

“We Are Called To A Life Of Holiness”

Portions contributed by [John Williams Iii](#).

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

1 Peter 1:13-27

A Quaker philosopher, Elton Trueblood, described our society as a "cut-flower" civilization. What he was saying is, the basic Christian truths have built it, but if we are disconnected from our roots, our ideals and ethics eventually fade and die.

Author Herb Miller says, “If we successfully give Christ to the next generation, we must hand his teachings to them, too.” Just as there is a difference between the having things on paper and putting them into practice, there is also a difference between having ideals and a lifestyle that is in harmony with those ideals.

Because you see, it is one thing to talk about Christianity, but it is another thing altogether to live a Christian life. It is the way we live as Christians of this generation that will pass on our “ideals and ethics”. It is therefore important that we stay “connected” to our “roots”.

Imagine with me if you will. A young man, who has been given a guaranteed future. You see, the President of the United States gave him a golden opportunity. He was going to be given a full scholarship to a University in Washington D.C., a place to live at the White House, escort to and from school by the Secret Service. Also, upon graduation he was going to be given the opportunity to have a career in the State Department.

Knowing that the young man was a Christian, the President gave him this opportunity, “With” a condition. He is never to attend church while living in the White House. Now the reason for this, is because they did not want to offend people of different religions who would be guests to the White House.

You see, this is a scenario that Bryan Chapell, brings up in his book, “Standing Your Ground”.

My question is, what would you do in that situation?

I mean, think about it! You could go on and become someone in the State Department. But, at the same time, your plans of nurturing your spiritual growth would suffer, right? Suppose this young man actually took the position.

How could he be faithful and fruitful if he could not participate in living out his Christian faith? What kind of mixed up values, “ideals and ethics” would he be passing on to his children? What type of witness would he be to his “would-be-Christian” peers? And then think about how this young man would be judged for his work by our Heavenly Father.

You see, Christians are called out of the world...right? Christians are called to a different lifestyle. Now, a lifestyle is a pattern of living wherein we live out what we believe. As Christians we were not called to blend in. As Christians, we were called to stand out.

We have been called to salvation by God. We have also been called out of the world and worldly ways in order to live out our calling to a life of holiness as we serve God.

A father and son were raking leaves when they noticed something darting in and out of the piles. After careful effort they uncovered a chameleon. It was difficult to see among the brown leaves though. You see, it had blended in with them by turning brown.

After catching this little creature, they put it in a jar of green grass, where it immediately turned green. When they added some red berries, the chameleon began to take on that color.

Well, some people are chameleons in character; wherever you put them, they turn that color. Their thinking and their behavior depend on their environment.

The conduct of Christians is not to be compromised. If we who are Christians compromise our conduct as being dependent upon our environment, then we fail to be obedient as God's children. We have to remember that we have been called out of the world.

Christians are not just called to a different lifestyle though. We are called to the way of holy living. The old saying, "When in Rome do as the Romans do" does not apply to Christians. It simply does not apply to Christians because we are not of this world.

Lloyd J. Ogilvie, in his book, "Mastering the New Testament", says, "There is a great deal of difference between attempting to live for God, and allowing Him to live in and through us".

If we do not strive to live as "**strangers**", then it becomes easier for us to "**backslide**" and conform to the former "**lusts**" of this world. Christians must strive to maintain that fellowship with God, who called them out of darkness, and into His marvelous light.

Consider First John 2:4-6: "**The man who says, 'I know him', but does not do what he commands is a liar and the truth is not in him. But, if anyone obeys his words, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we are in him, whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did**". You see, our conduct, and our character, they go hand in hand.

Robert Burns once wrote a poem called "Holy Willie's Prayer". It describes the holiness of a self-righteous Scottish church elder who piously presumed he was godlier than everyone else, and harshly criticized all others. The poem however tells how hollow Willie's holiness was when he was discovered lying in a drunken stupor in a snowbank one night.

Unfortunately, many people have come to associate holiness with hypocrisy. What worse title can we apply to someone other than “holy Joe?” It is unfortunate that holiness is sometimes viewed as a mask that people try to wear rather than a lifestyle that people try to live.

Now, Christians are sent into the world, correct? But for what?

Christians are sent into the world to make a difference. There is the story about a young boy who was on the beach. He noticed a bunch of starfish that had been abandoned by the tide. Immediately, he took to the task of saving all that he could.

He grabbed as many as he could in each handful and threw them back into the ocean. A passerby approached him and pessimistically said, “Young man what does it matter, you cannot save them all”. Defiantly, the young boy grabbed another one and said, “It matters to him” as he continued to do all that he could to save all the starfish that he could.

Christians are sent into the world to make a difference to those who sometimes are indifferent. When Christians are confronted with a hostile environment it can become tempting to forget about turning the other cheek. It takes an attitude of holiness to be able to turn the other cheek when we would rather retaliate.

Although meekness is not mentioned in this passage of Scripture, it talks about meekness when it tells us to be holy in all of our conduct. The Christian meekness is actually based on humility, which is not a natural quality, but an outgrowth of a renewed nature. Now, while the pagan quality is redolent [sweetly scented] of self-assertion, the Christian quality carries the flavor of self-abasement. Meekness and holiness are related when it comes to living a holy life.

Christians are called to be accountable, and we are accountable as our brothers’ keeper. Yes, we know that the saying about being our brothers’ keeper goes all the way back to Genesis 4, right?

Genesis 4 tells us of two brothers who were supposed to have accountability before God.

Both of these brothers were supposed to make offerings to God. Now, Cain's offering was based upon going through the motion of ceremony, while Abel's offering was authentic. We all know the story. We all know how Cain gets mad and kill's his brother Abel, because God received his offering and rejected Cain's. Cain was later questioned by God with the infamous question, **“Where is your brother?”**

Cain answers God's question with a question, **“Am I my brother's keeper?”**

This story helps us to understand that God wants us to remember that we are responsible for each other because we are each other's keeper. It also teaches us that God wants us to have both pure hearts and pure motives.

The fact that Cain was disobedient in the way he presented his offering is an indication of how neither, his motive, nor his heart, was pure.

Consider First Peter 1:22: **“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart”.**

First Peter 1:22 echoes the point of Genesis 4, because God wants us to have both “pure hearts and pure motives” in our relationship with Him, and also our relationships with each other.

We are accountable for the ways that we invest the talents that God has given us for serving in His kingdom. God wants us to do all that we can to forward His kingdom by living our lives while remembering that we were bought with a price.

God wants us to have godly fear which we would call, “awe”, which is respect, tinged with fear---reverent fear. God wants us to truly act like his children.

Surely, if we are God's children, who have been called out of the world and have been sent back into the world with the salvation of our souls...then we need to live like it. We know that God holds us accountable because He will judge each of us according to our work while we lived as resident aliens---strangers here on earth.

God wants to be able to say to every one of us, **“Well done thy good and faithful servant.” Matthew 25:23.**

The Bible says, **“Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord, a man avoids evil.” Proverbs 16:6.**

We are not, and cannot be faithful, unless we serve the Lord with reverent fear. God wants us to live a life of holiness, by being holy as He is holy, because the way that we live as His children, is supposed to reflect who God is...in us. Amen!!!