

Choosing Godliness

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Holiness Matters

Text: 1 Timothy 6:6

Without even realizing it we allow the world and worldliness to creep into our lives and churches. When we allow ourselves to watch and listen to entertainment and the principles the world is invested in, slowly they begin to take root in subtle ways until they have shaped our thinking and responses. Worldliness sneaks in when we begin to implement the world's best practices instead of living by Godly principles. They may be business related, motivationally related and when we decide to evaluate our success or failure by the bottom line. The world counts noses, nickels and numbers. Man looks at the outward appearance and metrics. God looks at the heart.

When holiness is our measure and our standard, we become intentional about everything we say and do.

One facet of holiness is to reject worldliness, in all of its forms and ideologies.

2 Corinthians 10:5 Worldliness encompasses sinful and compromising values, foolish living, fruitless thinking and wicked living. **Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:5-12** To 'reject' is to disregard and hold in contempt. It is never permitting the world or it's ways to gain entrance into our mind, way of thinking, decision making or belief system. It is to refuse to entertain it or allow it entrance into any area of our lives.

The world defines worldly as experienced and sophisticated. To be worldly is to have an open mind and to try many things and to welcome many ideas. It is concerned with material things like wealth, position, power and fame. In the eyes of the world if you are not like them then you are naïve. **Romans 16:19-20, Matthew 10:16 (NKJV, AMP)**

Holiness is not about choosing sides it is about choosing our allegiance. Holiness is a commitment to friendship with God. Holiness is about being undivided, unmixed and not torn. Holiness understands that you cannot be a friend of the world and a friend of God.

James 4:4-5, Matthew 6:24 Holiness has an undivided heart for God. The Bible equates having a relationship with the world and a relationship with God as spiritual adultery. This reframes our entire understanding of holiness.

Adultery is all about betrayal. It is not about vows and duty but about love, relationship and faithfulness. Those who have committed adultery have allowed an outside influence to erode trust, honesty, innocence and purity. Just as the Bible makes it clear that a marriage is between one man and one woman, our God is ONE God. **Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 45:5**

Holiness Principle # 4 – I reject worldly values and seek to influence the world for Jesus.

God sees our relationship with Him as a marriage. Marriage is a sacred and holy relationship. It is to be kept undefiled. **Hebrews 13:4**

Our relationship with God is not arranged, not a thing of convenience but a choice and a commitment. This is the essence of holiness. When we become a Christian, we become **one** with God. **John 17:20-24** The Old Testament prophets described Israel's relationship with God in marriage terms. **Isaiah 54:5-6(AMP), Jeremiah 3:8 (AMP), Ezekiel 16:8**

The pain of adultery has to do with the tearing apart of the oneness. The prophet Hosea was instructed to marry a prostitute named Gomer. Regularly she would leave him for **other** loves. The pain and humiliation that Hosea felt and that we can identify as we read his story is how God felt as the nation of Israel would pursue other gods and when we turn to **worldly** pursuits. This prophet provided for his wife and took her in when no one else would want such a used and defiled person yet she kept leaving. How this **grieved** the heart of the prophet and how it grieves the heart of God. **Hosea 1:2-3, Hosea 2:5-8** One important lesson that we learn is that – sometimes the grass is greener on the other side because it is fake. Worldliness offers us so much yet gives us so little. It is not love. It is all lust. **1 John 2:16**

We must realize that while there are **legal** ramifications to sin, of greater importance is the **relational** damage we do to God when we entertain, flirt and cheat with sin and idols in our lives.

One of the things that makes marriage so unique is that we marry our best friend. Because our walk with God is not an arranged relationship, we have the privilege of also being known, not only as a child of God, but a **friend** of God. **John 15:14-15** Abraham was called a friend of God, Moses spoke with God face to face, David is known as a man after God's own heart. It is clear from scripture that you cannot be a friend of the world and a friend of God because worldliness is considered adultery. The **pain** our desire for worldliness causes God is enough to sever friendship and relationship. **James 4:4-5**

Today people act as if jealousy is a character flaw. It is a natural response to betrayal and the breaking of relationship. When a marriage dissolves because of unfaithfulness it is not an amicable split, this kind of thing makes an **enemy** of the one who is betrayed. This should not be confusing or hard to understand.

At the heart of the marriage relationship is the desire to please, obey and love. When we do things in speech, action or attitude that are worldly we hurt the heart of God. Joseph understood this truth even in the midst of great unfairness. **Genesis 39:8-9**

When we keep Jesus as the **first** and only in our lives, we elevate our priorities and get rid of anything that could be an idol. An idol is **anything** that we give priority to or precedence over Jesus in our lives. Nothing is to be over or above Jesus in our lives.

Luke 10:27 I wish the depth of this commitment would sink in for most Christians.

Heart, soul, mind and strength = physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Often you hear that marriage is just a piece of paper. If that is all it is to you then don't do it. If serving God is just lip service, then do not pretend. Marriage is a **spiritual** connection; this is what our walk with God is. It is everything.

Nothing is more precious than our relationship with Jesus. Let nothing contend for your heart except your relationship with Jesus. No passion or love should take Jesus' place. Always make sure that Jesus sits on the throne of your heart.

It is important to understand that, just like your marriage, there are things that are warring and contending for our heart and relationship with Jesus. **James 4:1-8**

The cure for worldliness has several steps –

- humble yourself before God
- submit yourself to God
- resist the devil
- draw near to God
- cleanse your hands -what you are doing
- purify your heart, your thinking, feelings, emotions – stop being double minded
James 1:8, Psalm 24:3-5

While we can do all of these things in advance, holiness means we recognize that we resist the devil and the evil we face when we encounter it. Holiness is not passive it is active.

Ephesians 6:12 Holiness doesn't just happen.

There are several things we need to understand about our spiritual battle –

- 1) Our spiritual power comes from our relationship with Jesus. The seven sons of Sceva learned this the hard way. **Acts 19:14-16**
- 2) Our struggle is not with flesh and blood.
- 3) We have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and the demons have no control over us.
- 4) God has given us offensive and defensive weapons for our battle in the Full Armor of God.
- 5) We have the ability to use the Name of Jesus in every effort we resist the devil.
- 6) We have the ability to say no to anything the devil tempts us with.
Titus 2:11-14 (NIV)
- 7) Not knowing our identity in Christ leaves us open to the influence and oppression of the enemy.

Holiness happens in the contest of our culture. The standards of the world change according to the times people live and the culture they live in. God's standard of holiness is not relative to anything. It is perfect and timeless and does not change. God's standard does not change because He does not change. With God there is no such thing as situational holiness.

Hebrews 13:8, Malachi 3:6 Holiness is the same regardless of the era we live in or the culture we are a part of.

Because God's standard does not change, they will by default change and impact the culture in which holiness is lived. When we realize that people are not our enemy we then see the holiness of God as something that will change and impact the world's system or the way the world operates. Holiness offers people a truly alternative lifestyle that is counter cultural. Here is a question – Do you love Jesus as much as you hate sin?