

Studies in I Peter (25)

The Responsibility of Salvation: We are to Live a Consistent Life

Introduction

- A. In this first chapter Peter explains the relationship between the grace of God -- salvation -- and the believer's life of obedience.
- B. In summary he has shown salvation to be totally the gift of God's grace and our obedience as the evidence of salvation. He has pointed out our responsibility to obey God through dedication (V13); holiness (Vs14,15); love (V22); and now he speaks of consistency (Vs23-25).

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, all men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; and the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word which was preached to you. I Peter 1:23-25 NIV

I. The Basis and Ability for Consistency is Found in the New Birth.

For you have been born again

- A. The new birth is the bridge between redemption and salvation.

Peter has reminded us of how the new birth is related to both the mercy of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ in V3. In His mercy toward us God brought the deliverance of redemption into our life through the channel -- the gift -- of the new birth.

- B. The new birth has produced a spiritual newness in our life.

The believer now has a new perspective on life (living hope V3); a new future (inheritance V4); a new security (kept V5); a new joy (joy Vs 6-9); a new ability (obedient Vs 13,14); a new basis for life (written Vs 15-22).

- C. The new birth is the foundation for living a consistent life.

Because of the new birth we no longer belong to ourselves (I Corinthians 6:19,20) nor to the sinful world system (John 15:19) -- we belong to God. Peter has presented his case -- we are to obey God, and live a consistent Christian life -- simply because we belong to God. We must, therefore, cleanse ourselves of all those attitudes and actions which indicates disobedience to God.

II. The Power and Pattern for Consistency is found in the Bible.

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

- A. We have been born again through the "living word of God."

The Word of God is not ink on paper! It is living because God never separates His Word from Himself -- He Who is the Creator of all life continually dispenses life and power through His Word. We are born again because God has "spoken life" to us (James 1:18).

The believer can live a consistent life because God has designed the Bible to bring continual strength and cleansing to all who will obey His Word. We are "purified by obeying the truth" (V22). Our weakness, failures, depression, hopelessness, and barrenness can often be traced to our neglect of the Bible -- or to our outright disobedience.

- B. We have been born again through the "enduring word of God."

The word "endure" simply means "permanent or unchanging." The emphasis is on strength, stability, being trustworthy and always relevant. That which God has given us as the very foundation for our life -- abides. It is always up to date -- always the solution to our "modern" problems.

III. The Warning and Challenge for Consistency is Found in the Brevity of Life.

For, all men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field, and the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

- A. The temporary nature of life should force us to self-examination.

It is easy to spend one's life on secondary issues -- and miss the meaning of life itself! Too many Christians live according to a pattern that has been established by non-Christians (Ephesians 2:1-3).

- B. The temporary nature of life should force us to emphasize the spirit.

The old saying, "You can't take it with you," may apply to earthly possessions -- but not to spiritual growth and virtue. What we gain here in the realm of the spiritual we will take with us to Heaven!

IV. Our Responsibility for Consistency is Found in our Knowledge of Bible.

. . . But the word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word which was preached to you.

- A. The Christian has the truth -- the very key to life itself!

We have the answers to the most important questions of life.

- B. The truth we have been given -- places us under responsibility.

We must live consistently -- and we must witness to others.

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