



Lesson 17 ~ Yahweh Mekadesh

The LORD Who Makes You Holy

Leviticus 19:2; 20:7-8, 26; Colossians 3:5-10, 12-14

♥ Heart Talk

Continue to share with your small group anything you have experienced doing the *Heart Therapy* exercises for the past few lessons. Are you continuing to recite *Psalm 23* throughout your day? Or, were you able to spend some time alone with God doing an "obedience check" from **Lesson 15**? Perhaps you have been able to do some "little exercises" to help you "practice the presence of God" from **Lesson 16**? What do you sense that God is teaching you and accomplishing in you?

Introduction

The Hebrew words translated "*the LORD who makes you holy*" are **Yahweh Mekadesh** (mah-KAD-esh). The Hebrew verb *kadash*, which means *to be holy, sanctified, and separate*, is found over 700 times in the Old Testament, and it is most often used in the book of **Leviticus**. This Hebrew word is also translated as *dedicate, consecrate, sanctuary* and *hallow* in English.

In this lesson we will learn the meaning of *holiness* and that *Yahweh*, alone, is the standard for all *holiness*. Because *Yahweh* is *holy*, he calls all those who belong to him to also be *holy* and *set apart* for his purposes. Just as we learned that we cannot be righteous by our own efforts, we will see that *Yahweh Mekadesh* does for us what we cannot do for ourselves; he *makes us holy*.

♥ Heart Preparation

Jesus' Encouraging Words to You . . .

*Take time to be holy. The word **holy** does not mean **goody-goody**; it means **set apart for sacred use**. That is what these quiet moments in My Presence are accomplishing within you. As you focus your mind and heart on Me, you are being transformed: re-created into the one I designed you to be. This process requires blocks of time set aside for communion with Me. The benefits of this practice are limitless. Emotional and physical healing are enhanced by your soaking in the Light of My Presence. You experience a nearness to Me that strengthens your faith and fills you with Peace. You open yourself up to receive the many blessings that I have prepared for you. You become a cleansed temple of My Holy Spirit, who is able to do in and through you immeasurably more than you ask or imagine. These are just some of the benefits of being still in My Presence.*

Jesus Calling, (December 13) by Sarah Young

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently before him . . . **Psalm 37:7**. Continue to practice **sitting quietly before God, in silence, for 5 minutes** in order to prepare your heart to receive from God. As you sit quietly, letting your body and mind relax, imagine the peace of God creeping down over your head, your shoulders, arms, hands, legs and feet. Keep your mind fixed on Jesus and let the peace of God fill you completely.*

A Prayer to Help Prepare Your Heart

*Burn Holy Fire. Cleanse my desires.
Search me inside. Let nothing hide.
Burn Holy Flame,
until the same heart that's in You is burning in me.
Burn all that's dark, selfish or cold.
Soften my heart, possess my soul.
Burn Holy Flame,
until the same heart that's in You is burning in me.*

Clay McLean 1987

Questions

The Book of Leviticus – Have you ever tried to read *Leviticus*? If you have ever attempted to read through the Bible in a year, *Leviticus* is usually where you get bogged down! To the modern reader, much of this book seems outdated and downright strange with its description of various **sacrifices** and strict **dietary, purity, ritual, civil and religious** laws. Yet, behind all the seemingly peculiar details in this book, is an underlying theme that is very relevant and important to us today – the *holiness of God*.

Holiness is mentioned more times (152) in *Leviticus* than in any other book of the Bible and *Leviticus* is a guidebook for *holy living* in the presence of a *holy God*. After Israel's dramatic exit from Egypt, the nation was camped at the foot of Mount Sinai for two years in order to listen to God (**Exodus 19** to **Numbers 10**). During this time, God gave his people detailed instructions on how to live every part of their lives – religious and secular. This special instruction was needed because the nation of Israel was to be different and set apart from every other nation on the face of the earth. They also had to keep themselves holy in order to come into the presence of a holy God. In *Leviticus*, God declares his own *holiness*, as he calls his people to live *holy lives* – *set apart to him and set apart from* the civilizations around them. Today, we still need to see the importance of holiness and how to live our lives in the presence of a holy God.

YAHWEH IS HOLY

1. Read **Leviticus 19:1-2, 20:7-8, and 26**. If this was the **only information** you had about the term *holy*, what conclusions would you come to about the concept of *holiness* and *holy living*?
 - ♥ What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word *holy*? Does *holy* have a positive or negative connotation for you? Why?
 - ♥ How do you picture God's holiness? What does God's holiness have to do with your holiness?
 - ♥ What do you think it means to "*be holy*?" Does that sound inviting to you? Why or why not? Do you know of anyone whom you would describe as *holy*? What makes them holy?
2. *Holy* means to be *set apart; separate*. According to the Scripture listed below, what sets God apart, making him "wholly separate?"
 - Exodus 15:11 -
 - 1 Samuel 2:2 -
 - Isaiah 40:13-14, 25-26, 28 -
 - Isaiah 44:6 -
 - ♥ Why is God called a Rock (**1 Samuel 2:2**)? How many ways can you think of that he is like a rock? If someone asked, what **wonders** would you say that God has done in your life (**Exodus 15:11**)?
 - ♥ Some would say that it is intolerant, dogmatic and narrow-minded to insist that there is no other God than *Yahweh*. Is there proof for this statement? How would you reason with a person who might think there are other religions and other gods?
3. **Holiness** also means *purity*. How do the following verses confirm God's complete purity?
 - Deuteronomy 32:4 -
 - Psalms 18:30 -

Jeremiah 9:24 -

1 John 1:5 -

- ♥ What would it be like if our all-powerful God *wasn't* perfect, upright and just – and *was* able to do wrong? Specifically, how would this change your relationship with God?
- ♥ What evidence do you see of God exercising *kindness, justice* and *righteousness* on earth (**Jeremiah 9:24**)? What are some things that *delight* you? What does it mean to you that God also *delights*?
- ♥ *Light* and *fire* are often used as symbols of God's holiness. Why are these good metaphors? What do you find comforting about the statement that *God is light and in him is no darkness at all* (**1 John 1:5**)?

In his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A.W. Tozer writes: *Holy is the way God is. To be holy, He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely 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 belonging to God must be thought of as holy.*

Optional: Isaiah 6:1-8, Revelation 4:1-11 and Revelation 15:2-4 are three Scriptures that give us glimpses into the throne room of heaven. What are some specific responses that result when any living creature, human or heavenly, comes close to God's holiness? What is your response to God's holiness?

THAT WHICH BELONGS TO YAHWEH IS HOLY

In the Old Testament, anything **associated with God** becomes holy (set apart and pure) because he is holy. Although *associated holiness* is different from God's *essential holiness*, it does *make pure* and *sets apart* the holy from the unholy. That which God set apart as holy was to be treated with special respect and serve God's people as a reminder of their unique relationship with God. The priests were told, "*You are to distinguish between what is holy and what is ordinary, what is ceremonially unclean and what is clean. And you must teach the Israelites all the laws that the LORD has given . . .*" (**Leviticus 10:10-11**). In the Old Testament, the holy must never be used in a common or profane way. That which was consecrated to God must be for his use – forever.

4. God *set apart* **objects, persons, places** and **times** to be holy and consecrated to himself, to be used for his purposes. According to the verses listed below, *what* did God make holy and *why*?

Scripture	What was made holy?	Why?
Exodus 30:25-29		
Exodus 19:10-11, 16-22		
Deuteronomy 7:6-8		
Exodus 20:8-11		

- ♥ What does your church do to help distinguish between the sacred and the secular? Compare your lists. In your opinion, what is "sacrilegious"? What are some examples of your definition? Can you think of any ways in your own life that you separate the sacred from the secular?
 - ♥ As followers of Christ, do you think we still need to practice a Sabbath rest? Why or why not?
 - ♥ Do you prepare yourself in some way to come into the presence of God in worship? What are some things you could do to prepare your heart, body and mind to meet God? How might this be beneficial?
5. According to **1 Peter 2:5, 9-10**, *who* has been made holy and *why*?

- ♥ What were some of the functions of a priest in Old Testament worship? How do you feel about being part of a holy priesthood? How do you offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God?
- ♥ Share with your small group your experience of being called out of darkness into God's wonderful light. How do you declare God's praises or show his goodness to others (2:9)?
- ♥ What makes you a "living stone" and with whom are you being built into a spiritual house or temple? How do the words *chosen, royal, holy* and *belonging* make you feel (2:9 NIV)? What is your response?

YAHWEH CALLS THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIM TO BE HOLY

In the Old Testament, holiness was expressed in strict separation. The holy was not permitted to come in contact with the ordinary, or the clean with the unclean and interaction between Israel, God's holy people, and surrounding civilizations was discouraged. In the New Testament, the emphasis on holiness is *moral purity* – the concern over right and wrong and the quality of a person's character. God's people are to separate themselves from evil while living among people who do not live according to God's holy standards. Believers are *set apart* to God, but not set apart from involvement with unbelievers.

The Apostle Peter wrote, "Obey God because you are his children. Don't slip back into your old ways of doing evil; you didn't know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God – who chose you to be his children – is holy. For he himself has said, "You must be holy because I am holy"(1 Peter 1:14-16). God is holy; therefore, all who are associated with him must be holy and reflect him in their *character* and *actions*. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life (1 Thessalonians 4:7). The holiness of God requires that we who are associated with him live good and self-giving daily lives in this present world

6. Read **Colossians 3:5-10** in both the NIV and NLT. What, specifically, are the behaviors we are to put to death that belong to the old life we had before we became new persons in Christ?

- ♥ One way to put something to death is to *stop feeding it*. Can you think of any activities or practices you need to give up or stop doing so that you are not feeding the desires of the old nature?
- ♥ How important is holiness in your life? How is your life different from those who do not follow Christ? What do you think would help in your desire to be holy – set apart for God?

7. Read **Colossians 3:10-12** in both the NIV and NLT. What, specifically, are the behaviors we are to *put on* as God's holy, chosen, and dearly loved people?

- ♥ What is the difference between "holy" and "holier-than-thou"? How can you avoid this tag and still be the holy person God wants you to be? Do you know a "holy" person? How would you describe them?
- ♥ Which aspect of your old nature feels like a comfortable old T-shirt to you now? Why it is difficult to shed or remove? With what piece of Christ's wardrobe would you like to replace it?

♥ Heart Therapy

As seen in the throne room scenes of heaven, God's *holiness* – his absolute "otherness" and his unequivocal purity – always elicits awe and worship from any living creature that comes close to him. The never-ending song of heaven, "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty*" is sung by heavenly beings who repeat these words day and night (**Revelation 4:8**). *Worship* is expressing in words, music, rituals and silent adoration the *greatness, beauty* and *goodness* of God. As we worship, his Spirit touches our spirit and we enter the real presence and glory of God. **Review the names of God that we have studied this year. Set aside some time to just worship him, in your own unique way, for all that he is and all he has done.**

Give honor to the LORD for the glory of his name. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. Psalms 29:2