

1. **Introduction:** Peter told us that it is both our great opportunity and our duty to, with the help of the Holy Spirit, strive to become holy as God is holy. He explained how.
 - Practical holiness begins in the mind and gradually changes the heart. Peter says prepare your minds for action, concentrate and focus your mind. Be sure to stay spiritually alert, sober-minded and self-controlled, and set your hope fully on Jesus Christ.
 - Believers are to pay close attention, controlling everything contending for their mind's attention - what they look at, listen to, and everything that is allowed into their minds.
 - Always think biblically. Consider the long-range implications and consequences of thoughts and actions. Don't focus only on immediate results.
 - The way thoughts and actions affect character is more important than immediate pleasures or rewards.
 - It helps to begin each day doing something to renew one's sense of reverence for God and to remind ourselves from time to time during each day that we belong to Christ and He cares about us, the things that happen to us, and what we are becoming.
2. **1 Peter 1:22-25:** *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ²⁴ for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*
 - Peter says believers should live as obedient children of their heavenly Father. In 1:22 he says that obedience to the "truth" purifies the soul.
3. **Obedience to the Truth:** In John 14:6, "*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*"
 - By obedience to the truth, we purify our souls. But, in our daily life, we fail to be fully obedient because purification of our souls is not yet complete.
 - Purification proceeds as an upward spiral, the more obedient we are, the more we are purified, and the more purified we are, the greater our obedience.
 - These verses begin with a call for believers, those living as exiles in the world, to work for unity and community among themselves.
4. **Unity:** To achieve unity, Peter lists three requirements:
 - (1.) **Obedience to the Truth:** Believers must not follow the patterns of the world. We are to obey God's truth – God's standard of what it means to be a believer as seen in the person of Christ.
 - (2.) **Purity of Heart:** Pride, prejudices, grudges, and bitterness must be put aside. It means getting rid of those things in our behavior that would stand between brothers and sisters in Christ.

- (3.) **Sincere Love:** If we obey the truth and cleanse our heart, we will be free to love without hypocrisy. We should strive to eliminate our faults and be patient with the faults of others.
 - All believers are all children of the same heavenly Father. All have experienced the same rebirth, born again of imperishable seed. All are to express love and get spiritual nourishment and instruction from the same source – the living, abiding Word of God.
 - In eternity, brothers and sisters in Christ will be at peace with one another forever.
 - In the “here and now,” problems will inevitably occur between believers.
 - Life is short, but the Word of the LORD remains forever. It is constant from generation to generation. God’s Word provides the guide we need to live in a manner pleasing God.
 - Peter gives some instructions on how to deal with the “here and now” problems that occur between believers.
5. **1 Peter 2:1-3:** *So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*
- Earlier Peter pointed out that the life of a Believer should match their high calling in Christ. Believers are to be obedient with minds prepared for action, be self-controlled, and demonstrate genuine love for one another by words and actions.
 - To truly love one another, we must rid ourselves of attitudes and habits that are harmful to others and to ourselves – all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, and slander of every kind.
 - We are to eliminate attitudes and desires that draw us toward evil.
 - We are to yearn for the spiritual nourishment of God’s Word like a newborn babe craves its mother’s milk. In this way we will be nourished to grow up into our salvation as mature believers with attitudes and actions that please God.
 - Peter doesn’t mean that all his readers are babes in Christ. The implication is that all believers, whatever their spiritual age, should crave spiritual nourishment through God’s Word in a way like the intensity with which a new-born baby craves its mother’s milk.
6. **1 Peter 2:4-6:** *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”*
- Verse 2:4 begins a new section of Peter’s letter (2:4-10) in which Peter use OT imagery to demonstrate that New Covenant believers (Jews and Gentiles who are “in Christ”) are a new “People of God.” These new people of God possess all the blessings of OT Israel in even greater measure than OT Israel.
 - To whom does Peter refer in the phrase “*As you come to Him?*” What does it mean to “*come to Him*”? The flow of the letter makes it clear Peter refers to the Lord Jesus.

- Since Peter is writing to believers already born again into a living hope, he cannot be referring to believers' experience of initial conversion. What he refers to is drawing near to Christ through spiritual growth.
 - Believers grow spiritually from the ministry of the Holy Spirit as we study God's Word, as we fellowship with God's people, and in general, as we are obedient.
 - Peter says that Christ is a living stone rejected by men. but in the sight of God, "chosen and precious."
 - Coming to Christ means we side with Him; it also means we will experience opposition from those who reject Him.
 - Christ, as the living stone, chosen by the Father, is the chief cornerstone of the church.
 - Christ is Himself building His church using believers as living stones to achieve a structure superior to the Temple, which though beautiful and holy to God was made of perishable dead stones.
 - Believers are like living stones, being built by Christ into a spiritual house having the imperishable beauty of holiness and faith. Believers are a holy priesthood offering sacrifices under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit – sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Peter will talk more about living stones in 2:9.
7. **1 Peter 2:7-10: So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"⁸ and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**
- The people who received Peter's letter were believers. Believing in Christ, they will not be put to shame but will share in the chosen and precious status of the trusted cornerstone.
 - Unbelievers are destined to stumble, because they disobey the message.
 - In contrast to unbelievers, those who believe are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who belong to God.
 - Believers are joined with Christ so that they may fully declare the praises of Him who called them out of the darkness into His wonderful light – God redeems, not simply for what it means to us. He redeems us so that we might properly glorify Him.
 - Believers proclaim the excellence of Him who called us out of darkness by proclaiming all He is and has done.
 - Christians at one time were "no people" and "had not received mercy" – they were under condemnation for their sins. But now, through Jesus Christ, they have been granted the highest privilege in the universe. Now they are the people of God – not by any merit of

their own, for they deserve only judgement. All their privileges derive from the undeserved favor of God.

8. **1 Peter 2:11-12:** *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*

- Peter reminds believers that they are exiles and sojourners in this world. We are in the world as soldiers engaged in spiritual battle to protect ourselves and others.
- A portion of the spiritual battle lies within us. Giving in to sinful desires will hinder our growth in Christ-likeness and decrease our usefulness in the Kingdom.
- We are to maintain such good conduct among unbelievers that even if they accuse us of wrongdoing, it will be a false accusation, and God will be glorified through our good deeds.
- If our conduct does not honor Christ, unbelievers us when we speak of our living hope in Christ. Our lives should be honorable and Christlike.
- Evangelistic outreach should consider the culture in which it is being carried out but should never cater in a permissive way to the un-Biblical lifestyles of the unconverted.
- Paul declared that he would be all things to all people for the sake of the gospel, but he did not mean he was willing to pervert or distort the gospel. The gospel is simple and can be presented correctly and understandably in any culture.
- The setting might be as varied as a clearing in an African jungle with drums playing, or a cathedral in Europe with an organ playing Bach.
- The techniques and language necessary for presenting the gospel in an understandable way vary with culture but the gospel itself is truth delivered for all time and cannot change.
- God Himself is the only One who can convert an unbeliever and bring them into His Kingdom. God graciously allows us to be involved in the process as the Holy Spirit uses our preaching and teaching of the gospel, but we are “means” not “causes.”
- God can and does honor even watered down or distorted views of gospel. Some gospel presentations seem to allow having Christ and yet maintaining an unbelieving lifestyle – no necessity for repentance and turning away from a sinful past to a future of obedience.
- The unconverted need “living bread” and unadulterated truth but are often offered “pretty stones” instead.

9. **Next Lesson:** Begin with 1 Peter 2:13.