



Holiness -

(The place of intimacy with God)

Holiness is a massively important reality for us as God's people. Scripture is full of references both ascribing Holiness to God and calling His people to a lifestyle of holiness. Even the very intimacy of our relationship with God is governed by how seriously we take the call to holiness. The word "holiness" in its basic form means to be set apart from the common things of life and set apart for God's special purpose and use. In the New Testament, holiness takes a wider form of meaning both moral purity and moral rightness before God. The two ideas:- being set apart for God and moral rightness, sum up the heart of the word holiness.

Discuss - (In group / or small groups)

- Q1) Why do you think we should desire holiness?
- Q2) How do you think we can cultivate holy behaviour before God?
- Q3) What do you think will be hard about living a holy life?

So what does Scripture say about holiness and why we should cultivate holiness?:-

Fact 1 - God reveals Himself as Holy!!

We find that God is described within the Old Testament as a Being who's very essence of character and actions are Holy. The reality of God's Holiness is that He is completely ethically and morally pure in all that He says, thinks and does. In all His behaviour and responses He is full of perfect Love, Goodness and Justice.

God reveals Himself through Divine revelation as a God who is perfectly complete and whole in who He is. God does not need anything or anyone, but is self existing and completely faithful to Himself in morals and behaviour.

Because God is perfectly pure and perfect He will not get His hands dirty with the moral sin and decay in humanity. Sin is an abomination to Him. He will not look upon wrongdoing because of the great offence and revulsion it causes Him. Anyone who sins in a hardened way, God will not have fellowship with - but will discipline and ultimately punish.

Revelation 4 v 2 - 11

Fact 2 - God calls His people to be holy as He is Holy.

This may seem an impossibility that we can be holy before God. Part of His covenant promises is that He will make His people holy and develop them in the ways of holiness. This journey of being made more and more holy is called sanctification, in the bible. It is important as Christians that we year by year see this growth and transformation take place within us. God gives us His Spirit that we might see character flaws healed, behaviour weaknesses changed, a release from sinful habits and attitudes. It is important that we EXPECT this process to take place and we do not justify our sin or negative behaviour as just the way it is!! Being made holy is not about just knowing about this process – it is about submitting to it and cultivating holy living in our daily lives.

Leviticus 11 v 44 – 45

Leviticus 19 v 1 – 2

Exodus 31 v 13

Fact 3 – Simple reality is that no – one will see and experience God without holiness!!

Throughout the Bible we see that the quality of the intimate relationship with God is dependent on how serious we are to obey His will and live His way. If we do not take seriously this call to holiness then we will not encounter God on a spiritual and emotional level. This will result in a faith made up of the intellect, where there is no real intimacy, or any power to change us for the better. Hebrew 12 v 14 – 29 Matthew 5 v 8

Fact 4 – We will share in the Holiness of Jesus.

As we put our trust in Jesus, the bible makes it clear we are united with Him in many ways. One of these ways is that we share in a common inheritance with him, Part of this inheritance is fullness of life and a holistic lifestyle. In Jesus we see the perfect Holy God as a human being. Jesus showed the world the characteristics of true holiness and moral rightness. Through faith in him we see how the Holy Spirit is given us to transform us into people who share the likeness of Jesus. This includes being a holy and morally right people. In every sense as we co-operate with the Holy Spirit and live by God's word; as we make the right moral choices daily; the impossible is made possible and we grow in the holiness that God has ordained for us!!

