

HOLY HOPE

A LIVING HOPE

A LIVING HOPE WEEK THREE

1 PETER 1:13-2:12

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

READ

Psalm 118:5

WHEN HARDPRESSED, I CRIED TO THE LORD;
HE BROUGHT ME INTO A SPACIOUS PLACE.

PRAY

Take some time to ask God to quiet your hearts and make you aware of his presence in your life and in the group tonight. *Remember, we are not just gathering as a small group, but we are gathering and the Lord is in the meeting with us.*

Pray that everyone would feel welcomed and willing to join in the discussion.

READ

1 Peter 1:13-2:12

DISCUSS

1. Why is holiness a difficult subject to discuss? What has been your perception of holiness?
2. When you read the words of this Scripture that indicate that we are to be holy because God is holy, how does that make you feel? Do you feel comforted, challenged, or convicted?
3. Consider the statement: **Holy living is not about keeping a list of dos and don'ts, but it is about living differently.**

How are the two parts of the sentence different. How does this apply to living the Christian life? How can this give you hope?

4. How should the focus of our life be different from those who do not follow Christ? How does this change how we live?
5. How is the formation of our life different? How does this change how we live?
6. How is our future different? How does this change how we live?

PRAY

- Pray for someone by name that needs to receive Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Pray aloud or silently about an area of your life where you would like to stand out for the Lord and not blend into this world.

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Our church is currently in a series of sermons where we are studying the book of 1 Peter. This book of the Bible is a letter that the apostle Peter writes specifically to Gentile Christians who have been exiled to a portion of the world known as Asian Minor which is modern day Turkey. **He seeks to reassure them of their identity in Christ. He tells them that they are the chosen ones of God.** He makes the point that those who are in Christ are the new chosen people of God. **As Christ followers we are a holy nation set apart for the purposes of God.** The third sermon in this series is entitled "Holy Hope".

This series covers a large section of the letter. **The text is 1 Peter 1:13-2:12.** It is very difficult to adequately teach the depth of a text of this length and importance. This is why I am writing this. The thrust of the message of this portion of Scripture is on the subject of holiness. **Holiness can be an intimidating subject since many of do not feel very holy. However, the intent of what Peter conveys, or the message is not to be intimidating, but encouraging.** This will seek to describe what, why, and how of holiness.

THE WHAT

The word holy means to be set apart. It literally means something that designated for a specific purpose. We often equate holiness with acting in a way that is moral and upright. As believers we should be moral and upright in our character. However, holiness should not be seen as a legalistic set of mandates. The area where many of us get burdened is in the area of convictions. We can feel manipulated or judged if we are pressured to follow the convictions of someone else. We must also be careful to not impose our convictions on others. True holiness comes from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We should ask the Lord where he is wanting to change us, but we must also avoid imposing convictions we have on others.

THE WHY

The main reason Peter says we should be holy is because God is holy. We are called by a holy God to live holy lives. He does not expect us to live in a way contrary to who he is. The very essence of God is holiness. Holiness is the outcome of our obedience. When we truly live worshipful lives we desire to obey the Lord. We do not obey out of a sense of obligation, but we obey because the Lord loves us, and we love him. This love relationship puts in us a desire to obey the Lord.

We should also live holy lives because we understand that we will all be judged. The Lord judges without bias or preferential treatment (1 Peter 2:17). We may live charmed lives here on earth, but that does not necessarily carry over into the life to come. We must remember that we will all be judged by the Lord based on how we live our lives. Christ has paid the penalty for our sin which allows us to spend eternity with the Lord if we place our trust in him. However, Romans 2 as well as other passages make it clear that we will all stand in judgment. We need to remember that an evidence of our salvation is changed life that results in consistent growth in Christlikeness.

There are more reasons, but finally we must remember that our holy lives are a powerful tool for sharing the gospel. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:12, "Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world". Our lives can speak powerfully even to people who disagree with our beliefs. We need to share the words of the gospel, but hopefully our lives will cause others to desire to know what has made the difference in our lives.

THE HOW

We may be convinced that as believers we need to live holy lives. However, we may struggle to really live holy lives. The Scriptures can be very helpful. **Here are few principles:**

- 1. Surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit.** Peter says be holy as God is holy. The only way for this to happen is to live in submission to the Lord. This is when the Holy Spirit directs us and not our own desires.
- 2. Remember that you will face judgment.** We must remember that this life is not all there is. When we live our lives with eternity in mind it helps us to pursue God's desires above anything else.
- 3. Meditate on the great sacrifice of Jesus on your behalf.** 1 Peter 1:18 states that God paid a ransom on our behalf. The sacrifice of Jesus sets us free from the bond of our own sinful nature and the power of Satan.
- 4. Pursue the Lord as your greatest desire.** God is worthy of our total devotion. When we pursue him with great passion it changes our desire to fulfill our sinful desires.
- 5. Remember that God is building your life.** You are a "living stone". You are a part of God's spiritual temple. He is shaping our life to declare the glory of God.

We are called to a holy hope. Holiness fuels our hope. It is amazing that when we truly pursue the Lord and his ways that our lives really become more fulfilled. Holiness does not rob of us joy or excitement, but holiness allows to partner with the plans and purposes of the Almighty God. **What could be a more exciting adventure?**