

Holiness: A Gift of God's Grace ~ Part 12

"I am Adonai, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. Therefore you are to be holy, because I am holy." ~ Leviticus 11:45

"Following the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in your entire way of life; since the Tanakh says, 'You are to be holy because I am holy.'" ~ 1 Kefa 1:15-16

In this post, we will begin to look at the provisions God has made for us to lead a holy life.

What Provisions Has God Made for Us to Live a Holy Life? ~ Part A

Many Believers have a basic desire to live a holy life, but have come to believe they simply cannot do so. They have struggled for years with particular sins or deficiencies of character. While not living in gross sin ¹, they have more or less given up attaining a life of holiness and have settled down to a life of moral mediocrity with which neither they nor God are pleased.

Sha'ul wrote: ***"We know that our old self was put to death on the execution-stake with Him, so that the entire body of our sinful propensities might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For someone who has died has been cleared from sin."*** (Romans 6:6-7) This promise seems impossibly beyond them. The strong commands of Scripture to live a consistently holy life only frustrates them.

Many have sought to live a holy life by their own willpower; others have sought it solely by faith. Many have agonized in prayer over particular sins, seemingly without success. Scores of books have been written to help us discover the "secret" of the "victorious life."

In our search for answers to our sin problems, a troublesome question arises: *"What should I look to God for and what am I responsible for myself?"* Many are confused at this point. When we first start to live the Messianic life, we confidently assume we will simply discover from the Bible what God wants us to do and start doing it. We fail to reckon with our tendency to cling to our old sinful ways.

After experiencing a great deal of failure with our sinful nature, we are told that we have been trying to live the Messianic life in the energy of the flesh. We need to *"stop trying and start trusting,"* or my favorite *"let go and let God."* We are told that if we just turn our sin problem over to Yeshua and rest in His finished work on Calvary, He will then live His life in us and we will experience a life of victory over sin.

Having experienced failure and frustration with our sin problem, we are delighted to be told that God has already done it all and that we only need to rest in Yeshua's finished work. After struggling with our sins to the point of despair, this new idea is like a life preserver to a drowning man, almost like hearing the gospel for the first time.

But after a while, if we are truly honest with ourselves, we discover we are still experiencing defeat at the hands of our sinful nature. The victory seemingly promised us still eludes us. We still struggle with pride, jealousy, materialism, impatience, and lust. We still eat too much, waste our time,

¹ Why is it so common for us to put degrees on sin? God doesn't.

criticize each other, tell lies, and indulge in a dozen other sins, all the time hating ourselves for doing them.

Then we wonder what is wrong. *"Why can't I experience the victory described in all the books that others seem to have experienced?"* We begin to feel that something is uniquely wrong with us, that somehow our sinful nature must be worse than others.

HaSatan will try to confuse us on the issue of what God has done for us and what we must do ourselves. Lack of understanding on this issue has led to great confusion in our pursuit of holiness. It is very important that we make this distinction; for God has indeed made provision for us to live a holy life, but He also has given us definite responsibilities.

Let us first look at God's provision for us.

The Bible says, **"Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal bodies, so that it makes you obey its desires."** (Romans 6:12). The first thing we should notice in this passage is that the pursuit of holiness - this not allowing sin to reign in our mortal bodies - is something *we* have to do. Sha'ul's statement is one of exhortation. The experience of holiness is not a gift we receive like justification, but something which we are clearly exhorted to work at.

The second thing to note from Sha'ul's exhortation is that it is based on what he had just said. Note the connecting word *therefore*. Therefore, what? What are the facts or conditions upon which he is relying?

Let us take a look at Romans 6. **"So then, are we to say, 'Let's keep on sinning, so that there can be more grace'? Heaven forbid! How can we, who have died to sin, still live in it?"** (Romans 6:1-2) Then Sha'ul then develops that idea in verses 3-11. It is evident that the word *therefore* (verse 12) refers back to this fact that we died to sin. Because we died to sin, we are not to let it rule in our mortal bodies.

If we are to obey the exhortation of verse 12, it is vital that we understand what Sha'ul means by the expression we **"died to sin."** As we read this passage, the first thing we observe is that dying to sin is the result of our union with Yeshua. Because He died to sin, we died to sin. Therefore, it is apparent that our dying to sin is not something we do, but something Yeshua has done, the value of which accrues to all who are united with Him.

The second observation we can make is that our dying to sin is a fact whether we realize it or not. Because Yeshua died to sin, all who are united with Him died to sin.

We are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but our reckoning does not make it true, even in our experience. Verses 11 and 12 must be taken together. Because we are dead to sin through our union with Yeshua, we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. Our daily experience with regard to sin is determined - not by our reckoning, but by our will - by whether we allow sin to reign in our bodies. Our will must be influenced by the fact that we died to sin.

In my next post, we will look closer at what Sha'ul meant by his expression **"died to sin?"**