



Meredith Brock: We are so excited to have our friend and the bestselling author and speaker Jackie Hill Perry on the show today. And Jackie, since this is your first time on the show, I don't want to jump straight into business here, I want our listeners to get to know you a little bit. So I want to take a second and ask you a question. OK. A big group of our listeners are moms, I'm a mom, I've got three little kiddos, I know you're a mom and we have all been in the thick of this weird season of our kids at home all the time because of COVID and all the things. So on behalf of all the moms listening today, we would like to know, we know we're all doing it, we're all sneaking into the pantry and it's like sneaking the snack that you don't want your kids to see you eating because you know if they see you eating it, they're going to want some too. So what is your sneaky pantry snack of choice?

Jackie Hill Perry: This is really actually difficult for me to answer because I've been pregnant during both years of the pandemic. And so I'm just not really discriminatory in whatever it is I choose to eat, it's like, what's available at the time.

MB: I like that.

JHP: It could be the little crackers with the peanut butter, I'll go to those, it could be Rice Krispies Treats, it could be a bowl of dry cereal honestly, it could be baking a slice of sweet bread. So I don't know how to answer it except to say anything.

MB: Anything that's available that you can hide from your little's. Tell us the age range of kiddos that you have.

JHP: Six, three, 11 months.

Kaley Olson: Wow.

MB: And one on the way, am I right?

JHP: Yes. I'm almost seven months pregnant.

MB: Bless you, Jackie, bless you and your hips and your lower back. That's my prayer for you today.

Jackie Hill Perry: Thank you. I receive that.

KO: Oh my goodness. Well, Jackie, we hope that after we hop off this recording today that whatever snack fits your fancy later on, that you enjoy it and that you are rewarded for this teaching and this time that you've given to us. But let's get back to the real reason that you're here today, your new book *Holier*

Than Thou: How God's Holiness Helps Us Trust Him, hit the streets earlier this year in August. And we're so thankful that you took some time out of your schedule to come on the show and share a really special teaching with us today. And at Proverbs, we say all the time around here that our goal is to help women know the truth of God's Word and live out that truth. And I just can't think of a more fundamental teaching for us to get to absorb today from you that impacts our walk with the Lord. And so I'm excited to hear it, Meredith is excited to hear it. And so we want to turn the mic over to you and let you just talk.

JHP: All right, before we begin, I do think it's helpful to pray. I know we prayed already, but I would like to pray again. So, Father, we thank You for this time, we thank You for your Word, we thank You for Your Spirit, who helps us to understand it, helps us to take hold of it and helps us to believe it and apply it. And so, we pray God that You would use this short word to do mighty things, we pray all this in Your name. Amen. So I'll be walking through Isaiah 6, briefly from verse one to verse seven. So I'll just read it. It says, *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim each had six wings: with two he covered his face and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one call to one another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!' And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me for I'm lost, for I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!' And one of the seraphim flew to me having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips and your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'"*

I think this is a passage we all— depending on how long we've been in church— have heard and saw and read a lot. But I do think it's a passage that we should never treat as commonplace, primarily because it tells us something about the nature of God.

I think it's really important for us to have a theological, fundamental and true understanding about the nature of God, because we have so many critics, and so many books and so many TikTok videos, and even our passions and our circumstances that want to define God for us. And if their definitions are not true, then their definitions have a dark and demonic source. But also if, and when we allow them to define God for us, then we don't give God the room to define Himself. And so, I think it's very important that we become what we take heed to, what AW Tozer said, which is "what comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you." It isn't your gifting, it isn't simply your ministry, it isn't whatever identity that you embody on a daily basis, it's simply what is it that you think about God?

And so, I believe that if what comes into our minds, when we think about God, I think if it's void of His holiness, then there's a problem. It says that in a year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne. King Uzziah was a king in Judah for 52 years; 52 years is a really long time. Fifty-two years ago from today was 1969 and 1969, we had the Woodstock, we had the Stonewall riots, we had what's his name, walked on the moon, Neil Armstrong, you remember his name, my mother was 15 years old, 52 years is such an expansive amount of time and so much can happen. But even then, things must come to an end, including kings. And Isaiah says that it is in that same year, that King Uzziah dies, that he has a vision where he sees another king on a throne alive and well. You might say to yourself, what does this have to do with holiness?

Well, one thing about holiness that we have to understand is that holiness is not just that God is morally pure, that God is righteous, that God is sinless, but that also that God is transcendent, meaning He exists differently than us. The reason it is significant that Isaiah sees God on the throne alive and well means that God is not merely holy because He's alive, He's holy because He's always been alive. If you talk to

any child, they will ask you, "Hey, did God create me?" And you're like, yeah, "Did God create the world?" And you're like, yeah. And then they say, "Did God create us? Or who created God?" And then you're stuck and you don't know what to say. And the only biblical answer we can give is that no one created God, God exists because God exists. Which automatically sets Him apart from every single thing you have or will ever know because everything on earth and in heaven and in space has a beginning, is a derivative, is contingent, but it is only God who is sufficient and has a life within Himself.

That automatically helps us to see, oh, this being, we are dealing with, this person that Isaiah sees is completely different. And I think it's helpful to actually define holiness at this point, because I've given you both definitions in the midst of my exposition, but holiness is this, holiness comes from the root word to cut or to separate. And so when talking about holiness, all we're really talking about is the idea of separateness. So for example, Tony Evans gives this analogy about how in every house, there are two kinds of dishes. You have the regular dishes that you just eat chicken Alfredo on or applesauce, they're just not important. You got them from Hobby Lobby, Ross, TJ Max, Marshall's, you didn't spend a lot of money on them, you just throw them in the cabinet when you're done, this is no big deal. There's another set of dishes that only comes out during special occasions and you treat these dishes differently, you might've spent more money, you probably got these from Pottery Barn somewhere, or I don't know, West Elm, these dishes cost, these dishes have a level of investment in them.

And so, there are some people in some homes where when these dishes are used, you don't even put them back in the regular cabinets, you put them in a China cabinet that exists in a whole other place and a whole other side of the house, why? These dishes are separated from what is common. These dishes are separated from what is regular because these dishes, metaphorically speaking, are holy. So in talking about the holiness of God, we are not primarily talking about rules or wrath, hail and sin, damnation and judgment, we are talking about the fundamental idea that God is totally set apart from everything. And so Isaiah observes this, in the fact that God is eternal, that God is alive and well, that God will not die, that God has no beginning, that God has no end. And he notices that at the same time that this God is alive and well with the train of His robe filling the temple. He sees these creatures, and he calls them Seraphim.

Seraphim is translated as burning ones, so it's possible that these creatures look like inflamed beings with wings, which would quite frankly be terrifying if you saw them in person, but these angels are having a conversation or really singing a song, this is a hymn that we are seeing. They are singing a song about the nature of God, they call Him holy, holy, holy. It's important to know that they don't say holy ones, they don't say holy twice, but they say holy three times. And this is why, because in Hebrew literature, repetition is always used to emphasize something. So you see this in the New Testament, when Jesus would say truly, truly, or verily, verily, I say unto you, He would repeat himself to emphasize a statement. Depending on what kind of friends you have, if you've got a couple Black friends, you might've experienced that at one point, they might've met somebody that they think you remember. And they say, "Hey girl, I saw David," and you say, "David who?" And she says, "David, David," she repeats herself, she says the name again to interstice, to trigger a thought for you.

We don't even know, we thought we were being cultural, but we were actually being biblical the whole time. So to say that God is holy, holy, holy, to say His name to the third power is to say that God is not merely holy, but God is most holy. He is Supremely holy, He is completely holy, He is totally holy. But what is Isaiah's response to this vision? I think some of us, sometimes presume that if we were to have a vision of God, that if we were to enter into the throne room of God, our immediate response would be worship. But when Isaiah sees God, he doesn't join into the Seraphim's sprites, he doesn't lift up his hand and worship, he doesn't open up his mouth and give God glory, what actually happens is that as Isaiah

sees this vision of God, as the temple is shaking, as smoke enters the room, the only response Isaiah has in that moment is confession. And that's because God is not only set apart because He's transcendent, existing differently than us, but God is also set apart because He is morally pure, meaning He is completely righteous.

He is always ethical, He is morally superior, He is without spot, He is without wrinkle, He is without blemish. Imagine if you can, a being who can only do good, a being who could only be right, a being who could only think righteously, a being who has a clean heart and unblemished hands. Imagine a being with motives Satan can never influence; imagine a being whose behavior will never need torment; imagine a being who sounds too good to be true, but truly He is that good. And naturally then God's moral purity is so brilliant, so bright that in the presence of God, anything that is unlike Him automatically recognizes that they are unlike Him. And this is because in the Bible, it talks about how God is light, light is a metaphor for righteousness. And when we understand the function of light, we know that light illuminates, light shows us what's in the dark.

So, it's Isaiah stepping into the presence of the one who is light, where Isaiah finally actually sees what's been hidden this entire time, which is that he is a man of unclean lips who dwells in the midst of a people of unclean lips. But notice what he says, he says, "*Woe is me for I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.*" Before that he says, "*Woe is me for I am lost.*" I think the English doesn't really convey the full thrust of the Hebrew, which is for I am ruined, for I am destroyed. It's in the presence of almighty God, this transcendent, morally pure God that Isaiah not only recognizes his sinfulness, but he also recognizes the consequences that his sin deserves, which is judgment. Anytime we talk about holiness, we have to deal with the idea of justice because God has given us a law that if obeyed, we would be considered righteous too, we would be considered holy too. But because we break God's law by obligation of His moral nature and in His character, God is obligated to judge us.

But the funny thing is that even when Isaiah acknowledges his judgment, what comes in response isn't judgment, but mercy. Look at verse six, it says, "*Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And they touched my mouth and said, behold, this has touched your lips, your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.*" What makes this verse or these verses so amazing is that Isaiah never asked for it, he never said, "Hey God, can you atone for me?" Neither did he try to work himself into atonement? He didn't say, "Hey, I think I might be a prophet, how good can I be to atone for my sin? How many works can I do to atone for my sin?" We don't see him asking for atonement or working for atonement, but we see him receiving it anyway.

And I really believe that what is happening here is what happens to every woman who has repented and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that God initiated mercy on your behalf before you even asked Him to. And we know this by way of scripture, when it says, "*For while I was a sinner, Christ died for me,*" which is to say that even before you sin or before you need it or knew you needed a savior, God already did the work. God already did what He needed to do to secure your atonement. God already did what He had to do to make sure that you could be made right with God, that you could be made clean and set apart for godliness and for good works. To close, I just want to remind us of something or point something out rather, in John 12:41.

There's this really interesting statement that John says, I'm going to read it. He says that Isaiah saw His glory, speaking about Jesus and spoke of Him. And when you read that, you think, wait, Isaiah saw Jesus' glory and spoke of Him and it's odd because so often when we think about Isaiah 6, we think about the Father. But what John is saying is that what Isaiah saw was a pre-incarnate vision of the Lord, Jesus

Christ, which means that who he saw is the Lord that we call friend. Who he saw is the Lord that we call Savior. Who he saw is the Messiah. Who he saw is our King. Who he saw is our brother. And this God has the audacity to get up off His throne, come to sin, become a human, take on flesh and live a life of obedience unto death, even death on the cross so that it is at the name of Jesus that every man should bow and every knee should bow and every man confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

And so, what we see in Isaiah 6, is a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I think that should very much change how we look at, define and worship God. And so, I guess if I had to end by saying anything, it would be: That it is that God is holy. He is transcendent, He is morally pure, He is completely different than anything or anyone we have or will ever know. And because we were born after Adam, we were born very much unlike this God. But this God in His love and in His kindness, saw our situation and saw our position and knew we couldn't work our way into atonement. So He did what He had to do to secure, purely on the basis of mercy and purely on the basis of love for all that believe, that's it.

MB: Wow, Jackie. I know you've certainly given me and I know our listeners too, a lot to think about and digest because I think so often — and you have alluded to it. I think you alluded to it at the beginning of your teaching is that that word holiness gets thrown around in church circles and in Sunday school and hymns and worship songs and we don't really know the weight of it, and what it means in our lives. It's this churchy word, and you don't really use it anywhere else other than in church contexts. And I think the way that you have unpacked it, I think for a lot of our listeners, we have a lot of listeners that are new to church and then we have ones that have been in church before they were born. And so there's this, I think a wide swath of people hearing this for the first time going, “I've never thought about this like this before”.

And one of the things you said right at the top of your teaching was that AW Tozer quote of what comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you. And it gave me pause because I thought, OK, what are some of the things I think incorrectly about God? What are some of the things that I, or our listeners might be thinking about God? And what do you do with that when you have identified, OK, my thinking about who God is, maybe because you've made Him too small because He's still the felt bored Jesus story time from Sunday school, or maybe you've made Him this awful, terrible, God that is not good to you. What do you do with those thoughts Jackie? Help our listeners know, maybe if they had that moment like I did like, wow, where am I thinking about incorrectly about God and what do I do with that?

JHP: Yeah. I mean, our imperfection isn't just in our behavior, but also in our thinking patterns and so no one thinks perfectly about God. I think the good news is that God has given us His Word so that we can. And so I think one practical, I guess, application of wisdom is not just to say, what is it that I'm thinking about God and identifying what is wrong, but why? Because I do think that there's always a possibility that my thinking about God is shaped by what I consume most. And so could it be that my understanding and definitions of God are being shaped by the culture more than they're being shaped by the scriptures? Or could it be that my definitions of God are being shaped by my affections more than they're being shaped by the scriptures? Because our feelings will tell us to define God a certain way. “Oh, life is terrible so God must be bad, or God must not hear me.” And it's like, whoa, your feelings are telling you that, Jesus did not reveal that though.

MB: That's right. That's good.

JHP: I think the emphasis is don't shame yourself, praise God that you came to the knowledge of your heart. Like I say I did, get in the Bible, do the work and believe what you see.

MB: That's good. Kaley, I know you had a thought too you wanted to share.

KO: Yeah, definitely. Well, Jackie, I'm thinking about the subtitle of your book, *How God's Holiness Helps Us Trust Him* and I loved hearing from you today unpack what God's holiness is, but I couldn't get out of my head, trust comes into play. It's like this thing that we know that we trust God, but our trust is put on the line when we go through something really hard. Like for anybody, I mean, you could be like me and have suffered a miscarriage last year, that makes trust hard. Or you could be a mom who has a kid that's not talking to you right now or your husband could have... There's so many things right now that people are going through that their trust is on the line with the Lord because they hear that He's holy and that He can do no wrong, but they feel so wronged right now.

And so, I don't know what this has looked like for you, but when we question God's holiness, when we are going through seasons, where we feel like our trust is broken, how does this holiness inform your trust with the Lord in the situations that you've been in? And what are maybe some of the things that you've had to reorient in your mind in those dark seasons?

JHP: Great question. Let me say something from scripture first and then share my perspective, which is I started to see this connection between holiness and our trust when I was in Jeremiah 2. And God is speaking to Israel and He said, "*What wrong have you found in me that you left me and went after worthlessness?*" I was like, whoa. And then I saw it again in John 6, when Jesus speaking to Israel says, "*Can any of you convict me of sin? If not, why don't you believe me?*" And in both circumstances, you see God basically esteeming or bringing to light His moral purity as the reason why He's worthy of their faith. And I think when we bring that back into our life, the thing is that what we go through really does have a strong influence on what we believe. So, for example, even if you look at the disciples, when they were in the ship and they felt like the ship was about to sink, what was the first thing that they accused God of?

Don't you care that we're going to die? Where it's like their circumstances made them question the compassion of God. And so I think for me, I've really had to fight and wrestle with, I have to believe that God's Word is true, even if it contradicts how I feel, because my circumstances and my trials are always changing. And if I am defining God based on what I go through, then God's character is going to be all over the place for me, therefore my peace is, therefore my hope is. But if I anchor myself in the fact that God does not change, that God is a compassionate, God, slow to anger. That God is faithfulness, that God is good, that God is wise, that God is perfect, that God can't even lie to me. I really do think even if our circumstances don't change, at least we have peace in the midst of that.

KO: Wow. That's something that I know I need to chew on. And I feel like with what we learned about holiness and just hearing what you just said in the midst of everybody right now in their own seasons of life, walking in their hard circumstances, what truth to root ourselves in. Like you said, we can't anchor ourselves based on our situations, we have to anchor our hope and our faith and our trust in the truth of who God says He is. So thank you so much for coming on the show today, Jackie, and sharing this with us. And we did mention your book earlier at the top of the show and I want to take a moment to point our listeners back to it again, because I do think it's such a great resource as just something pivotal in your faith.

And so, Jackie's newest release *Holier Than Thou*, walks us through scripture and helps us understand what holiness is, like she talked about in her teaching today. It's really a foundational concept in our relationship with the Lord. And we want you guys to dig into this book and you can get your copy today, anywhere books are sold and we've linked it for you in the show notes at proverbs31.org/listen.

MB: And lastly friends, we want to invite you to our last online Bible study of the year. Earlier this year, our team sat around and took a look at the whole calendar and said, you know what? We want to dig into Advent and study it this year. So, we will be doing exactly that, that study starts mid-November and

registration is absolutely free. So join us by visiting Proverbs31.org/study to find out more or go to our show notes and you can sign up there.

KO: All right, friends, that's all for today. Thank you so much for joining us for this episode at Proverbs 31 Ministries, we believe when you know the truth of God's word and live out that truth it changes everything.