

The Discipline of Holiness (1 Peter 1:13-21)

BIG IDEA: *Because believers belong to a holy God and have been redeemed by Christ, they are called to pursue holiness in every area of life.*

WHAT IS TRUE & WHAT TO DO: *Holiness is not optional for the Christian. God has saved us to belong to Him, to reflect His character, and to live differently from the world. Set your mind on Christ rather than worldly desires. Treat sin seriously because it cost Christ His life. Cultivate habits that strengthen holiness and weaken the pull of sin. Our holiness is rooted in the precious blood of Christ, which redeemed us from our former way of life. We do not pursue holiness to earn salvation, but because Christ has purchased us for God.*

CONTEXT: *Peter is writing to believers who are living as exiles in a hostile world. They belong to God, but they are surrounded by a culture that does not share God's values. That means they must learn how to live differently without losing heart. And in some ways, this passage continues what we saw last week in Galatians 5. Last week, we saw that spiritual maturity is not produced by the flesh, but by walking by the Spirit. The Spirit produces Christlike character in God's people. Now Peter points us to the same truth: if God is holy and we belong to Him, then our lives should increasingly reflect His holy character. Holiness is not a separate subject from walking by the Spirit. It is one of its clearest results. The Spirit leads us away from sin and toward the holy character of God. Therefore, the discipline of holiness requires the Holy Spirit and should involve at least the following four components:*

1. PREPARE YOUR MIND FOR A HOLY LIFE (V. 13)

A. Holiness begins in the mind or thinking

- Holiness does not begin merely with outward behavior, but with how we think. Peter says, "with your minds ready for action."
- A careless mind will lead to a careless life. Before sin shows up in conduct, it often takes root in thoughts, desires, and imagination

B. Holiness requires spiritual alertness

- Peter says, "Be sober-minded." This means spiritual seriousness, alertness, and clear thinking. The Christian is not to drift through life half-awake spiritually. We must not let the world, family, friends, entertainment, emotions, or cravings dull our spiritual judgment.

C. Holiness grows when our hope is fixed on Christ

- Peter says, "set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Hope directs the heart, and if our hope is set on comfort, pleasure, success, or acceptance, holiness will always feel like a burden. But when our hope is fixed on Christ and His coming grace, holiness begins to make sense.

D. Application: What is filling my mind every day? Are my thoughts being shaped more by Christ or by the world? By my friends? desires? family? Begin each day with a conscious effort to set your mind on Christ. Fill your mind with Scripture, not just noise. Holiness becomes harder when your mind is distracted.

2. REFUSE THE PULL OF YOUR FORMER DESIRES (V. 14)

A. Believers are called to live as obedient children

- Peter says, "As obedient children." Obeying is not how we become God's children, but how His children live. Holiness flows from our relationship w/God.

B. Christians must not be shaped by former sinful desires

- Peter says, "Do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance."
- Before Christ, we were shaped by sinful desires because we did not know God rightly. Peter is saying: Do not go back to the mold you came out of.

C. Old desires still pull, but they are no longer to rule

- Old habits, old cravings, old thought patterns, and old sins may still tempt us. But Christians are not called to return to the patterns Christ saved them from

D. Application: Be honest about what your "former desires" were or still are. Do not romanticize your old life. Do not treat former sins as harmless memories. Ask: Where am I still being squeezed into the world's mold?

3. PURSUE HOLINESS BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY (VV. 15–16)

A. Holiness is rooted in God's character

- Peter says, "But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy." The standard for holiness is not culture, tradition, or comparison with other people. The standard is God Himself.

B. Holiness means being set apart unto God

- Holiness is not just avoiding bad things. Holiness means belonging to God, reflecting His character, and living differently because you are His. It is both separation from sin and devotion to God.

C. Holiness is to touch every area of life

- Peter says, "in all your conduct..." Holiness is not just for church attendance, Bible study, or public worship. It applies to speech, attitudes, entertainment, work ethic, relationships, thought life, sexuality, money, and private habits

D. God's command is clear

- Peter quotes Scripture: "Be holy, because I am holy." This is not a suggestion for especially mature Christians. This is the calling of every believer.

E. Application: Ask: What does holiness look like in my actual life? Is it in how I speak to my spouse? In what I watch? In how I treat coworkers? In how I handle stress? In what I laugh at? In what I hide? Holiness is not mainly about appearing religious. It is about increasingly reflecting the character of the God who saved you.

4. LIVE REVERENTLY BECAUSE YOU WERE REDEEMED BY CHRIST'S PRECIOUS BLOOD (VV. 17–21)

A. God's fatherly love does not cancel His holy judgment (v. 17)

- Peter says, "If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially [...] conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers." God is our Father, but He is not casual about sin. Reverence belongs in the Christian life.

B. Holiness matters because your salvation cost something precious (vv. 18–19)

- We were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold. We were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb." This is one of the strongest motivations for holiness in the passage. Sin is serious because it cost Christ His life to save us from it

C. Christ redeemed us from our empty former way of life

- Life apart from Christ may be busy, admired, and even religious, but in the end, it is empty. Christ did not redeem us so we could live in spiritual emptiness.

D. Christ's redeeming work was God's eternal plan and our present hope (vv. 20–21). Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world. He was revealed for our sake. Through Him, we believe in God. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. Therefore, our faith and hope are in God.

A. Application: Treat sin seriously because Christ's blood was precious. When tempted, do not ask, "What's wrong with this?" Ask, "Why would I toy with what Jesus died to redeem me from?" Let the cross teach you how ugly sin is and how precious grace is. Holiness is not cold duty; it is the grateful response of the redeemed in Christ.