

1 Peter

Week 2: Called to Holiness -- 1 Peter 1:13–25

There is a moment, somewhere in the middle of a long journey, when a traveler has to decide what to do with the road still ahead. The first burst of excitement is gone. The destination is not yet in sight. This is the moment when many people drift, settle, or quietly give up. Peter has just lifted the eyes of his scattered readers to a living hope and an inheritance kept in heaven. Now, with one small word, he turns them back toward the road. “Therefore,” he writes. Because all of that is true, here is how you now live.

What follows is one of the great summons of the New Testament. “As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” Holiness can sound like a cold word, the property of stained glass and stern faces. But in Peter’s hands it is warm and personal. It is the family resemblance of people who have been born again into the household of a holy God. It is what love looks like when it grows up. Peter is not asking these believers to earn anything. He is asking them to become, in their daily conduct, what they already are in Christ.

Peter knows the pull of the old life. He writes of “the passions of your former ignorance,” the habits and cravings these believers carried before they met Christ. He knows how heavy those chains can feel, and how expensive freedom is. So he reminds them of the price that was paid: not silver or gold, but the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or spot. You were not redeemed with pocket change, Peter says. You were bought with blood. Live like people who know what you cost.

By the end of the passage Peter brings us to the seed that gives this new life its staying power: “the living and abiding word of God.” Flowers fade, grass withers, empires fall, but the word of the Lord remains forever, and it is this word that gave you new birth. So read these verses as a person on a journey, somewhere past the beginning and not yet at the end, and let Peter point you forward. The God who called you is holy, and He is calling you upward, into His own likeness, one obedient day at a time.

Group Discussion: Peter tells his readers, “As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (vv. 15–16). In a culture that often treats holiness as old-fashioned or even unkind, what do people commonly misunderstand about it? What does genuine, Christlike holiness actually look like in everyday life?

Personal Reflection: Peter speaks of “the passions of your former ignorance” that once shaped his readers’ lives (v. 14). What is one old pattern, habit, or attitude from your life before Christ, or from a less faithful season, that still tugs at you? What would it look like to bring that specific area under the holiness God is calling you to?

Study Questions

1. Peter commands, “As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (vv. 15–16). What does it mean that God is holy, and why does Peter ground our call to holiness in the character of God rather than in a list of rules?
2. Peter says, “Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance” (v. 14). Name one specific desire or habit from your past, or from a careless season, that still pulls at you. What would it look like this week to refuse to be shaped by it and to be shaped instead by Christ?
3. Peter writes that 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 this teach about the seriousness of sin and the cost of our redemption, and why does Peter call Christ a lamb “without blemish”?
4. Peter says we were ransomed “from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers” (v. 18). Where have you simply inherited a way of living, thinking, or reacting, perhaps from family or culture, without ever asking whether it fits a person redeemed by the blood of Christ? What needs to change?
5. Peter calls his readers to “prepare your minds for action” and to be “sober-minded,” setting their hope “fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 13). What does it mean to set our hope “fully” on future grace, and how does the return of Christ shape the way a Christian thinks and lives now?
6. Peter urges his readers to be “sober-minded” and mentally ready for action (v. 13). Where is your own mind most undisciplined or distracted right now, in ways that dull your hope and weaken your walk? What is one practical step toward the alert, hope-filled mind Peter describes?
7. Peter says that we call on God as Father, who “judges impartially according to each one’s deeds,” and so we should “conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile” (v. 17). How do we hold together the truth that God is our loving Father and the truth that He judges our deeds, and what kind of “fear” is Peter describing?
8. Peter calls his readers to “love one another earnestly from a pure heart,” since they have been purified by obeying the truth (v. 22). Think honestly about your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Where is your love more polite than earnest, or more guarded than pure? What would earnest, heartfelt love cost you this week?
9. Peter says, “You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God” (v. 23), and then quotes Isaiah that “the word of the Lord remains forever” (vv. 24–25). What does this teach about the new birth, the power and permanence of God’s word, and the place of Scripture in the life of the Christian and the church?

10. Look back over the whole passage. Peter calls redeemed people to holy conduct, disciplined hope, reverent living, and earnest love, all flowing from the imperishable word that gave them new life. Name one specific way you sense Jesus calling you toward holiness through these verses. What is the single truth from 1 Peter 1:13–25 you most need to carry into this week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Leviticus 11:44–45, the original call to “be holy, for I am holy”; Romans 12:1–2, presenting ourselves to God and refusing to be conformed to the world; Ephesians 1:7, redemption through the blood of Christ; Hebrews 12:14, pursuing the holiness without which no one will see the Lord; James 1:18, brought forth by the word of truth