



The First Letter of Peter Bible Study Session 4 1 Peter 1:13-16



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Greek NT

13 Διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὁσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν, νήφοντες τελείως, ἐλπίσατε ἐπὶ τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 14 ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς, μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις, 15 ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε, 16 διότι γέγραπται ὅτι Ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος.

Gute Nachricht Bibel

13 Darum seid wach und haltet euch bereit! Bleibt nüchtern und setzt eure ganze Hoffnung auf die Gnade, die Gott euch schenken wird, wenn Jesus Christus in seiner Herrlichkeit erscheint. 14 Lebt als gehorsame Kinder Gottes und nicht mehr nach euren selbstsüchtigen Wünschen wie damals, als ihr die Wahrheit noch nicht kanntet. 15 Euer ganzes Tun soll ausgerichtet sein an dem heiligen Gott, der euch berufen hat. 16 In den Heiligen Schriften heißt es ja: »Ihr sollt heilig sein, denn ich bin heilig.«

NRSV

13 Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. 14 Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. 15 Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

NLT

13 So think clearly and exercise self-control. Look forward to the special blessings that will come to you at the return of Jesus Christ. 14 Obey God because you are his children. Don't slip back into your old ways of doing evil; you didn't know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God -- who chose you to be his children -- is holy. 16 For he himself has said, "You must be holy because I am holy."

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Introduction to Study.

With the key motifs established in the Proem of the letter, 1:3-12, Peter begins with admonitions to Christian living in verses 13-16, the first segment of the letter body (Διὸ). Two foundational admonitions -- 'set your hope' and 'become holy' -- form the core structure of these two Greek sentences, vv. 13, 14-16. These admonitions are modified heavily with rich concepts that expand the ideas of each core. Most English translations can't pack this much idea into relatively short sentences, and thus the translations break the material into multiple sentences, and especially as the NLT above illustrates, rearranges participle modifiers into full verb expressions. Although somewhat necessary because of the limitation of English grammar, the net impact is to blur the arrangement of ideas in the original text. The block diagram of the text below will highlight this inner connection of primary and secondary ideas in visual expression. The implications of setting up a firm hope and the commitment to holiness require a set of complimentary commitments, or else these two basic demands will not be met adequately. Only with understanding of the richness of these ideas can we correctly understand what Peter demanded, and even more importantly, can we implement these ideas into our living successfully.

I. Context and Background¹

¹Serious study of the Bible requires careful analysis of the background and setting of the scripture passage. Failure to do this leads to interpretive garbage and possibly to heresy. Detailed study of the background doesn't always answer all the questions, but it certainly gets us further along toward correct understanding of both the historical and contemporary meanings of a text. This serious examination

Because of the particular genre of these verses, the literary aspect is going to play a greater role than the historical aspect in the understanding of the ideas contained in the passage.

a. Historical

External History. That the copying of this passage by scribes over the first seven or eight centuries was fairly consistent is evidenced by the fact that the editors of the USB 4th revised edition Greek New Testament didn't consider any of the variances in copying to be significant enough to impact the meaning of the text, and thus needed to be included in the text apparatus of their edition of the Greek New Testament. Only two issues merit notation in the UBS Greek text, and they have to do with style issues connected to the quote from the Old Testament in verse sixteen.

First, later copyists were bothered by the seeming redundant use of the conjunctions in the introduction of the OT quote: διότι γέγραπται [ὅτι]. Consequently some of the later manuscripts especially omit the second conjunction ὅτι.² Enough manuscript evidence exists to warrant retaining the ὅτι, but it doesn't impact the translation of the text. This ὅτι is the so-called 'recitative ὅτι' that was used in the ancient world to introduce direct discourse. That is, it served as ancient quotation marks, and thus carried no cognitive meaning.

Second, some copyists, mainly because of shifts in the writing of Greek over time, were sometimes bothered by the absence of a stated verb in ἐγὼ ἅγιος (I holy) at the end of verse sixteen. Consequently some manuscripts insert the implied verb into the clause: ἐγὼ ἅγιος εἰμι (I am holy).³ The English translation remains the same whether or not the Greek verb εἰμι was directly stated or merely implied.

One or two other variations in the wording of the text are present, but have less impact than the two listed above. Thus the stability of this passage over the centuries of being copied by countless numbers of scribes is very strong indeed.

Internal History. Because of the specific genre of this text, it would not tend to have many time or place references, and such is the case. The forward look in the concept of 'hope' centers on final judgment and eternity at the end of human history. Eschatological expectation in First Peter is a significant doctrinal theme, and will be explored when it surfaces from passage to passage in the text studies. In vv. 13-16 the emphasis is not primarily spatial but conceptual ideas. Our hope centers on the grace of God to be expressed at the time of Jesus' return to earth. The focus on the present contained in the passage is geared to actions that will prepare believers for that future moment of time.

b. Literary

Literary Form (Genre). At the broad level of genre, this passage stands as the opening section of the letter body. As such it builds off of the themes placed on the table for discussion in the Praescriptio and the Proem sections of the letter in the first twelve verses of the letter.⁴ In verse three, a living hope was mentioned. It was forward pointing to the future inheritance promised believers. In verses six to eight, the experience of suffering persecution is seen as preparing us for final judgment that will bring praise to Christ because the suffering validates the genuineness of our faith commitment. Thus standing before God with a life of holy living because of our faith becomes vital to that day in the future.

of both the historical and literary background of every passage will be presented in summary form with each of the studies.

²"The formula introducing the scriptural quotation varies somewhat in the manuscript tradition, probably because the words διότι γέγραπται ὅτι (as in B ὅτι and a few other MSS) seemed redundant to later scribes, especially in light of a second ὅτι in the following clause. Consequently, the ὅτι ("that") was omitted in the majority of MSS (including p72 & A C and P), while διότι γέγραπται was omitted in two later minuscules (33 and 1243). The ὅτι should probably be retained but left untranslated (the imperative with which the quotation begins makes it virtually untranslatable in English)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 51.]

³"The manuscript tradition is closely divided over whether or not the verb "to be" is expressed: ἐγὼ ἅγιος (& A* B and a few others) or ἐγὼ ἅγιος εἰμι (p72 Ac C P Ψ and the majority of later witnesses). The shorter reading agrees exactly with the LXX of Lev 19:2, while the εἰμι is found in Lev 11:44 and in some MSS of Lev 20:7, 26. It is likely that ἅγιος is original here, and that the εἰμι was added at the end to correspond to the preceding ἄγνοι ἔσεσθε, although it is also possible that an original εἰμι was dropped to conform the quotation exactly to Lev 19:2. The difference in meaning is inconsequential." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 52.]

⁴"The key to the section as a whole is the 'living hope' mentioned first in v 3 and designated in a variety of ways throughout vv 3-12: as an 'inheritance' (v 4), as 'salvation' (vv 5, 9, 10), as 'the outcome of your faith' (v 9), as 'the grace to be given you' (v 10), and as 'praise, honor, and glory at the time when Jesus Christ is revealed' (v 8)." [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 52.]

**Outline of Contents
in First Peter:**

Praescriptio: 1:1-2

- *Superscriptio, 1:1a*
- *Adscriptio, 1:1b-2a*
- *Salutatio, 1:2b*

Proem: 1:3-12

- *Core, 1:3a*
- *Expansion, 1:3b-12*

Body: 1:13-5:11

- *Holy living 1:13-2:10*

● *Ideals 1:13-25*

● *Privileges 2:1-10*

- *Obligations 2:11-3:12*

● *Civic 2:11-17*

● *Haustafeln 2:18-3:7*

● *Social 3:8-12*

- *Persecution 3:13-5:11*

● *Encouragement 3:13-4:11*

● *Explanation 4:12-19*

● *Proper Conduct 5:1-11*

Conclusio: 5:12-14

- *Sender Verification, 5:12*

- *Greetings, 5:13-14a*

- *Benedictio, 5:14b*

At the smaller genre level, this passage functions as *paraenesis*, i.e., moral admonition.⁵ With the centering of our focus on hope for God's coming grace, Peter calls believers to develop a behavior consistent with this anticipation of divine grace. The demand for holy living might seem to some as not fitting naturally with the promise of God's grace at final judgment. But to conclude this is to fail to understand the dynamical quality of divine grace, and how it impacts a person's life both now and in final judgment.

Literary Context. The outline of First Peter on the right highlights the literary setting of 1:13-16. It stands as the beginning of the body proper of the letter. Additionally it is the first of three units of material in vv. 13-25, that stress levels of idealized living. These demands for high standards of behavior (1:13-25) are complemented by the great privileges given to believers as the new people of God (2:1-10). How we are to live grows out of who we are as God's people. At the heart of this is the conversion relationship with the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. His character of holiness then is to be replicated in us as His children. This theme of holy living stands as the dominate motif in 1:13-2:10. This is Peter's beginning word to his readers in the first Christian century. And it remains an important word to believers of all times.

Literary Structure.

Note the block diagram below that highlights the two core admonitions with their extensive expansion elements.

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1.13      Wherefore
          having girded up the loins of your thinking,
          being sober
          completely
2  set (your) hope
      upon the grace being brought to you
          at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1.14      As children of obedience
          not conforming yourselves
          in your ignorance
          to the former...passions
          but
1.15      according as the one having called you is holy
          also
          in all your living
3  become holy yourselves,
1.16      because it stands written,
          "You shall be holy,
          because I am holy."
    
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Both core admonitions are cast in the Aorist Greek imperative verb form. The significance of this is an intense call for a decisive commitment to carry out the admonition. Believers must take this action deliberately

⁵Paraenesis comes from the Greek noun *παραινεσις*, and means 'exhortation' or 'advice.' Among the moral philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome it played a significant role in their teaching. In the Hebrew - Jewish tradition the moral aspect of religion was critical. Consequently, admonitions to specific patterns of behavior are common place in ancient Jewish writings. It is mainly out of that Jewish heritage that Peter speaks in this letter. But his non-Jewish readers, even with very little grasp of the Jewish religious tradition, would have understood the principle of moral demands being made upon them. In the ancient world 'religion' was considered a branch of 'philosophy' since it offered a distinctive way of viewing the world and reality.

and intentionally as a firm decision. The series of Greek participles that modify each imperative verb are cast either in the Aorist tense or the present tense. The importance of this is to demand completed actions (Aorist ptcs.) in preparation for the admonition, or to demand on going actions (present ptcs.) as complimentary to the action in the core admonition.

In the case of the first admonition, to set our hope means prior to that we must ‘gird up the loins of our thinking,’ we must be continually ‘sober’, and God’s grace is being brought to us as we move toward the revelation of Christ.

In the case of the second admonition, to become holy means an ongoing pattern of non-compliance with our passions, and an already holy God has called us to holiness, which is supported by the OT scripture cited.

II. Message

The study of the text naturally grows out of the twofold structure present in the original Greek text.

a. Focus your hope, v. 13

13 Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.

13 Διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν, νήφοντες τελείως, ἐλπίσσατε ἐπὶ τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Notes:

The conjunctory connector Διὸ links this sentence back to vv. 3-12 by drawing out something implicit in the previous statements and making it explicit here.⁶ Given the wonderfully rich experience given to believers by God in Christ Jesus, certain obligations are inherent to that divine gift. Verse 13 puts the first of several such obligations on the table.

Set your hope. As is illustrated in the diagram above, the core expression is ἐλπίσσατε. Everything else builds off this one admonition. ἐλπίσσατε admonishes the readers to firmly establish hope in their lives.⁷ The Aorist imperative form of the Greek verb calls for a deliberate, intensive action of setting one’s expectation on something anticipated to come. One should remember that hope in the ancient Jewish world was much more than a wish, as it often is in the modern world. The biblical words ἐλπίζω and ἡ ἐλπίς expressed high levels of certainty so that the more accurate English word is ‘expectation’ rather than ‘hope.’ Confidence in the realization of what is ‘hoped for’ is a significant part of the Greek words. The verb used here ἐλπίζω is found here and in 3:5, two of the thirty one uses in the New Testament; the noun ἐλπίς shows up 52 times in the New Testament with three of them in First Peter. Chapters one and three are where both noun and verb surface in the letter.⁸ The earlier phrase in 1:3 ἐλπίδα ζώσαν set the stage for understanding hope as a living dynamic, providing sources of influence and power to the believer.

God’s coming grace. What is it that believers should hope for? The object of hope is specified mostly as God (1:21, 3:5) and here as “the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.”⁹ Peter calls upon believers to focus their expectation on the expression of divine grace connected to the disclosure of Christ at the end of human history. In the background lies the anticipation of God’s judgment, and the realization that successful final judgment depends on God’s favor and grace, not on our human achievements. But this eschatological grace is not a loophole for getting around that divine scrutiny of our life. To the contrary, this grace is a powerful spiritual dynamic pulling us into a lifestyle of holy behavior in anticipation of that coming day. The realization that our eternal destiny lies in the grace of God should motivate us to the highest possible levels of righteous living.

⁶“While this verse is imperatival in force, the consecutive conjunction διό (‘Therefore’) indicates that the command grows directly out of the announcement of the new reality, given by God in Christ, which was described in 1:3–12.” [Paul J. Achtemeier and Eldon Jay Epp, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 118.]

⁷“Hope as an imperative (ἐλπίσσατε) is characterized in v 13 by mental alertness and readiness for action and is focused precisely on what was assumed to be its object in vv 3–9, ‘the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (v 13b). The ethical content of the hope of which Peter speaks becomes explicit in what immediately follows: a requirement of holiness (vv 14–16), and of the reverent fear of God (v 17).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 52.]

⁸ἐλπίς in 1:3, 21, 3:15; ἐλπίζω in 1:13 and 3:5.

⁹In 1:3 and 3:15 hope is mentioned without a specified object.

Preparing your minds. Before the admonition to focus our hope Peter speaks of believers ‘having girded up the loins of their minds’ as a necessary preparation for being able to focus attention on hope. This is an ancient figure of speech describing mental preparation for action.¹⁰ To be able to intensely focus attention on hope requires mental discipline and action; it doesn’t happen accidentally. Comprehension of the content of hope is a part of that mental preparation, and Peter in both chapters one and three develops extensive detail on what it is that we hope for and that provides excellent understanding of what we can expect from God at the end of time. The Aorist participle ἀναζωσάμενοι (‘having girded up...’) clearly defines this as preparatory action to being able to focus our hope.

What we are to ‘tidy up’ is our τῆς διανοίας. Although usually translated as ‘mind’ the Greek word stresses the process of thinking more than anything else, even to the level of ‘reasoning.’ The idea is dynamic, not static, and emphasizes clearing up our thinking processes to make them efficient and accurate.

Being completely sober. The second preparation activity to focusing our hope is ‘being sober,’ νήφοντες τελείως. Although the Greek word νήφω sometimes means ‘not drunk’ in secular Greek, the six uses in the New Testament stress mental alertness and clarity of thinking.¹¹ A part of getting our minds ‘in shape’ to think clearly is to clear out clutter and irrational thinking that confuses and blocks mental preparation for action. Thus this word is often translated as ‘discipline’ yourself. But the emphasis of the word is not on behavior; rather, it is mental. Our thinking must be clear and under control if we are to be able to focus on hope.

Unclear is the modifying role of the Greek adverb τελείως, ‘perfectly.’ Does it go with ‘set your hope’ or with ‘being sober’? If it is the verb that follows it, ἐλπίσσατε, then Peter calls upon believers to achieve a level of focus on hope that is complete and maximum. This is how many take the adverb. The other alternative that is reflected in the punctuation of the N-A 27th ed. Greek New Testament which is to see it modifying ‘being sober,’ νήφοντες. In this connection, then Peter is demanding the highest level of self-control and disciplining of our minds to be able to function with complete clarity. One can’t be dogmatic in either modification direction. And it could be that Peter intentionally had Silas place the adverb between the participle and the verb in order to impact both -- something often done stylistically in ancient Greek.

What we sense here is that hope plays a vitally important role in the believer’s life. It clearly is a dynamic power that can become a channel of divine strength in times of struggle. It is here defined as expectation of receiving God’s mercy at final judgment because of the work of Christ Jesus. With the indescribable horrors of eternal damnation looming over the heads of all humanity, believers in Christ can look forward to the coming of Christ with divine judgment as a day when God’s grace will make an eternal difference in their lives. But to be able to achieve such a focus on hope we must prepare our minds by clearing out confusing thinking. We need to clearly grasp what it is that we are hoping for; we must realize the dynamical power that hope infuses into our lives and living. This mental preparation then gets us ready to let hope turn into concrete actions of

¹⁰“To ‘gird the loin’ was an appropriate metaphor for people in the Middle East at that time. These people normally wore long gowns, and when someone prepared for any strenuous activity, he ‘girded’ his robe, that is, he tied his robe securely (by using a belt, for example), to make sure that his robe would not be in the way. The metaphor therefore came to mean ‘be ready for action.’ The area of readiness in this verse is the mind, and the full meaning of the metaphor is therefore to prepare oneself mentally (compare NIV ‘prepare your minds for action’; SPCL ‘Think well what you are about to do’; GECL ‘Keep that goal in mind with strong determination’). A literal translation (for example, NAB, RSV) would produce a very unnatural expression without making the meaning clear.” [Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 33-34.]

¹¹“νήφω 1 aor. ἔνηψα (Soph., Pla., X. et al.; ins, pap) prim. ‘be sober’; in the NT only fig. = **be free fr. every form of mental and spiritual ‘drunkenness’, fr. excess, passion, rashness, confusion, etc. be well-balanced, self-controlled** (Aristot. et al.; Epicurus in Diog. L. 10, 132 νήφων λογισμός=sober reasonableness; Περὶ ὕψους 16, 4; Lucian, Hermot. 47 νήφε; Herodian 2, 15, 1; Achilles Tat. 1, 13 v. ἐκ τοῦ κακοῦ; Herm. Wr. 7, 1; BGU 1011 III, 9 [II B.C.]; POxy 1062, 13 ἵνα αὐτὴν [sc. τ. ἐπιστολὴν] ἀναγνοῖς νήφων κ. σαυτοῦ καταγοῖς; EpArist 209; Philo; Jos., Bell. 2, 225; 4, 42; SibOr 1, 154) **1 Th 5:8; 1 Pt 1:13.** [Ἱερώνυμος ἡδ]η νήψας νυκτὸς | ἐν ὀδῶνα[ις] Hieronymus, in pain (because of an injury to his ear during a violent storm) now came to his senses (concerning his animosity toward Paul) during the night AcPl Ha 5, 29f. v. ἐν πᾶσιν be self-possessed under all circumstances (M. Ant. 1, 16, 15) **2 Ti 4:5.** W. γρηγορεῖν (cp. Plut., Mor. 800b ἀγρυπνῶν κ. νήφων κ. πεφροντικῶς) **1 Th 5:6; 1 Pt 5:8.** W. σωφρονεῖν (Lucian, Nigrin. 5f): v. εἰς προσευχάς exercise self-restraint, to help you pray **1 Pt 4:7;** Pol 7:2 has v. πρὸς τὰς εὐχάς. v. ἐπὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν exercise self-control for (your own) good 2 Cl 13:1. W. allusion to the self-control practiced by athletes: νήφε ὡς θεοῦ ἀθλητῆς IPol 2:3.—HLevy, *Sobria ebrietas* 1929.—DELG. M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 672.]

holiness.

b. Become holy in your living, vv. 14-16

14 Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. 15 Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

14 ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς, μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις, 15 ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενήθητε, 16 διότι γέγραπται ὅτι Ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος.

Notes:

The second sentence in vv. 14-16 moves the issue to concrete actions of behavior. The packing of high volume ideas into a short sentence causes headaches to Bible translators. Thus, this one sentence is typically broken up into multiple shorter English sentences, as the NRSV above illustrates. The unfortunate by-product is the distorting of the proper connections between the primary and secondary ideas in the sentence. The core admonition is ‘be holy,’ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι...γενήθητε. Five separate expansions, each with significant impact on the core, are attached to this admonition. Thus one primary and five secondary ideas are stitched together here in a powerful expression of Christian living.

Be holy: αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι...γενήθητε. Some people in our day shy away from the idea of ‘holiness.’ This in large part because the idea has frequently been identified with a certain style of worship and brand of Christianity that often is characterized by feelings of religious superiority and arrogance. Folks who wear a ‘religious halo’ over their heads do not invite others to want to become Christians. But what Peter is talking about in our text has nothing to do with this false definition of ‘holiness.’

Instead, becoming holy in Peter’s terms ἅγιοι...γενήθητε underscores the idea of holiness with its roots in the Old Testament. In short, being holy means to carefully follow God’s rules for daily living. This has to do with morality and behavior, not with religious achievement making the individual superior to others not so obedient. For believers in Christ, this will be closely connected to ‘walking in the footsteps of Jesus,’ as Peter will define in 2:21. Being holy, ἅγιοι, fundamentally means to be dedicated to God through Christ. It was out of our conversion that the righteousness of Christ was applied to our life, and became the dynamic of life changing transformation. In the power of and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, believers then are able to live lives dedicated to Christ in a way that follows the example of Jesus. Holiness has nothing to do with styles of worship, certainly nothing to do with individual religious achievement. Instead, it has everything to do with obedience and consistent Christian behavior modeled after Christ’s example.

In expanding the idea of living holy lives, Peter adds several qualifiers to this core admonition, that we will now examine.

Like obedient children: ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς. The first modifier of the admonition makes a huge assumption about believers: we are ‘children of obedience.’ The Semitic nature of this expression underscores the assertion that believers are inherently obedient individuals.¹² As God’s children, our new nature is to obey our Heavenly Father. We have ‘inherited’ this nature from God in conversion that made us a child of God. Thus living holy lives is the expected consequence of our new spiritual nature as believers.

Resisting conformity to fleshly passions: μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις. The second modifier of the admonition calls upon believers to continually renounce the tendency of our fleshly passions to pull us back in the pre-Christian lifestyle of ungodly living.¹³ The ‘former passions’

¹²“This Semitic idiom (lit. ‘children of obedience’; cf. Matt. 9:15; Eph. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:14 for similar expressions) for children characterized by obedience indicates in the first place their belonging to a family, God’s family, as dependent members, and thus implies God’s warmth and care, 4 and in the second place their living out their family relationship by obedience to the paterfamilias, God. Obedience is a characteristic Pauline term for how a Christian lives (e.g., Rom. 6:12–17), and is the sure evidence of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26) and the goal of Paul’s preaching (Rom. 15:18; 2 Cor. 10:5). The gospel is an imperative to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord; any commitment (or faith) that does not result in concrete obedience is a misunderstanding of the message and less than Christian faith (cf. Jas. 2:14–26). ‘Obedient children,’ then, could be another name for genuine believers.” [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 67.]

¹³“This former way of life is described as being conformed to their ‘desires.’ While the term ‘desire’ can occasionally be positive (Luke 22:15; Phil. 1:23), it normally indicates the unsanctified longings of fallen humanity, is synonymous with ‘the world’ (Rom. 1:24; 6:12; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:3; Tit. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:11; 4:2–3; 1 John 2:16–17), and is rooted in the Jewish concept of the evil

refer to the longings in the pre-conversion life. Interestingly, Peter locates these passions ‘in your not knowing,’ ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν. Before coming to Christ there was lack of understanding about the demands for holy living, and especially how it was to be achieved through Christ. But in conversion a process of gaining understanding began. Now Peter calls upon his readers to not allow their present lifestyle to conform to the living patterns of their pre-Christian life. Such is utterly inconsistent with their commitment to Christ as believers. Allowing their behavior to drift back into the pre-conversion patterns would absolutely prevent living holy lives now. The admonition to holiness then demands a rejection of this previous lifestyle.

Holy measured by the One who called you: κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον. What then is holy living? How do we identify it? This third modifier of the core admonition answers these questions.¹⁴ The comparative preposition κατὰ sets up the evaluative standard for defining ‘holy.’ And holy is defined by the God who called believers into faith commitment to Christ. Emphasized here is the idea of being different from the world. Believers have different values, different ways of living, different commitments than their unbelieving neighbors. And this different pattern of living is defined by the character and behavior of Almighty God. As our Heavenly Father, He sets the agenda and the example for His people to follow. Thus, in order to know how to live holy lives, we must study God in scripture. What has He revealed to us in sacred scripture about Himself? His character? His way of doing things? How we answer these questions from scripture will give us concrete ideas about holy living.

It is important to note that the source of this understanding must be scripture alone. Human speculation about God is worthless, and potentially dangerous! When we move away from what God alone has revealed to us, we inevitably begin ‘re-creating’ God into our own image, in order to reduce Him and His demands down to a level that satisfies our sinful nature. Such actions constitute idolatry! And in the process we create a non-existing god who makes few demands and possesses zero power to help us.

Holy in every aspect of behavior: ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ. The fourth modifier specifies the scope of our holy living: every aspect of our behavior. The Greek noun ἀναστροφή specifies way of living and is close to the English word ‘lifestyle.’¹⁵ Thus the admonition to live in holiness covers absolutely every aspect of our

impulse in humans and similar to the Freudian concept of the id. The problem with desire is not that one enjoys or needs things in the material world — Scripture is neither ascetic nor Platonic, for it does not believe that the physical world or pleasure is evil in itself or a lower level of existence — but that the goods of this age become the goals one seeks rather than means to the goal of serving God. Desire in the biblical view is also totally undifferentiating, for it makes no difference to desire whether the property belongs to you or to a neighbor or the man or woman is the one bound to you by covenant love or not. Desire goes after anything that satisfies the drive. It is indeed these proximate desires (tempered by the wish to avoid undesirable consequences of certain behavior) that control most people, and to conform to these desires is to slip right back into the lifestyle that the Christian should have abandoned at conversion.³⁷ [Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 68.]

¹⁴“Their holiness is to correspond (κατά, kata) to the holiness of the one who has called them, whom Peter has already identified as God himself (see additional note on 1:15). To be holy means that Christians must conform their thinking and behavior to God’s character. The character of God was first revealed through the covenant God made with the people he had chosen for himself. The moral aspect of that covenant was summarized in what we commonly call the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1–17; Deut. 5:1–22). Living in right relationship to God demanded obedience to these commandments. By living in covenant with God, ancient Israel would be set apart from the ways of the world. For God’s ways are distinct from the ways of a fallen world, and he does not deal with the world on its own terms (e.g., ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways’ [Isa. 55:8 NRSV]). Therefore, his people are to identify with him by being set apart and by relating to the world on the terms that God prescribes.

“God’s revelation of his character in the old covenant paled in comparison with the revelation of his character as a living human being in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Peter’s command in 1:15 that his Christian readers be holy was a call to live in obedient relationship to Christ that by definition would set them apart from the customs and values of unbelieving, pagan society. The Christian’s morality would be defined by, and derived from, the character of God their Father as first revealed in Scripture and then ultimately in the life of Jesus Christ. In these verses, Peter initially defines the call to be holy by specifying the opposite of what he means: ‘Do not be conformed as previously to the desires of your ignorance’ (1:14). In other words, to be holy requires a change in one’s way of life from before, when one’s behavior was determined by unrestrained impulses to sin, even in ways accepted by society. God’s call that has brought Christians to Christ is also a call to deny those sinful impulses and abstain from certain social customs and practices, making one a stranger within one’s own society.” [Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 112-13.]

¹⁵“ἀναστροφῆ, ἥς, ἡ (in var. mgs. since Aeschyl., Pre-Socr. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; Jos., Ant. 18, 359 al.; Just., A I, 10, 2) **conduct expressed according to certain principles way of life, conduct, behavior** (Polyb. 4, 82, 1 [FKälker, Quaest. de elocut. Polyb.=Leipz. Stud. III/2, 1880, 301]; Teles p. 41, 2; Diog. L.; Epict. 1, 9, 24; 1, 22, 13; ins: SIG index; IG XII/1, 1032, 6 [II B.C.];

life. There are no sections that we can separate out to say, “Holiness doesn’t belong here.” Peter underscores that the commitment to holy living must cover everything.

Holy because of scripture injunction: διότι γέγραπται ὅτι Ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος. The fifth modifier of the admonition comes after the core expression in contrast to the first four above that stand in front of the main verb clause. It is anticipated by the ‘as the one having called you is holy’ phrase, but now is stated directly as a quote from the Old Testament: διότι γέγραπται. The subordinate conjunction διότι has several meanings, but here it is causal in nature.¹⁶ It states, by way of OT scriptural authority, why believers must live holy lives.¹⁷ The reference is taken directly from the LXX version of Lev. 19:2.¹⁸ Put simply, believers are to be holy because their God is holy. For the non-Jewish believers this represented new understanding. The pagan gods did not behave in a holy manner and made no demands on their worshippers to live holy lives. But for centuries the Jewish religion had taught that out of God’s holiness came the obligation of holy living by His people. Now, in Christ this demand found new meaning and authority because of Christ standing as the foundation of the believer’s relationship with God.

Wow! Peter launches the letter body with a bang. He calls upon us to fix our expectation squarely upon God’s grace, and out of that commitment then comes the obligation to implement that grace into our daily living through holy behavior. But this holiness must be biblically defined because modern tendencies are to distort it and to water it down. Peter provides clear definition of holy living here so that we can understand exactly what God requires of us.

IMagnMai 91b, 6; IPergamon 86; PTebt 703, 270 [IIIB.C.] Tob 4:14; 2 Macc 6:23; EpArist 130; 216) ἠκούσατε τ. ἐμὴν ἄ. ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ *you have heard of my conduct when I was still in Judaism Gal 1:13.* κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἄ. *according to your former* (i.e. pre-Christian) *way of life Eph 4:22* (GDI 4320, 5f κατὰ τὰν ἄλλαν ἀναστροφάν [Rhodes]). ἢ ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνῆς ἄ. **1 Pt 3:2**; cp. vs. 1. ἢ ἀγαθῆ ἐν Χριστῷ ἄ. vs. 16. ἢ καλῆς ἄ. **Js 3:13**; **1 Pt 2:12**. ἢ ματαία ἄ. *πατροπαράδοτος the futile* (i.e. directed toward futile ends) *way of life handed down by your fathers 1:18.* ἢ ἐν ἀσελείᾳ ἄ. **2 Pt 2:7**. ἢ ἔκβασις τῆς ἄ. **Hb 13:7**. ἅγιον ἐν πάσῃ ἄ. *γίνεσθαι be holy in all your conduct 1 Pt 1:15.* W. λόγος, ἀγάπη κτλ. **1 Ti 4:12**. Pl. ἅγια ἄ. καὶ εὐσέβεια *holy conduct and piety* (pl. to include all varieties; cp. EpArist 130) **2 Pt 3:11**.—DDaube, *Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis: Festschr. HLewald* ’53, 27–44.—DELG s.v. στρέφω. M-M. TW. Spicq.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 73.]

¹⁶**διότι conj.** (Hdt.+) (B-D-F §294, 4; 456, 1; Rob. ind.; Meisterhans3-Schw. 252f; Mayser 161; Thackeray 138f; FKalker, Quaest. de Eloc. Polyb. 1880, 243f; 300) a marker used to establish an intimate connection between two statements.

1. marker of a causal connection between two statements, because (=διὰ τοῦτο ὅτι ‘for the reason that, in view of the fact that’) in causal clauses **Lk 2:7; 21:28; Ac 17:31 v.l.; Ro 8:21 v.l.** (but s. 4); **1 Cor 15:9; Phil 2:26; 1 Th 2:8; 4:6; Hb 11:5** (Gen 5:24), 23; **Js 4:3**; Dg 6:5; Hv 3, 5, 4; m 12, 3, 4; Hs 9, 14, 4.

2. marker used to introduce an inference, therefore (=διὰ τοῦτο) **Ac 13:35; 20:26.**

3. marker used to indicate why someth. just stated can reasonably be considered valid, used in place of ὅτι (TestAbr A 11 p. 90, 6 [Stone p. 28]; TestJob 49:3): for **Lk 1:13; Ac 10:20 v.l.; 18:10; 22:18; Ro 1:19–21; 3:20; 8:7; Gal 2:16 v.l.; 1 Th 2:18; 1 Pt 1:16ab** (v.l.), 24 (ὅτι P72); **2:6.**

4. marker of discourse content, that (Teles p. 46, 4; 47, 12; 48, 11; Antig. Car. 149; 152; Diod S 4, 10, 7; 4, 23, 2 al.; Epict. 4, 7, 8; Dio Chrys. 21 [38], 14; Celsus 2, 49; SIG 1169, 24f; Sb 7638, 8 [257 B.C.]; UPZ 15, 24 [156 B.C.] ἐπίγνωσιν διότι=ὅτι; UPZ 16, 15 in a parallel concept of the same petition]; EpArist 151; Jos., Bell. 3, 475, Ant. 15, 142) **Ro 8:21 v.l.** (s. 1 above).—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 251.]

¹⁷“*Since (dioti, meaning ‘because’ or ‘for’) introduces the reason or ground which supports the preceding statement. Why should Christians be holy? Because it is written* (that is, it stands written in Scripture and remains valid today), *You shall be holy, for I am holy* (Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7 [LXX]; and 20:26). The holiness of God is thus in both Testaments the ground of his requirement that his people should be holy.” [Wayne A. Grudem, vol. 17, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 84-85.]

¹⁸“The quotation agrees exactly with the LXX of Lev 19:2 (see Note d; cf. also Lev 11:44; 20:7, 26). The so-called Holiness Code consisting of Lev 17–26 was directed, through Moses, to ‘Aaron and his sons, and to all the people of Israel’ (17:2), while the command in question was for Moses to deliver to ‘all the congregation of the people of Israel.’ Selwyn (following Philip Carrington) writes of a Christian Holiness Code underlying 1-2 Thessalonians as well as 1 Peter and of an understanding of the church ‘as a neo-Levitical community, at once sacerdotal and sacrificial’ (459–60; cf. 369–72). There is no doubt that, beginning with the command to ‘Be holy because I am holy,’ Peter is addressing his readers in distinctly priestly terms. They are, however, the priestly terms once used for ‘all the congregation of the people of Israel.’ The priestly character of the church for Peter is simply an aspect of its identification in his mind with Israel and the Jewish people as ‘a chosen race, the king’s priesthood, a holy nation, a people destined for vindication—all to sound the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light’ (2:9).” [J. Ramsey Michaels, vol. 49, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 59-60.]