

## Living Like You Belong to God

### Lesson Six: What Holiness Looks Like in Our Relationships

*“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)*

In week 4 we examined **1 Peter 2:13-17** and saw that the practice of holiness involves being under the governmental authorities. In week 5 we looked at what it means to walk as children of Light in our daily interactions.

This week, as we walk through more of **1 Peter**, we will continue to look at how the practice of holiness should affect our relationships with the people in our lives, including those in authority over us, even in the face of injustice and suffering.

- A. **Observe:** Servants and slaves made up a large percentage of the early church. Today we may view passages addressed to them through the lens of our dealings with an employer or other authority figures (**1 Peter 2:18-20**).

#### **Discussion:**

- In **verse 18**, servants are called to be submissive to their masters and respect them. Note that the instruction is to be submissive to not only the good and gentle masters, but the unreasonable ones also. During the time of Peter’s writing many Christians were servants or slaves.
- If a person, for the sake of conscience toward God, bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly, they will find favor. Favor is the grace of God, or kindness extended by a giver.
- Typically, our natural reaction to injustice is to fight back, get angry, rebel, seek retaliation, or to flee the situation. These Scriptures call for us to bear up under good and bad masters and to endure with patience.

- B. **Observe:** Let’s look again at **Romans 12:19-21**.

#### **Discussion:**

- According to **verse 19**, Paul’s advice to believers who are victims of injustice is to never take their own revenge, but to leave room for the wrath of God—“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” said the Lord. Instead, believers are to respond with kindness toward their enemies. In practical terms, they are to feed them if they are hungry, if they are thirsty, give them drink.
- In light of God’s promise to execute justice, believers are to overcome evil with good.

- C. **Observe:** Let's return to **1 Peter 2** and Peter's teaching about how to respond when we suffer for doing good. Following his advice to the slaves, he pointed to the powerful example of Christ's endurance under unjust suffering (**1 Peter 2:21-25**).

**Discussion:**

- In the midst of suffering for us, Christ offered an example for us to follow. **Verse 22** describes Christ as maintaining His holiness; no sin and no deceit was found in His mouth. With Christ's example in mind, we are to respond in the face of suffering by not returning revile for revile, not to utter threats, but to keep trusting God to judge.
- Christ bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For by His wounds, we are healed. We can be reconciled to the Father, our Shepherd and the Guardian of our souls.
- Peter was not teaching that we are saved by following Christ's example; he was saying that, because we are saved, we are to follow His example.

- D. **Observe:** Peter addressed how believers should practice holiness in some of their relationships with the world. Now he begins to deal with the practice of holiness in the family. The phrase *in the same way* here refers back to what we saw in week 4 in **1 Peter 2:13-17**: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution" (**1 Peter 3:1-6; Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18**)

**Insight:** To be *submissive to* is to voluntarily place oneself under the authority of another.

**Discussion:**

- In these passages, wives are instructed to be submissive to their own husband. According to **verses 1 and 2**, the results of this will be that even if any of them (husbands) are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe the wives chaste and respectful behavior.
- I believe that this applies to women that are married to unbelievers also for it is God that brings about the change.
- From what we have seen in these Scriptures, the woman's godly lifestyle is the best way to win her unbelieving husband to the Lord. The character qualities of a godly (holy) wife are being chaste, respectful, a gentle and quiet spirit, and being submissive.

- E. **Observe:** Now let's look at some Scriptures that deal with behavior of husbands (**1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19**).

**Discussion:**

- Two things that husbands are instructed to do in their relationship with their wives in **1 Peter 3:7** are to live with their wives in an understanding way and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life.

**Insight:** The phrase *live with your wives in an understanding way* here points to the fact that a husband should understand and be considerate of his wife's emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.

*Weaker* here refers to a woman's physical condition, not her emotions or intellect. And it certainly does not imply inferiority.

The Greek word translated here as love is *agape*. *Agape* love is sacrificial and has in mind the highest good of the one being loved. It is not an emotional type of love; rather it is a love of action.

### **Discussion:**

- For a believer to obey the instructions to *live with your wives in an understanding way* and *show her honor* would look like a relationship of patience, respect, and valued opinions. It would also be a life of sacrifice in the relationship. Again, the term *weaker* does not mean viewing one's wife as inferior when it comes to emotions and intellect. It refers to physical condition.
- If the husband does not show his wife understanding and honor he can expect his prayers to be hindered.
- From the Scriptures in Ephesians and Colossians, husbands are expected to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Also, husbands are not to be embittered against their wives. Christ is the example for husbands to follow.

F. **Observe:** How are believers to behave in the midst of a hostile culture? We are to be holy. Peter explains how we can live in ways that are countercultural. In doing so we will be distinct from the world around us, and that distinction will reflect the Holy one who has called us (**1Peter 3:8-9**).

### **Discussion:**

- The characteristics of holy living in this passage are those of living in harmony and peace with others in a hostile world—harmony, sympathy, kindness and humility. Believers should not return evil for evil, neither an insult for an insult, but giving a blessing instead.
- According to verse 9, God's holiness should be viewed as a calling from God in the believers life. Also, the very purpose of this call to holiness is so the believer might inherit a blessing.

### **Wrap It Up**

God did not spare Christ but sacrificed Him to pay for our sins. The only appropriate response is to sacrifice ourselves for Him. He gave all for us, we give all for Him.

The practice of holiness will only become a reality in our lives when we care more about God than we do about ourselves. As we take daily steps to glorify God, His holiness is seen in our separation from the concerns and distractions of this world, in our separation to our holy God.

The practice of holiness is not for the weak or the fainthearted. It is the day-today life of those who are filled with the presence of the Holy One of Israel and who, by His power, are losing concern for themselves. As we lose our self-centeredness and grow in our love of God we will begin to practice holiness. Our love for Him is shown not only in our commitment to right living but also in our love for people.

How are we doing in this? Are we living every moment of every day to glorify the God of glory? Is He the most important thing in your life? If He is, if you are seeking to bring glory to His name and to live like you belong to Him, then your life will be marked by love for others.

Go now and practice holiness.

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