



INTRO: There's a clarion call for us, as Christians, to be DIFFERENT: To be SET APART and to STAND OUT.

→ *How are we as Christians to be different? How might we stand out? What does it mean to set ourselves apart?*

- * HOLINESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS & JUSTICE had always been a big deal in Judaism, but had become very LEGALISTIC, JUDGMENTAL & HYPOCRITICAL.
- * In the move from Old Covenant to New, Jesus shifted the agenda from LAW to GRACE, JUDGMENT to MERCY, LETTER to SPIRIT.
- * But none of that DIMINISHES the importance of HOLINESS (1 Peter 1:15-16, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 7:1).
- * Holiness remains our CALLING & PRIORITY: To LOOK like JESUS To carry His HEART, reflect His CHARACTER & live His VALUES.
- * Holiness is BEAUTIFUL; Purity is ATTRACTIVE.
- * If we want to SEE GOD MOVE, we must make sure HOLINESS is deeply & strongly EMBEDDED in our Kingdom CULTURE (Matthew 5:8, Hebrews 12:14, Joshua 3:5, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 24:3-4).

→ *Define holiness? What does it look like? What does it do? What does it not do?*

→ *Does the pursuit of holiness play enough of a part in our modern Christianity? Are there any traps we could potentially fall into in pursuit of that holiness?*

→ *Holiness is beautiful; unholiness is ugly. Purity attracts; hypocritical, legalistic, self-righteousness repels. Discuss.*

→ *What does it mean to have clean hands and a pure heart?*

THREE PRIORITIES IN WORSHIP

1. SENSE OF AWE (Acts 2:43)

- * We come to church for ENCOUNTER ... We're here to MEET with Him.
- * AWE is a direct result of His MANIFEST PRESENCE.
- * If we want to see God move, the first priority is to INVITE that AWESOME presence, by falling on our faces in WORSHIP (1 Chronicles 16:29-30).

→ *How often do you feel a sense of awe in church? What does it feel like? Why is it there? What does it do to you? Would you like to feel it more? How might we?*

→ *"Church is not supposed to be a social club – though it may contain clubs and be very social. We come to church on Sunday for an encounter; we're there to meet with Him." Do you agree? Discuss!*

→ *What could we do to further cultivate that sense of awe as we gather? How does that tie in with our values of life and joy?*

2. The FEAR of the LORD (Acts 9:31)

- * Usual definition: REVERENTIAL AWE + RESPECT (Psalm 33:8, 99:1).
- * The fear of the Lord ASSIGNS God His PROPER PLACE and puts US rightly in ours.
- * The fear of the Lord gives the WORD due reverence & authority.
- * The fear of the Lord HONOURS His PRESENCE on bended knee.
- * The fear of the Lord DEFERS to God in everything.
- * The fear of the Lord DICTATES what we should EMBRACE and what we should RUN from (Proverbs 3:7).

→ *What do you understand by the 'fear of the Lord'? Do you have it? Could it or should it be stronger in your life? If you have it, what does it do or change or prevent?*

→ *Would you say you experience each of the above listed elements of the fear of the Lord in your personal / corporate worship life?*

→ *"To fear the Lord is to hate evil" Discuss! (Prov 8:13, 16:6, 3:7)*

→ *What would a church that truly fears God look like?*

→ *"We won't have a world that fears the Lord without a church that does." Discuss!*

3. CONVICTION of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4, 1 Thessalonians 1:5)

- * Our ministry shouldn't just feature clever use of WORDS, but must also be infused with evidence of Holy Spirit POWER and a deep sense of CONVICTION.
- * When we come together, there should be a deep, significant, tangible sense that God is HERE and He is AT WORK.
- * Conviction is the Holy Spirit PROMPTING, PRICKING & STIRRING our hearts.
- * Conviction is how God WARNS us & makes us UNCOMFORTABLE.
- * It's also how He LEADS us to SAFETY & PROTECTS us from HARM.
- * It's the force that DRAWS us to JESUS & away from SIN (Acts 2:37, 2 Chronicles 7:1-4).

→ *Do you know the voice of conviction? How does it work for you and what does it tend to say?*

→ *What happens when there is no sense of conviction? What could happen if that sense was corporately very strong?*

WRAP-UP

→ *If the dream is that whenever we gather to worship and open up the Word, the power of the Holy Spirit is so strong, people are brought to their knees by fear of Lord. A sense of awe settles over God's people and the convicting power of Spirit is deeply at work in every heart. If that's the dream and we really want to see God move, how do we cultivate this atmosphere, work that soil and develop this characteristic of Kingdom culture?*