

Be Holy

It's a new year. Year-End and New Year is typically a time for reflections, assessments, re-evaluations, and proposed emphasis or re-emphasis. Everything is usually "on the table"- relationships and family obligations and desires, employment performance/opportunities, community service, personal and self-improvement goals, etc. etc. etc. Honest evaluation and assessment is good. Seeing opportunities for improvement and setting goals is essential ("If you aim at nothing, nothing can hit it every time." Joe Buck Strong, my late father). For Christians, especially those who truly want to "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" cf. 2Pet.3:18, such appraisals and objectives become the impetus for *spiritual* progress. "But the Bible is such a BIG book" and "I have so many areas in which I need to do better" can become a daunting prospect. So, we usually choose one or two "areas" deemed those most needing improvement and "table" the rest for later, or pick an objective so vague that it is un-measurable or low enough to insure at least some measure of "success" for next year's evaluation. None of which is really helpful.

As I pondered these things, a few passages came to mind, but one really stood out from the rest, **1Pet.1:16** (as quoted from Lev.11:44), "**You shall be holy, for I am holy.**" Be holy- in all things, in every way, at all times. Just be holy. Of course, questions immediately arise from this...

1. What does "holy" actually mean?

"Holy" is translated from (the Greek word) *hagios*, which basically means *divine, pure* (1Pet.1:16), *consecrated/dedicated* people or things (Mark 6:20). "Holy" carries the notion of "superior moral qualities and possessing certain essentially divine qualities in contrast with what is human" (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament). In essence and relative to man's *holiness*, it is being *more like God* and *less like* (fallen) *man*.

2. How is God "holy" (since I am/we are to be as He is)?

Undivided/unmixed/pure- not "mostly good" or "not all bad," but entirely good, righteous, proper; light with no darkness at all, cf. v.15

Wholly **consecrated/dedicated** to spiritual purpose and service, cf. 2:5

Divine, cf. v.16

3. What is essential to being "holy"? (from 1Pet.1:13ff)

- **Girded Mind, v.13a-** the metaphor used is derived from the ancient Oriental practice of *binding* their long flowing robes up or close to the body so as not to impede their work or activity; here, the *mind* is so *prepared for spiritual work, activity, or journey*, cf. Neh.4:6 (where relative to rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem), "*the people had a mind (prepared/girded, PCS) to work.*" We must prepare ourselves **mentally** for *holiness*, and the pursuit/work of *holiness*.
- **Sober Spirit, v.13b-** *nepho* (*nay-fo*) does sometimes mean "free of intoxicant(s)," but more often refers to being *calm* and *collected in spirit, temperate*, and *circumspect* (which, not coincidentally, are the opposite effects of *intoxicated- rash, hot-headed, and lacking good judgment*), cf. 4:7; 5:8. We must

be in, or gain control of, our **spirits** (our *thoughts, emotions*, and thus our *desires*) to be *holy*.

- **Completely Fixed Hope, v.13c-** *elpizo* (hope or things hoped for; trusting anticipation with full expectance of ascertaining) is *teleios* (complete, whole, mature, lacking nothing) and “*fixed*” (set, to attach to) “*the grace to be brought to you*” (by and through *salvation*) “*at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (in this case, not His *word* but *appearing*). Think this through: in order to be *holy*, we must *look to* and *attach our hope* to the promised *coming* and *salvation* (by His *grace*) of *Jesus Christ* rather than the “here and now” temporal things of “this” life, cf. 1Cor.15:19; 2Cor.4:16-18. Having *prepared our minds* and *gained control of our spirits*, our **hope** (desires, expectations, and trust) are *completely fixed* not on the *earthly*, but the *eternal*. Thus, with *holy minds, spirits, and desires*, our *lives* become *holy*, as indicated by...
- **Obedience as Children, v.14a-** not “immature” or “know it all(s)” *children*, but *trustingly compliant*; willing to *obey* even when we don’t completely *understand* or *agree*; not from *blind* faith, but from experience *understanding* and *trusting* the Father’s *love, goodness, and wisdom* enough to *follow* His (and into) *holiness*. *Children* act “childishly” for at least a couple of reasons:
 1. They *want what they want* without any consideration of anything or anyone else; a baby doesn’t care what time of night it is or how little sleep you’ve had, it just wants to be fed and have a clean bottom; until they mature a little, *their desires* trump everything else, cf. v.14b regarding *lusts* (inordinate, selfish, or excessive *desires*); and,
 2. They simply *don’t know any better* precisely because they are *children*, and thus *immature* in their *knowledge* and *understanding*; they can’t comprehend the physics involved with a 5,000 lbs. automobile striking a 35 lbs. human, they just want to play in the street. But you do, and thus demand obedience whether they completely understand “Why?” or not, cf. v.14c. It’s the same for God, as a *Father* who *knows* all, and us, as *children*, who are (mostly) *ignorant* regarding the dangers of ‘*unholiness*.’

So, we can *conform* to our own *immature/ignorant desires*, or trust and *conform* to His *love, knowledge, and holiness*.

So, as we embark on whatever time God allows in this New Year, continually ask yourself some questions regarding *holiness*:

- ➔ Is what I’m **thinking** and/or **feeling** *holy*?
- ➔ Is what I’m **wanting to do** (or am doing) *holy*?
- ➔ Is what I’m wanting/asking **God to do** *holy*?
- ➔ Am I **encouraging** or **discouraging** *holiness* in others (meaning *everyone*)?

I realize that we are all more than ready for a *wholly* New Year that is different and better than the last; but let’s make it a *holy* New Year by being *holy* ourselves!