



HOLINESS: It Can Only Get Better

January 14, 2023

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Exodus 15:11 • “Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”

Psalms 89:35 • “Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David.”

Isaiah 35:8 • “A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.”

Romans 6:19 • “I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”

Ephesians 4:24 • “And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

Philippians 4:8 • “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

Hebrews 12:14 • “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “HOLINESS”

This week’s lesson deals with the concept of holiness and how it relates to our lives in a practical sense. While holiness has been dealt with before, it is a topic that bears repeating. There will be a special focus on obedience as opposed to victory, and on discernment as opposed to one’s own strength.

God has granted us salvation, and our response to His action is to believe and to obey His will for us. Obedience is always a reaction to His saving grace, not a ploy to gain favor. Regardless of what we do, we cannot deserve His grace; rather, it is a gift for us to accept and believe. Our response, then, is to follow the will of the one who loves us.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH “HOLINESS”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Understand more fully the concept of pursuing holiness in their lives.
2. Have some practical tools to use in striving for holiness in life.
3. Better understand the process of moving away from bad habits and replacing them with good habits.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) boom box or other music player, a wall; (Activity B) two blindfolds, two candy bars,* music as in Activity A.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Paper, pens or pencils.

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN BEFORE

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engaging in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adult* at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Have music playing as the students come into the room. Let the room settle and begin with a warm welcome.

Get set • Ask for one or more volunteers. Tell them you are going to have them do a challenge that will test their ability to stop. Ask each of them to stand about 10 to 15 feet from an unobstructed wall in the room. Then ask them if they would run as fast as they can and stop only centimeters before the wall. They must make sure they do not touch the wall itself.

Go • Once the students have tried (inevitably someone will hit the wall), have the other students vote on who ran the hardest toward the wall and who came the closest to the wall.

Debriefing • Ask: What was wrong with this game? (Answers will vary, but probably will reflect displeasure in the fact that students would hit the wall.) **Why is this not a good game?** (It is dangerous. You can't run up to the wall and expect to stop without some damage.) **Say: Hold that thought; we are going to explore a little later how we often play this game in our own lives.**

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Allow time for a good number of students to come into the room. Do preliminary activities, and when it is time to begin the lesson, ask for two volunteers.

Get set • Take the volunteers into the hallway or somewhere out of the room, and leave them there. Then return to the room to instruct the class. Tell the class to move their chairs into a circle and then stand to the side. Hide two candy bars (or some other type of treat) that have been identified differently somewhere in the circle (in two different places). Then divide the students into two teams by numbering them off. Tell each team which candy bar is "theirs."

Tell the class that when the two blindfolded participants reenter the room they will each be

told where their team is standing. It is the job of each team to call out and tell their teammate where their team's candy bar is, and how best to get it. Teams are also allowed to call out and try to confuse the other team's candy seeker. The team whose player gets the candy bar first wins.

Go • As the blindfolded teammates begin their search, start playing music to further distract the players.

Debriefing • Ask: Was this game difficult? Why? (Answers will vary, of course, but the theme is that it was difficult to hear the correct instructions.) To the blindfolded participants, **ask: How did you know whom to trust? Was it easy to follow directions? Did the music confuse you more? If you had a chance to do it again, what, if anything, would you do differently?**

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

You wake up in the morning and finally find the time to be alone with God. You use your quiet time wisely, and you are looking forward to a good day. You have asked the Lord for victory over sin, and you truly believe that He is wanting you to live a better life, a life of trust and obedience. As you finish your devotions, you get up and go to take a shower. However, when you get there, you see that your sister has already gotten into the bathroom and you have to wait. "No problem," you tell yourself. After about 20 minutes you are becoming anxious.

You need to get ready for school, and your sister is being very inconsiderate. After a half hour you are not just concerned, you are upset. Every minute that passes you can feel your internal thermometer getting hotter and hotter. When your sister finally exits the bathroom, you make sure that you give her a piece of your mind.

As you enter the bathroom, you find yourself full of regret, knowing you have already lost control and given into the temptation to

be angry and to say harsh words: to lash out at your sister. As you prepare yourself for school, you realize that you failed in your promise to Jesus, and you say to yourself, *Well, hopefully tomorrow I will find victory over my temper.*

Debriefing • Ask: Has this ever happened to any of you? How often do you find yourself in this situation? Why do you keep making the same silly mistakes that you have asked God for victory over?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

As citizens in God's kingdom, there are certain things we need to do in order to be like God—to be Christlike. What are those things? One is a desire to sin as little as possible. As we have seen in the beginning illustration, that is a tough thing to do.

Really, those of us who see ourselves as agents of God need only to look to one thing, and that is obedience to God's will in our lives. As we study and as we pray, we find the more we conform to God's will in our lives, the easier it is to be obedient. As we are obedient, temptation has less and less power on us. Sure, we will make mistakes; that is why there is forgiveness and grace. Can we eradicate sin from our lives? No. Only God can do that. But we can continually conform to God's will. That is what it means to live a life of victory in Jesus!

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Ask: What does it mean to live in response to the grace of God? While we cannot earn salvation by what we do, why is it important to live our lives in harmony with the teaching of God's Word and the principles of His law? Why is it important to surrender our lives to God's control in everything we do and allow Him to change us into His image? How is obedience to God's will a natural outcome of His presence in our lives?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: In Romans 6:19 Paul states: "I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness." **Ask:** How would this work out in your life?

Share the following ideas in your own words:

They say it takes 21 days to create a habit. Look at your life and see how many habits you have, both good and bad. What does it take to break a habit? It would be safe to say that it would take at least 21 days to break one if it takes that long to create one. We need to be intentional about creating new habits. God wants us to live in righteousness and holiness. The way we do that is by constantly claiming the power of the Holy Spirit and reminding ourselves of God's grace and mercy to us. This enables us to overcome our bad habits and be more like Christ.

Friday's section of this lesson has something called the 21-Day Challenge. This is not a formula for overcoming sin. If overcoming sin were that easy, someone other than Jesus would have done it a long time ago. However, we can make small strides in our struggle with sin and bad habits by becoming very intentional in the way we deal with those things that tempt us. Let's take a look at the 21-Day Challenge and apply it to our lives.

(Note: The 21-Day Challenge is not something that the students, if they are honest, are

probably going to want to share with anyone. It would be good to mark in your calendar to do a quick follow-up 21 days later, offering encouragement in the weeks between, in order to have some accountability with this activity.)

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Divide students into groups of three to five. Have them spend some time discussing what they think are the three biggest challenges facing them and the young people around them in their pursuit of holiness. Allow time for them to come up with a well-thought-out list and then see if the lists match among the groups.

Debriefing • Ask: Is there a common tendency that we can help each other overcome? Is there a way we can be more accountable to one another? What are some practical suggestions you have for overcoming in some of these areas?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What are some practical ways you can resist temptation by following the example of Jesus (see Matthew 4)?
2. Do you think your friends are willing to help you in your pursuit of holiness?
3. How can being accountable to someone or to a group help you deal with sin in your life?
4. How can your parents help you in this regard?
5. If you could ask God to help you overcome one thing right now, what would it be? (Have them answer this to themselves.)

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

Check to make sure that your students understood that holiness is a natural outcome of our response to God's love and grace.

Then in your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Holiness is something we strive for, but we obtain only through the grace of Jesus Christ. The overcoming of bad habits is a process, but if we are consistently trusting Jesus, He will give us the victory over sin and every selfish tendency.

Prayer of Commitment

Have the students divide into groups of two or three and pray for the desire to be obedient to God. Then have them come together and pray as a group for the commitment to holiness as a corporate Sabbath school class. Take time for silent prayer requests.



STUDENT LESSON

HOLINESS:

It Can Only Get Better

January 14, 2023

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:22).
- » **The Son, Our Beliefs, no. 4:** “God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. . . . Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 46, 47.

IT CAN ONLY GET BETTER

Jim is a kind person. In fact, everyone thinks that Jim has it all figured out. He leads out in singing at church, he gets good grades, and everyone seems to really like him. You can often see Jim running errands for teachers or making sure that no one is left out of a game on the playing field. Jim is one of those people that seem to know the secret to happiness. He is never down or depressed. He always has a smile on his face for anyone who needs it. He continually tries to be better and better. In fact, some are strongly motivated to follow Jim’s positive example and make a difference

for others. He is not even late to class unless he is helping out someone else.

The path of following Jesus’ example of holiness and obedience is what God desires for each of us. We are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ alone, and all those good things we do are a response to His love for us—a manifestation of His transforming grace working in us. We cannot earn salvation by our good works. However, if we accept Jesus’ sacrifice, good works will follow naturally. As James has written: “He who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25).

When we experience God’s saving grace, we will want to obey His commandments. Jesus says: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). As we live to honor God, He extends to us salvation freely. What a marvelous gift!

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Philippians 4:8.
- » Johnny has a bad habit. It seems as if no matter what he does, he keeps falling into the same thing again and again. He has asked God for victory, but he can’t stop wasting his time with useless entertainment.
 1. What do you think Johnny should do?
 2. What is the difference between asking for God’s help and becoming obedient to His will?

3. How can Johnny use his community to help him with such a problem?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE SON

- » Read Isaiah 45:22; Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Titus 3:3-7.
- » Becoming more like Christ is dependent on how we occupy our minds—what we focus on, look at, read, and think about. How do the above texts help us live a life free of fear so we have confidence in our eternal future?
- » “The cross of Calvary is to be lifted high above the people, absorbing their minds and concentrating their thoughts. . . . Then there will be a concentration of the energies in genuine work for the Master. The workers will send forth to the world beams of light, as living agencies to enlighten the earth” (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 44).
- » Can you find the Bible reference that goes with this verse? Use the references listed below to find the correct one.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (_____, NKJV).

Mark 9:23	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Romans 3:21-26
John 3:3-8	Isaiah 53	Galatians 1:4
1 Peter 1:23	Romans 12:2	John 3:16

Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Hebrews 12:14.
- » Why is holiness important? It is a mandate from God. However, don't be confused. We still have sinful natures. We know that total

perfection is received only through the grace of God and at the second coming of Jesus. But we have been called to be obedient to Christ and His will for us in every way that He reveals. This obedience always includes a desire not to sin and hurt our Best Friend, and to overcome temptation through the power of His grace.

- » As we seek what the Lord wants for us, we continue to grow in His grace. This becomes a more powerful desire in us the more we seek the heart of God. While we leave the work of perfecting to God, we concentrate on an ever closer walk with Him, and a better understanding of His grace.
- » As well, God has said He wants to give us life more abundantly. That is a life without the regrets that come from living our own way instead of His way. We want to be Christians who are walking in the light of God and looking at our past with happiness, not with regret. Obedience to God helps us with that.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Find the missing letters in order to complete this verse, quoted from the New King James Version. A few letters have been given to you.



See activity at the end of this lesson.

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read 2 Peter 1:3, 4.
- » Review the memory verse.
- » You are the one who makes the choices in your life. “The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The

yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness" (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 43). God is waiting for you to ask for His help, and He will bless you abundantly.

- » So the question becomes: What are you going to do with this knowledge? Continue on in making good decisions, and be encouraged in your pursuit of holiness.

Friday **APPLYING**

- » Read Philippians 4:13.
- » "God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 61).

» The 21-Day Challenge

1. I would like to be obedient to God's will in my life when it comes to:

2. A family member, Christian mentor, or trusted Christian friend would be interested in being accountability partners with me.

Yes _____ No _____

3. By God's grace, I will commit the next three weeks (21 days) to overcoming

one bad habit I have.

Signed _____

Date _____

- » Here are some words of encouragement that God has already spoken to help you through the next 21 days:

Proverbs 3:5, 6—"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

1 Timothy 4:12—"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Colossians 4:2—"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."

Colossians 3:23, 24—"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."

Wednesday activity

BIBLE INSIGHTS

Find the missing letters in order to complete this verse, quoted from the New King James Version. A few letters have been given to you.

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