

1. **Introduction:** God’s overarching command dealing with righteous behavior is to love God and love others. 1 Corinthians 13 describes characteristics of Christian love.
 - The elements of Christian love are all about love within limits, love constrained, for example, by the truth that love requires different behavior in loving God and loving people.
 - Think about it. Is the expression of your love for God, your mother and father, wife, children, brother, cousin, friend, enemy constrained to be different? Yes. The obligations attached to love are different for each category.
 - As an example, your expression of your love for God must be different from that of love for your enemy. Love for God is centered in obedience. Love for your enemy is centered in mercy constrained by obedience to God.
 - All these things are moral issues. “*Holy and righteous*” are adjectives used to describe moral excellence of God and His moral creatures (angels and people).
 - Corresponding abstract nouns are “*holiness and righteousness.*” Abstract nouns denote an idea, quality, or state of being rather than a concrete object.
 - Examples: God is *holy and righteous* (adjectives). That is, God possesses *both holiness and righteousness* (abstract nouns).
2. **Three categories of holiness and righteousness:** Positional – experiential – glorified.
 - **Positional** – result of God’s judicial declaration at justification.
 - **Experiential** – increases steadily during the process of sanctification (making holy).
 - **Glorified** – at mortal death the Holy Spirit completes the sanctification process making the believer to be permanently unable to sin, i.e., to be holy and righteous.
 - “Holy (holiness)” refers to the moral status of a person’s spiritual heart (the essence or core of being) that controls thoughts, words, and actions (from the heart come ...).
 - “Righteous (righteousness)” refers to the “fruit” (the outwardly observable words and actions) flowing from the spiritual heart.
 - Holy refers to the moral status of a person’s being. Righteous refers to the moral status of their behavior.
3. **God is Holy:** God is innately (intrinsically) holy and righteous, but humans are not.
 - Humans can only become holy and righteous through holiness and righteousness acquired from “a proper spiritual connection” to God.
 - Paul conveys that idea by writing about the necessity of being “in Christ,” that is, “in union with Christ.
 - No human can in their own power become *holy and righteous*, but people are not left to achieve that goal alone. God does the things we cannot do ourselves. He enables believers to become holy and righteous through Jesus’ vicarious self-sacrifice.
4. **Hebrews 10:10^{NIV}:** *And by (God’s) will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21:** *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

- **1 Peter 1:15-16^{AMP}**: *“But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct [be set apart from the world by your godly character and moral courage]; ¹⁶ because it is written, “You shall be holy [set apart], for I am holy.”*
 - Peter quotes from Lev 11:44-45. “Being holy and being righteous” are related in this way: if your being/character/spiritual heart is holy like God, then your conduct will be holy like God’s conduct. Righteous means having conduct that is holy.
 - Righteous conduct some of the time does not mean you are holy (remember the effects of God’s common grace). Following justification, believers are being transformed, being made holy through the process of sanctification.
 - Sanctification ends with glorification (the believer becomes holy and unable to sin).
 - In previous lessons, we pointed out that from a human perspective, *holiness* is a vertical-relationship word having mostly to do with our relationship to God.
 - *Righteousness* is a horizontal-relationship word having to do with our relationship with people.
5. **Importance of Being Holy**: For believers, becoming “holy as God is holy” is not “optional” but “essential.” Without holiness no one will see God.
- **Hebrews 12:14^{NIV}**: *Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*
6. **God’s Essential Nature**: God is innately (intrinsically) “holy.” His essence, character, attributes, and behavior are “holy” in every sense. He possesses total holiness.
- About God’s holiness, A.W. Tozer says, *“God does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is ... holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy. God is holy and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. Sin’s temporary presence in the world only accents this ... God is holy with an absolute holiness that knows no degrees, and this He cannot impart to His creatures.”*
 - “Holiness” has to do with moral character. God’s character is holy in every sense. He is not tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone (James 1:13-16).
 - God’s character defines “holy.” God is the absolute standard for moral character.
 - God’s conduct is pure (free from sin) and holy (unable to sin).
 - Humans are not innately holy. They receive holiness from being connected to God.
 - Being holy signifies perfect moral purity. It also refers to setting people or things apart for God. Believers are positionally holy having been set apart to God by their salvation.
 - God’s permanent, unchangeable, perfect holiness is a noncommunicable attribute. It cannot in its fullness be imparted to His moral creatures, not to angels nor to humans.
 - Adam and Eve were created “holy” but without the attribute of eternal, unchanging holiness. Their holiness required being spiritually connected to God.
 - When Adam and Eve sinned, they became spiritually dead, disconnected spiritually from God and His holiness. That lack of holiness together with spiritual deadness is transmitted to all their progeny who are born inherently morally flawed.

- To become holy and remain so, a believer must be permanently spiritually-connected to a source of holiness. God is the only source of holiness.
 - If fallen people (spiritually dead) are to be able to become holy, they must be reconnected to God's holiness. Regeneration (called the "new birth") is the answer.
 - Through faith, "the new birth" gives new spiritual life. Faith connects the believer to God, the only source of holiness.
 - Complete holiness is not given instantly at new birth. Newly "born again" believers, based on Christ's saving work, are given holy-status before God.
 - The remainder of their mortal life they are to pursue experiential holiness, growing through the process of sanctification as God works within them (Philip 2:13).
 - The Holy Spirit completes the sanctification process bringing the believer to the state of "glorification." The believer's glorified state is sin-free (unable to sin).
 - In summary, with respect to humans, "holy" refers to the moral quality of a person's "being" as defined by their character or essential nature. "Righteous" refers to the moral quality of a person's "behavior."
7. **Righteous:** To be righteous before the Lord to be morally excellent like Jesus.
- Justified believers (declared legally righteous before God) grow in righteousness becoming morally more like Christ as they progress in sanctification.
 - A believer's behavior is to be modelled on Jesus' behavior.
 - Behavior that is righteous is behavior that deals justly and honestly with others, courteous, fair, honest, and thoughtful.
 - A believer's righteous behavior flows from a spiritual heart that becomes step-by-step experientially more holy like Christ as God works within them.
 - A believer's goal is to be morally like Christ in all things.
 - Personal holiness is determined by the condition of a person's spiritual heart.
 - Personal righteousness is determined by the decisions you make about how your behavior should relate to the people and things.
 - The Ten Commandments and 1 Corinthians 13 help in thinking about what is required to be righteous.
8. **Ten Commandments:** *No other gods, no idols, no taking God's name in vain, keep the Sabbath day holy, honor father and mother, not murder, not commit adultery, not steal, not bear false witness, not covet.*
9. **1 Corinthians 13:1-7:** *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

- This is a wonderful description of Christian love for other people. The love Paul writes about is not without constraints. For example, love for people should never cause a person to violate God’s commandments.
 - Think of Solomon and two women both claiming to be the mother of the same child.
 - How can the true mother be identified? Solomon threatened the child with cruel death. One woman’s agonizing response revealed the truth. What was love’s role?
 - Solomon’s seemingly sinful cruelty was the route to truth and restoration.
10. **The Golden Rule:** The proactive statement in Matthew 7:12 that we call the Golden Rule is a key statement from Christ about righteous behavior.
- **Matthew 7:12:** *Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*
 - **Proverbs 15:9:** *The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but he loves him who pursues righteousness.*
 - Unless God enables us, we will never possess righteousness. No amount of man-made effort will yield righteousness.
 - To be righteous is to be “in the right” with God. A spiritual heart that is right with God yields a life that bears “fruit.”
11. **John 15:1–2:** Jesus says, *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”*
- A branch that does not bear fruit signals is “in the wrong” before God. To bear the fruit of righteousness, it is necessary to live in obedience to God.
 - **Galatians 5:22–23:** *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
12. **Self-righteousness:** When substituted for true righteousness, self-righteousness is the opposite of what God desires. Self-righteousness is typically based on a rules list. As each one is done, it is checked off in self-congratulation for a job well done.
- Pharisees of Jesus’ day were called out with harsh words as being masters of self-righteousness. Jesus said, *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.”*
 - Likewise, when we practice self-righteousness, it may look good on the outside, but inside is hypocrisy and wickedness” (Matthew 23:27–28).
 - When drawn by the Father to Jesus Christ and we come to faith in Him, He gives the Holy Spirit who empowers us to pursue righteousness for its own sake (Acts 2:38).
 - We are commanded to *“walk in the Spirit”* (Galatians 5:16, 25) which means living a lifestyle of total surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We must cultivate the ability to hear God and the habit of obeying His voice in everything.
 - **Summary:** (1.) Holiness applies to the moral status of a being’s nature or essence.
 - (2.) Righteousness applies to the moral status of a being’s behavior (thoughts, words, and actions).