



"Holiness consists simply in doing God's will, and being just what God wants us to be."

—Thérèse de Lisieux

18-Aug-17

## As He Is Holy (Part Two)

In Part One, we briefly examined what [holiness](#) is—"morally and spiritually excellent or perfect, to be revered; belonging to, devoted to, or empowered by [God](#)" (*The Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder*)—and found that God not only declares us holy under the blood of [Christ](#) but also expects us to *become* holy through Christian growth. We also began to consider our reactions to holy things, like the [Sabbath](#) and [holy days](#).

What about our response to God's instructions on tithes and offerings? Do we really believe they are holy to God (see, for instance, [Leviticus 22:15](#); [27:9](#), 28)? The Bible provides a few negative examples in the stories of Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire on the altar ([Leviticus 10:1-3](#)), and of Ananias and Sapphira ([Acts 5:1-11](#)), who lied about their offering. All four died because they failed to respect God's holiness.

An acquaintance of mine once used his second tithe to do some remodeling on his property. Shortly afterward, a flood destroyed the remodeled part of his home. In my experience, many people—most of whom have left the church—stopped tithing when their financial situations took a turn for the worse. They actually hurt themselves more, missing out on the bountiful

blessings God promises to those who tithe faithfully (see [Malachi 3:8-10](#)). God is serious about what He makes holy!

Lately, probably due to our technological advances, some have come to regard God's feasts as less than holy convocations. Someone told me a few years ago that he was not concerned about hearing the [Feast of Tabernacles](#) sermons live because he could just listen to them later online. Another person insisted that God expected us to attend only the two holy days of the fall Feast. Some people keep the Feast on their schedule, and others keep it with a couple of different groups who disagree about when to observe it. As [Judges 21:25](#) says, "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Are we not commanded to keep the Feast to the Lord for seven days with a Sabbath-rest on the first and eighth day ([Leviticus 23:39](#); see [Numbers 29:12](#); [Deuteronomy 16:15](#); [Nehemiah 8:18](#))? Can we keep God's Feast holy when we do it our way rather than His way? Do our advanced electronics change how we are to follow God's law?

Back in the early days of the church, people would do whatever it took to keep the Feast. They would drive their old jalopies hundreds of miles just to get there. Coming from a family of auto mechanics, I wonder how some of these vehicles ever left the driveway, much less made it to the Feast! Then, once they arrived, they lived in tents, went to every service (two per day—and sometimes more), and stood in lines for bathrooms, showers, and food.

Do we truly believe that what God has made holy is sacred to Him? Does it matter to Him? When we ignore or trample on His holy things, how close are we treading on the same ground as Nadab or Ananias? Are we endangering our eternal life?

It is similar to what occurs in the [Parable of the Talents](#) ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)). "Talent," as it is used in this parable, implies a gift from God. We have all been given a tremendous and holy gift from God in the understanding of His truth on how to be holy like God ([Leviticus 11:45](#)). Are we using it or keeping it hidden?

In a sermon at the Feast a few years ago, Mike Ford said that one act of [faith](#) does not make us faithful. In the same way, one act of [love](#), [kindness](#),

sacrifice, or generosity does not make us holy, but one [sin](#) can make us unholy (see [Haggai 2:10-14](#)) and may even cost us our lives. Because God has given us far more than those in [the world](#), we have a great deal more to lose.

Back when I was about seven years old, we played baseball in the street in front of our house practically every day after school. We were lucky enough to have a bat and ball, but none of us had a baseball glove. I wanted one badly, so I would watch the sale paper from Western Auto. Every week, it seems, there it was, the glove of a lifetime—and better yet, it was a Ted Williams Special! But my folks had no money for such things, so it would just have to wait.

A couple of years later, around the time I began playing Little League baseball, I finally got my Ted Williams Special as a gift from my parents. It seemed like I had waited an eternity for it! But now I had my glove, and I took care of it, forming the pocket so that when a baseball came my way, I would catch it just like Ted Williams did. I put it in my bed when going to sleep at night to keep it close to me. It became a part of me on the field, responding to my every command. Whether right, left, up, down, side to side, over, and under, it never let me down, performing just as I wanted it to.

I do not recall my glove ever being jealous of another glove. My glove never talked negatively about or attacked another glove on the team. It never fought with me or complained about catching a ball. It never tried to take a ball from another glove. It never tried to turn the other gloves against me. It performed right alongside all the others on the team harmoniously, and in fact, it glorified me! We could say it was "holy" to me. The more I used it, the more it submitted, becoming an extension of me. Is this not analogous to what God wants of us?

In [Ezekiel 36:22-23](#), we find the house of Israel in a scattered condition and God's regathering of them is yet future:

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my

great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. (*English Standard Version*)

The Hebrew word rendered "vindicate the holiness of" here (*qadesh*, "to be holy") is elsewhere translated as "sanctify," "hallow," "consecrate," or "magnify." God will take it upon Himself to show the rest of the world His holiness, which Israel has failed to do throughout its history. But He has called others, the spiritual [Israel of God](#) ([Galatians 6:16](#)), and by striving to become holy as He is holy, they will also magnify His great name through their [faithfulness](#) to Him and His way of life.

As the apostle Peter writes, "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy' ([1 Peter 1:15-16](#)). If we allow God to use us, keeping His laws as He has commanded—not just once but in all our conduct—we will be holy as He is holy.

- Ronny H. Graham

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Holiness \(Part 2\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

God must be considered in a class apart, incomparable, and unapproachable in the sense that there is nobody anywhere that even comes close to being like Him (Exodus 15:11). Our responsibility is to reveal to the people of Israel (primarily) the holiness of God and the direction of life God requires of them for being chosen. Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God. In contrast, low views of God will destroy those who hold them because these idolatrous thoughts are unworthy of Him. Holy things are set apart from the rest, consecrated, sanctified, and transcendently separate. God wants to transform us into that very image.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Preparing for the Feast](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

It is a rare individual in God's church who does not enjoy keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Each feast becomes "the best Feast ever!" But why does God want us to keep this Feast? John Ritenbaugh shows that the Feast of Tabernacles is far more than a yearly vacation. It is a time set apart for both rejoicing before God and learning to fear Him.

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