

A 6-WEEK, NO-HOMEWORK BIBLE STUDY

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Living Like You Belong to God



Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

4minute
BIBLE STUDIES

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PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



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P R E S S

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This small-group study is for people who are interested in learning for themselves more about what the Bible says on various subjects, but who have only limited time to meet together. It's ideal, for example, for a lunch group at work, an early morning men's group, a young mothers' group meeting in a home, a Sunday-school class, or even family devotions. (It's also ideal for small groups that typically have longer meeting times—such as evening groups or Saturday morning groups—but want to devote only a portion of their time together to actual study, while reserving the rest for prayer, fellowship, or other activities.)

This book is designed so that all the group's participants will complete each lesson's study activities *at the same time*. Discussing your insights drawn from what God says about the subject reveals exciting, life-impacting truths.

Although it's a group study, you'll need a facilitator to lead the study and keep the discussion moving. (This person's function is *not* that of a lecturer or teacher. However, when this book is used in a Sunday-school class or similar setting, the teacher should feel free to lead more directly and to bring in other insights in addition to those provided in each week's lesson.)

If *you* are your group's facilitator, the leader, here are some helpful points for making your job easier:

- Go through the lesson and mark the text before you lead the group. This will give you increased familiarity with the material and will enable you to facilitate the group with greater ease. It may be easier for you to lead the group through the instructions for marking if you, as a leader, choose a specific color for each symbol you mark.

- As you lead the group, start at the beginning of the text and simply read it aloud in the order it appears in the lesson, including the “insight boxes,” which appear throughout. Work through the lesson together, observing and discussing what you learn. As you read the Scripture verses, have the group say aloud the word they are marking in the text.
- The discussion questions are there simply to help you cover the material. As the class moves into the discussion, many times you will find that they will cover the questions on their own. Remember, the discussion questions are there to guide the group through the topic, not to squelch discussion.
- Remember how important it is for people to verbalize their answers and discoveries. This greatly strengthens their personal understanding of each week’s lesson. Try to ensure that everyone has plenty of opportunity to contribute to each week’s discussions.
- Keep the discussion moving. This may mean spending more time on some parts of the study than on others. If necessary, you should feel free to spread out a lesson over more than one session. However, remember that you don’t want to slow the pace too much. It’s much better to leave everyone “wanting more” than to have people dropping out because of declining interest.
- If the validity or accuracy of some of the answers seems questionable, you can gently and cheerfully remind the group to stay focused on the truth of the Scriptures. Your object is to learn what the Bible says, not to engage in human philosophy. Simply stick with the Scriptures and give God the opportunity to speak. His Word *is* truth (John 17:17)!

LIVING LIKE YOU BELONG TO GOD

In today's churches, the concept of *holiness* seems a bit archaic, or "old school." On the rare occasions the word *holy* comes into conversation, most people picture a preacher in a robe or a woman wearing a long skirt and her hair in a bun—individuals whose lives are devoid of fun, joy, and laughter.

Perhaps you associate the concept with an offensive holier-than-thou attitude sported by some self-appointed member of the piety police. Or does the word *holy* bring a sense of defeat and discouragement at the thought of the perfect life you know you will never attain?

Our goal in this study is to turn those misguided notions on their heads and help you see that in fact a life of true holiness is the key to true happiness. Rather than some arbitrary standard set by the church or an unreachable goal of sinless perfection, holiness is about

pleasing God, about living in such a way that it's clear you belong to Him. Holiness is what makes the believer unique and easily distinguishable from the unbeliever.

Although it's been neglected in recent years, holiness is a biblical idea, one that is mentioned over six hundred times in the Bible. It is even the key theme for some of the books in the Bible, such as Leviticus. If holiness is such a basic biblical concept, then we should know what it is and what it is supposed to look like in our lives.

In the next six weeks we will learn what holiness is, what God thinks about it, and how the practice of holiness should guide the daily life of a believer.

WEEK ONE

Although some people prefer to believe that a loving God looks upon all His creatures as being the same, from the very beginning He has chosen to set certain things and people apart from others. This week we'll look at some of the clear distinctions God has set to mark specific people and things as holy.

OBSERVE

As we begin our study we need to go back to the Creation account in order to see who God is and what His desire was from the very beginning.

***Leader:** Read Genesis 1:1–5 aloud. Have the group say aloud and...*

- mark every reference to **God**, including pronouns, with a triangle: 
- draw a cloud shape like this  around the word **separated**.

As you read the text, it's helpful to have the group say the key words aloud as they mark them. This way everyone will be sure they are marking every occurrence of the word, including any synonymous words or phrases. Do this throughout the study.

GENESIS 1:1–5

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

4 God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

⁵ God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

DISCUSS

- Look at where you marked *God* in this passage and list out all that He did.
- So you don't miss it, what specifically did God separate?
- Isn't that exciting? The first recorded words of God are "Let there be light." His first act was to separate the physical light from the physical darkness. And spiritually speaking, He has been separating light and darkness ever since. Keep that in mind as we continue our study on holiness.

OBSERVE

The people of Israel, God's chosen nation (Genesis 12), had been slaves in Egypt. God chose a man named Moses to lead them out and to serve as a mediator between them and Himself. The passage we're going to look at begins after God's chosen people had sinned greatly against Him. He forgave the sin but threatened to withdraw His presence from them. So Moses was pleading with God.

Leader: Read Exodus 33:15–16 aloud.

- Have the group draw a cloud around the word *distinguished*: 

DISCUSS

- What did Moses say distinguished Israel from all the other nations?
- So with that in mind, what did Moses want more than the knowledge the nation was forgiven?
- What about you? Would you be content to simply know your sins are forgiven, or do you want more than that? What distinguishes you from the world around you?

OBSERVE

As outlined in Leviticus 21, the priests were expected to preserve the holiness of the sanctuary and the uniqueness of the people of Israel. Therefore, they were subject to a higher standard than the average Israelite.

EXODUS 33:15–16

15 Then he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.

16 “For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?”

LEVITICUS 21:6

They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food of their God; so they shall be holy.

DEUTERONOMY 33:10

They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, and Your law to Israel. They shall put incense before You, and whole burnt offerings on Your altar.

Leader: Read Leviticus 21:6 and Deuteronomy 33:10 aloud. Have the group say and...

- put a **P** over each occurrence of the word **they**, referring to the **priests**.
- draw a cloud around the word **holy**.

INSIGHT

The word *profane* here means “to defile, make common, dishonor, to violate a covenant.”

DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking the references to priests? What were they responsible for?

OBSERVE

Israel had not obeyed God’s laws, and the priests were partly to blame.

Leader: Read Ezekiel 22:26 aloud. Have the group...

- put a **P** over each reference to **priests**, including pronouns.

- draw a cloud shape like this  around the words **holy** and **clean**.
- draw a cloud with a slash through it over the words **profane** and **unclean**, like this: 

DISCUSS

- What charges did God, speaking through Ezekiel, bring against the priests?
- We have seen that the priests were to teach Israel the difference between the clean and unclean. They were taught in Leviticus how they were to live in order to be an example to the nation. From all we have seen so far, were the priests following God's commands? Explain your answer.
- How seriously does God take making the distinction between holy and profane, and why?

EZEKIEL 22:26

Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

LEVITICUS 10:1–5

¹ Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them.

² And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

³ Then Moses said to Aaron, “It is what the LORD spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.’” So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.

OBSERVE

As we’ve seen, it was the duty of the priests to guard the holiness of the nation. By strict obedience to God’s law, they showed themselves to be separate and made a clear distinction between holy and unholy.

Leader: *Read Leviticus 10:1–5 aloud. Have the group...*

- *underline the references to **Nadab** and **Abihu**.*
- *mark every reference to **the Lord**, including pronouns, with a triangle: *

INSIGHT

Nadab and Abihu had been privileged to stand on the holy mount with Moses and their father (Exodus 24:9). Having heard the words of the Law, they knew what God required.

DISCUSS

- Were Nadab and Abihu doing what the Lord had commanded? Explain your answer.

- How does verse 1 describe the fire that they used?
- Was that a problem? Why?
- From what you have seen so far, how would you describe the attitude of Nadab and Abihu?
- Was God pleased with their worship? How did He respond?

INSIGHT

Fire from heaven is used twelve times in the Old Testament—six times as a sign of God’s approval and six times in judgment.

In this context *holy* means to be set apart from the common and to be treated with great respect. The priests treated God as common and with great disrespect.

- God took Nadab and Abihu’s disobedience seriously. Discuss how this relates to us today.

⁴ Moses called also to Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron’s uncle Uzziel, and said to them, “Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp.”

⁵ So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said.

- What was God's command in verse 3?
- Can you walk in disobedience and be in His presence?
- Can you enter God's presence without regard to His holiness? Explain your answer.

ROMANS 15:4

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

OBSERVE

The Old Testament passages we've looked at so far make clear God's concern with separating holy from profane in ancient times. But we need to know whether such distinctions still apply today. Let's look at some New Testament passages to find out.

Leader: Read Romans 15:4.

- Have the group say aloud and draw a squiggly line under the word **written**:



DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking *written*, and how does it relate to our study?

OBSERVE

What does all of this talk about priests have to do with us?

Leader: Read 1 Peter 2:5, 9. Have the group say aloud and...

- circle each occurrence of the pronoun **you**, which refers here to **believers**.
- draw a cloud around the word **holy**.
- put a **P** over the word **priesthood**.

INSIGHT

The word *priesthood* here carries the idea of a fraternity, a body of priests. It is referring to all believers.

DISCUSS

- What did you learn about believers from these verses?
- According to verse 5, as priests what are they called to do?

1 PETER 2:5, 9

⁵ You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

ROMANS 12:1–2

¹ Therefore I [Paul] urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

OBSERVE

Although Jesus' death on the cross ended the need for blood sacrifices once and for all, Christians today are still expected to present sacrifices to God. Let's look at how this ties in to the call to be different from the world around us.

Leader: *Read Romans 12:1–2 aloud. Have the group say and...*

- *circle the pronouns **you** and **your**, which refer here to **believers**.*
- *draw a cloud around the word **holy**.*

DISCUSS

- As a priest, each believer has the incredible privilege of coming into the presence of God, but with that privilege also comes responsibility. What are the responsibilities of the believer-priest?
- If the believer-priest does this, what will the result be? Explain your answer.