

## 1 Peter 1:13-16 “Responding Rightly to God's Holiness”[\[1\]](#)

Main Idea: In 1 Peter 1:13-16, Peter tells us the difference God's holiness should make in our lives. As Christians, holiness ought to affect us in 3 areas.

- I. Holy people are to have a Different Perspective (13).
- II. Holy people are to have a Different Pattern (14).
- III. Holy people are to have a Different Practice (15-16).
  - A. Holy living is linked to our Calling (15).
  - B. Holy living is linked to God's Character (16).

God is holy. For the past couple of months on Sunday evenings I've been suggesting that His greatest attribute is His holiness. When the Bible says that God is holy, it means that He is different, unique, awesome. To be holy is to be set apart. God is. He's one of a kind. He's transcendent. He's not common, but rather He's sacred. He's higher and greater than anyone or anything else. His power is matchless. His love is matchless.

What is the proper way for us to respond to the holiness of God? Make no mistake about it. The way you answer that question has eternal implications.

Last time we looked at Peter's confrontation with the holiness of Christ. Remember what happened to Peter? When he came to grips with the truth that Jesus Christ is holy, how did he respond?

Lk 5:8 "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man O Lord."

Peter is specially qualified to teach us how to respond to God's holiness. This evening, as we wrap up our 6 week study of God's holiness, we want to listen to Peter again. Not in the gospels this time, but in a letter he wrote 35 years later. Turn to 1 Peter, and see what Peter says is the right way to respond to God's holiness.

1 Pt 1:13-16 "Wherefore, gird up...But as He is holy, so be ye holy..."

What is the right response? We are to be holy. Think of that. God is holy. He expects us to be holy. His holiness is to make a difference in our lives. In what way? What difference should God's holiness make in our lives?

In 1 Peter 1:13-16, Peter tells us the difference God's holiness should make in our lives. As Christians, holiness ought to affect us in three areas.

### **I. Holy people are to have a Different Perspective (13).**

Listen carefully. Peter's instructions are written to Christians. Please notice.

1:1 "Peter...to sojourners..." So Peter is writing to Christians. In the text we'll study, Peter is *not* telling us how to become Christians, *not* how to be saved. He assumes that has already happened.

And how does that happen? See: 1:3 "Blessed be the God...who has begotten us again..." We become a Christian by being born again.

And notice something else. Do you know what is true of Christians? See: 2:5 "You are...a holy priesthood..."

If you are in Christ, you are holy. Do you know what is one of the most used terms in the NT to refer to Christians? See: 1 Cor 1:2, "Unto the church at Corinth, to them that are sanctified (set apart) in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." Ph 1:1 "Paul and Tim...to all the saints in Christ Jesus."

Do you know what a saint is? The word means "holy one." It has the same Greek root as the word translated "holy" in 1:15 ("*hagios*"). Christians are people who have been set apart, from sin and the world, to God through Jesus Christ.

God is holy. He's set apart. He's different. And listen. When God saves us, we become holy. We are set apart. We're different.

Objection: "Ok, if I'm a Christian, then I'm holy. Christ has made me holy. Why then does Peter tell us to be holy if we already are?"

Key: We are holy *positionally*. The moment we believe in Christ, we are declared by God to be holy. But here's the challenge. What we are in *position*, we need to learn to be in *practice*.

We are to be DIFFERENT. To be holy means to be different. I didn't say we are to be odd, or outdated, or out of style. Unfortunately that's the image people often have of Christians.

E.g.—Osama Binladen is different. But he's not holy. Obviously, he's far from it.

So what does it mean to be holy? Holiness ought to affect us in 3 areas. First, God's holiness ought to affect our perspective. Holy people are to live with a different outlook on life.

V 13 "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind..."

In Peter's day and culture, men wore long, flowing robes. The robes may have been comfortable, but they were a hindrance when it came time for work or action. Around the waist, the men wore a belt or girdle. When a man was going to do something strenuous, he would tie up his robe with his belt. In English when a person is getting serious about work we say he "rolls up his sleeves and gets at it."

That's the image Peter uses. As Christians we live in a world that is anti-God. What must we do? Peter gives three admonitions in v 13, all having to do with our perspective.

1. "Prepare your minds for action."—AV "gird up... your minds"

2. "Be self-controlled"—AV "be sober"; Don't be intoxicated. Be free from every form of drunkenness, whether physical or mental or spiritual. Christians function from the inside out. We're not to be controlled by external circumstances. What are we to do?

3. "Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you..."—AV "Hope to the end for the grace..."

Listen. Holy living starts right here. If we are going to be holy, we must live with a different perspective. Holy thinking leads to holy living. The battle is won *or* lost in your mind.

Illust: Dobson story of the elephants...

Challenge: There's no way around it. Holy living demands determination. Be aggressive with your mind. How? By fixing your perspective on two truths highlighted in v 13. First, fix your perspective on Grace. It's by grace that we are saved. It's by grace we must live. And second, fix your perspective on the second coming of Christ. (See: Tit 2:11-13)

Caution: What type of things are you allowing into your mind? Look back at your past week. What are the sources of input that affect your *thinking*? The books you read, the music you listen to, the television/movies you watch, the internet sites you search... "Oh, it doesn't affect me..." Really?

If we are to be holy, it starts with a different perspective.

When you became a Christian, did your perspective on life change? How about right now? Is Jesus Christ at the center of your life?

What is your goal in life? Is it your goal to make money? Is that what drives you, what makes you tick? Is pleasure your goal? To be comfortable, to have the good life? Is it your goal to be popular, to be in the "in" crowd? Or is it your goal to live your life for Christ, to please Him, to be ready for Him when He returns?

Here's where holy living starts. Holiness demands that I live with a different perspective. Holiness affects a second area...

## II. Holy people are to have a Different Pattern (14).

V 14 "As obedient children..."

What pattern are we to follow if we are to be holy? "As obedient children," like Father, like son.

Listen. Children inherit the nature of their parents, don't they? When God saved us, we became His children. He expects us to reflect His character in our lives. We are to live "as obedient children." As Calvin put it, we are to resemble God.

Just think of it! Do you resemble God? Can people see God in your life? See: 1 Peter 3:15-16 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts..." People ought to be able to tell that we follow a different pattern.

What pattern did we used to follow? Notice verse 14, "...do not conform..."; AV—"not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts..." The word "fashion" means "to conform to, to be formed like" (used in Rom 12:2). Before we became a Christian what pattern did we follow in life? AV—"the former lusts in your ignorance"

Here's what we used to be enslaved to before Christ set us free. The word "lust" means strong desire, or passion. The pre-Christian life is a life dominated by desire. We live for the gusto. We live for self-gratification. And we go hog-wild in that pursuit. Sin blinds us. Notice Peter says we were enslaved "in our ignorance."

Key: Ignorance leads to indulgence. (Wiersbe) That is, unsaved people lack spiritual intelligence, so that they give themselves to all kinds of fleshly and worldly indulgences.

E.g.—

But notice one key word. You "*had*." In the AV—'FORMER.' That's what we used to be. The literal Greek wording in v 14 is, "Don't be conformed to the before in your ignorance lusts." Christians are to control their desires, not be controlled by their desires.

Is your life different now than before you became a Christian? Is your life different now from the lifestyles of

non-Christians around you?

I'm not asking if you do a few different things than you used to, like going to church, and reading your Bible once in awhile. No. I'm asking something much deeper. Are your desires different now than they used to be? Is your pattern different?

Someone has said (B.K.C.), "Though absolute holiness can never be achieved in this life, all areas of life should be in the process of becoming completely conformed to God's perfect and holy will."

Key: Holy people follow a different pattern in life.

Let me ask you something. Is there pleasure in sin? Sure! Heb 11:25 says, "...the pleasures of sin for a season." Sin can be very pleasurable. For a season.

E.g.—

What's the right way to respond to God's holiness? We are to be holy. That means first we are to live with a different perspective, second with a different pattern.

### **III. Holy people are to have a Different Practice (15-16).**

Verse 15 "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do." Another translation says, "Be holy...in all manner of life." In all manner of life. The KJV uses the old English word "conversation." It has to do with more than our speech, however. Holiness is to permeate our lifestyle.

Friends, holy living is not an option. Please notice v 15 is a command, "BE YE HOLY in all manner of life."

Observation: I have conversations with a lot of defeated Christians. Oh, they're saved, but they're miserable. Why? Very simply they have ignored this command. Holiness is not a priority in their lives.

Joel Gregory made this important observation, "God's primary desire is to make us holy. And many things that make us happy do not make us holy."

Why is holy living mandatory for Christians? Two reasons...

#### A. Holy living is linked to our calling (15).

V 15 "But as He who has called you is holy"

This is critical. God called us. When we were dead in our sins, He called us. He chose us (1:2). He designed our salvation. He determined how we should live after we were saved. He called us. We now belong to Him.

There is to be no area of our lives untouched by holiness. In ALL manner of life. Let that truth sink in. Every area of your life is to be affected by affected by your relationship with the holy God who called you.

You may slip a few bucks (or a lot) in the offering plate on Sunday. And you may think that God is impressed. Or you may feel pretty good about yourself because you give God an hour of your time each week to come to church.

But let me ask you. Do you seek to honor Christ in your job? Do you consciously seek to please God in the

way you talk to your kids?

When God called us, He took ownership of every area of our lives. Holy living is linked to our calling.

### B. Holy living is linked to God's character (16).

Verse 16 "For it is written, Be holy BECAUSE I AM HOLY."

Observation: Holiness is not popular with the world. Holiness is out of style in the minds of "modern men."

(Sproul video 5) Several years ago, a Maryland truck driver was arrested for DWI. He was very obstinate with the arresting officers. He cursed them and carried on. At the time, the standard penalty for this misdemeanor was a \$100 dollar fine and 30 days in jail. In light of the man's behavior, the judge felt compelled to do more. He resurrected an old statute against blasphemy that hadn't been used in years, but was still on the books. The penalty for blasphemy was \$100 fine and 30 days in jail. The judge found him guilty of both crimes.

A "Time" magazine editorial came out afterwards. In it the writer ridiculed the episode. How ridiculous that in our modern day such an archaic issue as blasphemy could result in a \$100 dollar fine and 30 days in jail.

Listen friends. Holiness is not popular in our modern world. In fact, holiness is offensive. To unholy people, holiness is threatening. One of the highest forms of ridicule is to accuse someone of being "holier than thou." As R. C. Sproul put it, "Nothing terrifies us more than to be in the presence of the Holy One."

Do you know why the Pharisees hated Jesus? They had everybody believing they were the holy ones, that they were the standard of right and wrong. They convinced everybody that they were the "good guys." Until Jesus came along. And Jesus showed them for who they were. His holiness revealed their unholiness. And they hated Him for it. Like the student who aces a test and breaks the curve...

Problem: It's sad that holiness is not popular with the world. But it's not surprising. What's tragic is that holiness is growing less and less popular with people who identify themselves as Christians. The church today is plagued with people who don't take holiness seriously.

God's holy character has not changed. Neither has His plan for us.

Verse 16 says, "For it is written." When? Peter is quoting Lev 11:45-45. Moses recorded those words 1400 years before Peter lived. What's the point? Holiness is not an option. God expected His people to be holy in the 15th century BC. God expected His people to be holy in the first century AD in Peter's day. And God expects us to be holy in our day.

"Be ye holy for I am holy."

### **Challenge:**

What's the proper response to the holiness of God? Two decisions are in order...

1. I must ask Christ to come into my life and make me holy. See Heb 10:14
2. I must determine that by God's help I will live with a different perspective, follow a different pattern, which will reveal itself in a different practice.

The bottom line is this. Is it your ambition in life to be holy or to be happy?

Westminster Shorter Catechism, "What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Holy people are people who take God seriously in their lives. Do you? O friend, the only way to truly be happy anyway is to make holiness a priority in your life.

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[\\*\\*](#)Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

[\[1\]](#) I am indebted to the teaching of R. C Sproul for many of the insights shared in this series of messages. I highly recommend his video series and book on the subject.