



Leaders Notes

S E T

A P A R T

A SERIES
ON HOLINESS

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How to use the study booklets.

At St Paul's we are committed to growing as disciples of Jesus, spurring each other on to know and grow in Jesus. We know that God works through his word powerfully to teach and transform us, and so we know the importance of seeing God's word regularly sown into our lives and throughout the week.

We do that daily as we personally open God's word and depend on him in prayer. We also grow as we meet in our households to read God's word together.

Over time we've seen that as we study the same passage from God's word in different layers in our lives, that God builds depth in our understanding, stronger application in our lives, and encouragement in our households and in our church as we learn together.

As we together dig into the idea of holiness this term, we are doing that in a few ways...

CHURCH

Keep this guide with your bible and have it with you as you as you participate in church. Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided, ready to reflect on these personally, as you meet with someone 121, and as you meet up with your Small Group.

SMALL GROUPS

Take this guide with you to your Small Group each week. There are Bible studies for each topic within the holiness series, and space to write down prayer points that come from the study that week as well as prayer requests from the members of your group.

FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

This term, you may notice that some weeks when you pick up your kids they have an "ASK ME" sticker on - the idea of these is that you ask what they have learnt about that morning at kids church, a great way to start a conversation about our Holiness series!

Also don't forget to keep an eye on our [Facebook group](#) for parents (if you are not part of the group already and would like to join please email kids@spch.org.au)

Setting the scene for our “Set Apart” series

PURPOSE

The purpose of this series is to see genuine reverence for the holiness of God, understanding that he is pure, set apart and unapproachable in his power and glory. Holiness is an attribute of God which is presented in the bible as central and thematic but is widely misunderstood as simple morality or goodness. As we open the word, we want to explore the way God’s holiness is revealed through his power on display in creation, the temple and law, his unapproachable presence, in Jesus and through the Holy Spirit.

In discovering the glory of God’s holiness, we will encounter both our unholiness and the call to be holy as his redeemed. Having our sin and guilt atoned for in Jesus we are declared clean allowing us to relate to the holy and powerful God as our loving Father. Believing God’s grace is the foundation, it is our prayer that this will lead to genuine repentance and for us to not simply avoid sin, but start to enjoy and reflect God in every aspect of our lives. As God’s people are called to “Be holy, as I am holy”, we will have the opportunity to shine a light on the habitual, cultural and ‘acceptable’ sins present among God’s holy people (the saints). In addition we want to see people living their lives for the glory of God and increase their affections for Jesus not to merely accomplish a sinless life.

We want to encourage people to make holiness a reality in their lives by living to glorify God and become more like Jesus.



OVERVIEW OF THE STUDIES

Studies 1-3 **Understanding holiness**

These talks will allow us to first, build a foundational understanding of the holiness of the triune God. Second, how the holiness of Jesus is the means and example of holiness for our lives, exploring how we receive holiness in Jesus and are called to continually run after it. Finally, exploring how this holiness is not simply an individual call but a collective call to the church, allowing us to address the issues specific to SPCH.

Studies 4-7 **Personal holiness**

With an understanding of holiness in place we will then look to the practical. These four weeks will address what holiness looks like in our heart, in action (hands), in our minds and in the way we live more generally (walk). These four weeks are when we can dive into the areas where we are individually and collectively falling short of the calling we have received. We need to remember to balance the need for rebuke and redirection along with grace and the gift of holiness.

Studies 8-9 **Relational holiness**

Weeks 8-9 give us an opportunity to see how the call to holiness plays out in our relationships. This isn't simply a focus on dating or marriage but also work relationships, friendships, relationships with other believers and our commission to teach people to be obedient to Jesus (Matthew 28).

Study 10 **Hopeful holiness**

We will finish the series by looking to the future, there will be a final reminder that the bride of Christ is his holy church and a look to our hope of an eternity made completely new in the presence of our God.

Helpful Resources

The Hole in our Holiness

- Kevin De Young

The Pursuit of Holiness

- Jerry Bridges

Some interesting quotes...

“But holiness is not only expected; it is the promised birthright of every Christian.” *The Pursuit of Holiness by Jerry Bridges. P2.*

“We are more concerned about our own ‘victory’ over sin than we are about the fact that our sins grieve God. We cannot tolerate failure in our struggle with sin chiefly because we are success-oriented, not because we know it is offensive to God.”

The Pursuit of Holiness by Jerry Bridges. P4.

Questions you might like to ask at the beginning of the series...

Will you begin to look at sin as an offense against a holy God, instead of a personal defeat only?

Will you begin to take personal responsibility for your sin, realising as you do, you must depend on the grace of God?

Will you decide to obey God in all areas of life, however insignificant the issue may be?

Study 1

A Holy God

Passages:

Isaiah 6:1-8

Revelation 4:1-8

Other passages to look at:

John 17:1-5

Genesis 1:1 (maybe whole chapter)

INTRODUCTION:

The reason for us to be made holy in Christ and to pursue that holiness is because this is an attribute of God, our Maker.

“As used in Scripture, holiness describes both the majesty of God and the purity and moral perfection of his nature... God’s holiness then is perfect freedom from all evil.”

Jerry Bridges.

QUESTIONS:

1. What comes to mind when you think of holiness? How does it influence your view of God?

2. Read Isaiah 6:1-8. How does Isaiah paint a picture of God’s holiness?

He paints a picture of majesty that he is above everything. Even the spiritual/angelic beings worship him. His presence causes even the temple to shake and be filled with smoke. His majesty covers the whole earth, there is nothing in all creation that can boast this. Perhaps you could ask what people think the temple is? Is it a cosmic temple? Does his presence fill all of creation and can he shake the very foundation of all that is created and not be affected by that? Interesting that the foundation shakes at the sound of the seraphim’s voices, what would it be like if it was God’s voice?

3. What does Isaiah's response say about God's holiness?

Isaiah cowers at the presence of God. His sinfulness and shame are illuminated in the presence of such holiness. All he can do is confess. In fact it seems that he is quick to confess even without expectation of forgiveness or justification or hope because he has seen the king, the Lord Almighty and therefore will die. He is at God's mercy. He is not like God and is not even worthy to be in his presence. JC Ryle in his book *Holiness* says that we grow in humility when in the presence of a Holy God. He says, "*The nearer he draws to God, and the more he sees God's holiness and perfection, the more thoroughly he is sensible of his own countless imperfections*" (page 123).

4. What does it remind you of that the seraph took a live coal from the altar in Isaiah 6:6? Why is it so important?

The altar is a place of sacrifice. In this scene we see the opposite to what we would normally see in the OT. Normally if something impure touches something pure it makes the pure thing impure. Here the pure thing touches the impure and makes it pure. Perhaps you could ask what does this say about Jesus' sacrifice?

It is important because only God is truly pure and therefore we are reliant on his good for our purity and righteousness.

5. Read Genesis 1:1. What do we learn about God from this verse?

People need to think through the implications of their answer. It is not enough to say he created. He is also not bound by time. Order was given by him. He exists without trying to prove how or why or when. He deserves our praise. God is not in any tainted by or subject to any part of creation, therefore, remains holy. It is one of the things that sets him apart. He is not human, we are made in his image not us in his. Perhaps you could see how this relates to the second commandment in Exodus 20:4-6. You cannot make an image of God because there is nothing in creation like him. It begs the questions, therefore, why do we domesticate God, why do we try to make him like us, why do we expect him to be like us?

6. Read Revelation 4:1-8. How does this compare with Genesis 1:1? How is it different to Genesis 1:1?

There are formidable creatures in this vision yet they still bow down to the one on the throne. They are still created beings, created by God and at his mercy. They worship. Perhaps you could ask what posture do they take when they worship? Look at Revelation 4:10, Revelation 5:8-10.

MAKING IT STICK:

God's holiness demands a response of worship. In Psalm 19 who/what is it that declares God's glory? In what ways can we worship God as holy in our lives (this includes our work, homes, church, leisure, relationships)?

This can include things like forgiveness, grace, mercy etc remembering that God has done this for us. Even though he is other or different or bigger than us he still expects this from us. Don't settle for cliché answers here - push people on what they mean or for them to be practical. A response to the holiness of God wholly appropriate and even demanded.

How will you think differently about the holiness of God from this study?

How should the holiness of God be reflected in his church?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- John Gray as he leads our church.
- Our wardens, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.
- Our link missionaries Rod and Abby Bishop in their roles at ECM (European Christian Mission)
- That growth in our Christian walk will be impacted by the majesty and holiness of a God who is bigger than we imagine yet mindful of us so that we are known by him.

Study 2

A Holy Person

Passages:

Isaiah 6:1-8

Hebrews 7:11-28

INTRODUCTION:

We need to explore salvation in Jesus, through the lens of holiness. Jesus, the perfect example of holiness, is the great high priest by whom we who are unholy can be brought into the brilliant presence of the holy God.

Holy people, or as some translations say, saints, do not start out this way. A holy person is saved firstly by understanding the depth of their sin, the price paid to redeem them and that by grace. Last week we read Isaiah's response to a holy God which was a realisation of his own unholiness displayed in his morality (I am a man of unclean lips) and lack of avenues for redemption or even hope of redemption (I live among a people of unclean lips). His situation was dire and with no other path but death (I am ruined).

In his book "Holiness" J.C. Ryle begins with a chapter on sin. He begins by saying, *"He that wishes to attain right views about Christian holiness, must begin by examining the vast and solemn subject of sin. A mistake here is most mischievous. Wrong views about holiness are generally traceable to wrong views about human corruption... The plain truth is that a right knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity."*

A holy person is declared as such due their being united with Christ who substituted himself for the unrighteous. When we respond in repentance and faith we are united with him and therefore called to live holy lives. We do this by the power of the Spirit having been rescued by the precious blood of Jesus.

QUESTIONS:

1. How do you view sin? How much of a person's life does it affect and in what ways?

Sin is pervasive and all encompassing. Perhaps you could look at Genesis 6:5. This verse is nestled in a very difficult passage but sums up the verses around, that is, it is the point of the verses around it and God's willingness to save through Noah, just one man.

The second half of the question is not restricted to what we do but who we are. We rebel against God, we are called his enemies (Romans 5:10). Sin affects us spiritually and emotionally and sometimes even physically. Sin means that we are actually dead (Ephesians 2:1-3). Further to this C.S. Lewis in "Mere Christianity" says, *"when a man is getting better he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse he understands his own badness less and less. A moderately bad man knows he is not very good: a thoroughly bad man think he is all right... You understand sleep when you are awake not while you are sleeping. You can see mistakes in arithmetic when your mind is working properly: while you are making them you cannot see them. You can understand the nature of drunkenness when you are sober, not when you are drunk. Good people know about both good and evil: bad people know about either. This speaks into the human condition."*

2. Read Hebrews 7:26-28. How have people been saved from their sin? What was the affect of this?

People have been saved by Jesus' sacrifice. It was something that was constantly repeated by priests in the OT who had to be cleansed before they could represent the people in this act. Jesus' sacrifice meant that we are saved once for all. We are free to live holy lives and indeed ought to given that we are now in him and he in us. We are ambassadors, new creatures, citizens of heaven, children of God and disciples of Jesus. Given all of these ways of describing who we are, a holy life ought to be expected and holistic, not merely optional nor piece meal.

3. Read Isaiah 6:6-7. What do we learn about Jesus' sacrifice from these verses?

We may be able to link the coal from the throne from last week and show how Jesus also makes the unholy holy. As Jesus touches the unholy he does not take on their unholiness they receive his holiness. This is also seen in miracles when he touches the leper etc. We take in his holiness; he doesn't take on our unholiness.

4. Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. How does this passage describe what it is to be holy?

Being alert/sober. Setting our hope on Jesus. Obedience. Not conforming to evil desires.

5. If part of being holy is to be obedient to God, why do you think this is so hard even after becoming a Christian? Why do you think we ought to obey God?

We ought to obey God because we represent him, his name is at stake. He is jealous FOR his own name and we ought to do the same. His glory ought to be our goal. We also ought to obey God because he knows what is best for us and wants what is best for us. Obedience is out of love for God because he loves us. It is often seen as taking away our freedom or ability to choose.

Rather it ought to be seen as a means of freedom (we are who we were made to be. Like a fish who is free when in the water but when taken out of the water will die) and to make the right choices for the good of others, for our good and for the glory of God.

6. Read the following quote from Kevin de Young,

“We must remember that in seeking after holiness we are not so much seeking after a thing as we are seeking a person. The blessing of the gospel - election, justification, sanctification, glorification etc have been deposited in no other treasury than Christ. We don’t just want Holiness, we want the holy one.”

What do you like about this quote? What do you not like it? Does this quote help your understanding of being a holy person? If so, in what way?

MAKING IT STICK:

What things need to change in your life that do not reflect Christlikeness?

Can you think of times when you find it difficult to be a holy person and what is it that gets in the way?

How can we know how God wants us to obey him? How can we test whether we are obeying him?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today’s passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pat Jones and Emma Sibley as they lead our youth ministries. Ask for wisdom, and for God to sustain them. Pray that the leaders in youth ministry will show God’s love to those in their care and that many will be won for the kingdom.
- Our Parish Council, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.
- Our link missionaries John and Fiona McIvor. Pray that God will use them as they mobilise people for mission and consider their own return to overseas mission.
- Pray that as we live holy lives in obedience to God we will do it joyfully and with gratitude, knowing that God is for us and wants what is best for us. Perhaps you could finish with Phil 1:9-11.

Study 3

A Holy People

Passages:

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

1 Peter 2:1-10

Other passages to look at:

Philippians 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION:

“Teaching on Christian Holiness has frequently concentrated almost exclusively on the ‘holy man’ or the ‘holy woman’ to the neglect of the biblical concern for the ‘holy people’ or the ‘holy church’ ...this recognition of the corporate aspect is no road to moral compromise; rather it is a road to Christian sanity, realism and wholeness”

Bruce Milne Know the Truth 194

“If ungodliness is your delight here on earth, what will please you in heaven, where all is clean and pure? You would not be happy there if you are not holy here?” (summarising Ryle, Holiness by Kevin de Young pg 14-15)

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-3. What word does Paul use to define God’s holy people? How does he then describe them?

Paul calls them the church of God. He describes them as those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy people.

“The church of our text [referring to Matthew 16:18] is made up of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, of all who are really holy and converted people. It comprehends all who have repented of sin, and fled to Christ by faith, and have made new creatures in him... this is the body of Christ. This is the flock of Christ. This is the bride. This is Lamb’s wife. This is ‘blessed company if all the faithful people,...” J.C. Ryle

2. What does it mean to be sanctified and how does this relate to holiness?

Sanctified means to be made more like Christ. As Christ is holy we are holy.

3. Read 1 Peter 2:1-10. What do we learn about being God's people from this passage?

4. The letter to the Corinthians (and other Epistles in the NT) respond to a lot of things within a church that had lost its way on some things. What are some of the issues the letters in the NT address?

What we do when we are together (order within church). 1 Cor 5 talks about a kind of sexual sin. Forgiveness among God's people. Galatians talks about what people were adding to the gospel. Colossians 2:8 talks about deceptive and hollow philosophies. There are others which may come up.

5. Where do you think the church today has lost its way? What things have been allowed to distract us from being a holy people?

Be careful that this question does not become a complaint session. Perhaps consider things like an overuse of worldly corporate ideals (unhelpful leadership ideas, business type language and operation), individualism, loosening of our understanding on sexuality, deconstructionism (Deconstruction involves the close reading of texts in order to demonstrate that any given text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified, logical whole. ... Although its ultimate aim may be to criticize Western logic, deconstruction arose as a response to structuralism and formalism). Perhaps you could ask what sins have become acceptable or are not addressed.

6. How is holiness reflected in the way God's people treat each other?

Forgiveness, patience, discipleship.

7. Read 2 Corinthians 13:5-14. What things stand out to you in this passage? What encouragements do we receive from this as we live as God's holy people?

MAKING IT STICK:

Are there those among God's people with whom you need to reconcile? If so, what is stopping you?

How can we encourage each other to grow in our holiness?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- For Linda Stephens and Naomi Pigot as they lead our children's ministries.
- Keith Baker as he oversees the Generations ministries.
- Our link missionaries Norm and Janelle Gorrie serving with CMS in Kenya as they strengthen believers and reach the lost.

Study 4

A Holy Mind

Passage:

Romans 8

Other passages to look at:

Matthew 5-6, Colossians 3:1-17, Romans 12:1-12, 1 Samuel 2:35, Deuteronomy 11:18, Psalm 26:2

INTRODUCTION:

We now turn to a pursuit of holiness through the renewing of our mind and an appreciation for the Spirit's work in this process. The Spirit sets us apart in Christ, to then work in us as it reveals sin, truth and the hope of glory.

The mind set on things above is better at talking to itself than listening to itself - the talking, not mindless chatter, but an intentional, biblically fed, Spirit led, gospel centered and humble hearted holy speech. The Spirit is powerful and effective in our pursuit of holiness through the renewing of our mind which outflows in life and action.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think a renewing of our minds is important?

Allow discussion around this question to open up but be careful it is not just about knowledge but how we grow out of conforming to the world.

2. Read Romans 8:1-17. What does it look like to live 'according to the Spirit'?

Setting our minds on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5)

3. How does the gospel speak to the mind and its 'governance' in the process of justification and sanctification?

Romans 8:6-8.

4. What is the mind's role in our union with Christ in our call to repent and have faith, AND THEN in our ongoing communion with Him and pursuit of holiness?

5. What things do we allow to influence our minds that take our thoughts off God?

Maybe talk about the influence of the internet, social media. What we read or watch. Perhaps even what Christian books or podcasts we listen to.

6. What do you think Paul means when he says in Romans 8:9, “the realm of the flesh” and “the realm of the Spirit”?

It seems to indicate where we live and act. Where we get our influences from. Could it mean who is king of that realm? Do they cross over and should they?

MAKING IT STICK:

In what ways can we cause others to stumble and distract them from setting their minds on things above?

How do we encourage others in renewing their minds?

What can we do to be faithful in renewing our minds and how do we know we are maturing?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Discipleship ministry at church and Paul Lucas as he leads the Discipleship Team.
- For small group leaders across the church, for their encouragement and growth and the raising up of new leaders
- For those involved with Read with Me (one-to-one bible reading) with others and for the growth of this ministry for sharing the gospel and growth as disciples.

Study 5

A Holy Heart

Passage:

1 Peter 1:13-25

Other passages to look at:

Ezekiel 36:24-32, Romans 5:1-11, Psalm 51:10-12

INTRODUCTION:

A week to focus on the WHY behind a pursuit of Holiness.

How do we position our hearts to be ones that pursue holiness in the light of the Gospel? We seek to show that this is done relationally with God the Father, through Christ the Son and by His Holy Spirit. We want to show the direction and end point of pursuing holiness as “*the goal of our redemption*” (Packer) and the tension of positional and progressive sanctification. Possible interaction with the difference between motivation/inspiration or external motivation and internal, how we posture our hearts towards the transformative work of the Gospel through our lives. Kevin De Young postulates that we have a tendency to neglect the why of holiness - that our lack of emphasis on imperatives show an inability to provide depth and variety for the impetus for holiness that the bible gives (The hole in our holiness 57-60). We want to accurately place the gospel as a driving force for our hearts to pursue holiness. “*We know legalism and antinomianism are both wrong but antinomianism feels like a much safer danger*” (KDY 19). Antinomianism not as the extreme we see in Romans 6 but in the sense that Christians today have very little regard for the role of the law in their pursuit of holiness (KDY 54). Can we show grace?

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think makes it hard to be obedient?

2. Read Ezekiel 36:24-32, Romans 5:1-11, Psalm 51:10-12. What common threads do you notice through these passages?

The heart is changed by God. There is a creation element, that is, a heart of stone is taken out and a heart of flesh inserted, God creates a pure heart and God pours his love into our hearts.

3. Read 1 Peter 1:13-25. What is our response to the answers from question 2?

Verse 16 says that we are to be holy for he is holy. This is possible because God changes our hearts, he pours his Spirit into our hearts.

4. What do the verses from 1 Peter help us to understand about why we love?

We see the love of God in the gospel, that is, through the giving of the Son and the willingness of the son to give himself.

5. In 1 Peter 1:22-23 what do you think it means to love one another deeply and the reason for it?

Looking for answers from people. Hoping people can be vulnerable and open. The reason for us to love one another deeply is that we have been born again (v23), which continues the thread from the other passages.

6. What makes the command to love one another deeply difficult?

Try to get people to be honest. Remember for some people this may be difficult for them as they may have been on the receiving end of some unloving experiences. Be aware of those you may need to follow up with personally.

MAKING IT STICK:

What can we do to change our attitude towards obedience?

From your knowledge of the gospel what motivations are there for obedience?

How do we maintain a life of holiness having had our heart changed?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Care Ministry at St Paul's and for the Care Minister Fiona Smith as she leads the teams. Please be praying for the Sunday Care Teams at each of our services, prayer ministry, practical care, Help at Home Days, and the many teams providing care and support to people across our church.
- Our link missionaries John & Fiona (Zeke and Clay) - as they serve at the SIM-Australia Head Office, having returned from South Asia, and are now considering opportunities for service overseas in future.

Study 6

Holy Hands

Passages:

Colossians 3:1-17, James 2

Other passages to look at:

Peter 1:5, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 1 Corinthians 15:10,
Ephesians 2:8-10, James 2:14-26

INTRODUCTION:

Being alive is characterised by action and so our new life in Christ necessitates holy obedient action (focus on outward actions). This week's study looks at not acting because I have to but because I ought to. We are not talking about following laws or rules to get somewhere but because in a sense (we are now in Christ) we have arrived. We are obedient to Jesus out of love and not obligation. Due to the finished work of Christ and having responded in repentance and faith we are now 'in' him. To have Jesus living in us means we can live holy lives for his glory. This is not driven by law but it is not discarding law.

*"The law is good because firmness is good. God cares enough to show us his ways and direct our paths. How awful would it be to inhabit this world, have some idea that there is a God, and yet not know what he desires from us"*¹

QUESTIONS:

1. What responsibility do we have for our holiness? What boast do we have in our holiness?

God makes provision for our holiness in the redeeming work of Jesus. "God's provision for us consists in delivering us from the reign of sin, uniting us with Christ, and giving us the indwelling Holy Spirit to reveal sin, to create a desire for holiness and to strengthen us in our pursuit of holiness. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and according to the new nature He gives, we are to put to death the misdeeds of the body (Romans 8:13). Philippians 2:12 says that we are to work out salvation with fear and trembling. We have no boast because God makes provision and by his spirit works in us to change us (Philippians 2:12-13). Perhaps you can ask what are the implications of this. For example, The depth of God's grace, a posture of gratitude, humble obedience etc.

1. De Young, Kevin. *The Hole in our Holiness* (quoting Jason Helopolous) page 50.

2. Read Colossians 3:1-17. What are we to put to death? What do you think makes it difficult to do this?

Colossians 3:5-11. Perhaps you could ask what do we lose by putting these things to death and what do we gain? This can be difficult because of our need to satisfy our desires. These are seen as misdeeds of the flesh (Romans 8:13).

3. What are we to put on? How does putting these things on help us to obey God? How can these things help us relate better to others? How can these things help us do our work better?

When thinking about relating to others think about what God's law is and how it applies. How does it apply in marriages, church relationships, work relationships. Work can include vocation to earn money, volunteer work, parenting, ministry, maintaining your home etc. Colossians 3:17.

4. Read James 2:1-13. What do you learn about holiness from this passage?

5. What does James mean by the law that gives freedom in James 2:12?

MAKING IT STICK:

What things can you do to keep your mind and heart on things above?

Who can you be looking out for at church who might need help or to be welcomed?

What can we as a church be doing in our community that shows the fruit of our holiness?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for Sam Haywood and the young adult ministry.
- Pray for our link missionaries Brendan and Karina Pont and that they will be able to return to South East Asia this year.
- Give thanks to God for being generous to us and for the generosity of his people in their giving that ministries in our church can continue.
- Give thanks that God made provision for our holiness and for strength to remain holy in our hearts, minds and actions.

Study 7

A Holy Walk

Passage:

Colossians 3:1-17

Other passages to look at:

Romans 8:12-14

INTRODUCTION:

God has called us from darkness to light but He doesn't just leave us there. God makes provision for His people to walk a Holy walk and gives them the responsibility of using these provisions. The idea of 'walking' in the New Testament is about how we live each day. It is about 'doing' life as we work, relate to our families or households and deal with the world around us. This is not a 'what would Jesus do' thing, these are 'what would Jesus want me to do moments.'

In life we are constantly making decisions, thinking about what to do, relating to others going about our work (paid and unpaid). Setting our minds and hearts on things above means we can live holy lives not just at specific times but always. This is not easy and something that we ought to grow in.

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you recollect something you have learnt that you still do or say and who said it to you (for example, being told, 'when you do a job do it properly')?

2. Read Colossians 3:1-17. In verse 1 and 2 Paul tells them to 'set' their hearts and minds. What do you think Paul means by this?

Paul is saying that we need to focus our minds and hearts on things above. It also involves remembering who we once were and how the Spirit is transforming us.

3. What can we do to continue to 'set' our minds and hearts on things above?

Perhaps people can share habits they have for staying close to God and seeking his ways.

4. In Colossians 3:12-14 we are told what to put on. Can you think of situations where these things come into play in our Christian walk?

Talk through each of these (if you have time), that is, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Talk about forgiveness as this is a big topic. Perhaps you can ask how does love join all these things together?

5. What do you think Paul means in Colossians 3:17? Is this possible? What makes it hard for you to do?

6. Read Romans 8:12-14. What does Paul mean by ‘the misdeeds of the body?’ What do you think means to be led by the Spirit?

The misdeeds of the body could be replacing God with the good things he gives us. For example, we need to have certain relationships to meet our needs rather than God meeting those needs. We are then asking the relationship to fulfill what only God can fulfill. We can do this with all good things given to us.

MAKING IT STICK:

What things will you put in place so that your mind and heart is set on things above as you walk in your life as a Christian?

What things will you stop doing so that you are walking as a Christian (be honest)?

How can you support each other as you grow?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today’s passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our interns Sam Heinrich, Nick Clegg, Chelsea Rumbel, Blake Scurr and Alex Furner. Pray that they will enjoy their time, that they will grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus and that they will make good decisions about ministry in the future.
- Pray for our link missionaries Matt and Paula Crowe in Colombia.
- Pray that we will walk diligently as children of God and citizens of heaven.
- Pray for Ben Razey as he leads our Integration ministries.

Study 8

A Holy Relationship

Passage:

Romans 12:10

Other passages to look at:

Philippians 2, 1 Peter 4:7-11, Ephesians 4:17-32

INTRODUCTION:

What do holy relationships look like? Where are we currently falling short? What needs to change in order that our relationships are honouring each other and God?

Addressing relational holiness issues such as sexual impurity, gossip, dishonouring others. The ideal goal of this week is to cause people to 1. Compare how God relates to us, 2. How we relate to others, 3. How we can pursue a holy standard of relationship.

The way God expects us to relate to him is also expected with others. This applies across all relationships.

QUESTIONS:

1. What areas could we improve in as we relate as God's people?

Make sure this does not become a gossip session or people dwelling on their hurts. This is meant more as an accountability question and thinking about things that we are all guilty of.

2. Read Romans 12:9-13. In what ways do the things Paul is asking of the Roman church reflect God and his gospel?

All God did was from an overflow of love for his creation and jealousy for his own name. Jesus did not lack in zeal or spiritual fervour as he made his way to the cross. Jesus went to the cross with joy set before him (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus met our need for the forgiveness of sins and to be reconciled to the father. God is not asking us to do anything that he himself has not done. The gospel gives us the impetus to do it and continue in it. As the gospel displays the holiness of God so should our response to it manifested in a holy life in our relating to others.

3. Read Philippians 2:1-11. What are the Philippian church encouraged to do here? What is their motivation.

They are being asked to put the interests of others above their own. They are being asked to do this humbly. This is important because we become people who do things for our own gain rather than the praise and glory of God (as we read Jesus did in verses 5ff) if not acting in humility. Humility is what we learn from the hymn about Jesus in the verses 5-11. Perhaps you could ask 'What makes it difficult to maintain an interest in others?'

4. Read 1 Peter 4:7-11. What are the believers being asked to do here as God's holy people? How are they being asked to do it?

It is worth reminding people that in 1 Peter 1:16 the people being written to are told to be holy for God is holy. In these verses he is offering practical ways to do this.

5. What do you think it means to love deeply?

Worth pointing out here that this also comes from the gospel. Such is the depth of God's love that he would die for his enemies. Push people on this question to get them to test their convictions. We have had recent campaigns that run on the steam of the statement "Love is love." This is a shallow view of love as 1 John says that God is love. Love as God loves not as people feel.

6. Read Ephesians 4:17-32. What it makes it possible to live differently including in our relationship with others and with God?

Put off the old self and be made new. We are a new creation, it is our new default position. Maybe you can ask what we are to put off and what we are to put on. Also verse 32 can be difficult. Perhaps you can ask how people are going with forgiving others because we have been forgiven (gospel implication).

MAKING IT STICK:

How do we maintain our zeal for loving and serving others?

Are there people with whom you need to reconcile? What can you do to make this happen?

How can we come out of our comfort zones to relate better with God and others?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our small group leaders, that God will sustain them, give them insight and endurance.
- Pray for Rich Vassallo and his production team (both paid and volunteer). Thank God for their gifts and making it possible to meet online.
- Pray that we will be able to forgive as we have been forgiven.
- Pray that as we relate to each other we will do so with genuine humility and love. That we will do this for the sake of Jesus name and the good of our brothers and sisters.

Study 9

A Holy Commission

Passage:

Matthew 28:18-20

Other passages to look at:

Proverbs 10:17, James 1:22-25

INTRODUCTION:

Are we more focused on “Winning” than being obedient?

Christians often see sin as either defeating them, or they see themselves winning against the war of sin in their hearts. We must not think like this, firstly because Jesus has won (which means that we can neither bring upon a loss or a win against sin). Secondly because Jesus calls us to obedience, not winning. The language of “obedience” places the onus of one’s pursuit of holiness on themselves by the spirit, whereas “winning” places the onus on self righteousness. If sin is “defeating” someone, they most likely are shying away from their responsibility, because something “outside” of them has beaten them. When we fall short, we have not been defeated by sin. We have simply chosen disobedience.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Why do you think obedience is such an offensive word in our day?**
- 2. Read Matthew 28:18-20. What two things does Jesus ask them to do in these verses? What do you notice about his instructions?**

Jesus asks them to teach them to do all he has taught. He does not say ‘make them do all he has taught’. Perhaps you could ask why Jesus expresses it this way? Perhaps Jesus is saying it is part of the work of God’s Holy Spirit that changes people and Christ’s love that compels them (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). Teaching them stops us from being legalistic and more loving and abusing power or from being manipulative.

- 3. What parts of Jesus teaching do you find it most difficult to obey?**

Maybe look at Matthew chapters 5 to 7 for some ideas.

4. Read Proverbs 10:17. What part does discipline play in obedience?

This does not have to just mean disciplinary punishment. It can be disciplines that we include in our lives. Perhaps you could ask in what ways does God discipline? When do we think it is unfair and why?

5. Read James 1:22-25. What stands out to you in these verses?

6. Why is listening and doing so important?

Doing shows that we understand and believe what we have heard.

MAKING IT STICK:

How can we change our attitude toward obedience?

What areas of your life do not reflect Jesus teaching and how can this be changed?

In what can we better 'teach' others what Jesus taught?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our D-Team leaders as they lead the youth of our church each week
- Pray for Mark Pozorski and our administration team. Thank God for them and ask him to sustain them in their work as they offer admin support for the ministries of St Paul's.
- Pray that we will have the courage to obey and make disciples.
- Pray for our governments, that they will govern for the good of all people.

Study 10

A Holy Church

Passage:

2 Thessalonians 1:3-11

Other passages to look at:

2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 3:14-21, Matthew 16:16-20

INTRODUCTION:

The church is holy because Jesus, the head of the church, is holy. This speaks to more than just the institutional church. It speaks to the church as its people, living stones.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. When you think of church what comes to mind? Can you define church?**
- 2. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-11. In what ways does Paul encourage the church at Thessalonica? How are we encouraged by our own church?**
- 3. Read Matthew 16:16-20. In this passage what do we learn about who will build the church?**
- 4. Upon what will Jesus build his church against which the gates of hell not prevail?**

The church will be built upon the truth that Jesus is the Christ. The holiness of Jesus is reflected in his church, his bride.

- 5. Read Ephesians 3:14-21. What do these verses teach us about how we should pray for the church, that is, God's holy people?**

Remember that it is God church as it derives its name from him. We need to know the depth of Jesus' love because this will then mean the church displays holiness as it obeys Jesus. Obedience to Jesus shows love for him.

MAKING IT STICK:

How can we better love Jesus church?

Why is it important that people gather as the church under Jesus?

In what ways can and should the church display the holiness of Christ?

PRAYER:

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our church, its people, its ministries, its protection from the schemes of the evil one.
- Pray Ephesians 3:14-21.