



## [1 Peter 1:15](#)

(15) but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,  
*New King James Version*

When a person swears by a thing greater than himself, it lends weight to what he says. He means that his word is as certain as the existence and power of the one by whom he is swearing. When one takes an oath by [God](#) or on the Bible, such as in a court of law, men recognize that God Himself makes the oath binding.

God swore by His [holiness](#). "As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." We find here that we are to be holy because He is holy. Holiness, like righteousness, is both imputed by God and achieved by us. Just as the vessels of the Tabernacle and Temple were holy, so are we when we are consecrated, set apart, for God's use upon [conversion](#) ([I Corinthians 3:16](#); [Colossians 1:22](#)). Holiness, however, is more than an imputed state of being. It is a process that we must pursue throughout our Christian lives ([Hebrews 12:14](#)). That is why God admonishes us to become holy, to be holy in our conduct ([Romans 12:1](#); [II Corinthians 7:1](#); [Ephesians 4:24](#); [II Peter 3:11](#); [I John 3:3](#)).

The laws written in Leviticus 19, from which Peter quoted, are injunctions against defiling the mind, character, personality, and attitudes of a person through sins like [idolatry](#) and breaking the [Sabbath](#). God also speaks of taking care of the poor, of not reaping the corners of the fields, and of being just in judgment. He warns against respecting persons and always siding with the disadvantaged (who may be wrong in his cause). He also mentions not eating anything with blood, practicing divination, or soothsaying and so forth. These and other defilements make one unholy, impure, and defiled.

He wants us to be holy because He is with us and *in* us. He does not want to be contaminated by the impurities of His people. God wants to have close contact with His people. "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be

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My people" ([II Corinthians 6:16](#)). If we want to have a [fellowship](#) with Him, we must start to become holy as He is. "'Come out from among them and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you'" ([II Corinthians 6:17](#)).

Israelites, God's people, are advised to be separate so they can avoid every possibility of defilement: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the [fear of God](#)" ([II Corinthians 7:1](#)). *Flesh and spirit* indicates "physical and spiritual" or "body and mind"—one's total personality—outwardly and inwardly in all relations with God and fellow man. Our sanctification, part of which we do, sets us apart to walk the way of holiness.

Holiness is what makes God what He is. It is not an attribute of God like [love](#), [joy](#), or omnipotence. Holiness is the ground, basis, and foundation of God. It is His uniqueness and totality, His deity, and divinity itself. It is the perfect purity of God.

His holiness is symbolized in the construction of the Tabernacle: "The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy" ([Exodus 26:33](#)). A curtain separated the two chambers, and only the high priest could pass through the veil—and then only once a year. The phrase *Most Holy* is literally "holiness of holinesses." It represents the height, the top, the very pinnacle of morality. God was isolated from Israel, not because He was unapproachable, but because He wanted us to see the difference between us and Him. He really is approachable; no one in the universe is more approachable than God. But He is **transcendently superior**.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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