

MONDAY MANNA

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EXPECTING HOLINESS IN BUSINESS?

By Robert J Tamasy

Suppose you were to try identifying the traits you feel are most important for an employer, an employee, a customer or client, or a supplier. What would they be? It might seem simple to list qualities such as talent, skill, dependability and effectiveness, along with some others. But how about...holiness?

Holiness? When we hear that word, it conjures images of religious people and rites, perhaps someone sequestered in a secluded monastery somewhere engaging in rituals that have no connection with everyday life and work. But in truth, that is not what "holiness" is about.

Yes, one dictionary defines the word as "the quality or state of being holy." Synonyms suggested include: "blessedness, devoutness, godliness, piety, piousness, saintliness." All these terms seem to have nothing to do with the marketplace, at least in the 21st century. But a speaker I heard recently explained that at its roots, *holiness* means things such as "wholeness, integrity, and quality."

In that context, would it not be desirable to find "holiness" in those for whom we work, those who work for us, people who buy our goods and services, and those who provide the resources that we need? Would it not be desirable for others to find those characteristics of holiness in ourselves?

I must admit there have been few times – if any – when I thought, "there goes someone who exhibits holiness." However, as I reflect upon the thousands of individuals I have encountered through my career in many different settings, some people have demonstrated distinctive, even unusual wholeness, integrity, quality, humility, compassion, honesty and sincerity. They certainly would have the aforementioned speaker's definition of holiness.

So, how do we respond to this idea? How do we find holiness in others? How can – or should – we cultivate it in ourselves? It is not surprising that the Bible offers some suggestions:

Seek out and emulate people who model holiness. Is there anyone you know who, in terms of wholeness, integrity, quality and similar virtues, could fit into the "holiness" category? If there is, try to spend time with that person, even pursue him or her as a mentor and teacher. Then seek to become like them and positively influence others. *"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me – put it into practice..."* (Philippians 4:9). *"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others"* (2 Timothy 2:2).

Pursue a different way of thinking. We work and live in settings where holiness seems an alien concept. The world around us wants to "press us into its mould." By a conscious act of the will, we can resist such pressure and strive for higher standards of thought and action. *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and apply what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will"* (Romans 12:2).

Appropriate the power to become a holy person. The Bible teaches those who have committed their lives to following Jesus Christ have been given new life, a new capacity to live in a way they could not previously. *"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"* (Ephesians 4:22-24).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

When you hear the words “holiness” or “holy,” what comes to mind? Have you ever encountered a person that you regarded as holy, or who displayed holiness in their life? If so, describe what that person is (or was) like.

Why do you think the term “holiness” has such an unfamiliar ring to it, especially when considered within the context of today's workplace?

If you are a follower of Jesus, have you experienced evidence of a new life, as the Bible describes it? Explain your answer. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, or are not certain, does the idea of gaining a new life spiritually – even to experience holiness – have appeal for you?

Would you like to one day be regarded as a holy person, a person that exhibited holiness, even in the marketplace? What do you think that would look like? How could you go about cultivating the qualities of holiness?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more consider the following passages:

John 15:1-17

Romans 6:4

2 Corinthians 5:17

Galatians 2:20

Philippians 4:13

Colossians 3:1-10