
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 1 Peter

Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org

1 Peter 1: 13-21: Living with Holiness!

General idea: We are called to get our minds lined up with God—His Way, His precepts, and His plan. We still have the old sinful nature residing within us. God declares us clean, but we do not become *completely* clean. Perhaps, the reason for this is that if we were “scrubbed clean,” we would not face the struggles in life that produce depth and holiness. We would never struggle with thoughts, desires, sin, and life; therefore, we would not learn, grow, and respond to God within the realities of life. We would be robots, preprogrammed to respond—and such mechanisms do not produce real fruit or love.

Thus, we have to exercise self-control. In addition, as with all exercise, we gain the strength and endurance that provide the fortitude and courage to engage life. Along with faith, we have the staying power—for all we experience in life—to be His child and be a blessing to Him and others around us. God does not just command us to be self-controlled; He gives us a reason to remain in our faith development. He will give us His wondrous, special blessings for our trust and obedience. His reward is His salvation and the rewards in eternity. However, we are also given the strength to enjoy life and make the most of what we have now!

Therefore, Peter urges us not to slip back into our old ways, because they will cause us to slip away from God’s best and blessings. We are His children. Like all children, we need structure and discipline and to know we are loved. God has this for us!

Vs. 13-16: We are called to be holy! Do you have problems with containing your desires and thinking? Do you seek the distractions of the world that will cause you to stray off God’s path? Perhaps, what we need is a further realization of the boundless love Christ has for us so we will seek to please Him and not our desires. Because, His way is better than any plan we could produce on our own. Before we were Christians, we did not know better. Now, as Christians, we do know better. Therefore, we must remain self-controlled and holy!

- *Gird up the loins of your mind/prepare your minds* is a vivid call to action. It refers to tucking one’s robe into one’s belt to move faster. This also alludes to the Passover (Ex.12:11). It means to be prepared as in “fasten your seat belt,” not because you *will* crash, but *in case* you do. We are called to guard our mind so we can always be prepared and ready (Eph. 6:10; 1 Pet. 3:15). This also means our spiritual formation is to be continual. So, to be prepared takes action and application on our part. It is not a *free ride* where we just sit

and wait. Our spiritual journey requires our active participation. We should be ready to follow Him because we are redeemed (verses 4 & 19).

- *Sober/self controlled.* This is also called “sobriety.” It is not just about abstinence from alcohol, but, rather, being dignified and self-controlled—willing and able to be clear-headed. A person does not have self-control when he/she is drunk. However, this applies to anything—not just drinking and drugs.
- *Obedient children* means we are adopted into God's family and are made new. So, because of what Christ has done, we should be willing to be obedient (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 5:1; Col. 3:1-4, 1 Pet. 1:2-3, 22). Obedience means that, as Christians, we are to submit to what God requires of us; we are to follow His precepts regardless of the circumstances (Deut. 13: 4; 1 Sam. 15:22; Prov. 19:16; Acts 5:29; John 14:14; 15:14; 2 Cor. 10:5; Heb. 13:17; 1 John 1:7).
- *Called you.* God effectually takes the initiative. He seeks us, He motivates us, He picks us up; but we still have to reach out and grab His Hand and respond! In this context, it is about our portrayal and obedience just as a child obeys and portrays a father.
- *Be holy* means to set one's self apart, in a distinct manner, so to be identified and positioned in and with God and not in or with the world. It also means to be “set apart” from sin and its influences as “garbage-in-creates-garbage-out.” God called the Israelites to be set apart from the other nations. They were to worship God and then influence the other nations for God. At the same time, they were not to be contaminated by them. When they succeeded, they were blessed. When they failed, they were judged and taken into captivity. For us, it means we are not to be influenced by sin, so we are able to serve and please God, strive for moral purity, and benefit others (Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7, 26; Hab 1:13; Matt 5:48; Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 2:9).

We can learn and become responsible in our faith so we can persevere and completely trust in our living, loving Lord. When this comes about, we will not lose hope but be able to stand for as long as necessary in whatever situation we face.

Vs. 17-21: We may think that God plays favorites, as some people just seem blessed while others are under constant struggle. However, we can take comfort that God does not play favorites; we *all* are His favorites. Blessings of the world are never a sign of God's favor; they will fade. The faith we exercise will only build and we will come to see more bountiful blessings than we could ever have imagined. God is more concerned about what we do with what we have than with what we have! Always remember that Christ is our living Hope that will never

fade away. Because He paid for us, we owe Him more than we could ever know!

- *Father*. This is *Heavenly Father* to the Jews as they called upon God in prayer.
- *Without partiality*. God crowns us with His gifts. Thus, we can take comfort that God loves and treats us all the same. God does not show favoritism; He calls us to be unprejudiced, too. He does not condemn us for our wrongs because we have His grace, but God does judge us for our wrongs and rewards us for our obedience. He will reward us just for being in Him and for our merits (Isa. 53:4-5; Rom. 2:11; 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; James 2:11; 1 Pet. 2:24).
- *Your stay/strangers* means un-naturalized aliens, people who are not native or are not pursuing residency. Therefore, he is saying to watch how you conduct yourself and your loyalties. This refers to the sojourn of life, that we are not here permanently but, rather, are "pilgrims" on a journey until we reach our permanent home in eternity (Acts 10:34).
- *Fear* is how we are to come before God, and with humbleness (1 Pet. 5:6). It is a term of endearment and respect that is supercharged with more meaning and power because it infers intense reverence and awe of God and His holiness (Job 28:28; Prov. 1:7; 3:5; 8:13; 9:10; 16:6; 31:30; Psalm 2:11; 34:11; 111:10; Isa. 12:6; Eccl. 12: 13; Mal. 1:14; Matt. 10: 27-33; Rom. 2:11; James 2:1). It does not mean being afraid of Him, rather fearful of His wrath (Romans 3).
- *Redeemed* is a term meaning the freeing of a slave by the paying of his/her debt. We are freed from the bondage of sin by the great cost of His sacrifice of His shed blood that gives us "justification." He frees us from the "curse of the law" and "wickedness" (Ex. 13:13; 21:30; Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; Rom. 3:24; 8:2; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col 1:14; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:15; Rev. 5:9).
- *Aimless conduct/empty way of life* was a retort to the pagan worship services that had no meaning and led people to sin and harm themselves and others. Such conduct is futile and empty (Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:17). It has no purpose other than to deceive and to destroy. This conduct is not limited to pagan practices, but for anything that distracts us from loving and worshiping our Lord, such as desires and traditions (Jer. 2:5; Mark 7:8-13; Acts 14:15)!
- *Like silver and gold* infers, in this context, that these metals are not valuable. As under Nero, there was mass inflation and gold was devaluing and fading away as a commodity. Do not trust in anything that fades away!
- *Lamb* is the picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. He represents the only effective and ultimate sacrifice; He takes away the sin of the world. The sacrificial

animal of the Passover in the O.T. is the foreshadowing of what Christ will do and has done for us. The price was invaluable and could not have been paid by human measures (Ex. 12:3; Isa. 53:7; John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:14).

- *Without blemish.* The O.T. sacrificial animals had to be perfect in breed and form with no defect; if not, they were not valuable enough for a sacrifice. Those who sacrificed such blemished animals were dishonoring God. Jesus was unblemished because of the sinless life He led on our behalf. Some Jews take offence because Jesus was whipped and scarred before His sacrifice, that He was blemished and could not take away our sins. But, they misunderstand what blemished means for Jesus and us. It is not our bodies; it is our sinful nature and soul. Jesus was without sin and thus unblemished (Lev. 22:20-25; Heb. 4:15; 7:26-27).
- *Foreordained/chosen* means *foreknew*. He knows all that was, is, and will come. He is “omniscient.” Here, it is referring to the fact that Jesus has always existed and was chosen as our Redeemer before we were even created (John 17:24; Ac 2:17; Eph. 1:4; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:1; 1 John 2:18; Rev 13:8).
- *Last times* does not necessarily refer to the actual final days of our existence as in the *second coming* is around the corner. Rather, it means the period from the resurrection to His second coming. In other words, the present time (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2).
- *Through Him* means that Jesus is the only access that humanity has to God. He is our High Priest and Mediator. We do not need to go to any person to present ourselves before God; Jesus does this for us (John 1:18; 14:6; 1 Pet. 3:18).

Most people get discouraged when they are no longer in control. But, we have to realize that God still is in control. Thus, when our eyes are fixed on God, we will never lose hope (Psalm 62:8; 2 Cor. 1:3-7)!

How is your “fertility?” That is, how is the fruit of the Spirit that should be growing in and through you and that is meant to come through you in all things? Our faith will be tested—not to attack or cause us to fail—but to teach us to be more faithful, stronger, and better so we can be better to those around us. God wants us holy and pure in Him.

To make us pure, He needs to prune and refine us. This is not drudgery but an opportunity to be more than we could ever be on our own. Our growth in Him means faith, spiritual maturity, and character development. These are things more precious than any gold, personal success, or financial portfolio. As we go through the tough stuff of life, we will grow and become stronger. We will worship

Him more deeply and purely. We will honor Him more deeply, more relevantly, and touch the lives of others more deeply, too.

Life is not about our wants, needs, and comfort; it is about Christ working in us more powerfully and triumphantly. The key to turn on this engine of our spiritual formation is our willingness to pursue, endure, and grow. Allow the holiness of our Lord, His grace, His patience, understanding, faith, loyalty, goodness, and love to be exhibited in you—not by imitation, but with gratitude and submission, *kept by His power* (1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:27; Gal. 5:21-23; 1 Pet. 1:5)!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me? How am I encouraged and strengthened?
4. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
5. How can I be changed so I can learn and grow?
6. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
7. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
8. What can I model and teach? What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Do you think that you need structure and discipline? Why, or why not? What happens to children when they are not disciplined? How does this compare to adult Christians?
2. What does it mean to you to get your mind lined up with God? What would your life look like if it were not “lined up” or self-controlled?
3. Have you ever thought that God plays favorites, that some people just seem blessed while others are in a constant struggle? How can you take comfort in knowing that God loves and treats all of us the same?

4. How can the struggles we face in life produce more depth and holiness?
5. What if you were totally “scrubbed clean” of bad desires, temptations, and sin? Would you still be able to build a deep faith and grow closer to God? Why, or why not?
6. Do you get discouraged when you are no longer in control? How does the exercise of self-control give you staying power when you are in tough situations such as temptations or trials?
7. Do you have problems in containing your desires and thinking? How would further realization of the boundless love Christ has for you help you remain disciplined to please Him?
8. Why is your spiritual formation not a “free ride?” Why does it have to be continual? What do you need to do to be prepared for active participation, action, and application in pursuing and growing in Christ?
9. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the *Lamb*, the only effective and ultimate sacrifice for our sins. What does this mean to you? How can you reach out, grab His hand, and respond?
10. What can you do to resist the influences of desires, bad traditions, and sin so you can become more responsible in your faith, serve and please God, strive for moral purity, and benefit others?
11. What does obedience mean to you? How have you demonstrated it? Can you recall a situation in which you were *not* obedient and why? How is obedience a call to action? How could your personal and spiritual life be improved with the ability to move faster in your faith?
12. How can the exercise of self-control and obedience help you submit to what God requires of you and His precepts—regardless of your circumstances? What can you do to help this better obedience come about? Can you think of a specific instance or situation?

He who obeys instructions guards his life, but he who is contemptuous of his ways will die. Proverbs 19:6