

CGYG & LIFE Bible Study – 1 Peter 1:13-21

-Have you ever been strongly gripped by the reality of God and eternity and the importance of living a holy life? What were the circumstances that prompted this seriousness about spiritual matters?

-Why do you think so many modern-day believers (at least in the West) are so casual about the things of God, so much of the time? What's behind our preoccupation with trivial concerns and great neglect of eternal issues?¹

Read 1 Peter 1:13 - 2:3

1. In one or two sentences, summarize Peter's main point(s) in this passage.

-In light of who God is and all He has done for you, live lives of holiness and love, shaped and informed by the Word of God.

We'll focus in this study on 1 Peter 1:13-21, and consider the rest of the passage in the next study. Take a few moments to re-read v.13-21.

2. In v.13-21, Peter calls believers to live holy lives ["be holy in all you do" (v.15)]. What reasons/motivations does Peter give for living holy lives?

v.13

-v.13 starts with 'therefore' – indicates that what follows is predicated on what has come before, i.e. that

-we are God's elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (v.1-2)

-we were chosen and saved "for obedience to Jesus Christ" (v.2)

-in God's mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope and into an eternal inheritance (v.3-4)

-we are being shielded by God's power until the final consummation of our salvation when Christ returns (v.5), and He is even now refining our faith through trials (v.6)

-we can have joy here and now because of our present fellowship with Jesus Christ despite not having seen Him (v.8-9), and because we are receiving a great salvation that prophets foretold and that even angels long to look into (v.10-12)

-therefore, i.e. in light of who we are (God's elect), all we have been given and all we will one day receive, we ought to live accordingly

-we ought to set our hope fully on these things; in particular, on the grace (i.e. undeserved blessings) God will give us when Christ returns

v.14-16 (cross-reference for v.16 – Leviticus 11:44-45)

-we are children of God (through the new birth we have been given, v.3); we ought therefore to live in obedience to Him

-our former way of life was filled with evil passions and lived in ignorance of God; but now we know Him as His children and should live in light of that

-we should be holy because God Himself is holy; as His children, we should imitate His character (v.15)

-also, God's Word commands that we be holy (v. 16; cf. Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7)

v.17-21

- we should live in holiness/reverent fear because

-God has called us to be strangers in this world (v.17, cf. v.1)

-God is our Father; i.e. as children have reverent fear of their father, so we should live in holy fear of our heavenly Father

-God is also an impartial judge, and will judge our works impartially

-not speaking of a judgment for condemnation (since we have been redeemed), but judgment of our works for rewards

-also, will discipline us when we sin (as a father disciplines his children) – and does so with impartiality

-we were redeemed at great cost– not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (v.18-19)

-should not take Christ's blood lightly or trample on it, lest we incur God's displeasure and discipline as Judge (cf. v.17)

-Christ was foreordained to die for our sins from before Creation and is the one through whom we believe in God (v.20-21)

-our former way of life, out of which we were redeemed, was empty/futile; should not go back to it (v.18)

3. What does it mean to be holy?

- holy – means to be separated/set apart for God and for His exclusive use (see also Leviticus 20:7-8)
- also refers to that which accords with/imitates God's character – we are to be holy because He is holy (v.15-16)
- more specifically, a moral sense of separation from evil/sin, as God is separated from sin, with dedication to a life of righteousness/obedience to God → a life of moral purity

4. What do these verses teach us about what a holy life looks like, and about how you can live a holy life? How do these lessons apply to different areas of your daily life? (e.g. to your studies? to your work? to your relationships? to your leisure activities?)

- what does a holy life look like?
 - a life that is 'prepared for action' (v.13) – i.e. minds prepared & ready to serve God and respond to Him in instant obedience
 - literally, 'girding up the loins of your mind' (v.13) – picture of tucking in one's robe in preparation for strenuous activity
 - a life that is 'sober-minded' (v.14) – i.e. calm, steady, self-controlled; self-disciplined, in contrast to previous self-indulgence (v.14)
 - not given to hysterics or any kind of 'mental intoxication' that inhibits spiritual alertness
 - a life whose hopes are centered not on the things of this world, but on things eternal – in particular, the day of Christ's return (v.13)
 - prepared every moment for His return; not 'intoxicated' with the things of the world
 - a life that looks different in many respects to that lived by non-believers; driven by different desires and ambitions
 - not conformed to the world, or to its evil desires (v.14)
 - our ambitions and desires are shaped not by the world, but by our relationship to God as our Father; i.e. 'as obedient children' (v.14), desiring to honor and please Him
 - a life that seeks to imitate God and to obey Him (i.e. to be holy because He is holy, v.15-16)
 - a life that is obedient to Scripture ('since it is written', v.16)
 - a life lived in the fear of God (v.18), knowing that God is an impartial judge and knowing the price He paid to redeem us
 - not a fear of judgment/condemnation, since those who believe in Christ have salvation (v.8-9)
 - rather, 'reverent fear' as children have for their parents; do not want to disappoint God or displease Him
 - -results in a desire to obey Him, and in obedience
 - also a healthy fear of incurring God's discipline if we sin

-Living a holy life

- begins with our minds – preparing for action, being sober minded (see above); cf. Rom. 12:2 – transformed by the renewing of our minds
 - need to know Scripture; to have a strong appetite for it and to feed on it (cf. 2:2)
- set our hope fully on eternal things and on the things of God (v.13,21)
 - we should spend our time and energy thinking about these things, meditating on them, and living in light of them
 - our salvation, inheritance, & relationship with Christ, (v.1-12); the grace/blessings to be given us when Christ returns (v.13)
 - our hope is not in worldly things like wealth, fame, political power, etc., but in God
- turn away from the passions/evil desires of our former ignorance (i.e. when we were ignorant of God) and do not conform to them
 - see the world and its ways for what they really are – futility (v.18); thus, say 'no' to ungodliness and worldly passions (Titus 2:11)
 - pattern our lives instead on God's ways, as revealed in His Word (v.16-17)
- think often and think deeply about who God is (v.17); Father and Judge
 - should cause us to love Him, as our Father (v.17) and the one in whom is our faith and hope (v.21)
 - should cause us to live in fear of Him as our Father who judges impartially
- think often and think deeply about who Jesus Christ is and on what He has done for our sake (v.18-21)

Toward the Goal...

In light of all that God has done for us in calling us and saving us through faith in Christ, and in light of all of His blessings that yet await us on the day of Jesus Christ's return, Peter calls us who believe in Christ to live lives of holiness before God. As God's children through the new birth we have received in Christ (1:3), we are called to obedience (1:2, 14), and to imitate the character of our holy Father. As Peter says in 1:15, "But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do".

Furthermore, since our Father judges each man's work impartially, we should live our lives in holy fear, knowing the great cost at which He purchased our salvation and knowing how precious in His sight is the blood of His Son. As the writer of Hebrews says, "Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified Him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:28-29) Living such a life of holiness begins with preparing our minds for action through the Word of God (1:13,16; 1:22-2:3). As our minds are renewed through the Word, so also will our lives be transformed, as we see more clearly the holiness of God and the glory of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, and as we are conformed more and more to the likeness of Christ, and less and less to the passions of our former ignorance.

Consider for a few moments your walk with God. Are you desiring above all else to be holy, as He who called you is holy? What lessons have you learned or been reminded of that you need to apply to your walk?

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good." (Titus 2:11-14)

Endnote:

¹Opening discussion questions adapted from John MacArthur, *1&2 Peter: Courage in Times of Trouble*. Nashville: W Publishing, 2000.