

## The Well of Living Water: *Part Four*

Light + Life Group Conversation and Study Guide

Based on *Life-Giving Holiness* by Bishop Linda Adams  
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### Part Four: Who is Holiness For?

This is the fourth study guide in a series of four. Be sure to download [part one](#), [part two](#), and [part three](#).

Let's begin with this story from Scripture.

*"Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John — although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

(John 4:1-14)

## If you knew...

This story may be new to you, or you may have read it hundreds of times. Regardless of your familiarity with the story, the most amazing statement is made by Jesus in the middle of His conversation with this woman at the well. Remembering that we're talking about holiness — a reality that may seem distant or unattainable to you — put yourself in the place of the woman and hear Jesus say:

*“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”*

## If you knew the Gift of God.

Is living a holy life a matter of your own ability to “pull it off”? How would you respond if Jesus were here in person with you right now and said to you, “If you knew the gift of God...”? What would you say to Him?

## ...And who...

Have you ever been in presence of someone great and did not know it? How did your actions, words and/or mannerisms change once you knew? Do you *know* that Jesus can impart holiness to you? Do you question His ability? Why or why not?

## A spring of living water welling up to eternal life.

For whose benefit is holiness? Yours alone, or for someone else too? How does holiness help everyone in my sphere of influence?

As we ponder these questions, let's read the final segment from Bishop Linda's article, *Life-Giving*

### No Holiness but Social Holiness

The horizontal dimension of this love extends not only to family and friends, people we often refer to as “loved ones,” but to all. Jesus explained: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:43–48).

The Greek word used for “perfect” in this passage carries the meaning of “complete” and “mature.” Our love should not be exclusive, lacking completeness. God invites us into His own limitless love. This is the “perfect love” that “casts out fear” (1 John 4:18).

John Wesley famously wrote in his 1739 preface to [“Hymns and Sacred Poems.”](#) “‘Holy Solitaries’ is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than Holy Adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. ‘Faith working by love’ is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.” Our love is meaningless if not expressed in kindness, mutual care for one another's souls and bodies, and acts of compassion for the poor, the suffering, the marginalized and others for whom Christ died. The context of Wesley's statement here primarily refers to the fact that the spiritual journey is a communal path; our growth in grace is greatly enhanced by social dimensions. As we worship together, pray with one another, confess to each other and forgive one another, we experience “faith working by love.” The witness of his life, however, shows his commitment extending to societal issues such as abolitionism and community transformation as the outworking of holiness. +

## *Holiness.*

What does it mean that God's holy love — imparted to you — has a *horizontal dimension*?

Bishop Linda says “our love is meaningless if not expressed...” Name and discuss outward expressions of holiness. Who are they for and how do they impact those people?

“Social holiness” is a term from John Wesley that some have conflated today to mean the world's definition of social justice. Holiness will certainly embody biblical justice, but many people who do not know Jesus engage in acts of social justice every day. How is holiness different? Perhaps the image of the poor and oppressed drinking from a holy well is an helpful image.

Have you heard the term “social holiness” before? How have you interpreted it? How would you describe it?

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3–5. How are holy people supposed to “fight” against injustice?

## In Closing...

As we conclude this series of four studies, take a moment to reflect on how you've been challenged or encouraged.

What has been your biggest “aha” moment?

What questions remain that you'd like to have more conversations about?

What will you do with what you've learned?

## Let's pray.

Lord God, we see You for who You are and acknowledge that You are more powerful than temptation and sin. We are grateful for Your love that wants the very best for us and offers us living water so that not only will we be satisfied, but we can share Your life-giving holiness with others who are “thirsty.” We pray that our lives would become living, breathing, walking wells of Your holiness to the benefit of all who are in our spheres of influence.

For Your glory alone, Lord Jesus, and in Your holy name. Amen.