



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#160)  
Concepts connected to "holiness."


## What if???

**WHAT IF:**

- We *DON'T* clearly understand a Scripture passage?

**OR:**

- There are two ways to interpret it, and we are confused?




**WE CAN STILL BENEFIT FROM IT!!**

*It may be a technical detail that leaves us uncertain.*

But whoever obeys [God's] word, truly in this person **the love of God** has been perfected.  
1 John 2:5a (NET)

**DOES THAT REFER TO:** ① God's love for us? **OR** ② Our love for God?



**WHO WOULD THIS REFER TO?** ... the love of God ...  
1 John 2:5b

- The context might make it clear. (It usually does.)
- But even if we weren't 100% sure, the very fact that the words "God" and "love" are linked together teaches us something: *The two go together!*  
*By looking at other passages, we can see that these two words are commonly connected in Scripture. It's not just a single random occurrence.*

Scripture *OFTEN* links the words *God* and *love* together, in various ways.

Words such as *Devil*, *sin* and *wicked* don't have this connection with *love* – just a few verses about "loving evil," etc.

**FACTS LIKE THESE SHOULD TEACH US SOMETHING!**

*It may be something we don't understand – even though the Bible is quite clear about it.*

Herein is love, ... that [God] loved us, and sent his Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.  
1 John 4:10 (KJV)

- Here, a dictionary might help (especially a *Bible* dictionary).
- A different translation might help.

**PROFITATION???**  
**I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF THAT WORD BEFORE NOW!!!**

Even without these helps, we can see that it has something to do with *Jesus taking away our sin!*

*It may be a word that can be interpreted two different ways.*

Probably every language has words that are like this.  
Example: Is the word "YOU" singular or plural?

"You examine the Scriptures ..." \*  
John 5:39a (NASB)  
\* Footnote: Or (a command) *Examine the Scriptures*

- Both translations are legitimate (the same N.T. Greek verb form is used for both).
- Our choice of translation may result in slightly different ways to interpret the verse (though not contradictory or leading us astray).

Either way, we see a connection between "Scripture" and examining (studying) it – and *this is a common theme in the Bible.*

**The passage may be unclear for some other reason.**

- ✓ Translation difficulties (maybe an obscure word – more common in the Old Testament) or manuscript variations (normally inconsequential; *none* of them leads us into false teaching).
- ✓ Something that requires an understanding of the background (which we can often resolve with some research).
- ✓ Passages or concepts that are, by nature, difficult to understand (as 2 Peter 3:16 says) – though, with effort, it might be possible.

➡ Even here, many of these passages will have *word connections* that we can learn from!

What we *need* for salvation and godliness is clear enough that it can be understood and followed. These things are found in enough passages that there will be *no misunderstanding*.

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**Even if we do clearly understand a passage, paying attention to the word connections is important!**

★ Word *connections* are as important as word *definitions* in determining how we view reality. ★

**EXAMPLE:** Do you connect the word "freedom" with:  
 ① "doing *as you please*" or  
 ② "doing *what is right*"?  
 (The first of these phrases is often used by people who want to encourage or excuse sin.)

➡ The *devil* knows that word connections are important. This is why the *world* (which is controlled by the devil) puts so much effort into teaching us the *wrong* word connections!

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**Words link together.**

*The words we link together will greatly influence our views about God and reality.*

**THE WORLD (WHICH IS CONTROLLED BY THE DEVIL) OFTEN LINKS CERTAIN WORDS TOGETHER IN WAYS THAT OPPOSE THE BIBLE.**

⇒ Part of "developing a renewed mind" involves learning how the *Bible* connects those words.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, ...  
Romans 12:2a (NASB)

You cannot have the "mind of Christ" if your views about how concepts link together come from the world!

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**Examples.**

Concept	The WORLD connects it with...	The BIBLE connects it with...
Adultery, fornication, and other sexual sins.	Love; good; freedom; not sin.	Lust; evil; slavery to sin.
Believing; faith.	Being irrational; opposite of "fact."	Accepting and living by the truth.
Claiming that God defines "marriage."	Hateful bigot; "pushing your opinions on others."	Speaking truthfully.
Repentance.	Ignore it; sometimes joke about it.	The first step toward salvation.
"Wicked."	Something that's desirable.	Something to be avoided.

*The world redefines words, associates them with values, and distorts them in many other ways contrary to the Bible. It also emphasizes some concepts and downplays others.*

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**EVEN IF WE DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND SOME PARTS OF THE BIBLE, LEARNING TO ASSOCIATE CONCEPTS THE WAY THE BIBLE DOES WILL ACCOMPLISH A LOT!**

It will mean we are developing a Biblical, God-honoring way of thinking!

★ **How is this related to our study about salvation?** ★

We will be attempting to understand the concept of *holiness/sanctification*.

But holiness is so much the *opposite* of our sinful nature, that understanding it could prove to be difficult!

- If we *don't* succeed in developing a clear understanding of holiness, the mere fact that we learn how the Bible links holiness to other concepts will teach us a lot. *We will be headed in the right direction!*

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Here is why we are focusing on TWO groups of words – holiness and sanctify:

**1 N.T. Greek word group... but 2 English word groups.**

**N.T. GREEK**  
 ἅγιος, ἁγιάζω, ἁγιασμός, ἁγιότης, ἁγιασύνη

**ENGLISH**  
 holiness, holy, hallowed, etc.  
*(Old English/German origin.)*

**ENGLISH**  
 saint, sanctify, sanctification, etc.  
*(Latin origin.)*

**Translations may use either English word group.**

God's people ... "... called to be **holy**." = "... called to be **saints**."  
 ("Saint" refers to *anyone* who is saved.)

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**Another example, connected to holiness.**

Concept	The WORLD connects it with...	The BIBLE connects it with...
"Fear of God"	A cruel god; joke about it; deny it and focus on "love."	The right response of a creature toward the Creator; does <i>not</i> contradict love.

There are so many verses that focus on "the fear of God," that it could cause a person to wonder why many church-goers are so opposed to mentioning it!

Those who are in God's presence even sing about it! Not only that, they connect this response of fear to God's holiness!

Who will not **fear** you, Lord, and bring glory to your name?  
For you alone are **holy**.  
Revelation 15:4a (NIV)

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**Another example – the word "holiness" itself.**

Concept	The WORLD connects it with...	Many CHURCH-GOERS connect it with...	The BIBLE connects it with...
Holiness / sanctification.	Unnecessary; being "super-religious."	[Same responses as the world]; ignore it and focus on "love."	The #1 characteristic of the <i>true God</i> ; our obligation.

Even if we just look at the number of verses that use the words "love" and "holiness/sanctification," there are more verses about holiness than there are about love! \*

- Love, loved, loves, loving, lovingkindness, etc. – 607x
- Sanctify, sanctification, holy, holiness, etc. – 652x

Adding the words "beloved" and "saint(s)" might bring the numbers closer together; but either method shows us there is a strong focus on holiness.

\* Based on the New American Standard Bible (1995 version), a very "literal" translation.

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**If we are UNWILLING to describe God the way HE describes himself should that be a cause for concern?**

- Many people EMPHASIZE the apostle John's description of God: "God is love."

... God is love. ...  
**God is love.** Those who live in God's love live in God, and God lives in them.  
1 John 4:8b, 16b (GW)

- It seems that most people IGNORE God's own description of himself: "I am holy."

"I am the Lord your God. You must live holy lives. Be holy because **I am holy.**"  
I am the Lord. ... Be holy because **I am holy.**"  
Scripture says, "Be holy, because **I am holy.**"  
Leviticus 11:44b, 45b; 1 Peter 1:16 (GW)

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**Are we to take seriously the warnings about the need for holiness?**

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be **holy**; **without holiness no one will see the Lord.**  
Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

- This refers to seeing God in eternity ... after the judgment.
- The only time the unsaved will "see the Lord" \* will be at the judgment, and will only be for a moment. At that time:
  - ✓ They will acknowledge that "Jesus is Lord" (Philippians 2:10-11).
  - ✓ They will be told "Depart from me; I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23 & 25:41).

If holiness is a "heaven-or-hell" matter, perhaps it would be good to know – before we die – if we have it! Knowing what it is would help!

\* (Or, knowing their deserved judgment, they might be too terrified to look at him.)

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We aren't trying to get all the answers today...

**Today's goal: To begin thinking about the "holiness/sanctification" concept and how it connects to other concepts in the Bible.**

In the long run...

If we can't fully understand the concept, we will at least have an approximate understanding of it. The concepts that connect to it will keep us focused in the right direction!



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**WHY MIGHT WE NOT GET A 100% EXACT DEFINITION OF IT?**

We, by nature, were born the opposite of holiness; and it is only to the extent that we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, that we can begin to understand it.

We also need to consider the possibility that there are some things about God we will never fully understand. It is the infinite God, the one who created us, who defines himself as "holy"!

Holiness is so much unlike our natural condition, that trying to understand it is probably like a fish trying to understand what it's like to breathe air!



I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT AIR-BREATHING IS ALL ABOUT!

NOT REALLY!

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# DON'T PANIC

**NOT HAVING  
A 100%  
EXACT  
DEFINITION OF  
SOMETHING?**

Part of "growing in salvation" involves growing in our understanding of salvation and the things related to it... *and learning how to apply those things to life.*

If we are "in Christ," we are moving toward that goal of 100%. *But none of us have reached it yet!* (That won't happen until we see Jesus... and he finishes the process.)

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**When trying to understand holiness / sanctification, we will need to consider its connection to things such as:**

1. **God** – his holiness always described as a FACT; the *Holy Spirit*.
2. **Things** (mainly in the Old Testament) – sacrifices, things in the temple, etc.
3. **People** – a variety of themes – not being holy, needing holiness, being holy, its source in God, our attitude, etc.
4. **Moral purity.**
5. **Separation from sin.**
6. **Salvation.**

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This Week's Mission:

**Apply this "connection" principle!!**

① To the "holiness" concept.

✓ *Otherwise, we will never be able to comprehend it.*

② To *all* of life.

✓ To understand the difference between God's description of reality and the world's distortions.

✓ *Otherwise, we will never be able to follow Jesus.*

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