

The Books of 1 and 2 Peter, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 2: Be Holy; Ransomed by Precious Blood

1 Peter 1:13–25

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

First Peter 1:13–25 makes the great turn of the letter, from indicative to imperative, from what God has done to how the redeemed now live. The doctrinal weight here gathers around three pillars: the nature and ground of holiness, the meaning of redemption by the blood of Christ, and the new birth “through the living and abiding word of God.” Be ready to show that holiness is not earned standing but grateful resemblance, that the ransom language exposes both the gravity of sin and the immeasurable value of Christ, and that the new birth comes through the gospel word received in obedient faith, not through a private inner experience detached from response. Verse 22 in particular ties the purifying of the soul to “obedience to the truth,” which is exactly how our heritage reads the plan of salvation: the gospel heard, believed, obeyed.

Yet Peter is not assembling a systematic theology; he is forming pilgrims. Every doctrine here is bent toward the heart. Holiness is framed as the family likeness of children who know their Father. Redemption is framed as a price that should make a ransomed person live differently. The imperishable seed is framed as the secret of a love that is earnest and pure. Help students feel the warmth in the word holy, which we have too often left cold, and let the price of their redemption produce not guilt but grateful, wholehearted obedience.

So aim to send students home both clearer and softer: clearer about what holiness is and what their redemption cost, and softer toward one another, because people born of the same imperishable seed are family. The disciple we are forming is a freed prisoner who has read the receipt, knows the price, and now lives like someone who will never get over it.

Question 1

Student Question:

Peter begins, “Therefore, 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” (v. 13). How does the hope Peter described in verses 1–12 become the foundation for the way of life he now calls for, and what does it mean to set your hope “fully” on coming grace?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Start with the hinge word “therefore.” Peter never gives a command without first giving a gift; the ethics of verse 13 grow directly out of the grace of verses 1 to 12. This is the gospel pattern everywhere in the New Testament: we are not made holy in order to be loved; we are loved, and that love makes us holy.

Unpack the three pictures in verse 13. “Preparing your minds for action” renders a phrase about gathering up a long robe and tucking it into the belt so a person can run or work without tripping. Peter is calling for mental readiness, a tucked-up mind, alert and ready. “Being sober-minded” calls for clear-eyed seriousness rather than intoxication with the world’s distractions. Both lead to the main verb: “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you.”

Note the word “fully.” Many believers set their hope partly on coming grace and partly on a backup plan of their own making. Peter wants the whole weight of our hope resting on what Christ will bring at His revelation. A divided hope produces a divided life; a fully fixed hope steadies everything else.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gospel order of grace before command (indicative before imperative)
- Hope in future grace as the engine of present holiness
- Mental readiness and sober-mindedness as spiritual disciplines
- Christ’s revelation (His return) as the focus of Christian hope

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between hoping partly in Christ and hoping fully in Christ?
- What does a “tucked-up,” ready mind look like in your week?
- How does keeping the return of Christ in view change today’s decisions?

Question 2

Student Question:

Peter contrasts the “passions of your former ignorance” with the obedient, holy life (v. 14). Where do you still feel the pull of an old passion or pattern from your life before Christ, and what would genuine obedience look like in that exact place?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question presses on the gap between our new identity and our old reflexes. Peter assumes that conversion does not instantly erase the grooves worn by years of “former ignorance.” The Christian life is partly the slow re-grooving of a heart that still drifts toward old passions.

Help students name the old pattern specifically. Vague confession changes nothing. Whether it is anger, lust, envy, dishonesty, or the quiet idols of approval and control, the truth comes free only when it is named. Peter’s phrase “do not be conformed” implies an active resistance, a daily refusal to slide back into the mold.

Then point to the power for change. Peter does not say “try harder to be ignorant of your passions.” He says be conformed instead to the One who called you, holy in all your conduct.

Obedience in the exact place of temptation, repeated and grace-fueled, is how the old passion loses its grip.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Sanctification as ongoing transformation, not instant perfection
- The active resistance implied in “do not be conformed” (Romans 12:2)
- Naming sin specifically as a step toward freedom
- Obedience in the place of temptation as the path of growth

Discussion Prompts

- Which old passion still has the most pull on you, and when is it strongest?
- What would obedience look like at the exact moment of that pull?
- Who could walk with you for accountability in that area?

Question 3

Student Question:

Peter quotes God’s ancient command, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (vv. 15–16). What does holiness actually mean here, and why does Peter root the call to holiness in the character of God rather than in mere rule-keeping?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Define holiness clearly. At its root the word means to be set apart, devoted, distinct. God is holy in that He is utterly other, pure, and uncorrupted. To be called holy is to be set apart for Him and to begin to share His character. Peter quotes Leviticus to show that this is not a new demand but the heartbeat of God for His people across both covenants.

Stress why Peter grounds holiness in God’s character rather than in rules. A rule-keeper measures himself against a list and either despairs or grows proud. A child who knows his Father measures himself against a Person he loves and wants to resemble. Holiness is therefore relational before it is regulatory. We are holy because He is holy, and because we belong to Him.

Keep it warm and concrete. Holiness “in all your conduct” reaches into speech, money, sexuality, the way we treat people who can do nothing for us, the way we behave when no one is watching. It is not retreat from the world into a religious bubble; it is a distinct way of living in the ordinary world that makes the holiness of God visible.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Holiness as being set apart for God and sharing His character
- The continuity of God’s call to holiness across both covenants
- Holiness as relational (family likeness) before it is merely regulatory

- The reach of holiness into all of life, not just religious activity

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you most often reduce holiness to mere rule-keeping?
- How does seeing God as Father change the way you pursue holiness?
- In what ordinary arena of life is God calling you to be visibly distinct?

Question 4

Student Question:

Peter says to conduct yourselves “with fear throughout the time of your exile” (v. 17). What does a healthy, reverent fear of God look like in daily life, and where might your own walk with God have grown too casual?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Modern ears flinch at “fear,” so clarify it. The fear Peter commands is not terror that God is out to destroy us; it is reverent awe before a holy Father who is also the impartial Judge of everyone’s work. It is the fear that keeps a beloved child from treating a good father with contempt.

Notice that this reverence is to mark “the time of your exile.” Because we are passing through, and because the One who redeemed us is also the One who judges impartially, we walk carefully. Reverent fear and joyful hope are not opposites in Peter; they are companions. The same letter that overflows with hope also says, conduct yourselves with fear.

Apply it to the drift toward casualness. A reverent walk takes sin seriously, takes worship seriously, takes the Word seriously, and refuses the easy familiarity that turns grace into a license. Ask students where their walk has grown careless, and let reverent fear restore a holy seriousness without crushing their joy.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The fear of God as reverent awe, not cringing terror (Proverbs 9:10)
- God as impartial Judge of every person’s work
- The compatibility of reverent fear and confident hope
- Reverence as a guard against cheapening grace

Discussion Prompts

- How would you explain a healthy fear of God to a new Christian?
- Where has casual familiarity crept into your walk with God?
- How can reverence and joy grow together rather than crowd each other out?

Question 5

Student Question:

Peter says we were ransomed “not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (vv. 18–19). What does the language of ransom and the spotless lamb teach about the seriousness of sin and the cost of our redemption?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The word “ransomed” comes from the marketplace and the slave block. A ransom is the price paid to set a captive free. Peter says the captives were us, the captivity was a futile way of life, and the price was not silver or gold but “the precious blood of Christ.” Let the contrast land: the most valuable currency the world knows is dismissed as “perishable” next to the blood of the Son of God.

The phrase “a lamb without blemish or spot” reaches back to the Passover and the sacrificial system. Only a flawless lamb could be offered; only a sinless Savior could redeem. This exposes the seriousness of sin. Sin is not a small debt cleared by a small payment or by our own improvement. It required the lifeblood of the spotless Lamb of God (John 1:29).

Draw the practical line Peter intends. A person who knows the price of his freedom does not return casually to the slavery he was bought out of. The cost of redemption is meant to produce a holy life, not by guilt but by grateful wonder. We were not cheaply bought; we will not live cheaply.

Connect redemption to the way we lay hold of it. The blood of Christ is applied to us as we obey the gospel; we contact His death in baptism, being buried and raised with Him (Romans 6:3–4), and we walk in the cleansing that His blood provides as we walk in the light (1 John 1:7). Redemption is accomplished by Christ alone and received in the obedience of faith.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Redemption as a ransom paid by Christ’s blood, not by human merit or money
- Christ as the spotless Passover Lamb (Exodus 12; John 1:29)
- The gravity of sin revealed by the cost of redemption
- The blood of Christ applied through the obedience of faith and the walk in the light (Romans 6:3–4; 1 John 1:7)
- Gratitude, not guilt, as the proper motive of the redeemed life

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Peter call silver and gold “perishable” next to the blood of Christ?
- What does the spotless lamb image teach about how God views sin?

- How should knowing the price of your freedom change the way you live this week?

Question 6

Student Question:

Peter says this redemption frees us from “the futile ways inherited from your forefathers.” What is one inherited way of living, a family pattern, a cultural habit, a default reaction, that you most need Christ’s ransom to break in you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question makes redemption personal and present. Peter says we were ransomed from “futile ways inherited from your forefathers.” Sin is often handed down, not just chosen; we inherit patterns of anger, addiction, prejudice, anxiety, and pride from the families and cultures that formed us.

Help students see that the gospel breaks generational chains. The blood that ransomed us is strong enough to free us from patterns we did not even choose. This is hopeful news for anyone weary of repeating a parent’s failures. The cycle is not destiny; the ransomed are free to live a new way.

Push toward one concrete pattern. Ask each student to name a single inherited default, a reaction, a habit, a way of speaking to a spouse or child, and to bring it deliberately under the lordship of Christ this week. Freedom becomes real when it gets specific.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Redemption as freedom from inherited and habitual sin patterns
- The gospel’s power to break generational cycles
- Personal responsibility to walk in the freedom Christ bought
- Sanctification as the steady replacing of old defaults with Christlike ones

Discussion Prompts

- What pattern did you inherit that you most want Christ to break in you?
- How have you seen the gospel interrupt a cycle in your own family or life?
- What new way of responding could replace the old default this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

Peter says Christ “was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you” (v. 20). What does it mean that the cross was no emergency

measure but God's plan from before creation, and how does that shape the way you understand your own salvation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verse 20 lifts the cross out of time. Christ "was foreknown before the foundation of the world." The death of Jesus was not God's scramble to fix an unforeseen disaster; it was His plan before the first star was lit. This dignifies our salvation and steadies our confidence: we are part of something God purposed before creation.

Hold this together with last week's lesson on foreknowledge. The point is not an arbitrary decree about individuals but a settled, eternal plan to save through Christ all who would come to Him. The plan is fixed; the invitation is open. God knew before the world began that He would redeem a people by the blood of His Son.

Note Peter's tender phrase, "made manifest in the last times for the sake of you." The eternal plan has a personal address. The Christ planned before creation was revealed for the sake of these scattered, ordinary believers, and for us. Cosmic scope and intimate love meet at the cross.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The cross as God's eternal plan, not an emergency measure (Acts 2:23; Ephesians 1:4)
- God's foreknowledge and sovereign purpose to save through Christ
- The personal address of salvation ("for the sake of you")
- The unity of God's purpose across creation and redemption

Discussion Prompts

- How does knowing the cross was planned before creation steady your faith?
- What does it mean to you that this eternal plan was "for the sake of you"?
- How do cosmic scope and personal love meet for you at the cross?

Question 8

Student Question:

Peter says that having purified your souls by obedience to the truth, you should "love one another earnestly from a pure heart" (v. 22). How earnest and how pure is your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ right now, and where is God calling you to love more deeply or more honestly?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter draws a striking line from purity to love: "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart." A purified

soul is not meant to be admired in private; it is meant to overflow in earnest love for the family of God.

Examine the two qualifiers. Love is to be “earnest,” literally stretched out, strenuous, the opposite of casual. And it is to come “from a pure heart,” free of pretense, grudge, and self-interest. Peter is not asking for polite church manners but for the kind of love that costs something and means it.

Make it concrete in the local congregation. Earnest love forgives quickly, bears with the difficult, shows up in trouble, speaks the truth kindly, and refuses gossip. Ask students where their love for a specific brother or sister has gone cool or pretended, and what one act of earnest, honest love is being required of them now.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The link between a purified soul and love for the brethren (1 John 4:7–21)
- Obedience to the truth as the means of purifying the soul
- Love as earnest and sincere, not casual or pretended
- The local church as the arena of practiced love

Discussion Prompts

- Where has your love for a brother or sister grown cool or merely polite?
- What does “earnest” love require that ordinary niceness does not?
- Toward whom is God calling you to a more honest, pure-hearted love?

Question 9

Student Question:

Peter says we “have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God,” and then contrasts withering grass with the word that “remains forever” (vv. 23–25). How does this passage describe the means of the new birth, and what does it teach about the place of God’s word, and the gospel of obedient faith, in our salvation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal high point of the lesson, so give it room. Peter says we “have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.” The instrument of the new birth is the gospel word. The seed that produces the new life is the message about Christ, planted in a heart that receives it.

Connect this firmly to how salvation is received. Peter is explicit at the end of the passage: “this word is the good news that was preached to you.” The new birth is not a mystical event independent of the gospel; it comes through the gospel heard and obeyed. James says the same, that God “brought us forth by the word of truth” (James 1:18), and Paul says faith comes

by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). The Word is preached, the hearer believes, repents, confesses, and is baptized, and God gives the new birth through that living seed.

Press the contrast Peter draws from Isaiah. “All flesh is like grass... The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” Everything the world offers is grass: beauty, strength, reputation, empires. The word that gave us new birth is the one thing that will not wither. To be born of imperishable seed is to be planted in the one reality that outlasts the universe.

Guard against two errors. Against the idea that the new birth is a private inner zap with no gospel content, insist that it comes “through the word.” Against the idea that the Word is a dead letter, insist with Peter that it is “living and abiding,” powerful to create life in those who obey it. Salvation is by grace, through a faith that hears and obeys the imperishable word.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The new birth through the living and abiding word of God (James 1:18)
- The gospel word as the imperishable seed that produces new life
- Salvation received by hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel (Romans 10:17; Acts 2:38)
- The permanence of God’s word against the withering of all flesh (Isaiah 40:6–8)
- The Word as living and powerful, not a dead letter (Hebrews 4:12)

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Peter tie the new birth so closely to the word that was preached?
- What does it change to know you were born of seed that will never wither?
- How should the permanence of God’s word shape what you build your life on?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole passage. Peter moves from hope, to holiness, to the costly ransom, to a new birth through the abiding word, to earnest love. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through these verses. What single truth from 1 Peter 1:13–25 do you most need to carry into this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Gather the threads of the lesson. Peter has moved from hope to holiness, from the costly ransom to the eternal plan, from a purified soul to earnest love, and finally to a new birth through the word that lasts forever. The whole passage answers one question: how should a ransomed, reborn pilgrim live?

Ask for one specific point of formation. The danger after a rich passage is to feel generally moved and change nothing. Press students to name the single truth they will carry and one concrete way it will touch their week.

Close on the note Peter strikes: people are grass, but you have been planted in something imperishable. Send students out steadied by the permanence of what holds them, and warmed by the price that was paid to make them holy.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The integration of doctrine and daily obedience
- Holiness, redemption, and the new birth as one woven reality
- The Word as the means God uses to form the disciple

Discussion Prompts

- Which single truth from this passage do you most need this week?
- Where do you sense Jesus forming you through 1 Peter 1:13-25?
- What is one concrete way the price of your redemption will shape a choice this week?