

1. **Introduction:** This is a second lesson on “*Holy and righteous,*” the two adjectives used to describe the moral excellence of God and His moral creatures (angels and people).
 - “*Holiness*” is an abstract noun describing the moral condition of God’s innate essence as “*holy.*” God is *Holy!* *Righteousness* (abstract noun) is God’s behavior that flows from His innate holy nature.
 - “*Holiness*” is the moral status God desires for a person’s spiritual heart (essence or core of being). The spiritual heart controls thoughts, words, and actions.
 - “*Righteousness*” is the desired “fruit” (outwardly observable words and actions) that flows from a believer’s spiritual heart. Righteous means in agreement with holiness.
 - People are not innately holy and righteous but can become holy and righteous. The more holy your nature, the more righteous your behavior.
 - Three categories of holiness and righteousness: Positional, experiential, & glorified.
 - (1) Positional – results from God’s judicial declaration at justification.
 - (2.)Experiential – results from justification and the process of sanctification.
 - (3.) 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 means “unable to sin.” The behavior of a holy person is righteous without sin.
 - Redeemed sinners (not yet experientially holy) are capable of righteous behavior but are also capable of sin.
2. **God’s Essential Nature:** God is innately (intrinsically) “holy.” His essence, character, attributes, and behavior are “holy” in every sense. He possesses total holiness. His behavior is always righteous.
 - 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.*”
 - God’s moral character is holy in every sense. His behavior is righteous.
 - He is without sin, not tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone (James 1:13-16). In fact, 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 but receive holiness when they are spiritually connected to God. The redeemed human spirit is connected to God through His Holy Spirit.
 - Being holy signifies perfect moral purity. It is also used to signify the setting apart people or things for God. Believers are positionally holy because they have been set apart for God by their salvation. Being in the right before God requires right decisions.

3. **Righteous Decisions**: Righteousness requires right decisions. Choice necessarily implies rejecting some things and accepting others. Distinctions between alternatives, like good or bad, bad or worse, good or better, must be present in the mind before there can be a choice. Every act of the will expresses preference – desiring one thing rather than another. Without preference (only complete indifference) there can be no choice.
- To will means to choose or decide between two or more alternatives. In choosing there is always something that influences the choice, something that determines the decision.
 - Choices are freely made when the influences or inclinations driving the preference come from within – self-determination of choice being the key.
 - Notice that acts of the will cannot and do not come to pass of themselves. No choice is independent of the influence of the affections and understanding. In a very real sense, the will is the servant of the affections and understanding.
 - To think of the will choosing one thing in preference to another, while the understanding and affections are in a state of complete indifference, seems to be a contradiction.
 - Yet, this is exactly what many people mean when they use the term “free will.” They mean the will choosing as it pleases, acting as an independent agent, unconstrained by other faculties. People, in fact, choose according to their understanding and affections.
 - The strongest inclination of the mind at the time of choice determines the choice. The strongest inclination is determined by a combination of influences that arise in the understanding and affections.
4. **Augustine’s 4 States of Choosing**: The first state is pre-fall, the second and third are after the fall, and the fourth is the state of the redeemed in heaven.
- 1. **Able to Not Sin**: This was the probation state of Adam and Eve before the fall. They had the ability to not sin, but mutably so. That is, they were able to make righteous choices but could possibly make unrighteous choices. When they chose to disobey God for what they thought was the good reason of becoming more like Him, they sinned and fell into a morally corrupt state, losing the ability to make righteous choices.
 - 2. **Not Able to Not Sin**: This was the state of “choosing” of Adam and Eve after their sin and is the state of choosing for all their descendants (unless redeemed by God). People in the fallen moral state have insufficient inclination to do the righteous thing.
 - 3. **Able to Not Sin but also Able to Sin**: This is the state of “choosing” for redeemed people. Those whom God redeems are able to make righteous choices, but their lingering sin nature may interfere and lead to choosing to sin.
 - 4. **Not Able to Sin**: This is the glorified state of choosing, being unable to choose to sin. Glorified means “made holy.” The Holy Spirit completes the sanctification process.
5. **Holiness**: 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 subject to change for disobeying God. Their holiness necessarily required being spiritually connected to God.
 - When Adam and Eve sinned, they became spiritually dead, disconnected spiritually from God and His holiness, and unable to live in God’s presence.

- 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.
 - To enable fallen people (spiritually dead) 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" (regeneration) gives new spiritual life. Faith connects the believer to God, the only source of holiness. The connection is through the Holy Spirit who indwells the "born-again" redeemed believer.
 - Complete holiness is not given instantly at new birth. Based on Christ's saving work, new "born again" believers, are given positional holy-status before God.
 - The remainder of their mortal life they are to pursue increasing experiential holiness through the process of sanctification as God works within them (Philip 2:13).
 - At "glorification" the Holy Spirit completes the sanctification process. 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."
6. **Righteous:** To be righteous before the Lord is 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.
 - Righteous behavior deals justly and honestly with others. It is courteous, fair, honest, and thoughtful. Righteous behavior flows from spiritual hearts which, as God works within them, one step at a time become experientially more holy like Christ.
 - 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. Think about the requirements for being righteous.
7. **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.*
- Verses 4-7 are a wonderful description of Christian love for other people. The love Paul writes about is not without constraints. One important principle is 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 agonized response revealed the truth. Solomon’s seemingly sinful cruelty was the route to truth and restoration. Was his willful action an act of love?
8. **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.*
9. **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.*
- Unless God enables us, we will never possess righteousness. No amount of man-made effort can yield righteousness. Focus on “self” will always get in the way.
 - 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.”
10. **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.
11. **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 item is completed, it is checked off in self-congratulation for a job well done.
- Pharisees of Jesus’ day were called out with harsh words for 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.
 - God’s nature is moral. He created angels and humans as moral creatures.
 - **Summary:** (1.) Holiness is the moral status goal for a person’s nature or essence.
 - (2.) Righteousness is the moral status goal of a person’s behavior (thoughts, words, and actions). The holier the spiritual heart becomes, the more righteous is behavior.