



## [Hebrews 12:14](#)

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

*King James Version*

Of what does [holiness](#) consist? Is it the accumulation of religious knowledge? Many people have labored long to research material for commentaries and other tomes on religious subjects, but does that accumulated knowledge translate into holiness? After three and a half years with [Jesus](#), Judas had undoubtedly accumulated much knowledge, but it did not stop him from betraying his Master. Would Jesus, the Holy One, have betrayed Judas?

The Bible shows that many had long contact with truly godly people, yet never became holy. Joab had an almost lifelong association with [David](#), but he remained a scoundrel to his dying day ([I Kings 2:5-6](#), 28-34). For years, Gehazi served Elisha, but he ended up cursed because of greed ([II Kings 5:20-27](#)). Paul reports that Demas had forsaken him because he loved [the world](#) ([II Timothy 4:10](#)). The rich young ruler, who appears to have been moral and respectable in conduct, asked Jesus what he should do to have [eternal life](#), yet his rejection of His counsel proves that he was not holy at the time ([Matthew 19:16-22](#)).

Were the Jews made holy due to their claim that the Temple of the Lord was in the capital of their nation and [God](#) dwelled there (see Jeremiah 7)? Does this equate to some taking comfort because they are "in the church" and are therefore holy? Later Jews claimed that [Abraham](#) was their father, and that they had "never been in bondage to anyone" ([John 8:33](#)). They were indeed "related" to someone of renown who was holy, but this did not stop Jesus from telling them that their spiritual father was [Satan](#) the Devil!

Demographic categories may play their parts in one's sanctification, but none of them guarantees or makes one holy on its own merits. Holiness is not transferred via a group.

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Each must work with God on achieving it himself.

John Charles Ryle gives the following definition in his book, *Holiness*:

Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God's judgment, hating what He hates, loving what He loves, and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. He who most entirely agrees with God, he is the most holy man. (p. 34)

We must understand more to appreciate more fully what he wrote. Ryle's is only an overall definition because he reveals as he continues that it defines only the overall mindset, foundation, and trigger of the holy person's conduct. Holiness includes both one's mindset and conduct. What good is a mindset without the conduct to give evidence of it?

To paraphrase Ryle's conclusion, a holy person will strive to shun every [sin](#) known to him and to keep every known commandment whether required physically or in spirit. He will have an enthusiastic desire to perform [God's will](#) combined with a greater fear of displeasing God than displeasing the world. Paul writes in [Romans 7:22](#), "I delight in the [law of God](#) according to the inward man." David, too, says, "Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way" ([Psalm 119:128](#)).

Why will this combination of attitude and action exist? Because the holy person will be striving to be like Christ. He will labor to have Christ's mind in him, as Paul admonishes in [Philippians 2:5](#). He will deeply desire to be conformed to His image ([Romans 8:29](#)). Thus, the holy person will bear with others and forgive them, even as Christ bears with and forgives us. He will make every effort to be unselfish, just as Christ did not please Himself, sacrificing Himself for our sakes.

The holy person will endeavor to humble himself and walk in [love](#), as Christ served and made Himself of no reputation. The holy person will remember that Christ was a faithful witness for the [truth](#), that He came not to do His own will but His Father's. He will deny himself in order to minister to others and will be [meek](#) and patient when receiving undeserved insults. On the other hand, Jesus was bold and uncompromising when denouncing sin, yet full of compassion toward the weak.

The holy person will separate himself from the world and be instant in [prayer](#). Christ would not even allow His closest relatives to stand in the way of doing the work He had been given to accomplish. In sum, the holy person will shape his life to walk in the

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footsteps of His Savior, as the apostle John advises in [1 John 2:6](#), "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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