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## A Holiness Check

### 2 Timothy 2:19b, 21b

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#### Marking the Mileposts

**Y**ou spent some time at the hospital this morning with your father-in-law who is close to death. As you drive home with your wife, you listen as she tearfully reminisces and marks his mileposts. This “looking back” leads you to a little introspection yourself.

You remember the time that you walked the city streets at night with your son, looking at the barely discernible figures of homeless folks under the street lights. You had explained to him the need to make a difference in this world. When his friends from school got caught popping tires one night, you had a long talk with him about choosing not to follow the wrong crowd. When he hung out with a group—a gang—that restricted kids from other races, you explained to him for hours that he was no better than they.

But was it all talk? Did you do anything, or model in any way, a man who changed the world? Did you actually reach out across racial boundaries to understand what others feel? Have you added anything of significance to this world, or to anyone else's life? If someone were marking *your* mileposts, what would stand out? Would there be one significant time when you determined to turn from sin and wrongdoing? Is your “lifeline” filled with lots of highs, lows, bouts with sin, or decisions against sin? These defining moments determine our entire lives.

#### Reflection

A new year presents the opportunity to review what you have done, and to look toward the future. Somewhere in the lifeline of the growing Christian is a defining decision toward holiness. Habits of unholiness that have been tolerated for years finally become intolerable, and you finally take responsibility to allow God to cleanse you.

A godly man makes a decision to turn away from evil and to seek cleansing and purity. First, he turns from evil; second, he stops doing evil by putting a final end to habits of unholiness; and third, he pursues righteousness in his heart and habits. Have you turned away from sin that holds you back from being holy? Or is the new year the time to start?

#### Accountability and Application

We tend to think holiness is just a matter of the heart. It isn't. It starts in the heart, but it must transform the habits.

How about a holiness check on yourself? In the past three years, what sinful areas in your life have you turned from? What areas in your life provide proof that you are indeed pursuing righteousness?

How can you commit to holiness in the new Year?

## 2 Timothy 2:19b, 21b

<sup>14</sup>Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

<sup>15</sup>Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

<sup>16</sup>But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, <sup>17</sup>and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

<sup>18</sup>men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

<sup>19</sup>Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

<sup>20</sup>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.

<sup>21</sup>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.

<sup>22</sup>Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

<sup>23</sup>But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, forgive my sinful habits. Cleanse me as I open myself to the work of your Spirit. Help me to turn from evil. Empower me by your Spirit to stop specific sinful habits. Strengthen me in my pursuit of holiness.*

