**Living a Holy Life**

 **I Peter 1:13-25**

Peter Flannery wrote, “In our impure state, we cannot have a close connection with God. For He is holy and we are contaminated. We think of God as angry and standoffish when he appeared to Israel with thunder and lightning on Mt. Sinai. Yet we do the same thing in certain situations.

When my wife and I feed our 5 grandkids (all under 5), I sometimes wish I had a Hazmat suit for the task! During the feeding frenzy, which calls for close contact, I want to stay as far back as possible from the contamination. They must think that pizza grease really is good hair tonic or that alfredo sauce will absorb through their clothes and skin for needed nourishment. We consider the evening a great success if we only have to spot clean a few splotches out of our clothes.

I can certainly understand God's need to stay distant and standoffish - at least until He fixes our contamination problem.

But God does not want to remain standoffish. Which is why He provides imputed righteousness to all who believe in Christ. At the moment someone places their faith in Jesus as Savior, a great transfer takes place. Their contamination is exchanged for Jesus' purity!  As the Scriptures promise, "God made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus!" 2 Corinthians 5:21.

To avoid returning to the messy and impure temptations of life, God invites us to walk in HOLINESS by the power of His Spirit.

 Each New Year, I have seen commercials about GOLO, Weight Watchers plus and Noom. All of these are programs that should help us to get healthier. These initiatives and other opportunities we see offered might encourage us to think about New Year’s Resolutions. I, in the past have made resolutions but don’t ever remember following through with them completely. Start off in a good way, but end up going in a different direction than anticipated. Yet, there have been other times I have fulfilled the goals that God has given to me.

Well, instead of or in addition to making resolutions this year, let us decide to focus on deepening our relationship with God that can enhance our spiritual health. Decide to develop and expand upon these holy practices, which aren’t based on temporary gratification. These aspects of holy living that we will participant in throughout our lifetime are ones that will bring everlasting and eternal changes. These habits will benefit us for the rest of our lives. God is a holy God and expects us to live a holy life. There are several aspects to living a holy life that we should follow as we have participated in the Wesleyan Covenant Service today, it is a time to be reminded of the commitment we have made with and to God. This covenant should prompt us to do a deeper spiritual examination and draw closer to God.

1. Called by God to Live a Holy Life
2. Holy Means
3. Righteous
4. Godly
5. Pious
6. Pure
7. Faithful
8. Spiritual Practices to Living Holy
9. Prayer
10. Constant communication with God.
11. Jesus took the time to get away to pray.
12. Seek God in the morning and throughout the day.
13. Sometimes people say I don’t want to bother God by asking him for the little things in life.
14. Talk to God about everything in your life from finding a parking space, to what to cook for dinner, to praying for your children, grandchildren and world peace.
15. Study
16. Learn to study the Word.
17. Everybody should have their own bible.
18. This year commit to reading some portions of the bible every day or almost every day.
19. Read your Upper Room, Our Daily Bread or another devotional book.
20. Participate in Sunday school, bible study on Tuesday at 2pm or Wednesday nights at 6:30pm. Call me to discuss the bible on occasions or with a friend where the two of you can read scripture and/or do a devotional together, pray and talk about it.
21. Pick up a bible study book at the Christian Bookstore and do it on your own.
22. Choose a word this year that you can focus on and study that word each day or as often as you can. This year I just started this habit and I chose the word trust. In addition to the other studies I am doing, I will be reading on “Trusting God”, a devotional book by Joyce Meyers and “Trustworthy”, a bible study by Lysa Terkerust
23. Serve and Give
24. Find ways to offer your service to God.
25. Even though we are in the midst of a pandemic, some people are still serving at the Soup Kitchen and I know a friend who is serving at a homeless shelter. Serve in ways where you can feel protected from the virus but still able to use your God given talents.
26. People still need clothes at Goodwill, Salvation Army or Homeless Shelters and others are keeping the blessing box full.
27. As holy people we learn to serve and give to the best of our ability.
28. Ardath Pretznow, a person on our sick and shut-ins list, would love cards and letters sent to her. She just moved and you can get the address from the church office.
29. Hazel Miller, who lives in the Lodges of Durand, a senior care facility, would love to get cards and letters, because we can’t visit.
30. Listen to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit
31. Seeking and Obeying the Will of God.
32. Surrendering our will.
33. Dying to self and opening ourselves to the Spirit of God.
34. Listening and learning to discern the voice of God.
35. Total trust in God
36. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6
37. Builds Intimacy with God.
38. Creates a deep bond with the Lord.
39. Know and believe that God will do what is right by us even in the midst of the storm.
40. Trials, tribulations, grief, pain occurs but, God never leaves us in the midst of the trying times.
41. Love deeply
42. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.
Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Proverbs 3:3-4
43. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. I John 4:16
44. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. I Peter 4:8
45. Love that sacrifices.
46. Love that epitomizes the love of God.
47. Love, which is unconditional.
48. Love that never fails.

Practice these ways of living a holy life, as a means to seeking first the kingdom of God and all things will be added to you.