

GET YOUR MIND READY

1 PETER 01:13–16

Introduction

This passage begins the longest section of First Peter. Remember: the believers were suffering terrible persecution. They had lost their homes, property, money, possessions and friends. They had been forced to flee for their lives, perhaps carrying only what they could by hand. They were being persecuted because of Christ. They were living for Christ and proclaiming the salvation and hope of eternal life in Him. People were willing to hear about salvation, hope, and eternal life in Christ; but they did not want to hear about repentance, that they had to repent in order to be saved and to receive eternal life. They were just like people of all ages: they did not want to hear about righteousness and godliness, about a Lord to whom they had to give *all they were and had*. Therefore, the people turned against the believers. The believers had fled into other countries trying to escape the fury of the persecution. They were naturally disappointed and experiencing the dread of fear. They needed to be encouraged and strengthened to continue on for Christ. But what was the best way for Peter to do this? What could be said to encourage a people who had lost everything and were having to flee for their lives?

There was only one message that could encourage and strengthen them: the glorious message of the gospel of salvation. They needed to keep their eyes upon the grace and salvation of God. This is what Peter had preached. Up until now he had proclaimed the wonder and greatness of salvation. Now something else was needed. When we are facing the trials and temptations of life, it is not enough to keep our eyes upon salvation. We must also act; we must do some things. When we undergo the trials of life, whether persecution and suffering or temptation and sin, we must act. We must dedicate our lives to God, and we must get our minds ready. We must concentrate upon some things. We must focus and zero in on three things in particular.

- I. Focus upon the coming grace and salvation of God (v. 13).
- II. Focus upon obedience (v. 14).
- III. Focus upon holiness (vv. 15-16).

I. *1 Peter 01:13 Grace and Salvation of God*

Focus upon the coming grace, the salvation of God. Remember: grace is the favour of God showered upon us. We do not deserve His favour, for we have not believed God, not perfectly. We have disobeyed, transgressed, cursed, neglected, ignored and rebelled against God. Nevertheless God has favoured us. He loves us; therefore He has provided a way for us to be saved. He has sent His Son into the world to take all of our transgressions upon Himself and to bear the judgment for us. This is what is meant when Scripture says that *Jesus Christ died for us*. He took the guilt of our transgressions against God upon Himself, and He bore the judgment and punishment for us. This is God's grace to us, the great

favour and blessing which He has bestowed upon us, even our salvation. We can now be saved from sin and from death; we can now live with God eternally. But note a critical fact: we are not in heaven with God yet. We are not saved from the presence of sin and death yet. We are still living in this world and in the presence of evil and corruption. We shall be delivered some day; we shall be perfected and never know sin and death. But we are not there yet. However the day is coming, the day that is known as the glorious day of redemption or the glorious day of our salvation. The glorious day is coming, the day when Jesus Christ shall burst open the heavens above and return to earth to save and perfect us eternally. Therefore pursue that day; pursue the grace, the glorious salvation of God that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Go after God's grace — diligently go after it. Make sure, absolutely sure, that you do not miss God's grace. Pursue God's grace and salvation by doing three things.

1. Prepare your minds for action. This means to gather up all loose thoughts; to gird up your mind and thoughts; to concentrate and focus your attention upon your coming salvation. During Peter's day men wore robes, and they wore a belt around their waist. When they were set on some strenuous action, they gathered up their robe and tightened it under the belt so that the robe would not flop around and hinder their work. The believer is to gather up and prepare the thoughts of his mind, gather up all the loose thoughts and focus and concentrate upon the grace and salvation of God. He is to strain to control every thought, to focus upon...

- "whatever is *true*"
- "whatever is *noble*"
- "whatever is *right*"
- "whatever is *pure*"
- "whatever is *lovely*"
- "whatever is *admirable*"
- "if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things" (Ph. 4:8).

Note how clearly and simply Scripture states this: we are not to allow our thoughts to roam about and harbour thoughts of lust and worldliness. We are to focus our thoughts upon things that are excellent or praiseworthy. We are not to allow thoughts that tear down our moral and godly fibre.

Scripture is even more clear and forceful in another passage:

2 Cor 10:3-5 *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

The very warfare of the believer is spiritual and mental. Therefore, the believer must...

- demolish arguments or imaginations.
- demolish every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.

- take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Imagine — *every thought* is to be captivated for Christ. “Believers, prepare your minds for action. Gather up *all the thoughts* of your mind and focus upon the grace and salvation of God.”

Rom 8:5-6 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires: but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

1 Cor 2:16 *“For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

2 Cor 10:3-5 *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Eph 4:23-24 *To be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Phil 2:5 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

Phil 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Isa 26:3 *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.*

2. Be “self-controlled” (nephontes). Self-controlled means two things:

⇒ Not to become intoxicated with drugs or alcohol of any kind.

⇒ To be self-controlled in mind and behaviour; to be controlled in all things; not to be given over to indulgence, license or extravagance. It is the opposite of indulgence, of indulging in anything such as eating, drinking, recreation or whatever. It means to live a self-controlled and solid life.

The believer is to be self-controlled as he pursues the coming grace and salvation of God. He is not to indulge and gratify his flesh (sinful nature) in...

- drugs or alcohol
- food
- sleep
- recreation
- sex
- clothing
- possessions
- position
- recognition
- authority
- power
- pornography
- vehicles
- relaxation

The believer is to live a well-balanced life. He is to be self-controlled, solid and steady. He is to keep all things in the proper place. He is to be self-controlled, focused and concentrated upon the grace and salvation of God.

1 Th 5:6-8 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

1 Tim 3:11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Pet 4:7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

3. Set your hope fully on the grace and salvation of God. Our hope must be kept alive. There is a *dead hope* and a *lifeless hope*. A *dead hope* is the hope that so many people have, the hope that they will be acceptable to God when they die. But they seldom think about the fact; they just let their hope lie dormant in their mind. It is the hope, the feeling that most people have, the feeling that God would never reject them, not in the final analysis. Whatever life there is that follows death – they are not sure what it will be like – they feel they will be okay and acceptable. They are not *perfect*, but they are not unacceptable to God. This is a *dead hope*, an occasional thought that they will be okay in whatever life follows death.

Note the exhortation of Scripture: set your hope fully on the grace and salvation of God. Begin to hope now and keep on hoping to the very end. This is a living hope, the hope demanded by Scripture. Pursue, seek and go after the grace and salvation of God. Hope for it and keep on hoping for it. Hope until the revelation of Jesus Christ. He is

going to rent the clouds above and return to earth and save us from the sin and death and the evil and corruption of this world. Therefore, hope and keep on hoping, pursue and keep on pursuing, for the coming grace and salvation of God.

Rom 8:24 *For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?*

Col 1:5 *The faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel.*

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

Heb 6:18-20 *God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.*

1 Pet 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you.*

1 John 3:1-3 *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

II. **1 Peter 01:14 Obedience**

Focus upon obedience. There is sharp contrast in this verse. Note exactly what it says.

1 Pet 1:14 *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.*

The phrase “obedient children” means *children of obedience*. That is, believers are to be so obedient to God that obedience becomes the basic trait of their lives. Obedience is to be so characteristic of our lives that we can be called *children of obedience*. However, in contrast to being *children of obedience* is the phrase “conform[ing] to the evil desires you had.” As stated this is a sharp contrast. It pictures us as *children of evil desires*. That is, we

used to be so given over to our own desires, to doing our own thing, that we could be called *children of evil desires*.

This is not a pretty picture, but it is exactly what a person without Christ is: a *child of desire*, a person who lives just like he wants to live. He does what he wants to do instead of what God says to do. He obeys himself, his own desires, not God and His Word. Therefore, he is a child of desires, *a child of evil desires*. What kind of lusts or desires are being talked about? All kinds. There are the lusts and desires for...

- money
- recognition
- sex
- housing
- popularity
- property
- authority
- position
- possessions
- clothing
- food

Man must have the necessities of life. God made him to desire these things. But when we begin to desire and lust and crave these things it becomes wrong. Our focus and concentration in life becomes the lust of these things, getting more and more of them and gratifying our flesh [sinful nature]. The lust of the flesh [sinful nature] and of the eyes will enslave and consume us. This is a fact of human nature that is too often ignored and neglected. Note why: because of man's ignorance.

Man is ignorant of God. Man does not know God, not personally, not in a close relationship that fellowships and communes with God day by day. When man thinks of God, he thinks of some misty Being or Force who is far away in outer space someplace, too far removed for us to relate to Him in a personal way. Therefore, man feels that he is free to do his own thing and to go his own way through life. And before man knows it, lust has gripped his life. Whatever it is that excites him or gives him purpose in this world, that thing enslaves man. The result is either obsession or emptiness. The person is either controlled and dominated by his lust or else left in despair and discouragement because his lust does not satisfy him.

The point is this: God is not far off and removed from man. God has revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, man is to look at Jesus Christ and see God, and he is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Man is to obey God; he is to obey God so much that he will become a child of obedience. The world and its lusts or evil desires are no longer to control our lives. The Lord Jesus Christ is to dominate our lives. We are to focus and concentrate upon Him and the glorious grace and salvation that He is to bring at His revelation.

Mat 7:21 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”*

Mat 7:24-27 *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine*

and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Mat 12:50 *“For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”*

John 14:21 *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

John 14:23 *Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*

John 15:10, 14 *“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. You are my friends if you do what I command.”*

Rev 22:14 *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”*

Deu 26:16 *The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.*

III. **1 Peter 01:15–16 Holiness**

Focus upon holiness. Holy (hagios) means to be righteous, pure, sinless and godly; to be perfect, complete and fulfilled in every possible sense; to be separated and entirely different from all other beings and things. The believer is to be holy, that is...

- righteous, pure, sinless and godly.
- perfect, complete and fulfilled.
- separated, entirely different from all who live worldly.

There are three reasons why believers are to live holy lives.

1. God is holy. He is the very embodiment and perfection of absolute holiness (see *Holy*, 1 Pet. 1:15-16).
 - => God is the embodiment of absolute righteousness, purity, sinlessness and godliness.
 - => God is the very embodiment of absolute perfection, completeness, and fulfilment.
 - => God is the very embodiment of absolute separation — different and set apart and separated from all else.
2. God has called believers to be holy in all of life. God’s very purpose in saving us is to have a people who will be just like Him and who can live with Him eternally. God’s purpose is for us...
 - to be holy, righteous, pure, sinless and godly.

- to be perfect, complete and fulfilled.
- to be separated from the world and set apart unto Him.

God does not want us corruptible and dying with the world. God wants us holy; He wants us set apart to be just like Him. God wants us to live with Him eternally. But to live with Him eternally, we must be like Him: we must be holy. Therefore, we must pursue, seek and go after holiness. We must live holy, pure, righteous and godly lives. We must seek and go after God: we must seek to be like God while on this earth. If we do, then God gives us the most glorious of hopes: the hope of eternal salvation.

3. Scripture demands holiness. It is written in Scripture: “Be holy, because I am holy” (Lev. 11:45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). We have no choice: this is the command of Scripture itself. If we wish to be God’s, then we must live like God. We must live lives that are holy.

Lev 11:45 I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

Luke 1:74-75 To rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

2 Cor 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

1 Pet 1:16 For it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Heb 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

2 Pet 3:11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.

Psa 99:9 Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the LORD our God is holy.

Isa 6:3 And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Rev 15:4 “Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” ■

1 PETER 01:15–16
HOLY, SAINT, SANCTIFICATION (HAGIOS)

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” 1 Peter 01:15–16

All three of these words and their various forms (holiness, saints, and sanctification) are translated from one Greek word *hagios*. Its Hebrew equivalent is *kadosh*. It is difficult to translate into English although its meaning is easy to grasp. Its basic meaning is to be separated, set apart and different. Morally, it means pure, sinless, righteous, holy. Something holy is set apart, separated, different from all other persons or things. It is something that God has set aside for Himself. Man cannot set it aside as holy. It has to be set aside by God Himself.

A study of the word *holy* shows the movement of God in history.

1. God is said to be pre-eminently and supremely holy (Lk. 1:49; Jn. 17:11; 1 Pet. 1:15). He possesses an incomparable majesty, so supremely majestic that there are beings who do nothing but surround His throne day and night singing out the praises of His holiness (Isa. 6: 1f; Rev. 4:8).
2. Things that have a special connection to God are said to be holy. The ground upon which Moses stood when God confronted him was said to be holy (Exo. 3:1-5; Acts 7:33). The temple was said to be holy (Mt. 24:15), and the Most Holy Place in particular was holy (Heb. 9:2-3). The mount where Christ was transfigured was called holy (2 Pet. 1:18). The covenant that God made with Abraham was holy (Lk. 1:67-79). The gospel and Scriptures are called holy (Mt. 7:6; Rom. 1:2). Anything that becomes associated with God is set apart unto God in a very special sense and becomes different from other things.
3. The Jews are called a *holy nation* (Exo. 19:6). They were set apart in a very special way to God. The Old Testament deals primarily with the Jews and their special relationship to God: "You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own." (Lev. 20:26; cp. Dan. 7:18, 22).

=> The Jewish people were *holy* in that they were to be different from other nations, different in that they were to believe God and serve Him faithfully. God knew them in a very special way above all the nations of the earth (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22; and *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4:1-25).

=> The Jewish priesthood was *holy*, different from other men (Lev. 21:6). The people's tithe or tenth was *holy*, different from other money and goods and used for different purposes (Lev. 27:30, 32). The temple was *holy*, different from other buildings (Exo. 26:33).

But note this: the Jews refused to play the part in history that God wanted them to play. The Old Testament is a continuous record of their rejection of God's will. And when God sent His Son into the world, they committed the supreme and lasting rejection. They refused to acknowledge Him and put Him to death.

4. Jesus Christ is said to be holy in a very special way.

=> Before His birth, the angel said to Mary, “The holy One to be born will be called the Son of God” (Lk. 1:35).

=> Mary worshipped Him in song and praise before His birth saying, “Holy is His name” (Lk. 1:49f). He was the only begotten Son of God, *holy*, revered and worthy of veneration and worship.

=> The people recognized that He was *sanctified* by God (Jn. 10:36; cp. 6:69).

=> The mentally ill and demon-possessed recognized Him as the Holy One of God (Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34).

=> The church worshipped Him as “the Holy Child of God” (Acts 4:27, 30).

Note this: Jesus Christ Himself was the transition from God’s dealing with the Jewish nation as holy to a new people as holy. When the Jews rejected God’s Son, they showed their ultimate refusal to follow God, to be holy and separated unto Him. Therefore, God had no choice but to raise up another people to be separated unto Him. The new people are those of all nations and peoples who believe and follow Christ as the Lord of their lives.

5. The church is now said to be the holy people of God. The privileges and responsibilities of following God were taken from Israel and given to the church (Jn. 17:14, 16; Rom.11:16f).

=> The church is called *a holy nation* and a *royal or holy priesthood*, a people made up of genuine believers from all nationalities and languages and races (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

=> The church is a people who set themselves apart unto God as holy and separated and different, who utterly trust Him and abandon themselves to follow Him.

=> The church is now the dwelling place for God’s presence. Believers are being built “to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22). The church in some unique and spiritual sense, by an act of God, becomes the very body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). The church, the body of believers when meeting together locally, now replaces the temple of the Old Testament (1 Cor. 3:16).

6. But there is something even more precious and hallowed to real believers. The body of the individual believer becomes holy, for the Spirit of God dwells within the believer’s body (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The body of the believer becomes the dwelling place for God’s very presence, and the body replaces the holy of holies within the inner sanctuary of the temple. Thus, believers are called *saints or holy ones* (Acts 9:13, 32, 26:10; Rom. 1:7.) □

LIVE ON EARTH IN THE FEAR AND REVERENCE OF GOD

1 PETER 01:17–21

Introduction

How can we stand against the trials and temptations of life? When we are severely attacked to such a point that we cannot understand, how can we bear it? Is there anything anywhere that can help us to bear it? Yes! There is the fear of God. If a person fears God and fears Him enough, he will stand against temptation and he will endure the trials of life.

But note: most people do not like to talk about *fearing God*. To fear God is thought to be psychologically unsound and emotionally disturbing. It is said to drive people into all kinds of emotional problems. Because of these charges, many have shied away from preaching and teaching *the fear of God*. But note: Is this true? Is it true that preaching and teaching *the fear of God* causes problems for people? One thing is sure: this is not what Scripture proclaims. Scripture proclaims that man must fear God or else he will be doomed forever. Therefore, whatever is causing man's psychological and emotional problems, it is not the *fear of God*, not the *true fear of God*.

What does Scripture mean by the *fear of God*? It means two things.

=> To fear God means to hold Him in fear, dread and terror.

=> To fear God means to hold Him in awe, to reverence the holiness, power, knowledge, wisdom, judgment and wrath of God.

What Scripture teaches is this: man must reverence God and hold God in the highest esteem and honour. Only if man reverences God will he worship and serve God.

Therefore, the fear that God wants man to have is a fear of reverence and awe, a fear that will stir man to love God with the deepest of emotions, with a true honour and esteem. But if man fails to reverence and love God, then he must fear the judgment and wrath of God. Why? Because man will have to bear the judgment of God. Therefore, fear is man's only hope; it is one of the forces that can drive him to cry out for the mercy of God.

This is the subject of this passage. We are to live on earth in the fear of God.

I. Because you call God "Father" (v. 17).

II. Because God will judge the world (v. 17).

III. Because you are a stranger and alien (pilgrim) on earth (v. 17).

IV. Because you have been redeemed (vv. 18-20).

V. Because you believe in the God who raised up and glorified Christ (v. 21).

I. 1 Peter 01:17 God is our Father

Believers are to reverence God because *they call God "Father"*. A father is to be revered: every child is to reverence his father. The word *reverence* means to hold one's father in the highest esteem and to honour and respect him. It means to hold one's father in such esteem that one fears lest he displease and hurt his father. This is especially true of God. God is our Father. He has adopted us as His children through the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are to reverence Him. We are...

- to honour and respect Him.
- to hold Him in the highest esteem.
- to fear lest we displease and dishonour Him and bring pain to His heart.

The point is this: if you call God "Father," then live like it. Stay true to Him. Stand against all the trials and persecutions, temptations and evils of this life. Call upon your Father; ask for His help and strength. But reverence Him; show honour and respect by living for Him.

Mat 6:9 *"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'"*

Mat 7:11 *"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"*

John 1:12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Rom 8:15 *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."*

2 Cor 6:17-18 *"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

Gal 4:4-6 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

1 Pet 1:17 *Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.*

II. 1 Peter 01:17 Judgment of the World

Believers are to reverence God because *God will judge the world*. Note that the word "fear" (phoboi) is used. It means to hold God in reverence and awe. The judgment of God should strike fear, dread and terror within us, for it is to be the most fearful, dreaded and terrorizing experience imaginable. In fact, the human mind cannot even picture how awful

and frightening it will be to be judged and cut off from God for eternity. Two things are said about the judgment of God.

1. Every person is going to be judged. No one shall escape. Every person will come to the day when he will stand all alone in a private interview with God. In that moment he shall stand face to face with God for one purpose and one purpose alone: to be judged.
2. It is the works of a person that are to be judged. No false profession will stand in that day. When God reveals the person's works, his works will show that he never really trusted in Christ. He only said that he believed Christ, but his life and works will prove differently. It will be seen that he lived a lie. His life and works will show that he lived for the world and its possessions and pleasure.

Thought 1. We must never forget: a person is saved by faith in Christ, by a faith that lives for Christ and continues to live for Christ. A person who believes in Christ lives for Him. The person believes; therefore he lives day by day doing exactly what he believes. There just is no such thing as faith without works to *back up the faith*. If a person truly believes, then he does what he believes. His works follow his belief. This is the reason it is our works that shall be judged: our works will reveal exactly what we believe.

3. God will judge without partiality. God has no favourites. It does not matter who the person is: high or low, rich or poor, sinner or saint, good or bad, righteous or evil — all shall be judged and favouritism will be shown to no one. Peter, Paul, Martin Luther, Pope Paul, Billy Graham, Caesar, George Washington, John Kennedy, Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King, Einstein, Hitler, Stalin, Genghis Khan, Bill, Henry, Jane, Elizabeth — every human being who has ever lived, both high and low, will be judged; and we shall all be judged on an equal basis. There will be no partiality and no favouritism shown to a single person.

Mat 16:27 *“For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”*

Mat 25:31-32 *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”*

2 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

1 Pet 1:17 *Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

2 Pet 3:7 *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

1 John 4:17 *In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.*

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

Rev 20:12 *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

Rev 22:12 *"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."*

Psa 62:12 *And that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.*

Jer 17:10 *"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."*

III. 1 Peter 01:17 Strangers and Aliens on Earth

Believers are to reverence God because *they are strangers on earth*. The word "strangers" (paroikais) means to dwell alongside; to be passing by. It is the picture of an alien or stranger who is in a foreign country and is only dwelling there or passing by for a brief time. This is the believer here on earth. He is not a permanent resident on earth. He is only passing through the earth to a better world. This means a most wonderful thing: when a person is a stranger or alien in a foreign land, his mind and heart are home. He lives in a consciousness of home. So it is with the believer: his thoughts are upon home. He lives and walks in the consciousness of being in heaven with God. This is his attitude and his thoughts as he walks through his pilgrimage upon earth. He travels through life with his mind and heart upon heaven, his permanent home.

Heb 11:13-16 *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

Heb 13:14 *For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

1 Pet 2:11 *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.*

Exo 6:4 *I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.*

1 Chr 29:15 *We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope.*

Psa 39:12 *“Hear my prayer, O LORD, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were.”*

Psa 119:19 *I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me.*

IV. 1 Peter 01: 18–20 Redemption through the Blood of Jesus Christ

Believers are to reverence God because *they have been redeemed*. The word “redeem” (lutron) means to set free or deliver by paying some ransom. Note three significant points.

1. We need to be redeemed, to be set free from the empty life that we have been taught to live by our forefathers. This is exactly what Scripture says:

For you...were [not] redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, (v. 18)

The life which most fathers teach is a vain and empty life. It focuses upon the world, its possessions and pleasures...

- jobs
- position
- professions
- authority
- money
- pleasure
- housing
- recognition
- property
- fame
- enjoyment
- popularity
- ease
- honour
- investments
- prestige
- retirement
- recreation
- comfort

Note carefully: these things do not satisfy the human heart. They are necessary to human life; we must have the basic necessities in order to sustain life. But physical and material things do not satisfy or fulfil the human heart. Only one thing can do that: God – the presence of God living in the heart and giving the person the perfect assurance of living forever with God. Therefore when a person focuses upon the world, its pleasures and possessions, he becomes vain. His heart becomes empty, void, unfulfilled and incomplete. The worldly heart senses a lack of permanent purpose, meaning and significance. Why?

- => Because the worldly person has little assurance that he is acceptable to God. Why?
Because his life and thoughts are not focused upon God; they are focused upon the world.

- => Because the worldly person is not sure he will live forever. Why? Because his life is not focused upon heaven; it is focused upon this world, upon getting all the possessions and pleasures he can to live comfortably.
- => Because the worldly person transgresses the law of God. He neglects, ignores, rejects, rebels and curses God. He is simply guilty of transgressing the law of God; therefore, he must bear the judgment and punishment for having violated God and His law. He must die, be exiled and cut off from God eternally. The worldly person has chosen to live without God; therefore, his desire will be granted. He will never have to live with God. He will continue on and on without God – exiled, cut off from God forever and ever.

The point is this: we need to be set free and delivered from the empty life that we have been taught to live. Our forefathers were wrong. A worldly life does not work. It only leaves us empty and void, incomplete and unfulfilled, and it dooms us to death, to an eternity apart from God.

1 Kng 22:52 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he walked in the ways of his father and mother and in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin.

2 Chr 22:3 He too walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong.

Jer 9:14 “Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts; they have followed the Baals, as their fathers taught them.”

Amos 2:4 This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because they have rejected the law of the LORD and have not kept his decrees, because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed.”

Mat 15:3 Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition [teaching]?”

Eph 2:2-3 In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

1 Pet 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers. ■

LOVE ONE ANOTHER FERVENTLY

1 PETER 01:22–25

Introduction: Love

There is no greater force than love. If two people truly love each other, they will do anything for the other. There is no greater bond on earth than true love. This is especially true of the love between believers. Why? Is there a difference between the love that believers have for one another and the love that neighbours have for one another? Scripture says yes, emphatically yes. Believers are to have a different kind of love than neighbours have for one another. The love that believers are to have for one another is what the Greek calls *philadelphia* love, a very special kind of love. The word is “scarcely found except in Christian writings” (B.C. Coffin. *First Peter*. “The Pulpit Commentary,” Vol. 22, ed. by HDM Spence and Joseph S. Exell. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950, p. 11.) *Philadelphia* love means *brotherly love*, the very special love that exists between the brothers and sisters within a loving family, brothers and sisters who truly cherish each other. It is the kind of love...

- that binds one another together as a family, as a brotherly clan.
- that binds one another in an unbreakable union.
- that holds one another ever so deeply within the heart.
- that knows deep affection for one another.
- that nourishes and nurtures one another.
- that shows concern and looks after the welfare of one another.

The importance of believers loving one another with a Philadelphia love cannot be overstressed. Note what verse 22 says:

=> We are to have *unfeigned love* for our Christian brothers. Unfeigned means genuine, sincere, without pretension, hypocrisy or play-acting. We are not to pretend, play and act like we love one another; we are to love one another genuinely and sincerely.

But note this: there can be no mistake about the importance of love, for verse 22 says more and it is forceful: “love one another deeply, from the heart.” The word “deeply” (*ektenos*) “does not mean ‘with warmth’ but rather ‘with full intensity’.” It literally means to *stretch love fully out* or to love one another *in an all out manner* (Alan M. Stibbs. *The First Epistle General of Peter*. “The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959, p. 94).

This is the love believers are to have for one another, a Philadelphia kind of love. Now note: there are three reasons why we are to love one another fervently.

- I. Reason 1: you have purified your souls (v. 22).
 - II. Reason 2: you are born again through the Word of God (v. 23).
 - III. Reason 3: your flesh withers and falls away (vv. 24-25).
-

I. 1 Peter 01:22 Salvation and Obedience

Believers are to love one another because God has *purified their souls*. This means that the soul of a true believer is cleansed of sin. He is forgiven and purified from every sin he has ever committed. His soul is pure and clean, completely free from all guilt and moral dirt, pollution and corruption. The true believer is no longer guilty of any misbehaviour or sin, no matter what it is. He stands before God with a pure and clean soul, a soul that is perfect and acceptable to God.

But note a significant point — note what it is that cleanses the believer's soul: it is obedience to the truth. The believer obeys the truth and as he obeys the truth, the Spirit of God continually cleanses his soul from sin. This is critical to note: a person is cleansed only while he is walking in the truth, only while he is obeying the truth of God's light. When a person walks in the light of the truth, the Spirit cleanses his soul through the blood of Christ.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

This is the reason we are to love our brothers. God has cleansed our souls from sin for the very purpose of loving others, and we are obedient when we love them. It is a circle: we are obedient when we love them and we love them when we are obedient. God has cleansed our souls so that we can love people with a clean and pure heart — with no restraints of guilt or shame or weakness whatsoever. Therefore, let us love one another in the freedom of a pure and clean soul.

John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 14:21 "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

John 15:10-12 "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Rom 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

1 Th 3:12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 Tim 1:5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 Pet 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 John 3:23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

II. *1 Peter 01:23 Born Again through the Word of God*

Believers are to love one another because they have been born again through the Word of God. All believers have been spiritually born again and spiritually remade. They have been spiritually created into new men and new women, created anew by God to be brothers and sisters to one another and to love one another. Note two points.

1. First, believers are not born again by perishable, corruptible seed, that is, not by the seed of mere man who is perishable or corruptible. If we were born again by the work of some man, we would still be perishable. We would still be...

- abusive
- arrogant
- self-seeking
- bitter
- hypocritical
- deceptive
- prideful
- envious
- angry
- snobbish
- selfish
- neglectful
- jealous
- hateful
- withdrawn

This is the behaviour of perishable, corruptible seed; it is the nature of human beings. It is the way man acts toward others. But this is not to be the nature of believers, for believers have been born again.

2. Second, believers are born again by the imperishable, incorruptible seed, through the Word of God itself. God spoke and convicted us and led us to repent of our sins and turn to Him. It may have happened when we were reading God's Word or thinking about God or when we were listening to some preacher proclaim God's Word. It does not matter when or how we were born again. What matters is that it has happened. When we turned from sin to God, God spoke the Word and made our spirits alive, making them alive to Him and His Word.

Note that God's Word is the *imperishable, incorruptible seed*; it is the seed that is planted within our hearts and lives. The word imperishable means that it does not perish. Imagine! The Word of God *recreates us*, and it is imperishable. This means a most wonderful thing: we are incorruptible; we will not age, perish, deteriorate or decay. As this verse says, "the living and enduring Word of God." Therefore, we shall live and endure forever.

The point is this: as born again brothers and sisters, God has put His imperishable Word into our hearts. And the very first Word or commandment to believers is to love one another. Therefore, we must love one another deeply, from the heart. We must obey God.

1 John 3:23 *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

John 3:3, 5-6 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."*

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

1 Pet 1:23 *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

1 PETER 1:23 BORN AGAIN; NEW BIRTH

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 1 Peter 01:23

A spiritual birth, a rebirth of one's spirit, a new life, a renewed soul, a regenerated spirit. It is the regeneration and renewal of one's spirit and behaviour (2 Cor. 5:17). It is the endowment of a new life, of a godly nature (2 Pet. 1:4). The new birth is so radical a change in a person's life that it can be described only as being *born again*. Something so wonderful happens to the soul that it is just like a *new birth*. It is a spiritual birth, a birth beyond the grasp of man's hands and efforts. It is so radical, so life-changing, and so wonderful that it can be produced only by the love and power of God Himself.

The New Testament teaching on the new birth is rich and full.

1. The new birth is a necessity. A person will never see (Jn. 3:3) nor ever enter (Jn. 3:5) the Kingdom of God unless he is born again (Jn. 3:7).
2. The new birth is a spiritual birth, the birth of a new power and spirit in life. It is not reformation of the old nature (Rom. 6:6). It is the actual creation of a new

birth within — spiritually (Jn. 3:5-6; cp. Jn. 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:24). (See notes, Eph. 1:3: 4:17-19; *New Person, Self*, Eph. 4:24.) A person is spiritually born again:

- a. By water, even the Spirit (see *Water and Spirit*, Jn. 3:5).
 - b. By the will or choice of God (Jas. 1:18).
 - c. By imperishable, incorruptible seed, even by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23).
 - d. By God from above (1 Pet. 1:3). The word new (ana) in the phrase “new birth” also means *above*. (Cp. Jn. 1:12-13.)
 - e. By Christ, who gives both the *right* and *power* to be born again (Jn. 1:12-13).
3. The new birth is a definite experience, a real experience. A person experiences the new birth:
- a. By believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:1; cp. Jn. 3:14-15).
 - b. By the gospel as it is shared by believers (1 Cor. 4:15; Phile.10).
 - c. By the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23), or through the Word of Truth (Jas. 1:18).
4. The new birth is a changed life, a totally new life. A person proves that he is born again:
- a. By doing righteous acts (1 Jn.2:29; cp. Eph. 2:10; 4:24).
 - b. By not practicing sin (1 Jn. 3:9; 5:18).
 - c. By loving other believers (1 Jn. 4:7).
 - d. By overcoming the world (1 Jn. 5:4).
 - e. By not continuing to sin (1 Jn. 5:18).
 - f. By possessing the divine seed or nature (1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:14; cp. Col. 1:27). □

III. *1 Peter 01:24–25 Body Perishes; Word Endures*

Believers are to love one another because their flesh (body) withers and falls away ever so quickly (cp. Isa. 6-8). Note two facts.

1. Life is ever so short. It lasts no longer than the grass that appears so quickly and then withers away or the flower that appears just as quickly and falls away.

Note the phrase “all their glory.” People work and work to be glorious, to be...

- attractive • charming • acceptable • appealing
- honourable • esteemed • upstanding • dignified
- recognized • beautiful

But no matter how much glory man achieves, he ages, wrinkles, deteriorates and passes off the scene. His flesh is no more than the grass that withers, and the glory of his flesh is no more than the flower that falls away. But this is not true with the believer.

Psa 90:5-6, 16 *You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning — though in the morning it spring up new, by evening it is dry and withered. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children.*

Isa 40:6-7 *A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass.”*

Isa 51:12 *“I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass.”*

James 1:10 *But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower.*

1 Pet 1:24 *For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall.”*

Psa 39:5 *You have made my days a mere hand-breadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath.*

Psa 49:12 *But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.*

Psa 49:17 *For he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendour will not descend with him.*

Psa 78:39 *He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.*

Psa 103:14 *For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*

Job 7:6 *“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and they come to an end without hope.”*

Job 9:24 *When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it?*

Isa 2:22 *Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?*

Isa 5:14 *Therefore the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limit; into it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revellers.*

Isa 38:12 *Like a shepherd’s tent my house has been pulled down and taken from me. Like a weaver I have rolled up my life, and he has cut me off from the loom; day and night you made an end of me.*

James 4:14 *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.*

2. The believer endures forever: “the Word of the Lord stands forever” (v. 25). The Word of the Lord lives in the heart and life of the believer. Therefore, the believer lives forever (v. 23). What is this word that stands forever? It is the Word of the gospel that is preached to you. If we receive the word of the gospel — really bring it into our lives — it will live within us forever and keep us living forever.

The point is this: believers have received the Word of the Lord into their lives. Therefore, they are going to be living together forever. We are the family of God. Therefore, we are to live and act like the family of God; we are to love one another deeply from the heart.

***Psa 119:89** Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*

***Isa 40:8** “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”*

***Mat 5:18** “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”*

***Mat 24:35** “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”*

***1 Pet 1:25** “But the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.*

***John 5:24** “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

***Rom 8:15-17** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

***1 Cor 15:1-4** Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

***Gal 4:4-6** But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” ■*