

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart January 2025

Holiness for the New Year

by Steve Huston



This past year, like most preceding years, finds the term “decency” having its definition changed by society and that same society looks down on and actively demeans the old definition; the same is being done to the term “holiness” by those in the organized church. Some sections of society and the church hold steadfastly to what was once known as “decency” and “holiness,” but these changes affect – to some degree – all who are a part of society and the church. While it’s impossible to “turn the clock back,” we can “set the clock aright.” I’m not advocating for a worship of tradition; I’m urging us to get back to biblical basics and living as God has called us to live – a life which glorifies God through obedience to His

Word and His call to personal holiness.

Many balk at true holiness, stating, “I don’t want anyone living or dead telling me how to live my life,” yet this call to personal holiness is found in both the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 20:7; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). It’s a call for every area of our lives – personal, family, work, entertainment, etc. As Joel Beeke and Michael Barrett write in their introduction to A Radical, Comprehensive Call to Holiness: “*The divine call to holiness is a daily task involving the core of religious faith and practice. Calvin said, ‘The whole life of Christians ought to be a sort of practice of godliness, for we have been called to sanctification.’ Holiness is the commitment of the whole life to live Godward – to be set apart to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.*”

This “holiness” isn’t a list of dos and don’ts that we adhere to so that we’ll be accepted; it’s a life to be lived because we’ve been

transformed by Christ. In other words, it’s not simply a theology; it’s a daily experience of loving God with all that we are and loving our neighbor as ourselves, because of God’s grace working in us and through us.

I never heard my godly grandmother say a negative word about anyone or complain about the hardships she endured. Why? Because that’s who Grandma was IN CHRIST; there was a trust that God knew best. My mother exuded positive and encouraging words. Regardless the situation, she would point others to her loving Saviour. Why? Because that’s who Mom was IN CHRIST; even though she was misdiagnosed which brought her to an “early” death, she believed Romans 8:28 and every other promise or command in God’s Word. Space does not permit me to give the details of my father or other men and women who exemplified godly, daily living in younger and older years alike because they had

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experienced the transforming power of Christ and lived out personal lives of holiness before a watching world.

The Scriptures we read and the hymns we sing are more than just mere words that describe a theology our minds agree with; they are words to live by and to be encouraged by, all to God's glory because of His grace and His Spirit living in us, moving us, perfecting us. As Oswald Chambers reminds us, we are not to be merely imitators of God's holiness but we are to BE holy AS God is holy; a transformation has taken place. "When Jesus saves us, He destroys the personality of sin and gives us a personality of holiness." (Chambers)

I have attempted to pass on a life of holiness to my children through family devotions; monitoring what they read, watch, or listen to; give guidance in extra-curricular activities

and friendships – all the while giving them more liberties and responsibilities as they grow. I tell them my expectations; during those times and their times of questioning, we look to the Bible and ask, "What does the Bible say about that?" I want my children to be used of the Lord, so I take my responsibility to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" seriously (Eph. 6:4). Yet, they, like all of us, grow up and choose for themselves if they will follow a Biblical standard of holiness or a standard of their own.

In dealing with adult children or our community, a life of holiness includes holding up the banner of Light and urging all men to live as rightful "image-bearers" of God, that He may receive greater glory. In John Wesley's message *The Wilderness State*, he warns regarding sins of omission: "Now, if we hate our brother in our heart, or do not rebuke him when we see him in a fault, poverty will soon seep into our own soul, and we become partakers of his sin. By neglecting to reprove our neighbor, we make his sin our own.

We become accountable for it to God. We saw his danger and gave him no warning..." **Is this why the church is less effective today?** This is why the American Decency Association warns, educates, stirs: we desire to hold the Lamp of Holiness high, that men would be directed to our Heavenly Father, our Saviour, the guiding influence and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

I leave you with a New Year's challenge from John Wesley's message "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount": "Today, do and accept His will. Today, give up yourself – your body, soul, and spirit – to God through Jesus. Desire nothing but that God may be glorified in all that you are, all you do, and all that you suffer. Seek nothing but to know God and His Son Jesus through the eternal Holy Spirit. Pursue nothing other than to love Him, to serve Him, and to enjoy Him in this hour and all eternity." This is a challenge to personal holy living. Lived out, this will change our families, our communities, our state, and, eventually, our nation.



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