

# Apostolic Iron

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## TRUE BIBLICAL HOLINESS

*Ephesians 4:24*

*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created **in righteousness and true holiness.***

Holiness is a Scriptural doctrine. According to the Articles of Faith, it is also a doctrine of the United Pentecostal Church International. Regardless how any of us attempt to define *holiness*, the fact cannot be ignored that being holy as prescribed in the Scripture is necessary for salvation.

*Hebrews 12:14*

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, **without which no man shall see the Lord:***

The subject of holiness cannot be dismissed, explained away, or edited out of the Bible without subjecting both the preacher who does so and those who follow him to impending peril. Likewise, it is intellectually and spiritually impossible to Biblically confine the doctrine of holiness to governing only the "inner man" while the "outer man" remains ungoverned, thus allowing the flesh to be given over to the whims of the fads, fashions, and obsessions of this world. Holding such a position surely indicates that there are other very serious spiritual problems in ones life. Because the Lord commanded us to be holy because He is holy, it is imperative that we carefully consider the subject of the doctrine of holiness.

*1 Peter 1:13-16*

*13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

*14 As obedient children, **not FASHIONING yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:***

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

*16 **Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.***

After we obey the plan of salvation, no other spiritual subject so directly affects our daily lives and lifestyles more than holiness. Yes, we are to read our Bibles and pray "without ceasing." But, the impact of holiness is both inward and outward, 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. Holiness is the atmosphere in which we express our personal commitment to the Lord. Holiness reveals how literally we believe that "we are not our own," but that we are bought with a price. Our attitude towards the doc-

holiness reveals the depth and degree of our revelation that our bodies are the “temple of the Holy Ghost.” While holiness defines who we are in God both inwardly and outwardly, it also guides what we do and do not do.

The Apostle Paul specified in Ephesians 4:24 that we should put on the new man that our God has created in righteousness and **TRUE** holiness. The point then should be obvious: if Paul had to specify “true holiness,” then by definition we must conclude that there is also a “**FALSE**” holiness. Because of the existence of the false, we must carefully examine the Scripture to be able to identify both the true and the false. This examination is vitally important; our salvation and the salvation of those who follow us depend upon it.

## HOLINESS DOCTRINE AND CONVICTIONS

Because of the emphasis that the Scripture places upon the doctrine of holiness, we must each determine for ourselves exactly what this doctrine addresses and what it does not. As members of the UPCI, we have already agreed to adhere to certain fundamental interpretations of the Scriptures which proclaim this doctrine. The concern that many of us have today is that some of our ministers are abandoning the definition of holiness that we have long held to be true. Consequently, they are also re-defining for themselves how their new interpretations are to be applied to the appearance, personal conduct, etc. of the souls who follow their leadership. Woe be to the leader who allows his own carnality and lust to redefine his “doctrine” in order to excuse himself to do what his flesh wants to do without giving any consideration of the eternal effect of his doctrinal change upon those who trust his leadership!

*“The application of the doctrine and principles of holiness by the Holy Ghost to our individual, personal daily lives is called “convictions.””*

There are some aspects of the doctrine of holiness that we as a body have agreed are necessary for salvation and therefore help to at least partially define the basis of our continued fellowship with one another. However, there are additional convictions that some among us have UNILATERALLY determined to be additional “tests” of both salvation and fellowship. Since the UPCI as a whole has made no agreement to follow their position, these ministers are causing division in the corporate body by holding everyone else up to their “holier standards.” This blatantly places their personal convictions and “Biblical” interpretations higher in importance to them than the clear Scriptural teachings on unity, sowing discord, and judging another man’s servant. Both positions — adding to and taking away from “True Biblical Holiness” as taught in the Word of God — are equally as dangerous to the individuals involved and to the corporate body in general.

Holiness as a doctrine is made up of those principles and applications of Scripture that are clearly defined by two or more witnesses in Biblical contexts.

Consequently, the application of the doctrine and principles of holiness by the Holy Ghost to our individual, personal daily lives is called “convictions.” Doctrine and convictions are NOT synonymous concepts either intellectually or Biblically. Our doctrines of holiness should be fundamentally similar, but our personal convictions may be very different (Romans 14:1-23).

For example, men and women wearing the apparel of the opposite sex is expressly forbidden by Scripture and is therefore a doctrine. To deny the importance of teaching against this practice which is emphatically called an “abomination” is to declare that God can change and is, therefore, not eternal. *Abomination* is the strongest synonym for expressing ones feelings against something. How can what was once abhorrent to Him no longer be even unpleasant to Him but wholly acceptable in His sight? By definition, God is, in fact, eternal, and therefore He is unchangeable. Change is a function of time. God is not subject to time, being eternal. Therefore, it is impossible for Him to change. He made them “male and female” and the distinction must be maintained in order to be pleasing in His sight! Teaching that the repugnant is now pleasing to God is self-deception. How willingly deceived must one be to teach such a “doctrine” (that abominable is now acceptable)?

On the other hand, the length of a person’s sleeves is not specifically specified in the Scripture except by the general word *modest*. Thus the specific length of the sleeve that an individual would wear would then be his or her personal conviction. Obviously the exact length would vary from one person’s convictions to another. Even the word *modest* is defined very generally both in English and

in the Greek. Therefore, without specific Scripture to determine the exact “Biblical” length of a sleeve, how could anyone in good conscience and with a right spirit make a specific sleeve length a “heaven or hell” issue for everyone? Sleeve length can be made a matter of personal discipline (conviction) and a specific sleeve length may be legitimately used for leadership requirements in a local church application, but NO specific sleeve length can be Biblically supported as a salvation doctrine for the entire body! Furthermore, the collective body has NEVER agreed to abide by such a “conviction.”

Convictions which are made doctrines are labeled in the Bible as “traditions.” Just a casual reading of Scripture quickly reveals Jesus’ strong feelings against all traditions. I have a right as a part of a specific portion of the body to expect my fellow members of that body to believe very similarly to me in doctrine; I DO NOT have the right to expect them to agree to follow my convictions. Why? Because their personal convictions are just as valid as mine even if they are very different from mine (read Romans 14:1-23)! It was not the sinners who crucified Jesus! It was the religious who crucified Him because He would not live by and promote their convictions! Again, convictions that are turned into doctrines are Biblically called “religious traditions.” The body of Christ is experiencing the same “crucifixion” in our day for the exact same reasons.

Where are James and the church council that met in Acts 15 when we need them? The converted Pharisees wanted to impose circumcision upon the Gentile converts. The Apostle James (brother of Jesus) made a decree that was supported by the entire church council to make no such requirement of them. Why? Because the Apostle James determined that just because circumcision was taught by their fathers did not make it necessary for them. If you want to continue to teach “circumcision” fine, but do not judge the rest of us and divide the body if we do not follow! Peace in the church was achieved because the leaders made a decision concerning what the church’s position would be. They expected the rest of the body to follow their decision. Their decision was confirmed by the Holy Ghost at Antioch where the believers “rejoiced for the consolation” (Acts 15:25 - 32). I wonder if such an ability to make a decision for the entire church body is what it means to be Apostolic? If so, are we truly Apostolic?

As members of the UPCI, we should agree on all essential areas of the doctrines of holiness because they are specified in the Bible and in our Manual. Yet, we may or may not agree on the specific personal application of these principles (convictions), especially those things which are not specified either in the Bible and / or the UPCI Manual such as sleeve length, wearing of wedding bands, the use of TV in evangelism, etc. Those “convictions” which are NOT specified in the Bible or the Manual, but are exclusively the individual interpretation of some of our pastors or of their pastors before them (whose teachings they continue to follow), must NOT be allowed to be used as weapons of mass destruction upon the body of Christ.

AT NO TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE UPCI HAVE WE EVER AGREED ON A SINGLE SET OF CONVICTIONS! This is why the fundamental doctrine states, “We shall endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit until we all come into the unity of the faith, at the same time admonishing all brethren that they shall not contend for their different views to the disunity of the body.”

No one (and definitely not me) is suggesting that anyone change or compromise his or her personal convictions. The very nature of a personal conviction dictates that it be followed regardless of anyone else’s practice or opinion to the contrary. Nevertheless, it is very wrong for me to make those same convictions into doctrines for everyone else and then use those convictions-turned-doctrines to judge the fellowship collectively and / or individually. It is wrong to such a degree that the Bible labels those who do so as “carnal” (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). Whether we use names of the prominent leaders we follow (Peter, Paul) or various labels that categorize our strictness (conservative, moderate, liberal) to identify our “sect,” the whole situation demands the scriptural anathema: “carnal.” The carnal CAN NOT please God! (Romans 8:5-8).

The Manual of the UPCI includes most of the commonly agreed upon specifics of the doctrine of holiness and a few commonly held convictions. Having or watching a TV is NOT specifically

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forbidden by the Bible and is nowhere called a sin by the Manual; therefore, "having a TV is sin" cannot be a Biblical doctrine. It is however a conviction that was agreed upon by a majority of those voters in attendance at the business meeting held at the General Conference in 1955 who desired to have this conviction included in our Manual and made it a test of fellowship. The UPCI collectively agreeing to make certain convictions a test of fellowship for its leadership is Biblically acceptable. But, judging others by personal convictions that have never been or are no longer sanctioned by the collective body is Biblically "sowing discord among the brethren"!

True holiness is beautiful (Psalms 29:2; 96:9); yet, both extremes of the "doctrine of Holiness" have succeeded in making it "ugly." Some have made it "ugly" with their attitude and their judgmental condemnation of those who do not agree with them. Others, in claiming to respond to this attitude, have concluded that holiness as a doctrine cannot be positive because of its "effect" upon those who believe it. Therefore, they "liberate" themselves and those who follow them. The attitudes and the spirits of both of these groups are wrong. **We, as a movement and a body, must refuse to allow either group to wrest the doctrine of holiness and its beauty away from the body and hold it hostage! We must stand for True Biblical Holiness and proclaim its beauty in love! We must not forfeit holiness and its beauty because we reject those who are rejecting the rest of us!**

### IS "OBEY ME BECAUSE I SAY SO" AN EFFECTIVE AND BIBLICAL METHOD OF COMMUNICATING HOLINESS TODAY?

**"This techno-savvy generation is saturated with information and wants proof. They have questions and demand answers."**

In light of the above, understanding holiness and how to present it to people becomes an essential element of any minister's responsibility. The root of our problem is that we have not acknowledged the change in the world and also the change in the constituency of the UPCI. This change necessitates that we change: **NOT OUR MESSAGE, BUT OUR METHOD!** Our method has been heavily based on proclamation; i.e., "it is true because I say so." While this may have been an "acceptable" method of making disciples 40, 60, or 80 years ago, it is neither acceptable nor effective today!

The title or appellation which Jesus primarily used to refer to His followers was *disciple*. The definition of *disciple* is, "a learner, i.e. pupil; a taught or trained one" (Strong's). Webster's states that, as a synonym, *disciple* includes not only the idea of the person as a student of and a follower of certain doctrines, but also that he has a close personal relationship with the teacher of the doctrines. Teaching is the ministry of explanation. It is the only New Testament method of making disciples. Transforming converts into disciples is fundamental not only to the goal of seeing people truly saved, but is also essential to the overall maturity and stability of the church itself. By definition, disciples cannot be made by preaching, no matter how "great" the preaching may be. It is an easily discovered Biblical fact that Jesus was almost exclusively called a teacher, NOT a preacher. Jesus was a "disciple-maker."

This techno-savvy generation is saturated with information and wants proof. They have questions and demand answers. They are automatically skeptical of anyone who says that something is true "because I say so." **AND THEY SHOULD BE!** Either we have a Scriptural basis and reason for what we believe or we do not. We do not have to fear people's questions. Truth never fears examination! God has given us Scriptural answers that will convince the "gainsayers." We are commanded to "study to show" ourselves "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Truth does not have to fear questions; in fact, truth welcomes questions. If we as leaders react to questions emotionally and defensively, we communicate that we really do not know the answer and fear facing questions. Study the Word and let God give you a true Biblical basis for your doctrines and convictions and you will NEVER again have to fear someone asking an honest and legitimate question.

The word *conviction* and the word *convictions* are not in the King James New Testament. (Look it up!) However, the Greek word meaning "convince" or "persuade" is found there. *Conviction* is "the state or appearance of being convinced, as of the truth of a belief." As a synonym, the word

suggests “a being convinced because of satisfactory reasons or proof and it sometimes implies earlier doubt” (Webster’s). *Convince* means “to overcome the doubts of; persuade by argument or evidence; make feel sure.” Therefore, by definition a person cannot be made a disciple by proclamation (preaching), only by explanation (teaching). Neither can they be made to have convictions just because anyone tells them to believe something because “they say it is so.” Until a believer is **CONVINCED** through the presentation of Biblical evidence of the truth of any doctrine, they CANNOT AND DO NOT have a conviction. Conformity is not living by conviction! Obedience to what I am not yet convinced of is necessary for the newborn babe in Christ, but IT IS NOT possible to become a mature disciple unless I first become convinced for myself!

Again, at the expense of redundancy, if we want people to have Scriptural convictions we must first convince them with Scripture. This is not done by proclamation (preaching) but by explanation (teaching). We cannot yell loud enough or spit, stomp, and sweat profusely enough to obscure the fact that we do not know what we are talking about. Sometimes our emotional displays are simply a crutch to mask the defensiveness of our insecurity. If we can intimidate someone from questioning what we say, maybe they will never figure out that we do not have answers to their questions. Maybe we are afraid for people to expect Biblical proof of what we teach because we are afraid to confront the fact that we cannot even prove what we teach to ourselves. **Maybe we are fearful to acknowledge to ourselves that we are not truly convinced of our own convictions.** I cannot imagine the serious lack of peace in the soul of a preacher who cannot even answer his own questions which lurk deep in his heart, let alone the lack of peace produced by the responsibility to try and convince others to live in a way he himself is not even convinced of. The answers are there — in the Book — but we must be willing to search for them until we find them for ourselves!

Honest-hearted people will always follow the man who presents a solid Scriptural presentation of truth that answers their sincere questions. This New Testament ministry of explanation is called *teacher* and, in most usages in the New Testament, it is synonymous with the word *pastor*. We must be willing to “pastor” people by feeding them the “sincere milk of the word.” Meat is not for babes in Christ. People must be allowed to grow up sufficiently before they are “blasted” with our do’s and don’ts. The word *pastor* is actually the translation of Greek word for *shepherd*. We, shepherds of **GOD’S FLOCK**, must take heed how we lead!

Sometimes our defensiveness causes us to assume in advance that people are going to reject our message. This assumption provokes us to take one of the most beautiful doctrines in all of Scripture and present it negatively and offensively. People end up rejecting our approach and attitude, but we convince ourselves that they are rejecting our message. Thus we justify ourselves and further entrench ourselves and our message in the bondage of defensiveness. We must seek God for understanding and wisdom so that we may contribute to the salvation of souls instead of erecting barriers that hinder them from being saved.

Biblical holiness is beautiful! It is not ugly, “plain,” a burden, a trial, a sacrifice or any other negative term. It is not unfair! It does not deprive; it enriches! It is not a curse; it is a blessing! The Lord has clearly promised that He will withhold NO GOOD thing from those who love Him. As children, sometimes our parents tell us no, not to punish us, but because they love us. As we grow up, we begin to understand their true motive for what they told us to do or not do. Yet, do we have “saints” sitting on pews who still do not understand even though they have been in our church “forever”? Yes! Why? Because instead of being led into an understanding that enables them to make choices for themselves, they have never progressed beyond just doing what they have been told to do. There is absolutely no way this is pleasing to God! Doing what you are told to do (long term) without understanding or being convinced of the Scriptural validity of what you are doing is the fundamental principle of “religion.” In the Bible the Lord plainly declares that He hates religion (look it up)!

**“...if we want people to have Scriptural convictions we must first convince them with Scripture.”**

## THE PURPOSE OF HOLINESS

We must first understand the purpose of holiness if we are to present it positively to others. Holiness is the identifying mark of a "prepared bride." It is the proof that we are given to Him without reservation and that we acknowledge our bodies to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Holiness is the demonstration of our acceptance of God's assertion that we are not our own, but that we are bought with the price of His precious shed blood. But, most of all, holiness is a product of our devotion and dedication to a person — THE LORD JESUS CHRIST — not to an organization! I do not live holy because I am UPCI; I live holy because the Bible teaches that I should be separated unto Him. By definition (as presented earlier), true disciples do not just follow a doctrine; they know and have a personal relationship with the teacher of that doctrine — the Bride's eternal Husband, Jesus. We are not called as soulwinners to make "converts to a religion;" we are commissioned to introduce the lost to a person — Jesus. We are not called as pastors to make converts followers of our doctrines and convictions (our disciples); we are charged with making them disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers SHOULD NOT FOLLOW leaders unless the leaders are following Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Holiness is not a weapon to be used against worldliness and carnality. Worldliness and carnality are just verifications that one's relationship with the Lord is failing or does not even exist. The Scriptures reveal that Jesus takes worldliness and carnality as a personal offense. James 4:4 says, "... whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Romans 8:7 says, "... the carnal mind is enmity against God..."

***“Believers SHOULD NOT FOLLOW leaders unless the leaders are following Christ”***

Holiness is also not something we take off of people (ie. - jewelry, make-up, etc.) or cause them to stop doing. It is something (actually someone) that we believe is put on them by God. The Bible says that those who have been baptized into Christ have "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Holiness is the separation from the world that occurs, both inwardly and outwardly, when Christ's personal "Robe of Righteousness" is placed upon them. The things that people take off or stop doing are not for the sake of being holy, but for the purpose of not contaminating or discrediting their holiness. Holiness must be focused or directed "unto the LORD" (Exodus 28:36) and not "against the world." I am holy because of who I am for, not because of what I am against.

God is Holy! If the essence and emphasis of holiness is "anti-world," then God could not have been considered holy until there was a world and sin to be against. Therefore, in God's case, holiness must be a quality of His character and not a condition or state in which He lives. Ideally we too at some point in our walk with God will be holy as a matter of character and not just as a matter of a state of being; or, at its least effective, as a matter of the condition of conformity for the purpose of church membership. Is it not true that the only way that many preachers present holiness to their audience is as a list of do's and don'ts? Holiness is not what I am if I do not do the "don'ts" and do the "dos." Holiness is my motivation for willingly obeying the shalls and shall nots — not out of fear or shame — but because I want to please Him!

A new bride does not "give up" all of the single men in the world to be "stuck" with the one she marries. She chooses one man out of all the single men in the world to be hers. She enters the state or condition of matrimony (separation or "holiness" unto her husband) by first a choice and then a commitment (vows). But, over the course of time, marriage becomes a part of her character. Her faithfulness to her husband goes beyond her choice or vows; it becomes so much of a part of her that there is never even the consideration of her being unfaithful. Jesus is our husband; we are His bride. Do we consider it a chore and a sacrifice to belong to Him and to be identified with Him? Are we only "holy" because that is what our church "requires"? Do we believe and practice holiness unto the Lord because we want to or because we are afraid not to? Is it Jesus we are afraid of displeasing or our peers?

## THE PROCESS OF BECOMING HOLY

*2 Corinthians 7:1* **Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

We must pursue the goal of having holiness become a part of our character. For that to happen, holiness must be “perfected” in us. The Greek verb translated *perfecting* means “to bring to an end, to accomplish, to perfect, to execute, to complete” (Thayer’s Lexicon). Strong’s Greek Dictionary defines it as, “to fulfill completely.” Vine’s Expository Greek Dictionary defines it as, “to bring through to the end” ([derived from the Greek words] *epi*, intensive, in the sense of “fully,” and *teleo*, “to complete”). **The use of the word *perfecting* in reference to holiness by the Holy Ghost is intended to communicate that being holy is a process not an event.**

A *process* is a function of time; therefore it cannot be accomplished by a single event. This is confirmed by the tense of the Greek word translated *perfecting* in 2 Corinthians 7:1, which is the “present active participle.” The “present participle expresses continuous repeated action.” The “active voice represents the action as being accomplished by the subject of the verb.” (This information is from The Complete Word Study Bible.) Therefore, from the very specific inspiration of the Holy Ghost in writing this verse, we can say definitely that holiness is a condition which is continually progressing in each of our lives through the process of the HOLY SPIRIT’S working with us to help us to “cleanse ourselves” both inwardly and outwardly. The ultimate goal of this process is for holiness to become a part of our character; our character defines whom we really are, not what we do or do not do!

The working of the Holy Spirit in us is called *grace*. Paul wrote that the grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts so that we can live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). We are being taught by grace and truth; teaching is the vehicle, instrument, or conduit of the process. Grace is the teacher. Again, the “process” of becoming holy is a function of time. We do not become holy through an event. Receiving the Holy Ghost and being baptized in Jesus’ name does not make us holy. It only COMMENCES the process.

Since being holy is a process, NO ONE can say of themselves “I AM HOLY.” Paul implied that being holy inwardly and outwardly requires a continual “cleansing” of my flesh and spirit. Will there ever be a point in time in this life when I can declare, “I am finished with the process. I am holy!”? ABSOLUTELY NOT! **Consequently, there is never a time when I can Biblically compare myself with others and say “I am holy; they are not.”** Why? Because all true seekers of God, all true believers, are involved in the process of becoming holy. Someone else being at a different point in the process than I am does not mean that they are “more or less” holy than me.

When we become “partakers of His holiness” (Hebrews 12:10), holiness will be in our character. Having **HIS** holiness is the ultimate goal, not having a “holiness” of our own that we have created. Yet, attaining this dimension of holiness is only possible when we first understand what righteousness is.

**“We must pursue the goal of having holiness become a part of our character.”**

## TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST PROCEED TRUE HOLINESS

*Romans 6:19* **I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.**

**Romans 6:19 (Amplified Version)**

19 I am speaking in familiar human terms because of your natural limitations. For as you yielded your bodily members [and faculties] as servants to impurity and ever in creasing lawlessness, **so now yield your bodily members [and faculties] once for all as servants to righteousness (right being and doing) [which leads] to sanctification.**

**Romans 6:19 (Wuest's Expanded Translation)**

19 For just as you placed your members as slaves at the disposal of uncleanness and lawlessness resulting in lawlessness, **thus now place your members as slaves at the disposal of righteousness resulting in holiness.**

**Romans 6:19 (New Living Translation)**

19 Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. **Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.**

True Righteousness is the foundation of True Holiness. Romans 6:19 says, "...even so yield your members servants of righteousness **unto** holiness." Strong's Greek Dictionary defines the preposition *unto* as, "a primary preposition; to or into (indicating the point reached or entered), of place, time, or (figuratively) purpose (result, etc.)." Therefore, becoming servants of God's righteousness is paramount to "reaching the point" of His holiness.

**"True Righteousness is the foundation of True Holiness."**

The litmus test for whether or not one has true Biblical holiness depends upon the source of the righteousness that undergirds and sanctions it. Paul said that righteousness is a "gift" from God (Romans 5:17). A gift by definition cannot be earned (by works) or deserved (by any amount of "separation"); it can only be received. If it is our own righteousness that we have (produced by "our deeds, our good works"), and not His, which comes only as a gift from Him, then we do not have true holiness! We have Asceticism / Phariseism — "false holiness." The Pharisees had their "own righteousness" (Romans 10:3). When we, like them, go about to establish our own righteousness by our works, we discredit both God's holiness and our standards. Those standards and convictions which **would be Biblically valid** if founded upon His true righteousness become false and superficial when based upon our own righteousness. If "all our righteousnesses are as

filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6), where does that put "our holiness" based upon and proceeding from those same "filthy rags"?

Paul was extremely concerned about the source of his righteousness. He knew that if his righteousness was his own, instead of God's which comes by faith (Philippians 3:9), then his ability to know God would be greatly hindered or even neutralized. Only when my righteousness is from God can I truly know Him (Philippians 3:9,10). Knowing him through His righteousness allows me to have true holiness that enables me to "see God" (Hebrews 12:14).

The concepts of Righteousness and Justification are etymologically related. They come from the same Greek root word *dikaïos* which means "innocent" and is translated "just, right, righteous." Justification is the process and Righteousness is the result.

The concepts of Holiness and Sanctification are also etymologically related. They come from the same Greek root word *hagios*. It means "sacred; pure, blameless, consecrated" and is translated "most holy, holy thing, holy one, **SAINT.**" *Sacred* means (Webster's) "consecrated to or belonging to a god or deity; holy." It also means "set apart for, or dedicated to, some person, thing, etc." Sanctification is the process and Holiness is the result. Thus holiness is akin to marriage because two "set themselves apart" from all others and keep themselves for each other only. If we want to understand



holiness and its purpose, we need only to compare it with God's institution of marriage as defined and described in His Word.

### WHAT IS TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS?

In the garden Adam was created innocent and without shame (Genesis 2:25). Therefore, he was not naked even though he was nude. When he sinned he became guilty of breaking the word of God and his sin caused him to be ashamed, with the resultant awareness of his nakedness. *To be naked* means "to be exposed, to be without protection or defense."

God "justified" him (restored man's righteousness or innocence) by shedding the blood and taking the life of a substitutionary sacrifice. We know through the principles of typology that the sacrificed animals were sheep. This death enabled God to not only forgive Adam of his sin, which removed his guilt; but it also enabled God to declare Adam innocent (the act of justification), which removed Adam's shame. God did this by covering Adam's nakedness with coats or robes made from the skins of the sheep. When Adam was declared innocent and his shame was covered, he was then "righteous."

*Psalms 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

Let me elaborate. Man had attempted to address the situation of his nakedness (his shame or loss of innocence) himself. He made his own "covering" — "aprons of fig leaves" (Genesis 3:7). By this act, man attempted to re-establish his righteousness or innocence (the clothing of his nakedness) through his own efforts. What was the result of man's efforts? Complete failure! As a result, man hid himself from the God that he was created to fellowship with.

The Prophet Isaiah trumpeted this warning, "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin" (Isaiah 30:1). If it is a blessing for our sins to be covered with a covering provided by the Lord, then it is a curse to attempt to cover our sins with a covering of our own making. Isaiah declared that the motive behind this is to hide our sin so that we may continue in sin while appearing to be righteous and holy.

Man's attempts at covering himself (the fig leaves) were not acceptable to God. The Lord's solution was to make them coats or robes of the animal's skin. God made the robe, but Adam had to choose to put it on! The putting on of these skin robes was Adam's acceptance, by faith, of God's method of making him righteous or "declaring him innocent." This is the process of justification. When Adam put on the skins in obedience, he became "righteous," once again innocent and no longer naked in his own eyes and in God's sight. Again, his shame and nakedness were covered; therefore, Adam was innocent. We too must put on a "skin robe" in order to be righteous or innocent (to have our nakedness covered). None of us can cover our wrong with a covering made out of the good deeds we have done or our acts of "separation." Only the "righteous skin" of the crucified Lamb of God made into a "robe of righteousness" that we put on in the waters of baptism can make us innocent (righteous) again (Galatians 3:27).

Shame and nakedness are connected throughout the Scriptures. God's method of dealing with our shame (our feeling of the absence of innocence in our lives) is to cover it with His own righteousness (innocence). Again, this covering is called "the robe of righteousness." "I put on righteousness and it clothed me: my judgement (Heb. - "verdict, sentence") was a robe and a diadem" (Job 29:14). "... He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness..." (Isaiah 61:10). (See also: Revelation 3:4,5,18; 4:4;6:11; 7:9,13,14; 19:8).

The Lord invited the Church of Laodicea to "...buy of me...white raiment that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear..." (Revelation 3:18). I can never be holy (pure, clean, set apart unto God)

***"Shame and nakedness are connected throughout the Scriptures."***

until I am first made righteous (innocent) in Him. In Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul told us to "put off... the old man, which is corrupt... and **put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**"

Therefore, it is the covering of our nakedness (our exposed sinful self) which is the state or condition of being "righteous." When we are thus covered through the work of His Spirit and Word and by means of His blood, we maintain the cleanliness of this covering (white robe) by the same means (His Spirit, Word, and blood); only then are we identified with him and, as a result, are "set apart unto Him." This is the state or condition of being "holy." Thus sanctification is instantaneous upon the putting on of this "robe," but it is progressive in that we must maintain the purity (cleanliness) of it by keeping it free from any spot, wrinkle, or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27; James 1:27) which might be allowed into our "flesh and spirit" (2 Corinthians 7:1). We do this through "separation" from the world.

The *filthiness* of "the flesh and spirit," which we are told to cleanse ourselves from in the process of perfecting holiness, is defined as, "a stain" (Strong's); "defilement, an action by which anything is defiled" (Thayer's); or "a soiling, defilement" (Vine's). This "stain" or "soiling" is that which defiles our robe of righteousness. The soiling of our robe of righteousness produces guilt inwardly (because we have damaged our God-given "innocence") and a stain outwardly, thus making us "not holy." The solution is to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness (stains) of the flesh and spirit." *To cleanse* is to "free ourselves from stains or defilement" (Thayer's) or "to make [ourselves] free from admixture" (Vine's). Thus, we can be considered "holy" at any moment in the process that His innocence has removed all of our guilt and our robes are cleansed of stains by His blood.

**"We can be considered "holy" at any moment in the process that His innocence has removed all of our guilt and our robes are cleansed of stains by His blood."**

At the expense of being redundant let me say again that we are told to "cleanse ourselves [justification and sanctification] from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (1 Corinthians 7:1). Again, *perfecting* means (Strong's) "to fulfill further or completely" or (Vine's) "to bring through to the end; to make fully complete." While we are to daily submit to justification and sanctification, our goal is for holiness to become complete. Holiness is complete not by just keeping our outward identification with Him "clean," but rather when the process causes it to become a part of our character (our inner man) in Him as well. Living holy is what we do until being holy is who we are — set apart unto the Lord.

### THE ROBE OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

David declared in Psalms 32:1, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (Hebrew - "clothed")." I cannot hope to be holy until I am first made righteous. I am made righteous by the forgiveness of my sins which removes my guilt, and the covering (clothing) of my shame which makes me innocent in His sight. Thus righteousness is the basis upon which God is able to make me holy ("set apart" unto God). How can I truly be His if I am still attempting to "cover my own nakedness" through my own efforts and not accepting His covering as a gift from Him? His "robe of Righteousness" is the basis for my separation from my past and provides the foundation for my being set apart unto Him and separated from the world.

The father put His own robe on the prodigal son, covering the filth and the rags of his failure and providing the basis for the prodigal's return to fellowship with the father and his house (Luke 15:22). Righteousness is the basis of our fellowship with God, but holiness is the state and condition within which we fellowship with Him. Holiness defines our commitment to that relationship above all other possible relationships, and it provides the atmosphere in which the relationship takes place.

At most weddings the bride is easily identifiable. Her white gown is unlike any other dress in the church. Thus, our wearing of His "robe of righteous" is our identifying mark of "holiness" and proves that we are His Bride. As a bride we desire to keep our wedding garment spotless by keeping ourselves for Him only, "so long as we both shall live"! John wrote, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Revelation 16:15). The Greek

word translated *keepeth* means “to attend carefully, to take care of” (Thayer’s). This is the essence of separated living.

Furthermore, in this context, we can now fully understand what is offered to us in 1 John when the Apostle wrote, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Maintaining our relationship with God is not accomplished by simply being forgiven when we fall. We must also be cleansed of the effect of our actions upon our (His) righteousness. Forgiveness makes us innocent once again; cleansing restores the cleanliness (holiness) of our “righteous robe.” Thus, the Apostle beseeches us to walk in the light and fellowship “one with another” so that the blood can do its work in our lives of both forgiving and cleansing (1 John 1:7) — gifting us with righteousness and perfecting holiness.

Thus the proof of true holiness and our motivation for being holy must flow from a growing, vibrant, and intimate relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom. Our holiness proves that we are “married” to Him; we are in a committed and separated relationship with Him. “We live for Him and not for ourselves” is the message of love and devotion that holiness is supposed to communicate. Could it be that the reason it seems that most of our “holiness standards” affect women more than men is because most of our standards of separation are so closely associated with being His Bride? In our culture, a bride in her white wedding gown specifically sets her apart from the rest of the crowd; her white gown is intended to reflect both her character and virtue that she brings to her groom as a gift. *Here Comes the Bride* being played is almost unnecessary because she is dressed like no other person present. We rarely think of the bride without mentally picturing her in her gown. So it seems that the many Biblical references to a bride and her wedding apparel correlate with the church and its outward marks of identification! Our outward standards are not intended to communicate an air of superiority (“holier than thou”), but they communicate to one and all, “I am His, He is mine”!

When we desire to know Him, we are not satisfied with just being His children or a part of His bride. We desire to have our whole being saturated with Him so that we can be like Him and live in His image. This is the essence of TRUE HOLINESS.

### ARE STANDARDS OF SEPARATION VALID?

What about standards? Even as speaking in tongues is the first external evidence of the Holy Ghost indwelling our lives, so the outward elements of our separation doctrine are only evidences of what is in our hearts. Suppose someone was to ask me, “Do I have to speak in tongues to be saved”? My Biblical answer would have to be, “No.” But we know that a person cannot be saved without having the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and we also know that the Scriptural sign and outward evidence that a person has received the Holy Ghost is that they speak in tongues. Some would then reply that I have just said that they do in fact have to speak in tongues to be saved. No, that is not what I said! It is the Holy Ghost that saves, not the tongues. The outward sign CANNOT be made the condition of salvation.

Likewise, the same principle must apply to “standards of separation.” Will a woman go to hell for wearing pants? No! Wearing clothes that pertain unto a man is only the outward sign. She will be lost because of her disregard for and her rebellion against the Creator who made her distinct from the man. The pants prove that in her heart she does not regard the Creator or His will. Will a woman be lost because she wears make-up? No! She will be lost because she is “loving and making a lie” (Revelation 22:15). She is also “stealing” God’s glory by covering her face with something that is false. The presence or the absence of the identifying sign is not that which determines salvation. It is what the outward sign reveals as being present or absent in our hearts and lives that will determine our salvation. Thus, holiness standards answer to the condition of the heart!

***“Thus the proof of true holiness and our motivation for being holy must flow from a growing, vibrant, and intimate relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom.”***

However, Jesus said:

*Matthew 23:25-26*

25 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

26 *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

Therefore, it is possible to appear separated on the outside and not have true Biblical holiness at all. Nevertheless, it is impossible to have true Biblical holiness on the inside and it not be reflected on the outside in both appearance, conduct, and attitude.

Furthermore, Paul wrote:

*2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*

The Greek word translated *be separate* is defined by Strong's as: "to set off by boundary, i.e. (figuratively) limit, exclude, appoint, etc." Thayer's definition is, "to mark off from others by boundaries, to limit, to separate." Call them "standards," "boundaries," or any other appropriate appellation: their purpose is to separate us from that which is contrary to our relationship with Him as His children. If I want to be received of Him, I must be willing to be separated unto Him.

***"It is possible to appear separated on the outside and not have true Biblical holiness at all."***

The reason why the Lord used the boundary analogy (standards) in reference to us as His children and not to us as being His wife is because children need boundaries for their own good until they mature enough to know what is right and wrong for themselves (convictions). Boundaries are only necessary until doing what is right and not doing wrong is a part of me, and then I, through the empowerment of His grace, limit myself by nature and character. It is not that I do away with "standards" as I mature; but rather, I now obey them willingly. The "boundaries" have ceased to be an obligation to me. I am no longer living how I "have" to live, but I am now living how I "want" to live. The boundaries (standards) are now a part of my identity — a **SAINT** (holy, set apart one) of God!

#### **CONCLUSION:**

True Biblical holiness is essential for salvation. Every true Man of God will diligently endeavor to seek and study until God gives him a personal revelation (which can be Biblically supported) of the doctrine of holiness. Our personal salvation and the salvation of those who are supposed to follow our faith (Hebrews 13:7) are eternally dependant upon it. No true man of God can summarily dismiss the doctrine of holiness and its relevance to salvation. No person of intellectual or spiritual integrity can Scripturally proclaim that the necessity of holiness as manifested in both our inward and outward lives is unimportant, extraneous, or in error.

It is imperative that the Apostolic movement comes to the understanding that True Biblical Holiness is founded upon the personal revelation and daily experience of True Biblical Righteousness in our lives. Without first having His righteousness in our lives, our holiness is not holiness at all! Our goal is to be clothed with His Righteousness and to walk in His Holiness! In Jesus' name!

One final word of exhortation if I may. The Prophet Isaiah declared: "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isaiah 32:17). No matter how much "holiness" we claim to have, if it is not based upon His righteousness, then it is not true holiness. How can you tell that a person has true righteousness which produces true holiness? Easily: look at what their holiness labors to do! The work of righteousness is peace! Follow peace with all men AND holiness without which no man shall see God (Hebrews 12:14)! If the

declared holiness is working for peace, then it is true holiness from true righteousness! If it is working against peace and for division, then it is false holiness produced by self-righteousness! ONLY THOSE WHO CLOSE THEIR EYES AND STOP THEIR EARS CAN BE DECEIVED (Matthew 13:15)! What are you hearing; what are you seeing? Beware and watch out for your soul!

**cmwright**