

## You Can't "Catch" Holiness

*d, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.*

—JOHN 11:41

Jesus giving thanks to God. When you pray, as Jesus did here, by saying, "I thank you, Father, for hearing me." One reason I encourage you to pray, when we know that God has heard our requests (SEE I JOHN 5:14-15), is that you may then go off wondering whether God will grant us what we have asked. The way to keep up the voice of thanksgiving (SEE

*Thus says the Lord of hosts: Ask now the priests to decide this question of law: If one carries in the skirt of his garment flesh that is holy [because it has been offered in sacrifice to God], and with his skirt or the flaps of his garment he touches bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any kind of food, does what he touches become holy [dedicated to God's service exclusively]? And the priests answered, No! [Holiness is not infectious.] Then said Haggai, If one who is [ceremonially] unclean because he has come in contact with a dead body should touch any of these articles of food, shall it be [ceremonially] unclean? And the priests answered, It shall be unclean. [Unholiness is infectious.]*

—HAGGAI 2:11-13

*Holiness* has been defined as "separation to God," a separation that should result in "conduct befitting those so separated." In the New Testament, the same Greek word translated *holiness* is also translated *sanctification*, which the Greek dictionary says "cannot be transferred or imputed." That means that holiness is an individual possession, one that is built up little by little. It can not be given to or taken from another person.

In other words, you and I cannot become holy by going through a prayer line or by having hands laid on us or by associating with someone else who is holy.

As we see in this passage from the Old Testament prophet Haggai, unholiness is infectious; holiness is not. What that means is that you and I can associate with someone who is living a sinful life, and that individual's sinfulness can rub off on us. We can catch it like a disease.

But holiness is not like that. It can't be picked up by contact or exposure; it has to be chosen on purpose.