

## Living Like You Belong to God

### Lesson Four: God's Purpose In Setting Us Apart

*"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be Ye Holy: For I Am Holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)*

The Old Testament teaches that God, the Law, the temple, and the nation of Israel are all holy. But does any of that apply to us now? What about Christians? Believers are called *saints*, but what does that mean?

- A. **Observe:** In his letter to various young churches, Peter described the incredible blessings of salvation and then turned his attention to how we are to live in light of those blessings (**1 Peter 1:13-16**).

#### Discussion:

- As obedient children, these believers were instructed to prepare their minds for action, keep sober in spirit, and fix their hope completely on the grace to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. They were also instructed in **v. 14** not to be conformed to their former lust, but to be holy in all their behavior.
- Obedience to these instructions should affect their and our lifestyles so that they (we) can behave more like Christ. Our belief should impact our behavior. The key characteristics that we should demonstrate are the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance (**Gal. 5:22-23**).

- B. **Observe:** Let's now look at **1 Peter 2:9-10**, paying close attention to the word "ye" (you).

#### Discussion:

- God has done great things for us and to us. God has made us a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people that we should show forth the praises of Him who has called us. He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He has made those who were not a people the people of God. Because of God we have received mercy.
- With the blessing of being God's chosen possession (peculiar people) comes the responsibility of showing forth praise unto Him who has called us.

- C. **Observe:** How can believers proclaim God's excellencies to others? Let's read **1 Peter 2:11-12**, and also **Matthew 5:16**.

#### Discussion:

- We can proclaim God's excellencies to others by 1) abstaining from fleshly lust that war against the soul, 2) keeping our behavior (conversation) honest among unbelievers, and 3)

letting our light (the light of Christ) shine through our good works which glorify the Father in heaven. Our behavior and good deeds prove we belong to God.

- To live as strangers and pilgrims in today's culture means to not live by the world's standards and values that go against what God has set out for us to live by. We can know how God wants us to live by reading, studying, and obeying His Word, through the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Have you ever heard someone say, "I am not going to that church, because it's full of hypocrites"? A *hypocrite* is one who indulges in hypocrisy. *Hypocrisy* is the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform; pretense. The Greek root word means acting of a theatrical part; wearing a mask.
  - When a person makes that statement about a church, they are saying that the lifestyles of some of the people attending that church don't match up with their belief or profession. Their actions don't match their talk.
  - This can cause the unsaved to stay away from that particular church and even not to have faith in Christ.

D. **Observe:** Another indication of holiness in the life of a believer is how that person responds to authority (**1 Peter 2:13-17**).

#### Discussion:

- In **verses 13-15**, Peter calls for the believers to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers. He says, "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."
- In general, the purpose of authority is to maintain rules of law and punish those that violate them. If the person that holds the office is ungodly or if you don't respect the man or woman holding the office, you are still obligated to submit to the authority of the office or the laws that are set forth, as long as they don't violate the laws of the Lord. We are always to be careful never to allow the law of the land to overrule the law of the Lord.
- We are to act as free men and women and not use our freedom as a covering to do evil. We are to use our freedom to be servants of God. Peter makes four points in **verse 17**. We are to 1) honor all people, 2) love the brotherhood, 3) fear God, and 4) honor the king. This will show that we are God fearing, people loving, law abiding citizens.

E. **Observe:** Turn to **Romans 13:1-7** and let's see what Paul has to say about authority.

**Insight:** To be *in subjection* is to place oneself under the authority of another.

#### Discussion:

- Everyone is to submit to authority, for all authority (good or bad) comes from God.

- According to **verse 2**, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God and they who opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
- In **verses 3-7**, we see that rulers are not a cause for fear to good behavior, but for evil; if you don't want to fear authority, do that which is good. Rulers are servants of God to thee for the good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid for he (rulers) beareth not the sword in vain. Rulers bring wrath on those that practice evil.
- It is necessary to submit to all authority to avoid wrath and for our conscience sake.
- According to **verses 6-7**, believers have the responsibility of paying taxes to rulers because they are servants of God. In addition to paying taxes believers are responsible to render to all that is due them—custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor is due.
- Our submitting to authority and honoring them shows that we have the character of Christ. Also, it shows the world that we are called apart to live differently because of Christ.

F. **Observe:** In **Romans 12:10**, Paul gets to the heart of how holiness is demonstrated in our behavior toward others.

#### **Discussion:**

- Believers are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love and to give preference to one another in honor. These can be shown by respect, kindness, love and gentleness toward one another.

#### **Wrap It Up**

The term *chosen people*, which used to apply only to Israel, is now used for both Jewish and Gentile believers. The responsibility to reflect God's holiness, once entrusted solely to the nation of Israel, has now been given to the church as well. God said to the descendants of Jacob, the people of Israel: "You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (**Exodus 19:6**). Now believers are called "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (**1 Peter 2:9**). Peter also called Christians "a holy priesthood" (**2:5**).

God's purpose in choosing believers for Himself is so that they may declare His praises before others. Believers should live so that their heavenly Father's qualities are evident in their lives. They are to serve as witnesses of the glory and grace of God, who called them "out of darkness into His marvelous light" (**1 Peter 2:9**).

So then, in practicing holiness we are reflecting God's character to the world around us. All of our behavior must be pleasing to God, including our submission to authority. Following God does not give us the right to resist or defy the secular authority He has placed over us. God has established all authority, and by respecting the office and honoring authority we show the world that we honor God. In other words, being under authority is reflecting holiness. However, we are always to be careful never to allow the law of the land to overrule the law of the Lord.

How are you doing? Are you paying your taxes? Obeying the speed limits? Obeying the law? Honoring those officials placed in authority over you, such as the president? Your supervisor at work?

“ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (**Matthew 5:16**).

**Next Week’s Lesson:** Living Daily In The Light

**Homework:** Read **1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; and 1 John 1:5-7.**

*“Let’s be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving our own selves.”*  
(**James 1:22**)