



The Importance of Holiness

In 1 Thessalonians 4, the apostle calls for them to live holy lives, sanctified before God. This *“is the will of God.”* People today talk of prudish times of the past, and revel in the idea of liberty and freedom to pursue their own fleshly desires. To be celibate, or committed to your spouse alone is becoming more and more rare.

But, this is not a matter of preference or culture. It comes from God Himself. Notice the following:

“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 4:7-8).

Our commitment to live holy lives comes from our call as disciples of the Lord. We are to be holy. What do you think about that? Are you accepting of it, or does it seem too strict and against nature?

If you reject the call to holiness, you are not just making a choice to do as you wish. Instead, you are rejecting God. He has revealed His righteousness in His word. To reject its teaching is to reject the Author Himself.

Don’t be as the Romans in your approach to godliness. *“...Although they knew God they did not glorify Him as God... but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools...”* (Rom. 21-22).



Continuing in Sin

It is sad that a statement by Paul *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”* (Romans 6:1-2), should need explanation and defense. And yet, because of error and the current cultural climate, it certainly does.

Paul taught salvation by grace, which just about every religious person believes. He taught that sin precludes any individual being saved by perfect obedience, which just about every religious person accepts as a true statement. Here he taught that continuing to sin after being saved by grace was unacceptable. This truth, which is clearly stated, can't be accepted by individuals who believe the Calvinistic precept of the Perseverance of the Saints, colloquially known as “Once saved always saved.”

Where Calvin and other theologians contend that God's sovereignty requires that the *elect* be secure in their standing with God, Paul argued otherwise. Calvinism teaches that God's sovereignty posits that God's control of redemption requires man have no part at all in it. He is saved only because God chose to save him. So, if God made the choice, the decision is permanent and immutable. This means it matters not if we continue to sin after receiving God's grace. The remission of our sins is accomplished exclusively by Him, and so our continued standing is purely in His hands as well.

So, where Paul said we can't continue to sin after our salvation, others say doing so will not impact our standing with God. It is a position that brings false comfort, but that comfort is something that many cling to, whether the doctrine it's based upon is legitimate or

1 John 2:12-14

Mining the Scriptures

There are several ways to explain the text. The most simple is to consider that John is writing to three groups of Christians, little children, young men, and fathers. It is not dogmatic, but Barnes suggests years to approximate 20 & below, 20-40, & above 40.

The little children (note, there are two different words translated in this way in 12a and 13b which may or may not have any significance), are told by John he writing was *"because your sins are forgiven you"* and *"because you have known the Father."* John was certainly writing to young Christians to mature them in faith.

Young men, *"because you have overcome the wicked one,"* and *"because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one."* This indicates valiant and strong Christians, who receive strength from John's words.

Fathers, *"because you have known Him who is from the beginning."* This is repeated twice, a confirmation of their long held faith, close acquaintance, and trust in God the Father.

not. And it is not! Paul wrote, *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (6:4).

The possibility of a Christian losing his salvation because of returning to sin is all too real. Peter agreed with Paul, *"For it would have been better for them not have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire'"* (2 Peter 3:21-22).

The Christian life is a beginning! Our standing is not immutable until judgment! (Hebrews 9:27). God requires his disciples live a holy, sanctified life! (Romans 12:1-2).

Seven Sons of Sceva

There are many passages of scripture that tangentially teach principles of authority, even though the primary purpose of the text may concern something entirely different.

In Acts 19, we are told of the miracles that Paul did, powerful miracles that included healings and exorcisms. We are told that even pieces of clothing, aprons or handkerchiefs, that had touched Paul's body, were brought to the sick and healed them (12). Such power was effective in proving Paul's authority was from God, and caused many at Ephesus to believe in Jesus. We are told, "*So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed*" (20).

An interesting aspect of the text was the rise of imitators of Paul. We see the same thing today. How many times have you seen a television evangelists asking for money, and offering to send some trinket has been blessed or prayed over. The idea is that the use of the trinket would bring fortune or healing. This is a passage that has inspired that kind of imitation. Is it valid?

Well, consider the case of the seven sons of Sceva, found in verses 13-17. We are told that these seven were itinerant Jewish exorcists. We have such today. Men who claim to be able to exorcise evil spirits. While it is uncommon, there are Catholics priests and even some Protestants who believe that demon possession remains to our time and that they have the authority from God to cast them out. The claim these powers even though they are often teaching religious error, and engaging in activities and worship that do not have Divine approval. In this they mimic the seven sons of Sceva.

Sceva was a Jewish chief priest in Ephesus. The relating of this case indicates that under the new covenant,

being a Jew had no significance with regard to a man's standing with God. By this time a New Covenant had been established, the covenant of Jesus Christ, God's Son. So, while religious, Jews were not accepted by God unless their acceptance was based on faith in Jesus Christ.

There is no evidence that the Jewish exorcists were effective in their efforts to remove demons from the possessed. One might ask the simple question, if they were already successfully performing exorcisms, why did they feel it necessary to reference *"the Jesus whom Paul preaches"* (13) when they witnessed his efforts? They saw the effectiveness of Paul, and determined to utilize his obvious efficacy to gain success for themselves! It is evident from the text that this didn't work. *"Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?' Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded"* (Acts 19:14-16).

Do you remember the response of the demons collectively named Legion in the country of the Gadarenes when Jesus cast them out of a wild man in Luke 8? *"When he [the man, speaking through the influence of Legion] saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!'"* (28). We are told, *"they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss"* (31). Jesus successfully cast the demons out into a herd of swine which then *"ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned"* (33).

Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”* The demons recognized Jesus because of who He was, and the authority He had over them! *“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!”* (James 2:19).

It was for this reason that Paul, as an apostle, was recognized by the demons as well. Concerning this, Jesus said in Mark 16:17, *“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues.”* What Paul did was in Jesus’ name, by his authority! The demons knew of this authority, and knew Paul.

However, the itinerant Jewish exorcists made the same claim! They said, *“We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches”* (13). This did not make their claim true. Just because you do something and claim that it is in Jesus’ name, does not mean it is so. In Jesus’ name means by His authority. Did Jesus give you permission? Saying He did when He did not is a lie, and will bring condemnation!

Consider Jesus’ words. *“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”* (Matthew 7:21-23).

In short, this describes the ineffectiveness of the seven sons of Sceva, **and also describes the iniquity of much worship and innovation in churches today!**

News and Notes at West Side

Personal Work Group 3 meets today

- **Ill.** *Tommie Blackstock* was transferred from one Rehab facility to another in the latter part of the week. She is still not able to come home, but is getting stronger each day. Please pray for her... *Laura Godfrey* is improving, but still not fully over her pneumonia... *Sara* and *Bryce Fearing* were suffering from allergy and sinus problems on Wednesday, and were unable to come to the Bible class... Please pray for all these to get better quickly.

Permanent Prayer List

- **Out of Town.** *Ellen Davis* took a quick trip to Alabama this past week. We pray for a safe return back to us.
- **Our Meeting** with brother *Brett Hogland* is coming soon, May 4-9, Saturday through Thursday. We have prepared the typical materials for you to use to invite others. A Facebook event, post cards, and circulars are all available. Circulars have been sent to area congregations... Additionally, a meal list has been supplied and is on the board in the foyer. If you would like to show Brett some hospitality while he is here, please sign your name!

Chronically or Seriously ill

- Tommie Blackstock
- Stan Cox
- Margaret Wood
- Mary Dean
- Arlene Holt
- Jack Holt

Shut-ins

Charlene Garner / Hope Doss / Jo Wilson

Others

- Laynie Holland
- Dennis Scroggins
- Abigail Saltz
- Dan Hash
- Gwen Matney
- Ed Matney
- Chip Foster
- Bruce Tilley
- Randall Carrell
- Dalton Vilares

For the Members

Events Calendar

Attendance Sheet



Meetings — 2024

May 4-9

Brett Hogland

Blue Springs, MO

November 2-7 - Jesse Flowers

Meetings — 2025

Spring - Reagan McClenny

Fall - Bruce Reeves

Tri-Annual Singings

7:00 — 8:30 pm

June 15, 2024

October 19, 2024

February 15, 2025

Men We Support

Thandu Moses

Arogyaswami Viyayabhaskar

(India)

Admire Makuwe

(Zimbabwe)

Last Sunday's Record

Attendance

NA

Contribution

NA

West Side church of Christ

6110 White Settlement Road

Fort Worth, TX 76114

(817) 738-7269

soundteachingws@gmail.com

Schedule of Services

Sunday

- 9:00 am (Morning Worship)
- 10:00 am (Bible Classes)
- 11:00 am (Lord's Supper/Worship)

Wednesday

- 10:00 am (Ladies Bible Class)
- 7:30 pm (Evening Bible Study)

(Ladies' Bible class: September - May)

Sign up for our West Side news texts

Text **@stancox** to: 469-208-6443

or

Email: stancox@mail.remind.com

Note: subject and body of email
can be left blank

Like our
Facebook
Page



facebook.com/soundteaching.org

Subscribe
to our
YouTube
channel



youtube.com/@WSchurchofChrist

soundteaching.org

- General information regarding the West Side congregation
- All teaching material (sermon audio and PPTX, bulletin articles, classes) presented at West Side
- Links to other helpful internet sites



Scan to visit site