



HIGHER AIM

A Call From Peter

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

INTRODUCTION

The book of 1 Peter was written to believers who were facing persecution. And it's important for us to understand this particular book of the Bible because as time goes on, we as Christians will face more and more persecution and opposition for what we believe. The Scripture that we will be studying will shake your heart, and help you understand what God has for you in the days to come. As believers, we could experience more and more persecution, as the Second Coming of Jesus approaches. Therefore it is absolutely vital that we take this Scripture and use it to prepare our hearts for what could be coming down the road.

KEY POINTS

1. The Servant

You can't read today's key passage without understanding that Peter cast a long shadow of influence and leadership in the early church. Peter's life was all about Jesus! His whole life was wrapped up in Jesus. He lived for Jesus. He spoke and proclaimed Christ. That is what he was all about; from the moment he followed Christ to the moment he would shut his eyes in death, his life was all about Jesus. He lived to serve His Savior, regardless of whatever opposition and persecution he faced. He was the picture of a true servant, and that's an example we should all strive to follow.

2. The Saints

"The Saints" are God's elect. Peter wrote the letter of 1 Peter to God's elect, the chosen. The Greek word, "eklektois" means "chosen." But what is very interesting is that these saints are described not only as chosen, but also they are called exiles. The Greek word here is an interesting word. The Greek word is, "parepidamous" which means an alien, a temporary resident. They are sojourners. Because of persecution from the Jews and Rome, they are temporary residents, or Jews living outside of Jerusalem or Palestine. This description is used to describe sojourners, people who are on a journey. They will walk with Christ all the way to heaven.

It is from this passage that we have the important reminder that this world is not your home! Peter's Letter captures this concept. We have to stop living like this world is our home. We are just passing through to have an influence upon this culture until God calls us home.

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3. The Salutation

There is a very common greeting that Peter says to the saints in his book, "Grace and peace be yours in abundance." The Greek word for Grace is "Charis" which means "God's unmerited favor." The Greek word for Peace is "Iranan." That's where we get the word "Irene." It means "Peace." It literally reads like this in the Koine Greek, "Grace to you and peace be multiplied to you."

Life Application

- God has a plan for your life.
- Knowing who you are in Christ is critical to your spiritual maturity.
- Live to be a blessing to others

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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?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Hope

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

INTRODUCTION

Hope is the belief that circumstances will get better. It's not a wish for things to get better -- it's the actual belief, the knowledge that things will get better, no matter how big or small. Today's key passage from 1 Peter 1 is a call to experience that kind of hope. God wants all of His children to live in hope. He does not want you to live hopelessly in this world. The poorest person is not he or she without a dollar; it is the person who is living without hope. I pray that as we go through this content together, you would get engaged with the hope that God has for you and live a rich, hope-filled life.

KEY POINTS

1. The Author Of Hope

Although hope can be learned, the only way it can be sustained is through the relationship you have with the Author of hope, and that is God. Scripture tells us, if you want your hope to last, you must make sure that you are plugged into the Author of hope. He is God the Father, through Jesus Christ.

2. The Pathway To Hope

The Scripture says, "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Salvation is the key to experiencing this everlasting hope that God wants you to have. This new birth in Christ produces a "living hope." The phrase, "living hope" is in the present active participle, which means it is continuous. This living hope continues to pump through your veins, through your heart, and through your mind. And it comes as a result of your relationship with Jesus Christ, who was resurrected from the dead. Without Him, there is no pathway to hope.

3. The Future Of Hope

The Scripture continues talking about "The Future of Hope." It literally says, "You have an inheritance; your focus is on the future inheritance." The Greek word here is, "Kleronoman." It is an old Greek word describing, "Property received by the heir from the benefactor." This is a picture of God's wealth. He is our benefactor, and we are heirs of what He has. Our inheritance is coming from Him. God owns everything! And we can have hope because of that truth!

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4. The Testing Of Hope

Hope gets tested in life. You will definitely go through testing times in your life. An immature or unbiblical believer might think that once you give your life to Christ, everything will be great. Everything will be roses. You will always have money in your bank account. You won't have any problems. God will make you healthy, wealthy, and extremely wise. But think again! Part of following Jesus is enduring trials and suffering. But we don't have to let these hard times get the best of us because we have hope in Jesus Christ!

5. The Power Of Hope

Hope doesn't have to see it right now. Hope flows out of faith. Hope produces joy. Hope is the indescribable gift that glorifies God in the middle of what you are experiencing. Because you see the purpose of that tribulation, you realize that God is creating a platform for you to shine for His Glory. When you go through pain, sorrow, and challenges in your life, it brings glory and honor to Jesus Christ. People will see your light shine. You don't have to make a big deal out of it. They watch you; they see it, feel it, and sense it. That brings glory and honor to Christ because you are pointing people back to His power!

6. The Revelation Of Hope

We can read the revelation of hope by reading Scripture and seeing with the prophets in the Bible had to say. This is what Peter points us to in today's key passage when he specifically points out the prophets and what they had to say. I would encourage you to go back and do your own study of Scripture, specifically the Old Testament to see what the prophets had to say about hope.

Life Application

- If you need hope, make sure you are a believer.
- If you need hope, ask God to allow it to come alive in you.
- If you need hope, find other believers who are living victoriously, in spite of the odds.
- If you need hope, ask God to give you insight as to how He is using your present situation to make an impact for eternity.
- If you need hope, press on toward the future, refusing to look in the rear-view mirror.

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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?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Holiness

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

INTRODUCTION

Even though Peter might be one of the most “famous” people in the Bible, he was the furthest thing from a goody-two-shoes. In fact, he was probably considered to be a pretty unlikely choice to be one of Jesus’ disciples. Nevertheless, Jesus chose him. After Peter began to follow Christ, he learned what it meant to be a disciple. He wasn't perfect. In fact, God chose a very imperfect man to lead the first megachurch that ever existed on this planet. After all, Peter was the very man who denied Jesus three times. He even used profanity to deny him the last time! After he repented, God used him to bring thousands of people to faith in Christ. Slowly but surely, this man moved toward purity and holiness. The man who was once full of himself learned to be humble. He could take a rebuke and still keep on following Christ. Years later, this very same man is calling (through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) for us to live differently from the evil culture in which we exist. So right now, we’re going to take a look at what Peter says on how we are to fulfill our calling to be holy.

KEY POINTS

1. Choose To Live Out Of Our Living Hope

The only way you will be able to sustain a lifestyle of holiness is to live out of the hope that you have in Christ Jesus. It is out of your relationship with Him that the lifestyle which God wants you to have is produced.

In other words, stop trying to be holy in your own strength. Instead, follow the desire on the inside of your heart as you keep your eyes on Jesus. Allow that to be your focus, not your works. If you try to do holy things, you will be frustrated. You will find yourself being manipulated by your own mind. God wants you to live in accordance with His Word and His Spirit so that you can show others how to be holy only by the power of Christ in you.

2. Come To Attention

To come to attention means to come to a place where your mind is fully alert. And that’s what Peter is calling us to do. When he uses the phrase, “fully sober,” in today’s key text, he is not talking about drunkenness at all. He is talking about focusing your mind. To put it in basic terms, Peter is saying, “I want you to get yourself together. I want you to get serious about walking this path of holiness. Stop playing around! I want you to perfectly get your mind together in this focus of being holy.”

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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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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?

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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A Call To The Bible

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- 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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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?

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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A Call To Jesus and The Church - Part 1

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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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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?

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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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?

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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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?

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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When Is It Right To Resist?

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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?

HIGHER AIM

The Ten B's of Godly Living - Part 1

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

INTRODUCTION

In 1 Peter chapter 4, Simon Peter lists what I could call the ten b's of godly living. So over the next few weeks, we are going to be breaking down these ten b's and looking at how we can live a godly life according to Peter's words in his first epistle. Let's dive in!

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

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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?

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.

NOTES

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?

HIGHER AIM

The 10 B's Of Godly Living - Part 3

Answering The Call | Part 11 | 1 Peter 4:1-19

INTRODUCTION

The fourth chapter of 1 Peter gives us a wonderful picture of what God desires for us to do in godly living. As we continue our conversation on the 10 B's of godly living, we're going to dive deeper into this chapter of Scripture and learn more about how to live a life that honors the Lord and emulates Christ.

KEY POINTS

1. Be Loving

There is an interesting phrase in Scripture that few of us really understand. It follows the command that says, "for love covers a multitude of sins." Do you know what that is saying? It is saying that if you are really loving, you will be able to see past those things that rub you wrong. In other words, you don't just love the people who compliment you or who make you laugh. You don't just love those who give you joy or help you in your walk with Christ.

We are also called to love people who chafe us. We are to get over those things that bother us and get under our skin. Often the first thing we want to do is run to get them out of our lives. But the sooner we embrace people like that, the sooner God will help us move toward maturity. If we want to live a godly life, we have to learn to be loving.

2. Be Hospitable

Being hospitable means opening your home to someone without grumbling or complaining. But why is this required to live a godly life? I'll tell you why. Hospitality opens the door for evangelism.

Have you ever thought that if someone came and stayed at your house, you would have time with them? You would have breakfast with them, maybe lunch, and possibly dinner with them. That would give you multiple opportunities to find out where they are in their life and in their walk with God. So with this in mind, Peter is saying, as you open your house, there will be opportunities to share Christ with others, and we need to take those opportunities when they arise.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

The 10 B's Of Godly Living - Part 3

Answering The Call | Part 11 | 1 Peter 4:1-19

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. When was a time you tried to love someone even though they got under your skin or frustrated you? What was the outcome of that decision?
2. Would you consider yourself a loving person? A hospitable person? Why or why not?
3. How can you take a step towards hospitality and opening your home to someone this week so that you can open the door for conversation about their life and their relationship with Jesus?

HIGHER AIM

The 10 B's Of Godly Living - Part 4

Answering The Call | Part 12 | 1 Peter 4:1-19

INTRODUCTION

As we continue our conversation on the 10 B's of godly living, we're going to continue breaking down the list of things Peter outlines for us in 1 Peter 4 so that we might live a life that honors and glorifies God. This week, we're specifically going to talk about serving, so let's dive in.

KEY POINTS

- 1. Be Different**
- 2. Be Astute**
- 3. Be Alert**
- 4. Be Prayerful**
- 5. Be Loving**
- 6. Be Hospitable**
- 7. Be Serving**

Different Types of Spiritual Gifts

- Gifted men to the church
- Sign gifts
- Ministry gifts

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

The 10 B's Of Godly Living - Part 4

Answering The Call | Part 12 | 1 Peter 4:1-19

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How are you currently serving others in obedience to Christ?
2. If you're not currently serving in some capacity, what is holding you back from doing so?
3. Which of the ministry gifts that Dr. Dodd spoke of are you strongest in? How can you use those gifts to serve the Lord and minister to others?

HIGHER AIM

The 10 B's Of Godly Living - Part 5

Answering The Call | Part 13 | 1 Peter 4:1-19

INTRODUCTION

Today we are wrapping up our conversation on the 10 B's of Godly Living. We're going to conclude Peter's list of ways to live a godly life by talking about the importance of being mindful, being insightful, and being joyful. Let's dive in.

NOTES

KEY POINTS

1. Be Different
2. Be Astute
3. Be Alert
4. Be Prayerful
5. Be Loving
6. Be Hospitable
7. Be Serving
8. Be Mindful
9. Be Insightful
10. Be Joyful

- 3 Challenges:**
- Dig into commitment
 - Dig up sin
 - Dig out

HIGHER AIM

The 10 B's Of Godly Living - Part 5

Answering The Call | Part 13 | 1 Peter 4:1-19

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you find it hard to be joyful when your circumstances are difficult? How can you lean into the joy you have in Christ when life is hard?
2. When was an instance where you were surprised by tough times after you became a Christian?
3. Which of the 10 B's of Godly Living do you want to start working on more diligently as you follow Christ?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Fearless Living

Answering The Call | Part 14 | 1 Peter 3:13-22

INTRODUCTION

Many believers don't know what it means to live fearlessly. If there is anyone who has the encouragement and the right to live fearlessly, it is believers. But what does it look like to live fearlessly? That's exactly what we're going to look at in today's message.

KEY POINTS

1. A Fearless Heart

In verses 13 -15, we realize that living fearlessly calls for a fearless heart. This passage is very interesting when it says, "You should not be afraid of anyone." In fact, the Scripture says, "Do not be frightened of them."

We are not to fear other people. Don't allow the truth of Scripture to be hidden from other people. You need to enter into the conversation and be willing to stand up for what you believe in fearlessly. Do not be afraid of what other people may think of you, even though they might defame you or say untrue things about you. Stand firm in your faith and embrace the fearlessness that is yours through the Holy Spirit.

2. A Fearless Voice

In verse 15, the Scripture says, "Be prepared to give an answer... Always be able to give an apology for the hope that is in us." We are not apologizing for the hope. We are not saying, "I'm so sorry that this hope is in me," but rather we are giving a defense of what that word means. "Apologetics" means to give a defense for the hope that you have. In other words, we are to have a spoken, verbalized defense for what we believe. This is what it means to have a fearless voice.

3. A Fearless Resolve

You may not suffer for doing right, and you might not pay a price with your life for standing on the Word of God. However, you may. The heat in our culture is getting hotter and hotter. I really believe the pushback in our culture is drawing the battle lines as never before.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Fearless Living

Answering The Call | Part 14 | 1 Peter 3:13-22

As believers, we need to realize we are in the battle whether we like it or not. The battle lines and the trenches will get deeper and deeper. This is not a political war; this is a moral war taking place in our culture. God is choosing people who will abide by His agenda, not the evil one's agenda. And to abide by His agenda, we need to have a fearless resolve.

4. A Fearless Proclamation

The fearless proclamation that is discussed in today's key passage is regarding baptism. Many people need to get their baptism in order. Why is that? Because it is a fearless proclamation to tell everyone, "I am a follower of Jesus, and I want you to know that I identify with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. I identify with you who know Christ." When you choose to be baptized, you are fearlessly going public and proclaiming your decision to follow Jesus. That's the kind of fearless proclamation we're called to make when we surrender our lives to Christ.

5. A Fearless Confidence

The Bible says, "Jesus is Lord." We need to always identify with Christ in every way, shape, and form. We are to pray in His name. We are to live in His name. We are to share the Gospel in His name, for His Kingdom. And we can do all of these things with confidence because of who Jesus is and because we have His Holy Spirit living within us!

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Fearless Living

Answering The Call | Part 14 | 1 Peter 3:13-22

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you struggle with being fearless when it comes to your faith? Why or why not?
2. Have you made a fearless proclamation of your faith through baptism? If not, what is holding you back?
3. How can you practice having a fearless voice and talking about the hope you have in Christ?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Leadership (Part 1)

Answering The Call | Part 15 | 1 Peter 5:1-4

INTRODUCTION

The Bible has a lot to say about leadership. More specifically, we can learn about how to lead people well by watching how Jesus led people. So over the next couple of weeks, we're going to discuss several biblical truths surrounding leadership so that we can learn how to be godly leaders.

NOTES

KEY POINTS

1. God's leaders should always be team players.

A mature leader realizes that they can't do it all. It is a healthy thing to have teams. Many people burn out in ministry because they try to do it all by themselves. The reality is that none of us can do everything. All of us must get a chance to share a small part here and there. Regardless of what you do in ministry, you have a responsibility to develop team leaders as well as to lead others.

2. God's leaders must act like shepherds.

The relationship between shepherds and sheep in biblical times is well known. Sheep were more than a business. They were treated like family and many sheep would spend their entire lives under the care of one shepherd.

The Bible talks about the sheep knowing the shepherd's voice. When Jesus says, "My children know My voice," it is describing this beautiful, wonderful relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. The sheep knew their shepherd would protect them, that he would make sure they had plenty of food, plenty of cool water, and ample shade when it was time to rest. We as leaders should have this same mentality when it comes to how we think about the people we're leading.

3. God's leaders must have willing hearts.

The Scripture says that God wants His shepherds and His elders to lead with a desire and a want to lead. They should not be leading because they feel pressured to lead. People follow other people who enjoy serving.

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Leadership (Part 1)

Answering The Call | Part 15 | 1 Peter 5:1-4

The pressure to lead out of guilt or shame is an improper motivation to serve. I don't believe it's ever a good idea to use guilt, shame, or coercion to get people to serve or to lead. If I have to motivate you by guilt or shame, you will not lead for very long. That is not the proper motivation to sustain you. Instead, in order to be a godly leader, you must have a willing heart to lead.

NOTES

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Leadership (Part 1)

Answering The Call | Part 15 | 1 Peter 5:1-4

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Would you consider yourself a team player? Or do you find it difficult to delegate and lean on others?
2. What is a practical example of shepherding others like Jesus did?
3. Do you have a willing heart to lead? Or do you often feel guilty or shamed into positions of leadership?

HIGHER AIM

A Call To Leadership (Part 2)

Answering The Call | Part 16 | 1 Peter 5:1-4

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. When was a time you faced an ethical dilemma? How did you respond? What did you learn from that situation?
2. Are you passionate about where/how you're serving right now? Why or why not?
3. How can you set an example for other believers this week as you are "becoming" a leader?
