

1 Peter

Lesson 2 Chapter 1:13-2:3

Leader Guide

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Lesson 2

1 Peter 1:13–2:3

Called to be Holy

“Be holy, because I am holy.”

1 Peter 1:16

Prayers

Introduction

This lesson focuses on our calling to be holy. Peter’s discussion on holiness continues through 1 Peter 2:12 and concludes with the thought that we are called to be holy as a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God. The Lutheran Study Bible points out that the Hebrew word for holy has no modern equivalent that fully captures its meaning. In part, holy means “set apart.” As Christians, we are set apart for God’s purposes. God’s purpose for us is to be united with Christ because it is through our union that Christ becomes our righteousness, holiness, and salvation. Our conduct needs to reflect our calling as God’s set-apart people. The opposite of holy is not sinful but common. We are not called to be common like the world, but we are set apart as strangers in the world, called to the great purpose of joyfully worshipping God and proclaiming God’s love for all people through Christ’s redemption, living a life that honors him, and serving our neighbor.

Read 1 Peter 1:13-2:3

^{1Pe 1:13} Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

^{1Pe 1:14} As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

^{1Pe 1:15} But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;

^{1Pe 1:16} for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

^{1Pe 1:17} Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

^{1Pe 1:18} For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,

^{1Pe 1:19} but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

^{1Pe 1:20} He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

^{1Pe 1:21} Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

^{1Pe 1:22} Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

^{1Pe 1:23} For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

^{1Pe 1:24} For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,

^{1Pe 1:25} but the word of the Lord stands forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

^{1Pe 2:1} Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

^{1Pe 2:2} Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,
^{1Pe 2:3} now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Discuss

1. “Therefore” refers to the previous statement in verse 12. Why should we prepare our minds for action and self-control?

^{1Pe 1:12} It was revealed to them [the prophets] that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

We have received the Gospel of Jesus Christ and have been set apart as God’s people in the world! The prophets longed to know when God would come to lead his people in righteousness and redeem them to eternal life. Jesus Christ fulfilled their prophecies. Some prophecies remain to be fulfilled at Christ’s second coming when all heaven will rejoice as God raise us to be with him forever and creates the world anew.

2. Peter calls us to obedience as God’s children in verses 13-14. We often relate obedience to obeying the Law. But, Paul tells us that “Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the Law (Galatians 3:25). Obedience and freedom from the Law are both scriptural truths; how do you reconcile these statements?

I remember discussing freedom from the Law during a study of Galatians when someone asked, “Well, which commandment don’t you want to obey?” We all laughed, but the comment illustrated a common misunderstanding. Paul referred to the Law as the entire Mosaic sacrificial system for the forgiveness of sin. Christ’s perfect sacrifice, once for all sin, for all time, made the Old Testament sacrificial system obsolete. It is the sacrificial system we are freed from, not obedience. We are under a new covenant of grace and mercy. The new covenant calls us into obedience of God’s perfect moral law – to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5), and love our neighbor as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18). As God’s children and owing our redemption to Christ, we desire obedience.

3. In verse 16, Paul quotes the Old Testament in his call for believers to be holy, “Be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44). God’s holiness and his calling a people to himself to be holy is a central theme in scriptures, occurring 492 times in the Old Testament and 233 times in the New Testament. Holiness is having a high moral character or, in an absolute sense, having the **character** of God. A holy person will behave righteously. Holy also means to be set apart. When applied to God, He is set apart from sin. Likewise, God calls us to be set apart from sin. Holiness can have the same meaning as sanctify or consecrate. We are holy, sanctified, and consecrated - set apart for God’s sacred purposes.

Refer to the following scriptures and discuss how we become holy, taking on God’s character.

It is because of him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

First, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:8-10)

The only way to be holy, to take on God’s character, is to be united with Christ. God places us in Christ through his gift of faith so that Christ becomes our holiness. Christ’s work is finished and complete so that we cannot become more holy before God. The second aspect of holiness is our behavior and obedience.

4. In verses 14-16, Peter calls believers to be holy and not to be conformed to the world by indulging in a sinful nature. Faith secures our holiness in Christ, but a holy character should also be evident in all we do. Peter and Paul refer to living holy lives throughout their letters. What are some of the specific actions of holiness they are encouraging?

^{1Pe 2:9} But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

a. Serve God and our neighbors, declaring God’s praises

^{1Pe 2:17} Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

b. Love one other

^{1Pe 3:9} Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

c. Be forgiving

^{1Pe 4:7} The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

d. Be self-controlled (don’t indulge your sinful nature) and pray

^{1Pe 4:9} Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

e. Offer hospitality to one another

^{1Pe 4:10} Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

f. Use your spiritual gifts and talents to serve others

^{Col 1:10} And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God

g. Doing good works and growing in our knowledge of God

5. The Scriptures refer to two aspects of our holiness, our complete holiness in Christ by faith and our developing holiness in our daily actions and behaviors. How might focusing exclusively on Christ's holiness or on our efforts to be holy lead to an unhealthy spiritual view?

If we focus entirely on how Christ is our holiness, we might not see our own need to turn from our sinful behaviors, come to repentance, and seek God's forgiveness.

Suppose we focus on our own behaviors and measure our holiness by our own standards. In that case, we could become like the prideful Pharisees, or become weary with guilt and shame over our sins, possibly doubting our salvation in Christ. When looking to ourselves for our holiness, we do not enjoy the forgiveness, grace, and joy God has given to us through Christ.

6. In *Abide In Christ*, Andrew Murray gives an illustration of white robes to help us understand our struggle with sin and holiness. When we first come to Christ in faith, he clothes us in sparkling white robes, reflecting the brilliance of his holiness. As time goes on, our robes become stained and dirty. Oh, how we long for them to be white again. But how can we clean our spiritual robes?

We return to the cross. Some participants will respond with our need for repentance, which is partially true. But repentance does not forgive our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness; only the blood of Christ can do that. Daily, we must return to the foot of the cross to wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb, confessing our sins for what we have done and left undone, and have faith that Christ has forgiven and will forgive all our sins.

In Revelation, Jesus told the Apostle John, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14).

Christ as Our Redemption

7. In verses 18 and 19, Peter reminds believers they are redeemed from an empty life by Christ's sacrifice. What wonderful assurance we have to be redeemed from sin. Our complete redemption and deliverance from the consequences of sin as God's children was the purpose of Christ's incarnate life. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ, one perfect sacrifice for all people, for all time. Read the following scriptures and name the blessings we have in Christ's redemption.

^{Eph 1:7} In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

^{Eph 1:8} that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

- a. Verse 7 **Forgiveness of sins**

^{Gal 4:4} But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

^{Gal 4:5} to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

^{Gal 4:6} Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

^{Gal 4:7} So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

- b. Verse 5 **Full rights of sons (God's children)**
- c. Verse 6 **God's Spirit in our hearts**
- d. Verse 7 **Child of God**

^{Tit 2:13} while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

^{Tit 2:14} 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.

- e. Verse 14 **Redeemed from wickedness, purified, to be a God's people, and to do good**

- 8. In verses 1:23-2:3, Peter reminds us that our days are short, like withering grass, but our spiritual rebirth gives us the hope of eternal life. Therefore, in however many days we are given, we should rid ourselves of sinful behaviors and grow up to maturity. What qualities of spiritual maturity do you desire in your life?

Closing Prayer