

¹³ So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. ¹⁴ So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. ¹⁵ But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. ¹⁶ For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

¹⁷ And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So, you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents." ¹⁸ For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. ¹⁹ It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. ²⁰ God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. (1 Peter 1:13-20, NLT).

Summary of Today's Scripture

1 Peter 1:13–20 describes how Christians, those who have accepted Christ, should live out their lives. We must prepare our minds to live as we should live. We must choose to act according to our new identity in Christ. This means consciously rejecting the evil desires that motivated our actions before we knew better. Choices matter. They matter to how our life will be lived and they matter as to whether or not our thoughts, words, and deeds will please the Father. He paid for us with the blood of Christ. He enables us through the power of the Holy Spirit to live in newness of life. Since He has made us able, we must avail ourselves of His power to live in a way that is pleasing to Him.

You may remember a couple of weeks ago when we first started studying 1 Peter chapter one when I told you that God's grace saved us, but it also sustains us. The passage today shows us that even though we are "righteous" in our standing before God, we are not automatically "righteous," or as Peter says "holy," in the way that we live (our state of being). Our "standing" is different than our "state of being." In review, let me say that when you accept Jesus as your Savior, you are a new creation. The dead spirit within you that you were born with is made alive in Christ. Having been washed and covered in the blood of the Lamb (Jesus) you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) that stands righteous before God. That is your "righteous standing". Your standing will never change, but your state will. You see, there are two types of "righteousness" that recur in the Bible.

Peter is not addressing the first kind of righteousness in this passage. He is making an urgent call to “righteous” living. This requires planning, action, and discipline. He says, “prepare your minds for action and exercise self control.” This is Peter calling us to live out our identity in Christ. Let me start by saying that we are only able to prepare our minds for action and we are only able to exercise self control through the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, as I’ve often said, we are not talking about a “white-knuckled” kind of faith. So let’s parse this exhortation, and examine how it is that we do this.

Preparing our Minds

First, we **prepare our minds** by filling our minds with truth. If you keep “trying” to live the Christian life without either reading or listening to God’s Word, you’re really not preparing your mind with anything but your own thoughts. We must ingest His Word because “His Word is truth.” As Jesus prayed for His disciples (and I believe we’re included in that prayer), He prayed:

“¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

***¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.** ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. (John 17:15-19, NKJV).* We are sanctified by truth and His word is truth, so part of sanctification (not justification) occurs each time we take in God’s Word, let it take root in our hearts, and allow it to be expressed in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Self-Control

Self-control is not something that comes naturally. What comes naturally is your flesh and its desires to take control of you and your situations. The only way I am aware that we can really get a hold of the flesh is to let the Lord get a hold of the flesh. Self-control is the mark of the believer because it is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). An uncontrolled person is a fleshly person.

*Whoever has no rule over his own spirit
Is like a city broken down, without walls. (Proverbs 25:28, NKJV).*

*¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to **live self-controlled**, upright, and godly lives in the present age, (Titus 2:11-12, ESV).*

*⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ **and knowledge with self-control**, and self-control with steadfastness,*

and steadfastness with godliness,⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (2 Peter 1:5-7, ESV).

Put Your Hope in the Gracious Salvation

Peter then tells us exactly where we are to put our hope - in the gracious salvation that we've been given. It is easy to lose hope or even become hopeless. Peter is telling us that when we feel that way, we need to go back perhaps to times in our lives when we knew that God moved in our lives. I call that "revisiting cairns." Some of you have heard me talk about "cairns" (heaps of stones of remembrance). Early Scottish families would pile stones up in a special way to make a monument of something significant that happened in their lives. We too, have cairns in our minds that are set points when God did something absolutely spectacularly special (that's sort of hard to say) in our lives. You were not mistaken that it was Him. He did something which is a marked forever in your mind. Go there and find hope in times of doubt and despair.

[Joshua's](#) stones of remembrance are just one monument in a series of memorials commemorating the mighty acts of God on behalf of the people of Israel ([Exodus 13:3-6](#); [24:4](#); [Deuteronomy 27:1-8](#); [Joshua 22:9-12](#); [24:24-28](#); [1 Samuel 7:12](#)). To everyone else, the stones were just a heap of rubble, but to the people of God, they were a constant reminder that Yahweh was a personal and powerful God, working wonders on behalf of His people.¹

Don't Slip Back into Your Old Ways

Peter then tells us in verse 14: "¹⁴ *So you must live as God's obedient children. **Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then.***"

This is the correct interpretation of the term called "back-sliding." I've heard some say that a person can't "back-slide," but this is because they are mixing two kinds of righteousness. They are mixing standing with status. Peter would not be saying this if we as believers didn't have the propensity (tendency) to slip back into our old ways. This happens when we stop walking in the Spirit and yielding our hearts and minds to the operative power and will of the Holy Spirit. Peter makes a point of saying "you didn't know better then." That of course intimates that we DO KNOW BETTER NOW. So do as you know is right.

We must remember that we are in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6) which begins in our minds. Peter reminds us of this. Likewise, Paul continually emphasized that the battle

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/stones-of-remembrance.html>

was always about the transformation of our minds. He EXHORTED (meaning to incite by argument and make urgent appeals²) the Church in Rome, *"12 Therefore I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—alive, holy, and pleasing to God—which is your reasonable service. ² Do not be conformed to this present world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2, NET).*

GET INTO THE WORD – STAY IN PRAYER – GATHER WITH THE SAINTS – WALK IN THE SPIRIT

Be Holy in All that You Do

¹⁵ But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. (1 Peter 1:15, NLT).

This again does not refer to our right standing before the Father. This is referring to holiness in our conduct (status not standing). Many believers confuse these two things. Peter is telling us that we are to live out who we are in Christ. We are to live a holy life because God is holy and we should "take on the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16), living holy because He is holy. Believers can, and do, sometimes live in states of unrighteousness. This doesn't change their standing before God and their salvation in heaven, but it sure can change their state of being while here on earth. The believer who lives in unholiness and who yields to his or her flesh is a miserable person. So, be holy in all that you do!

Eternal Rewards

Verse 17 speaks to eternal rewards. It is important for believers to understand this is not speaking to whether God will allow us into heaven.. This is not the issue. Peter has already dealt with the security of the believer's place in heaven. Our earlier study showed that once a person is saved they are always saved and cannot be removed from being a child of God. We were given credit for Jesus' sacrifice for us when we believed on Him. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price (the wages - Romans 6:23) for our sins.

But our Father in heaven does judge. He judges our works, and He judges the intents of our hearts. He pays attention to whether our thoughts and actions are those of "holy people" set apart for His divine purposes (1 Peter 1:15), or whether our choices continue to be driven by the fleshly evil desires that were our pattern of behavior when we lived in ignorance (1 Peter 1:14; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15).

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exhort>

In knowing this, there should be a change in the way we live. The final verses this morning remind us that this world is NOT our home, and we'll never fit in. There's no need to keep trying to fit in. We are foreigners, traveling through a land that is neither our home nor our final destination. Some of you may be asking: "Well pastor, are you saying that I should live in fear?" I would say you're not to live in fear, but you ARE to live with a healthy "fear of the Lord." That means a respect for Who He is and what He desires for your life. This is not a fear of divine eternal punishment, but rather it's the healthy kind of fear that a child has to walk in a manner that pleases their father. It is just a real awareness that we have a Father in heaven who is attentive to our thoughts, words, and deeds.

The writer of Hebrews states this matter of divine discipline clearly: ⁹ *Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!* ¹⁰ *They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.* ¹¹ *No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.* (Hebrews 12:9-11, NIV).

In verses 18-20, Peter reminds us that Jesus was the Lamb without spot and blemish that was provided as a ransom for many. This was planned before the foundation of the world. It was God's provision of grace to all of mankind. Oh what a blessed Savior we have.

Let us respond to His grace by preparing our minds for action, and may we exercise self-controlled lives that are holy because He is holy!

Let us pray.

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