

# BACK TO SCHOOL

## THE CHALLENGE OF YOUTH IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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Objective: To show the importance of holiness in the Christian's walk with God  
 Thesis: God calls upon all who believe in him to imitate his holiness.  
 Subject: Holiness  
 Text: 1 Peter 1:31-16

## ATTENTION

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There is an adage that says, “**A man is** known by the company he keeps”

There is an English idiom that is synonymous “**Birds of a feature flock together**”

The interpretation is simple: similar people go to the same places and do the same things together.

When a person becomes a Christian, God requires from that individual what He God is.

The Bible says:

**1 Peter 1:15** But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;  
**1 Peter 1:16** Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

As far as the Bible is concerned, Holiness is not an option.

If you are a Christian – there is no exception to this call.

This call is not just to pastors, elders, deacons or board members.

This call is to every Christian no matter what your age.

No matter what your gender! No matter what your educational or economic level is.  
 Every Christian is called to be holy.

1. Holiness is freedom from all SIN.
2. Holiness is complete PURITY.
3. Holiness is important for FELLOWSHIP with God
4. Holiness is important for EFFECTIVE SERVICE to God.
5. Holiness is important for our ASSURANCE of salvation

## NEED

George Knight, a professor of church history in the SDA Theological Seminary of Andrews University in his book, “I Used to be Perfect” seeks to clarify Justification and sanctification.

In taking us back to school, he says, contrary to what was previously taught, that” both justification and sanctification are a work of a moment and the work of a life time.”

Like horse and carriage justification and sanctification go hand in hand.

Both come by the grace of God.

The Bible in comparing justification and sanctification submits:

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive [**justification**] *us our sins*, and to cleanse [**sanctification**] us from all unrighteousness.

Christ does not justify unless He sanctifies.

And this is basic and essential teaching of the Bible.

In addition holiness unto God is the supreme challenge that faces the one who believes and accepts the salvation that God offers.

- Holiness demands faithfulness to one’s spouse because marriage is holy.
- Holiness demands faithfulness to one’s returning of tithe and offerings because the tithe is holy
- Holiness demands obedience to God’s 10 commandments because the Law is holy
- Holiness demands acceptance of the 7th day Sabbath because the Sabbath day is a holy day

1. And today the church needs youth who are Christians
2. Youth who attend church because they want to and they love to
3. Youth who have a relationship with Christ

And even though the Bible purports holiness as consecration, holiness is a choice!

To this the Apostle Peter asserts:

**1 Peter 1:13** Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind...

You have a journey to go, a race to run, a warfare to accomplish, and a great work to do.

As the traveler and the laborer gird up their long and loose garments, that they may be more ready and expeditious in their business so do you by your minds, and your affections:

- *gird them*
- gather them in
- let them not hang loose
- disengage yourselves from all that would hinder you

**PUNCH:** Our youth today are too distracted.

Extrinsic values tend to predominate. GO ON!!!

Our young people have a narrowed focus not a broadened perspective.

1. Prayer is not essential
2. Bible study is boring
3. The youth are not caring
4. The meek and quiet spirit that Peter talked about is not practiced.

The Apostle Peter challenges every youth and by extension everyone to be:

**1 Peter 1:13 ... alert and think straight.** Put all your hope in how kind God will be to you when Jesus Christ appears. CEV

## SATISFACTION

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In verse 14 of 1 Peter chapter one, the Apostle who was crucified upside down shows that The difference between God's children and the children of this world is summed up in one word - OBEDIENCE

It is the spirit of obedience that gives you the impetus to move forward

It is the spirit of obedience that keeps you away from what defined you in the past.

Peter is asking you kindly not to slip back to your old ways of doing evil because you know better.

**1 Peter 1:14** As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: (KJV)

**1 Peter 1:14** Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better then; you do now. (Message Bible)

John refers to the former lusts as the:

1. Lust of the Flesh
2. Lust of the eyes
3. The pride of life

**1 John 2:16** For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

If there is anything that destroys the youth of our church it is the three forms of evil mentioned in 1 John 2:16

Our sinful world is comprehended under three heads:

### **THE LUST OF THE FLESH**

The lust of the flesh is the desire which *resides in the flesh*, not the desire *for* the flesh.

1. The lust of the flesh is seen in the Christian who still drinks liquor
2. The preacher who still smokes
3. The youth who is immoral

The lust of the flesh includes all unchaste desires, thoughts, words, and actions:

- Fornication
- Adultery
- Rape
- Incest
- Sodomy GO ON!!!

The lust of the flesh also includes:

- Intemperance in eating and drinking
- Gluttony and drunkenness
- Reveling and all the sensual pleasures of life.

Then follows the **LUST OF THE EYES**

The eyes are delighted with treasures  
Riches and rich possessions are craved by an extravagant eye. GO ON!!!

It does not, of course, mean that the eye is never to be gratified.

It is **NOT** sinful to find pleasure in beholding objects of real beauty.

**PUNCH:** The lust of the eyes is one's fondness for glitter, glare and show.

The lust of the eyes leads one into living a life of:

1. Dishonesty
2. Jealousy
3. Curiosity

The wise man declares:

**Proverbs 27:20** Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

And then there is **THE PRIDE OF LIFE**

The word pride here used means, ostentation or boasting.

1. Always trying to put on a show
2. Extravagant
3. Pretentious

John's conclusion after comparing the three forms of evil asserts:

**1 John 2:17** And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

All these things are continually fading and perishing.

They are like a pageant, which only amuses the eye for a moment, and then disappears forever.

**BUT!!** The man that does the will of God:

Darby Bible: Abides for eternity

Hebrew Name Version: Remains forever

Message Bible: Is set for eternity

# VISUALIZATION

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Our challenge therefore, as we near the soon coming of our Lord and Savior is found in 1 Peter 1:15

**1 Peter 1:15** But as **he** which hath called you **is holy**, so **be ye holy** in all manner of conversation;

When the grace of God calls a sinner, that grace calls the sinner to holiness.

The grand model of the Christian is not the Church, or the Pastor.

Augustine, a church father of the early church says, "Every one that begets, begets an offspring resembling himself . Let the acts of the offspring indicate similarity to the Father" [Augustine].

Paul adds:

**Romans 12:2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Now! If our challenge is holiness there are several things we must do:

1. Choose our friends wisely
2. Be careful where we go and who we go out with
3. Take a good look at our wardrobes and remove that which encourages unholiness
4. Use discretion when reading books, listening to music or watching television
5. Be alert to that which endangers spiritually
6. Exercise self control
7. Walk in the fear of God

And hear this: IF God asks us to be holy, it is not something we cannot do

**PUNCH:** God will never ask us to do what he knows we cannot do!

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## ACTION

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You will notice that being holy is an imperative. It is not asked for it is commanded.

And please note that the focal point of holiness is not:

1. How we keep the Sabbath.
2. It is not faithfulness to church duties.
3. It is not in a diet.
4. It is not returning tithes.

All these are important aspects of the one who walks in truth but they are not the focal point of holiness.

The Scribes and Pharisees were good at practicing these things.

They prided themselves that their behavior was far superior to that of other people.

Their motivation for holiness was rooted in actions rather than in attitude.

I declare therefore, that if we must be holy as God is, we must change our attitude towards:

- GOD
- THE CHURCH
- THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE (You Name it)

And although God demands that we be holy, we must decide!

**PUNCH:** Holiness is a choice!

And it is a choice that has benefits:

- It keeps you close to God.
- It results in a fulfilled life and an inner peace amid the chaos of the age.
- It enables one to handle stress. GO ON!!

And one day soon when Jesus comes, it will take us from time to eternity! Hallelujah!!

## APPEAL

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William Longstaff wrote:

*Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.  
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,  
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.*

*Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;  
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.  
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;  
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.*

*Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;  
And run not before Him, whatever betide.  
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,  
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.*

*Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,  
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.  
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,  
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.*

## THE CALL

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- 1 Is it your **desire** to live a life of holiness? (hands)
- 2 Is it your **desire** to live a life of obedience? (Stand)
- 3 Is it your **desire** to be ready for the day of the Second Coming of the Holy One of Israel? (Altar)

Sing as they walk to the altar – “I am Thine O Lord”

Make appeal for recommitment and baptism!

## THOUGHT

*Some people succeed because they are destined to, but  
most people succeed because they are determined to.*