

I. #8: True Worship Flows from A Pure Heart, Pure Lips, and Clean Hands.

- a) Peter said, "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). Notice that we are called to be a "holy priesthood."
- b) The priesthood ministering to the Lord in Revelation 14:1-5 is a holy priesthood. They are sexually pure, no lie is in their mouth, and they are blameless (Rev. 14:4-5). They have clean hands and pure hearts.
- c) David said, "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully" (Ps. 24:3-4). The "hill of the Lord" is Zion. Only those with "clean hands and a pure heart" can come into the holy of holies. Only those who have "not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully" can journey into the fiery presence of the Lord.

II. We Need a Correct View of Holiness.

- a) In today's postmodern culture, where there is supposedly no absolute truth and there's been a devaluation of morals and boundaries, holiness has a bad rap. Mean-spirited, legalistic Christians have certainly contributed to the besmearing of holiness as well.
- b) Holiness is not: legalism; rule keeping; condemnation; gritting our teeth and trying to obey external commandments in our own strength and power; giving our best effort to live for the Lord; grumpy, bored, and joyless people who do everything right.
- c) Holiness is: happy holiness; life-based, Spirit-empowered, and grace-enabled; spiritual beauty; Christ in us living; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control.
- d) Talking about Jesus, Hebrews 1:9 states, "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions." Happy holiness is loving righteousness and hating lawlessness.
- e) Holiness begins in our spirit, where the Holy Spirit dwells, and then flows into our heart, permeating into our soul, and subduing our body, as we allow Christ in us to live.
- f) Holiness does not begin external and work its way internal. Rather, holiness begins internal and flows external.
- g) In one of the most stinging rebukes in Scripture, Jesus told the Pharisees,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness (Matt. 23:25-28).
- h) Externally, the Pharisees were virtually perfect. They exerted all the discipline they could muster to keep all of the commandments of the Law. Yet Jesus told them, "Inside you are full of robbery and self-indulgence...full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness...full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

III. Holiness Is Required to See God.

- a) Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

- b) Hebrews 12:14 states, "Pursue...sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."
- c) A pure heart and clean hands are requirements for seeing the Lord. This doesn't mean that a pure heart and clean hands save us, assuring us a place in heaven. Rather, I believe these verses point to Revelation 22:3-4, where in the new Jerusalem, God's holy-of-holies priesthood, His bondservants, will minister to Him and "see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads."
- d) Only the believers who pursued internal and external holiness in this life will be permitted to minister to the Lord before His throne and see His face. Like Ezekiel 44 describes, there are two priesthoods. The outer-court priesthood that ministers to the people and the holy-of-holies priesthood that ministers to the Lord face-to-face.
- e) Holiness is a requirement to minister to the Lord in the holy of holies. Only those who are blameless before Him, not just positionally but also experientially, will be permitted to minister to Him in the most intimate place of worship and see His face.

IV. Purified Lips

- a) Zephaniah prophesied, "Then I will give to the peoples *purified lips*, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve [minister to] Him shoulder to shoulder [as living stones fit together].... My worshippers...will bring My offerings" (Zeph. 3:9-10, emphasis mine).
- b) The Lord's holy-of-holies priesthood will be a people of "purified lips."
- c) When Isaiah saw the Lord, who John said was the pre-incarnate Son of God, he said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5).
- d) In the blazing holiness of God's glory, Isaiah saw the defilement of his lips. Before this experience, Isaiah was a righteous man. He didn't go around cursing, swearing, and slandering. But he realized how self-centered his speech was in the presence of the Man, Christ Jesus.

V. A Mouth of Mixture

- a) James said that the tongue is: a fire; the very world of iniquity; that which defiles the entire body; that which sets on fire the course of our life; that which is set on fire by hell; and a restless evil that's full of deadly poison (James 3:5-8).
- b) James said, "With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (James 3:9-10, emphasis mine).
- c) James continued, "Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh" (James 3:11-12).
- d) No one can be part of the holy-of-holies priesthood whose mouth is a dual spring.
- e) Questions to ask ourselves:
 - How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet curse men and women made in His likeness?
 - How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet judge and criticize the Lord's people?
 - How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet be a prophet of the accuser of the brethren, in full agreement with the devil's accusations of our brothers and sisters in Christ, voicing what he says about God's people?

- How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet gossip about our brothers and sisters in Christ?
 - How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet grumble and complain about the circumstances the Lord has us in?
 - How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet sing lies and a live a lie, where our words and our heart are not aligned, which is hypocrisy?
 - How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet give our lips to course jesting and folly?
 - How can we bless and praise the Lord, yet say yes but do no? To say one thing and do another?
- f) Let's ask an honest question: Do you think the Lord enjoys being sung to by a people with defiled lips?
- g) The lips of the Lord's holy-of-holies priesthood will be a source of fresh spring water with no mixture. They will use their lips to bless and praise the Lord and use their lips to bless men and women made in His image. They will tell no lies, not boast about themselves, nor will they exaggerate.
- h) The Lord's holy-of-holies priesthood will consecrate their lips for service to the Lord, both to bless His name through singing and to proclaim Him as a messenger.
- i) Let's talk about six ways our lips our tainted with mixture.

VI. #1: Criticism, Judgment, and Accusation.

- a) The devil is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). He is constantly accusing the body of Christ for their failures, faults, and shortcomings. And he wants us to agree with his accusations about us and ourselves. Then, once we are in agreement, he wants us to be a "prophetic" voice of accusation that declares what he says about ourselves and others.
- b) We have to learn the difference between righteous and unrighteous judgment. We should voice righteous judgment and refrain from unrighteous judgment (John 7:24; Matt. 7:1; 1 Cor. 2:15).

VII. #2: Gossip.

- a) Proverbs 18:8 states, "The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body."
- b) There truly is a place to share concerns that we have about others and to stand in the gap on their behalf, interceding for the Lord to work in their lives. At the same time, we have to be careful that this doesn't lead to gossip and slander. The pride in our fallen nature enjoys hearing negative reports about others because it makes us feel superior.

VIII. #3: Grumbling and Complaining.

- a) The Lord said about Israel, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me" (Num. 14:27).
- b) Israel's constant grumbling and complaining offended the Lord and caused them to die in the wilderness. Grumbling and complaining are the voice of unbelief. Grumblers and complainers will not inherit the promises of God.
- c) We grumble and complain about the situation and circumstances that the Lord has us in, not realizing the wonderful work He is doing, even if it is hard and painful.

IX. #4: Lying.

- a) Lying comes in many forms. We can blatantly lie for our own benefit. We can tell half-truths for our own gain. We can exaggerate to make ourselves look better. And we can say or sing something but have a gap between our lips and our heart. This makes us hypocrites.
- b) Jesus said, "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men'" (Matt. 15:7-9).
- c) A.W. Tozer said, "Christians don't tell lies; they just go to church and sing them."

X. #5: Not Keeping Our Word.

- a) David said that one requirement for dwelling in the holy of holies is that we swear to our own hurt and don't change (Ps. 15:4). This means that our yes is yes and our no is no. This means that if we say something, then we should do everything in our power to keep our word.
- b) Jesus said, "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil" (Matt. 5:37).

XI. #6: Boasting.

- a) James said, "So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!" (James 3:5).
- b) When we use our lips to brag, boast, and make ourselves look good before men, we lose eternal rewards (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16).

XII. Taming the Tongue

- a) James said, "For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue" (James 3:7-8).
- b) He continued on: "For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well" (James 3:2). In the Greek, "perfect man" is the very same two words as "mature man" in Ephesians 4:13. In other words, the corporate man who is a representation of the Son of God is comprised of individuals who have learned how to tame their tongue.
- c) Three ways to tame the tongue:
 - #1: Know that only the Holy Spirit can tame our tongue.
 - #2: Realize that the tongue speaks from the overflow of what fills our heart (Matt. 12:34).
 - #3: The key to taming our tongue is allowing the indwelling Spirit to fill and dwell in our heart (Eph. 3:17).