

A People Acceptable To God

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Introduction: How can we identify one who is a child of God? Look at the heart!

- A. The answer to this question reveals the answer to life itself! **(Rom 12:1-2)**
 - 1. Do you often think of things as being acceptable to God?
 - 2. We are living sacrifices, offering ourselves to God each day. Is it acceptable?
- B. We should view every moment this life as an offering of our hearts to God.
 - 1. What does it mean to be a Christian? **(1 Pt 2:4-5)**
 - 2. Remember that God does not accept most sacrifices offered to Him! We must first look to Him in humility and seek His ways.

I. God's Standard is Holiness

- A. We are to be holy because God is holy. **(1 Pt 1:14-16)**
 - 1. The root idea of holy is to be "set apart" with the idea of perfection and purity.
 - 2. God is the standard of holiness.

"Holy is the way God is. To be holy he does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because he is holy, all his attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy." - A. W. Tozer

- B. The only issue at judgement day is the issue of holiness. **(Heb 12:14)**
 - 1. Why did Paul write what he did to Christians? **(Eph 5:27; Col 1:21-23)**
 - 2. There is a widely accepted form of religion that laughs off any standards as "legalistic" while claiming to serve God. What does God accept?
 - 3. Our ability to deal with false doctrine and their movements should be evidence of a desire for holiness. **(2 Cor 11:2-4)**
- C. We are made holy and then are to live an holy life.
 - 1. In our conversion we are made holy by forgiveness. To be a saint is to be holy! **(1 Cor 1:2; 1 Pt 1:2)**
 - 2. We are to pursue forgiveness daily as we also walk in the light! **(1 Jn 1:5-9)**

II. Holiness must begin in the heart

- A. It is easy to substitute that which man sees for that which God sees. **(2 Cor 10:12, 18)**
 - 1. Why did the Pharisees act as they did? **(Mt 15:8-9)**
 - 2. In the Old Testament we find men who tried to substitute worship for holiness. **(Prov 21:2-3; Jer 6:20-21; Mal 1:8-10,13)**
 - 3. These are the carnal men in the church who view worship as entertainment. They will have many false standards but have no control of their hearts.
- B. The battle for holiness can only be fought without watering down the standard.
 - 1. The Pharisees even mocked God's standard. **(Lk 16:13-14)**
 - 2. It takes great humility to seek God's will without change! Only with this attitude can He bring change to our hearts. **(Prov 16:2; Mt 15:18-19)**
 - 3. A holy life will be willing to make great sacrifices. **(Mat 5:28-30; 2Cor 6:17-7:1)**

"It is not difficult in our world to get a person interested in the message of the Gospel; it is terrifically difficult to sustain the interest. Millions of people in our culture make decisions for Christ, but there is a dreadful attrition rate. Many claim to have been born again, but

the evidence for mature Christian discipleship is slim. In our kind of culture anything, even news about God, can be sold if it is packaged freshly; but when it loses its novelty, it goes on the garbage heap. There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations of Christians called holiness.” -- A Long Obedience In the Same Direction

C. We find strength in the example of Christ. (**Heb 12:2-4**)

III. We need the wisdom to stay holy.

A. It takes time to be holy. (**Eph 5:15-17**)

“Although we become Christians instantaneously by faith in Christ, knowing God and developing faith is a gradual process. There are no shortcuts to maturity. It takes time to be holy.” - Erwin W. Lutzer

1. The battle to grow in love and to hate sin takes time! Impatience has caused many to quit. (**Heb 10:36-37**)
2. There is also an improper understanding of forgiveness that causes some to be overwhelmed and quit. (**2 Cor 2:7,10-11**)
3. If we are overconfident we will find ourselves confronted with new temptations unprepared!

B. A willingness to study and be corrected. (**1 John 3:1-3**)

1. Many Christians have given in to the “positive Christianity” philosophy.
2. When open study is feared and a proper rebuke despised, we no longer have a desire to be holy.

“Before we can be filled with the Spirit, the desire to be filled must be all-consuming. It must be for the time the biggest thing in the life, so acute, so intrusive as to crowd out everything else. The degree of fullness in any life accords perfectly with the intensity of true desire. We have as much of God as we actually want.” - A. W. Tozer

C. A hatred of sin. (**Heb 10:26-31**)

1. Our society has developed a hatred for standards. How can we be entertained by much of what is shown on television?
2. We will use our tongues in a way to show holiness. (**Prov 10:30-31**)

D. A deep respect for the choices of God. (**Col 2:18-19**)

1. Why have many churches neglected to teach on Bible authority?
2. Why are many Christians offended at Bible teaching on modest dress and modern dancing? Are we the people of God?
3. We are seeking to live in the way revealed by God! What do brethren mean when they ask: “Is the church building holy?”

E. A strong purpose in living. (**1 Pet 1:15-16**)

F. A love to worship a holy God.

1. In worship we see God in a way to transform us. (**Psa 19:13-14**)
2. Do you take delight in worship? (**Psa 1:1-3; 122:1**)

Conclusion: One day we all will want to be acceptable to God. (**2 Cor 5:10**)

“Holiness has love for its essence, humility for its clothing, the good of others as its employment, and the honor of God as its end.” - Nathanael Emmons