

# 1 PETER 2:1-10

## THE ATTITUDES FOR LIVING A HOLY LIFE

The astute class-mate will notice that last week's question mark regarding how far we would get in our study this week was resolved, i.e., to **vs 10**. I not only think this will be good place to stop from a topical viewpoint, but also from a content coverage viewpoint. In these verses Peter continues to address the believers relationship to God, whereas **vs 11** starts his discussion on the believer's relationship to others, i.e., such as government, family, employers, etc., which continues for several chapters. Additionally, Peter pours a lot of theological information and inspirational exhortation into **2:1-10**. So, all-in-all, a good break-point. With that said, let's again ask God to bless this time.

Father, I think of this as a "virtual" gathering of like-minds, in Your Name, and therefore I claim the promise of Your presence with us and ask that You feed us with this "pure milk of the word that we may grow (spiritually) thereby." Amen.

I want to change our procedure today. I want each of you to continue to use your own bibles as we proceed, recognizing that this means a number of different translations will be in use and I feel this is good. When I study for the class, I have 5-6 different versions and translations open on my desk, chairs, wherever. Also different "study bibles" and commentaries, which themselves are based on various translations. For these class studies I generally use the "New King James Version" and feel that I should type out our study scriptures so any differences from mine to yours will be easily observed. Since I do study using many different ones, I will endeavor to identify differences where I feel it would be appropriate to do so. I will start with a transcription of the scripture first.

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(NKJV) **1 Peter 2:1-10**, (1) “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, (2) as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (3) if indeed you have tasted that the LORD is gracious. (4) Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, (5) you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (6) Therefore, it is also contained in the Scripture,

‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame’.

(7) Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious but to those who are disobedient,

‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone’,

(8) and

‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.’

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

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. (9) But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (10) who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

With that, let's try to determine what God wants us to learn from this scripture. Recall that last week we identified “6 Steps for Living a Holy Life”. I find in today's scripture 4 “Attitudes for Living the Holy Life”.

Let's first consider **vs 1-3**. As in our previous study where the “And” of **vs 1:17** pointed the readers back to Peter's instruction to “be holy”, the “Therefore” of **vs 2:1** points us back to God' word as identified in **vs 1:25**. The preaching of the gospel (good news) from the Word was the vehicle through which they had been saved, and it would be their “life source”\* for living a holy life. (More on “life source” later.) In these 3 verses I find the first 2 of these “attitudes”. The “Therefore” is immediately followed by some “items” the believer needs to “lay aside”, and, I like what the NIV says, “rid yourselves of”. The “Therefore” is immediately followed by some “items” the believer needs to “lay aside”. I also like what the NIV says, “rid yourselves of”. This is an interesting list of “items” to get rid of. To categorize these items I want to first consider the definition of the word attitude since that is the word used in my title of this study. Ignoring the definitions which refer to “position” and “orientation”, my “Webster's” states that

\* “The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Peter”

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attitude means “a state of mind”. When I consider this list, I see that they are all based on one’s state of mind. Even “evil speaking” (e.g., gossip, slander, etc.) can be considered as a state of mind since Jesus said in **Matt. 12:34**, that what one speaks comes out of his heart / mind. However, these results of one’s attitude toward someone, may not ever be sensed or known by the other person. So, why does Peter address these so strongly? These “items” are not like violent sins of robbery, murder, rape, etc.; are they? Could it be that (1) Peter considered that it would be a low probability event for a Christian to ever be involved in the violent sins, and (2) that these “items” may be the type of sins that even Christians have to fight regularly; perhaps they are the kind of sins the author of Hebrews alludes to in **Heb. 12:1**, “...the sin which so easily ensnares us,...”. I hate to admit it, but these 2 reasons fit me. In order to respond to Peter’s instructions to get rid of these sins requires the acknowledgement to God that one has these attitudes and ask for His forgiveness. This is called “confession”. Given the situation that caused this attitude, one might need to confess it to the other person and ask them for forgiveness. Confession is followed by “repentance” which means to “turn away from”, i.e., get rid of it! This then renews a believer’s fellowship with the Lord (**1 John 1:9**) and, as needed, reconciliation with the other person. I consider this to be the first “attitude” for holy living:

## (1) One’s Attitude Toward Others

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The 2<sup>nd</sup> “attitude for holy living” is found in **vs 2**:

## (2) The Attitude Toward God’s Word

Firstly, I will try to clear-up a translation difficulty in this verse. The NIV states, “crave pure spiritual milk”. The KJV, NKJV, and NAS each state “the pure milk of the word”. Rather than try to repeat the views of the commentators, the main points for the NIV version is that the Greek word, *logikos* is translated elsewhere as spiritual and or reasonable (**Rom.12:1**) . The arguments for “of the word” are (1) the Greek word *logikos* comes from *logos* (the word), and (2) the O.T. sometimes uses “milk” as a metaphor of God’s word, and (3) “of the word” makes a better fit with the preceding context of **chapter 1**.

Now, let’s move on with defining the second “attitude” while noting that I am basing it on the “of the word” translation. “Desire” is the key word here ,which means “to intensely crave”. I assume that each of you would agree that desire is also an output of, or state of, the mind. The instruction is to desire it; the question for us is then “how does one develop such a desire? Let’s take the lead from Peter where he said to desire it “as newborn babes”. Sounds like a good start since he previously stated that these believers had been “born again”, but not necessarily referring to any lack of spiritual maturity, but just to desire it “like” babes. So, what gives a baby their “intense craving” for milk? Their body signals a need, a hunger for it, to sustain life itself. A Christian cannot depend on their body signaling a need for the Word, so we must identify the need ourselves. We can develop a need, a craving for something, from several situations; (a) from a habit; regular reading and meditation in it till it becomes a habit, (b) follow Step 6 of how to live a holy life from

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our previous study which is “Continuous Remembrance of the Price Jesus Paid for Your Redemption”, and (c) ask God to give you that intense craving for His Word. And, of course, satisfying this desire for God’s word through regular study, meditation on its teachings, and its application in one’s life reduces spiritual growth. To what end?

**Ephes. 4:13**, “...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;...”

We see, then, that the proper “attitude” toward God’s word will be the starting point to achieving spiritual growth.

Just a short note to clarify another translation issue regarding the ending of **vs 2**. The NIV states the result of desiring (and studying ) the Word is to “grow up in your salvation.” I feel that this is a very misleading translation in that it implies a salvation by works disclaimed in **Ephes. 2:8-9**. The NAS makes a little better attempt to clarify by stating it like this; “grow in respect to your salvation”. The bible makes it very clear that there is no partial salvation. One is completely saved the moment they believe and receive all the benefits of salvation that were identified in **Chapter 1**. Our abiding in the Word provides the spiritual nutrients necessary for spiritual growth, the goal of which is as defined in **Ephes. 4:13** above. This includes the production of spiritual fruit and the energy and strength for good works and service to others as “doers of the word and not just hearers” (**James 1:22**).

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Our 3<sup>rd</sup> “attitude” for holy living is found in the more lengthy section of **vs 4-8**. I will identify it now as it might help guide your understanding of this portion of scripture.

## (3) The Attitude Toward Fellowship With Christ

In **vs 4-8**, Peter contrasts the relationships to Christ of a believer and an unbeliever (“disobedient”; **vs 7**). Peter uses the situation of one “coming to Jesus” (**vs 4**) and metaphors to develop this contrast. He uses two similar metaphors in speaking of Jesus. The first is “living stone” and the second is “corner stone”. Note that Peter uses the modifier “living” in several places in this epistle; living hope in **1:3**; living word in **1:23**; then here as living stone in **2:4**. Peter uses the same metaphor for these believers; “living stones”. I understand these metaphors to mean that Jesus is a “living stone” in that He is the life-giver; giving life to all who believe in Him as Savior and Lord. He gives them the abundant life while they are on this earth;

**John 10:10b**, “I come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

and eternal life with Him when this life is over (**John 3:16**). Peter calls believers “living stones” because they have been given a new life in Christ when they were “born again” by His Spirit.

He then develops the contrast by stating what happens when the believer and the unbeliever “comes to Jesus”. Verse **4** states that Jesus was loved by, and chosen by God to perform the role of “life giver”, and, **vs 7** states that in this role, He became the

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“corner stone” of the “spiritual house” (the Church) that was being built up of believers i.e., the “living stones”. The contrast being that when the unbeliever (the “disobedient” in **vs 7**) came to Jesus ( **vs 4**) he rejected Him as the Messiah (the “living stone) and “stumbled” and was “offended” (**Matt. 13:57** ) by the total thought of such (**vs 8**). However, when the believer “came to Christ” (for fellowship, communion, prayer, etc), as a “living stone” (**vs 4**), he should know that he was a part the process of Christ building His Church (“ a spiritual house”). Additionally he would serve as a part of a “holy priesthood“. In the role of priest( **vs 5**) he would offer up “spiritual sacrifices” (good works and service to others) that were “acceptable to God, and he would do this through” the power of the Spirit of “Jesus” living in him. Scripture assures him that by so doing, God would not be “ashamed of him” (**vs6**). And just as important, as priest, we have direct access to God, whenever we want and as often as we want, we can “come to Him”.

I see in all this that one’s attitude toward fellowship with Jesus is not just looking forward to the pleasure of “coming to Him” for that marvelous time of fellowship with the One who through His great “mercy” (**vs 10**) brought us “out of darkness and into His marvelous light” (**vs 9**), but it also includes what our response should be as “living stones”.

And, it is that response that brings us to the 4<sup>th</sup> “attitude” for holy living.

## (4) The Attitude Of Our Response As “Living Stones”

Peter very plainly tells us in **vs 9** that as His “special people” we are to respond in praise to Him for all the great privileges we have in Christ. So, what hymn do we sing most often in our Sunday worship time? Yes, it’s the “Doxology”. The name comes

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from a Greek word meaning “to speak honor and glory” and therefore is a great name for the hymn, and, to sing it is good. A potential problem can arise because we have sung it so often, many of us sing it from memory. But this can become a rote action, i.e., singing in a thoughtless, routine way, without meaning, and I’m certain God does not feel honored or blessed by it. Let’s sing it together, reading and meaning the words and speaking them directly to God.

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.**

## **NEXT WEEK**

### **1 PETER 2:11-25**

**“SUBMISSION & OBEDIENCE TO THOSE IN AUTHORITY”**