

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 1:14-16 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Motivations From God To Be Holy

READ: 1 Peter 1:14-16, with vv.8-9,13 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - God intends that believers maintain a mindset in which they greatly rejoice about the future blessings that are coming for them, which will sustain believers as they endure trials and suffering in the present during this life. (v.6)
 - - Through the proving of our faith within adverse trials, we true believers will be prepared to give tremendous praise, glory, and honor to God and to Jesus Christ when He is revealed at His second coming. (v.7)
 - - Persecution and adversities in our life are designed and intended by God to develop and strengthen our faith, which will produce the outcomes that God will bless us for greatly. (vv.8-9)
 - - During this time in human history, God has now provided completed revelation about the grace and salvation that has come through Jesus Christ. (vv.10-12)
 - - Through the preaching of the gospel to us humans, God supplies completed revelation about how each of us humans can acquire "the salvation of our soul" through Jesus Christ. (vv.10-12)
 - - In response to the salvation that we true believers have been given from God, we are to change, establish, and orient our thinking and our life in all the ways that God wants for us. (v.13)
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v.14 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, determine, and describe what the Word of God is saying in verse 14, and include why there is the reference to "obedient children" and what the meaning is of the phrase "when you lived in ignorance".]

SECTION POINT: True believers are to deliberately and diametrically change what they desire, pursue, and conform to.

- - In continuation of the motivational reasoning derived from previous verses 10-12 that because the grace and salvation from God has been completely revealed to us now through the preaching of the gospel, "therefore" (v.13) we who have become the recipients of that grace and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ are to be "obedient children".
- - By the grace or undeserved favor of God and through salvation provided by Jesus Christ, we true believers have been spiritually reborn as true children of God. (cf. John 1:12-13)
- - We true believers are the spiritual offspring of God, starting out as children spiritually and growing in the faith to become mature men and women of the faith.

- - As naive and un-knowledgeable children, we are given instructions and our parents compel us to obey those instructions.
 - - One main reason that we are compelled to obey the instructions of our parents is to protect us from acting from the "ignorance" or lack of knowledge and wisdom that we naturally do not possess as children, who need to develop.
 - - As His spiritual children, our heavenly "Father" (v.17) instructs us to "obey" the directive "not to conform to the evil desires [we] had when [we] lived in ignorance".
 - - "Formerly" when we were not true believers, from our spiritual "ignorance" we "conformed" ourselves or naturally indulged ourselves in pursuing and gratifying our "desires", "lusts, and longings". (Strong's #4386, #1939)
 - - These natural desires, lusts, and longings, along with our gratification of them, are contrary to what God instructs because they are contrary to being "holy" - which God requires to be "sacred, blameless, and consecrated" before the Lord. (v.15, Strong's #0040)
 - - Now as true believers and spiritual children of God, we are to obey this direct instruction to immediately and completely cease and hereafter refrain from entertaining any and all unholy desires, and refrain from engaging in any of their corresponding unholy activities.
 - - Now as true believers and spiritual children of God, we are instead to "conform" ourselves to "holiness", shaping ourselves "to be like God in true righteousness and holiness". (v.15; Ephesians 4:24)
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v.15 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, determine, and describe the ramifications of this mandate in verse 15, and include what evidence from experienced observations indicates about the success or failure of believers to accomplish this mandate.]

SECTION POINT: True believers are called to be comprehensively holy in the same way that God who called them is comprehensively holy.

- - Within the extending of grace and salvation to true believers, God also "calls" them to be "holy", "in accordance to" how He "is holy". (Strong's #2596)
- - Children are naturally and genetically like their biological parents. In a similar manner, true children of God are to be naturally spiritually and genetically spiritually like their spiritual parent - God. (v.14)
- - As God is holy, so too are His spiritual children to "be holy" - mandated to willfully and deliberately be of the same character as God. (vv.15,16)
- - By choice and corresponding actions, true believers are to decide, implement, and become like God, in comprehensive holiness of comprehensive character. (from Strong's #1722 with #3956 with #0391 with #1096)
- - From the indication here of being commanded by God to do this, our pursuing and advancing toward comprehensive holiness of comprehensive character requires great and sustained effort.
- - This pursuit of comprehensive holiness is an ongoing struggle, battle, and strenuous exertion of "self-control" (v.13), self-discipline (v.15), self-denying (v.14), self-sacrificing (v.13), and etc.

- - Evidence from experienced observations sadly indicates that an extremely small percentage of true believers ever achieve consistently living at a high level of comprehensive holiness - "being holy in all [that they] do" and are.
- - Evidence from experienced observations further indicates that some true believers achieve periodic living at a higher level of holiness, but most believers live in ongoing repeating cycles of brief partial victory in holiness followed by utter defeat in holiness. (cf. the 'Parable of the Sower' in Matthew 13:3-8,18-23)
- - Even though there may be powerful spiritual reasons why nearly all true believers fail to achieve consistently living in comprehensive holiness, the fact of truth and ultimate reality is that each of those failing persons is living in rebellion to this mandate from God "to be holy in all you do".
- - And those failing persons certainly will not escape the coming reality that every person will be subject to the "Father" one day "judging" how they had lived their life. (v.17)

v.16 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, determine, and describe the mandate in this verse 16, and include the significances of the words "for", "written", and "because". Also generate and include applicable comparisons between what the rest of the world is doing in comparison to what true believers are to be doing, in respect to the mandate in this verse 16.]

SECTION POINT: True believers are to be strongly motivated to pursue extreme personal holiness because of how extremely holy God is.

- - This command to "be holy" first originated in the Old Testament Law - Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2.
- - Because of its restatement here in 1 Peter, this command hereby remains valid, applicable, and binding upon believers under the New Testament.
- - We believers are called and set apart for God's holy purposes - 'sanctified'. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)
- - In the midst of the rest of the world living in sinfulness, we true believers are "called" by God to live in holiness. (1 Peter 1:15)
- - While the rest of the world lives in the manner consistent with their inherent sin nature, we true believers are to live in a manner that deliberately puts to death our inherent sin nature, and deliberately live according to our new nature of holiness, which has been given to us by God and is empowered by His Holy Spirit indwelling us. (cf. Ephesians 4:17-24)
- - While the rest of the world is motivated by various internal and external stimuli to live in sinfulness, we true believers are to be motivated by the holy character of God, to live in holiness.
- - While the rest of the world lives in disregard and dismissal of this long-standing "written" mandate by God to live in holiness, we true believers are to continuously keep in mind and obey this "written" perpetual mandate by God to live in holiness.
- - While the rest of the world lives in rebellion to this imperative from God to "be holy", we true believers are to live in willing full compliance to this imperative from God to "be holy". (cf. Strong's #2468 - second person imperative present tense)

- - While the rest of the world readily experiments with and engages in sinfulness, we true believers are to stay on alert and guard against becoming involved in sinfulness. (1 Thessalonians 5:5-8)

- - While the rest of the world lives in sinfulness in order to please themselves, we true believers are to live in holiness in order to please God.

- - While the rest of the world lives in the present to acquire whatever they think will benefit them - even if it is sinful, we true believers are to live with the future in mind to acquire that which God will bless us for - even if we have to pay a high price now to avoid what is sinful. (1 Peter 1:13)

- - God is personally holy to the ultimate extreme. Therefore, we true believers are to pursue being personally holy to that same extreme extent that God possesses. (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:1)

- - God in no way participates in sinfulness (ex. James 1:13). Therefore, we true believers are in no way to participate in sinfulness. (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:17; 7:1)

- - God has created us humans in His image and He has regenerated us true believers to be like Him in holiness (Genesis 1:27; Colossians 2:13; 3:10). Therefore, God is correct and fair in expecting us true believers to be holy in the same manner that He is holy.

BIG IDEA: In obedience to God, in response to a calling from God, and because of the character of God, true believers are to pursue extreme comprehensive personal holiness.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - Have you been spiritually reborn as an actual true "child" of God?

- - If so, are you an "obedient" child of God? To what degree or amount?

- - Do you have any "evil desires" that you are continuing to "conform" to?

- - Since the day you became a true believer, how much of your spiritual "ignorance" that you lived in as an unbeliever has been dispelled?

- - Since the day you became a true believer, how have you been responding to this "calling" from God to be holy?

- - Are you "holy in all [that] you do"?

- - How seriously do you take this calling to be "holy in all [that] you do"?

- - What is your evaluation of and regard for the holiness that God possesses?

- - How motivated are you to be holy?

-- What evidences and proofs can you offer to substantiate how motivated you say or think you are to be holy?

- - - - Are you motivated to the extent of being holy only when you are in church?

- - - - Or only when you are in public?

- - - - Or only when other people are watching?

- - - - Or only outwardly and usually not inwardly?

- - - - Or only in areas of your life that you choose, the easy or comfortable areas?

- - - Or only in areas of your life that you want to face, being oblivious to or in denial about other areas?

- - If your spiritual heart is as tender to God as you claim it is, then are you ready to obey this direct instruction from God to immediately and completely cease and hereafter refrain from entertaining any and all unholy desires, and refrain from engaging in any of their corresponding unholy activities?

- - Are you ready to comprehensively "conform" yourself to "holiness" now, shaping yourself "to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"?

- - Are you ready to fully engage yourself in an ongoing struggle, battle, and strenuous exertion to firmly establish self-control, self-discipline, self-denying, and self-sacrificing, in order to achieve success in being holy each day?

- - Or instead, are you going to quit, or procrastinate, or fabricate some excuse not to obey God and comprehensively conform yourself to holiness?

- - For those of you who are not a true believer, do you realize and comprehend that God says in verse 14 that you are "living in ignorance"?

- - God also says that you are living in conformity to evil desires, even though you may think and perhaps even vehemently assert that you are not.

- - Do you want to continue living in spiritual ignorance?

- - Do you want to continue living in conformity to evil desires?

- - Do you want to allow your spiritual ignorance and evil desires to contribute in keeping you in your current state of being technically alienated from God?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What are some other obligations that God expects of us true believers, as His "obedient children"?

- - Which of those other obligations are reasonable for God to expect of us, particularly when considering the "grace to be given" us? (v.13)]

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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