

1 Peter 1:13 - 2:3 ~ The Call to Holiness ~ Discussion Questions

1. In the first century, what did “prepare for action” mean? Today, how do you go about “preparing your mind for action?” (1 Peter 1:13)
2. Why does Peter call his readers, “children?” (1 Peter 1:4, Romans 8:15) For you personally, what would be included in the warning “do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance?” (1:14)
3. What are the five things Peter encourages us to do (1:13-15). What sense of progression do you get from these? Which of these is hardest for you to do?
4. Verse 1:15 says, “Be holy in all you do.” What does it mean for you to be *holy*? (Leviticus 11:44-45, Galatians 2:20, John 14:21)
5. Can the statement, “You shall be holy,” (1:16) be understood as both a command and a promise?
6. Verse 1:17 has three ideas: A) God judges impartially (Acts 10:34), B) live as strangers here, and C) live in reverent fear (Hebrews 12:28, Proverbs 1:7). In everyday terms, what do these things mean?
7. With what are believers redeemed from their sins? What does “redeemed” mean? (Exodus 21:30) From what are believers redeemed? (Gal 3:13, Titus 2:14)
8. Consider all the things in your life which are “perishable.” For which of these would you want to get some kind of insurance? Which things in your life are imperishable? How do you budget your time and energy with regard to what is perishable or imperishable?
9. When was Christ chosen? Do you think God knew how humans were going to be before he created them? (Rev 13:8) When are the “last times?” (1:20, Is 2:2)
10. How had these Christians purified themselves? What truth should we obey in order to purify ourselves? (1:21-22)
11. What did Peter say would come out of believing the truth in God and purifying yourself? (1:22, John 13:34-35, 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10) In these verses, who did Jesus, Peter, and Paul say you should love?
12. Here again, we have the idea of being “born again.” (1:23) How exactly are you born again? (John 3:1-21, Titus 3:5, James 1:18) Have you been born again? Do you feel reluctant to tell others you are a born again Christian?

13. What lasts forever? (1:24-25, Isaiah 40:6-8)
14. The word “therefore” connects Chapter 2 with what idea from the previous verses? (1:23 - 2:3)
15. Of what did Peter urge us to rid ourselves? (2:1, Ephesians 4:31-32) How do you do this?
16. What does “crave” mean? What do you crave? What should you crave? (2:2)
17. How should we satisfy our spiritual craving or longing?
18. At what stage in your Christianity would you say that you are? A “newborn baby?” An “obedient child?” (1:14) Someone with sincere, deep love for others? (1:22) Someone who has “grown into salvation?” (2:2) In what ways have you seen your spiritual life grow?
19. Go back and read Verses 1:14 and 1:18-19 from the perspective of someone who is not a Christian. How would a non-Christian respond to them? Better yet, how would you explain them to a non-Christian?

1 Peter 1:13 - 2:3 ~ The Call to Holiness ~ Leader's Guide

1. In the first century, what did “prepare for action” mean? Today, how do you go about “preparing your mind for action?” (1:13)

First, we should note the word “therefore” in verse 13 shows that Peter believed that the following exhortation was the logical consequence of the blessing of verses 3-12.

In the language of the first century, “prepare for action” meant that people should literally gather up their long, flowing robes and tie them around their waists so they did not impede one’s movements; then you are ready for physical action. Second, the command “be self-controlled” [NIV] or “discipline yourselves” [NSRV] meant literally that one should be perfectly sober. You may think of the word sober as the opposite of intoxication, but in the NT it denotes ‘complete clarity of mind and its resulting good judgment.’ ” Peter seemed convinced that sound thinking was a necessarily prerequisite for holy living.

Remember last time we said the meaning of hope as used in the NT and by Peter meant a guaranteed assurance, *not* wishful thinking as we commonly think of it today. So the second part of that verse, “set your hope on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed,” actually suggests that the promised grace can already begin to be experienced, now or in the near future. Ultimately, that grace means deliverance from sin and a state of complete blessedness. But remember, hope must be totally focused on grace.

How do you prepare your mind for action today? Empty it of extraneous thoughts, focus only on what is to be done, say a prayer, think ahead, equip yourself with the needed tools, take one step at a time, be confident. What else?

2. Why does Peter call his readers, “children?” For you personally, what would be included in the warning “do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance?” (1:14)

Peter uses the word, “children” several places in his letter. By that he means that Christians, born into the family of God (verses 1:3, 23) are children of their heavenly Father. How did Jesus teach us all to pray? To “our Father in heaven.” Believers are also described as being heirs of God and adopted into God’s family. Romans 8:15 – For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.[or “you have been adopted”] And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

What evil desires did you have before becoming a Christian or before reading the Bible? Did you give into these desires? Do some of these desires or temptations still sneak up on you? Did becoming a Christian magically rid you of all temptation and evil desires?

3. What are the five things Peter encourages us to do (1:13-15). What sense of progression do you get from these? Which of these is hardest for you to do?

- A. Prepare yourself for action
- B. Be self-controlled
- C. Set your hope on the grace to be given to you when Jesus is revealed
- D. Do not conform to the evil desires you had (i.e., do not give into temptation)
- E. Be holy in all you do

You might see a sixth thing in Verse 14 where Peter suggests that we must be obedient children. He then defines that obedience as not being conformed to the desires that you previously had in your ignorance. Here, Peter uses the same word, “conform” as Paul did in Romans 12:2 – Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Certainly there is a progression. God calls us to be holy because he is holy and we are now part of his holy family. But you can’t start there; that’s the end. To be holy is to be set apart—separated from sin and impurity and set apart to God. The complete moral perfection of God should move his children to strive for moral purity. Holiness has the idea of separateness; Peter’s readers and we Christians today are to be people set apart for God from the surrounding culture.

Furthermore, the idea that this holiness is to be expressed in our conduct is one of the pervading and repeated themes of this letter.

Which of these steps is the most difficult for you?

4. Verse 1:15 says, “Be holy in all you do.” What does it mean for you to be holy? (Leviticus 11:44-45, Galatians 2:20, John 14:21)

Peter’s words are nearly identical to those in Leviticus, but that really doesn’t help us much in knowing how to be holy.

Leviticus 11:44-45 – I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

Galatians 2:20 – so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me. [GNT]

Paul gets us a little closer with his letter to the Galatians, but John couldn’t be clearer.

John 14:21 – “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

There are 50 specific commands of Christ (see lesson on them and next page).

50 Commands of Christ - Summary List

1. **Repent**—*Matthew 4:17, Luke 13:3*
2. **Let not your heart be troubled**—*John 14:27, John 16:33, Matthew 6:25-26, Philippians 4:6-7*
3. **Follow me**—*Matthew 4:19*
4. **Rejoice**—*Matthew 5:12, (Also 2 Corinthians 6:10, 12:10, James 1:2-4)*
5. **Let your light shine**—*Matthew 5:16*
6. **Honor God's law**—*Matthew 5:17-19*
7. **Be reconciled**—*Matthew 5:24-25*
8. **Do not commit adultery**—*Matthew 5:27-30*
9. **Keep your word**—*Matthew 5:33-37*
10. **Go the second mile**—*Matthew 5:38-42*
11. **Love your enemies**—*Matthew 5:44*
12. **Be perfect**—*Matthew 5:48*
13. **Practice secret disciplines (giving, praying, fasting)**—*Matthew 6:1-18*
14. **Lay up treasures in heaven**—*Matthew 6:19-21*
15. **Seek first the kingdom of God**—*Matthew 6:33*
16. **Judge not**—*Matthew 7:1-2*
17. **Do not throw your pearls to pigs**—*Matthew 7:6*
18. **Ask, seek, and knock**—*Matthew 7:7-8*
19. **Do unto others**—*Matthew 7:12*
20. **Choose the narrow way**—*Matthew 7:13-14*
21. **Beware of false prophets**—*Matthew 7:15*
22. **Pray for those who spread the word**—*Matthew 9:37-38*
23. **Be as shrewd as serpents**—*Matthew 10:16. (Also Romans 16:19)*
24. **Fear God. Do not fear man**—*Matthew 10:28 (Also Luke 12:4-5)*
25. **Listen to God's voice**—*Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43, Mark 4:23, Luke 14:35, 1 Kings 19:11-13*
26. **Take my yoke**—*Matthew 11:29*
27. **Honor your parents**—*Matthew 15:4*
28. **Beware of false teaching**—*Matthew 16:6, 11-12*
29. **Deny yourself**—*Luke 9:23 (Also Matthew 10:38 and Mark 8:34)*
30. **Do not despise little ones**—*Matthew 18:10*
31. **Go to Christians who offend you**—*Matthew 18:15 (Also Galatians 6:1)*
32. **Forgive offenders**—*Matthew 18:21-22 (Also Proverbs 19:11)*
33. **Beware of covetousness**—*Luke 12:15*
34. **Honor marriage**—*Matthew 19:6, 19:9*
35. **Lead by being a servant**—*Matthew 20:26-28*
36. **Make the church a house of prayer for all nations**—*Mark 11:17*
37. **Pray in faith**—*Matthew 21:21-22, John 15:7*
38. **Bring in the poor**—*Luke 14:12-14*
39. **Render unto Caesar**—*Matthew 22:19-21*
40. **Love the Lord**—*Matthew 22:37-38*
41. **Love your neighbor**—*Matthew 22:39*
42. **Be born again**—*John 3:7*
43. **Await my return**—*Matthew 24:42-44*
44. **Celebrate the Lord's supper**—*Matthew 26:26-27*
45. **Watch and pray**—*Matthew 26:41*
46. **Keep my commandments**—*John 14:15*
47. **Feed my sheep**—*John 21:15-16*
48. **Make and baptize disciples**—*Matthew 28:19*
49. **Teach disciples to obey**—*Matthew 28:20*
50. **Receive God's power**—*Luke 24:49*

6. Verse 1:17 has three ideas: A) God judges impartially, B) live as strangers here, and C) live in reverent fear (Hebrews 12:28) What do these things mean?

A) Impartiality. Acts 10:34 – Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.” God does not favor people because of their station or position in life, their nationality, or their possessions. He does respect their character and judges their work (or deeds). And make no mistake about it, your deeds here on earth will be judged.

2 Corinthians 5:10 – For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

B) Strangers here. Peter first said that back in 1:1 (we are strangers in the world), i.e., we people temporarily reside on earth, but our real home is heaven.

C) Live in reverent fear. Not terror, but wholesome reverence and respect for God., which is the basis for all Godly living.

Hebrews 12:28 – Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Proverbs 1:7 – The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools [those who are morally deficient] despise wisdom and discipline.

7. With what are believers redeemed from their sins? What does “redeemed” mean? (Exodus 21:30) From What are believers redeemed? (Gal 3:13, Titus 2:14)

Believers are redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1:19) In the Bible, to redeem means to free someone from something bad by paying a penalty or ransom.

Exodus 21:30 – However, if payment is demanded of him, he may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded.

In the Greek world, a slave could be redeemed by the payment of a price, either by someone else or by the slave himself. Similarly, Jesus redeems believers from the “curse of the law” (Gal 3:13) and “all wickedness” (Titus 2:14). The ransom price is not silver or gold, but Christ’s blood, i.e., his death. The ultimate result is forgiveness of our sins and “justification” which means being declared righteous (or being right with God).

Galatians 3:13 – Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” [Deut 21:23]

Titus 2:11-14 – ¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 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.

8. Consider all the things in your life which are “perishable.” For which of these would you want to get some kind of insurance? Which things in your life are

imperishable? How do you budget your time and energy with regard to what is perishable or imperishable?

9. When was Christ chosen? Do you think God knew how humans were going to be before he created them? (Rev 13:8) When are the “last times?” (1:20, Is 2:2)

According to Peter, Christ was chosen “before the creation of the world.”

Rev 13:8 – All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have *not* been written from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain.

Another interpretation of “chosen” is that in the eternity past, God chose Christ as redeemer.

There are scores of references throughout the Bible to “last times.”(James 5:3, Acts 2:17, 1 Tim 4:1, 2 Tim 3:1, Heb 1:1-2, 1 John 2:18, etc.) The reference in Isaiah 2:2 seems closest in this case where “last days” seems to refer to the Messianic era. In other words, the last days began with the first coming of Christ and will be completely fulfilled at his second coming. Which means, of course, that we are in the last times right now.

10. How had these Christians purified themselves? What truth should we obey in order to purify ourselves? (1:21-22, James 2:14, 18, 24)

They had purified themselves by believing that Christ was chosen by God to redeem them his death and resurrection. “Obeying the truth” means showing that you believe, or show your faith, by obeying the commands of Christ.

James 2:14 – What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

James 2:18 – But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

James 2:24 – You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

11. What did Peter say would come out of believing the truth in God and purifying yourself? (1:22, John 13:34-35, 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10) In these verses, who did Jesus, Peter, and Paul say you should love?

Peter said “obeying the truth” (or showing your faith would result in a sincere love for your brothers.

John 13:34-35 – “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 – Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.

References to brothers, especially loving your brother, can frequently be interpreted in several ways. Believe it or not, loving your “brother” is generally

best interpreted as loving other Christians or believers. Even in Jesus' own teaching and the New Testament as a whole, there is a progression over time in relating to, loving, and reaching out to other Jews, to Jewish leaders, to Jewish believers in Christ, to Gentiles, and finally to "all mankind."

12. Here again, we have the idea of being "born again." How exactly are you born again? (John 3:1-21, Titus 3:5, James 1:18) Have you been born again? Do you feel reluctant to tell others you are a born again Christian?

In John 3:1-21, Jesus explained the concept of God's love and being born again to Nicodemus basically saying that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water (baptism) and the (Holy) Spirit. In Verse 1:23, Peter says you are born again...through the...word of God. This new birth (or spiritual regeneration) comes about through the direct action of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, Titus 3:5), but the word of God also plays an important role (James 1:18) for it presents the gospel to sinners and calls upon them to repent and believe in Christ.

Titus 3:5 – he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

James 1:18 – He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created

People in society today, perhaps aided by some boisterous and less-than-stellar born again Christian leaders often have a negative view of someone who says he is born again. According to a 2002 study by the Barna Group, a representative sample of non-Christians, the image of "evangelicals" or "born again" rated tenth out of eleven groups evaluated, beating out only prostitutes. Military officers, ministers, Democrats, real estate agents, movie and TV performers, lawyers, Republicans, and lesbians all had higher positive views.

13. What lasts forever? (1:24-25, Isaiah 40:6-8)

The point of the quotation in verse 24 of a portion of Isaiah is to stress that the word of the Lord stands forever.

14. The word "therefore" connects Chapter 2 with what idea from the previous verses? (1:23 - 2:3)

The word connects the exhortations that follow with 1:23-25. The idea of being born again (1:23) is continued with the idea of being a newborn baby (2:2).

15. Of what did Peter urge us to rid ourselves? (2:1, Ephesians 4:31-32) How do you do this?

Peter says to get rid of malice (desire to do harm to someone), deceit, hypocrisy (saying one thing, doing another), envy, and slander (false statement damaging a person's reputation). How do you get rid of these things? It ain't easy.

Ephesians 4:31-32 – Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

16. What does “crave” mean? What do you crave? What should you crave?
(2:2)

“Crave” as described here is the unrestrained hunger of a healthy newborn baby for milk. Peter uses this as an example of the eager desire for spiritual food that believers ought to have. “Spiritual milk” refers to God’s word (1:23-25). Verse 2:3 suggests that believers have had an initial taste of God’s word, the taste was good and, as a result, they should long for additional spiritual food.

17. How should we satisfy our spiritual craving or longing?

There is no single best way. Certainly read the Bible. Pray. Go to church. Hang out with and talk to other Christians. Listen to Christian radio. Go on a missions trip. Help with Christian aid projects. Set an example. Obey God’s commands. Be Holy. Do what Peter says in the preceding verse.

18. At what stage in your Christianity would you say that you are? A “newborn baby?” An “obedient child?” (1:14) Someone with sincere, deep love for others? (1:22) Someone who has “grown into salvation?” (2:2) In what ways have you seen your spiritual life grow?

19. Go back and read Verses 1:14 and 1:18-19 from the perspective of someone who is not a Christian. How would a non-Christian respond to them? Better yet, how would you explain them to a non-Christian?

The Call to Holiness - 1 Peter 1:13-25 - Notes from on-line

The word therefore in verse 13 shows that the author believed that the following exhortation was the logical consequence of the blessing of verses 3-12. The English versions often have two or three commands in verse 13. The Greek text has only one: place your hope completely in the grace that is being brought to you. The first part of the call to holiness is to hope completely or, as the Greek states, perfectly in grace. It is easy to begin to hope partially in things other than the grace of God. Mixed motives, double minds, and the nervous keeping their options open must end. Hope must be focused totally on grace.

The way in which that is done is described in the first phrase of verse 13 that literally says to "gird up the loins of your minds." This was a highly picturesque way of saying, "Get ready." The coming pressure and persecution will be greater than that which has already passed. We are going to have to set aside the distractions and leave the doubts and false hopes behind. To do so requires that we get ready. Being mentally prepared for pressure is the first step (and sometimes the only step necessary) to focus hope completely in grace. The second way in which hope is focused on grace is by being sober. Though the word sober was originally as the opposite of intoxication, "in the NT it denotes 'complete clarity of mind and its resulting good judgment'" . Peter seemed convinced that sound thinking was a necessarily prerequisite for holy living.

The next imperative does not come until verse 15 where the readers are commanded to become holy. Verses 14 and 15 present a series of attendant attitudes, actions, and circumstances that go with the command to be holy. Verse 14 calls on the readers to be obedient children. That obedience is defined as not being conformed to the desires that you previously had in your ignorance. Peter knew that life in the pagan world prior to the conversion of his readers had been bound up in the pursuit of earthly passions. Using the same verb that Paul did in Romans 12:2 Peter argued that holiness calls for a life that is no longer shaped by the world. Rather the holiness of God is to become the pattern in all you do.

Verse 16 provides Old Testament backing for the call to holiness by quoting Leviticus 11:44-45 and 19:2. Peter insightfully comments, "To be called by God, to be drawn near to him is to be called to imitate him, for God cannot coexist in fellowship with one who has an evil lifestyle." The call to holiness in both Old Testament and New is not a call to be good for goodness' sake. Rather, it is a call to the appropriate purity that will allow us to enter into personal relationship with a holy God.

One of the reasons Peter is eager to call his readers to holy living is the price that was paid for their redemption from sin. Verses 17-21 point out that the Gentile readers were not ransomed from the emptiness of their former life by material things, even such valuable materials as silver or gold. Rather, their, and our, freedom was purchased by the death of Christ.

Peter refers to Christ's death by speaking of his precious blood. The word precious literally means of high value or of high cost. The description of Christ's blood as being like that of a lamb without blemish or defect calls to mind the description of the Passover lamb. What Peter had in mind was a question similar to that which Paul asked in Romans 6:1. "If God has sacrificed the life of his own son as a Passover lamb to purchase our deliverance from sin, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The very ridiculousness of the question answers it. Simple gratitude for the great price paid for our salvation from sin should move us to the persistent pursuit of holiness.

The final paragraph of 1 Peter 1 pulls together several themes that have already appeared in the chapter. Obedience, purity, and the new birth all are mentioned again in verses 22-23. The new

concept is the living and enduring word of God. This is not a reference to the Bible, but to the creative word of God that first spoke the universe into existence according to Genesis 1. That creative word has effectively spoken new life for us via the new birth. That powerful word can create in us the capacity to love one another deeply, from the heart. Furthermore, that word of God stands forever.

Verse 24 quotes from Isaiah 40:6b-8 (though omitting Isaiah 40:7). Though the Scripture quotation speaks of the fragile and passing nature of human beings, it comes from Isaiah 40 which begins with the words, "Comfort, comfort my people, says the Lord." Peter was writing to people under the pressure of persecution. Whether then or now people under such pressure need to be reminded that the effective voice of God stands forever. It cannot be destroyed. It cannot be silenced. As Isaiah 55:11 declares, it accomplishes the purpose God has in speaking. The creating word from God is fully capable of speaking courage and the ability to persevere into the readers. That, Peter concludes, is good news.