

## The Holiness of God part 2

By David Harrell

**Preached on:** Sunday, August 28, 2016

This morning I would like to address the issue of what it means to really live a holy life. This is actually part 2 of where I began last week in my exposition of Isaiah 6. Then from there, I will launch into some aspects of Calvary Bible Church, some passions that we have, some changes that we hope will help facilitate some of the things that will emerge from the text this morning.

Last week by way of reminder, we examined Isaiah's soul-terrifying, sin-destroying vision of our holy God and, of course, that was an experience that forever changed his life. It was an experience that empowered his prophetic ministry to endure the enormous obstacles that he encountered. He was awestruck by God's transcendent glory. He was overwhelmed by God's moral purity and profoundly humbled by God's mercy towards him. And folks, this is where we all must begin if we are going to understand what it means to live a holy life which we are commanded to do.

For example, in 1 Peter 1, beginning in verse 14, Peter says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" In similar fashion, the Apostle Paul addresses this. You may recall in 2 Corinthians 6, Paul reminds us that we are a temple of the living God; that he dwells within us and we should therefore separate ourselves from all of the deceptions, especially religious deceptions in the world; and that one day we are going to enjoy the full panoply of all of God's blessing that the heavenly Father has bestowed upon us. And he says this in the first verse of chapter 7, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." And indeed a reverential fear of a holy God must also be our motivation for godly living. Then the Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:1, he says, "I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

Well, I want you to understand what it is to live a holy life, one that honors God and why we are passionate about that here at Calvary Bible Church, and this will also help you understand some of the changes, some of the expansions that the elders are implementing which I will describe not in great detail but at least in general over the course of this discourse to you this morning.

So, first of all, we need to answer the question: what does holiness, or it could be translated godliness, what does that actually look like in a believer's life? First of all, let me tell you what it's not. It is not a list of religious duties. Any teaching on evangelical

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holiness that makes Christian duty the center of gravity around which our lives must orbit misses the entire point of the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news that our sanctification is not dependent upon self-effort. Can I hear an amen? That always bothers me when preachers do that but I couldn't help it. I mean, we just need to celebrate that.

Nor is it some kind of second blessing that we seek. I mean, such thinking really frustrates grace and it replaces grace with works and that's just legalism. Beloved, holy living is that which comes out of a new nature. When we are born again, when we are radically changed in our nature, we begin to have a passion to advance the glory of Christ and his kingdom.

So when you think of holiness, I want you to think of happiness, alright? I want you to think of celebration. I want you to think of gratitude. You see, holiness is the enjoyment of God being lived out in every aspect of our life. It's a conscious desire to manifest Christ and to take pleasure in him. We are now able to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves, and to enjoy the Lord like we have never been able to do. That's what happens when we are born again. Therein is the power of regenerating grace. So when God calls us to live a holy life, he's calling us to live a life that celebrates Christ. Christ in us, the hope of glory. He's calling us to yearn for more of the God that we have seen now through the eyes of faith. He's calling to live a life that overflows with joy because we have been forever separated from the power of Satan, the power of sin, the penalty of sin; some day we will be separated eternally from the very presence of sin.

A holy life is one that is lived in union with the Triune Godhead. This is why repeatedly we're told in the New Testament that a holy life is really a call to be who we are in Christ. You know, Jesus said repeatedly we are to abide in him, alright? Abide in him. Be consciously aware that we are now in Christ and he is in us. John said in 1 John 2:28, "Now, little children, abide in Him." Folks, frankly, if you claim to be a believer and you're walking around like Eeyore most of the time, okay, you're constantly sad, you're just discontent and just kind of down in the dumps, your Christian life is boring, you have lost sight of these great truths and your vision of God has become distorted and, frankly, you are a living contradiction to holiness.

Beloved, holiness is a living doxology. It is an overflowing of joy for who God is and what he has done for us and when people encounter a person living a holy life, they should get a taste of that pure refreshing water of saving grace that only flows from the reservoir of felt grace, of a felt Christ. It is the outward expression of the inward reality that we have been made forever holy no matter how we feel about ourselves. Lots of times I don't feel too holy, do you? But isn't it amazing, we are. Now, we're not going to

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enjoy the full expression of that until we're glorified one day but God has forever, he has permanently made us holy.

It's for this reason that the Apostle Paul addressed believers as being holy. He described the church at Corinth as "those that have been sanctified in Christ Jesus." Sanctified, by the way, means "to be set apart or to be made holy." If he were writing to Calvary Bible Church, he would say "to those that have been sanctified in Christ Jesus." When he wrote to the believers in Rome, to the believers in Ephesus and Philippi and Colossae, he always called them "the saints in Christ Jesus." A saint is literally one whom God has set apart from sin unto himself; one whom God has made holy; one who therefore rejoices in hope of the glory of God, as Paul said in Romans 5:2. You know, I feel sorry for believers that somehow don't get this because they just lack power and they lack joy. I should reverse that, if you lack joy, you lack power. I mean, who wants what you have if you're just kind of an old sore-tailed cat all the time?

And I feel sorry for the legalistic, moralistic, law-keeping Christian because they're always miserable and they make everybody else miserable with all of their rules and regulation. You know, you get around them and you just feel like you're on duty all the time. You're afraid you're going to do or say something, the wrong thing. They impose upon themselves and others never-ending restrictions. They're trying so hard to impress God and others. Really? You're going to impress God? I'm going to impress God? No. God is impressed with the righteousness of Christ in whom we have been hidden and that should cause us to celebrate the Gospel. You know, when we get into all of this legalism stuff, we find that our conscience begins to hold us to non-essentials and we become increasingly inflexible and dogmatic and frankly proud as we begin to elevate our personal preferences to the level of divine fiat as though we're trying to attain that which only Christ could attain, mainly his righteousness. Folks, Christ has accomplished our sanctification. We are made holy by God through faith in Christ so we need to rejoice in it. We need to celebrate it.

I was thinking about what Paul said in Ephesians 1:4, that we were in Christ – now catch this, this will blow your mind so hang on – we were in Christ before the foundation of the world. Now, if that isn't a cause for celebration. We were set apart ultimately before the foundation of the world, in eternity past. So, beloved, it's only after you have had, if I can use the same language, that soul-terrifying, sin-destroying vision of a holy God and understand that he has made you holy solely by his grace, only then will you be able to experience and express the soul-satisfying, the soul-exhilarating enjoyment of God's presence and his power in your life. Only then will you be able to live in perpetual awe of God and experience that unassailable joy that he offers come what may. Jesus said in Luke 10:20, "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Dear Christian, we will only enjoy God when we really know him and we obey him not out of duty but out of

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desire, because we know who he is, we understand what he's done. How can we do anything but live a holy life? That desire can only come from a proper understanding of the Gospel of grace.

Beloved, holiness produces happiness. The theme of the first sermon Jesus preached begins with the resounding and repeated theme of happiness because of the Gospel; that inner state of joy and contentment and well-being come what may because of the good news of the Gospel. You remember it. It's in Matthew 5, beginning in verse 3. Jesus says, "Blessed." Stop there. What does "blessed" mean? It means "happy." It means "blissful." Let me put that in some of these passages. "Happy are the poor in spirit for there's is the kingdom of heaven. Blissful are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. Happy are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. Blissful are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Overwhelmed with joy are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blissful are you even when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." You see, blessedness, that blissful celebratory joy in the inner man is a fundamental characteristic of our God and when we come to Christ, we are made partakers of the divine nature so guess what we are going to have? The joy of God. And when you don't have that, you've lost sight of who God is.

In Jonathan Edwards' great work "The End For Which God Created the World," he very compellingly argues from Scripture a central insight, namely that God created the world to exhibit the fullness of his glory in the God-centered joy of his people. If you want to glorify God, live out that joy. God wants to be known, he wants to be loved and he wants to be enjoyed, therefore pursuing joy in God is obedience. That's holy living. This is the type of perspective that we need and when we have this, folks, you're just going to crave more and more of who God is.

You know, it's easy to think, if you go back to last week and I hope you remember that, it's easy to think that because God promised Isaiah that the people that you're going to speak to, at least the vast majority of them, I've hardened their hearts because of their constant wickedness, their idolatry, they're not going to listen to you, but I want you to go ahead and preach to them. Now, you would think that he would have been a pretty miserable guy to be around. It would've been pretty sad, wouldn't it? But nothing could be further from the truth. As you read his inspired prophecy, you just get a sense of the real happiness that he enjoyed because of what God had done and what he knew God was going to do. For example in Isaiah 61:1, he didn't say, "The Spirit of the Lord God has come upon me." He wouldn't have said that. I mean, he would have been ecstatic. "The

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Spirit of the Lord God is upon me!" This is a time for celebration. Why? "Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified." Drop down to verse 7, "Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs."

Folks, that comes from a man who understood the holiness of God and who was living a holy life. I think of Peter who served Christ faithfully for 40 years knowing all along that at the end of his life and ministry he was going to be crucified. Boy, that must have been a pretty sad fellow, right? Not at all. Just read his doxology in 1 Peter 1:3-9, and at the end of that section he says, "though you have not seen Him," and by the way, he's encouraging saints that are being persecuted, they had been scattered all over everywhere. He says, "though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls." Folks, when we have this kind of biblical perspective of God's glory and of his grace, we will gladly honor him with a life of holiness.

I was thinking about this in my life and I think I can give an example that you will all identify with. You know, when these things really capture your heart, you find yourself saying, "I can't wait for blank because I love to blank." Let me give you an example. I can't wait to get up in the morning right before the sun comes up, make my coffee, get my Bible, find my little private spot and to begin to commune with the Lord my God and to hear his voice because I love to hear what he has to say. I can't wait to spend that same time with my wife because I love her and I love to see what God is doing in her. I can't wait to come to church where I can sing those great praises that are welling up in my heart all week in fellowship with God's people and hear his word. I can't wait for all of the other things that God gives like right now I can't wait for fall. I am not a hot weather person. I can't wait to see what God does with all of the leaves because I love the smell of tobacco barns. I love the smell of a campfire on a cool fall night. I can't wait for winter to get here to see what God does then because he's glorified in all that because I love to watch bird dogs work quail and I love the smell of gun powder. I love to get into the mountains on a good horse with a pack string of horses and go deep into the wilderness to hear an elk bugle, to see the eagles, to see grizzlies meandering across an alpine meadow with butterflies coming up. I love to crank up the volume on my stereo where I can listen

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to the whole range of music that God has given us. All of these things give glory to him and I can't wait to see my Savior face-to-face.

Folks, this is another way of practically understanding what Colossians 3:1-2 says. I want to take you there for a moment. Paul says, "Therefore," now mind you he's speaking to believers in a church just like us, okay? "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ," the "if" could even be translated "since." "Since you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." You see, this is like Isaiah, he's saying, "See everything through the lens of God's holiness, through his glorious transcendence. Stay lost in the wonder of who he is, what he's up to in your life, what he's up to in the world, what he has promised. Be in awe of his work of redemption. Be overwhelmed by his mercy and his grace and his kingdom."

Verse 2, "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." In other words, "Surrender your life to his plan and to his purposes and when you do, you will magnify him in your life and you will experience the exhilarating soul-satisfying joy of his presence in your life and you will have power."

Now, while we're in Colossians 3, let's look at how godliness is manifested in the local church. He goes on to talk about this in verse 12 and following and as I read this, I want you to see if this describes your heart attitude as you are a part of this church, okay? "So," members of the church at Colossae, "as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." He goes on to say, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Wow, what a stinging rebuke for passive church attenders, you know, the spectators who just kind of show up to watch what's going on but they never really get involved.

It's so sad, isn't it? Many Christians are that way. They do not see the church as the body of Christ in which they are Spirit-empowered organs necessary for its health and effectiveness for the glory of God. They just don't see the church that way. Said differently, they do not see the church as the central priority of their life to build the kingdom of God. They show up on Sundays, they sing the hymns, they listen, they give their offering, and then they disappear. No one really knows them. They don't really know anyone else. They know nothing of real fellowship. I heard a guy this week from Harvest

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talking about how that what they enjoy is what he called hello-ship. I thought that was pretty good, pretty well summarizes it. You know, you come in, you do the pleasantry thing, you kind of grip and grin, bump and run, and then you're gone. These kind of people know nothing of what it is to live out Colossians 3:12-17. Why is that? They lack a proper view of God which causes them to forfeit the soul-exhilarating joy of his presence and power in their life.

Let me take you back to Colossians 3:1-2. Let me read it from that perspective. Beginning in verse 1, "They are not lost in the wonder of having been raised up with Christ." Are you with me? They're not lost in the wonder of that. That doesn't overwhelm them. That doesn't bring tears to their eyes. They never really think about that. "So they're not seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. So they're not setting their mind on the things above but on the things of the earth." Verse 12, drop down there, "They have ceased being amazed over the fact that they have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, so they become self-absorbed, self-centered rather than God-centered. They see no real need in their life to put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." You see, none of this is necessary when you are the Lone Ranger, when you're living in spiritual isolation. You're to be part of a body, we'll say you're the kidney but, nah, I'll just stay over here. Well, how long are you going to last? I mean, look what that does to the body. You get the point.

Verse 14, "Since they're not involved in anyone's life in the church, they have no need to put on love which is the perfect bond of unity, so they know nothing of the peace of Christ ruling in their hearts, to which indeed they were called in one body. You see, they make no effort to be an active member in the one body. And be thankful? Yeah, for physical things, I guess, but not for spiritual blessings and resources. That's not really any big deal in my life."

Verse 16, "With this kind of attitude, they know nothing of what it means to let the word of Christ richly dwell within them, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." I mean, that's the type of stuff that the church staff does, that the elders do, or maybe the Sunday school teachers, or maybe some of the other folks that are involved. I don't really have time for that.

In verse 17, "They are utterly clueless about the apostles admonishment, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

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My friend, if this describes you, I would just humbly call you to repentance. You know, I've been burdened about this for many years as a pastor here at Calvary Bible Church and this, along with the clear teaching from Scripture, is what has fueled my passion to develop a more effective soul care discipleship and counseling ministry. This is why I asked Dr. Joe Miller to come and join the staff. But also the elders believe that we need to be more intentional ourselves in shepherding you; to help facilitate this kind of God-honoring holiness in each of our lives and in our church. This is very difficult, I should say, when you realize that we live in a culture that is just crazy busy, right? We've got all these gadgets to try to help. I mean, come on. People can't even talk to each other. I mean, they're just so busy answering and all that crazy stuff. Then to make it even worse here at Calvary Bible Church, I mean, we're a commuter church. We're not a community church. I mean, most of our people drive an average of about 30 minutes to get here. We have members, I was checking, some that live over an hour and a half from each other. A lot of you live an hour from your brothers and sisters in Christ.

You know, this is only going to continue as more and more people seek the kind of church that by God's grace we try to be, so how can we possibly have intentional fellowship, one-anothering, soul care like what Paul described here? Well, we believe the answer in part is really twofold: 1. is to offer more ministry and fellowship opportunities on Sundays because that is the one day everyone commutes to the church campus; and then secondly, to expand our regional home fellowship groups both in number and in their soul care effectiveness.

Let me talk about this specifically. You know, we tried to establish a second campus in the Nashville area, especially in Hermitage, one that would grow into a church, and I'm sure if we would continue in another year or two, you see little growth but it's very slow. It takes a lot of time and resources and frankly we have neither. We don't have time, we don't have the resources. People come and they visit the campus down there and they're disappointed. Oh, they're excited about our doctrine, they're excited about expository preaching, they hear that on the internet, they're excited about our soul care ministries, our teaching, training opportunities, but nothing else. Basically they're excited about who we are up here, not who we are down there. We don't have anything for their kids, really for their teens. Basically they come and they worship with a little group and that's kind of the extent of it. There is a fellowship group but, you know, that takes time to develop. Lots that have come would prefer, even though it's longer, to commute up here. Some of you are that way and that's fine but most people just look elsewhere.

So as we've already mentioned, September 4<sup>th</sup>, next Sunday will be our last Sunday to meet for a morning worship service in Hermitage. Everything else will continue, the fellowship groups, the things that I do with the men, the Bible studies and so forth. And the families down there are excited about coming up here so you're going to see a lot of

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new faces coming here beginning September 11<sup>th</sup>, but because so many families live so far away and because we, especially down there and even here, are unable to really provide the types of ministries necessarily to really meet the needs of the children, I mean, we know that Wednesday night Awana and our devotional time in praying meeting is not even an option for the majority of the people in our church. It's not even an option. There are some people that go and they complain, "Oh, I dread Wednesday nights because, you know, daddy doesn't get home until 6 or 6:30 and the kids have school and we've got all of this going on." And it makes for a very late night and so we have decided to move Awana from Wednesday nights to Sunday morning from 9-10:30 but we also want to enhance Awana by including some more robust theological training and we are going to do that by incorporating the very excellent Generations of Grace curriculum into the teaching time which our Sunday school teachers have been teaching all along. So hopefully those of you that have been a part of that will transition and help out in Awana.

But we also want to expand what we do at our Wednesday night service and enhance that through more of a home fellowship group model where folks can gather together in their region at times that are more convenient and this will allow a lot more people to participate in that. It's really been sad. There are very very very few of you that come on Wednesday nights and I understand there's all kinds of reasons and we want to do something about that. This will also give me the freedom, along with Nancy, to go from group to group to be able to minister to you and open up the word to you and have more of that intimate time with you.

But not only do we plan on offering our own version of Awana for children on Sunday mornings but we are also going to really beef up what we do with student ministries and give that an opportunity to really develop on Sunday mornings. We are currently interviewing a very dynamic young couple to fill the position of part-time director of student ministries. They will teach a student ministries class during the Sunday school time. They will lead weekly, monthly, yearly events and activities, but most importantly, they're going to be responsible for face-to-face, one-on-one discipleship and they will do this as well with the use of a very successful online discipleship program offered by Word of Life Fellowship. We're going to organize and lead a yearly student ministries camping experience. We'd like to send all of our youth and maybe some of the families up to the famous camp up in Schroon Lake, New York, there in the Adirondacks and also they will be responsible for organizing a yearly mission trip in a foreign country for our students. I mean, we really want this for our kids. I want this for my grandkids so badly. By the way, after the elders have finished the vetting process and we're getting real close to that, we're going to bring them in and we're going to have all the parents that are interested get to know them and we'll get your feedback as well.

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So not only will everyone who makes the effort to commute have these kinds of ministries for their children and youth and obviously the adult Bible fellowship will continue, but also we're going to begin to serve lunch every Sunday for a small fee, similar to the summer nights meals. You'll hear more about that later. And ladies, by the way, don't panic. It's not like you're going to have bring dishes every Sunday, alright? We'll explain that more later but many commuters have complained that, my goodness, by the time we get through fellowshiping here, you know, it's 1-1:30 and by the time we get home, it's 2-2:30, by the time we eat lunch, it may be 3:00. So we're going to try to help with that and alleviate that.

And after lunch, some of the existing fellowship groups that typically meet on Sundays after church will continue to be able to do that. They may want to meet over here in the other rooms, but we're also going to add to all of this, and you've probably been seeing what's going on out here with the earth moving equipment, we're trying to turn our 8 acres into more of a family park that will provide a variety of recreational opportunities for the whole family. We are putting in kind of a softball, kickball playing field. We want to have volleyball, tetherball, horseshoes, Italian bocce ball. Are you familiar with that? A lot of you like that. And different things. We want to landscape the property, put in benches, gazebos scattered here and there throughout the property. We're putting in a walking track and a bike track. We want to build a fire pit that we can use. We really want to build a 30 x 90 pavilion. We've checked into that. They're about \$17,500 if we do the work ourselves, so I'm hoping somebody will write that check at the close of the service. With a cooking grill, a fireplace. By the way, the current family life center is 50 x 100 so 30 x 90, you know, it's pretty big. We're going to need that.

Now, mind you, we can't do all of this at once but only as the Lord provides, but this is the direction that we're going and this will be a great place for birthdays, for anniversary celebrations, for family reunions, outdoor weddings, various things. I mean, this is your church. We're going to also add some indoor opportunities for fun and fellowship for all the ages, especially when it's rainy and cold. We like to put like some churches do, a canvas wall that drops down around the pavilion and we've got a big fireplace in there and for those of us that hate hot weather and love cool weather, oh, won't that fireplace be wonderful. A great place for fellowship.

We're going to discuss more of the details of this on September 11<sup>th</sup>, but folks, next to the Sunday morning exposition of the word, the most important means that God uses in a church to grow his people spiritually is that intentional fellowship and we see that mainly being facilitate through a small group ministry. I mean, let's face it, most of our relationships are horizontal, they're not vertical. Most of our interactions stay stuck on the superficial, kind of the type of thing you would enjoy at the beauty shop or at the barber shop and that's really sad. Many times we don't know one another. We don't know how

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## The Holiness of God part 2

By David Harrell

**Preached on:** Sunday, August 28, 2016

one's others are hurting and what's going on in their life. We don't know what it is to really lovingly come along someone and bear another's burden of sin and try to help them deal with it. We just tend to live in isolation.

Many Christians never allow anyone into their life and they really have no desire to be involved in anyone else's life but, folks, that is not biblical community. I mean, there is another whole sermon series on this but that's not biblical community. This is not how Christ intends the church to function. I mean, we are part of a family. We're part of a body. We're part of a vine, you know, you just don't take a branch and it goes out here on its own. You've got to stay, you've got to abide in him and too many Christians see their local church like a consumer would see a restaurant or maybe a department store. It's just merely an organization that offers religious services to a consumer rather than a living spiritual organism of which Christ is the head and we are members of that body that are there by God's grace and by his power to serve him and to serve one another.

So folks, live in isolation like that, frankly it's offensive to God. It's just unbiblical and we want to encourage you as we put these together, to be a part of one. You know, that's kind of the American way, isn't it? People will come up to you and say, "Well, where do you go to church?" Right? You hear that a lot. "Where do you go to church?" By the way, it always freaks them out when I tell them I'm a pastor. I mean, all of a sudden I'm a skunk, you know. Nobody wants to be around a skunk. But where do you go to church? They don't say, "Where do you worship and serve Christ?" because people don't think that way but that's really the way it needs to be.

Beloved, you're simply not going to grow if you're not going to be committed to body life. This is at the core of holy living. This is the core of worship. Biblically the concept of worship is serving God so worship is living out your awe of a holy God and serving the one who has created you by serving others in his body. It's staying lost in the wonder of the one who has saved you, who dwells within you, who commissioned you, who is coming for you. If you were to ask people, "Do you worship God?" Many professing Christians would say, "Well, yes, I go to church every Sunday." That's kind of how the cultural mindset is, I go to church, that means worship. But folks, if that's all you're doing, you're not really worshiping God, you're worshiping yourself. I mean, worship is what we do in every area of our life in adoration and service to God. It's presenting our bodies as a living and a holy sacrifice. I mean, just showing up on Sunday morning and calling that worship is like doing one push-up, two sit-ups and three deep knee bends and calling it a workout. That might be a workout for some of you, but that's not a workout, okay?

So what we want to do is facilitate more of that through a small group ministry that provides opportunities for just a lifestyle of worship. Now, we're not talking about getting

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into some phony therapy group and bearing your soul and subjecting yourself to the group's counsel. I mean, boy, that's very dangerous. But folks, it's rather caring for somebody other than yourself and finding the joy that is inherent in that. Small groups help facilitate this.

Now, I know many of you have individuals that you're in relationship with. I do, I have had for years. Nancy has. We've had unorganized fellowship with certain friends and that's great but we would encourage you also as time goes on to consider more of an organized intentional kind of small group that is really connected to the overall mission of the church.

Now, several groups already exist. They're doing a great job of this but it's our desire to create a number of other groups around the region, maybe having about 4 to 5 couples, 8 to 10 people is about all, and we're going to be using the Harvest Bible Fellowship curriculum. They have really written the book on this. They're really excellent with that and I like what they say, "We are not a church with small groups, we are a church of small groups." And folks, that's what we're going to have to do if we're going to be effective as a church, as a commuter church.

In addition to all of this, we will continue to expand our formal soul care discipleship and biblical counseling ministry and we're thrilled to see the impact that that has had. I mean, it's exceeded my expectations. We're training and certifying our own biblical counselors. You're seeing some of the counseling rooms here. We're opening up our own biblical counseling center here but we're also happy to announce that the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors has endorsed Calvary Bible Church to be one of their official training centers where people can come for ACBC certification. And I don't have time to elaborate on this, I'll let Dr. Miller do that at another time, maybe on September 11<sup>th</sup>, but folks, that is huge. This is going to give us an opportunity to reach, I don't mean just middle Tennessee, but I mean mid-South. In fact, around the country. This will draw many people to Calvary Bible Church, maybe to become a part of us but certainly to be trained by what we're passionate about and give us opportunities to host conferences, many other forms of ministry.

So, folks, I hope you can see how all this fits together. This is very brief. It's very general. It's kind of big picture but this is how we believe we can advance the kingdom and be faithful to what God has called us to be as a holy people. This is how we can live out Colossians 3, if you will.

Now, we often say there are pros and cons to everything and there is certainly no con-less church and we know that change is always hard but I hope you will bear with us and I hope you will see the big picture of who we are. We are a teaching and a training church.

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That is our DNA and we've got to be faithful to that and we need your help. We need your help financially. We need your help in terms of getting involved. So please don't sit back and just make a small group of people do all the work. And please, please hear this, I'm going to say this with love: don't be that person that rolls your eyes, "Yeah, I don't know. Can you believe they're this...?" Folks, we just don't need that. We just don't need that. If you want to come up with 15 ways why a lot of these things won't work, you can probably come up with 50. You know, it's like looking at a bumblebee and saying, "That thing will never fly." But it does by God's grace and we believe this will, but we need your help. So please help us overcome the inevitable obstacles rather than being one, okay? That's my passionate cry to you.

So let's join together in our awe of our holy God and let the world just marvel at the joy that we have in serving him and exalting the majesty and the glory of Christ together, okay?

Let's pray.

*Father, thank you for the great truths pertaining to holy living. Thank you for what you're doing in each of our lives. And Lord, you know the passion of our heart to honor you and, Lord, as we pivot, as we adjust, as we expand, as we make some changes, Lord, I pray that you will continue to lead us. So we give you praise, we give you the glory for all that you have done, are doing and will do. Use us for your glory that we might experience your joy for it is in Christ's name that I pray. Amen.*

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at [otcr.org](http://otcr.org).

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