

Biblical Holiness in A secular Entertainment Based World

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The Meaning of the word: HOLY

The Hebrew word: **kodesh** means consecrated, dedicated, or hallowed and is derived from the Hebrew word **kadash** which means to make, to pronounce or to observe as clean. There is another Hebrew word derived from the same root, with a surprising meaning: **kadaysh** a male devoted (or set aside or consecrated) to sacred licentiousness – a male prostitute or temple sodomite)

It can be applied to **people** (Ex. 22:31), to **gatherings** (Ex. 12:16), to **places** (Ex. 3:5; Ps. 2:6), to **food** (Lev. 22:2), to **clothing** (Ex. 28), to **oil** (Ex. 30:25; Nu. 33:25), to **incense** (Ex. 31:11), to all the **furniture of the tabernacle** (Num. 4:15), and to **specific days** (Ex. 16:23; 35:2).

In other words, biblical holiness refers to all and anything or anyone or any time or any place (gathering) which are set apart for G-d and which have been separated from any ritual or moral uncleanness and for the purpose of praise, prayer and the other activities of holy gatherings.

It also refers to the condition of being clean ritually and morally, both as a lifestyle and as a daily reality maintained by the choices we make and the things we do and the places we go.

In the chapter in Leviticus on which animals are kosher, the discussion ends with the rationale behind kosher which is: you shall be holy for I am holy (Lev. 11:45). When the L-rd spoke of the function of the Levites and especially of the priest, He said they were to distinguish between the holy and the common and between the unclean and the clean.

It does not exclude either beauty or pleasure and is often mentioned in the Bible in conjunction with both celebration and rejoicing

Two Questions:

1. Why were the patriarchs never required to remove their shoes in any of the places where they had an encounter with G-d?

2. If the earth is the L-rd's and all who dwell on it, why are only certain places and certain people holy and if He is the L-rd of eternity, why are only certain times holy?

Biblical holiness seems to indicate two functions. A place or a person or a thing or a time can be holy when it is both **separated from** evil (defilement) and then is **set apart to**, or reserved for a holy function (worship, prayer, study).

Holiness is also the application of the teachings of the Bible to everyday life situations (I P. 2:9-11; I John 2:15, 16; Matt. 6:33) and it is the conscious avoidance of things which the Bible forbids and these fall into two broad categories: **idolatry** (breaking G-d's spiritual commands) and **fornication** (breaking G-d's moral commands).

At different times in the history of the church and of the synagogue, there have been movements which stressed holiness as avoiding any contact with the culture of the world around us and this has variably included not dressing the same, not listening to the same music and not having anything social to do with people in the world. It included such things as not wearing makeup, not going to concerts, or movies and at one point, not even watching TV

The reason for all this was that the world did what it did for the wrong reasons and if we did anything which the world did, we would also be doing wrong things for the wrong reasons.

Should we avoid all contact with the world and avoid all forms of secular entertainment, in order to avoid doing wrong things for the wrong reasons?

My biggest objection to secular entertainment is not that they are doing wrong things, or that they are doing them for the wrong reasons. My biggest objection is that frequently secular entertainment portrays doing things which the Bible says are wrong as if they were doing something which was right (Is. 5:20).

It gets worse in that secular entertainment also often portrays the things the Bible says are right to do as if they were wrong, bigoted and cruel.

Also entertainment can become an addiction where people want to be constantly entertained (Prov. 20:27) and are either starving for satisfaction (Prov. 27:7) or are getting too much of a good thing (Prov. 25:16).

Our modern secular entertainment world both portrays that which is immoral as if it were moral and that which is ugly as if it were beautiful. It can give us a taste for the unclean and the immoral and causes us to begin to think that if it feels good it must be good. Also it says that if we feel something is holy, then we are taught that our feeling that it is holy, makes it is holy.

I have a TV in my house. I have a computer. I do not go to movies or concerts, but for health reasons.

What is the balance?

Holiness means to be set apart for G-d and to be performing a sacred function. In between times it is ok to play baseball, go for a walk and even to listen to secular music as long as it doesn't portray unholy things as if they were holy – or holy things as if they were unholy. Secular fashions and secular entertainment can be innocent, as long as we are careful not to be drawn into doing or thinking things which contradict the Bible. Does that mean we turn things off and refuse to go to certain places? Yes, sometimes, but the principle should be twofold.

I need first to live a life separated unto G-d so that the sacred functions of my life come first (Bible Study, Prayer, fellowship, witnessing and worship). I then, secondarily, need to live my life so that none of secular activities which I allow into my life either get in the way of my sacred functions or cause me to do, to say or to look at things which would defile my heart and my life. This is because as a sacred vessel of the L-rd, while I may live in the world and have to relate to the world, there are things which a sacred vessel should not do, and places it should not go – amidst all the rest which are neutral.

To know the difference, is the discernment and wisdom of the saints.