

Spiritual Growth Through Understanding Holiness I Peter 1:14,15

Introduction

- A. While salvation brings the greatest benefits of any relationship into the life of the believer, it also brings solemn obligations.
- B. In his instruction to Christians in trials, Peter brings out both aspects in his epistle. Failure to assume the responsibilities of the Christian life will hinder every facet of one's walk with God.

I. The Grace of God in the Believer's Salvation, I Peter 1:3-2:10.

- A. The description of salvation, Vs 3-5.
- B. The joy of salvation, Vs 6-9.
- C. The greatness of salvation, Vs 10-12.
- D. The responsibility of salvation, Vs 13-2:3.
 - 1. The responsibility of dedication, V13.
 - 2. The responsibility of holiness, Vs 14,15.

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (daily life).

- a. The basis of holiness -- "As obedient children ..."

The answer as to WHY a Christian must live a holy life and HOW he can do so -- is found in the truth that he is a child of God. He has been born of God (V3, John 1:12,13), he is called to walk in fellowship with God (V5, I Cor. 1:9), he is to glorify God (V7, I Cor. 6:20), and he has the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life (V2, I Cor. 6:19), Who makes available to him the power of the Resurrection (V3, Rom. 6:4). This brief summary is more than sufficient to show how inconsistent we are when we sin!

- b. The characteristic of holiness -- "As obedient children ..."

While Biblical holiness does not originate with actions, but with the will (choices of faith and love) and the mind (knowing God's will), it is inseparably related to daily life. The Lord Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt 7:20), and James said, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). There is a great truth here: obedience brings the transforming work of God which makes one holy. As we learn to obey God -- He works in us (Rom. 6:16-18). There is no holiness -- apart from daily practice.

- c. The warning regarding holiness -- "Not fashioning your-selves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

While we have been born again and have entered into a life of newness (II Corinthians 5:17) – we see patterns in our attitudes and walk which were formed before salvation. Paul spoke of his old nature (flesh) manifesting itself in a "law" (pattern of action) in his life (Romans 7:18-23). Too often we allow our former sins to "go into hiding" or we express them in a more "Christian way." Every believer must face his self-centeredness, jealousy, covetousness, self-righteousness, pride, judgmental suspicion, and negativism.

- d. The pattern regarding holiness -- "But as he which hath called you is holy ..."

Peter does not refer to divine infinity here but to what it means for God to be holy. He is holy in a complete separation from all ungodliness and the fullest expression of righteousness, truth, and love. This is the pattern which must be found in our lives -- separation from all evil, and the practice of righteousness, truthfulness, and love. Such a life means honesty, trustworthiness, integrity, faithfulness, lovingkindness, consistency, with the priorities and goals which are in harmony with these virtues.

- e. The command regarding holiness -- "So be ye holy ..."

These few words bring the believer's responsibility clearly before us -- we must be holy. As we have seen, true holiness is the result of the work of God in transforming us, as we learn to obey Him by faith and love. We must make the choices necessary to be free from sin and to live a life within and without that is summarized by such virtues as righteousness, truthfulness, and love.

That which is a contradiction to such a life, or questionable, must be put aside. We have no option -- we must be holy people.

- f. The extent of holiness -- "In all manner of conversation."

The old English word "conversation" means "daily life." The teaching here has to do with the responsibility to bring every facet of our life into harmony with the command to be holy. Every believer is embarrassed as to how hard this is to do. In reality the difficulty is not due to a lack of provision -- but a lack of desire on our part. Too often we do not realize how serious a sinful allowance may be in our life. A good illustration is James' description of the wrong use of the tongue, or money, or our worldliness, or partiality, or lack of prayer. He also reminds us that a double minded man is "unstable" in all his ways (1:8). We may not live with sin in our lives.

Victor M. Matthews