

## Holiness Precedes Supernatural Power

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).* Many of us are looking for a shortcut to the supernatural life - to see the power of God. However, this exercise can become frustrating and fruitless. The truth is, God’s mighty power is available to us, but not without holiness. Holiness precedes power! God empowers that which He has first made holy (set apart for His own use). Do you want your Christian walk to be really effective? Then seek Jesus Christ as your source and standard of holiness. Do you want to see the power of God operating in your life? Then seek Christ’s purity of heart. A mature believer will be both holy and powerful, but holiness will precede power.

Holiness is the virtue of being “holy” (sanctified). The Greek verb *“to consecrate”* means *‘to be set apart for God’* or *‘to be made holy’*. The root idea of holiness is that of separation. In the NT we are identified as “especially belonging to God,” so we must show ourselves worthy in lifestyle and character for such a privileged position. The Lord is not expecting us to be good people, but holy people. Our problem is that we want to be holy under our own power, and it won’t work. For us to be more like Jesus, we must take upon us His very nature. That means as He increases we decrease. The more we deny ourselves, the more Jesus is exalted. That’s simple enough! However, holiness that exhibits revival power is very elusive.

There is a definite connection between holiness and spiritual power. The 19th century Holiness Movement, which started just after the Civil War, was a powerful revival movement with astounding results. True holiness is a system of *self-governing behaviour*, and it’s always accompanied by power from heaven. Whom God calls, He anoints!

True holiness is very powerful. It was Christ’s holiness that gave Him authority over the enemy! If the devil could find fault or sin in the Lord Jesus, he would have destroyed Him. But Jesus Christ was the spotless Lamb of God, so He defeated satan – making a spectacle of him in the process.

Our position in Christ Jesus is one of holiness! Nevertheless, we must constantly be doing something in order for it to become visible in our lives. This is our positional holiness. Paul goes on to say to the **Ephesians 4:21-24**: *“If it so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”* Putting on the new man requires a concerted effort on your part. Paul says, *“It’s now your responsibility to put away your lusts and put on the new man.”* Having your mind renewed is a direct result of this act.

The most important function of holiness is for it to be used to the glory of God - in power. Holiness is a key to the power we’ve been waiting to see poured out without measure. The great awakening! Note holiness is not a completed work because we are still being transformed into His likeness (day by day). However, with the Holy Spirit’s help and guidance (and our total reliance upon Him), we can continue in our position of holiness, being assured that God’s mighty power will accompany us. Yes, we have that “positional power” in Christ already but power must be active for it to be powerful. Passive faith is just that, passive and conservative,

producing a lukewarm attitude that denies the power of God.

As Christians, we have all the necessary spiritual resources at our disposal; to heal the sick and raise the dead. So why aren't we doing the first works? The things that Jesus said we would do - and even more! I believe God is waiting for us to finally get a revelation of true holiness. He wants to pour out His spirit upon all flesh. However, Jesus does not yet have a "holy church" that represents His divine nature. Propagation of the gospel is not enough, their needs to be evidence of holiness and resurrection power.

The priestly garments that God had the Israelites make were holy garments. And once the construction of the Ark of the Covenant was finished, they were to make a golden plate and have "Holiness Unto the Lord" engraved upon it, and then place it in position. Holiness is also our finished work! Jesus Christ is our High Priest and we're now dedicated to Him. Cornerstone is the candlestick, we are the vessels, the Holy Spirit is the oil, our worship is the altar and our prayers are the incense. Our Lord Jesus is coming back for a "holy church", one that worships Him in the beauty of holiness.

*"Give to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (1 Chronicles 16:29). "Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2).*

Back to our opening scripture... *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).* Without holiness, no man can see God. Think about that. Imagine not being able to see proof of God in anything. No signs, no wonders, no majesty! Yes, no man shall see the power and majesty of God without holiness! God desires that we be transformed by the Holy Spirit to become lovers of His holiness.

It's the work of the Holy Spirit to set us apart to God. He works in us to 'separate' us to all that pleases God and conforms to the character of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's work in us makes God's holiness real. This acts is both practical and spiritual. The Spirit of God is pre-eminently *"the Holy Spirit."* Jesus was *"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).* God is holy; His Son is holy; the Holy Spirit is holy. God's holiness stands alone - unapproachable, incomprehensible, totally unique and unobtainable to His creation. Holiness is God's standard, because *"in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).*

A. W. Tozer chose his words carefully when he wrote: *"God is holy with an absolute holiness that knows no degrees, and this He cannot impart to His creatures. But there is a contingent holiness, which He shares with angels in heaven, and with redeemed men on earth as their preparation for heaven. This holiness God does impart to His children. He shares it with them by imputation and by impartation, and because He has made it available to them through the blood of the Lamb, He requires it of them... 'Be holy, for I am holy'. He did not say, 'Be as holy as I am holy,' for that would be to demand of us absolute holiness, something that belongs to God alone."*

The work of making us holy is the work of the Spirit of holiness. God's goal is that we should become more like Christ every day. He puts in our heart a hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God. God the Holy Spirit dwells within the temple of the believer's body (**1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16**). Since He dwells within us we can be clothed with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This indwelling presence of God 'empowers' us! That being the case, we should be both holy and powerful, but remember, holiness will always precede power.