

THE BUILD & DEFEND SERIES

FORTIFYING THE WALLS OF HOLINESS LIVING

A SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Introduction

Welcome to “Living in Holiness: A Journey of Transformation,” an exciting and engaging youth Bible study series that invites you to embark on a transformative exploration of holiness and its profound significance in your daily life. In a world brimming with distractions and challenges, this series is designed to equip you with the knowledge, inspiration, and practical tools to lead a life that mirrors the holiness of God.

Throughout this enriching journey, we will delve into five thoughtfully crafted lessons, each focusing on a distinct facet of holiness. Together, we will uncover the foundational principles of holiness, explore the vital role of self-control, obedience, and self-denial, and learn how to infuse holiness into every aspect of our lives.

Lesson 1: The Foundations of Holiness – Discover the roots of holiness, dispel common misconceptions, and explore the biblical definitions that shape our understanding. We'll also discuss the relevance of holiness in the lives of today's youth and delve into key scriptures that illuminate this concept.

Lesson 2: Self-Control in Holy Living – Explore the importance of self-control in maintaining a life of holiness, acknowledging the battlefield of the mind, and understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding our choices. We'll also address external influences and dive into relevant scriptures.

Lesson 3: Obedience and the Denial of Selfish Desires – Learn that obedience is not blind submission but a conscious choice to align with God's will. We'll discuss the role of a thriving relationship with God and the significance of self-denial in our pursuit of holiness, accompanied by relevant scriptures.

Lesson 4: Holiness in Everything We Do – Understand that being a Christian is a full-time commitment and explore how making God the center of our lives impacts our daily actions. We'll share practical tips for embedding holiness into our daily routines, accompanied by relevant scriptures.

Lesson 5: Reflecting the Image: Identifying with God's Holiness – Discover the profound truth that we are made in the image of God and explore the concept of sanctification as a vital component of our Christian journey. We'll delve into the desire to reflect God's holiness and explore relevant scriptures.

Each lesson will engage your mind and spirit through icebreakers, central verses, in-depth discussions, and practical action items. Our aim is to create a space for open and meaningful discussions that address your questions, challenges, and aspirations related to living a holy life.

Our collective prayer is that, as we journey together, you will not only gain a deeper understanding of holiness but also cultivate a more profound relationship with God. May you discover how to lead a life that authentically reflects His holiness in every facet of your existence.

Let's embark on this transformative journey together, as we seek to embrace holiness and allow it to mold us into the image of our holy and loving God.

Lesson 1: The Foundations of Holiness

1. Hook/Ice Breaker

Activity: Word Cloud on Holiness

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to say or write down words they associate with “holiness.”
2. Collectively display these words to create a word cloud.

2. Central Verse: 1 Peter 3:15 - “But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.”

3. Body of the Lesson

A. Misconceptions about Holiness

- Discuss the common misconceptions about holiness, highlighting how it’s viewed as outdated or related to legalism.

B. Biblical Understanding of Holiness

- Dive into the biblical definitions: Hebrew *qadosh* (separation, different, not alike) and Greek *Hagios* (separated unto God).

C. Importance of Holiness for Today’s Youth

- Address the pressing questions youths have about holiness and its relevance in their lives.

4. Additional Scriptures on Holiness

1. **Leviticus 11:44** - “For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.”
2. **Hebrews 12:14** - “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”

5. Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think holiness has become a misunderstood concept over time?
2. How can understanding the biblical definition of holiness change our approach to it?
3. Why is holiness crucial in our walk with Christ?

6. Closer

A. Action Item:

Write down 3 practical ways you can practice holiness this week.

B. Focus for the Closing Prayer:

“Lord, help us to understand and embrace the true meaning of holiness. As we navigate our lives, may we reflect Your purity and righteousness in all we do.”

Lesson 2: Self-Control in Holy Living

1. Hook/Ice Breaker

Activity: The Marshmallow Test

Instructions:

1. Give each participant a marshmallow.
2. Tell them they can eat it now, or if they wait 5 minutes without eating it, they'll get another one.

2. Central Verse: 1 Peter 3:13 - "So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control."

3. Body of the Lesson

A. The Mind as the Battlefield

- Discuss how our minds are the central place where decisions are made and how self-control starts with our thoughts.

B. The Role of the Holy Spirit

- Delve into how the Holy Spirit can guide our choices, thoughts, and actions, leading us toward holiness.

C. The Impact of External Influences

- Address how external factors, like media and peer pressure, can influence our choices and the need for self-control.

4. Additional Scriptures on Self-Control

1. **Galatians 5:22-23** - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."
2. **Proverbs 25:28** - "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls."

5. Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think self-control is vital in leading a holy life?
2. How do you usually respond to external pressures that try to influence your choices?
3. In what areas of your life do you struggle with self-control, and how can you invite the Holy Spirit to guide you?

6. Closer

A. Action Item:

Identify one area in your life where you need to exercise self-control and pray about it daily.

B. Focus for the Closing Prayer:

"God, grant us the strength to exercise self-control in our daily lives, that we may align our choices with Your will and reflect Your holiness."

Lesson 3: Obedience and the Denial of Selfish Desires

1. Hook/Ice Breaker

Activity: "The Obedience Challenge"

Instructions:

1. Set up a simple obstacle course.
2. Blindfold a participant and guide them through it only using your voice.

2. Central Verse: 1 Peter 3:14 - "So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires."

3. Body of the Lesson

A. Obedience as a Choice

- Discuss how obedience isn't about blind submission but a conscious decision to align with God's will.

B. The Relationship Factor

- Delve into how our obedience flows out of our relationship with God and our desire to please Him.

C. Denying Self for Christ

- Explore the challenge of self-denial in our modern culture and how it's essential for our growth in Christ.

4. Additional Scriptures on Obedience and Self-Denial

1. **John 14:15** - "If you love me, keep my commands."
2. **Luke 9:23** - "Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'"

5. Discussion Questions

1. What does true obedience to God look like in our daily lives?
2. How can we cultivate a stronger relationship with God to foster genuine obedience?
3. In what ways can we practice self-denial in our pursuit of holiness?

6. Closer

A. Action Item:

For one week, intentionally give up something you desire (e.g., a favorite snack or activity) and use that time or craving as a reminder to pray or read Scripture.

B. Focus for the Closing Prayer:

"Lord, instill in us a heart of obedience and guide us as we deny ourselves to pursue Your path of holiness. Help us prioritize Your will above our desires."

Lesson 4: Holiness in Everything We Do

1. Hook/Ice Breaker

Activity: "A Day in the Life"

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to list down their daily activities.
2. Discuss which activities help them feel close to God and which might pull them away.

2. Central Verse: 1 Peter 3:15 - "But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy."

3. Body of the Lesson

A. Being a Full-time Follower of Christ

- Discuss how being a Christian isn't just a Sunday affair but a daily commitment.

B. God as our Priority

- Emphasize that making God the center of our lives means that every action, no matter how small, reflects His holiness.

C. Practical Holiness in Daily Life

- Share practical tips and habits that can help embed holiness into our daily routines.

4. Additional Scriptures on Holiness in Action

1. **Colossians 3:17** - "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
2. **Romans 12:1** - "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."

5. Discussion Questions

1. How can you ensure that God remains the focus in all your activities?
2. What daily habits can you adopt to reflect holiness in your everyday life?
3. Can you share a personal experience where being mindful of holiness in a mundane task brought you closer to God?

6. Closer

A. Action Item:

For the next week, start each day with a prayer to dedicate all activities to God. At the end of the day, reflect on how this changed your perspective.

B. Focus for the Closing Prayer:

"Heavenly Father, guide us to find holiness in every moment of our day. Let our actions, big or small, reflect Your love and purity. We seek to honor You in everything we do."

Lesson 5: Reflecting the Image: Identifying with God's Holiness

1. Hook/Ice Breaker

Activity: "Mirror Mirror"

Instructions:

1. Provide each participant with a small mirror.
2. Ask them to look at their reflection and think about what they see beyond the physical.

2. Central Verse: 1 Peter 3:16 - "For the Scriptures say, 'You must be holy because I am holy.'"

3. Body of the Lesson

A. Made in His Image

- Discuss the profound truth that we are made in the image of God and its implications.

B. The Process of Sanctification

- Dive deeper into the concept of sanctification and its importance in the believer's life.

C. The Desire to Reflect God's Holiness

- Discuss the importance of genuinely desiring to be like Christ and how that impacts our actions.

4. Additional Scriptures on Reflecting God's Holiness

1. **Genesis 1:27** - "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."
2. **2 Corinthians 3:18** - "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

5. Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways you consciously try to reflect God's holiness in your daily life?
2. Describe a time when you felt particularly close to God and saw a change in your actions because of it.
3. How can we encourage and support one another in our journeys of sanctification and reflecting God's holiness?

6. Closer

A. Action Item:

Holiness Reflection Journal: Start a journal where you document daily instances where you felt you reflected God's holiness, challenges you faced, and prayers for guidance.

B. Focus for the Closing Prayer:

"Lord, as we strive to reflect Your holiness, draw us closer to You. May our lives be a shining example of Your nature and love. Guide us in our journey of sanctification, and let our deepest desire be to mirror Your holiness in all we do. Amen."