

Unshakeable Faith Week Six

As my three children were growing up, there were periods when my relationship with one of them was marked with silence and distance. Almost every time the trouble started because that child had been doing something he or she knew I wouldn't approve of. So they tried to hide their behavior by "hiding" from me.

There have been seasons when I avoided God for the same reason. Because I had allowed something into my life He did not want there I pulled away from Him. I failed to pray or read His Word because I didn't want to "hear about it." The result was a lack of fellowship with God and no sense of His presence. It's impossible to be intimate with God and rebellious at the same time.

Unshakeable Faith Trait Six: Pursues Holiness with Eyes Focused on the Father

Peter wrote clearly and passionately about a Christian's need for holiness. He knew that holiness is necessary for intimacy with God. He heard this truth many times from Jesus Himself.

Read Matthew 5:8 from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. What is a blessing given to the "pure in heart?"

The word translated as "pure" in Matthew 5:8 is the Greek adjective *katharos*. It means to be "free from corrupt desire and sin; to be blameless and innocent." From the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus taught about the importance of a "clean" life. He taught this to the multitudes and scolded the Pharisees (Matthew 23:23-28) for being clean only on the outside.

If you have cross references in your Bible, Matthew 5:8 probably refers you to Hebrews 12:14. "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord." The noun *holiness* is similar to *pure* in Matthew 5:8. It refers to a heart and life that is pure and consecrated to God.

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. Peter's call to holy living begins with a "therefore" in verse 13. Look back at 1 Peter 1:3-4. What is the wonderful truth that deserves our response of a holy life?

How does Peter describe a holy life in verses 13-14?

According to verses 15-16, why does God say we should be holy?

If you have time, read the following verses, penned by the Apostle Paul, and list every character trait you can find in the appropriate column.

Holy behavior/characteristics

Worldy behavior/characteristics

Eph 4:17-32

Eph 5:1-21

Col 3:1-17

I don't want to be far from God when tough times hit. I want to be close enough to God to feel His breath on my cheek and His strong arms around me. What about you? If there is something in your life that's gotten between you and your Savior, don't wait another day without going to Him in repentance.

As we strive to live a holy life that is pleasing to God, our intimacy with Him will deepen. We will understand Him better and more fully sense His presence. We will continue to face trials, temptations, and difficulties as long as we live in this earthly body. But if we pursue holiness, we will not fall when adversity strikes. We will be unshakeable!

In what ways can a deeper experience with God and a more intimate understanding of Him bless our life and help us in times of trials?