

## What Is Holiness Lynn Thrush

We derive the meaning of holiness, rather than describe an independent object. The word begins to be defined when we know the source from which it springs, or the entity with which it is identified. Holiness is properly identified with God, “I will show My greatness and My holiness.” Ez. 38:23. Holiness is connected to the very positive terms “majestic” and “splendor.” Ps. 29:2. Holiness is contrasted to that which is profaned, Ez. 36:22-23 and to that which is unclean. Lev. 11:44.

Holiness as a noun is best understood as a gerund (a noun derived from a verb). Holiness is a description of God or a person or thing because of action done, or as the result of a prior action. 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:24. Thus as a description related to activity/action/behavior, holiness is not static; it resists being defined as a state of being or attainment. Holiness then, is comprehended in the life/behavior/thinking of the disciple.

The opposite of holiness is that which is adulterous/mixed. Holiness is unmixed. God is love, and there is no admixture of anything other than love within Him. God is other-oriented, and there is no admixture of selfish behavior in Him. Jesus everywhere saw an adulterous generation, a culture of mixed loyalties. Jesus wants no admixture of loyalties in His disciples.

Holiness should not fundamentally be described by that which ought not to be present, namely sin. Such a negative, passive and reactionary inversion of holiness assures that holiness is taught in terms of what ought not to be. Rather, holiness is the good character of God unmixed by any shadow of darkness. The love of God and the fruit of the Spirit depicted in unmixed intention and action go a long way in describing holiness. The relational dimensions of Romans 12:1-2 and Ephesians 3:19 call all persons to transformation of life and fullness of God, holiness working out in the disciple’s life as an ongoing journey of yielding to God and growing in grace.