

# Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

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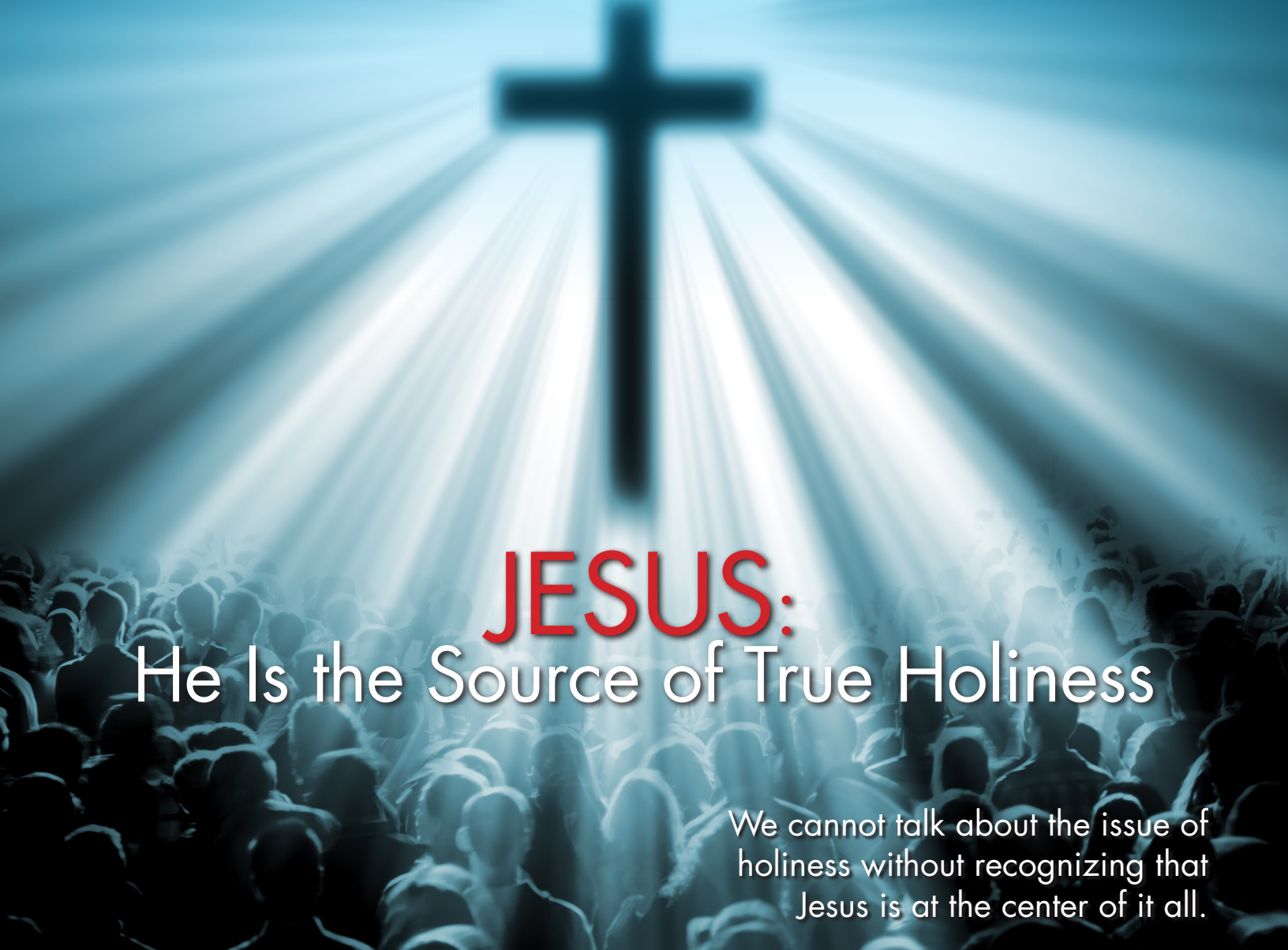
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# JESUS: He Is the Source of True Holiness

We cannot talk about the issue of holiness without recognizing that Jesus is at the center of it all.



BY DOUG  
BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Superintendent, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries. You can follow Bishop Beacham on [Facebook](#) or Twitter [@DougBeacham](#).

**D**uring the first four months of 2016 the IPHC focus is on “The Source of Holiness: God.” In this column I want to continue that emphasis by focusing on the eternal Son of God, Jesus, the “only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9), who is the “fullness” of the revelation of the Father’s will, character, and being (see John 1:16; Ephesians 1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Colossians 1:10; 2:9).

The spirit of the world wants us to discover, know and experience God but without reference to Jesus Christ. That approach manifests itself as “the spirit of Antichrist.” The biblical descriptions of this spirit and the coming historical figure known as “antichrist” are found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and the letters of the Apostle John (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7).

This spirit, which has always operated in the world but especially since the incarnation of Jesus Christ, is characterized by rejecting that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God. The New Testament makes it very clear that the confession that Jesus is the Son of God is essential to the core of Christian Faith and to salvation.

Let’s examine how the New Testament reveals the holiness of Jesus and what that holiness means for us.

First, Jesus was “conceived by the Holy Spirit” in the womb of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:30-35). Thus the holiness of the eternal Son

of God, who existed before creation and by whom all things are created (Colossians 1:15, 16; Hebrews 1:2, 3), is made clear by the very act of conception. Jesus, the Son of God becomes the Son of Man for our sake.

His holiness is known in the earliest days of His life when brought before Simeon in the Temple to be dedicated to the Lord. This presentation, reflecting back to Exodus 13:2, recalls that this child, like all first-born males, is “called holy to the Lord” (Luke 2:23). Jesus is the fulfillment of that prophetic holiness revealed to Israel.

Second, while the word “holy” is not used in the temptations of Jesus, the fundamental issue relates to Jesus’ identity as the Son of God (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). This was Satan’s attempt to turn Jesus as he did Adam and Eve in the Garden (Genesis 3). By His holy call and character, Jesus of Nazareth over a 40-day period rejected the various temptations of Satan, all of which were based on misunderstandings and manipulation of the clear Word of God.

Third, in the Gospels unclean spirits discern that Jesus is “the Holy One of God.” Mark 1:24 and Luke 4:34 reveal that before people recognized Jesus, the powers of darkness recognized Him and were terrified of His power and had to submit to His authority.

Fourth, Jesus “sanctified” Himself “that they (the disciples, including us) also may be sanctified by the truth” (John 17:19). In verse 17 Jesus revealed that it is the Word of God, the truth, that sanctifies us.

Fifth, Acts 2:27 quoting Psalm 16:10, affirmed that God’s “Holy One” will not “see corruption in

the grave.” In other words, though Jesus’ body was bruised, pierced, and bloody on the cross, when He died Satan was not able to initiate corruption against His flesh. The triumph of the resurrection, by the “Spirit of holiness” (Romans 1:4), was God’s redemptive triumph over all that Satan stole in the Garden.

Sixth, in Paul’s letters he recognizes that the church, the Body of the risen Lord, “is a holy temple,” “holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 2:21; 5:27). This is an amazing statement given what we know and experience about ourselves, the members of Christ’s body.

We “have this treasure in earthen vessels,” Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:7, to a body of believers that by most standards were anything but holy. Yet, because of the all-surpassing holiness of Jesus, the church is nonetheless a holy reality in anticipation of the full revelation of the glory of God.

This is why Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 is so important. Jesus “became for us wisdom

from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’” This is why Jesus continues to work in His church, sanctifying and

washing us for His glory (Ephesians 5:26).

This is why we, as members of the Body of Christ around the world and through the generations, do not exalt ourselves or glorify ourselves. We exist in this world to glorify God through our Holy Lord Jesus Christ!

Seventh, Revelation 3:7 and 6:10

The spirit of the world wants us to discover, know, and experience God but without reference to Jesus Christ.

# Encourage

**A place of hope. A people of promise.**

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remind us that the Lord of history, Jesus, is “holy and true.” There is a “right side of history.” But it is not determined by the self-will of politicians, economists or anyone else. It is determined by the One who is “Holy and true.”

Finally, Hebrews 2:10-18 reminds us of the great mission of Jesus as He brings “many sons to glory.” Jesus is the “captain of [our] salvation” because “both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one.” This is why Jesus “is not ashamed to call [us] brethren!” He declares to the Father, “Here am I and the children whom God has given me” (Hebrews 2:13/Isaiah 8:18).

The source of holiness is not some theological abstraction known as “God.” Our source, Jesus, has “shared in our flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy Him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). That is the good news that we have received and that we share with the world! □





# HOLINESS IS NOT A BAD WORD

We need to reclaim  
this concept for a new  
generation that has only seen  
the bad stereotypes.



BY JOHN  
CHASTEEN

JOHN CHASTEEN has served as a pastor and conference superintendent in the IPHC. He is a life coach and director of The Chasteen Group, a life-coaching ministry based in Oklahoma City. He directed the graduate school at Southwestern Christian University and founded the Life Coaching Institute at that school. He and his wife, Becky, have three grown children. You can read more of his writing at his blog site, [heycoachjohn.com](http://heycoachjohn.com).

An important question to ask yourself is, “What comes to mind when you think of the word holiness?” For many, the term conjures up stereotypical images of legalism—things like button up collars, long sleeves, no jewelry and snake handling. Well, maybe not the snake handling part, but I think you get my point!

As strange as it may sound, the concept of holiness almost seems a bit archaic to many leaders in our current generation. The attitude that “holiness is optional” seems to permeate American church culture, yet holiness is a crucial aspect of the Christian life. Its importance is woven throughout the fabric of Scripture.

In this day of cultural change and societal reorientation, how does a minister maintain the needed balance between remaining relevant and contending earnestly for the faith? Doesn’t the Bible call us to a life of holiness? The answer is a resounding yes!

Let’s start by saying that God has called every believer to holiness, especially those of us who lead (see 1 Thessalonians 4:7). Even more importantly, every leader needs to know how to incorporate the element of holiness into his or her everyday life and ministry. I believe the starting point is to develop a healthy perspective on holiness by starting with the right concept.

The words *holy*, *holiness*, or one of its derivatives are used more than 495 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament. We find that more than 670 times in the Bible the word holy or one of its spin-offs can be found. Could it be God is trying to get a point across?

More than any other adjective, God uses the word *holy* to describe His name, for example: Holy God, Holy Spirit, and Holy One of Israel. In fact, the *holiness of God* is mentioned even more than the love of God.

The Hebrew word for holiness is the word *kadesh*, and it denotes two basic meanings. First, it has to do with the idea of exclusiveness. It describes the idea of setting something apart, marking it as different, uncommon, and not for every day use. The word is often used of God and denotes that He is totally separate from all of creation. In the term “the Holy One of Israel,” the word shows the exclusiveness of Israel to God.

At times, the word *holy* is used in reference to items and places. Certain sacrifices were considered holy to the Lord and places were also called holy, the idea being that God is saying, “These are mine, don’t touch.” The second aspect of holiness in the Old Testament had to do with purity or goodness, which doesn’t need much explanation. The New Testament counterpart of the word is the Greek word, *hagios*. It literally means to be set apart or separated unto God.

A contemporary example that I like to use to portray the idea of being set apart would be a ritual that happens every Thanksgiving day at my house. I’m a fanatic about pumpkin pie, so in order to secure my piece I’ll often take it and set it apart on top of the fridge. At that point it becomes set apart, exclusive for someone or something. Crude illustration I know, but it gets my point across!

Unfortunately, many view holiness in a negative light. Many false ideas are perceived that really do not clearly portray the biblical concept. Here is a list of a few of these false concepts:

**Holiness is not a long list of prohibitions.** I had an older gentleman once tell me that as a boy he was grounded for a month for simply picking up a baseball on Sunday. Ouch! I realize that for many reading this article that might hit a little close to home. Yes, holiness will keep us from doing things we shouldn’t; however God’s intent is not to withhold from us.

**Holiness is often interpreted as meanness.** We have to be very careful that our personal holiness doesn’t become mean-spirited toward others. It is so easy to rate ourselves according to our holiness walk. Don’t do it. Love and be kind to those who don’t walk in the holiness that you do.

**Holiness is not a license to be weird.** Jesus was not an oddball. Different, yes! Uncommon and set apart, absolutely! Finding the healthy balance is the tension most of us feel as leaders as we navigate this postmodern day and age.

**Holiness is not a badge of superiority.** We must keep in mind that every believer is progressing at his own speed and may not be at the same level as you or I am. Holiness does not separate us from other believers. Guard yourself from pride!

On the positive side, holiness brings with it many personal benefits and perks that cannot be attained to any other way. This is not an exhaustive list, but here are a few things that could be considered perks.

**Holiness is a work of grace.** Holiness begins on the inside of the believer. In his classic book *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Jerry Bridges writes: “Holiness is a work of grace.” This means you can never live a holy life on your own. Without God’s help true holiness is unattainable.

**Holiness positions you for service.** Paul tells Timothy that there are many vessels in a great house, some for honor and some for dishonor. He continues to instruct us to be set apart for the master’s use (see 2 Timothy 2:20–21). Holiness does just that; it positions you for greatness.

**Holiness begins on the inside.** Most theologians call it provisional holiness. The Scripture teaches: “Christ has blessed us with every spiritual blessing so that we could be holy and blameless before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4). The fruit of imputed rightness gives us power to live holy and pleasing before God.

**Holiness can be seen by others and must be lived out in our daily walk.** As wonderful as provisional holiness is, it must be accompanied by a life of practical holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit. Practical holiness means we regularly crucify the flesh, deny ourselves and understand the meaning of sacrifice and service. This in and of itself makes you different, uncommon, and in a biblical sense holy.

Finally it is imperative to remember that holiness is the crowning attribute of God Himself. It sets Him apart from evil and gives Him perfect freedom from it. It makes Him unlike mankind. That is why He calls us to be holy, to reflect His glory and be free from evil (1 Peter 1:15–16).

We are called to be holy—not common. We are to be different from the world and exclusively His. This is the attitude that should permeate all we are and all we do. When we can no longer differentiate between the ways the world lives and the way we live, we’ve departed from true holiness. □

The attitude that “holiness is optional” seems to permeate American church culture, yet holiness is a crucial aspect of the Christian life.





# Your Church NEEDS MORE Than a Monologue

To truly teach your church, you must understand the need for “active learning.”



BY DR.  
ADRIAN E.  
HINKLE

ADRIAN HINKLE serves as the Academic Dean for the School of Graduate and Professional Studies and at Southwestern Christian University in Bethany, Oklahoma. Hinkle has been active in the International Pentecostal Holiness Church since 1997. Her teaching and research interest is the Hebrew Bible and biblical interpretation. She is the author of *Pedagogical Theory of the Hebrew Bible* (Wipf and Stock), which includes much more information on the topic of active learning.

Each Sunday, many churches follow a routine of worship, sermon and then dismissal. We work hard to avoid unknown variables that could create conflict. But do our congregations really learn best in this tidy format of passive listening? Often our members quickly forget the message and forget to apply its principles.

For years, I attended church and learned information about God, but never had a relationship with Him. It wasn't until I was invited to a church where the Holy Spirit was allowed to freely move and sometimes interrupt the routine that I truly encountered God.

People were encouraged to share their testimonies, and lives were impacted in a way I had never witnessed before. The short sermon, which followed, deepened the impact by reinforcing the testimonies.

Pastors seek ways to ensure the edification of the body of Christ. We want to attract and keep new church members, but we've focused on *what* is taught and not *how* it's taught. The means by which we communicate biblical truth and testimony impacts what a believer learns and more importantly, retains.

Active learning is achieved when the learner participates through touch, activity or inquiry. When a student, regardless of age, combines sight, touch, or smell with auditory instruction, the impact and memory retention far exceeds information retained through oral instruction alone.

Interestingly, while the active learning theory was not popularized in the field of education until the 1980s, it is deeply integrated into the biblical examples of religious education in the Old Testament. The biblical texts support Israel's use of a combination of visual and kinesthetic participation that was often followed by oral instructions.

Within the Old Testament, as Israel's understanding of God developed, major changes in their relationship coincide with a specific experience that deepened its impact. This can be seen in examples such as the covenant given to Abraham (see Genesis 7–9, 17), and Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 12).

Israel experiences God and then learns the significance of the experience. Future generations that did not participate in the original event vicariously participate in the experience through either a sign or festival that was used to remind them of it and allow the older generation to teach the younger generation what they experienced first-hand. Examples of these include the sign of the bow for the Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:13), the sign of circumcision for the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:11), and the role of Passover (Exodus 12:24–27).

Similarly, mighty acts of God on behalf of Israel are memorialized in order to retell the testimony to future generations. This is evidenced in stories such as the twelve stone pillars at the base of Mt. Sinai (Exodus 24:4), stacking of stones after crossing the Jordan River (Joshua 4: 20–24), and the stone in Joshua's field where the Ark of the Covenant had rested during its return to Israel (1 Samuel 6:18). The expectation is that those who are unfamiliar with the story will see the monument and inquire of its significance, therefore creating an opportunity for the learner to hear the account of God's work on Israel's behalf.

In addition to these examples of how to instruct through the inclusion of visual and kinesthetic experiences, the command to instruct also carries the indication for active, experiential learning. The word translated to teach, in texts such as Deuteronomy 4:9, Exodus 9:14, 10:2, and Genesis 18:21, 42:11 come from the Hebrew, *yada*. This word literally means to teach by showing but may also include multiple senses.

In order to truly know God, He must be experienced. Though He cannot be seen, the effects of God's ongoing involvement and redemption of humanity are clearly visible. Succeeding generations who had not experience the initial event firsthand were given monuments, symbols, and liturgy that purposefully fused story with experiential learning so they could understand what earlier generations describe in their testimonies.

A survey of modern churches reveals we've lost the art of combining oral instruction with active, experiential learning that we see throughout Scripture. As a result, we inadvertently weakened the impact of our message. It is my opinion, however, that Pentecostals stand in a primed position to reintroduce active learning in the local church.

Through the active role of the Holy Spirit and expectant faith of Pentecostal believers for God's interaction in their gathering, the combination of experience and oral instruction becomes readily available.

As pastors and leaders, how can we incorporate active learning with our believers? Here are some ways:

## 1. GET THEM MOVING PHYSICALLY.

For example: divide the congregation by eye color, brown and not brown, and ask them to move from their seats and sit on different sides of the sanctuary based on this classification. This can be used in connection with multiple texts such as loving those different than you, church unity, and welcoming outsiders.



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## 2. GET THEM TALKING.

Allow members to share testimonies of God's work in their lives. You can also pause within a sermon to briefly break and allow them to discuss a point with the people around them then report some of their main points.

## 3. INVOLVE MULTIPLE SENSES SUCH AS SIGHT, SMELL AND TOUCH.

For example: seeing the work of the Holy Spirit in healing and salvation can be strongly followed by a teaching on the love of the Father, His pursuit of humanity, or His Providence. There are limitless possibilities here on things they can see as reminders of an earlier sermon or an illustration that can be incorporated.

## 4. USE A HANDS-ON ILLUSTRATION TO EXPERIENCE THE MESSAGE.

A shared physical experience is one of the strongest teaching tools for creating a long-term memory. An example of this activity may be to collect artwork from members of the church that coincide with events during Passion Week. Use these to create Stations of the Cross that members can take time to move through in the weeks leading up to Easter.

Oral teaching is essential, but its impression and influence is greatly strengthened when combined with another sensory experience. The ongoing testimony of believers' experiences united with solid biblical teaching makes a lasting impression that will edify believers and attract unbelievers to our amazing God. ■



# How Do We Stand for HOLINESS When Gay Marriage Is Legal?

We can't change God's standards,  
but we must change our attitude.



BY J. LEE  
GRADY

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who serves as contributing editor of *Charisma* magazine and editor of *Encourage*. He also directs The Mordecai Project, an international missions organization based in Florida. He is a member of the IPHC's Sunshine Conference. You can follow him on Twitter at [@leegrady](https://twitter.com/leegrady) or visit his ministry website at [themordecaproject.org](http://themordecaproject.org).

It's official. Thanks to the Supreme Court's ruling last year in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, gay marriage has been legalized in this country. Same-sex relationships are the new normal. The rainbow flag was unfurled on June 26, 2015, the White House was illuminated with rainbow colors, and our president tweeted "Love Wins" after the historic ruling.

The decision didn't shock me. Seventy percent of our country already had gay marriage laws on the books, so most of us saw this coming. I don't agree with the small percentage of our population who pushed to win this right. And I am horribly grieved that a lifestyle that is so contrary to Christian morality is being celebrated in a country that once honored Christian values.

But it is what it is. Most of America has moved on. During this year's raucous presidential campaign, few candidates from either party ever mentioned gay marriage.

Life will be different in America now—so we might as well prepare for the change. Just as *Roe v. Wade* redefined the way Christians approached the issue of abortion, the 2015 Supreme Court ruling has changed the game. I recommend we take the high road. Here are six ways we should respond:

## 1. Recognize that we are a religious minority.

Some American Christians think we have a right to control culture. That's not a biblical concept. Yes, we are supposed to shine the light of Christ's influence in a dark world by preaching the gospel and by demonstrating the compassion of Jesus. But we live in this world as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2:11). We are not a "moral majority." We are not welcome here.

Holiness is not self-righteousness. It doesn't mean we tell everyone else what to do. It means we live our lives in such a way that we exemplify Christ's love and righteousness in a tangible way in our communities.



Paul told Timothy: “The godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). I’m not afraid of persecution. If the United States government decides to throw me in jail because I believe the Bible, I will join a host of brave Christians who have suffered worse treatment—including today’s martyrs in the Middle East.

Let’s stop whining when sinners don’t behave like we want them to. Our job is not to control people but to extend God’s mercy to them. Mature believers lay their lives down for sinners, just as Christ did.

## 2. Get busy evangelizing your community.

Perhaps the Supreme Court’s gay marriage ruling will wake us up to the fact that the United States is now the third largest mission field on earth. We are not a Christian country, so let’s stop pretending we are. The fact that gay people can now legally marry is not going to change the Great Commission.

Jesus said: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). The sad truth is that most American Christians weren’t sharing their faith when our laws were based on Christian morals. Will this new ruling motivate us to care about sinners?

## 3. Repent for hateful attitudes toward the gay community.

As an evangelical Christian I believe the Bible is clear about sex: God created it as a gift to be expressed within the confines of marriage between a man and a woman. But that doesn’t give me a right to bash gay people.

The love of God draws people to repentance. In the past year I have heard a lot of hateful language aimed at homosexuals—including church leaders using words like “queer” to describe the gay community. That is not holiness—it is insensitive bullying. Let’s ask God to break our hearts so we can be free from bigotry and self-righteousness.

## 4. Keep teaching the truth about biblical morality.

This is certainly not a time to back away from the Bible. We can’t compromise. But while we uphold what the Scriptures say about homosexuality, let’s be just

as committed to preaching the truth about adultery, fornication, pornography, child abuse, domestic violence and divorce.

Evangelical Christians are sometimes viewed as hypocrites by the world because we argue against gay marriage when we haven’t shown them that our own heterosexual marriages work. The hypocrisy gets louder when one of our own is arrested for molesting a teenager or when his marriage fails because he left his wife for his secretary. We must teach holiness in all areas of sexuality—not just condemn homosexuality.

We also must offer compassionate counseling to people who want to overcome homosexual feelings, just as we offer healing prayer to those who struggle with depression, gender confusion, addiction or the effects of abuse or abortion. Holiness is not just holding up a standard of behavior but offering the healing needed to break free from sin.

## 5. Defend our religious freedoms.

The last time I checked, the United States was still listed as a democracy. But the church must work overtime

to make sure our government doesn’t force churches to perform same-sex marriages. Gay couples can find state officials or pro-gay clerics to perform their ceremonies, but the state has no business forcing a church to renounce its core teachings. If the government tries to control the content of Christian preaching to prevent what is deemed “hate speech,” there will be nothing left of our Bill of Rights.

## 6. Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Today some doomsday Christians say they wish God would judge America like He did Sodom and Gomorrah. I prefer to take the strategy of Abraham, who prayed for Sodom because He understood the mercy of God—even though he lived before the New Covenant era. Today we live in the age of grace, and we should petition God for a global revival rather than asking Him to call down fire on people who offend us.

Pray for mercy. Pray for a fresh wave of evangelism. Pray that the Spirit’s power will inundate our nation and unleash a third Great Awakening. That is our ultimate hope. ☐



Evangelical Christians are sometimes viewed as hypocrites by the world because we argue against gay marriage when we haven’t shown them that our own heterosexual marriages work.

# IT'S TIME TO CALL SIN WHAT IT IS

The Bible mentions sin 450 times, but we prefer to call it something else.



BY RANDELL  
O. DRAKE

RANDELL O. DRAKE has been an ordained IPHC minister for 35 years and is serving his 14th year as New Horizons Ministries IPHC Conference Bishop. He and his wife, Michelle, have been married 33 years. They have two sons, Taylor and Evan, one daughter-in-law, Ashlie, and they are the proud grandparents of a granddaughter, Aubrielle. He is the author of the book *Just Sayin'*, from which this article was adapted.

**S**in. Transgression. Wrongdoing. Whatever name you place on it, whatever label you call it, whatever moniker you choose to describe it, it is sin.

I will tell you what it is *not*. It is *not* just a lifestyle choice. It is *not* just an indiscretion. It is *not* just a minor offense. It is *not* just a misdeed.

It is sin.

It is *not* just bad behavior. It is *not* just a lapse in judgment. It is *not* just a faux pas. It is *not* just a gaffe. It is *not* just a blunder.

It is sin.

It is *not* just recklessness. It is *not* just a slip-up. It is *not* just a mistake. It is *not* just an error. It is *not* just a goof.

It is sin.

Okay. I think you got my point. To some, this may sound unkind or unmerciful or unloving or intolerable or judgmental or intolerant or narrow-minded or whatever word one would use to describe someone you don't agree with. It's really not.

For personal holiness to truly be real in our lives as leaders, for sanctification to be how we walk and talk in our lives and ministry, for God's righteousness to be foremost in our everyday living and witness, we must recognize sin for what it is—action against the will of God.

As a leader, a pastor, a minister, a bishop, I just choose to love people in and through their mistakes. It's how I want others to treat



me when I mess up. It's how God treats me when I disobey or violate His Word.

That's right. I mess up. I sin. I transgress. I make mistakes.

I do. You, too?  
Sure you do. Don't deny it. We all do.

Free Will. Those two words have bothered, troubled, confused, vexed and disturbed many Christians, theologians and leaders since the Garden of Eden. We choose. We decide. We opt. God gave that awesome privilege and that weighted responsibility to us humans.

As leaders, we must lead. God expects us to do nothing less. Our Father has chosen to provide for us the opportunity to speak life and death, to teach and train, to equip and release. Living a sanctified and holy life enables us to lead without our intentions being questioned.

So, why would we want to sugar coat sin? As leaders, why would we want to not give guidance to our congregations, to steer the sheep away from the ditch? Why would we choose to ignore, evade or shun teaching and preaching on sin?

Sin is still sin. No matter what people want to call it in this politically correct era, sin is defiance to God's Word, transgressing against God Himself (see Jeremiah 3:25) and willful disobedience of God. Holiness is living in God's will, destiny and desire for us.

As parents, Michelle and I would deal with sin in our house. When our children would make a mistake or do something wrong accidentally without prior knowledge of it being wrong, we would lovingly correct them, show them the error of their way and then expect them to do

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better and not do it again. When they would willfully disobey our rules, disregard our policies or disrespect our guidelines, then we would lovingly apply the "board of education" to that place God prepared with extra padding.

By the way, there are no big sins and little sins. Just sins. Sometimes, I find people who think some sins are

bigger and worse than others. I know some sins seem to us to be worse, but the Bible states sin is sin. Lying, murder, stealing, adultery, gossip, envy, gluttony are all in the same list: sin. Sin is mentioned about 450 times throughout the Bible.

A pastor overheard one of his parishioners praying at the altar one Sunday.

"Lord, please, get the cobwebs out of my life."

The pastor whispered a silent prayer of his own for the man asking God to ease his pain and help him with his sin.

A couple of weeks later, the same man returned to the altar and made his request of God, "Lord, please, remove the cobwebs from my life."

Again, the pastor silently prayed for the man.

The man returned to the altar for a third time the next Sunday, asking for God's help. "Lord, please, wipe the cobwebs from my life."

This time the pastor leaned over the kneeling man, laid his hand on the man's shoulder and prayed aloud, "Lord, kill the spider."

We, as leaders, and our churches often want the pain of our sins to

go away. We want God to ease our suffering for the bad choices we have made and sin's effects we are experiencing. What we really need is for God to kill the spider. If we stop the sinning, we stop the hurting, the anguish, and the remorse. Kill the cause, not just the effects. We should be praying prayers like:

"God, search me. If you find any sin in me, show me. I confess my sins and my failures. I repent and turn from my sin. I want to experience You and Your peace, grace and mercy. Restore to me the joy of your salvation. I want more of You and less of me."

A prayer like that changes us. It's not about not having to suffer the consequences of our transgressions; it is about us putting the sin behind us, repenting, turning from it. If we are new creations, sanctified leaders, Spirit-empowered Christians, we should behave with new thinking and living.

As leaders, we must practice what we preach. Our lives must demonstrate living in grace, holiness and repelling sin. If we sin, we must admit it. If we ignore it, we risk losing our testimony, our witness, our peace, our joy, our integrity, our leadership.

I do have good news in the midst of all this talk of sin.

A solution. A remedy. An answer.

His name is Jesus.

He gives grace and mercy and forgiveness. He removes the sin. Jesus is the one "Who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Yet, we have to do our part. We must confess. Admit we have sinned and do sin. 'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us' (1 John 1:8). Then, we must strive to live in personal holiness, not yielding to temptation, not giving in to our fleshly desires. It's not always easy, but it is always right.

We don't need to ask God to only take away the cobwebs, we need Him to kill the spider. □