



Characteristics of a Prevailing Church John 17:13-26

Holiness is the 2nd characteristic of a prevailing church – *“I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth.” John 17:15-17*

1. Facts about holiness:

- **Holiness Defined** – “to be set apart for the purposes of God”
 - One of Satan’s greatest lies, most of us are influenced by this lie... we either feel we don’t want to be holy because it will be boring/lonely or we feel we can’t because we’re just not strong enough! God would never call us to a life of boredom or defeat and real holiness will never produce boredom or defeat.
 - Jesus was holy in fact holiness is the number #1 attribute of God.
 - 1 John 4:17 *“as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face Him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.”*
 - One of Satan’s greatest deceptions, He goes after Christ-followers with this huge lie... holiness robs one of fun, adventure and significance... when exactly the opposite is true!
 - Example of the tongue James 3:3-5 *“A bit in the mouth of a horse controls the whole horse. A small rudder on a huge ship in the hands of a skilled captain sets a course in the face of the strongest winds. A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything — or destroy it!”*
- **Justification & Sanctification:**
 - “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Rom. 4:25*
 - “For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.” Heb. 10:14*
 - Justification is an immediate event, when we accept Jesus as our savior; we are made perfect in God’s sight.
 - Justification is a gift that is not earned by merit or performance.

- Sanctification is also a gift that is not merited. It is a work of the Holy Spirit who we cooperate with.
- How do we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to help our sanctification?

2. Commitments that help our holiness: Commitments are like work-outs in the gym, where we develop the spiritual muscles to carry the responsibilities of kingdom living.

Each of the disciplines listed below, scripture describes as “holy”, good place for us to begin practicing!

- **Sabbath Rest** *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” Ex. 20:8*
 - Heb 4:9-11 *“There remains, then, a Sabbath — rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.”*
 - This is a commitment to live in grace, no longer attempting to earn God’s favor, “trying harder” to be good by the keeping of rules.
 - Col 2:16-23 *“Don’t let anyone tell you what you must eat or drink. Don’t let them say that you must celebrate the New Moon festival, the Sabbath, or any other festival. These things are only a shadow of what was to come... Why do you live as if you had to obey such rules as, “Don’t handle this. Don’t taste that. Don’t touch this.”? After these things are used, they are no longer good for anything. So why be bothered with the rules that humans have made up? Obeying these rules may seem to be the smart thing to do. They appear to make you love God more and to be very humble and to have control over your body. But they don’t really have any power over our desires.”*
 - The alternative to “rule keeping” is relationship developing... being in church, being in a group, serving, etc... Remember the OT concept of Sabbath as a day of worship is still valid.
- **Tithe** *“One tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord and must be set apart to him as holy.” Lev. 27:30-31*
 - Actually, in N.T. theology everything the Christ-follower owns belongs to God and we are merely stewards of it.
 - God doesn’t need your money but He does want all of your heart and few things compete for our heart more than money.
 - Tithing is a wonderful, practical way of keeping our heart “set apart”.

- **Bodies** “...each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable...” 1 Thess. 4:4-5
 - Context of this verse is sexual purity.
 - Rom 12:1-2 “I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.”
 - Applicable to any vice that has a hold on you.
 - Notice like contentment, self-control is learned.
 - How about you? Is there a hurt, habit or hang-up that has a grip on you? God's antidote is to process it in relationships, not “try harder”, which would be equivalent to a “rules” approach... it doesn't work!
 - Good place to learn self-control is CR.
- **Marriage** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Mark 10:7-9
 - We refer to marriage as holy matrimony.
 - A good marriage absolutely requires a commitment.
 - Mistaken belief that quality marriage is automatic... hardly! Marriage like most every other important entity... you get out of it what you put into it.
 - You can say all you want “divorce is not an option” but it will become an option if you fail to practice the love essential to marital health.
- **Bible** “Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another — showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.” 2 Tim. 3:16-17
 - Bible itself is called the holy Bible... why? It's God-breathed!
 - 2 Tim has one of the clearest descriptions of the value of God's word and why it's important to be a student of God's Word.
 - Look at how the Bible sets us apart... makes us different:
 - Shows us truth...
 - Exposes our rebellion...
 - Corrects our mistakes...
 - Trains us to live God's way...
 - God's word puts us together and shapes us up for the tasks God has for us...

- Biggest reason why scripture becomes dull and non-interesting? Failure to apply some point the Holy Spirit is addressing in our life!
- Final statement refers to the “set-apart” feature of the Christian life.

CONCLUSION:

- ✓ Holiness is the #1 attribute of God
- ✓ 1 John 4:17 “we live like Jesus here in this world”
- ✓ Because He was holy, so we are to be. 1 Peter 1:16 “For it is written, be holy because I am holy.”
- ✓ A prevailing church is the church Jesus prayed for... “I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth.” John 17:15-17

APPLICATION:

- ✓ First, ask the Holy Spirit to erase from your minds any false conceptions about holiness such as:
 - Living a boring, puritanical life
 - Living an isolated, monastic life
 - Living a defeated, just try harder religious life
- ✓ Instead, adopt the true meaning... a holy life is simply a normal Christian life where we're invited to live out God's purposes for our life on earth.
- ✓ Second, seek membership in the gym of God... Holy Spirit will be your trainer!
 - Honor the Sabbath, rest in the done, giving up “doing”
 - Learn to be generous, become a tither
 - Deal with your strong-holds... come to CR
 - Prioritize your marriage, learn to be a Godly husband/wife
 - Become consistent in your personal reading, study and application of the Bible in your life

Mission or Ministry as appropriate – Who can you invite to your group or minister to that has a hurt, habit, or hang-up don't let them battle that alone, help them get in a small group and get help!