

# In Jesus' Steps

## Disciples for Life

### Unit 1: Who Is God?

*Learning to know and love God for who He is, His character, attributes, and being.*

#### Lesson 5 God Is Holy

##### Day One *Set Apart*

In *Lesson 4: God Is Sovereign*; we learned that God is the supreme and ultimate ruler of the universe. He rules and uses His power in union with all His other characteristics. God's being or personhood is not separated out into compartments.

At all times, our Sovereign acts and exists in all His attributes. Therefore, He governs the world in love, goodness, and mercy. He also governs in wisdom, truthfulness, knowledge, righteousness, and perfection. These are some of God's other attributes and ones you may want to study on your own.

God has authority and power over every situation, good or bad. In fact, He determines what is good and what is bad. He sets the standard of righteousness based on His holy character. Holiness is the last attribute we will consider in our study, *Who Is God?*

**Definitions:** *Holy* can be defined as being set apart, pure, and sacred.

To *set apart* makes someone or something different, special, or sacred. To *set apart* places someone or something in a particular place or category. It can also mean selecting for a specific purpose.

*Pure* as related to an individual is perfection. To be *pure* is being free or separate from moral fault, sin, infirmity, or contamination.

*Sacred* is defined as worthy or entitled to reverence, veneration, and respect. Places that are dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of God are *sacred*.

*God is holy.* Holiness is a part of God's character that we seem to gloss over (treat with less care or ignore). There seems to be a tendency to place more emphasis on God's other attributes. For sure, we all need to know *God is love*. We also want to hear *God is mercy* and *God is good*.

These *are* important and life-giving attributes of God. Life can be difficult and most of us are carrying around a heavy baggage of sin, rejection, and loss. But we also need to give equal weight and attention to God's holiness. We must understand what it means to say, *God is holy*. This characteristic of God is just as important in our walk with Christ as the others.

**God is set apart, pure, and sacred.** No one can see God in all His glory and live (Exodus 33:20). As we learned in Lesson 1 of this study, "God Is Good", Adam and Eve sinned and lost

the privilege of seeing God face to face. They lost the privilege for us also. But God already had a plan.

God worked out a way for people to be restored in relationship with Him. He wants all human beings to be reinstated into a holy priesthood capable of serving a holy God. Jesus makes this possible for us; He is the way, the truth, and the life, as Jesus Himself has declared (John 14:6).

Those who deny Christ will be sent to hell by a holy and righteous God. Saying a prayer of commitment (promise, pledge, or dedication) and then **not following Jesus** is alarming. It could indicate an unrepentant and unchanged heart. A true believer, though by no means perfect, loves God and obeys Him.

Jesus said to *fear God and not those who kill the body* (Luke 12:4–5). They may kill the body, but God has the power and authority to throw those who reject His Son into hell. The holy people of God will join Him in relationship now and see Him face to face after our earthly death. The unholy people will not.

**Fear of the Lord:** *Fear of the Lord* is defined as a mix of reverence, dread, and wonder. It is complete awe of the reality of God's holiness and power. It is trusting, serving, and worshipping God with veneration and respect. *Fear of the Lord* also includes recognizing our accountability and the stern judgment to those who reject God's gift of salvation in Christ Jesus.

**Read Acts 9:31 and answer questions 1–2:**

*Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.* Acts 9:31 (Read 2 Corinthians 5:7–11)

1. The early church lived in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
2. Why do you think these early believers were following Jesus?

When you live in the fear of the Lord, you are following Jesus. You are not afraid of what anyone may do to you. You are faithful to God. You understand God's mystery, power, and holiness. You recognize that God is pure and hates evil. All people will be accountable or answerable for the things done in the body, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

God *is* set apart. No one comes close to His uniqueness. He is our extraordinary, one, true, living God. He is matchless. *He is holy.*

The fact that God is the creator of the universe sets Him apart from everyone. He is truly in a category by Himself. Creation itself shouts of God's holiness. It also reveals His creativity, beauty, and awesome power.

**Read Genesis 2:2–3 and answer questions 3–5:**

*By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup>Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Genesis 2:2–3*

3. By the seventh day God finished His work of creating the world and He \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 2).
4. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 3a).
5. Why did God bless the seventh day and make it holy (v. 3b)?

**Definition:** The Hebrew word translated *Sabbath* in the English NIV (Exodus 16:26) is *sabbat* (שַׁבָּת). In Hebrew, the word *sabbat* is defined as a day of rest, or the *Sabbath*. The *Sabbath*, or seventh day according to the Hebrew calendar, is Saturday. The first day of the week is Sunday.

Genesis 2:3 is the first place the word holy is used in the Bible. God set apart the Sabbath (Saturday) for a special purpose. People should rest because God rested from His work. Our rest also demonstrates or expresses an obedient heart. God made the day holy and therefore, we keep it pure and set apart for Him.

**Read Hebrews 1:3 and answer questions 6–8:**

*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 1:3*

6. Who is the exact representation of God's being (v. 3a)?
7. What work did the Son accomplish on the cross (v. 3b)?
8. What did Christ do after He completed His sacrifice for the purification of sins (v. 3c)?

The Sabbath is a holy day made for resting and for honoring God as creator and provider of all things. Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday after having mediated (or acting as the go-between of) a new and eternal covenant for people. Therefore, Sunday is now the Christian's time of rest and corporate worship.

Jesus is the exact representation of God's being and thinks and acts exactly in the same way (John 5:19). So, when Jesus ascended into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God to rule with supreme authority, and to take a *Sabbath* rest from His completed work on earth. Recall Jesus' words from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

God had made the Sabbath holy at the time of creation. However, we do not learn of its extreme importance until the time of Moses. The Sabbath was a sign between God and the generations to come that He is the LORD, and He alone makes people holy (Exodus 31:12–17). Keeping the Sabbath day holy is the fourth commandment, and from the beginning it was serious business. If anyone desecrated (violated, defiled) this day, they were put to death.

God also wanted His people to rest on the Sabbath to appreciate their freedom from their Egyptian captivity (Deuteronomy 5:15). They were to remember the LORD their God brought them out of slavery. They had been unable to free themselves and had to rely on and trust God.

Jesus taught against the strict rules and lack of love surrounding the Sabbath, but never suggested ending its observance (Mark 2:23–28). The early Christians paid close attention to Jesus' teaching through His disciples and observed a special day of rest and worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

Think about it. Has anything really changed? We still need rest from our labors. God is still worthy of praise for His awesome creation. We should also remember that the LORD our God brings *us* out of slavery. We are not able to free ourselves from Satan's bondage. But thank God, Jesus freed us from sin and makes us holy. It should delight us to spend a quiet day with God.

Spending time with God delighted a Scotsman named Eric Liddell (1902–1945).<sup>1</sup> Sunday was an especially holy day for Eric. From his youth he had been taught and believed it was a day of rest and worship. This was a day to honor and revere (deeply respecting and admiring) God.

In school Eric excelled at every sport he tried. He was especially good at running. However, he would *not* play sports, including running, on Sunday. When he was 19, he entered his first competition in Scotland. He showed great promise as a first-class runner.

Eric soon became a hero in Scotland for his running ability. He set a new British record by running the 100 yard<sup>2</sup> dash in 9.7 seconds. Following that event, the newspapers announced even more inspiring news, some called it a miracle.

Eric was representing Scotland against Ireland and England. He was entered into the 440-yard race. However, Eric hardly ever ran this distance in competitions. Therefore, he was not expected to win.

Eric and another runner, J.J. Gillies in the next lane, took off on cue. However, Gillies accidentally bumped into Eric and knocked him down. Eric fell into the center of the track while Gillies kept running. Eric thought he had been disqualified so he did not stand up right away.

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<sup>1</sup>Janet and George Bengé, *Christian Heroes: in the series Then and Now*, book 6 : *Something Greater than Gold* (Seattle, (YWAM Publishing, 1998), 28-50.

<sup>2</sup>Roughly equivalent, 1 yard equals .9144 meters. Britain and the U.S. used the measurement of yards at this time in history while many other counties used the metric system. Britain adopted the metric system in 1965.

However, he had *not* been disqualified. An official waved at him to keep going. When Eric saw him, he immediately jumped to his feet and ran down the track after his competitors. The other runners were at least 20 yards in front of him by this time. It seemed like an excellent effort for good sportsmanship, but an actual win seemed impossible.

The crowd was stunned to see Eric catch up with and then start passing the other runners one by one. Then against all odds he burst across the finish line, winning the race. The crowd went crazy with excitement. He received a hero's welcome when he returned to Scotland.

That same year, 1924, Eric qualified for the Olympic Games, held in Paris, France. He was to run the 100 meters. His country was looking forward to his winning the gold medal. However, three months before the start of the games, Eric received a list of the events. The heats were scheduled on *Sunday*. A heat is a single race within an event. Eric had never competed or practiced on a Sunday, it was a day of rest and worship.

**9.** Having read Eric Liddell's story above, would *you* run on Sunday? Explain your answer:

### **Action Step**

**10.** God is Holy. Consider this truth as you meditate (think deeply) on the following scriptures. Then write anything that God revealed to you or what you learned through this.

*Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. <sup>11</sup>Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.* 1 Chronicles 16:10–11

*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. <sup>30</sup>Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. <sup>31</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"* 1 Chronicles 16:29–31

*Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. <sup>10</sup>Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.* Psalm 96: 9–10

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* Proverbs 9:10

**Accountability:** Be prepared to share your answer to #9 and Action Step #10 with your team.

—End Day One—

**Day Two**

***Being Friends with the Holy***

God is holy. He is always holy. He is set apart or separate from sin and evil. Therefore, everything God does is right. When we complain about our circumstances, we are saying God is not doing right by us. At best we are implying God is unfair, and at worst, we are suggesting that God is bad.

From *Lesson 1: God Is Good*, we know this truth: “God is good.” He is working behind the scenes, even during devastating circumstances. We are to pray and ask for God’s help and not complain. We are to place our trust and hope in a good and holy God.

Eric Liddell informed the British Olympic Committee that he could not run the 100-meter race.<sup>3</sup> He had never run on Sunday and would not now—even if it meant giving up a gold medal. The committee met with the organizers of the games in Paris, but they would not make any changes or exceptions. The schedule was the schedule.

When the newspapers ran with the story, the public turned against Eric. Some said he was unfit to represent Scotland. Others even called him a traitor. It was a difficult time for Eric as he endured such hateful comments. But for Eric, God was to be honored, even above his country.

I cannot help but think how easy it would have been to justify running on Sunday. It was the Olympics and the whole world was watching. Just think how much one could honor God when the gold medal was won. Besides, running is more pleasure than work, right?

Upon further examination, all of the reasons given to justify running are really just excuses for one’s own glory. It is a desire to be in the limelight. It is the human flesh wanting attention, fame, and honor. Eric was only interested in *honoring God in the way God desired*.

Nevertheless, Eric was human, and it was challenging to endure such widespread verbal abuse. Because God is holy, He cares about those afflicted (troubled) by others. God is pure and is not pleased when people sin against each other.

In the case of the Israelites, God heard their groans and cries for freedom. He saw the way the Egyptians were oppressing (abusing) them and desired to relieve their suffering. God would use a man named Moses to deliver His people from slavery.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 46.

**Read Exodus 3:2–5 and answer questions 11–15:**

*There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup>So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." <sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup>"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Exodus 3:2–5*

**11.** There the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ appeared to him in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ from within a bush (v. 2a).

Think a moment about fire. You probably imagined flames of yellow, orange or red. Did you know that a fire may actually burn white? White is the hottest color possible for organic (living matter) material. Among other things in the Bible, fire is used as a symbol to represent God's holiness. Fire is dangerous and not something to be trifled with. So too, God's holiness should strike fear in our hearts. We should be frightened of ever treating God in an unholy way.

**12.** What drew Moses' attention to the bush (vs. 2–3)?

**13.** The angel or messenger appears, and God calls, "Moses! Moses!" How does Moses respond (v. 4c)?

**14.** What is the reason God gives for having Moses take off his sandals (v. 5)?

**15.** Why is the ground holy?

The LORD does not question, "Is that you Moses?" He is emphatic (forceful) and commanding. God speaks authoritatively in the power of His awesome holiness.

Moses answers and obeys God. He remains a respectful distance away and removes his sandals. God's presence has turned this ordinary dirt into sacred soil.

The stage is set. God has a sacred mission for Moses. He is to go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and bring the Israelites out of slavery. Moses recognizes this is a huge and dangerous undertaking. He starts giving excuses and reasons why he should not take on the job— five excuses in all.

God patiently responded to four of Moses' objections. However, by the fifth objection, His holy anger burned against Moses. The LORD had assured Moses He would be with him and perform wonders, signs, and miracles (Exodus 3:12, 20, 4:8–9). Finally, God would hear no more lame excuses and sent Moses on his way.

Today, believers desire to hear from God and receive a special mission or task. This is a good thing. In America and other countries, we do not usually equate our calling with danger. However, this could change at any time. The prophets in the Old Testament and the disciples in the New Testament were quite familiar with danger. They were often persecuted, oppressed, and killed. This is also true of Christians living in certain countries today.

**16.** How do you think you would react if God called you to a dangerous mission?

**Accountability:** Be prepared to share your answer #16 with the other disciples next week.

The LORD was with Moses and freed the Israelites with wonders, signs, and miracles. In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt, they came to the desert of Sinai and camped in front of a mountain. Moses went up the mountain, where God spoke to him. The LORD had a message for the people He freed from bondage.

**Read Exodus 19:5–6 and answer questions 17–19:**

*“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, <sup>6</sup> you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”* Exodus 19:5–6  
(Covenant is an agreement, pact, treaty, or alliance between two parties.)

**17.** What must the people do to be God’s treasured possession (v. 5)?

**18.** By obeying God and keeping His covenant, even though the whole earth is His, they will be for the LORD a kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ nation (v.6)

**Definition:** *Obedience* means to comply (follow, observe) with an order, request, or law. It is submission to another’s authority.

**19.** Why do you think obedience is important to God?

The Lord created people for relationship on His holy terms. As Creator of the universe, He has the right to make the rules. We were made in God’s image to think and act like He does. He does *not* want to be with people who run amok (without control).

**20.** Are you concerned that studying about God’s holiness will change your *friendship* with God? Yes No Maybe (Underline One) Explain your answer:

Learning about God's holiness *should* change our friendship with God. It should make our relationship genuine and thus, better. It is important to consider friendship with God according to *His* requirements. Friendship with God is *not* like our like human relationships.

God called Moses and Abraham His friends because they trusted and obeyed Him. Think about it. How many people would you call your friend, if they required your submission and obedience to their every command? Friendship with God is not based on equality like human relationships, because we are *not* His equal. No one is.

Jesus had friends while on earth, but He had the same requirements. He expected His disciples to obey Him. He ate with sinners who turned from their sin and obeyed Him. Jesus did not call the religious leaders of the time His friends because they did not obey God, especially in their hearts.

**21.** Read John 15:14. Jesus said, "You are my \_\_\_\_\_ if you do what I \_\_\_\_\_."

*You are my friends if you do what I command.* John 15:14

God is holy yet He also is relational. The challenge is to understand both, and to relate to God on His terms. There will always be a tension (balance, stress) between God's holiness and His relational character.

The prophet Moses was successful in relating to God on His terms. Two months after the Israelites left Egypt, they came to the desert of Sinai and camped by Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:1). Moses climbed Mt. Sinai to meet with God and receive instructions. He actually climbed the mountain and met with God on a number of different occasions. The following happened before the people's rebellion of idol worship with the golden calf.

God told Moses at their first meeting on Mt. Sinai:

*"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 'you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites'"* (Exodus 19:5–6).

Moses came down from the mountain and spoke the words the Lord had commanded him. The people all agreed to obey God and the terms of the covenant. They were agreeing to be holy—to be set apart.

God had chosen Moses to continue to lead the Israelites. Therefore, God wanted the people to obey Moses as His spokesperson. In order to get the people's attention and make sure they did obey, God made His *holy* presence known.

Moses prepared the people to meet the Holy One of Israel. They were instructed to wash their clothes as an outward sign of holiness. Moses also ordered the Israelites not to go up the mountain or to touch it. If they did, they would not be permitted to live. They would die.

After the people were made ready, God revealed His presence through thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast. The LORD descended to the top of Mt. Sinai in fire, and the whole mountain trembled violently. The people also trembled (shook) in fear.

The sixth time God called Moses to the top of the mountain, He gave Moses the law and the commandments (Exodus 24:12). In order for God's holy presence to be among the Israelites, God gave Moses instructions for a sanctuary (Exodus 25:8–9). A sanctuary was a place set apart as a dwelling place for the Lord. God is omnipresent (present everywhere), but He made a way for the people to understand the holiness of His presence.

All of the sanctuary's (tabernacle) furnishings were carefully chosen and made. They were holy to the Lord. Especially holy was the ark of the Covenant. It was carefully placed behind a curtain made of finely twisted blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and linen. This place was known as the Most Holy Place.

The Ark of the Covenant (Testimony) represented God's throne room. The word *ark* means box or chest. The Ten Commandments, engraved on stone tablets, were placed inside the ark. God would remain present with His people if they followed His commandments or covenant.

### **Action Step**

**22.** Take some time to think about your relationship with a holy God. Do you treat His name with respect? Do you listen, watch, or read anything that misuses His name? Do you submit to His sovereign plan for your life? Do you follow His holy Son each day? How do you honor Him?

*After thinking about your relationship with God, write down areas you will work on to improve your relationship with our holy God.*

**Accountability:** Be prepared to share your action step #22 with the other disciples next week.

—End Day Two—

**Three**  
***God's Holy Presence***

Even though God revealed His holiness at Mt. Sinai, Nadab and Abihu did not take it seriously. These were Aaron's sons. Aaron was Moses' older brother, and God had chosen and appointed him high priest. His sons were to serve as priests with him. As per God's instructions, Moses conducted a formal and holy ceremony anointing them and installing them into service.

**Definition:** In the Old Testament *anoint* means to apply or rub oil on a person or thing (Exodus 40:9). Biblical *anointing* is used for consecration (setting apart a person or object), healing (James 5:14), and burial (John 19:39–40). God gave Moses a special formula for the oil that was to be used only for *anointing* the priests. The first priest, Aaron, and subsequent priests were *anointed* with this special oil (Exodus 30:30).

**Read Leviticus 10:1–2 and answer questions 23–27:**

*Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. <sup>2</sup>So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Leviticus 10:1–2*

**Definitions:** A *censer* is a vessel or holder for burning hot coals and incense. *Incense* is made with natural materials to produce a fragrant odor when burned.

23. What did Nadab and Abihu put into their censers (v. 1a)?
24. Did the Lord authorize or approve their actions (v. 1b)? Yes No (Underline One)
25. Did Nadab and Abihu do what God had commanded (v. 1c)? Yes No (Underline One)
26. What did God do to Nadab and Abihu (v. 2)?
27. Why do you think God's fire consumed them and they died?

Aaron's sons did not treat God as holy. They did not consider the LORD worthy of obedience, so they took control of the situation. We do not know exactly why their actions were sinful, but they were clearly contrary to God's command. Nadab and Abihu took a holy job and a holy place and turned them into something unimportant and commonplace.

**Read Leviticus 10:3 and answer questions 28–31:**

*Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said:" 'Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.'" Aaron remained silent. Leviticus 10:3*

**28.** How did Moses explain the deaths of the two priests, Nadab and Abihu?

**29.** Is God honored when we disobey Him? Yes No (Underline One)

**30.** What will you do to change any areas of your life where you are disobeying and dishonoring God to areas of obedience and honor?

**31.** If you are struggling or need help with obeying God in some area of your life, share with your discipleship team and pray for each other at the next meeting.

**Accountability:** Be prepared to share your answers to #30–31 with your discipleship team.

By setting up the sanctuary, God was teaching a powerful lesson on His absolute holiness. It was a restricted place. It had limited access. Only the priests were allowed in the Holy Place of the sanctuary, and even they were not allowed in the Most Holy Place.

Aaron, the first high priest, was the only one authorized to enter behind the yarn and linen curtain (veil) and into the Most Holy Place. Anyone else who entered would die. The high priest was only permitted to enter the Most Holy Place once a year. If he entered at any other time, he would die (Leviticus 16:2).

The reason the high priest went behind the veil into the Most Holy Place was to make atonement for the people. The word *atonement* means to bring together as one those who were enemies. Humans are considered enemies of God because of sin (Romans 5:10). God is righteous and must judge wrongdoing.

God established the Day of Atonement for the Israelites to have their sins forgiven each year. This was a way to restore holy fellowship. It involved a substitute to receive the punishment for their sins.

## **Cost of Sin**

God is the giver of life. He created all life. He has the right and sovereign power to give life and to take it away. We learned in *Lesson 1: God Is Good* of this study about Adam and Eve. They were banished from the Garden of Eden for disobeying God. The cost of their sin was physical death; they would return to the dust of the ground. Although their death did not happen immediately, they eventually died.

God is merciful. Instead of taking their lives at the moment of their sin, God took the life of an animal. From the animal, he made garments of skin for Adam and Eve and clothed them (Genesis 3:21). They were able to live a certain number of years before they physically died.

Sacrifices continued with their children, Cain and Abel, and their descendants. However, it was through Moses that God gave the people the formal sacrificial system and law. It was designed to restore fellowship by covering sin. Remember, God is holy and will not be in relationship with unholy creatures. But He is also merciful, gracious, and loving. God provided a way for atonement.

### **Read Leviticus 17:11 and answer questions 32–34:**

*For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.* Leviticus 17:11

**32.** What made atonement for one's life before Christ came to *earth to die as the perfect, sinless sacrifice for our sins?*

**33.** Why did an animal have to be sacrificed?

**34.** Did you realize God is so serious about sin? Yes No (Underline One)

The cost or punishment for sin is death. The killing of an animal is a vivid picture of the price for disobeying God. Rebellion is serious business.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would sacrifice a bull and a ram to cover his own sins. He had to seek God's cleansing before He could enter into His presence. Then the high priest was to take two goats, one for sacrifice and one as a live scapegoat. Both the blood of the bull and the goat were sprinkled on the front of the atonement cover in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16).

The high priest was to lay both hands on the scapegoat and confess all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites. In this way he was putting all the sins on the goat's head. The goat was then sent into the desert carrying the sin outside the camp and far away to a solitary place.

**Definition:** The *atonement cover*, or *mercy seat*, was a piece of pure gold that covered the top of the Ark of the Covenant. The *atonement cover* symbolized God's throne and the place to seek forgiveness for one's sins. When the blood of a bull and goat were sprinkled on the atonement cover it would "cover" over Israel's sins.

**35.** Read Leviticus 16:30. What was the reason for the atonement day?

*... because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins.* Leviticus 16:30

**36.** Review and think about days 1–3 of this lesson. How are God's holiness and human sin opposed (in conflict) to each other?

**Action Step:**

**37.** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand and appreciate God's holiness as well as leading you in a meaningful worship time. Share how the Holy Spirit led you:

**Accountability:** Be prepared to share your answers to #36–37 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Three—

**Day Four**  
***Holy Jesus***

Eric Liddell, again, helps us to understand the importance of the holiness of God.<sup>4</sup> Even though the Olympic Committee would not change the schedule, they offered Eric the opportunity to run the 200-meter and 400-meter races. These events were *not* scheduled on Sunday. Similarly, Eric was also *not* favored to win a medal in either of these, but he agreed to run.

Eric was still subject to cruel words. At the beginning of the games when the teams were gathered, Lord Cadogan moved among them shaking their hands. He was head of the British Olympic Committee. At that time, the United Kingdom of Great Britain was comprised of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

When Lord Cadogan stopped in front of Eric, he said loudly, “To play the game is the only thing in life that matters.” Everyone, including Eric, knew what he intended. He meant that Eric’s decision not to run the 100-meter race had cost Great Britain a gold medal. His words stung as they were supposed to. But no matter how much criticism and cruel comments, Eric did not regret his decision. Games are *not* the only thing in life that matters—God is the only one who matters.

The crowds numbered 60,000 from around the world. There was particular interest in the 400-meter race because twice in the heats, a new record had been set. Eric entered the stadium with a note in his pocket. He had received it earlier from a worker for the British team. It read:

“In the old book it says, ‘He who honors Me, I will honor.’ ”

The quote was taken from 1 Samuel 2:30c and meant a lot to Eric. No matter what happened, he had honored God. This was his foremost desire in life: to glorify God.

Eric took off at the start of his race. It seemed to the crowd that he was running the 100-meter instead of the 400-meter. He was running too fast to keep up that pace. People familiar with running did not think he would have the stamina to finish the race.

But with God’s help, he kept going. He finished the race with a burst of energy that had the crowd in a frenzy. He not only won the gold medal but had set a new record. The previous recordholder was in the race and came in a distant second.

**38.** If Eric had not won or even placed in the 400-meter race, would he have still honored God?  
Yes No (Underline One)

Eric was a Christian. As the Bible commands, he honored our triune God (John 5:23; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). He treated God with respect and reverence. He treated God as holy, just

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<sup>4</sup> The following material about Liddell is gleaned from *Ibid.*, 51–61 and the direct quotes are found on pg. 51 and 57, respectively.

as the Old Testament and the New Testament instructs us. In the Old Testament, God's dwelling place (tabernacle, sanctuary) was designed with this in mind.

In setting up the tabernacle, God was giving the people a tangible copy of His throne room in heaven (Hebrews 8:5). Through it, God was graciously revealing truth to them. Here are four truths to consider:

**First:** He was giving a clear picture of His holiness. He is set apart and not to be approached in any random way. God is worthy of all respect and reverence. God is sacred. He established the sanctuary with its sacrificial laws as the method and way for the Israelites to worship Him.

**Second:** He is pure and those coming into His presence must be pure also. Sin is not acceptable.

**Third:** Sin separates us from God. We cannot go into His throne room except by penalty of death. God tells us plainly *that the wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23). This does not mean that we will physically die, although at some point all of us will. Rather, Romans 6 is saying that sin results in spiritual death.

**Fourth:** The high priest prefigured Christ, who offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin. In other words, the high priest foreshadowed or pointed to Jesus as the *great high priest* (Hebrews 4:14).

**Read Matthew 27:50–52 and answer questions 39–41:**

*And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. <sup>51</sup>At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split <sup>52</sup>and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.*  
Matthew 27:50–52

**39.** Jesus' human body died on the cross, and what happened to His spirit (v. 50)?

**40.** What temple curtain do you think was torn (v. 51)? (cf. Hebrews 9:3)

**41.** What did the torn, temple curtain (veil) to the Most Holy Place signify (mean, indicate)?

Jesus' physical body died on the cross, but His spirit did not. Jesus is fully man and fully God. God cannot die. Before His body died, Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit." Luke 23:46

The curtain or veil separating the Most Holy Place of the temple (sanctuary, tabernacle) was completely torn in two. Jesus' death opened a direct way into God's presence (Hebrews 9:1–14).

**42.** Read Hebrews 9:22. Why did Jesus die or shed His blood for our sins?

*In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22*

**Jesus is holy.** He never sinned (1 Peter 2:22). He is the perfect substitute and sacrifice for our sins. The cross that bore the suffering Jesus pulsated, indeed trembled, with God's holiness. Jesus was killed as a sacrifice for our sins. God did not give His Son's life so that we may go on sinning. For those people taking His holiness lightly, caution: *You may be putting yourself in grave danger.*

Ananias and Sapphira serve as a warning. Husband and wife, they were members of the early church. The members or believers at that time were "one in heart and mind". No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had (Acts 4:32–35).

If anyone were in need, those who had land or houses would sell them and lay the money at the apostles' feet. In this way, the money could be given to anyone as they had need. This is certainly a way of honoring God and taking care of His people.

Ananias sold a piece of property. However, with his wife's knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself. He took the rest and laid it at the apostles' feet. By this act Ananias was pretending that he was giving the whole amount to the church.

**43.** Do you think Ananias did something wrong? Yes No (Underline One)

The Holy Spirit alerted the apostle Peter about Ananias' sin. Peter then questioned Ananias and said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?" (Acts 5:3). Ananias had a choice. With his free will and with Jesus' help, he could have been honest. But he was not. It is a choice that we all have.

**44.** Read Acts 5:4. What was Ananias' sin?

*"Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." Acts 5:4*

**45.** Read Acts 5:5. What happened to Ananias?

*When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Acts 5:5*

Sapphira did not know her husband had died. So, when she appeared about three hours later, Peter questioned her about the price for the land. She also lied and fell down and died.

Recall the note Eric Liddell had received: "Those who honor me I will honor." Here is the rest of that verse: "but those who despise me will be disdained (1 Samuel 2:30)." *Disdain* means the person is unworthy of one's consideration or respect; it means contempt. God does not think much of those who dishonor Him.

God does not change. The wages of sin is death (Romans 3:23). The Bible does not tell us whether Ananias and Sapphira will be separated from God forever. Will they go to hell? We do not know. But holiness is serious and there are dire consequences for sin.

**Read Ephesians 5:3–5 and answer questions 46–48:**

*But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup>Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup>For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Ephesians 5:3–5*

46. What are improper for God's holy people (v. 3–4)?

47. What is an immoral, impure, and greedy person called (v. 5)?

48. Will an idolater inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God (v. 5)? Yes No (Underline One)

**Read Leviticus 20:7–8 and answer questions 49–50:**

*Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. <sup>8</sup>Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy. Leviticus 20:7–8*

49. Why is God telling the Israelites to set themselves apart and be holy (v. 7)?

50. What are the two ways that the Israelites were to become holy (v. 8)?

**Read 1 Peter 1:15–19 and answer questions 51–54:**

*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” <sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1:15–19*

- 51.** The apostle Peter says to be \_\_\_\_\_ in all you do (v. 15).
- 52.** Why should you be holy in all you do (v. 16)?
- 53.** Since you call on God the Father who judges each person's work impartially (fairly), how should you live out your time here on earth (v. 17)?
- 54.** How were you redeemed from sin and an empty way of life (v. 19)?

The Bible tells us nine different times to be holy, because God is holy. We cannot just say a prayer of commitment to Jesus and then, not follow Him. God is looking at our hearts.

**Action Step:**

**55.** Be holy this day. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in holy thoughts, deeds, and actions. Share how the Holy Spirit led you:

**Accountability:** Be prepared to share your action step to #55 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Four—

**Day Five**  
***Holy Heart***

Being holy does *not* just involve doing the right things. It involves doing them with the right mind and attitude. If we have a holy heart, then we will say and do holy things (Luke 6:45).

People have had trouble with their heart attitudes since Adam and Eve. The Lord set up the sacrificial system to help the Israelites with their sin, but many of them missed the point. God wanted them to have a loving attitude toward Him. He wanted their hearts.

**Read Isaiah 29:13 and answer questions 56–57:**

*The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.”* Isaiah 29:13

**56.** The Lord said, “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their \_\_\_\_\_ are far from me.”

**57.** What was the people’s worship of God based on?

About 800 years later, Jesus taught a similar message. There were many religious leaders who did all the right things, but for all the wrong reasons (Matthew 6:5). They wanted to be acknowledged, respected, and admired by the people.

**58.** Read Ephesians 4:22–24. What should your new self be like (v. 24)?

*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.* Ephesians 4:22–24

Eric Liddell is a good example of a “new self” in Christ. God had his heart, soul, and mind. Eric was famous in Scotland even before the Olympic Games. He was fast and breaking records. The newspapers printed stories about him all the time.

He was approached by a friend to speak to a group of men about Jesus. Eric’s friend thought these men might be willing to come and hear a famous athlete. The gospel would be shared also. Although Eric was shy and not good at public speaking, he accepted. His friend was right about the draw—the men not only came, but listened carefully to what Eric had to say, both about sports and about God.

Eric said, "Do you want to know the God I love? He has given me strength when I thought I had nothing left. And He has given me these words when I thought I couldn't speak."<sup>5</sup>

The invitations to speak continued. Over the next four years, he spoke his simple message of faith and hope to thousands. It seemed that Eric had a perfect "Christian" career. However, Eric felt called to be a missionary. He had felt God's call since he was a boy.

So, at the height of his fame, both as an Olympic champion and Christian speaker, he told the world that he would be going to China as a chemistry teacher. Of course, his main goal was to tell the Chinese people about Jesus.

**Read Acts 20:24 and answer questions 59–60:**

*However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*  
Acts 20:24

**59.** What is the race the apostle Paul is talking about?

**60.** When Eric accepted God's calling to go to China, what race did he want to complete?

Both Paul and Eric accepted their calling to be holy, like God is holy. They turned from the world in order to be set apart for God. Their race was to tell the world the good news of God's grace through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Neither Paul nor Eric had an easy time as missionaries. Paul's story is recorded in the New Testament. Eric served in China during a difficult time. The country was not safe. The Chinese nationalist and communist groups were fighting for control of their government. A person's life could be a stake for the wrong loyalties. There were also Japanese invaders. They were vicious fighters. China was soon a war-ravaged country.

Christians were especially hated by the Communists and likely to be killed on the spot. During this time, Eric went from village to village trying to encourage and help the Christians who lived there. It was an extremely dangerous time. He would not have been considered a friend of any of the fighting groups.

World War II began September 1, 1939, and on March 3, 1943, Eric was placed in a Japanese internment camp. Two years later Eric died of a brain tumor. He was 43 years old.

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<sup>5</sup> Ellen Caughey, *Eric Liddell*, (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Books, 2000), 61.

There is much more to Eric's life in China. But wherever he was, he served the Lord in His strength and joy. He was a man of faith, discipline, and principles. He took on a dangerous mission to serve his holy God.

Eric took his example of how to live from God. His model was the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus offered Himself as the ultimate and perfect sacrifice for sins. Jesus made Eric Liddell holy, and He makes us holy. He sets us apart for God.

*Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.* Hebrews 2:11

Still, we have a responsibility in holiness. Jesus did not die so we could do whatever we please. He died so we could worship and follow our *Holy God* with a cheerful and joyful heart.

### **Action Step**

**61.** Memorize 2 Corinthians 7:1 *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

**Accountability:** Be prepared to recite 2 Corinthians 7:1 (your action step #61) with the other disciples next week.

Let us now end *Unit 1: Who Is God*, and lesson 5 by focusing on God. Please read and think deeply about the God you know and love:

*Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."* Revelation 4:8

*Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.* Revelation 15:4

—End of Day Five, Lesson 5, and end of Unit 1: *Who Is God?* Study—

**Congratulations** on completing *Unit 1: Who Is God?* Study! Excellent job. We pray studying about God and His attributes will bring you peace and knowledge in serving and honoring Him.

**Next—Unit 2, Lesson 1: Christian Leadership**

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