

CLI Leadership Bible Study: Lesson 12

How to positively influence the attitudes and actions of others for Jesus Christ

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day One) *Holy is the LORD*

As we progress from Lesson 11, *Knowing God's Will*, to Lesson 12, *The Leader's Fire of Holiness*, there are two things to remember. **First**, you can pray for yourself and others to know God's will. God will answer your prayer because He wants us on the right path.

Read Colossians 4:12 and answer questions 1-2:

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. Colossians 4:12

Note: The apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Colossians that his fellow worker, Epaphras (EP uh frass), is always wrestling in prayer for them. Wrestling is a strenuous and demanding activity and thus to wrestle in prayer denotes struggling and exerting effort. The Greek word *agonizomai* (ἀγωνίζομαι), translated *wrestle* in English, is also used in the sense of doing one's best and not giving up.

1. What is Epaphras' prayer for the members of the Colossian church?

****See end of lesson for repeat of questions and blank spaces for you to write your answers.**

When all the questions have been completed, return your answer sheets to CLI. You may keep this lesson for your own study or review. You may also pass it on to another or discard.

2. Have you prayed for others to stand firm in all the will of God? Yes No (Circle One)

3. Commit to wrestle in prayer for one person this week. Pray in the spirit of Epaphras' prayer, *that this person may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.* Write your comments about this prayer experience:

The **second** thing to remember about "God's will" serves as a natural bridge to what we will be studying: **God wants us to be holy**. Holy is defined as being pure, perfect, good and righteous. It also means being separated from sin and anything that sets itself up against God.

Read 1 Peter 1:15-16 and answer questions 4-6:

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15-16 (quoted from Leviticus 11:45-46)

4. Peter says, because God who called you is holy, be holy in _____ you do (v.15)

5. What challenges do you have in being holy in all you do?
6. How may we pray for you in your challenges to be holy?

Christian leaders are especially called to serve, work, play, eat, drink, think, live and exist in a holy state. It is not a part-time activity or pursuit. It is full time, all the time.

Not only does God want us to be holy, but He has given us this desire in our hearts. Anyone called to serve the Lord Jesus has this longing to be like Him and take on His character. God began preparing our hearts for Jesus and our holiness through the law and sacrificial system.

Read Leviticus 11:44 and answer questions 7-8:

I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. Leviticus 11:44

7. Why did the LORD tell the Israelites to consecrate (set apart) themselves and be holy (v. 44a)?
8. What is meant by the word *clean* and *unclean* in our everyday language?

Physically speaking, if a person is unclean, he is dirty. If the unclean person washes away all the dirt, grime, and filth, he is clean. The concept of clean and unclean also refers to behaviors that are righteous versus (opposed to) those that are unrighteous. These behaviors originate in and are governed by the mind. Therefore the mind too, with its attitudes and motivations, can be clean and unclean.

The concept of "cleanness" was basic to God's plan for teaching and preserving holiness in His people. He established laws concerning their actions, their diet and their hygiene. In the verse above, God is saying that the Israelites are not to eat creatures like the rat, the weasel or the lizard (Leviticus 11:29-33).

Although scholars have long debated the reasons behind the regulations, there is not a definitive (final) answer. Three possible reasons or a combination of these are: 1. Designed to avoid pagan practices. 2. Separation of Israelites in food, ethical and religious matters. 3. Preventing disease and keeping Israelites eating healthy. Perhaps God used all of these reasons to some extent, but the overarching reason God used the law was to reveal the sinner's need for cleanness.¹

For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' Mark 7:21-23

Read Mark 7:21-23 and answer the questions 9-11:

9. According to Jesus, what makes a person unclean?
10. Explain in your own words the point or concept that Jesus is teaching to his disciples?

¹ Trent C. Butler, *Holman Bible Dictionary*. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 268-269.

Jesus is expanding the concept of cleanness to a person's inward attitudes and motivations. He wants His disciples to realize that following God's rules in a mechanical and thoughtless way does not make a person clean. Jesus is also laying the foundation for the New Covenant of grace, which is found in His work on the cross. He is the fulfillment of the law with its regulations and rules.

Therefore, the dietary laws no longer apply to believers, whether of Jewish or Gentile heritage. Everything God has made is good and now can be eaten without defilement (Acts 10:9-16). Cleanness or holiness comes through Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Definition: Slander is saying something false and damaging about another person that damages his or her reputation. Notice it is included with a long list of evil sins, including murder, in Mark 7:21-23. And in a sense it is murder; it is character assassination.

11. Jesus says that just having slanderous thoughts about someone makes us unclean. How will this change the way *you* think and talk about others?

Read Isaiah 6:1-3 and answer questions 12-13:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.³ And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Isaiah 6:1-3

12. Who did Isaiah see? (Read John 4:24,12:41; Revelation 1:13)

Definitions: Incarnation is the act of God the Son taking on a sinless human nature in the person of Jesus Christ for the purpose of freeing human beings from sin. Preincarnate describes the time before Jesus took on human nature through his holy conception and birth.

Isaiah had a vision of the preincarnate King of glory, Christ our Lord. That is, he saw Jesus before He took on flesh and walked the earth. He saw God and Christ as one; Isaiah makes no distinction between Father and Son.

Definition: Seraph is a heavenly or angelic being with human form and six wings. The plural, masculine noun is normally rendered seraphim but translated seraphs in the NIV Bible translation. They seem to be positioned over God's throne for divine worship and used as agents of purification. Seraphim are only mentioned in Isaiah 6.

13. What were the seraphim calling out to one another?

In Hebrew the adjective used to describe the LORD (YHWH) in verse 3 is qados (קדוש). It means holy and sacred. God is set apart on His heavenly throne in perfection. He casts a vision of divine brilliance and majesty. He is pure. He is morally excellent.

The seraphim emphasize the LORD's sacredness by repeating the word *holy* three times. God is holy and exalted as He sits upon His throne. He is the powerful, sovereign Holy One over all angels, men and creation. He designed the world and filled it with abundance and splendor.

Read Isaiah 6:4-8 and answer question 14–20:

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.⁵ "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:4-8

14. What did Isaiah exclaim in verse 5? " _____ to _____!" I cried. " _____ am _____! For I am a man of _____ lips, and I live among a people of _____ lips and my _____ have seen the King, the _____ Almighty."

15. Write in your own words why Isaiah cried out in fear (v.5):

When confronted with a holy God, we are overcome with our own lack of holiness (Luke 5:8). His perfection brings us to our knees in worship and fear (Revelation 1:17). We fear because we can see the truth in His presence. The fire of His holiness burns through our weak and pitiful flesh. We know He is God, worthy of all praise and allegiance.

16. How did God take away Isaiah's sin and guilt (v.6-7)?

Isaiah was purified and made holy by a red, hot coal from the altar. The prophet's sin was covered and God's holy wrath was turned aside (Leviticus 16:11-13). God is righteous and just; sin must be punished.

17. If a burning coal was immediately placed on your lips or offending body part, how might your sinful actions change?

18. Right after Isaiah's guilt was taken away and his sin atoned for, what did he hear the Lord saying (v.8a)?

19. What was Isaiah's reply (v.8b)?

20. What is your reply to God's call?

Personal Application: Meditate on God's holiness (Numbers 27:12-14; Leviticus 20:1-7; Joshua 24:19-27; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:24-27; John 6:68-69; Revelation 4:8-11, 16:5-7).

21. What did the LORD impress upon you about His holiness?

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Two) Fire of Fear

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. Exodus 3:5-6

22. Read Exodus 3:5-6. What was Moses' response when God revealed Himself (v.6c)?

Moses saw the burning bush and started walking towards it. The fire caught his attention. He was curious but not afraid. Even when Moses was told to take off his sandals, he did not seem too disturbed. But as soon as God announced that He was the one true living God, Moses hid his face in fear.

Both Moses and Isaiah had visible manifestations of God that caused them to fear. The theological (study of God) term for God showing or revealing Himself to man is called a theophany. God appeared to people in a variety of ways in the Bible, but the greatest theophany is found in the incarnation of Christ (John 1:18).² Recall the apostle John also had a fearful reaction when He saw the risen Christ (Revelation 1:17).

Read Proverbs 9:10 and answer questions 23-24:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10

23. What is the beginning of wisdom?

24. What is understanding?

There are several Hebrew words used for fear in the Old Testament. In both Exodus and Proverbs above, the Hebrew word for fear is *yare* (יָרֵא). It is used to express Moses' response to God at the burning bush and also the prescription for receiving wisdom. The Hebrew word *yare* (יָרֵא) means: **1. fear, be afraid, be afraid of** **2. stand in awe of** **3. fear, reverence, honor, e.g. (for example) parents, things** **3. inspire reverence, godly fear and awe.**

Definition: Revival refers to a specific period of spiritual renewal and holiness in the lives of Christians; they exhibit a healthy fear and reverence for God. Revival is derived from the word revive, which means to recover consciousness or full strength; bring somebody back to life.

J. I. Packer defined revival as "God's quickening visitation of His people, touching their hearts and deepening His work of grace in their lives." When God touches the heart of a single believer it is called renewal. It is called revival when God quickens the hearts of a group of believers. When God impacts larger segments of believers, even globally, it is called an awakening.³

² James D. Hernando, *Dictionary of Hermeneutics*, Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1995, 168.

³ <http://www.sbts.edu/resources/files/2009/09/revival-handout.pdf>

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), of Puritan and Calvinist theology, is one of the best documented of all Americans of the eighteenth century. He was a contemporary of the English evangelist George Whitefield and one of the leaders of the Great Awakening of 1740-42.

The Great Awakening was one of the most intense periods of spiritual fervor (passion) in American history. The Holy Spirit convicted, changed, and inspired large numbers of believers. When saints are renewed, revived or awakened they are keenly interested in serving God and living a holy life. This combination allows the Spirit to work through Christians in order for others to hear and respond to the gospel.

God works through all kinds of people, even brilliant ones. Jonathan was of the latter persuasion. Even as a child he was intensely aware of God's creation. He was filled with wonder at the strength of rocks, the color of rainbows and the sweet taste of honey.

Jonathan was also fascinated with spiders and their webs. He would spend long hours in the woods observing insects and classifying them. Succeeding generations in the scientific community would wonder at the boy's notes and conclusions, considering his lack of training or equipment.

In addition to intelligence, God also blessed Jonathan with a father who taught him with diligence and patience. His father, a pastor, was also strict and demanding because he wanted children "to excel in the things of the Lord." Again, God has a plan for those born in helpful families, and those who are not. If you did not have a caring family, be encouraged, God wants to be your family. He wants to be everything to you and for you.

At 13, with a great passion for Jesus and a desire to see revival, Jonathan left home for the Collegiate School, later to become the prestigious Yale College. He was a well-disciplined student absorbed in his reading and studies. He was a loner for the most part as he tackled philosophical (study of nature, reality, ethics, logic) questions and sought answers.

At 18 he was granted a degree and a license to preach. While at his first pastorate in New York, he wrote, "I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness wherein my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to mind the words of the Psalmist, Psalm 119:20, 'My soul breaks for the longing that it has...'" (Author translated the old English words into modern language)

Jonathan married at 23 and after a time became pastor of Northampton Church in Massachusetts. He would often take long horseback rides listening to God and writing down notes for his sermons. At times he spoke of the terrible wrath of God and the urgency of personal salvation but often he spoke of God's love and the virtues of everyday holiness.

Piety (devotion to God) was an important topic for Jonathan. He was alarmed at the lack of spiritual zeal of his fellow Puritans. They seemed more interested in material comforts and keeping up outward appearances than desiring to please God.

God caused the first revival in 1734, which lasted a couple of years and spread to neighboring communities. By Spring of 1735, Jonathan recorded "three hundred souls" had come to Christ.

In thinking about these three hundred, he compared the effects of true salvation to the difference between making a rational statement that honey is sweet, and experiencing its sweetness.

The first revival ended and the area seemed to relapse or backslide into its previous state. But in 1740 George Whitefield arrived in the United States from London signaling the Great Awakening. Humbly, Jonathan Edwards wrote Whitefield a gracious letter, extending an invitation for him to preach at the Northampton church.

George Whitefield, fiery and dramatic, gave four sermons without notes. Although his style was the opposite of Edwards, who read his sermons, God used both men in reviving His people.⁴ The lesson here is to be yourself, God created you in a unique way. Allow God to work through *your* personality and style. Live the life *you* were meant to live.

Edwards was invited to preach in Enfield, Massachusetts on July 8, 1741, where he delivered his famous sermon entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Although this sermon earned him the reputation of a *fire and brimstone* preacher, the truth is, he contrasted God's wrath against sin with His loving provision for salvation.

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom for it brings the wise to Christ. The only way a sinner can stand before God is through the blood of Christ. But even in the blood of Jesus, we stand in awe of a holy God!

Awe is respect combined with fear or wonder. Awe is the right response to a holy God. We are to both fear and reverence God. As we grow in our love relationship with God, our fear changes from debilitating (incapacitating) fright to enabling fear. In other words, believers are enabled to serve God in holy living.

During revival God makes His presence known. People's reactions are similar to Moses' hiding his face and Isaiah crying out "Woe is me!" Their tears and fear are just as genuine. People experiencing revival may not *see* God, but He definitely makes His presence known.

God wants His leaders to recognize His holiness. In fact, the fire of God's holiness should ignite our hearts for purity and piety. Both Moses and Isaiah caught the spark of holiness and dedicated their lives to serving God in righteousness.

25. Have you caught the spark of God's holiness? Yes No (Circle one) Why or Why not?

26. Did Moses and Isaiah teach those they led about God's holiness? Yes No (Circle one)
How do you know?

Moses and Isaiah not only taught the Israelites verbally about God's holiness, they wrote their lessons down for future generations. The Holy Spirit inspired both Moses and Isaiah to record the lessons about God's holiness in the Bible. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, and Isaiah wrote the book of Isaiah.

And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness. Deuteronomy 6:25

⁴ Hosier, Helen, *Jonathan Edwards, The Great Awakener*, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, Ohio, 1959.

27. Read Deuteronomy 6:25. What will be the Israelites' righteousness?

Jonathan knew that our righteousness and holiness now come through the Lord Jesus, and not the law. He preached this good news and called people to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior. However, he was convicted that his usefulness to God's kingdom was related to the condition of his inner life. He spent a lot of time with God in prayer, solitude, meditation and Bible study.

Jonathan taught there must be a new attitude of the heart toward God and a desire for divine things. Men and women must be engaged with God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of love, humility and kindness. His sermons on this topic have been preserved in his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746). It was also written in response to an exaggerated display of emotions in some people that he deemed were not true signs of salvation.

As the revival ended, Jonathan sought a new holiness for the church because he feared the church and the world would blend together. Two areas were especially controversial. First, he believed full church membership should be restricted to only those who make a profession of faith and give evidence of their salvation. Second, communion should be for believers only.

Some members of the congregation did not agree with Edwards and eventually voted him out as pastor. Both he and his wife, Sarah, acknowledged the providence of God and sought His will for their future. After much prayer they accepted a missionary post among the American Indians. He had a heart for missions and had prayed diligently for the advancement of the gospel among this people group.

Jonathan Edwards was concerned for their spiritual welfare and worked diligently on their behalf. God blessed his work and made it fruitful. Seven years after his work among the Indians began, he contracted a secondary fever from a small pox vaccine and died at age 54.⁵

Jonathan's life and teachings were based not on the law but on Jesus Christ. He preached holiness for Jesus' sake and for the sake of the people he served. He desired a people set apart by and for Christ so that the righteousness He brings would be evident to all.

Read Romans 10:4 and answer questions 28-29:

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.
Romans 10:4

28. Do you get your righteousness by following the Old Testament Law? Yes No (Circle One)

29. How do you, or anyone else, get righteousness?

Although we do not follow rules and regulations to receive righteousness, we do follow the Lord Jesus. He is our righteousness and He expects obedience. For example, He taught us through the Holy Scriptures to fear God (Luke 12:4-9).

⁵ Ibid

Definition: The Greek word *phobeomai* (φοβέομαι) is translated *fear* in Luke 12:5 and other New Testament passages. In addition to fear, *phobeomai* (φοβέομαι) denotes being afraid of; being afraid (to do something); worshiping and reverencing (God) and respecting others. The Greek word captures the same meaning as the Hebrew word for *fear* we looked at earlier. Christians are still admonished (warned) to fear and reverence the triune God.

How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:29

30. Read Hebrews 10:29. How do you think God views Christians who deliberately keep on sinning and do not care about their purity?

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. Acts 9:31

31. According to Acts 9:31, the church was strengthened and encouraged by the _____ Spirit. It _____ in _____, living in the _____ of the _____

32. How are *you* being encouraged by the Holy Spirit and living in the fear the Lord?

33. How are you encouraging believers to live in the fear of the Lord?

Personal Application: Have you ever had an uneasy feeling when verses *seem* to oppose or contradict one another? Most of the time it is just a matter of additional prayer and study to understand how biblical concepts interact and work together. Other times you may not receive a complete answer. In these cases, there may remain a holy tension in Scripture until you pass on to glory.

A Christian leader must learn to accept holy tension, knowing God's word is always true. Our finite (limited) minds may not understand how certain teachings fit together, but by faith we know they do. Below you will have an opportunity to ease the tension in two biblical concepts.

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

34. Read 1 John 4:18. How does the teaching "no fear in love" fit within the context of a holy God that is "to be feared" (1 Peter 2:17). Reference other verses to make your case or argument.

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Three) Effort and Grace

Read Hebrews 12:14-15 and answer questions 35-37:

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.¹⁵ See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. Hebrews 12:14-15

35. The author of Hebrews tells the Jewish believers to _____ every _____ to live in peace with all men and to be _____; without _____ no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one _____ the _____ of God and that no _____ root grows up to cause _____ and _____ many.

Believers are commanded to pursue, chase, and seek after holiness. They are commanded to strive for and practice holiness. Yet in the very next sentence the author of Hebrews says, *see to it that no one misses or falls short of grace.*

Definition: Grace is God's divine power in action to undeserving people (Hebrews 12:15).

In the New Testament, the writers used the Greek word *charis* (χάρις) to convey God's divine power working through a person's life. It was also used specifically to express a believer's unmerited salvation in Christ. Previously there had not been a precise word to describe God's plan of salvation because it was unknown. The actual plan of salvation in Christ was hidden from mankind until the proper time when God revealed it (Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 3:4-6).

Grace (*charis*) was a secular (not religious) word in use at the time. It had the "idea of a favor or kindness done to another or of a gift which brought pleasure to another. Viewed from the standpoint of the recipient (receiver), it was used to refer to the thankfulness felt for a gift or favor."⁶ Writers of the New Testament have also used grace (*charis*) in its secular meanings. For example, we say grace (give thanks) before a meal (1 Corinthians 10:30).

The Hebrew word *chen* (חֵן) is perhaps closest to the Greek word *charis* (χάρις). When speaking of God, it can mean His gift of redemption from enemies, troubles and sins. Although there isn't a particular word for grace in the Old Testament that conveys the same meaning as in the New Testament, God's grace or favor is revealed throughout Scripture. God is described as gracious. He is merciful and loving. He gives help in time of need. He shows favor to those who don't deserve it. He is steadfast in His promises. He continually delivered His people from their enemies and provided the sacrificial system for taking away sins. The Old Testament is not only a record of God's grace but a promise of His even greater grace which was to come through Jesus Christ.⁷

36. How do you think pursuing holiness and accepting God's grace work together?

The book of Hebrews is about Jesus, *the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word* (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus, who is supreme and all sufficient, brought salvation to mankind according to the Father's plan. He makes men and women holy (Hebrews 2:11). In addition, because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

The inspired author is saying: **take hold of Jesus.** Do not miss what He has done for you. He has made you holy by His blood and will continue to help you through all your temptations. You cannot be holy on your own. In fact, if you seek righteousness in yourself then you will only succeed in causing trouble and corrupting others.

⁶ Butler, 573.

⁷ Ibid

On the other hand, God did not take away our free will and our ability to sin. He expects us Christians to pursue godly lives. We have a duty to discipline our minds and bodies. But even in our pursuit of holiness, God works through us (grace) and helps us persevere each day.

37. How does your life demonstrate the right relationship between grace and effort?

Without the right relationship between grace and effort, we might become proud of our holiness. We might tend to look down on others who seem to be easily tempted and not as grounded as ourselves. This is known as spiritual pride. Knowing that it is Jesus who makes and keeps us holy, should make us humble. Humility is a key attribute of a holy life.

Definition: Humility is knowing one's true position before God and attributing all talents and gifts to Him. Humble Christians are not concerned with pleasing themselves but with pleasing God and serving His people. Jesus is *the* model of a humble servant (Philippians 2:5-8).

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6

38. Read James 4:6. How can you be assured of having God work in your life?

As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. 2 Corinthians 6:1

39. Read 2 Corinthians 6:1. What does it mean "not to receive God's grace in vain (no use)"?

Jesus Christ's death on the cross for our sins is a free gift. Nevertheless, Paul is saying that you can receive the gift to no purpose and without result. Although we should live for Christ, we can still live for ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:15), and that will ultimately prove empty and fruitless.

Personal Application: Ask God to speak to you through reading and meditating on Matthew 25:14-30; Philippians 3:12-14; Hebrews 5:12-14; and 2 Peter 1:5-11.

40. Please share what God impressed upon you during your Scripture reading:

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Four) The Struggle

The higher the call to leadership, the higher the call to holiness. The higher the call to holiness, the harder you must discipline yourself to root out the evil in your life. But you are not on your own. God is always working in your life, and His grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Nevertheless, holiness seems to be elusive for many Christians. Either they do not understand the call to be pure or they understand it and choose to escape or avoid it. As a leader, you are called to lead a pure life and to lovingly teach, explain and model holiness to others.

Now purity does not come easily for anyone, especially leaders. Satan attacks and tempts God's righteous leaders in various ways (Job 1-2; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 22:31). We will look more at Satan and how to overcome his tactics in our next lesson, *Spiritual Warfare*. But for now we are focusing on our responsibility. For when you and I stand before God (1 Peter 1:17-19), you and

I alone will be held accountable for how we lived our lives. The truth is: the devil is not an excuse for sloppy and impure living.

Read Hebrews 12:4 and answer questions 41-42:

In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.
Hebrews 12:4

41. Do Christians struggle against sin? Yes No Maybe (Circle one)

Yes, Christians struggle against sin. The Bible says in your struggle, not if you struggle. All Christians have to fight back against some kind of sin. Weaknesses vary from person to person but everyone will have to resist with great effort the extreme desire to defeat the self. The self is a hungry and insatiable (greedy) tyrant.

42. How stringently (rigorously) should you fight back against sin in your life?

By saying "shedding your blood," the author of Hebrews is saying that we are to resist sin to the point of death. Remember that believers at this time were being severely persecuted and life was difficult. They were told not to give in to the worldly way of life but to fight back, even to death.

Their Leadership Model and ours, the Lord Jesus, fought back against sin to death. His struggle, with tears and blood in the Garden of Gethsemane was real (Matthew 26:38-39). Jesus, the eternal victor, won the fight and died on the cross rather than turn from His sacred responsibility.

As a leader it is important to understand why Christians have not lost the inclination to sin and how much of a struggle it can be. You will not only be fighting your own battles with sin but helping others to fight theirs. Knowing the truth of Scripture will keep you and others from feeling fatally flawed, wondering "what is wrong with me?"

After we are born again in Christ, we are a new creation. Our sins are forgiven and we have God's Spirit to lead us in all righteousness. We clearly have the ability to do what is right (Romans 6:11-14) but we do sin (1 John 1:8).

As a new creation, we continue life with our human nature and free will. We still have the ability to choose our thoughts and actions. We can even override the nudging and prompting of the Holy Spirit. Why would we even think of doing such a thing?

First, we have Satan and his followers prowling around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). They are masters at making evil choices look pretty good. Second, our human nature will always be tempted to put itself above others. We will always struggle not to make our own comfort and satisfaction of primary consideration. Third, we continue to live in a fallen and corrupted world. Sin is everywhere and affects us in subtle and not so subtle ways.

Jesus, by His Spirit, lives within believers and helps us resist temptation like He did (Matthew 4:1-11). We need to allow Jesus to take over and work through us (Philippians 4:13). Once we are saved, we begin a process called sanctification. Sanctification means growing in holiness

and purity (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). We become more and more like Christ, taking on the very character of God.

Read 1 Peter 2:4-5 and answer questions 43-45:

As you come to him, the living Stone-- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5

Definition: Spiritual means having no physical substance. "Giving a sacrifice involves permanently giving something that has value to the giver, and therefore involves giving up something that most people would rather keep for themselves. A sacrifice is given by a lesser being (man) to a greater being (God) as a form of submission and worship. Animals given for sacrifice in ancient Israel had to be 'without blemish,' and were some of the finest animals the farmer owned (Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 1:3)."⁸

43. What kind of priesthood do you belong to?

44. What spiritual sacrifices will you offer to God through Jesus Christ?

45. What are some ways that you will help others become a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ?

The apostle Peter told us in 1 Peter 2:2 that we need to grow up in our salvation. In order to grow up in our salvation, Christians must choose habits for holy living. The way of pure living is in the Bible. As a leader, encouraging others to be engaged by God's Word is essential.

Growing up means starting on the small things (Matthew 25:21). If we do not handle the seemingly minor things, we will certainly not be able to tackle the larger issues that come our way. For example, I was sharing the salvation message with someone who said he loved Jesus. In fact, he said, "I would die for Jesus."

However, upon further conversation, he admitted that he had never surrendered his life to Christ. I said, "You can give your life to Jesus right now." However, he said, "No, I don't want to pray and make that commitment."

When I asked him why he did not want to confess Jesus as Savior and Lord, he admitted he was living with his girlfriend. He knew it was wrong but said he was not willing to give up his living arrangements. If this sinner will not give up his sexual activity for Jesus, he certainly will not shed his blood for the Him.

Personal Application: Think about some of your personal habits such as eating, drinking, reading, daydreaming, looking, listening and watching programs. Are they glorifying to God? For example, do you look at other people and think about them in a critical or unkind manner? Or do you look at them as made in the image of God and individuals whom He loves and desires

⁸ United Church of God, <http://www.ucg.org/christian-living/treasure-digest-qa-what-are-spiritual-sacrifices/>

to work through? Pray and ask God to help you purify these habits so that your living and leading are synonymous (identical). Remember, make every effort to get rid of all impurities.

46. Share one unholy personal habit that you will commit to work on with God's grace:

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Five) Turn, Fix and Focus

Author and composer Helen H. Lemmel (1864-1961) relates that one day, in 1918 a missionary friend gave her a tract entitled *Focused*. The pamphlet contained these words: "So then, turn your eyes upon Him, look full into His face and you will find that the things of earth will acquire a strange new dimness."

These words made a deep impression upon Helen. She could not dismiss them from her mind. She recalls this experience following the reading of that tract: "Suddenly, as if commanded to stop and listen, I stood still, and singing in my soul and spirit was the chorus, with not one conscious moment of putting word to word to make rhyme, or note to note to make melody. The verses were written the same week, after the usual manner of composition, but none the less dictated by the Holy Spirit." The hymn: Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.

Born in Wardle, England, Helen was the daughter of a Wesleyan Methodist pastor, and she came to this country with her family at the age of twelve. In addition to being known as a brilliant singer and musician, Mrs. Lemmel was also widely recognized as a woman with remarkable literary ability. She wrote more than five hundred hymns and poems. She remained active for God in her musical and literary pursuits until her home-going at the age of ninety-seven.⁹

Personal Application: Read or sing the following hymn by Helen Lemmel. (If you do not know the melody to this worship song, research to hear it; it is worth the effort.) Think about the words and what meaning they have for you in pursuing holiness.

Turn You Eyes Upon Jesus

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's a light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!

Refrain

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

⁹ The Old Time Gospel Ministry website, 1999.

Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion—
For more than conquerors we are!

Refrain

His Word shall not fail you—He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

Refrain

47. How does this hymn encourage your pursuit of holy living?

48. How does this hymn encourage you to lead others in pure actions?

Read Hebrews 12:2-3 and answer questions 49-51:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2-3

Definition: Fix means to fasten firmly and to direct (the eyes or attention) steadily toward something. This is the meaning of the Greek word *aphorao* (ἀφοράω), which is translated fix in Hebrews 12:2 above. It means to direct one's attention without distraction.

49. What does "fix your eyes" on Jesus mean to you?

50. Do you "fix your eyes" upon Jesus? Yes No Sometimes (Circle One) Why or Why Not?

51. What are some ways that you can help others "fix their eyes" upon Jesus?

Striving for holiness in an unholy world can be wearisome. Not only can we grow weary of doing good ourselves, but we may grow weary of seeing professed Christians living impure lives. You may put time and effort into other people only to see them make poor choices or stray altogether.

Jesus had the same problem with His disciples. They were not perfect and were often slow to understand (Matthew 20:24-28; Luke 24:25). Judas, one of the original twelve, betrayed Jesus altogether after an intense three year program of love and compassion. But Jesus persevered and made the remaining eleven disciples champions in God's Kingdom. Be encouraged; He will do the same for you and those He has entrusted to you.

Read John 15:19-21 and answer questions 52-53:

If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. John 15:19-21

52. Will the world honor you for your pure life and treat you well? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

53. Explain your answer in #52?

Humanly speaking, it is easier to join with sinners and be one of the gang than to separate ourselves and stand with Christ and persecution. Do not let anyone fool you into thinking that following Christ and striving for holiness is a weak condition. There is nothing that reveals strength like that of standing with God in the face of ridicule, shame and the threat of physical harm. That is one of the reasons early Christianity won over scores of their persecutors. They were amazed at men, women and youth standing firmly in the arena waiting for the lions or some other dangerous creature to enter and consume them.

These martyrs never saw the earthly results of their devotion to Christ, but they most certainly will at the judgment seat. They followed their Leader into death. Christ died on the cross in strength and power, the strength and power to face evil and overcome it.

Jesus did not remain dead but was raised to life after three days. His resurrection proves He is God's holy, powerful and living Son. We serve a living God who made us in His image. His image is holy. We have a responsibility to understand God's holiness and to make sure that our lives fully reflect His sacred image.

Holy Father, May we burn with a leader's fire of holiness, now and forever, in Jesus. Amen.

- End Lesson 12 -

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS Lesson 12

CLI Christian Leadership Study: The Leader's Fire of Holiness

Name & Number: _____ Date: _____

Name of Institution: _____ Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day One) *Holy is the LORD*

1. What is Epaphras' prayer for the members of the Colossian church?

2. Have you prayed for others to stand firm in all the will of God? Yes No (Circle One)

3. Commit to wrestle in prayer for one person this week. Pray in the spirit of Epaphras' prayer, *that this person may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.* Write your comments about this prayer experience? _____

4. Peter says, because God who called you is holy, be holy in _____ you do (v.15)

5. What challenges do you have in being holy in all you do? _____

6. How may we pray for you in your challenges to be holy? _____

7. Why did the LORD tell the Israelites to consecrate (set apart) themselves and be holy (v. 44a)?

8. What is meant by the word *clean* and *unclean* in our everyday language?

9. According to Jesus, what makes a person unclean? _____

10. Explain in your own words the point or concept that Jesus is teaching to his disciples?

11. Jesus says that just having slanderous thoughts about someone makes us unclean. How will this change the way *you* think and talk about others? _____

12. Who did Isaiah see? (Read John 4:24,12:41; Revelation 1:13) _____

13. What were the seraphim calling out to one another? _____

14. What did Isaiah exclaim in verse 5? " _____ to _____!" I cried. " _____ am _____! For I am a man of _____ lips, and I live among a people of _____ lips and my _____ have seen the King, the _____ Almighty."

15. Write in your own words why Isaiah cried out in fear (v.5): _____

16. How did God take away Isaiah's sin and guilt (v.6-7)? _____

17. If a burning coal was immediately placed on your lips or offending body part, how might your sinful actions change? _____

18. Right after Isaiah's guilt was taken away and his sin atoned for, what did he hear the Lord saying (v.8a)? _____

19. What was Isaiah's reply (v.8b)? _____

20. What is your reply to God's call? _____

Personal Application: Meditate on God's holiness (Numbers 27:12-14; Leviticus 20:1-7; Joshua 24:19-27; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:24-27; John 6:68-69; Revelation 4:8-11, 16:5-7).

21. What did the LORD impress upon you about His holiness? _____

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Two) Fire of Fear

22. Read Exodus 3:5-6. What was Moses' response when God revealed Himself (v.6c)?

23. What is the beginning of wisdom? _____

24. What is understanding? _____

25. Have you caught the spark of God's holiness? Yes No (Circle one) Why or Why not?

26. Did Moses and Isaiah teach those they led about God's holiness? Yes No (Circle one)

How do you know? _____

27. Read Deuteronomy 6:25. What will be the Israelites righteousness? _____

28. Do you get your righteousness by following the Old Testament Law? Yes No (Circle One)

29. How do you, or anyone else, get righteousness? _____

30. Read Hebrews 10:29. How do you think God views Christians who deliberately keep on sinning and do not care about their purity? _____

31. According to Acts 9:31, the church was strengthened and encouraged by the _____

Spirit. It _____ in _____, living in the _____ of the _____

32. How are *you* being encouraged by the Holy Spirit and living in the fear the Lord?

33. How are *you* encouraging other believers to live in the fear of the Lord?

Personal Application:

34. Read 1 John 4:18. How does the teaching "no fear in love" fit within the context of a holy God that is "to be feared" (1 Peter 2:17). Reference other verses to make your case or argument.

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Three) Effort and Grace

35. The author of Hebrews tells the Jewish believers to _____ every _____ to live in peace with all men and to be _____; without _____ no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one _____ the _____ of God and that no _____ root grows up to cause _____ and _____ many.

36. How do you think pursuing holiness and accepting God's grace work together?

37. How does your life demonstrate the right relationship between grace and effort?

38. Read James 4:6. How can you be assured of having God work in your life?

39. Read 2 Corinthians 6:1. What does it mean "not to receive God's grace in vain"?

Personal Application:

40. Please share what God impressed upon you during your Scripture reading:

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Four) The Struggle

41. Do Christians struggle against sin? Yes No Maybe (Circle one)

42. How stringently (rigorously) should you fight back against sin in your life?

43. What kind of priesthood do you belong to? _____

44. What spiritual sacrifices will *you* offer to God through Jesus Christ? _____

45. What are some ways that *you* will help others become a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ? _____

Personal Application:

46. Share one unholy personal habit that you will commit to work on with God's grace:

Lesson 12: The Leader's Fire of Holiness (Day Five) Turn, Fix and Focus

Personal Application:

47. How does this hymn encourage your pursuit of holy living? _____

48. How does this hymn encourage you to lead others in pure actions? _____

49. What does "fix your eyes" on Jesus mean to *you*? _____

50. Do *you* "fix your eyes" upon Jesus? Yes No Sometimes (Circle One) Why or Why Not?

51. What are some ways that *you* can help others "fix their eyes" upon Jesus? _____

52. Will the world honor you for your pure life and treat you well? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

53. Explain your answer in #52? _____

Next: Lesson 13: Spiritual Warfare

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