

Yahweh M'Kaddesh
(The Lord Who Who Makes Holy)

Keep My statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sets you apart. - Leviticus 20:8 HCSB

At the village church in Kalonovka, Russia, attendance at Sunday school picked up after the priest started handing out candy. One of the most faithful attendees was a pug-nosed, pugnacious lad who recited his Scriptures piously, pocketed his reward, and then fled into the fields to munch on it. The priest took a liking to the boy and persuaded him to attend church school. This was preferable to doing household chores from which his devout parents excused him. By offering other inducements, the priest managed to teach the boy the four Gospels. In fact, he won a special prize for learning all four by heart and reciting them nonstop in church. 60 years later, he still liked to recite Scriptures, but in a context that would horrify the old priest. For the prize pupil, who memorized so much of the Bible, was Nikita Khrushchev, the former Communist Premier. As this anecdote illustrates, the "why" behind memorization is fully as important as the "what." The same Nikita Khrushchev who nimbly mouthed God's Word when a child, later declared God to be nonexistent -- because his cosmonauts had not seen Him. Khrushchev memorized the Scriptures for the candy, the rewards, the bribes, rather than for the meaning it had for his life. Artificial motivation will produce artificial results.

Did you notice in the verse above that we are to keep and obey God's laws, not in order to BECOME holy but because God is Yahweh M'Kaddesh (the Lord Who Makes Holy)?

At times I have been accused of preaching a doctrine of works – of preaching that one must do good works in order to get to heaven. I do not believe that at all. What I do believe is that if you are "saved" (by which I mean you have put all your trust and faith in the ability of Jesus' sacrifice to get you to heaven and decided to make Him your Master), you will inevitably work. In both cases, good works are being done, but the difference is in the motivation.

I have also been accused of being judgmental at times. But Christ said, "*Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are really wolves that will tear you apart. You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit.*"¹ You can tell a person is alive by what they DO. If I had a body lying down before me that did not speak, see, hear, smile, move, defecate or procreate, I would have a hard time believing that it was not a cadaver. A person who claims to be a Christian but does not understand the holiness of the Lord and react by keeping all His laws and obeying them will have a hard time being a convincing Christian.

¹ Matthew 7:15-16