



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N6 February 11, 2024

HIGHER UP "The Pursuit of Holiness" 1 Peter 1:13-16

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Single-Mindedness
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33



Why is holiness so difficult?

Holiness. Unfortunately this has never been popular in modern or even ancient cultures. Rarely does holiness win awards, inspire films or make the bestseller list. Many skeptics ridicule holiness as something prudish, strange or awkward. A frequent and favorite insult used against people of faith is the slur "holier than thou." People trying to live upright lives are often accused of being judgmental or hypocritical for holding to standards or convictions.

Even Christians can find it hard to embrace holiness. Churches today often strive to be more relevant or "hip" rather than more righteous. Good luck finding a recently published book about holiness on Amazon or in your local Christian bookstore. Even our own 31 Core Competencies curiously do not mention holiness. There are competencies that point to holiness, like single-mindedness, self-control and kindness/goodness, but nothing specifically calls believers to holiness.

Holiness is hard to live and often so easy to mess up with hypocrisy. We can easily gravitate to the extremes of licentiousness or legalism when considering holiness. Some might say, "We are saved by grace so it does not matter how we live." Others might counter with "We must dress different, speak different, eat different and even smell different so the world will know that we obey a holy God." Both extremes are less than helpful and often are harmful.

Holiness should be an expression of our attempt at following the Great Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Lk. 10:27). Loving God and loving our neighbor as our self can keep us from the extremes of misapplied holiness.

One aspect of holiness involves the idea of purity, cleanness or righteousness. If we claim that a book, a church or a practice is "holy" we consider those things sacred and special. Holy things should not be profaned or soiled with deceit, corruption or defilement. Marriage is considered holy (Heb. 13:4) and should not be

polluted with lewd disregard, adulterous liaisons, or casual carnality. We often consider "dirty" things to be the antithesis of holiness. We often describe unholiness as including "dirty jokes," dirty thoughts," or as hip-hop describes lawlessness - "riding dirty." The opposite of "dirty" is "clean." Living "clean" can be seen as living holy. Sinfulness is at its core the corruption of good. Finding the good that sin has corrupted and redeeming that good is the art of holiness. Throwing out the bad and polishing up the good can lead to a more holy life.

Another way to think about holiness is "wholeness." When we say that God is holy, we are saying God is more than sinless. Holiness is more than a statement of negation. There is a sense that "holiness" includes God being "wholly other" or "entirely complete." Jesus said, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). The perfection of God means that he is complete. We as humans will never be perfect in the same way God is. But we can be more holy in the way we approach life by being more like our perfect heavenly Father.

Sin is often the "halving" or "reduction" of God's whole. Take for example food. God has created all foods for us to enjoy (Acts 10; Mk. 7). By God's design, food is for nutrition, celebration and enjoyment. Yet our interaction with food can be corrupted when we reduce food to just one of these aspects. If food is rigidly seen as only for nutrition or religious identity, we can become heartless legalists, whom Jesus considered unholy (Mt. 23:25-27). If we see food as only for enjoyment, we can become gluttons. But if we can incorporate the wholeness of God's purpose for food, we can then handle food in a holy manner. This "wholeness" idea of holiness can help keep things like money, sex, and power in check. Instead of settling for just half of God's design or exalting just one aspect of God's arrangement, embrace the entirety of God's plan for the things he has created. Adam and Eve ignored all the provisional variety of Eden for just one bite of their imagined bliss. Holiness is embracing the wholeness of God's perfection.

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16

13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." [NIV]

13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." [ESV]

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." [NKJV]

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Double underline each use of the word "holy" in the passage.
- Draw a box around the word "minds" in v.13.
- Draw arrows from the word "minds" to the two phrases describing "minds."
- Circle the phrase that shows upon what you should set your hope.
- Place brackets around the phrase in v. 14 that shows a simile or comparison.
- Underline the phrase in v. 14 to which you should not conform.
- Place brackets around the phrase in v. 15 that shows the intended scope of your holiness.
- Write the references Lev. 11:44-45;19:2; Mt. 5:48 by the phrase "it is written" in v. 16.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What is the foundation for all the commands found in 1 Peter 1:13-16 (hint: consider the word “therefore” v. 13)?
2. Put in your own words the two ways we are to approach the “setting” of our hope (v. 13).
3. What does “setting your hope on grace” (v.13) have to do with obedience (v. 14) or holiness (v. 15)?
4. How does a believer in Jesus “not conform to evil desires”?
5. How is God holy?
6. How are followers of Jesus to be holy?
7. God is perfect; we are not. How can we ever live up to the charge of 1 Peter 1:15-16?
8. What is the significance of Peter referring to the Old Testament (v. 16)?
9. Think of “all you do” (v. 15). How does holiness impact daily life?
10. How can a follower of Jesus be holy without being “holier than thou”?

Commentary On The Text

After a long description of the many facets of salvation (1 Pet. 1:1-12), Peter turns his attention to the outcome of such a heavenly gift. Believers who are changed by God's work of salvation should think and live differently. Salvation secures for us a bright future (1 Pet. 1:3-5), but salvation also enables us to live a transformed now (1 Pet. 1:13-16). Peter condenses this call to transformation in two distinct challenges — hope and holiness.

Peter's first challenge is to "set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Pet. 1:13). Hope is earlier called "living" and is connected to new birth and the resurrection of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:3). Salvation offers us new life now that can be better than life we lived before faith in Jesus. This hope can motivate us to withstand rejection and persecution. This hope can help us endure many different trials. Hope at its simplest definition is "trust." We can trust God who saved us, who is saving us daily and who will ultimately save us at "the revelation of Jesus Christ at his coming." This trust is in the grace of God who offers us so much more than we could ever earn. Trust and hope are not passive. We must actively trust or "set our hope" upon Jesus and his grace daily as we await his return. "Setting our hope" is like setting a sail on a boat. We cannot make the wind blow, nor can we dial up which way the sail will turn, but we will never catch the wind without setting the sail. Trusting God is living in such a way that we lean into the expectation that God is moving in our lives and we depend upon him to move us along his currents. Many Christians paddle on to their own exhaustion. Others give up and float aimlessly. A believer deeply impacted by the gracious gift of salvation leans upon and taps into the winds of grace that transport one into a dynamically transformed life.

This hope is not wishful thinking. Peter states that we must prepare our mind for hope with sharp alertness and complete sobriety. In order to "set your hope" successfully you need to have a mind that is alert. Believers are to prepare their minds for action. "More literally, they are to 'gird up the loins of your minds.' The image of 'girding up the loins' means that one tucks in one's long flowing garments to run or do serious work (cf. 1 Kgs 18:46; cf. also Exod 12:11; Luke 12:35). Perhaps we have a reference to exodus traditions here, where Israel prepares itself to leave Egypt. The NIV captures the sense well. Hope will not become a reality without disciplined thinking" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, *The New American Commentary*, 78).

Hope also requires a mind that is clear and not under the influence of distortions or intoxicants. Peter states that to hope aright we need to be fully sober. This is not so much a challenge regarding the abstaining from intoxicating substances as it is a challenge to be clear headed or not confused by strange or worldly influences. To be sober minded is to be alert and not drowsy. We often lose hope when we are down, diminished or overwhelmed by external forces. Renewing our minds

(Rom. 12:2) and watching our way (Mk. 14:38) can keep the channels of hope clear for renewed strength as we trust in Jesus. What we do with our minds will influence our experience of hope. A single-mindedness that prioritizes God and his purposes can help keep one out of the doldrums and on the path to joy and peace.

Peter's second major imperative is a call to holiness. "Be holy, because I [God] am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). Holiness is major in 1 Peter. "Note the wide range of terms employed: holy (*hagios*, 1:12, 15, 16; 2:5, 9; 3:5); sanctify (*hagiazō*, 3:15); sanctification (*hagiasmos*, 1:2); purify (*hagnizō*, 1:22); pure (*hagnos*, 3:2); unblemished (*amōmos*, 1:19); spotless (*aspilos*, 1:19); pure (*katharos*, 1:2); undefiled (*amiantos*, 1:4). The author takes over the Levitical theme that God's people are to be separate from the rest of the world, urging his readers not to be like 'the Gentiles' (2:12; 4:3). One obvious component of their separation would be giving up the worship of the gods (4:3, 'lawless idolatry'), and the author echoes other early Christians in urging his readers to avoid sins of excess: licentiousness, drunkenness, etc. (4:3). But another set of things to avoid are community-killing attitudes: deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander (2:1). Holiness is thus about both being different from the world and being devoted to fellow believers" (Richard B. Vinson, *1 & 2 Peter, Jude*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, 69).

This initial call to holiness in 1 Peter is couched in the imagery of childlikeness. We are to be like "obedient children" (1 Pet. 1:14) who do not conform to the evil desires we once entertained. This challenge to "not conform" is the negative aspect of holiness. To be holy is to be separate or consecrated to God in an undefiled way. Peter's quotation comes from Leviticus 11 or 19 where the people of God are reminded that they were to eat holy food, wear holy garments and prepare themselves with washing to worship the holy God of Israel. As followers of Jesus, we need to give attention to leaving behind "evil desires" that would corrupt us or make us unclean before God. The "salvation of our souls" (1 Pet. 1:9) includes a change in our behavior.

The positive aspect of holiness is "being holy." Peter does not say "do holy things." Instead he commands "be holy" in all the things we do. "We are to be imitators of God as beloved children; holy as he is holy, perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Be holy in all you do (1:15). The pattern of holy living cannot be reduced to a limited number of 'holy' actions. God's righteous deeds flow from his holy nature; holiness patterned on him must express transformed hearts. On the one hand, this seems to set an impossible standard: how can we be like the holy God? On the other hand, there is a marvelous simplicity in a holiness patterned on God himself; it does not require encyclopedic grasp of endless directives and prohibitions. It flows from the heart; its key is love. To be holy is to love the Lord our God with heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves" (Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross*, *The Bible Speaks Today*, 67).

Mindful Hope and Imitated Holiness — these are the marks of those receiving the salvation of their souls.

Word Studies/Notes

V. 13 *minds* “In Greek, the phrase is ‘gird up the loins of your minds,’ picturing a person ‘girding up his loins’ by tucking his long robes into the belt around his waist in order to run (see, for example, 1 Kings 18:46; 2 Kings 4:29; 9:1). The word ‘minds’ refers to spiritual and mental attitudes. To lead holy lives in an evil world, the believers would need a new mind-set. Like ‘robes’ that are already ‘girded up,’ their minds should be set and prepared, ready for ‘action’ at God’s prompting. As the Israelites ate the Passover meal with their ‘loins girded’ (‘your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand’ Exodus 12:11 NIV), to be ready when God called, so believers must also be prepared for action” (Bruce B. Barton, *1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude*, Life Application Bible Commentary, 38).

V. 13 *sober* “Believers are to be self-controlled (lit. to be sober), by which Peter here means more than the avoidance of drunkenness (rebuked in 4:3). The disciplined behavior to which Christians are called entails having a steady, balanced attitude, not one given to intoxication by some passing enthusiasm or novel fad. Discipline in the Christian life is just as essential as in any other walk of life where success depends upon a determined single-minded commitment” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 44).

V. 13 *hope* “Peter therefore orients his readers to a future eschatology of a grace that is fully present but not fully realized in their lives, a grace that is fully guaranteed by the past event of the redeeming death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Although saving grace is a present reality, the gracious gift of final deliverance awaits a future realization. The inheritance that is currently kept in heaven (1:4) as the full and final salvation (1:9) will be finally and completely theirs when the rule and authority of Jesus Christ that is now hidden becomes universally manifested...Peter instructs his readers to set their hope on the grace that will be theirs when Jesus returns by being fully able to think and act on the basis of their true nature in Christ, despite whatever hostility such a lifestyle might provoke from their society” (Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 110).

V. 13 *grace* “The phrase [set your hope on the grace] functions not so much as the object of hope (‘hope for the grace’) as its ground (‘set your hope on the grace’). The present participle φερόμενον [hope] probably has here an implied future force, a probability made the more likely because of the reference to the return of Christ (ἐν ἀποκαλύψει) with which the verse concludes. The implication is not that they presently have no grace, but that their hope is to be grounded in

that fulfilled grace which comes with Christ’s return, when hope will become visible reality. It is that hope which will sustain them in the hard labor of remaining faithful to Christ” (Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, 119).

V. 14 *obedient* “Depicting believers as the obedient children (of God) extends the metaphor of their divine rebirth (1:3) and states the basis for the imperatives that follow (vv 14–15), as well as the grounds for their invoking God as Father (v 17). In this Semitic construction, the qualifying term of ‘obedience’ (*hypakoēs*) serves as a modifier of ‘children’ (*tekna*). The expression ‘children of X,’ like ‘sons of X,’ identifies an essential quality or power by which its referent is controlled (cf. Hos 10:9; Isa 57:4; Lk 16:8; Eph 2:2, 3; 5:6)” (John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 37B, Anchor Yale Bible, 357).

V. 14 *evil desires* “This injunction is repeated twice elsewhere in the letter. In 2:11 the addressees are again urged to distance themselves from ‘deadly cravings that wage war against life’ and to ‘maintain honorable conduct among the Gentiles.’ Likewise in 4:2–3 they are exhorted to have nothing more to do with the ‘cravings’ of their past and other vices typical of the Gentiles, which are incompatible with fidelity to the will of God” (Elliott, 359).

V. 15 *be holy* “To be appropriated by God means to be made holy; thus the choice of Israel as chosen people also makes them holy, which is defined in Lev 29:26 as being set apart from all other peoples. It is such separation that our author here also means with the word ‘holy,’ a point already indicated with the prohibition in the preceding verse. Yet the word ‘holy’ does not contain etymologically any necessary connotation of morality; the moral content is, as also is apparent here, to be derived from the nature ([just as] κατὰ) of the God who has called and separated them from their former culture. ‘Holiness’ is therefore not something one can ‘achieve’ by moral effort; rather it is a separation from former culture for God that entails certain behavior appropriate for this situation. Thus the command ‘become holy’ means to live a life worthy of God” (Achtemeier, 121).

V. 15 *all you do* “The most striking feature of Peter’s interpretation of the biblical text is the linking of holiness with ἀναστροφή, ‘conduct’ or daily life. A key word in 1 Peter, ἀναστροφή [all you do] is used here for the first time, and with the widest possible application. Holiness is to characterize the day-by-day conduct of Christian believers always and everywhere. ... A religious, almost numinous, quality characteristic of God (or the gods) and of priest, temples, and all kinds of cult objects is boldly translated here into positive ethical virtues: purity and reverence, and above all the doing of good in specific human relationships.” (J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, 59).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

With all your inner faculties, trust completely in the grace that Jesus offers to you to live a radically transformed life of godly obedience and holiness.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Almost every parent comes home with their first child wondering where the manual is. “Am I doing this right?” plays on a constant loop in our minds. Recently, a parent stopped me to ask for guidance in a specific situation with their preschooler. After explaining things, with tears brimming in their eyes they quietly said, “I’m afraid I’m messing up. I’m afraid I’ll break her.” Parenting brings joy and hope but it also brings a strong element of insecurity and a battle on all fronts. We’re not only fighting for safety and protection from this world, but we’re also advocating in every setting and even experiencing struggles with our little darling as we strive to shape them into the person God created them to be. Then there’s the ongoing battle in our minds. We wonder why they’re not hitting a particular milestone, why they’re so strong-willed, and why they won’t stop misbehaving. The war wages as we think to ourselves, “What am I doing wrong?” Part of loving the Lord is turning our mind over to Him. Second Corinthians 10:5 encourages us to take captive our thoughts and make them obedient to Christ. This means we do the hard work of wrestling with our insecurities and denying the lies of the enemy as we train our mind to trust our faithful God to do what He does better than we ever could – fight for us. If you’re waging war in your mind, can I encourage you to pray, asking God to help you take every thought captive and train your mind to focus on Him. We’re praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?	What Do You Think?	What Do You Do?
Read 1 Peter 1:13-16 1. How should we prepare our minds to think? 2. What should we set our hope on? 3. Why should we be holy?	How would you explain what it means to be holy to a friend?	Rate yourself using the nine fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23. Which of these reveal “holes” in your character?

CORE COMPETENCY: Single-Mindedness

I pay attention to what God thinks is important for my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Hebrews 10:23

“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess for He who promised is faithful.”

KidPIX COUPON

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

CHILD’S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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