

# STEP OF NAPHTALI

## WEEK 6

### נַפְתָּלִי - NAPHTALI

*“My Struggling”*

#### THE WEAKNESS WE ARE STRENGTHENING

Many Christians are hanging out in the church’s “hospital.” They know Jesus came for the sick, not the healthy, but they don’t understand Jesus calls us to get well and move into health, not remain in the ER. Most Christians are not pursuing holiness.

#### FOCUS

Beginning to pursue obedience daily.

#### KEY VERSE

*Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*  
(2 Timothy 2:21)

#### KEY POINTS

- Sanctification, the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Salvation is the process of becoming HOLY and saved from the “World.”
- Holiness does not mean purity, it means “SET APART.” The opposite of holy is not “impure,” but “common.”
- To be “Set Apart” means to live our lives each day trying to become more and more like Jesus, to be separate from the World so God can use us for His special purposes.
- Living “Set Apart” is a struggle but we can overcome because Christ is with us to help and guide us.

*The Step of Naphtali is about intentionally entering the Path of Holiness, recognizing our special purpose in Him, and establishing a strong Habit of Long Obedience.*

## ICE BREAKER

*What are some physical characteristics, personality traits, or habits you received from your parents you wish you could change? Are there any you love and want to always keep?*

## GROUP DISCUSSION

The SIXTH Step in the Path 2 Strength is the **STEP OF NAPHTALI**.

The name Naphtali, the 6<sup>th</sup> born son of Israel, means “My Struggle.” Once a Christian has become a follower of the Messiah, their lifelong struggle is to become more and more like Him over the course of the days God has given them.

Many Christians are not aware the Bible teaches there are **three** parts of salvation: **Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification**.

Justification is the first (1<sup>st</sup>) part of Salvation, and it means to be made just, to be declared “innocent” in God’s court. This is a **legal declaration**, a one-time thing, and because it’s a *legal declaration*, it cannot be undone or taken back.

*Here are some verses about Justification you can look up later:* Romans 3:28, Romans 5:1, Romans 5:9, 1 Cor. 6:11, Titus 3:7

We are justified in God’s eyes in this way when we accept the free pardon He has offered us through the Blood of Christ. When we accept Jesus as our Lord & Savior, we put on His righteousness and God no longer sees our transgressions, only the holiness of Christ.

**To be Justified means to be saved from Hell.**

Glorification, the last (3<sup>rd</sup>) part of Salvation, is the moment when we receive our glorified bodies in Heaven after death. This is different from being saved from hell, this is to be saved from our fallen Flesh, i.e. all human desires.

*Here are some verses about Glorification you can look up later:* Romans 8:30, Philippians 3:20-21

The middle (2<sup>nd</sup>) part of Salvation, is Sanctification. Sanctification is a process that takes our entire life to complete. It is to be saved from the World as we become more and more like Jesus.

**1.)** *How does understanding the three parts of Salvation (Justification, Sanctification, Glorification) help you navigate the Christian life? Does it help you explain the Christian walk to others more easily?*

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Sanctification, the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Salvation, is the focus of the **STEP OF NAPHTALI**.

*But what exactly does the word "Sanctification" mean?*

To be sanctified is to be made holy. The Bible calls you and me *saints*. However, the word *saint* doesn't mean super righteous person, or an extremely pure person. Holiness does not mean purity; it means *to be set apart*.

***Therefore, the opposite of Holy is not impure, it is common.***

To be holy to God means to be set apart for a special purpose for Him. Of course, this would hopefully include keeping oneself clean of unclean things, *but to be holy means to be special*.

An easy way to understand this is to think about how many families have special plates and silverware in their china cabinets they only take out for Christmas and Easter. These are *special* plates that will not be used for *common* things.

**2.)** *Can you think of any other examples of things we consider common vs. special in the world?*

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Now, would a normal person take a fine china plate out of their cabinet and use it as a doggie bowl?

Of course, the answer is no.

Then, what about us? God has called us holy and asks us to pursue holiness.

*To be holy means to act in a way that is consistent with the special purpose God has already called you to.*

**3.)** *If you had to explain to another Christian why we should pursue holiness, what would you tell them?*

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**4.)** **READ** the following passages:

**2 Timothy 2:15-16;19-21** – *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness . . . Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.*

*Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, **sanctified** and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work."*

**2 Timothy 2:22-26** – *"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."*

**Leviticus 11:44a** – *"For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy."*

**1 Thessalonians 4:7** – *"For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness."*

**1 Peter 1:14-16** – *"[Be] as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

**Luke 6:47-48** – *"As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words **and puts them into practice**, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built."*

**John 14:15** – *"If you love Me, keep My commandments."*

**5.)** *What stood out the most to you from these verses?*

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Knowing we need to be sanctified is the easy part, walking the walk is obviously harder.

**6.)** *If we are honest with ourselves, what are some of the reasons we struggle to pursue holiness? What obstacles are in your way? How can we overcome them?*

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Remember that sanctification is a lifelong process, so we are working on this daily. This means we should not beat ourselves up as we stumble, but simply be quick to confess our sins and try again.

The **STEP OF SIMEON** was about *beginning* the path of obedience and daily confession. The **STEP OF NAPHTALI** is about *establishing* a Habit of Long Obedience.

7.) *What are some techniques/habits you can begin to help you stay on course pursuing obedience daily?*

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Let's remember in the **STEP OF REUBEN**, we committed to make the Kingdom of God and its righteousness the top priority in our lives.

***Let's recommit to this now!***

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, "*But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*"

***Therefore, Jesus is promising that if we make a priority of pursuing His holiness, He will provide for us and bless us with His favor.***

**We recognize this pursuit of obedience is and will be a daily struggle, which is why the STEP OF NAPHTALI is "your struggle" and "my struggle."**

Beyond re-committing to seek God's Kingdom as a top priority, a great practice is to make it a part of your daily prayer to ask God what He wants you to learn, where you need to obey Him better.

Some good questions to ask Him (among others) are:

- How can I follow you better?
- What do I need to understand?
- How can I show love to so-and-so better?
- Is there any place I need to obey You better?
- Where do I need to grow?
- How can I overcome this problem/bad habit?

Another recommendation is to set up a visual cue in a prominent place somewhere in your house that will remind you to be pursuing holiness daily. This is something God actually commanded the people of Israel to do:

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** – "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*"

Today, many Jewish homes have something called a *Mezuzah*, which is a small cylinder installed on their door posts that contains a rolled-up scroll with the words of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 written on it. This serves as a daily visual reminder to them of the importance of God's Word to them and the need to obey it.

