



## Group Resources

Read: Leviticus 11:44; 1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 6, 17:7, 43:15, Ezekiel 8 - 11, Ezekiel 47:1-12; Matthew 9:1-8, 26:26-29; Mark 7:14-23; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians; 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:1-10; Revelation 21 - 22

Video: [Holiness](#)

Sermon: Scandalous! | The Most Disgusting Picture in the Most Holy Place

## Proposed Group Agenda (2 hrs)

Fellowship/Connection Time (30 min.)

Welcome & Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Warm Up (10 min.)

Video (15 min.)

Dig In (45 min.)

Grow (10 min.)

Closing Prayer (5 min.)

## Hermeneutic Tool

Pay attention to the pace of Scripture, especially in narrative texts. When the pace slows down, as it does in the middle of Exodus, that likely indicates something noteworthy or very important is happening.



\* The individual reading plan for this week covers Leviticus 19 - Numbers 10 and Psalms 36-42



## Warm Up

Lectio Divina | Exodus 15:1-18

Lectio Divina is an unhurried, contemplative reading of a portion of Scripture.

The goal is not to force yourself into a mystical experience or even into deep insight, but to focus your affection and attention on God. Go through the steps together as a group using Exodus 15:1-18 as your chosen passage. Allow 2 or 3 of your members to share their experience once you've concluded the exercise.

### Step 1 | Lectio (read)

The first step is a slow reading of Scripture while listening for God to speak through it. Read it with a listening heart and openness to God. As you slowly read, look for any word or phrase that draws your attention. When you identify this word or phrase, meditate upon it a minute or two.

### Step 2 | Meditatio (meditation)

Quietly read the words of Scripture a second time paying attention to the broader theme(s) of the passage. Interact with it, invite it to shed light on your thoughts and experiences, and permit God to connect the truth(s) to your life. This process allows Scripture to become His personal word to you.

### Step 3 | Oratio (prayer)

Respond to what God has spoken to you through the word. We often think of prayer as primarily talking to God, but Scripture invites us to conversational intimacy with God. We aren't coming to God with demands or petitions; rather, we're consecrating ourselves and asking that He take His Word into the deepest and most intimate places of our lives.

### Step 4 | Contemplatio (contemplation)

A time of rest. Here we entrust ourselves to God as we reflect on what He has spoken. We listen for any other words He may want to speak. We remain still and close in reverent silence before we are released to fulfill His purposes.

Q. What comes to mind when you hear the word “holy”? How does its biblical meaning differ from our cultural meaning?

Key Theme

**1**

Holiness is a biblical word that means “unique, set apart.”

# HOLINESS

HEBREW QADOSH

GREEK HAIGOS

The first two things called “holy” in the Bible are:

1<sup>st</sup>

**THE SABBATH DAY**

God “sanctifies” it (makes it holy by setting it apart) as a day of rest from all the work to enjoy the goodness of creation.

Genesis 2:3

2<sup>nd</sup>

**THE “HOLY GROUND” AROUND THE BURNING BUSH OF GOD’S PRESENCE**

God’s presence is so powerful and unique that it makes the area surrounding His presence set apart as well.

Exodus 3:1-6

**IN BOTH CASES THE HOLINESS OF THESE THINGS IS HONORED BY TREATING ALL OF THEM WITH SPECIAL CARE, NOT DOING ACTIVITIES ON THEM THAT ARE DONE ELSEWHERE.**

In the rest of the Bible, all kinds of things can be holy:

**PEOPLE**

**PLACES**

**THINGS**

**TIME**

Q. How is holiness rooted in an understanding of God's character? How is God's holiness both good and dangerous at the same time?

Key  
Theme

2

People, places, and things are considered "holy" because they have a close relationship to God, who is the source and definition of holiness.

God's holiness is a way of talking about God's character and nature as the most unique, powerful, beautiful, and good being in all the universe:

**"THERE IS NO ONE HOLY LIKE THE LORD;  
THERE IS NO ONE BESIDES YOU."**

1 Samuel 2:2

**1** God is called "holy" for the first time in Exodus 15:11

**2** God's holiness is connected to his unique role as the creator and author of all life and beauty.

ISAIAH 6:3; 17:7; 43:15; 54:5; 55:5

**3** God's holiness is also connected to His character as the source of all moral goodness and purity.

LEVITICUS 11:44

**ISRAEL'S SIN IS OFTEN CONTRASTED WITH  
GOD'S HOLINESS: SEE JEREMIAH 51:5 AND  
PSALM 78:41**

Q. How is God's holiness both good and dangerous at the same time?

Key  
Theme

3

God's holiness is so pure and good that it poses a paradox for humans living in a world ruined by sin.

A

His power and purity is the source of all life and sustains our existence.

ISAIAH 6:3

B

But His power and purity can become dangerous to mortal humans corrupted by sin: This paradox is seen most clearly in the dangerous goodness of God's presence living in Israel's midst in the tabernacle and temple.

1

The temple had to be kept separate from all types of "impurity" that would defile God's holy presence.

LEVITICUS 11-15

2

Only holy priests were allowed into God's direct presence in the temple, and even they were in danger if they didn't honor God's holiness.

LEVITICUS 9-10



Q. What is the significance of Isaiah's vision in comparison to the tabernacle/temple system established by Leviticus (see Isaiah 6)? How does this vision reveal God's heart for people who are unclean?

Key  
Theme

4

However, Isaiah the prophet had a strange vision where he was in the temple (where he didn't belong!) and in the direct presence of God.

- A** He is terrified for his life because of his moral impurity ("unclean lips") ISAIAH 6:5
- B** Instead of being destroyed, God has burning, holy coal taken from His presence and applied to Isaiah's lips (ouch!) ISAIAH 6:6
- C** Instead of the temple becoming contaminated by Isaiah's impurity, the opposite happens: God's holiness transfers to Isaiah and erases his sin and impurity. ISAIAH 6:7

**THIS IS UNEXPECTED TO SAY THE LEAST! THE IMPLICATIONS OF ISAIAH'S VISION ARE HUGE. PERHAPS GOD DOESN'T NEED TO BE PROTECTED BY THE IMPURITY OF SIN, MAYBE IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND. MAYBE IT'S OUR SIN THAT IS ENDANGERED BY GOD'S HOLINESS.**

Q. The Prophet Ezekiel has visions that reveal other important contributions to the theme we looked at in Isaiah 6. What happens at the end of Ezekiel chapter 10? Why does God withdraw His presence from the temple?

Q. What is the significance of the river flowing out of the new temple in Ezekiel 47:1-12? How does this passage relate to what happened in Isaiah 6?

Key  
Theme

5

Ezekiel's vision contains another important contribution to this theme.

A

Ezekiel's vision of a new temple is part of his larger vision of how God will restore His covenant people after their sin and covenant failure: In Ezekiel 8-11, God's presence leaves the temple after it's defiled by Israel's idolatry and sin.

EZEKIEL 8-11

B

Ezekiel envisions a new temple (Ezekiel 40-47) in a new land (Ezekiel 48) with a new covenant people (Ezekiel 36-37).

ISAIAH 6:6

C

This temple needs to be honored as a holy space, but at the same time, Ezekiel's vision about the river flowing out of the temple makes it clear that God's life-giving holiness will one day flow out of the temple into the world creating all kinds of new life.

EZEKIEL 47:7-12





# Where's Jesus?

Q. How does Isaiah's vision help you understand the importance of the kind of people that Jesus would heal (see Theme #4, page 7)? What kind of impact would these hearings have had in the Jewish culture of Jesus' time?

Key  
Theme

6

When Jesus arrives on the scene announcing the arrival of God's kingdom, He seems to identify and move towards people who were considered "unclean" and unfit to enter God's presence in the temple.

**A** Jesus' contact with the leper (Matthew 8:1-4), the bleeding woman (Matthew 9:20-23), the dead boy (Luke 7:11-17) should have made him "unclean," but instead His holiness and purity transfers to them, healing and restoring their bodies.

**B** Jesus declared that people are not made impure by anything that touches or enters their bodies, but rather by the moral corruption and selfishness that comes out of their minds and hearts.

MARK 7:14-23

**C** Jesus claimed that He was the new temple, the place where God's holiness meets people in their sin and uncleanness: He offered forgiveness of sins apart from the temple and said His death was a sacrifice that covered for the sin of others

MATTHEW 9:1-8  
MATTHEW 26:26-29





# Where's Jesus?

Q. Read 1 Peter 2:1-10. How do the images of temple, holiness, priests, and the church come together? What does this reveal about God's holiness? How does this raise the bar of holiness for a follower of Jesus?

Key  
Theme

7

Jesus established the community of His followers as a new temple, where God's holiness meets with His people and changes them forever.



After His resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 resembles the entrance of God's holy presence into the temple.

ACTS 2:1-4



The apostles argued that the community of Jesus' people are a new temple, and so are called to be holy like priests, set apart from showing the world the grace and mercy of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17  
EPHESIANS 2:19-22  
1 PETER 2:4-5; 9-10



Jesus also used the image of Ezekiel's temple-river to describe any person who trusts in Him: the Spirit will make that person a holy source of God's own life that spreads to others:

JOHN 7:37-39



The story of the Bible concludes with John's vision of the new creation, where Ezekiel's river is flowing out of God's presence creating a new garden of Eden-city where His people are with Him forever.

REVELATION 21-22

## Works Cited

Introduction | Written by Jerry Bridges as a forward to the study guide for "The Holiness of God" by R.C. Sproul.  
Warm Up | Hardin, Brian. Passages: How Reading the Bible in a Year Will Change Everything for You. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2011. Excerpted.  
Study Materials, Questions & Information generated from materials provided by Reality Church SF - Year of Biblical Literacy and The Bible Project. Used by permission.



# Grow

These questions are designed to help you look at yourself, be aware and honest about who you are in light of your interaction with Scripture, and consider any appropriate actions.

Consider these quotations...

No attribute of God is more dreadful to sinners than His holiness. - Matthew Henry

I am convinced that the first step toward attaining a higher standard of holiness is to realize more fully the amazing sinfulness of sin. - J.C. Ryle

We have learned to live with unholiness and have come to look upon it as the natural and expected thing. - A.W. Tozer

Seraph round about the throne who cry day and night, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, give expression to the feelings of all unfallen rational creatures in view of the infinite purity of God. They are the representatives of the whole universe, in offering this perpetual homage to the divine holiness. - Charles Hodge

Now practice Lectio Divina focusing on 1 Peter 2:1-10...

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