

Beliefs Matter

Discovery Starters

Holiness

We are called to **lead holy and righteous lives**

that exemplify the nature and character of God

[Lev 19:1-2](#); [Psa 51:7-11](#); [Jer 18:1-11](#); [Eze 20:10-12](#); [Zec 13:9](#);
[Luk 1:68-75](#); [Eph 4:21-32](#); [Tit 2:11-14](#); [1Pe 2:9,21-25](#); [1Jo 3:1-3](#)

Belief #2 – Holiness: Made Holy

Biblical Foundation:

So I brought them out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness. There I gave them my decrees and regulations so they could find life by keeping them. And I gave them my Sabbath days of rest as a sign between them and me. It was to remind them that I am the LORD, who had set them apart to be holy (Eze 20:10-12).

Discovery Starter:

Ezekiel makes it clear that God's purpose for us is that we be holy. God's reason is because he is holy (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2) and he wants to conform us to his image (Rom 8:29) in order that we might walk in close fellowship with him (1Co 1:9). He wants us to share in his character and have uninterrupted friendship with him. A call to holiness is not a call to limit us, but an invitation to pursue the imitation of God in order that we may enjoy intimacy with God.

God's means of making us holy is rooted in himself. His redemptive work in our lives is what makes the difference – that is why we are repeatedly told that he is the one who makes us holy (Exo 31:13; Lev 20:8; 21:8,15,23; 22:9,16,32). It's not that God does this independently from us. God exhorts us to put all his "decrees ... into practice" precisely because he is the one "who makes ... holy" (Lev 20:8). Our response of obedience to his acts of deliverance allow us to live as God intends us to live.

Jesus' exhortation "to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Mat 5:48) in the Sermon on the Mount, and the parallel "be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate" (Luk 6:36) in the Sermon on the Plain echo the command, "You must be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2). God is to be our standard of how we should live our lives Oftentimes moral excuses are made with the phrase, "Well, we're only human." Let us not forget that we were designed by a holy God for

holiness. Jesus came to restore us to that original design by showing us what it means to be truly human. He embodies the new normal by living a life which matches God's way of living life. Jesus "faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin" (Heb 4:15). Paul enjoins us: "Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ" (Eph 5:1-2).

Keep Going:

When God wants to say something with emphasis, he underscores his words with "I am the LORD." This declaration can be found 158 times in 70 chapters across 14 books of the Original Testament. The chapter that most frequently repeats this phrase is Leviticus 19, often considered the heart of "The Law of Holiness" which comprises the last third of Leviticus. Consider the statements that climax with "I am the LORD" in this chapter:

- 19:3 honor your parents and the Sabbath
- 19:4 do not participate in idolatry
- 19:10 care for the poor
- 19:12 do not use dishonest words and thereby dishonor God
- 19:14 care for those with disabilities
- 19:16 care for those whose life is at risk
- 19:18 love your neighbor as yourself
- 19:25 take care of your physical environment
- 19:28 do not participate in pagan practices to honor the dead
- 19:30 honor God's sanctuary and the Sabbath
- 19:31 do not participate in pagan practices to contact the dead
- 19:32 care for the elderly
- 19:34 care for the refugees, immigrants, foreigners in your midst
- 19:35 do not use dishonest weights and measurements
- 19:37 obey all of God's decrees

How do these statements help you understand holiness? What are repeated themes? What are the inner heart issues and the outward social issues addressed in this passage? How do integrity, love and compassion display holiness?

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