

## The More Excellent Way- Week 5 Walking in Holiness

enables us to progress in our journey to holiness as we partner with God. We have many steps by which we grow and change and are transformed along this road. *Which of these 3 have you already taken? Share the experience.*

**Child Dedication-** Child dedication is an act of parents who bring their child before the church congregation to publicly declare that the child belongs to God and that the parents desire to raise their child to understand and follow the things of God.

*15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. - Mark 10:15-16 NIV*

**Baptism-** Once we become new creations "in Christ" our allegiance to everything else becomes secondary and our lives should reflect Jesus to the world. We declare this through our baptism.

*4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. - Romans 6:4 NIV*

**Membership-** In Crash Course, you will grow as a disciple of Christ, learn about the heartbeat of our church, and be equipped to serve + change our communities!

*46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, - Acts 2:46 NIV*

What is your next step in this journey?

### WRAP-UP

As we conclude our series on sanctification and holiness, we reflect on what it means to live as a "living sacrifice," continually surrendered to God's will. Holiness is not simply about following rules, but about being set apart for God's purposes through daily worship, service, and transformation by the Holy Spirit. We celebrated memberships, child dedications, and baptisms as powerful expressions of commitment to God and one another. We are challenged us to examine areas where faith has become routine, resist conformity to worldly patterns, and take intentional next steps in our spiritual journey like child dedication, baptism, membership, and deeper surrender to God.

### MEMORY VERSE

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship.- Romans 12:1-2 NIV*

**Challenge** – Identify and area of faith that has become routine. Offer it to God again, and ask Him to reawaken your heart.

### INTRODUCTION

At New Life this Sunday we celebrated new memberships, child dedications and baptisms. All of these events represent a commitment to God and one another. As we close out our sermon series on sanctification and holiness, we want to address what it means to live a sanctified life, walking in holiness. What does it look like to live a life of continuous surrender to the will of God? This Sunday's celebration was a demonstration of some of the ways we walk in holiness, continuously seeking to do God's will.

### Ice Breaker

What are the predictable, "rituals" that you follow every day? (Check your messages? Play an online game? Walk the dog?)

### Key Passage

*1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. - Romans 12:1-2 NIV*

### STUDY QUESTIONS

#### 1. A Living Sacrifice

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship Romans 12:1-2 NIV*

In his letter to the Romans, Paul beseeches the church to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice. The idea here is that we hold nothing back, total commitment, your "whole self" is the living sacrifice. The animals being offered in the temple as a sacrifice did not remain alive. In

contrast, the sacrifice Paul calls us to make is a continuous sacrifice throughout our lifetime; a living sacrifice.

*Paul says it is because of God's mercy that we should offer our bodies as living sacrifices. Sometimes people mistake God's judgment and wrath for a lack of mercy. How has God displayed his mercy to you individually? How does God's mercy affect your decision to offer yourself to Him completely? What would you expect to happen if God were not merciful?*

Paul says the body we offer as a living sacrifice is to be holy. If we thought holiness means following the rules, and being on our best behavior, then Paul is calling us to improved performance. But we have learned that being holy (Gr. *hagios*) fundamentally means separated or set apart for God's purposes. It is not our behavior that makes us holy, it is our decision to totally surrender our lives to God that makes us holy and our behavior is the indicator of our holiness as we are led and empowered by the Spirit of God daily.

*15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. - Hebrews 13:15-16 NIV*

*37 Jesus replied: " Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' - Matthew 22:37-39 NIV*

Paul calls our sacrifice "true and proper worship." The word translated as "worship" in Rom 12:1 is *latreia* meaning "rendering service to God." In the King James Bible it is even translated as "your reasonable service". Worship is not a moment, it is not to be offered one hour on Sunday and forgotten. Our continual, living sacrifice is offering ourselves in service to God daily; it is a way of life.

*The author of Hebrews tells us to continually offer God a sacrifice of praise (specifically offering thanks) What else are we told not to forget to do? In light of what Jesus said were the two greatest commandments, why would you expect this to typify a holy life? You can begin right now by offering up a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God.*

Our empowerment to serve God, to live aligned with His will, comes from continual surrender of our lives to Him. It is our daily intentional submission to God that enables us to grow in our journey to holiness.

## **2. Transformed not Conformed**

Faith requires a long obedience in the same direction, daily commitment, and intentionality. While our desire is to be faithful, over time we may slip into patterns that become predictable, but not alive, routine rather than reverent. Our faith which was once vibrant may feel dull and lifeless.

*Are there areas of your life where you see yourself settling for survival instead of surrender? Where is your faith more routine than reverent?*

*2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. - Romans 12:2 NIV*

If you have identified areas where you need to reawake your faith, God is not inviting you to start over but to go deeper and draw closer. To resist whatever may seek to shape you into the patterns of our culture and refocus your view on the Holy God who loves you.

*Conformity to the world happens naturally. What does Paul suggest as the defense against it? It is the power and the presence of God that transforms us with a renovation of our understanding. What are the patterns of this world that you see pressing you to conform to cultural norms that don't align with God's will? How can you minimize that pressure and increase God's access into your life so that you can be transformed by Him.*

*List some of the reasons that God is worthy of our worship and should fill us with awe and wonder. Allow yourself to be amazed once again that the Creator of the universe loves you and sacrificed Himself for you.*

## **3. Next Steps in Walking in Holiness**

We worship and serve a righteous, holy and loving God. But to draw near to God we must be holy as He is holy. There will be opposition and the journey isn't always easy. But it is the power of the Holy Spirit in us that