

Rooted: Core Truths, Teacher's Guide

Week 6: Holiness and Daily Conduct

1 Peter 1:13–21

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson takes up a core truth of the Christian life that our age has largely lost: the call to holiness. In 1 Peter 1:13–21, Peter commands believers to “be holy in all (their) conduct,” grounding the call in the very character of God, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” He frames holiness with hope set on Christ’s return, a decisive break with the passions of the old life, reverent fear before a Father who judges deeds impartially, and the priceless ransom paid in the blood of Christ. A great deal is at stake doctrinally. The teacher should help students see that holiness is not optional or peripheral but essential, that it flows from grace rather than earning it, and that it must be guarded from the twin distortions of legalism and license. The passage also touches the sober reality that God “judges impartially according to each one’s deeds,” which means a believer’s conduct genuinely matters and that grace is never a license to sin. Holiness is the natural shape of a redeemed life, not a payment for redemption.

This doctrine is intensely formative, which is exactly how Peter uses it. He does not discuss holiness in the abstract; he aims it straight at daily conduct, at minds, desires, habits, and the way believers live as exiles in a watching world. Many Christians keep their faith in a Sunday compartment while the rest of the week looks little different from the surrounding culture. Others have wearied themselves trying to earn God’s love by their performance. The truth that we have been ransomed by the precious blood of Christ, and are now called to live as holy children of a holy Father, speaks to both. The teacher’s task is to let this doctrine do its forming work, calling students to a holiness that is neither cold legalism nor cheap grace, but the grateful, reverent, whole-life response of the redeemed.

So aim at both targets. Send students home with a clear understanding of what holiness is, why it matters, how it flows from redemption, and how to avoid both legalism and license. And send them home actually intending to live differently, more like their Father, in some concrete area of daily conduct. The disciple we are forming is one who remembers the price that was paid for them and longs, out of love and reverence, to be holy as the One who called them is holy.

Question 1

Student Question:

Peter writes, “as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,” quoting God’s own words, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (vv. 15–16). What does it mean to be holy, and why does Peter ground the call to holiness in the holiness of God Himself?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin by defining holiness rightly, because the word is so often misunderstood. At its root, to be holy is to be set apart, distinct, belonging to God and reflecting His character. God is holy in that He is utterly separate from all evil, pure, and wholly good. When God calls His people to be holy, He is calling them to belong to Him and to bear His likeness, to be set apart from sin and set apart for Him. Holiness is not first about rules; it is about reflecting the character of the God to whom we belong.

Notice where Peter grounds the call: not in our effort or in a list of regulations, but in the character of God Himself. “As he who called you is holy, you also be holy,” quoting Leviticus, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” The standard of Christian conduct is not the culture around us, not our own preferences, and not even comparison with other believers. The standard is the holiness of God. We are to be holy because He is holy, and because we are His children, called to resemble our Father.

Help students feel that this is both higher and warmer than they expected. Higher, because the bar is God’s own character, not merely being a decent person or better than average. Warmer, because the call comes from a Father to His children, an invitation to family resemblance rather than a cold demand from a distant lawgiver. We are not striving to become acceptable to a stranger; we are growing to look like the Father who has already made us His own.

Address the fear that holiness is unreachable. No one becomes holy by sheer willpower or overnight, and Peter knows it. But the call is real, and God supplies what He commands, working holiness in His people over time. The teacher can reassure students that the call to holiness is not a setup for failure but a summons to become, increasingly, what we already are in Christ: a people set apart for God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Holiness as being set apart for God and reflecting His character
- God’s own holiness as the standard, not culture, preference, or comparison
- The call to holiness as family resemblance, from a Father to His children
- Holiness as both higher (God’s character) and warmer (a family call) than expected
- Holiness as God’s ongoing work in His people, not mere willpower

Discussion Prompts

- What does it actually mean to be holy?
- Why does Peter ground the call to holiness in the character of God?
- How does seeing holiness as family resemblance change the way you hear the command?

Question 2

Student Question:

Peter says holiness is to mark “all your conduct,” not just our religious activities. Where in your daily life is there a gap between what you profess and how you actually behave? Name one specific area of conduct that you have been treating as off-limits to God’s call to holiness.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses Peter’s phrase “in all your conduct” into the specifics of daily life. Peter does not restrict holiness to worship or religious activity; he extends it to everything, our words, our work, our appetites, our money, our private habits, the way we treat people when no one is watching. The aim of this question is to expose, honestly and without shame, the gap between Sunday profession and Monday practice.

Help students locate the off-limits area. Most of us have unconsciously fenced off some part of life from God’s call to holiness: a habit we excuse, a relationship we keep on our own terms, the way we talk about others, what we watch or scroll, how we handle anger or money. We would never deny that God is Lord of all, yet we live as though certain corners were exceptions. Naming one such area is the first step toward letting holiness reach it.

Move toward one concrete area. The goal is not vague resolve to be better, but a specific corner of conduct surrendered to God this week. Ask each student to name one area where their walk does not yet match their profession, and to invite Christ’s holiness into precisely that place. Encourage them that bringing it into the light, before God and perhaps a trusted believer, is the beginning of change.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Holiness extending to all of life, not only religious activity
- The common gap between Sunday profession and weekday practice
- Off-limits areas we unconsciously fence off from God’s lordship
- Naming a specific area as the first step toward holiness in it

Discussion Prompts

- Where is the biggest gap between what you profess and how you live?
- What area of conduct have you quietly treated as off-limits to God?
- What is one specific way you will invite Christ’s holiness into that area this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

Peter says, “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 13). How is a clear-eyed hope in Christ’s return connected to holy living, and why does Peter call us to prepare our minds and be sober-minded as part of pursuing holiness?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question draws out the surprising connection Peter makes between hope and holiness. Before he ever says “be holy,” he says, “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Holiness, for Peter, grows out of hope. The teacher should help students see that how we live is powerfully shaped by what we are living for. A person whose hope is fixed on Christ’s return lives differently from one whose hope is pinned on this world.

Explain the mental discipline Peter calls for. He says to prepare our minds for action (literally, to gird up the loins of the mind, the ancient image of tucking in a long robe to be ready to move) and to be sober-minded, clear and self-controlled rather than intoxicated by the distractions and cravings of the moment. Holiness begins in the mind, in deliberately fixing our hope and our thinking on Christ rather than drifting with whatever pulls at us. A scattered, intoxicated, this-world-focused mind will not produce a holy life.

Show how hope fuels holiness practically. When our hope is fully set on the grace coming at Christ’s return, the passing pleasures of sin lose much of their grip, and the sacrifices of holy living make sense. Why cling to what is fading when something far better is certain? Conversely, when our hope quietly shifts to comfort, status, or security in this life, we will compromise to protect those things. The teacher can help students see that pursuing holiness includes the daily work of setting our hope, again and again, fully on Christ.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Holiness as growing out of hope fixed on Christ’s return
- Preparing the mind and being sober-minded as the discipline behind holiness
- How what we live for shapes how we live
- Hope in Christ loosening the grip of passing pleasures

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Peter connect holy living to hope in Christ’s return?
- What does it mean to prepare your mind and be sober-minded in daily life?
- How does fixing your hope on Christ make holiness more possible?

Question 4

Student Question:

We become like what we hope in. Where have you been setting your hope on something other than Christ, comfort, success, security, approval, and how is that misplaced hope quietly feeding compromise in your conduct? What would it look like to set your hope fully on Christ this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the link between hope and holiness inward. We become like what we hope in, and we will protect and serve whatever we are truly counting on. So misplaced hope is not a harmless mistake; it quietly bends our conduct. The aim here is to help students trace their compromises back to the hopes underneath them.

Help students name their functional hopes. Beneath many of our daily choices is a quiet trust in something to make us happy, safe, or significant: comfort, financial security, career success, the approval of others, a relationship, an image we maintain. None of these is evil, but when any of them becomes the hope our heart rests on, we will compromise our conduct to get it or keep it. The cutting question is: what am I so afraid to lose that I will bend the rules to protect it?

Move toward resetting hope on Christ. The remedy is not merely to try harder to behave, but to set our hope fully on Christ, so that lesser hopes lose their power to drive us. Ask each student to identify one misplaced hope that is feeding a particular compromise, and one way they will deliberately reset their hope on Christ this week, trusting Him with the very thing they have been clutching.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We become like, and serve, whatever we truly hope in
- Functional hopes (comfort, security, success, approval) that bend our conduct
- Tracing compromises back to the hopes underneath them
- Resetting hope on Christ as the remedy, not merely trying harder

Discussion Prompts

- What are you most afraid to lose, and how does that fear shape your choices?
- Where is a misplaced hope quietly feeding compromise in your conduct?
- What is one way you will reset your hope fully on Christ this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

Peter tells these believers not to be “conformed to the passions of your former ignorance” (v. 14). What does it mean to refuse to be shaped by the desires that ruled our old life, and why is the break with that former way of living so central to holiness?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter calls believers “obedient children” and tells them not to be “conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.” This question explores the decisive break with the old life that holiness requires. Before knowing Christ, Peter says, these believers lived in ignorance, driven by passions, the cravings and desires that ran their lives. Conversion means a real turning from that old pattern, not merely adding Jesus on top of it.

Help students understand “the passions of your former ignorance.” Peter is describing the way we lived when we did not know God: shaped by appetite, by impulse, by whatever felt good or expected at the time, without reference to God’s will. Holiness means those old passions no longer get to run the show. We do not pretend the desires vanish instantly, but we refuse to be conformed to them, to let them set the shape of our lives.

Stress why this break is central to holiness. You cannot be set apart for God while still being conformed to the very desires you were rescued from. The two are at odds. This is the same point Paul makes in Romans 12:2, “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” Holiness is not just doing a few religious things; it is a transformation that increasingly breaks the power of the old cravings and reshapes us around God’s will.

Bring it home with hope and realism. The break with the old life is decisive in principle (we have died to the old self, as the study saw in Romans 6) and progressive in practice (we keep refusing to be conformed, day by day). The teacher can encourage students that they are not helplessly bound to their former passions; as obedient children, empowered by Christ, they can and must say no to what once ruled them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Conversion as a real break with the old, passion-driven life
- “Former ignorance” as life lived without reference to God
- Refusing to be conformed to old cravings as central to holiness
- Holiness as transformation, echoing Romans 12:2, not mere religious additions

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to refuse to be conformed to the desires of your old life?
- Why can holiness and clinging to former passions not coexist?
- Where do old cravings still try to run the show in your life?

Question 6

Student Question:

It is easy to be quietly conformed to the world around us, absorbing its values, appetites, and assumptions without noticing. Where have you been letting the surrounding culture, rather than Christ, shape your desires and decisions? What is one pattern you need to stop conforming to?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question makes the danger of conformity concrete and contemporary. Conformity to the world is rarely a dramatic decision; it is usually a slow, unnoticed absorption. We breathe in the values, appetites, and assumptions of the surrounding culture the way we breathe air, often

without realizing how much they have shaped us. The aim of this question is to help students notice where the world, rather than Christ, is forming them.

Help students see the subtlety of it. Cultural conformity shows up in what we assume is normal: how we spend and accumulate, what we find entertaining, how we talk about success and beauty and sex and money, what outrages us and what we shrug at, how we treat those who disagree with us. Much of this is absorbed unconsciously through what we watch, read, and scroll. The world rarely asks us to renounce Christ; it simply invites us, a little at a time, to want what it wants.

Move toward one pattern to break. Ask students to identify one specific way the surrounding culture has been shaping their desires or decisions more than Christ has, and one concrete step to stop conforming, whether that is changing a media habit, rethinking a spending pattern, or refusing an assumption they have absorbed. The goal is the renewing of the mind, so that we are transformed rather than conformed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Worldly conformity as slow, unnoticed absorption rather than a single choice
- Cultural values and appetites we take in through media and habit
- The world inviting us to want what it wants, not to renounce Christ outright
- Breaking specific patterns of conformity as part of the renewed mind

Discussion Prompts

- In what ways has the surrounding culture shaped your desires without your noticing?
- Where are you being conformed to the world rather than transformed by Christ?
- What is one pattern of conformity you need to stop this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

Peter says that if we call on God as Father, who “judges impartially according to each one’s deeds,” we should “conduct (ourselves) with fear throughout the time of (our) exile” (v. 17). How do we hold together the truth that God is our loving Father and the truth that He judges our deeds impartially, and what is the godly “fear” Peter calls us to?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question takes up a truth our age finds difficult: that the God we call Father also “judges impartially according to each one’s deeds,” and that we are therefore to “conduct (ourselves) with fear.” The teacher should help students hold together two truths that are often pulled apart. God is genuinely our loving Father, near and gracious, and He is also the holy Judge who

takes our conduct seriously and shows no favoritism. Peter sees no contradiction; he puts both in a single sentence.

Clarify what kind of “fear” Peter means. This is not the cringing terror of a slave before a tyrant, nor the anxiety of someone unsure whether they are loved. It is reverent awe, the appropriate response of a creature before the holy God, and of a child before a Father who is to be honored and not presumed upon. The fear of the Lord, throughout Scripture, is the beginning of wisdom; it keeps us from treating God casually and sin lightly. A child can be both secure in a father’s love and reverent before a father’s authority.

Address the impartial judgment of deeds carefully, since it touches important doctrine. Peter is writing to Christians, and he tells them their conduct matters and will be assessed by a God who plays no favorites. This guards against the error of thinking that grace makes our behavior irrelevant, or that, once saved, how we live no longer counts. Scripture consistently teaches that believers will give an account (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12) and that genuine faith shows itself in obedience. This is not works-salvation; we are ransomed by Christ’s blood, as the next verses say. But the God who saves us by grace also calls us to live as those who will answer to Him, and He means for that reverent accountability to keep us walking in holiness.

Bring it home. A healthy fear of God is not the enemy of joy and intimacy with Him; it is the soil in which they grow rightly. The teacher can help students see that recovering reverence will not make them love God less, but will make them take Him, and their own conduct, far more seriously, which is exactly what Peter intends.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God as both loving Father and impartial Judge of our deeds
- Godly fear as reverent awe, not cringing terror or anxiety about being loved
- The fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom and a guard against casual sin
- Believers giving an account for their conduct (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12)
- Grace as never making our behavior irrelevant (against cheap grace)

Discussion Prompts

- How do we hold together God as loving Father and impartial Judge?
- What is the difference between cringing terror and the godly fear Peter calls for?
- Why does it matter that God judges our deeds, even though we are saved by grace?

Question 8

Student Question:

Reverence, or the proper fear of God, has largely disappeared from how many people think about Him today. Where in your life have you lost a healthy sense of awe before God, perhaps

growing casual or presumptuous about sin? How might recovering a reverent fear of God change the way you live this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question invites students to examine where reverence has eroded in their own walk with God. In an age that prizes casualness and informality, many believers have lost the sense of awe before God that Scripture everywhere assumes. We can become so comfortable with God that we grow presumptuous, treating sin lightly, approaching Him carelessly, and forgetting who He is.

Help students recognize the symptoms of lost reverence. It often shows up as casualness about sin (a shrug where there should be grief), presumption upon grace (assuming forgiveness is automatic and so sinning freely), prayerlessness or distracted worship, and a general sense that God is a comfortable buddy rather than the holy One before whom angels veil their faces. None of this denies God's nearness and love; it simply forgets His greatness and holiness.

Move toward recovering awe. Reverence is rekindled by dwelling on who God is, His holiness, majesty, and the price He paid for us, and by taking sin as seriously as He does. Ask each student where they have grown casual or presumptuous, and what one practice, perhaps more careful preparation for worship, more deliberate prayer, or a renewed grief over a particular sin, might help them recover a healthy fear of God this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The erosion of reverence in an age of casualness
- Symptoms of lost awe (casualness about sin, presumption, distracted worship)
- Reverence as compatible with, not opposed to, God's nearness and love
- Recovering awe by dwelling on God's holiness and taking sin seriously

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you grown casual or presumptuous before God?
- How has a loss of reverence affected the way you treat sin?
- What practice might help you recover a healthy fear of God this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

Peter gives the deepest motive for holiness: "you 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). How does being redeemed by the blood of Christ serve as the great motive for holy living, and how does this keep holiness from becoming either legalism (earning God's favor) or license (treating grace as permission to sin)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal and emotional climax of the passage, and it gives the teacher the deepest motive for holiness. Peter tells believers they were “ransomed from the futile ways inherited from (their) forefathers, 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.” The whole call to holiness rests on this. We are to live holy lives because of what it cost to rescue us.

Unpack the language of ransom and redemption. To be ransomed is to be bought out of bondage by the payment of a price. Peter says the price was not money, however vast, but the lifeblood of the sinless Son of God, the spotless Lamb foreshadowed by every Passover lamb and every sacrifice in Israel’s history. The teacher should let the cost sink in. We were not redeemed cheaply. The most precious thing in the universe, the blood of Christ, was the price of our rescue from an empty, futile way of life.

Now show how this is the engine of holiness, and how it guards against both legalism and license. Against legalism: notice the order. Peter does not say, live holy lives so that you may be ransomed. He says, you have been ransomed, therefore be holy. Holiness is the response to redemption, not the purchase of it. We are not earning God’s favor; we already have it, bought by Christ’s blood. This frees the legalist from the exhausting treadmill of trying to be good enough. Against license: precisely because we were bought at such a price, we cannot treat sin casually. To go on sinning freely is to despise the blood that ransomed us, to count it cheap. This sobers the careless believer who has turned grace into permission. The cross both frees us from earning and forbids us from presuming.

Help students feel the personal weight. The strongest motive for holy living is not fear of punishment or hope of reward, but love and gratitude toward the One who shed His precious blood for us. When holiness feels like a burden, the remedy is to return to the cross and remember the price. A person who has truly grasped what their redemption cost does not ask how much they can get away with; they ask how they can honor the One who bought them. The teacher can close by pointing students back to the Lamb without blemish, whose blood is the reason and the power for a holy life.

Note as well that Peter says Christ “was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.” Our redemption was no accident or afterthought; it was God’s plan from before creation, accomplished in Christ and applied for our sake. The holiness to which we are called is part of an eternal purpose, to make for God a people who are truly His own.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Redemption as being bought out of bondage at the price of Christ’s blood
- The blood of Christ, the spotless Lamb, as a price beyond all silver and gold (vv. 18–19)
- Holiness as the response to redemption, not the purchase of it (against legalism)

- Sin as despising the precious blood that ransomed us (against license)
- Love and gratitude toward Christ as the great motive for holy living
- Redemption as God's plan from before the foundation of the world (v. 20)

Discussion Prompts

- How does being ransomed by Christ's blood serve as the great motive for holiness?
- How does the order (ransomed, therefore holy) guard against trying to earn God's favor?
- Why does treating sin casually despise the price that was paid for us?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the passage. Peter has called you to a holiness that resembles your Father, is fueled by hope, breaks with the old life, lives in reverent awe, and flows from the priceless blood of Christ. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth about holiness and daily conduct that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone question asks students to gather the whole passage and name one specific way Christ is forming them. Resist letting answers stay general. Press gently for the concrete: which truth, changing what, beginning when.

It helps to retrace the movement. Peter called us to a holiness that resembles our holy Father, that grows out of hope set on Christ, that breaks decisively with the old life and refuses to be conformed to the world, that lives in reverent awe before the God who judges our deeds, and that flows from the priceless blood of the Lamb who ransomed us. Invite each student to ask which of these truths their heart most needs this week.

Close by reminding students that the goal is transformation, not merely information. The call to holiness is meant to change how we actually live from Monday to Saturday, in some concrete and visible way. Encourage each one to leave with a single truth to carry, return to, and pray over until the next gathering, asking Christ to make them holy as He is holy.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Scripture aimed at transformation, not merely information
- Holiness as the grateful response of the redeemed, in all of life
- Avoiding both legalism and license in the pursuit of holiness
- Daily conduct increasingly resembling our holy Father

Discussion Prompts

- Which truth about holiness does your heart most need this week, and why?

- What would it look like, concretely, to live in light of that truth?
- How can this group pray for and encourage you in that one step?