

**January 31, 2021 James Gallaher**  
**Building Identity Series: A Holy People**

**I Peter 2:9** *You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...*

What does it mean to build identity in your life? Similar to how our identities are formed, Pastor James is building something but what is it? At one point the mystery of what is being built is gone, the form and function are realized, but then a decision needs to be made. Will that piece of furniture be allowed to remain with just the basic form and function? Or will he take the difficult time to refine it?

In it's current state, it is useful. It has form and function and will serve a purpose. Looking closely though, it is rough around the edges. Refining can be an intense process. Refining requires effort.

To be set apart means that something must be different about it - refined. **Ephesians 1:3-4** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly place in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.*

Holy means "set apart" - different than surroundings. "*A Holy nation*" is a people that are set apart from the world around them. Israel was similar to other nations with rules and commonality, yet God called them to be a set apart nation – and now were a new nation with Christ as King. Christians are called to be set apart.

**Ezekiel 44:10-18** ...talks about 2 priesthods. The first one goes away from the Lord and back to their idols during difficulty. Eli, the high priest, forgot what it meant to be in the priesthood. His heart had grown cold to God. He had become lazy and had no vision of God's desire and yet he was allowed to continue serving in the priesthood. He had form and function but he lacked holiness. He was performing the duties of a priest but immorality was in his life. This should be a wake up for people in the Kingdom of God.

How much we look at the same outward things in people and we are surprised when we find out otherwise. **Romans 11:29** *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.* The gift makes some appear holy when inwardly they are not. How often do we judge other's success by what we see? How often do we judge our own lives based on the same success? How much do we ignore those things in our lives? **God's willingness to weather those times with us is not His willingness to turn a blind eye to our immorality and the defiled areas of our lives. It is His mercy giving us time to change!** Just because things on the outside seem to be going well does not mean He will turn a blind eye to those things on the inside. His mercy is so great!

Eli was continuing to serve in form and function in the priesthood. **Ezekiel 44:11, 13** What kind of a priesthood do we want to be? A minister only to people or a minister of sacrifice to God? It is a mystery that God allows it to go forth. If God didn't allow that, He would have no one to minister to the people. We all have those areas in our lives that need to be touched by the holiness of God.

Paul, as one of the greatest religious leaders, speaks of holiness. **1 Corinthians 2:2** *For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.* **What takes place in the outward appearance of a person has no value as compared to what God wants to do on the inside of an individual.** Let us not become consumed with what we see on the outside of a life or of our own lives to the neglect of what God wants to do on the inside of us. Holiness is the refinement and unwillingness to allow the little things to remain the same – the place where God can change the deep things in our lives. Success is not an indicator.

Samuel, in anointing a new king of Israel, sees the right form and function of all the sons of Jesse but none are right. **1 Samuel 16:7** *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees for Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."* David then comes and has form and function but didn't have the worldly perspective and instead had the Lord's anointing.

How much we look at others success and our own and assume God is blessing! But that doesn't guarantee that there is purity and purpose in all areas.

**Ezekiel 44:15-16** speaks of the second priesthood. The Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, decided to set themselves apart – to be different. They were willing to set themselves apart from those around them. These two priesthoods (Eli and Zadok) were serving side by side in the temple. God allowed the priesthood of Eli to minister to the people. The sons of Zadok were allowed to be God's ministers – allowed to offer unto God and to have relationship with God. One priesthood with form and function to only people and the other priesthood with form and function and also with a usefulness to God.

Personal holiness is not about doing the form and function but allowing God to refine and purify what's on the inside of an individual's life. If we want to be holy, we must win the battles in our minds. **1 Corinthians 9:27** *but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.* **2 Corinthians 2:5** *We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.* **Romans 12:2** *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Holiness demands we must win the battle of heart and mind. **2 Timothy 2:20** *Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.* These are words for us, the church. It doesn't matter what we bring to the table or what our value is, some bring honor and some bring dishonor. Will we be a vessel of honor or dishonor? **2 Timothy 2:21** *Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.* Two vessels can have the same form, same function, same usefulness, and yet, one can bring honor and another dishonor. The only way to change is to change the inside of the vessel. Don't mistake God's mercy for His lack of interest in areas of struggle. His mercy allows us time to change. What kind of priest do you want to be? Cleanse and be a vessel of honor, sanctified, useful to the master and prepared for every good work. Be willing to ask the Father to be done with those things not bringing you honor. Ask God to be set apart for His glory.

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What is new to your understanding of holiness?

How have you been surprised that someone's form and function was being used of God when you learn of some flaws?

What has been concealed that you want to offer to God for cleansing? Purify Me, Father!

What kind of priest are you? Lineage of Eli or of Zadok?