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# What's A Saint To Do?

By

Mark McGee

Paul makes no bones about it. He is a saint. A holy man. And why not? That's what God called him to be.

“... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love ...” Ephesians 1:4

Start talking about holiness at the office, school or around the neighborhood and see what happens. It's like the plague made you its permanent home! People don't want to hear about holiness: God's or yours. They especially don't want to hear about their lack of it.

The Apostle Paul pulls no punches about holiness. Before he writes one word about our adoption as sons through Christ, redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sin, Paul says, “He chose us...to be holy and without blame.” Paul goes so far to call Christians saints (*hagiois*, in the Greek). The word comes from the same root noun used for “holy” and “sanctification.” The idea is of someone or something set apart for sacred service.

God's life is an eternal history of Holiness. It occupies the foremost rank among the moral attributes of God. He is absolutely **separate from and exalted above** all His creatures, and He's equally separate from all evil and sin.

Moses introduces us to God's holiness in Exodus 3:1-6. It's the story of the burning bush.

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, ‘I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.’ So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.’ Moreover He said, ‘I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.”

From that point, the Bible speaks of holiness more than 600 times.

God created Adam and Eve in perfection. God looked at them and said what He had done was “very good.” The first human beings were holy from creation. God gave them His law (“you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”) and set them on their way. After the human race fell into a sinful state (through Adam), holiness became something God had to teach the human race about over and over again. It was to little avail, until Christ died to make us holy and blameless. In Christ we **are holy**. We have the holiness of God living in our souls. We are saints: God’s holy ones!

W.E. Vine wrote: "This sainthood is not an attainment, it is a state into which God in grace calls men." (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, McDonald Publishing, 1940, p. 566) Paul wasn't holy because of something he did. Neither are we. Paul wrote that all Christians "were by nature children of wrath." He called himself "chief of sinners." Paul understood that his holiness came as a direct result of God's Grace.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) ..." Ephesians 2:4-5

Paul makes it clear that personal holiness is more than an option or choice for Christians. We **are** holy and blameless in God's sight! That's what the Greek makes clear in Ephesians 1:4. God's penetrating gaze sees down into the deepest part of our spiritual lives. He sees the life and presence of His Holy Son and Holy Spirit. We are holy because the One living in us is holy and without blame. We are holy! We are set apart for sacred service. Holiness is not an option. It's an opportunity. No one else can be holy. Christians are the only flesh-and-blood holiness this world sees or knows. God lives out His holiness through us! Paul exhorts us to "...be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:24) That comes right after Paul writes:

“... that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24

“Therefore.” That’s the first word of Ephesians 4:25. Underline it in your Bible. Whenever you see the word “therefore,” ask what the “therefore” is “there for”. Because we are to be “renewed in the spirit” of our minds and are to “put on the new man, which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness,” we should behave like the saints we are! Here’s what Paul means for us in relationship with others.

“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘*Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,*’ for we are members of one another. ‘Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ

also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ” Ephesians 4:25 – 5:4

This is extremely important that we understand what Paul is saying here! We **are** holy because of our position in Christ. That means we should **act** in ways that are representative of our position. We are holy and blameless in God’s sight. We should live our lives in ways that are holy and blameless in the sight of the world. Here’s Paul’s list. In the quiet of your home, ask yourself if there’s anything you need to do to change your behavior. If there is, talk it over with God. He’ll show you the way.

1. Put off falsehood. Speak truthfully to other believers. We are members of the same body.
2. Don’t sin when you’re angry. Don’t stay angry day after day. Don’t give Satan a foothold in your life and the lives of others because of your anger.
3. Thieves should work hard by making things that can be useful to people, then sharing what they make with others. Thieves used to live off the work of others. Now they should work hard and give back to people in need. They should change from living a life of “taking” to a life of “giving.”
4. Don’t say things that will hurt others and tear them down. Say things that will encourage others and build them up.

5. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Don't bring Him pain by the way you behave.
6. Get rid of bitterness in your life.
7. Get rid of rage and anger in your life.
8. Get rid of brawling and slander in your life.
9. Get rid of every form of malice in your life.
10. Be kind and compassionate to others.
11. Forgive others just as God forgave you.
12. Imitate God. Be like Him.
13. Live a life of love in the same way Christ love you and sacrificed Himself for you.
14. Don't allow even the slightest hint of sexual immorality in your life.
15. Don't allow any kind of impurity in your life.
16. Don't be greedy either. That's an improper way for God's people to live.
17. Don't speak in an obscene way. Don't speak foolishly. Don't use your wit to scoff or sneer at others (the meaning of the Greek word *eutrapelia* ).
18. Give thanks to God.

Holy living is not a mystery that only a few can ever know. God has directed **every** member of the Body of Christ to live a holy life. Holiness is "The readiness to respond to life from God's point of view."

Remember that God lives out His holiness through us. We are His “saints:” ordinary people saved by grace and indwelt by the Supernatural God “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:7)

Our lives are the theater of God’s Holiness. Use the stage well!

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