

# THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Today is Tuesday, July 16 and we are learning what the Bible says about holiness.

## OPENING PRAYER

*In the morning, I seek the God who loves me. I quiet my mind, calm my breath and focus on the goodness of my Lord and Shepherd. He brings me to green pastures, leads me to still waters and guides me in paths of righteousness. He shows me the way of holiness and strengthens my steps to walk in the way that leads to life. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7***

## REFLECTION

God is a holy God and we are called to be a holy people. Holiness is realized through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in us through grace. John Wesley was the eighteenth century founder of the Methodist movement. The more John Wesley studied the scriptures, the more convinced he was that "holiness of heart and life" was a central theme of the entire Bible. Actually, it is the focus of the Christian life itself. If you read the Bible looking for an emphasis on holiness, you will notice it consistently throughout the pages from beginning to end, Genesis to Revelation.

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he indicates that it is God's will for believers to be sanctified and made holy. As a brother or sister in a community of faith I am a part of a church family and live daily in order to please and honor God. Paul urges me to do this more and more. I gain instruction in God's Word for faithful Christian living - learning to control my thoughts and actions in a manner that is holy and honorable. God calls me to be pure and live a holy and righteous life. Paul clearly declares it is God's will that I should be sanctified - made holy and mature, made to be like Jesus. I cannot even attempt to realize this in my own power, I desperately need the power of sanctifying grace that comes through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's power living in me will enable me to live a truly holy life honoring God. The Holy Spirit leads me in paths of righteousness.

The concept of holiness is consistent throughout the scriptures. God's will is for me to be made holy and perfected in love. I consider the places in my life where God wants to reveal

unrepented sin, impure thoughts or immoral actions. Perhaps God wants to expose self-imposed barriers to my progress in holiness or ways I am not cooperating with his desire to mature me in love. Maybe the Holy Spirit wants to take me by the hand and instruct me in the true meaning of holy living so I am able to please God more and more. Perhaps the Good Shepherd wants to lead me on certain paths and I am resisting choosing to go my own way. What difference would it make for me to wholly trust and obey the God who loves me and guides me?

**Ask:** Do I believe it is God's will that I should mature in holiness? How can I best cooperate with the Holy Spirit's purifying work in my life?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Lord God, you are holy and you call me to be holy. I want to honor and please you, yet I continually fall short and miss the mark of holy living. I ask you to sanctify me in your grace by the power of the Holy Spirit. I wholly surrender myself to you, humbly aware of my helplessness to realize holiness or purity in my own power. Come, Holy Spirit, sanctify me through and through, purify me more and more, and keep me blameless. Reveal the hidden sins that lurk behind the curtain of my heart and expose them to the light of your powerful cleansing grace. I cannot make progress without your consistent labor in the depths of my soul. Amen.*