







# HIGHER AIM

## A Call From Peter

*Answering The Call | Part 1 | 1 Peter 1:1-2*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What can you learn about servanthood from Peter's example that he set in following Jesus?
2. How does your perspective on life change knowing this world is not your home?
3. What is one practical way you can live to be a blessing to others this week?

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Hope

*Answering The Call | Part 2 | 1 Peter 1:3-12*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you consider yourself a hopeful person? Why or why not?
2. How would you define the difference between hope and faith?
3. When was a time you chose to have hope even when your circumstances seemed hopeless? How did God come through for you in this situation?

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Holiness

*Answering The Call | Part 3 | 1 Peter 1:13-21*

### 3. Celebrate Grace

If we have received Jesus Christ, we need to celebrate grace. The church should know what it is like to be full of grace. God's people need to learn what it means to be full of grace. It is to be given something they don't deserve. This includes respect, honor, applause, acceptance, and love. None of us deserve these things, but Jesus has chosen to give them to us. We need to be celebrators of grace.

### 4. Cut The Old Life Out And Let The New Life Flow

This statement is easier said than done, but it's exactly what we are called to do as Christians. But how do you get rid of your old life? Because you are in this skin suit, your flesh wants to be rebellious. So how do you get rid of those evil desires? Do you just discipline yourself? Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Thankfully, today's key passage speaks specifically about how to cut the old life out and let the new life flow.

- Set your mind on being an obedient child of God.
- Don't give in to how you used to live before you met Christ.
- Look to Jesus.

### 5. Cultivate A Personal Biblical Worldview

In verse 17, Peter says you are to live as a foreigner, as a stranger who is just traveling through life. The mentality is that you are just passing through. You are to look at this world and define how it should be based on what the Bible says, not what everyone likes. Who cares what Congress thinks? Who cares what the President thinks? You need to care about what Jesus thinks. This Scripture is saying to look at the world through the lens of the Lord's will and determine that you will live like that.

### 6. Confess Daily What Your Redemption Cost

Simon Peter says you weren't purchased by monetary means; you were purchased by the blood of Jesus. He is the Lamb, which is a phrase that all the Jews who were reading this understood. Jesus was and is our Passover Lamb. Therefore, God wants you to thank Him daily that He has saved you. With this knowledge, we should be eager to confess our sins to Him and thank Him for redeeming us and not leaving us separated from Him for eternity.

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Holiness

*Answering The Call | Part 3 | 1 Peter 1:13-21*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How would you define “grace” in your own words?
2. What is something about your old life that you need to cut out of your life now as you’re trying to follow Jesus and walk the path of holiness?
3. Do you struggle to prioritize what the Lord thinks over what other people think? Why do you think that is?

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To The Bible

*Answering The Call | Part 4 | 1 Peter 1:22-25*

### INTRODUCTION

We need to come to an understanding as to why we are called to the Bible. As we look at today's key passage, we are going to see that Simon Peter and God's Spirit are calling us to the Bible. Therefore, we need to know why we stand on the Bible. After all, without the Bible, we are just a social gathering. We are just here to encourage one another, rather than grow closer to the Lord. His Word is very powerful, and therefore we can confidently stand on it and root our faith in what it says.

### KEY POINTS

**1. We answer the call to the Bible because of our redemption.**

We stand on the Word of God because we got saved. In other words, our sins were forgiven. Sometimes, when we use words like "saved," people who have not been exposed to Christianity, will say, "Saved from what?" With "born again," they ask, "What does that mean?" "Redeemed" is another spiritual word. It means that all of your sins have been forgiven. They have been wiped off your slate. You are considered spotless, acceptable, clean, and loved, all because of what Jesus did for you on the cross. Do you know why I can say that with confidence? Because the Word of God says that.

**2. We answer the call to the Bible because it is true.**

Truth is very important. There are not two different truths. If there is a truth for you and a truth for me, that dichotomy is a lie! We are in a culture that is teaching that today. Our kids are taught falsehoods. If they believe something is okay for them, that's their truth. Another person could choose a different truth. Two different truths cannot exist side by side in the area of morality. In God's Word, there is only one truth! In 2 Timothy, it says this, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). I want you to know that the Bible is true. We can have confidence in that, and when we do, our faith grows.

To break it down for you even further, here are five reasons why the Bible is reliable and true:

- It is completely unique.
- It is scientifically accurate.
- It is prophetically accurate.

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To The Bible

*Answering The Call | Part 4 | 1 Peter 1:22-25*

- It is miraculously powerful.
- It is authoritatively demanding.

### 3. We answer the call to the Bible because it has changed our lives.

People come from many different backgrounds. But regardless of where you come from, if you have had an encounter with Jesus Christ, you are a believer. It has changed how you live, what you do, and what the priorities are in your life. In fact, the Bible tells us in 1 Peter that the reason why we love each other is because God has changed us.

We would not love others with care and selflessness if it were not for the power of Christ residing in us. In our flesh, we are selfish, self-focused human beings who love ourselves more than anything else. But when we surrender our lives to Christ and choose to live for Him, we love others with the love that we've been given in Christ, and that kind of love changes our lives forever.

### 4. We answer the call to the Bible because it lasts.

God's Word is the one thing that will never, ever change! Scripture tells us, "Grass and flesh will dry up and die, but the Word of God will remain forever." The only thing that will last is the Word of God. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew, "For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matthew 5:18).

### 5. We answer the call to the Bible because it's the best news on the planet.

Our key passage reads like this, "but the word of the Lord remains unto the age." This word preached is the Koine Greek word "Euaggelisthen." It is translated as "the Good News." The Bible is not trying to ruin your life or control your life. It is trying to keep you out of the ditches, keep you on the Interstate, and headed in the right direction. It is the Good News, and that should give us so much hope, comfort, and peace!

### Key Takeaways

1. Never apologize for what the Bible says; instead, declare it.
2. Refuse to be mad or irritated at friends who don't believe the Bible; remember, they need Jesus.
3. Thank the Lord daily for His Word.

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To The Bible

*Answering The Call | Part 4 | 1 Peter 1:22-25*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you regularly read your Bible? If not, what is keeping you from doing so?
2. How has God's Word changed your life?
3. Is there someone in your life who doesn't believe the Bible is true? If so, how can you show the love of Christ to them and pray for them this week?

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1

*Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12*

### INTRODUCTION

I don't know when you first felt the tug of the Spirit of God in your heart that drew you to Christ. I don't know how old you were when the light went on in your mind and in your soul that you were a sinner, and you desperately needed Jesus. If you have answered the call, and you have turned from your sin and placed your faith in Jesus, you are to continue answering that call. It is not just a one-time experience; salvation is a one-time experience that continues on. The lifestyle of continuing in the process of listening to Jesus, responding to Him, and allowing your life to be totally entwined with Him is an ongoing experience. So as we look at today's key passage, Peter is going to give us guidelines on how we can continue to answer the call.

### KEY POINTS

#### 1. Turn your back on your past.

In verse 1, Peter was referring to this concept of turning from sin and continuing to turn from sin. If you are going to answer the call to Christ, you must turn your back on your past. Your life is to be different. How you were before you met Christ is one thing, but now that you have given your life to Christ, there needs to be some progression. The only way that can happen is that you continue to answer the call to Jesus.

He is saying, "I want you to turn your back on your past." Can you remember how your life was before you met Christ? Do you remember the disobedience, the sin that was in your life, and the different desires that you had? Your life now is to be totally different. When you follow Christ, there must be a change in your life.

#### 2. Turn your direction toward discipleship.

As you continue to follow Jesus, you must make it a priority to get into the Word of God; the way you do this is to make discipleship important to you.

God doesn't want you to remain as a baby. That is not God's plan. God wants all of His children to mature and grow up in faith. He wants all of His children to move from eating apricot mash to T-bone steaks.

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1

*Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12*

But in order to experience that kind of growth and develop that kind of maturity, we need to take discipleship seriously. We need to read our Bibles, engage in Christian community, use our gifts and talents to serve others in the name of Jesus, and spend time in prayer, getting to know God on a deeper level. As we do these things on a regular basis, we will engage in discipleship and therefore grow and mature in our walks with Jesus.

### 3. Turn your eyes on Jesus.

If you want to answer the call to Jesus and His church (like Simon Peter is encouraging us to do), you need to turn your eyes on Jesus. Stop looking at the church and stop looking at other people in the church. Whatever you do, don't look at me, or any other pastor for that matter. I could fail you. I could say something or do something that would disappoint you. Other believers can do that, as well. Our focus is not to be on other believers; it is to be on Jesus!

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# HIGHER AIM

## **A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1**

*Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12*

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. Is there part of your past that you have yet to turn your back on since you made the decision to follow Jesus? If so, how can you begin to let that go?
2. Would you say that discipleship is important to you at this stage in your walk with Christ? Why or why not?
3. When was a time you looked to another person or to the church instead of looking at Jesus? What was the result of that decision?

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 2

Answering The Call | Part 6 | 1 Peter 2:1-12

### INTRODUCTION

As we are in the study of 1 Peter, we are answering the call, and that call is to Jesus and His church. We all need Jesus. And we need Him more and more every single day. Additionally, we also need the body of Christ. We need people in our lives who invest in us. We need the body of Christ to use their spiritual gifts to encourage us, help us, pray for us, and be there for us. So with this in mind, we're going to continue our conversation from last week on the way we answer the call to Jesus and His church.

### KEY POINTS

Last Week's Points:

1. Turn Your Back On Your Past
2. Turn Your Direction Toward Discipleship
3. Turn Your Eyes On Jesus

This Week's Points:

#### 1. Turn Your Mind On Your Position

How you see yourself is very important. As you read today's key Scripture passage again, I want you to focus on who you are. We often shame ourselves and put ourselves down, thinking that will help us when it really doesn't. God wants us to focus on our position so that we can be confident in who He says we are.

- "Living stones" built on the chief cornerstone
- "A spiritual house" built on the Rock, together with each other, built on Him
- "Chosen"
- "A holy priesthood offering sacrifices." All believers are priests...
- "A Holy Nation"
- "God's special possession with purpose"...to proclaim praise and declare that He called you from darkness to light.

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HIGHER AIM

**A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 2**

*Answering The Call | Part 6 | 1 Peter 2:1-12*

**2. Turn Your Life Inside Out**

In order to live a life that honors the Lord, you need to first focus on what's going on inside your heart. Address any sin that you haven't repented of. Surrender your will and your desires to the Lord. Make sure you are aligning your heart with His so that you can carry out His will for your life. Then after that, you want to turn your life inside out and focus on what's going on outside of you. In other words, focus on your witness. Are you living your life in a way that points others to Jesus? Can people tell you're a Christian by the way you act, think, and speak? These are all things you need to be focused on if you want to answer the call of the Holy Spirit and live a life fully surrendered to Christ.

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# HIGHER AIM

## **A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1**

*Answering The Call | Part 5 | 1 Peter 2:1-12*

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. How does what the Bible says about you differ from how you see yourself?
2. Is there anything inside your heart that needs to be addressed and realigned with the heart of God?
3. How confident are you that people can tell you're a Christian by the way you act, think, and speak?

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Submission

*Answering The Call | Part 7 | 1 Peter 2:13-25, 1 Peter 3:1-7*

### INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the issue of submission, we have battled with that since the Garden, and we still battle with it today. It is not a topic that is easy to preach about or teach about, but it's one worth teaching and preaching about because we are commanded to submit in God's Word. In this message, we are going to look at several principles regarding submission in order to gain a better understanding of what is required of us when we are told to submit, and as we do, we'll see how living a life of submission to Christ is always in our best interest.

### KEY POINTS

**When we answer the call to submission, we do several things:**

1. When we submit to authority, we honor God.
2. When we submit to an authority, we are exercising our freedom.
3. When we submit to an authority, we let our lives do the preaching.
4. When we submit to an authority, we are trusting God for all outcomes.
5. When we submit to an authority, we live without fear.
6. When we submit to an authority, we follow the example of Jesus.

**Living in submission means the following:**

1. Living in submission reveals just how secure you really are.
2. Living in submission means you don't retaliate.
3. Living in submission means you don't threaten.
4. Living in submission means you leave all things to the Judge.
5. Living in submission like Jesus means you are willing to suffer unjustly, without complaint, trusting God to use your life for His Kingdom.
6. When we submit to an authority, we will still wrestle with our desires.

**Jesus told His disciples three things about suffering:**

1. He would suffer.
2. He would suffer for others to provide a ransom and remission of sin.
3. All who would follow Him must be prepared to suffer.

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# HIGHER AIM

## A Call To Submission

*Answering The Call | Part 7 | 1 Peter 2:13-25, 1 Peter 3:1-7*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you find it difficult or easy to live a submissive lifestyle?
2. Which of the ways of living in submission do you need to work in your own life?
3. When was a time you suffered because of your choice to follow Jesus and be obedient to Him? What did you learn from that situation?

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# HIGHER AIM

## When Is It Right To Resist?

Answering The Call | Part 8 | 1 Peter 2:13-17

### INTRODUCTION

Today, we're going to be answering the question, "When is it right to resist?" Because we are men and women who love the Lord and love His Word, we are to design our lives and our behavior to align with the Word of God. And sometimes that might require that we resist the world and what it says for the sake of our faith and our beliefs. In order for us to understand resistance, we need to understand what the Bible describes. Let me give you several biblical examples of civil disobedience. I am not sharing this with you to get a crowd together to resist the government or to resist some individual. I want to give you some principles that you can use to guide your life.

### KEY POINTS

#### 1. Biblical Examples of Civil Disobedience

- Under Pharaoh's Reign
- In Jericho, Joshua 2 and the story of Rahab
- In Early Israel Under King Ahab
- In Israel before the invasion of Babylon
- In Babylon, the stories of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and Daniel
- New Testament Resistance

#### 2. Biblical Guidance for Resistance

- If you are going to resist, do so in order not to sin against God.
- If you are going to resist, do so in order to preserve life.
- If you are going to resist, do so in order to combat evil.
- If you are going to resist, do so, if at all possible, through the government system in place.
- If you are going to resist, do so, with an eye on your witness.
- If you are going to resist, do so, in prayer!
- If you are going to resist, do so, willing to pay the price for disobedience.

#### 3. Do Not Resist the Tug of the Holy Spirit!

You need to listen to the tug of the Spirit, especially if you feel led to resist. You need to make sure it is not your flesh that you are responding to, or your convenience that you are listening to, but rather to the tug of the Spirit of God. He will never lead you to do something that God has said, "Don't do." Don't resist the tug of the Holy Spirit.

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# HIGHER AIM

## **When Is It Right To Resist?**

*Answering The Call | Part 8 | 1 Peter 2:13-17*

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. When was a time you witnessed civil disobedience for the sake of Jesus Christ?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt the tug of the Holy Spirit to resist? How did you respond?
3. What can you learn from the people in Scripture who chose to follow God over submitting to the world's demands?

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# HIGHER AIM

## **The Ten B's of Godly Living - Part 1**

*Answering The Call | Part 9 | 1 Peter 4:1-19*

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. How can being different as a Christian make a difference in the lives of other people?
2. Which of the six aspects of being different comes pretty naturally for you? Which is the most difficult?
3. What is one practical step you can take this week to be different in the way you live your everyday life?

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# HIGHER AIM

## The Ten B's of Godly Living - Part 2

*Answering The Call | Part 10 | 1 Peter 4:1-19*

### INTRODUCTION

Last week, we looked at the first of the ten b's of godly living according to 1 Peter chapter 4. We talked about how being different can be a really good thing when you're a Christian because other people will notice and you will be able to share Jesus with them when they wonder why you're different. Today, we're going to continue down the list of the ten b's of godly living and see what else Simon Peter has to say to us about how to live a life that honors God and emulates Christ.

### KEY POINTS

#### 1. Be Different

- With Mind of Christ
- For the Will of God
- From your Past
- Regardless how Treated
- In View of Judgment
- In Gratitude

#### 2. Be Astute

We need to be astute believers. We need to know what the Word of God says about the last things. Many people have never studied eschatology, the study of the last things. They have never studied prophecy. They have never even looked at the Book of Revelation because of how confusing and intimidating it seems to be. But this is no excuse. We need to be diligent in learning about the end times so we are aware and prepared for what is to come.

Simon Peter is saying, "I want you to be astute. The end of all things is near." You might say, "He said that in the First Century, and it has been a long time." Yes, but they lived every day during that century as if Jesus was ready to come any day. We should strive to live in the very same way.

#### 3. Be Alert

In other words, the Scripture tells us we are to watch the culture and be alert to what is happening right now. The Scripture says, "I want you to be sober-minded. I want you to think clearly, not emotionally. I want you to think clearly on what the Scripture says, in light of what is happening in our culture."

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## The Ten B's of Godly Living - Part 2

*Answering The Call | Part 10 | 1 Peter 4:1-19*

With this in mind, we need to be careful not to get sucked into our culture because of the relationships we have with the people we love. I have watched this happen so many times over the years I've been in ministry. Young people often decide what is right and what is wrong based on what their friends determine is right and wrong. People who should know better suddenly make poor decisions. A person they love, whether it be a family member or one of their close friends, embraces a lifestyle that is the polar opposite of the Word of God and suddenly they think it's okay. They say, "I shouldn't be the judge, I just need to embrace them and say whatever they think is okay."

But this is not how we are commanded to live according to Scripture. The Bible says you need to be sober-minded. You need to know what is right and what is wrong, and that means being alert, as Simon Peter says in today's key passage.

### 4. Be Prayerful

Prayer is a very powerful thing because we do our best battling on our knees. When you read the last chapter of the Book of Ephesians, you realize that we are to be men and women who pray. While praying, we are saying, "God, it is up to you. It is up to you to protect my family, and to protect me. It is up to you, Father, to grab hold of someone's heart. It is up to you, God, to do the protection. It's up to you, God, to orchestrate where we go in the days to come. It's up to you, God, to heal my friend or to heal my spouse, or to heal my child. It's up to you, God, in all of these things, I seek you, Lord."

As many people have said, "Prayer is not so much trying to change the mind of God, but rather to align us with the mind of God." Have you ever been praying for something and you wanted it very badly? You were saying, "Oh God, I'm asking you to do this." In the middle of the prayer, God said, "In your spirit, in your heart, I'm glad you are praying about this, but I will do that."

It's a tough thing to completely surrender your wants and requests in order to submit to God. But when we pray with an open heart and the desire to live out His will for our lives, God will work in amazing ways through our prayers.

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# HIGHER AIM

## The Ten B's of Godly Living - Part 2

*Answering The Call | Part 10 | 1 Peter 4:1-19*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is one practical step you can take this week to be more astute?
2. Would you say you have a keen awareness of what is right and wrong according to God's Word? Or do you find yourself easily swayed by the beliefs and behaviors of those closest to you?
3. How is your prayer life right now? Is there something you can do to deepen and strengthen your prayer life?

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