

A person wearing a red hat and a large backpack is seen from behind, trekking across a vast, white, snowy landscape. The person is holding a long pole or stick. In the background, a large, translucent blue figure, resembling a person, is superimposed on the sky and snow, appearing to be part of the environment. The sky is a deep blue with some clouds. The overall scene is surreal and evocative.

Trekking Deeper

LIVING HOLINESS



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WEC TREK

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INTRODUCTION

We live at a time when humanity needs to hear and respond to God's call for holiness, arguably more than it has ever done before. We live in a shameless world and even as Christians when we reflect on our own lives it is difficult to consider ourselves as holy people. The word holy, however, is usually misconstrued and so carries with it many misconceptions.

Holiness is a huge topic and this booklet is in no way definitive. As we examine both the theory and practice of holiness, please make these studies your own and reflect carefully on your life of holiness.

There are twenty studies in this booklet. The course is designed to take one month, but you can do it at whatever speed you choose. There are two free days each week, but I would encourage you to use these extra days to pray and to look more deeply at any particular topic the Lord has been speaking to you about. Alternatively, you may like to read and reflect on the Bible passages connected with holiness that are listed at the end of this booklet.

Most days I have given a relatively long Bible reading. There are two reasons for this. First, every verse must be seen and read in its context. Secondly, the Bible is the only perfect and pure word of God. Therefore, the Scriptures are far better for teaching about holiness than these or any other notes could ever be! It is better to take far more time over the Bible readings than my imperfect notes. Don't rush the Bible readings but allow the Lord to speak to you through them. Please note all Scripture references are from the New International Version.

My prayer for you is that through your Trek experience you will grow in your relationship with God, drawing closer to Him, and learning more of Him and from Him.

Phil Grasham

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DAY ONE: **FIRST THOUGHTS**

READING – PSALM 111

Verse 9 “He provided redemption for his people ... holy and awesome is his name.”

Before we begin to consider “holiness”, let’s focus our attention on God. How about using this Psalm as a springboard to praise the Lord? Marvel at how glorious and gracious our God is. He is majestic, He is merciful. Worship Him for He is worthy.

Well, why did you choose this module? How would you characterise holiness? What are your expectations as you begin this series of studies? Take time now to pray that the Lord will use the Bible readings and the contents of this booklet to inform you and transform you in the way He desires.

In this module, we will first examine God’s holiness and then consider our own position of holiness. Secondly, we will look at being holy. Are we already in some sense holy? Do we become holy all at once, or is it gradual? Is human holiness inevitable? Necessary? Reversible? Finally, we will talk about some every day practical aspects so that we do not simply tie ourselves up in theories, but are released to live pure and blameless lives.

Holiness is vital in the life of every believer but not many believers really know what holiness is all about. We need to understand that it is not for a favoured few who have more time or inclination to be holy. God’s command rumbles out from the Scriptures: “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

As we investigate holiness, our focus must be on Jesus Christ. We are in Him and He is the source of our holiness. Because He is holy, we are holy and we are to be holy. It is crucial to realise that holiness comes through faith and experience. It is neither forced on us from above nor achieved by the idea that practice makes perfect. In addition, holiness is not about outward piety, but understanding that we have been set apart for a divine purpose.

**DAY TWO: GOD IS HOLY**

READING – PSALM 99

Verse 3 “Let them praise your great and awesome name – he is holy.”

God is holy. But what does that mean? Different Christian thinkers have tried to explain holiness. A lot of what they have written is helpful. Nonetheless, no one definition captures the full truth, and even several definitions together still fall short of unveiling the holiness of God. In *The Glory of Christ* (p.260) Peter Lewis writes: “It is difficult to give the term ‘holy’ any one meaning, as it is a description of what God is in his infinite perfection. It is not one thing about God, but everything about God.” So, we can say that holiness is the attribute of God that encapsulates everything that is different about Him.

God is unique. Before God spoke the universe into existence, He already was perfect and self-sufficient. In God’s incomparable character, He is dissimilar from everything He has made. Our God is apart from and not a part of His creation. However, while God is distinct, He is not distant. 1 Kings 8:23 says, “O LORD ... there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below – you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way.”

God is also righteous. He is completely pure, entirely just and totally good. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.” He is wholly opposed to sin but in His absolute faultlessness He is not tainted or influenced by this world’s wickedness. There will never come a point where the world’s sin finally gets too much for God and He gives up. James 1:13 says, “God cannot be tempted by evil ...”

Spend time reflecting on God’s holiness. Our God, who exists outside of time and space, is constant and unchanging. This means He was, is and always will be unique, perfect and righteous.



DAY THREE: HOLY, HOLY AND HOLY

READING – ISAIAH 6

Verse 1 “... I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.”

This is a truly awe-full encounter! Isaiah went to the Temple and saw the King of heaven; the One who lives forever. It's hard for us to appreciate this vision of infinite majesty and holiness. Imagine being in church and the doors are banging, the floor is shaking, and the whole building is filling with smoke. The creatures flying above Isaiah had called out in worship to the Eternal Lord and the Temple was rocking and rolling.

These angels covered their faces and their feet, not because they were sinful but because they were creatures in the presence of their Almighty Creator. As they flew, they called to each other “Holy, holy, holy.” We should note that repetition in Hebrew is a form of emphasis. We might say that God is exceedingly, exceptionally, extremely holy! In Jewish thinking, to state something twice is to show that it's *really* important. To declare something three times in succession is to assert that this is of massive magnitude. In the Bible, God's holiness is the only divine attribute that is elevated to such prominence.

It's incredible that our holy God can tolerate the existence of evil without annihilating it immediately. Although evil represents everything God is not, our Lord is constantly dealing with it, in our lives and in this rebellious world. It's interesting to note a shift in Isaiah's focus. In Isaiah 5 we read, “Woe is you!” In Isaiah 6, Isaiah cries out “Woe is me!” God could have obliterated Isaiah; instead, He cleaned and commissioned him. Notice, though, that Isaiah still had a choice. God did not insist: “Okay, Isaiah, go!” God asked: “Whom shall I send?” And Isaiah eagerly responded: “Here am I. Send me.” The King of Glory who appeared to Isaiah is asking us the same question. What is our reply?

Is this our picture of God – awesome and magnificent? Pray to understand more about God's glory and power.



DAY FOUR: COVENANT AND KINGDOM

READING – DEUTERONOMY 7

Verse 6 “The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people ...”

We have seen that to be holy means to be set apart. If we look in the Old Testament, we can see some tremendous examples of this. Let’s just consider one obvious separation. During the plagues of Exodus 7-11, there is a clear division between the Israelites and the Egyptians. In the plagues, the Egyptians have to face the atrocious climatic changes, the insect infestations and the death of livestock and ultimately their first-born sons, whereas the Israelites do not. Exodus 8:22-23 says “I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live ... so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. I will make a distinction between my people and your people ...” Why? Because of the indestructible covenant God had made with Israel’s fathers – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It has been said that there are two main strands of teaching through the Scriptures – covenant and kingdom.

God held and still holds to His covenant promises. The Israelites were not more deserving as God’s people, but they were released from the Egyptians to become a consecrated people with a mission to implement God’s purposes in this world.

All through the Scriptures we see God separating His people so that they would be His holy ones, ready and willing for Him to use. What was in embryo form in Israel in the Old Testament is now fully developed with the whole Church in the New. God is calling His people to be different, and to do the work He is calling them to do: to bring glory to God and fulfil His commands.

Are you living in the truth of God’s covenants and kingdom? Do you consider yourself set apart for God’s purposes? If someone examined your life, would they find that you are radically different from the world or pretty much the same?



DAY FIVE: COMPARATIVE HOLINESS

READING – COLOSSIANS 1:15-23

Verse 22 “... he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight ...”

Wow! What a passage! Go on read it again; it’s fantastic!

We were separated from God because of our wicked behaviour, but now we are reunited to God by Christ’s death and resurrection. We are blemish free and without any accusation! Romans 8:1 says, “... there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

It all happened at the cross. Someone has written: “The cross ... represents the intersecting of two attributes of God’s nature. Here it is that the love of God meets the holiness of God. The holiness requires payment of the penalty and the love provides the payment.” Jesus’ death and resurrection hold the same power to save and the same ability to transform as they did in the past and will do in every age to come.

One problem is that we often compare our holiness with the people around us. Why? Even if, in humility, we decide we are more spiritual than others, it is like contrasting one aircraft with no wings with another with one wing and assuming that the latter is okay. But neither will lift off the ground! Would we really prepare for take-off on a one-winged aeroplane? We need to measure our holiness against God’s. This will show us that there is need for a complete change of our moral and spiritual condition. As someone has written, “We are too Christian to enjoy sinning, and too fond of sinning to enjoy Christianity. Most of us know perfectly well what we ought to do; our trouble is that we do not want to do it.” We fall far short of who we should be, but in God’s grace, He will help us change ... and fly!

Do you believe that all that needs to be done for your salvation has been done at the cross? Do you compare your spirituality with others? Do you believe that you are more holy or less holy than others?



DAYS SIX AND SEVEN: **SEEING AND FEELING**

On Day Three, we read from Isaiah 6. Try to imagine this remarkable scene. For further insight, look at Revelation 4.

In the space below, write a psalm or a poem based on both what you “see” and how you “feel”.



DAY EIGHT: SLAVES TO WHICH MASTER?

READING – ROMANS 6:15-23

Verse 19 “... now offer them [the parts of your body] in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness ...”

We must face the issue that if salvation is by faith alone (and not by conduct and customs) then a person’s morals are immaterial. We are saved by grace, not by our actions. So, how we live before and after accepting Jesus is irrelevant, right? “You’re having me on!” says Paul (or words to that effect).

Paul explains that we begin as slaves to one master (sin) but when we believe and trust in Jesus, we become slaves to another master (righteousness). We swap owners. This, says Paul, is what leads to holiness. In 2 Peter 2:19, Peter writes: “... a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.” The idea of slavery is unfamiliar to us. We enjoy such independence that we cannot begin to imagine a life of being dominated by anyone or anything. But our spiritual slavery has radically changed from being manipulated by a tyrannical tormenter to being lead by a selfless Saviour.

Slavery to God results in holiness which results in eternal life. Our responsibility is to do what pleases God, not what sustains sin. It has been said that freedom is not the right to do what we want but the power to do what we ought.

We cannot serve two masters. When we believed in Christ, we gave our allegiance to our holy King, but sin and death do not give up easily and constantly look to overpower us. Paul wonders how, after we have believed in Jesus, we can possibly run back to our old master and want to come under his slavery again. And yet this is often what we do – none of us have to think too hard for personal examples! We know the best and yearn for the worst. What a ridiculous situation to be in! This is why we need God’s grace and the Spirit’s strength.

Are you a slave to righteousness? Have you tasted that the Lord is good and yet crave sin from your old appetite?



DAY NINE: TAKE NO PRISONERS

READING – COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

Verse 12 “... as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility ...”

God chose us, but that does not remove our personal responsibility to live holy lives. We are to clothe ourselves with godly qualities. We must work with the Holy Spirit, as our divine tailor, so that we are dressed in love, humility, peace, kindness, compassion and faithfulness.

Paul uses this analogy of taking off and putting on our “selves”. By God’s grace, our shredded, filthy pyjamas have changed to immaculate, pure white wedding outfits. The problem is our new clothes get mucky when we let ourselves be marked by our old ways of living. In the same way as we would be soiled if we jumped into a mud mound, so we are stained when we socialise with sin. Even if everyone around us stumbles, we must stand for what is true. William Penn wrote, “Right is right even if everyone is against it and wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it.”

Paul demands that we examine ourselves and deal ruthlessly with whatever is anti-God. We are to put to death everything in ourselves which is corrupt and keeps us from fulfilling His will. God will help us but we cannot expect to sit back and wait for the Lord to remove from us whatever He doesn’t like. We must take action. We must be vicious! We do not simply lock up the things that are unholy and hope they don’t break out. We are to seize those things that are ungodly, imprison them and destroy them. We are to round up everything that opposes purity and massacre all that is evil. This sounds rather drastic, but when we are dealing with greed, rage, lust, and dishonesty, we must be brutal.

Are you benevolently dealing with your sin or are you mercilessly hunting it down? Are your “clothes” whiter than white or are they grimy and grubby? Take time to talk with God.



DAY TEN: HOLINESS AND SUFFERING

READING – HEBREWS 12:7-29

Verse 14 “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no-one will see the Lord.”

We must let nothing stop us from living in peace with God and with everyone we know and meet. Ultimately, as our key verse says, without holiness no-one will see God.

This passage shows that there is a connection between holiness and suffering. It's hard to accept, but our characters are shaped most profoundly through suffering. No pain is pleasant, but when we realise the sacred purpose behind it we are better able to cope with it. Suffering can even be seen as a privilege because we are more likely to run to God, and so our faith grows during times of trouble. Romans 5:3 says, “... we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

In addition, when life is easy, we do not have the chance to prove how trustworthy God is. Some people assume that faith in God makes for an easier life, but nowhere in the Bible do we find this to be true. In fact, we are more likely to find the opposite.

God disciplines us throughout our lives with all sorts of events and experiences. He is not a sugar daddy, He is our heavenly Father, and responsible fathers teach and train their children. Are you going through hassles? Rejoice! The Lord knows what is best for you. Since His desire is that you become like His Son, He is far more concerned with your motives and attitudes than with your labours for Him. God would rather you were holy than hard-working. This is not because working for God is not important, but because He wants you to be pure and blameless.

Do you run from every problem and trouble? Do you realise that suffering has a very special purpose in the life of the Christian? Can you think back and appreciate that it was during times of real struggle that you grew the most in your faith?

**DAY ELEVEN: COMPLETED SANCTIFICATION**

READING – HEBREWS 10:1-18

Verse 12 “... when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”

This passage is key in portraying the complexities of our sanctification – “making holy”. Our reading makes it clear that sanctification is paradoxically a completed, perfectly accomplished state and a continuing, yet to be finished, process. In verse 10, it says that we have been made holy: it’s a done deal. In verse 14 it talks about those who are being made holy: it’s as yet incomplete.

Let’s consider the two positions. Today, complete sanctification. In *Hebrews* (p.122) GB Wilson writes: “... once for all ... [it] has been completed for the believer ... this ‘sanctification’ is the objective achievement of Christ which has secured the purification of His people and forever set them apart for the service of God.”

If holiness refers to being detached from what is normal for the purpose of God then sanctification happens at conversion along with justification and glorification (Romans 8:30). In the same way that, positionally, you are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6), so you are, positionally, completely holy. God declares us holy because we are in Christ and we are wholly in Christ. We are not a little bit in Christ and then a bit more after that. We are holy because Christ is holy and we have died in Him and been raised in Him. We are holy, full stop, because Christ lives in us through the *Holy Spirit*. Ultimately, we are holy because God says we are. This has nothing to do with our day-to-day battles with temptation. We are positionally in the Lord Jesus who has accomplished everything on our behalf.

Do you understand that you are holy? The Holy Spirit does not tolerate ungodliness and so is grieved when you turn from what is good. Do you need to ask for forgiveness?



DAY TWELVE: PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

READING – 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14 - 7:16

Verse 1 “...let us purify ourselves ... perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

Yesterday we looked at sanctification – “making holy” – as a once for all definitive act. Today, we focus on the equally important truth that it is a process. The word sanctification in Greek is *hagiasmos*. All Greek nouns which end in *-asmos* convey a process rather than a completed state.

We do not suddenly become perfect at the moment of our conversion. I don't think any of us would argue with that! In fact, as we grow in holiness, we realise how unholy we are.

As we mature in our spiritual life, we are more and more enabled by the Holy Spirit to defeat sin and temptation, but the inclination to sin remains with us until we die. The desire for sin decreases as we learn to live in the Spirit, but the ability to sin is never totally done away with.

If we tie the complete/incomplete truths together, we can see that our position before God as holy people is completed at our conversion. There are no upgrades! Still, the practical outworking of our holiness develops progressively as time passes (Philippians 3:12).

You are holy, but Paul tells us that as we have these incredible promises, we should purify ourselves. Note that Paul included himself as one who also needed to aim for purity and holiness.

The impetus for actively striving for holiness is out of reverence for God. Remember that this straining after holiness is not about earning salvation but wanting to become more like Jesus Christ.

Are you striving for holiness? Do you see the importance of growing in holiness under the supervision of the Holy Spirit? Ask Him now to fulfil John 16:8 and convict you of guilt “in regard to sin, and righteousness and judgment.”



DAYS THIRTEEN AND FOURTEEN: PRAY FOR THE WORLD

It is crucial we pray for world evangelisation. Wherever you are, how about praying for the Japanese?

- ◆ Japan is a mixture: materialism and secularism jostle with Buddhism and Shintoism. More than three-quarters of the Japanese population claim no personal faith, but most participate in the main Buddhist and Shinto festivals. Many Japanese have shrines both at home and at work.
 - Pray that many Japanese will be convicted of their sins and look to Almighty God.
 - ◆ Religion tends to be seen as a means of obtaining what one wants from the appropriate god.
 - Pray that many Japanese will truly understand the glory and holiness of God, their Creator and Saviour.
 - ◆ Shintoism is concerned with national identity. By participating in the customs of the local shrine a person shows solidarity with the local community. Tradition requires allegiance to the ancestors and to the nation as the highest ideal.
 - Pray that many people will find their identity in Christ and give allegiance to the Lord Jesus.
 - ◆ Two-thirds of all Japan's villages and towns have no Christian witness and Christians make up a tiny minority of the population. However, there is freedom of religion and many opportunities for evangelism, particularly among students.
 - Pray for more people to go to Japan and more people to pray for this nation.
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DAY FIFTEEN: YOU'RE A SAINT!

READING – PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

Verse 1 “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi ...”

Are you a saint? Don't laugh! Biblically speaking that is exactly what you are! Our modern usage conveys the idea of angelic-like individuals with halos who seem to float several inches off the ground. We have it in our heads that saints are perfect. But, although it seems to be a contradiction in terms, it is possible to have sinning saints. The Bible calls us saints even though we are not faultless and continue to sin against the Lord. Paul called the Corinthians saints and then rebuked them for divisions between believers and for sexual immorality. These were immature and unspiritual saints, but saints nonetheless.

In the NIV New Testament the word saint occurs forty-five times and is the regular word for believers, whereas the words “Christian” or “Christians” occurs only three times. The Bible declares that believers are different from other people. The main difference is that Christians have a relationship with Jesus Christ. They are therefore in Christ and are set apart for Christ. The word “saint” also has the idea of someone who is dedicated to God.

In *God's Words* (p.178) J. I. Packer writes: “The New Testament does not say that Christians must lead holy lives in order to become saints; instead it tells Christians that because they are saints they must henceforth lead holy lives.”

We live in a wicked world which means it can be hard to live as a saint. The ability to do so comes from grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 2).

Are you a saint? Do you understand that you are set apart in Christ to do what He wants you to do? What difficulties do you have in being a saint in this depraved world? Does it make any difference to you that other believers are also regarded as saints?

“With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18).



DAY SIXTEEN: HOLY INVOLVEMENT

READING – PROVERBS 8

Verse 13 “To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech.”

Holy living is not simply for personal indulgence. Far from leading to isolation, holiness should lead to participation. Any idea of holiness that does not include activities of love and concern is not biblical. We are set apart for God so that we might be salt and light in this tasteless and dark world.

Our Lord calls us to love our neighbours. We cannot claim to do this if we leave them in ignorance of Christ. We mustn't shy away from people, whoever they are and how different they are, but must proactively meet with people and show them who we are and ultimately who they are before God.

The Holy Spirit equips and empowers us to do this. It is by the Spirit that Christ lives in us and demonstrates His life through us (John 16:13-15).

Ephesians 5:18 says, “Do not get drunk on wine ... instead, be filled with the Spirit.” Paul's Greek might be better translated “be filled and keep on being filled.” We are to be filled and refilled repeatedly because our hearts can be like sieves! Regularly we should pray for the Spirit to fill us and influence everything we say and do. We walk around with the resources of God within us and so we should ask the Lord to direct us, help us, and use us.

Our growth in holiness is dependent on inward change and outward actions. We have this paradox: we are transformed by lives of personal purity and by activities with filthy humanity. We must allow the Holy Spirit to change us and work through us to change others.

Are you living by the Spirit? Do you love your neighbours as yourself? Is your whole self given over to God or are you holding something back? Has the Holy Spirit trickled out of your life? Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and help you to live in holiness.



DAY SEVENTEEN: SPIRIT'S SWORD SLICES SIN

READING – HEBREWS 4

Verse 12 “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword; it penetrates ...”

If we continue to consent to sin, it is as if we go back through the cross into ignorance and darkness. But the cross is not a revolving door. We cannot choose to be on different sides of it as the urge takes us. Once we have died with Christ, we have died to sin. Now we look ahead and live in the fullness of resurrection life.

Hebrews 12:1 talks about the sin that so easily entangles, as if we are trudging through a dense forest and are ambushed by the undergrowth. What we need to do is to take up the sword of the Spirit and to slash through the sin (Ephesians 6:17). Then we can “run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

The *Holy Bible* is crucial to growing in holiness. The more we know what God has said and the more we know what Jesus did – how He lived and what He taught – the better equipped we are to differentiate between righteousness and unrighteousness. As we study God's Word and reflect on the lives of God's people, we can see not just how holy men and women survived in this ruthless world, but how God was able to use them to revolutionise this world. It can also help us have an acute sin sensor that enables our consciences to let forth a screeching siren whenever we flirt with ungodliness.

God's Word teaches us all we need to know about God, who we are in Christ, and about His plan for this planet. The more we know His Word, the more questions will be answered and the more our lives will be affected. Let God's timeless truths influence your behaviour.

How much do you know the Bible? How much do you really let God's Word grip your mind and heart, and affect your decisions and choices? Let the Holy Spirit illuminate the Holy Bible as you read and reflect upon it.

**DAY EIGHTEEN: SACRED OR SECULAR**

READING – 1 PETER 1:13-23

Verse 15 “... just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do ...”

God is holy so we, too, must be holy, for we are His people. God is constantly holy, but in western societies we often divide our activities into what we regard as sacred and what we regard as secular. This usually means that we regard our leisure times and our holidays as “earthly” and consider them outside of God’s responsibility. On the other hand, we think that our prayer times and our short-term mission trip are holy and therefore within God’s remit.

Where do we get this idea? It’s not biblical! All of life is holy; all of life is God’s concern. God is involved in everything and His truth has something to say about every aspect of life and living: in our homes, workplaces, night clubs, sports clubs, mission location or wherever else. We are talking everywhere!

The Lord’s Prayer includes daily living, help with ordinary events, and forgiveness. It is all about day-to-day life. We shouldn’t compartmentalise the Lord, because God is the God of all life and Christ claims all our lives.

We need to become believers who know the truth and so can interpret and analyse the world around us. What does God think about genetically modified food, the Internet, pluralism, globalisation etc? What are the godly and ungodly morals and ethics in everything we do?

The Lord does not want us to be spiritual at certain times of the day or week. He wants us to give Him our hearts and minds, and to allow Him to change us, inspire us and help us in all that we do, so that His name is glorified.

Have you segregated certain areas of your life? Is God in control of everything? Do you realise that your holiness must extend to every thought, word and action ... does it? Is there anything you want to say to God?



DAY NINETEEN: VICES AND VIRTUES

READING – GALATIANS 5:16-26

Verse 29 “Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”

This is a very familiar passage, but try not to simply skim over the top, but plunge in and be drenched by it.

It is time to evaluate yourself! This is not an exam; there is no pass mark, but it is crucial to look deeply at your life and see what needs to be done. This is not navel gazing, but an opportunity to examine your holy lifestyle. Psalm 139:23-24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” So, commit this exercise to the Lord and pray that He would expose your spirituality to you.

There are two lists in our Galatians passage: one of vices and the other of virtues. Look slowly through verses 19-21. This may not be painless but it’s still worth doing. Does anything stand out? Have you been involved in any of these activities and not yet asked God to forgive you? Is there anyone you need to contact or any damages you need to sort out? Are you still caught up in any of these sins? What are you going to do about it? Take time now to work out a plan of action, but don’t forget to carry it out!

Okay, now look slowly through verses 22-23. How many of these attributes are a part of your life? Do you have some or all of them or is something missing? Is there one particular area where you realise that you are especially lacking? What are you going to do about it? Take time now to extend your plan of action. You will find that the more you concentrate on living out the positive qualities the more you will find the negative qualities will be dislodged.

You will neither drive out the vices nor develop the virtues without the help of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to work in you to produce His fruit and help you to remain in Christ, for apart from Him you can do nothing (John 15:5).



DAYS TWENTY AND TWENTY-ONE: **DESCRIBE THE TRINITY**

The Trinity is a fundamental belief of Christians everywhere. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are inseparable. How would you describe the Trinity to the people you are working with?

Can you think of new ideas, illustrations, or analogies to explain the Trinity in local cultural forms?

Don't forget the Further Reading at the end of this booklet.



DAY TWENTY-TWO: **PREPARING TO PRAY**

READING – 1 TIMOTHY 2

Verse 8 “I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.”

When we pray, who are we praying to? It’s really important we recognise that we pray to our Perfect Almighty Father. God is love (1 John 4:16), and we must never let go of that wonderful truth. At the same time, He is the sovereign Majestic Glory (2 Peter 1:17).

Let’s draw on this tension. Ephesians 3:12 tells us, “we may approach God with freedom and confidence.” But far too many people wander up to God without respect or the recognition that they are in the presence of absolute perfection. The Jews were aware of God’s magnificence so that when they constructed the Temple, they built the southern stairway with uneven steps. This meant that anyone climbing the steps had to think about where he put each foot. The Jews believed that a person should not just march into God’s presence without first considering who it was they were going to. We must appreciate that God is our loving Father and the Eternal Ruler of the Universe.

The custom of lifting up hands was a common one among both Jews and Christians when in an attitude of prayer. But God wants holy hands. The Lord wants clean motives and clean actions. Jesus said that it is the pure in heart who will see God (Matthew 5:8). No one is excluded from God, but the person with an unclean heart finds that there is no authenticity in his or her prayers. How can we pray to a holy God with sin in our lives or the intention to go and sully our souls with ungodly things? We cannot expect Him to hear and answer our prayers while we live opposite to the way He has said we should live.

Are you angry or in dispute with someone else? Are you in any way living contrary to God’s Word? Do you only regard God as a friendly companion or do you recognise that He is the Eternal Almighty who rules over everyone and everything?

**DAY TWENTY-THREE: MIND YOUR MIND**

READING – 1 THESSALONIANS 4

Verse 7 “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”

If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is “new” as in “fresh and clean”, rather than “new” as in “brand new”. We are the same people with the same thought patterns we had before. Our job now is to sort out our minds as we strive for new and improved ways of behaviour.

God insists on holiness in our minds as well as in our spirits. In Romans 12:2 Paul made it clear that we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Note it is not by the removal of our minds! Christians are not to be brainless automatons. It is good to question, reason, and deliberate, but our minds do need a thorough scrub. What we think affects how we behave – and we are to have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15-16), to behave like Christ.

What are you feeding into your mind and heart? What books are you reading? What music do you listen to? If you have access to a television set, what programmes are you watching? Are you caught up in fantasy novels, song lyrics of sex, drugs, and violence, or the TV culture that promotes ungodliness?

Did that last paragraph irritate you? We don't like it when people place restrictions on us. How dare they! But we must realise that certain forms of “entertainment” do contaminate our minds and hearts.

It has been said that the mind is the main combat zone against sin and temptation. It is here where battles are won and lost. Paul was very clear: we must take captive every thought ... (2 Corinthians 10:5) because what a person allows to penetrate their mind and heart influences their words and actions.

How is your thought life? What do you feed into your mind? How is your dream life? Are you increasingly dwelling on what is true, right, and pure?



DAY TWENTY-FOUR: **DON'T TALK RUBBISH!**

READING – EPHESIANS 4:17-32

Verse 29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up ...”

Living holiness involves a commitment to healthy speaking. Proverbs 15:1 says, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

To be holy in our speech means to guard against boasting, gossip, obscenities, insults, and criticism. Stop for a moment and think back over the last several conversations you’ve had. Were you positive and encouraging or negative and discouraging? Were you honest, reliable, and constructive? On reflection, were your words pleasing to God?

We need to be people who speak words of life, loyalty, and love. 2 Timothy 2:16 says, “Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.”

James is clear that while the tongue is just a tiny part of the body it has the power to praise and the capacity to condemn (James 3:5-6). It can offer such tender words of worship and the next moment scream harsh words of abuse.

Obviously, our mouths don’t work independently from the rest of our bodies. In Matthew 15:18 Jesus explains that what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart. In biblical belief the heart is the centre of human life. It does refer to our feelings and passions but also to our mind, will, conscience and understanding. The heart is a metaphor for all mental and emotional activity. So, it is only when our minds and hearts are pure that our speech will be pure as well. Psalm 19:14 says “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

So, how is your speech? Is this something you need to work on? Do you need to stop and take a deep breath when someone speaks to you? Does your uncontrolled mouth hamper your pursuit of holiness?

**DAY TWENTY-FIVE: LOVE ONE, LOVE ALL**

READING – 1 JOHN 4:7-21

Verse 11 “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

There is arguably no greater test of our holiness than our relationships. Are you growing in holiness? If you’ve answered yes, do the people around you agree?

The second greatest commandment is “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31). Take a moment to reflect on your relationships: how do you treat the members of your family and your friends? Okay, so far? How do you handle your mission colleagues or local believers? How about those people you don’t get on with? Maybe not such a good result. Finally, how do you deal with those people who have upset you, frustrated you, or wronged you? If you’re like me, there will be plenty of room for improvement!

If we use 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 as our definition of love, do you treat people with patience, kindness, respect, humility, trust, and forgiveness? This is what the Lord is calling us to do. Even those people who have offended and irritated us need to be treated with love.

God has lavished His great love on us (1 John 3:1) and we are made in His image. This means we must love: love God and love humanity. Jesus preached and demonstrated a gospel of divine holiness with divine love. He came healing, serving, explaining, giving, and ultimately dying. As His disciples, we are called to the same ministry of love.

1 Timothy 1:5 says, “The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” Let’s love properly and passionately.

How are your relationships? Do you accept some people and reject others? Do you include some people and ignore others? Do you love everyone unreservedly or conditionally? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you in all your relationships.



DAY TWENTY-SIX: JESUS CHRIST IS ON HIS WAY

READING – 2 PETER 3

Verses 11-12 “You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming ...”

Stop for a moment and think about the things that are happening in the world – terrible wars and famines, unspeakable depravity and corruption. We live in a chaotic world that is crying out in pain. Many live in ignorance of Jesus Christ while other faiths keep many people trapped by deception. How should we live as the planet hurtles towards God’s final judgement?

We can feel as though we are being pulled apart. We want to identify with people so that we ourselves are not a barrier to their salvation. Yet, at the same time, we hold radically different positions from the world around us. The world now believes so much that is diametrically opposed to the gospel, and we cannot surrender our morals and motives simply to tolerate this world’s delusions. The biblical absolutes of righteousness and truth have been replaced with ‘feel-good’ relativism. We must not go with the flow but take a stand for holiness.

The Lord is coming back! Our expectation of this truth should motivate us to holy living. As we fulfil God’s purposes, we can actually affect the return of our Lord. We can do this by proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:14), praying for God’s kingdom to come and living holy lives as testimony to our Lord and Saviour. Of course, we are going to frequently mess up but, as retired Archbishop Dom Helder Camera of Brazil said, “Holiness is not never falling down. It’s getting up again every time you fall, with humility and joy and saying to God, ‘Yes Lord, I have fallen a hundred times, but thanks to you I have got up a hundred and one times!’”

Do you fit in with the world or do you stand up for truth and righteousness? Are you living a holy life to speed the return of Jesus Christ? If you have fallen down, get up and keep going. Could you look God in the face with a clear conscience?



DAYS TWENTY-SEVEN AND TWENTY-EIGHT: **YOUR CREATOR**

Isn't the human body remarkable! God has designed us with incredible attention to detail.

Did you know that each human body consists of 206 bones, 5 litres of blood and 640 muscles?

It's well worth looking after such an amazing creation, especially on your Trek. So, what do you need to do? Go for a walk, take a nap, drink some water, take a shower, or have a bite to eat.

Praise God for your body, enjoy it and honour Him with it (1 Corinthians 6:20)!



FURTHER READING

We can learn a lot about holiness by reading and studying portions of the Scriptures. Below is a small selection, but do not be limited by the ones listed here. Read the passages slowly and discover what you can about God's holiness and your holiness. When you have finished, ask: What have I learnt? What do I need to do?

- ◆ **Exodus 19**
- ◆ **Leviticus 19**
- ◆ **Leviticus 20**
- ◆ **Numbers 8**
- ◆ **Psalm 24**
- ◆ **Psalm 51**
- ◆ **Ephesians 2**
- ◆ **Hebrews 9**
- ◆ **1 Peter 2**
- ◆ **Revelation 21**

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NOTES

Trekking Deeper is a devotional discipleship programme specifically written for short-term volunteers. The aim of the Course is to help “Trekking Deeper” keep their focus on Christ and to grow spiritually during their placements.



Trekking Deeper consists of a series of nine booklets:

The ABC of Preparation *	Practical Faith
Costly Discipleship	Living Holiness
Dynamic Prayer	United in Discipleship
Exploring God's Word	Returning & Advancing *
God's Guidance	(* new titles)

“Refreshing, stretching, packed with helpful insights, I found the Trekking Deeper booklets an excellent tool for personal discipleship.”
Glenn Myers (author of the Briefings series)

“I learnt a lot about prayer and it was good to have notes with short-termers in mind.” **Gillian Thom (Mexico)**

“I learnt stuff I didn't know before.” **Jeremy Estabrook (Senegal)**

“The questions made you analyse and pray about your feelings rather than just pottering on.” **Lindsey Hale (Mexico)**

“I learnt things that I could apply and think about and they weren't boring!” **Alison Davey (Sierra Leone)**