

# Let God be God

In any relationship we have with our heavenly Father we must always let God be God.

**What we are about to study is the sovereignty of God.**

For some this will be the most important study we have ever made.

It will be a major breakthrough in their understanding of God.

For many it will be a “*very hard pill to swallow*”.

Indeed some may not swallow it at all.

**What do I mean by “the sovereignty of God”?**

**Psalm 115:3 [NIV]** “*Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.*”

God’s right and power to do whatever He pleases with anyone at any time.

In mediaeval times people believed in the “*divine right of kings*”.

This meant that a king could do anything, including breaking the rules, that would apply to anyone else.

King Henry VIII is an example of this.

Although this “*right*” is **not** Biblical some today, born or raised to a privileged position of leadership, sadly have the idea that they are above the law.

In recent years “*human rights*” and in parallel with this “*animal rights*” have been an issue of considerable discussion.

Some highly motivated people defending various “*rights*” have become very hostile towards the “*rights*” of others outside of their viewpoint.

**God’s rights are almost totally neglected today.**

God as Creator has a right to be God!

The question is, will we let God be God in our lives?

**Why is this study important?**

It lets us view theology from God’s perspective.

**There are two basic ways of studying theology [knowledge of God]:**

- a) **From man’s point of view** – the most common approach nowadays.
- b) **From God’s point of view** – the Biblical approach.

The word theology came from two Greek words “*theos*” – God, and “*logos*” – word.

Thus pure theology is to come to the knowledge of God from His Word from the divine perspective, **not** man’s perspective.

**Our study of the sovereignty of God will give us a taste of theology from God's point of view.**

Today's generation has lost any real respect for God.

**There is no real fear of God in the nation and its leaders, nor among those claiming to be Christians.**

This is a "*me generation*" the whole perspective is "*what's in it for me?*"

This is why the "*health and wealth*" gospel, aired by many religious evangelists, has great appeal to the mass of people.

The irony is that this "*theology*" presented from man's perspective results in less fear and less respect for God.

The true Biblical teaching of the sovereignty of God will help us correct our perspective of theology [knowledge of God].

**This study of the sovereignty of God will enable us to get better acquainted with the God of the Christian Bible, our Creator.**

God's sovereignty, His right or privilege, cannot be divorced from His unchanging attributes.

For example:

## **God is the Creator**

**Isaiah 64:8** [NIV] "*Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*"

Our basic relationship to God is that of potter and clay.

**Romans 9:21** [NIV] "*Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?*"

The potter chooses what he creates out of the clay.

**Jeremiah 19:6** [NIV] "*O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does? declares the LORD. Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.*"

**Not only individuals but nations are moulded by God in His sovereignty.**

**Isaiah 29:16** [NIV] "*You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, He did not make me? Can the pot say of the potter, He knows nothing?*"

When we lose the fear of God by a lack of understanding of His sovereignty we get things "*back to front*" and try to tell God how He should react and respond to us.

**Isaiah 45:9-12** [NIV] "*Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'? Woe to him who says to his father, 'What have you begotten?' or to his mother, 'What have you brought to birth?' "This is what the LORD says – the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts.*"

A strong warning from our Creator against viewing Him from the wrong perspective.

## God is Holy

There is no earthly frame of reference by which we can fully understand the holiness of God. Holiness is God's essential attribute that makes Him Sovereign.

**Leviticus 11:44** [NIV] *"... I am the Lord your God ... **I am holy.**"*

We have to start with God's Word about Himself.

Some theologians state this attribute of God as "*wholly other*".

**God is utterly different from what man is or what man does.**

**Isaiah 40:25** [NIV] *"**To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? says the Holy One.**"*

**There is no earthly comparison to what God in His Holiness is like.**

Even though we were created in God's image, the image of God in us has been defaced by our sin and sin is the result of self-pride which does not accept the sovereignty of God.

The Holiness of God and His Sovereignty are constantly linked in His Word.

Being blinded by our sin we do not have the intelligence to comprehend God's Holy essence.

## The holiness of God is constantly linked in His Word with His brilliant brightness.

**1 John 1:5** [NIV] *"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.**"*

Light is related in God's Word to truth, holiness and righteousness, while darkness is related to Satan and sin.

**Ephesians 6:12** [NIV] *"**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**"*

The struggle we have against sin and Satan.

**Acts 26:17-18** [NIV] *"I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. **I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.**"*

Paul's commission from God was to assist us to turn from darkness to light from the power of Satan to the Power of God.

**Leviticus 20:7-8** [NIV] *"Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. **I am the LORD, who makes you holy.**"*

Only God can make us Holy, we are not Holy in ourselves, nor can we make ourselves Holy.

**2 Corinthians 7:1** [NIV] *“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.**”*

It is our respect for the sovereignty of God that will perfect our holiness by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

## **Another aspect of God’s Holiness is that He cannot lie**

**Hebrews 6:18** [NIV] *“God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.”*

**John 1:14** [NIV] *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from **the Father, full of grace and truth.**”*

**John 14:6** [NIV] *“Jesus answered, **I am** the way and **the truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Jesus Christ is truth; all His Words and actions reflect the fact that God cannot lie.

**John 14:17** [NIV] *“...the **Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth, which is an obvious need for His role as our Counsellor.

**From God’s truthfulness flows His faithfulness.**

**Psalms 33:4** [NIV] *“For the word of **the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.**”*

God is one who can always be dependent upon.

**1 Corinthians 1:9** [NIV] *“God, who has called you into fellowship with **his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.**”*

**1 Corinthians 10:13** [NIV] *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. **And God is faithful**; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*

Our relationship with our Creator can be one of total trust in the promises He has made in His Word.

## **Another aspect of God’s Holiness is shown in the way He hates sin**

**Habakkuk 1:13** [NIV] *“**Your eyes are too pure to look on evil**; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”*

**Zechariah 8:16-17** [NIV] *“These are the things you are to do: **Speak the truth** to each other, and render true and sound judgement in your courts; **do not plot evil** against your neighbour, and **do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this, declares the LORD.**”*

God’s desire for us to be truthful, faithful and just as He is in all His dealings with us.

He also wants us to be like Him in hating all that is evil.

**Leviticus 20:7-8** [NIV] *“**Consecrate yourselves and be holy**, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.”*

**1 Peter 2:9** [NIV] *“But **you are** a chosen people, a royal priesthood, **a holy nation**, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”*

Our relationship with God and our fellow man must be based on truth and faithfulness, if we are to be like our Father.

**Genesis 1:26** [NIV] *“**Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness**, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”*

This relationship of holiness with our Creator was the main goal of God from the very beginning.

It continues right through the two Covenants and on into eternity.

## **It is in God’s Holiness that His divine transcendent sovereignty is shown**

Jesus Christ perfectly mirrors the holiness of God.

**John 14:9-10** [NIV] *“Jesus answered: Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father**. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?** The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”*

**As we study the life of Jesus Christ we can understand the holiness and the sovereignty of God.**

**Hebrews 7:26** [Amplified Bible] *“Here is the High Priest, perfectly adapted to our needs, as was fitting, **holy, blameless, unstained by sin, separated from sinners and exalted higher than the heavens.**”*

Jesus was holy and utterly without the blemish of sin.

**1 Peter 2:22** [Amplified Bible] *“He was **guilty of no sin**, neither was deceit ever found on his lips.”*

Most of the time the deity, glory and holiness of Jesus Christ was hidden behind His human flesh.

When Jesus did choose to manifest His glory, none could argue with Him.

**John 8:7-9** [Amplified Bible] *“They [the Pharisees] kept demanding an answer, so He stood up again and said, ‘All right, hurl the stones at her until she dies but only he who never sinned may throw the first.’ Then he stooped down again and wrote some more in the dust. And the Jewish leaders slipped away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until only Jesus was left in front of the crowd with the woman.”*

Using divine wisdom and a commanding presence Jesus turned the challenge of His accusers back on to them.

There is no real reason to debate what Jesus wrote with His finger in the dust on the ground.

His presence was enough to make all His accusers uneasy.

**John 18:6** [Living Bible] *“I am he, Jesus said, and as He said it, **they all fell backwards to the ground!**”*

The falling back may be due to the moral supremacy of Jesus, or it may be that His presence struck dread into all those concerned.

Jesus at this point chose to give them proof of His infinite power that they might know that nothing could prevail against Him if He chose to exert His Unlimited Power.

**This incident shows us that Jesus chose to die.**

Here again it is clear that Jesus could have escaped death if He had wished, He was sovereign.

**Job 4:9** [Amplified Bible] *“By the breath of God they perish, by the blast of His anger they are consumed.”*

## **We are called to become holy!**

**Hebrews 12:14** [NIV] *“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”*

“Holiness” and “sanctification” are words that are often used interchangeably when referring to mankind.

**Holiness, pertaining to God** is what He is in Himself.

**Holiness, pertaining to us** is derived, that is, it does not come from us but comes to us from God.

**Romans 3:10-18** [NIV] *“As it is written: **There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes.**”*

In ourselves is no goodness, no holiness, no righteousness, we are vile.

**Jeremiah 17:9** [NIV] *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”*

We have in ourselves no cure for our condition.

**1 Corinthians 1:30** [Living Bible] *“For it is from God alone that you have your life through **Jesus Christ. He showed us God’s Plan of salvation, He was the one who made us acceptable to God, He made us pure and holy.**”*

**Holiness or sanctification is a divine work in us.**

The basis of this is Christ’s act of redemption.

The liberation from our evil human nature by the purchase effected by the death of Christ on the cross.

The only boasting permitted by the sanctified, made holy Christian, is in what Christ has done for him.

**Ephesians 4:22-24** [NIV] *“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; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**”*

Here is certainly a reference to the original creation of man.

**Genesis 1:27** [NIV] *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

**God took Himself as the model in which man was to be formed, first mentally then spiritually.**

Paul says here that we should put on the new man, which is following the pattern of God’s mind in righteousness and true holiness.

Both righteousness and holiness refer to the same thing in our mind, one illustrates the other.

We learn from Paul what Moses meant by the *“likeness of God”*, it was righteousness and the truth of holiness, in our mind.

**Righteousness** is in our relationship to our fellow man.

**Holiness** is in our relationship with our Holy Creator God.

**Colossians 3:7-10** [NIV] *“You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have **put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”*

This new nature is constantly being renewed, this development into a perfectly renewed nature is continually progressing to completion, during this physical life.

The likeness of God now being formed in us by the Holy Spirit of God is much more glorious than the image that was borne by Adam.

**1 Corinthians 11:7** [NIV] *“A man ought not to cover his head [sign of authority], since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory [honour] of man.”*

**God created the man and the woman to compliment one another.**

Both dependent on the other to fulfil a physical example of the relationship between the Son of God and the church.

**Ephesians 1:22** [NIV] *“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,...”*

Christ is the head of the church.

**Ephesians 5:-21-23** [NIV] *“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.”*

**John 16:13-14** [NIV] *“But when he, **the Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **He will bring glory to me** by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*

The church [the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit] will glorify Christ.

So in the same way the wife will bring glory and honour to the husband.

**How does the wife [church] do this?**

**Proverbs 31:11-12, 23** [NIV] *“Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.” “Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.”*

It is the wife [church] that brings honour [glory] and respect to the husband [Christ].

This passage is really guidelines to personal and corporate evangelism that will show the Sovereignty of God [Christ] the Head of all things and the worship of the church [wife] as she lays down her life to serve others in an act of worship.

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

The “*image*” is what every man has.

The “*likeness*” is what is being created in us by the indwelling of the glorious Holy Spirit of God.

**James 3:9** [NIV] *“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, **who have been made in God’s likeness.**”*

The word in the Greek is a progressive verb and better translated “*is being made*”.

God in His first statement contemplates man’s first creation and his being renewed [made new] in a second creation through the knowledge of Him who created him being made available to man through His Son Jesus Christ.

## What are the achievable goals of holiness in this life?

### Morality

We rightly tend to think of holiness as morality, why?

**1 Peter 1:16** [NIV] *“...for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy.”*

Peter quotes **Leviticus 11:44** in his letter “*be Holy, because I am Holy*”.

But this quote follows on after he admonishes us.

**1 Peter 1:14-15** [NIV] *“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;”*

**Evil desires are the basis of all immorality.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-4** [NIV] *“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable,...”*

Paul’s focus is on the sexual immorality that evil thoughts will naturally lead us to commit.

**1 Thessalonians 4:6-7** [NIV] *“...and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. **For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.**”*

God will punish us for such thoughts and lifestyle, as a course correction, so we move towards holiness and not down the path that leads to eternal death.

**Proverbs 2:12-19** [NIV] *“Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways. It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left*

*the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. For her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her return or attain the paths of life.”*

### **The scriptures personify wisdom as the Word, Christ.**

It is only through a relationship with Him that we can be walking a pathway of righteousness and holiness.

Nothing will bring shame or disgrace upon the Christian or church like sexual sin.

**Ephesians 5:3** [NIV] *“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.”*

Whatever else may be true of us as Christians, there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality.

Sexual immorality is Satan’s favourite and most effective tool to destroy any work that God may wish to accomplish through us.

### **Honesty**

**Ephesians 4:28** [NIV] *“He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.”*

In our financial dealings there must never be a hint of mishandling money in the church.

**Malachi 3:8** [NIV] *“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you? In tithes and offerings.’”*

Neither must we omit the matter of tithing and offerings.

**Psalms 58:3** [NIV] *“Even from birth the wicked go astray; **from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.**”*

**By nature we are all liars.**

**Revelation 21:8** [NIV] *“But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters **and all liars** – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”*

**Note:** Is this the kind of company we want to be among?

**One proof of our sanctification** [our being in the process of being made Holy] **is that we always tell the truth!**

### **A peaceful spirit**

**Hebrews 12:14** [NIV] *“Make every effort to **live in peace with all men and to be holy**; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”*

**This means an attitude that is devoid of bitterness.**

**Ephesians 4:30-31** [NIV] *“**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.**”*

One of the chief ways in which we grieve the Holy Spirit and drive Him out of us is bitterness.

And remember it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that allows God to sanctify us, make us into a Holy creation.

**The proof that we are bitterness-free is that we have totally forgiven all those who have hurt us in any way.**

**Matthew 5:9** [NIV] *“Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they will be called sons of God.”*

Only with an active attitude towards building peace between ourselves and others can we ever become Sons of God.

This is a constant frame of mind, the way we think, not just a one-off when we are feeling generous in spirit.

## **Controlling our tongue**

**Matthew 7:1-2** [NIV] *“**Do not judge, or you too will be judged.** For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

Controlling our tongue in our judgement of others, in what we say to people and what we say about people.

**A legalistic spirit will lead us to being judgmental, for we tend to look down on others from our supposed position of righteousness.**

**Ephesians 5:4** [NIV] *“Nor should there be obscenity, **foolish talk or coarse joking**, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.”*

It is totally out of place with a controlled tongue to use obscenities, coarse joking or foolish talk.

**Matthew 12:36** [NIV] *“But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every **careless word** they have spoken.”*

This is a verse we should constantly keep in the forefront of our mind.

The word “*idle*” or “*careless*” means inactive, useless or barren.

Any word that does not promote good or encouragement in the one who receives it.

**Words are the index of our heart, the list of what is found in our mind and nature.**

**In the judgement day every word, good or bad, even those we feel were of no consequence, will be taken into account in estimating our character and hence our eternal future.**

All our words must do one or two things, administer grace or instruct in righteousness to avoid being “*idle*”, worthless.

## **Walk in the light**

**1 John 1:7** [NIV] *“But **if we walk in the light**, as he is in the light, **we have fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

**Walking in the light means we must constantly be open to the Holy Spirit’s guidance and instruction, by not grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit.**

**1 John 1:8-10** [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all***

*unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”*

All areas of sin in our lives must be confessed and left behind as our life takes a new direction.

**Philippians 3:12-16** [NIV] *“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. **And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.** Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”*

If we have doubt about some activity in our lives God will in His time make it clear to us what needs to be confessed and repented.

We need to make each day a step towards the goal God has set before us to be Holy even as He is Holy.

Sanctification is a day-by-day process of becoming more like our Creator God.

## **Conclusion**

Holiness is God’s essential attribute that makes Him sovereign.

God’s Holiness is perfectly mirrored in Jesus Christ, the perfect example for all Christians.

God begins to create in us holy beings through the work of sanctification that starts at the time of belief and repentance and will continue throughout eternity.

Our attitude should be that of John Newton who said *“I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be but thanks to God I’m not what I used to be.”*

God is transcendent and sovereign.

**We will never be Holy like God for we have all sinned and are created, not the creator.**

But it is God’s plan for us to be His created sons and this means sanctification and putting on holiness, so as to be able to experience the father/son relationship with the Holy Sovereign Creator God.