

of the Holy Spirit. He alone is able to cleanse us from these things, but He is always willing to respond when we sincerely ask.

The acts of the sinful nature are described in Gal. 5:19-21: "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

The Bible uses very strong language to advise us what to do with these things: Put them to death (Rom. 8:13), crucify them (Gal. 5:24; 6:2). They must go. Get rid of them once for all. Sin and holiness cannot co-exist! (See Gal. 5:17.)

- 2. The Positive:** Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Once the heart has been cleansed of all sin, it becomes a fit habitation for the Holy Spirit. This was experienced by the disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Ac. 2:4). Paul expresses it with the words, "filled... with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19). What an incredible experience!

However, the Holy Spirit only takes up residence when he has been given the keys to all the rooms of the heart, and when He has been given complete control (Rom. 8:9). When God is in control, you are being like God.

A Glorious Possibility: You Can Be Like God

Do you really want to be like God? You can be, but first you must want it more than anything else! God does not give a gift of this magnitude to half-hearted seekers. You must "hunger and thirst" for it (Mt. 5:6).

If you do not want to be like God, what is the reason? Is it because you do not like God? Is it because you think there is something better? Is it because you think you know better than God what is best for you? Be assured that the highest ideal to which a human being can attain is to become like God. There is nothing better! It leads to the highest happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment.

To Summarize What God Wants

He wants you to be like Him so you can enjoy each other. To be like Him you must be made holy.

Lesson Three What God Really Wants

Many people are confused about the true nature of their relationship to God. The confusion results from a mistaken concept of the nature of God. Sometimes He is seen as the "enemy" who wants to dominate us. Others see God as a tyrant who wants to take away our freedom and enslave us. Still others see God as a cosmic policeman who is ever watching to catch us in a violation of "the law" to ensure that we will be punished for it. Or, He may be thought of as a kindly grandfather with a long beard that needs to be manipulated into giving us the things we want. All of these concepts are terribly wrong! But, the question remains, What does God really want? It is very important to understand the answer to that if we are going to please Him. We will try to answer that question in this lesson.

What Does God Really Want?

To get the answer to the above question we must begin by going back to the beginning. All creative acts must first exist in the mind of the designer before they can exist in reality. Any artist, architect, or designer must have a clear idea of what he/she intends to create before initiating the project. **What was God's plan or ideal for man before creating him?** The Bible clearly answers that question: "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph. 1:4).

Next, we must look at what God did when He carried out his plan. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). There is a lot of meaning in those words, but basically it means that **God created man like Himself**. Unfortunately, it was the likeness to God that man lost when he sinned.

In his separation from God, man's situation was hopeless until God in His mercy opened up a wonderful plan whereby through Christ man could recover what he had lost. It is not surprising that God's desire has never changed. He still wants man to be like Him. His desire is simply and clearly expressed in His most basic command, "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). It cannot be misunderstood that **God is holy, and He wants us to be like Him**.

It becomes even more clear when we look at the miracle that God performs (when man meets the conditions) to achieve the fulfillment of His desire: "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” (Eph 4:22-24). Astounding! The new self that we become through God’s grace has been created to be like God.

What does God want? It is clear that His most fundamental desire for man is that we be like He is.

Why Does God Want Us to Be Like Him?

God wants us to be like Him because:

1. He wants to enjoy us! The kind of intimate fellowship He desires would be impossible if there were a basic conflict in our natures. It can only be achieved when we are in harmony with Him.
2. He wants us to enjoy Him! This is the greatest gift He can give us. Sin makes us uncomfortable in His presence.
3. He loves us and desires the best for us. Holiness is good for us. It is the best and happiest way to live. His love compels Him to desire holiness for us.
4. He understands the consequences of sin and it hurts Him to see us head down the road towards pain and destruction. Like an earthly father who sees his children going towards drug addiction or prostitution or any wrong path, it pains God to see His children reject the ideals and values of their Father.

God’s Actions Are Motivated By His Purpose

Everything God has done in relation to the human race has been motivated by His desire for us to be holy (in harmony with Him).

- He began to reveal Himself centuries ago in the Old Testament because He wanted us to know Him.
- The revelation of Himself came to its climax when He sent His Son Jesus in human flesh to dwell among us. By looking at Jesus it is easy for us to understand what God is like.
- He sometimes must discipline us, but it is always only for the purpose of helping us share in His holiness (Heb. 12:10).
- He sent Christ to die for us in order that He might forgive our sins (remove what separates us) and bring us back to Himself.
- He sent the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts to cleanse and sanctify us (make us holy) so that we may share the same nature and be in harmony with Him.

- Someday He will glorify our bodies and take us to heaven where we will enjoy God and He will enjoy us in perfect fellowship forever! This has always been His final goal.

In What Ways Can a Person Be Like God?

There are some ways in which a human person could never be like God. In such things as omnipotence (no limit to His power), omniscience (no limit to His knowledge), omnipresence (God is everywhere), can be found only in an infinite being. **Since human beings are finite (limited), they can never be like God in these ways.**

However, when it comes to His moral attributes it is different. Consider the following cases. For example:

Love: Whenever you love somebody with “God’s kind of love” (see 1 Cor. 13), you are being like God.

Forgiveness: Whenever you forgive somebody who has offended you, you are being like God who freely forgives.

Truth: When you speak the truth, you are being like God, who is the truth and cannot lie or deceive.

Compassion: Whenever you try to help a needy person, or to relieve suffering, you are being like God, who has a compassionate heart.

The Fruit of the Spirit: Whenever the fruit of the Spirit is exhibited in your life, you are being like God. (See Gal. 5:22.)

Holiness: When the very roots of sinfulness have been cleansed from your heart, you have become a holy person. Your actions will then be controlled by sincere and unselfish motives. Your very nature is in perfect harmony with God’s nature. You hate sin and evil and do everything possible to avoid it. You seek righteousness, justice, and truth. In all of these ways (these are only examples, many others could be given), you are being like God.

How Can a Person Become Like God?

To become like God, a person must:

1. **The Negative:** First, destroy everything in his/her heart and life that is unlike God. This includes a change of attitude towards all forms of sin, which results in stopping the practice of deliberate (willful) disobedience of God’s laws, and seeking the cleansing of the sinful nature with which we were born. The sinful nature can only be cleansed by an act of God after a person’s sinful acts have been forgiven. This can only be accomplished with the help