

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Called to Be Holy (1 Peter 1:13-25)

In the previous lesson we read of the hope that is a part of the life of the Christian as he looks forward to a great inheritance and an eternal salvation because of the resurrection of the living Lord. Even though a Christian may suffer like Peter's original readers, he is assured that something better is coming and this hope helps to sustain the Christian.

Key Verse



1 Peter 1:15

“but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”

In verse 13, Peter begins with the word “therefore” and this word always alerts us that what is coming is built upon what is past. We have this great and abiding hope therefore . . . we need to live holy lives.

As a preface to the call to holiness, Peter calls upon self-discipline in the life of the Christian. In verse 13 he writes, ***“preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ . . .”***

Our modern English translators have tried to make the first phrase in verse 13, a bit easier to understand. The literal translation is: “wherefore girding up the loins of your mind” which pictures a first century man whose long garment could be pulled and tucked under the belt. This exposed the legs and allowed one to run faster or work without hinderance. The mind is the seat of intellect and guides and directs our conduct.

1. Why does Peter use the word “action” in verse 13?

Being sober-minded tells us that God expects us to have complete clarity of mind so that we are not distracted by sin.

2. Why is the word “fully” important in verse 13?

The remainder of this section of 1 Peter is centred on being holy. We will use 1 Peter 1:15 as our key verse. We are called to be holy because God is holy.

What Does Holiness Mean for the Christian?

Before we list all the ways Peter describes holy living for the Christian, we should make some attempt to define holiness. The Old Testament word for holy probably comes from the Hebrew word *qadosh* which means to separate or divide.¹

¹ Cottrell, Jack. *The Faith Once for All: Bible Doctrine for Today*. College Press: Joplin, MO, 2002, p. 338.

In the New Testament the word for holiness is the Greek word *hagios*. As in the Old Testament it carries the idea of being set apart or being consecrated to God. Holiness describes a life that is separated from the world and given to God. To be holy we should abhor sin and love righteousness.

Peter now goes on to describe a number of aspects of holiness:

- A. **Holiness is based on a new relationship.** God is now our father (v. 14, 17); other Christians are our brothers (v22).
- B. **Holiness brings a change in lifestyle** (vss 14-15) Our conduct (or way of living especially in how we interact with others) is to be holy.



3. Describe the lifestyle of Peter's original readers before coming to Christ? (v. 14)

- C. **Holiness is essential since it is commanded in Scripture.** "Written is literally 'it stands written.' The word used in Greek literature of legal documents" that continued to be in force.²
- D. **Holiness is based on the nature of God** (v. 16). God is our father and we are to imitate him as best we are able. (See Leviticus 19:2) People want to measure themselves by one another or by people they see as "less good" than themselves. Verse 16 clearly teaches that we should measure our conduct with a holy God.
- E. **We live holy lives because we fear God who is judge** (v. 17)

4. What is meant by the phrase, "conduct yourselves with fear?"

5. Is anyone but God able to judge impartially? Why or why not?

6. What criteria does God use in his judgment?

7. How is his judgment related to his grace?

8. What is meant by the word exile in verse 17?

² Smith, James R. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 29.

Christians have the great privilege of calling upon God (v. 17). We are able to approach God in prayer as his children. We can petition him for those things that we need and can appeal to him as our Father. Still, God expects and demands holy living. His judgements are impartial which both encourages us and causes us to have a great deal of fear or respect for God. While God's grace is essential for our salvation and we cannot be saved by any amount of works, God expects (even demands) obedience from his children. Those who constantly rebel place themselves in a dangerous position before God. (Also see Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-30)

F. We live holy lives because of the futility of unholy living (v. 18)

9. What is the meaning of “futile” and why does Peter describe the previous life of his first readers as futile?

10. Describe the contrast between the inheritance of verse 18 and the inheritance of verse 4.

G. We live holy lives because of the high cost that was paid for our ransom (v. 18-19)

In New Testament times it was common for a prisoner or slave to buy his freedom by providing a “ransom.” We might also say that this person had been redeemed. These redemptions could be costly as measured by silver or gold, but our ransom cost the very blood of Christ. Like the Passover Lambs during the Mosaic Age which must have been without spot or blemish, Jesus who was sacrificed for our sin was without any spot or blemish of sin. (See also John 1:29)



H. We live holy lives because redemption was a part of God's original intent (v. 20)

God had foreknowledge of our sin and the necessity of the sacrifice of his Son from the beginning. Beyond that Jesus has always existed (v. 20), but was “made manifest” or made known in these last times. The phrase “*for the sake of you*” tells us that Jesus came so that Gentiles could be incorporated into the people of God.

I. We live holy lives because of the resurrection (v. 21)

11. How was Christ given glory? (v. 21)

J. Holy people love one another (v. 22)

12. Describe the kind of love Christians should have for one another. (v. 22)

K. Holy people have been born of imperishable seed (v. 22)

Peter is alluding to the new birth that he already spoken about in 1:3. In our human bodies we are born through the seed of man, but our new birth comes through the eternal and imperishable Son of God.

13. What role does the Word of God play in our new birth? (v. 23)

K. We live holy lives because our life in the flesh is temporary while the word of God endures forever. (vss. 24-25) -- See also Isaiah 40:6-8

L. We live holy lives because the good news has been preached to us (v. 25)

14. List three practical applications from 1 Peter 1:13-25.