

Living New | Week 3

Sanctification: Pursuing Holiness as a Beloved Child

Ask your group members to share something that especially stood out to them, that especially encouraged them, or that they found especially helpful from the message or FONL study material this week. If your group is large, you may only have time for four or five responses.

Ask the group members to read aloud a few verses about holiness: 1 Peter 1:14-16, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, and Hebrews 12:14. Have someone in the group to open your time in prayer, asking God to give you insights regarding the pursuit of holiness. Ask him/her to use the verses as the basis for the prayer.

Ask your group members to define holiness. On a large Post-it, write down some of their main observations so that you basically build a group definition for holiness/sanctification. Make sure that the definition reflects the concepts of righteousness, being set apart, and purity. Keep that definition up throughout your session. You will refer back to it during the closing prayer.

Spend some time reading through A.W. Tozer's description (found in Week 3, Day 2) of the holiness of God from *The Knowledge of the Holy*. Write down on a large Post-it the seven responses to God's holiness that are listed in the lesson. Ask the members of your group which 2-3 responses are most needed in their lives. Make a mental note to follow up with each person one-on-one.

Help the members of your group understand that they are saints of God. To do this, use a large Post-it. Draw two hearts on the Post-it. Inside one draw a question mark (?). Tell them that it represents the person who questions his/her status before God. "Am I saved? Am I loved? Am I worthy? Am I a saint?" Spend some time talking about why it might be difficult for that person with a "?" heart to live a holy life. Inside the other heart draw an exclamation point (!). This represents the person who is sure of his/her status before God. "I am saved! I am secure! I am worthy! I am loved! I am a saint!" Discuss how knowing this actually helps someone pursue sanctification and holiness better.

Ask your group to identify what some questionable activities might be—those activities that are not explicitly condemned in the Scriptures, but which have become controversial for Christians to participate in. Using the list of "13 Questions to Evaluate Questionable Activities" (found in Week 3, Day 4) as a guide, create your group's list of the top five questions to evaluate whether or not to engage in questionable activities.

On a large Post-it, draw two pots, one standing upright and one tipped over. Read Galatians 5:22-23. Talk through the illustration in the material "When You Are Tipped Over." Explain how the pressures of life actually reveal what is going on inside of us. Explain that holiness means that love, joy, and peace will come out of our lives during pressured moments if we are truly holy. Ask the group what those closest to them would say comes out of them when they are under pressure. Discuss why it is so hard to be holy at home, especially when things go wrong. Ask the group to discuss how they might become more motivated to pursue holiness at home.

Talk about how important it is to remain connected to Jesus as the Vine in order to produce the fruit of holiness. On a large Post-it, do your best to draw a vine with a branch growing from it. Read John 15:5. Draw some grapes growing from the branch. Try to answer the question, "Which branch bears the most fruit?" Try to illustrate on your drawing that the deepest, widest, purest, and most consistently connected branches are the ones who bear the most fruit. Ask the members of your group to share practical ideas on how we can be more deeply, more widely, more purely, and more consistently connected to the life of Christ. Make the point that this is how we must bear the fruit of holiness—the fruit of the Spirit—in our lives.

Based on the LifeGroup lesson, add any observations to the definition of holiness you developed earlier.

Ask one of your group members to close the time in prayer while referring to this definition of sanctification/holiness as a basis for the closing prayer.