



Preacher's Pen *by Gene McCoy*

In his first letter to the Christians who were scattered because of great persecution, Peter encourages them to faithfulness by writing of the hope we have in Christ. If there is ever a time when holy living is difficult, it is certainly during times of persecution.

But this is the very purpose for which we have been called. Paul declares in Ephesians 1:4 that God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. We need to know, therefore, what it means to be holy.

We need to understand that being holy is **NOT** a matter of **DOING** but of **BEING**. It's not what you **DO**, but rather what you **ARE**. This fundamental principle is illustrated by the life of Mother Theresa, whose compassion to the poor and downcast is well known. Mother Theresa did not **become** a compassionate person by helping the poor. She helped the poor because she **was** a compassionate person. In the same way, we do not **become** holy by things we **do**. But we **do** deeds of holiness because we **are holy**.

In Ephesians 5:25-27 Paul says there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking." This is not the **means** to holiness but rather the **measure** or expression of it.

Because we are holy, Peter says our lives should exhibit certain characteristics. Read his exhortation in 1 Peter 1:13-16.

PREPARATION

We must first prepare our minds for action. We must be mentally prepared to serve God;

deliberate, having our minds constantly focused on God.; mentally and spiritually ready to do God's work.

This involves deliberate thought, according to Paul (Phil. 4:8). We must continually think on things that are true, noble, right, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy.

Such preparation requires **CONCENTRATION**. Peter characterizes it as self-control, or soberness of spirit. Having a clear mind is essential. We should not be influenced by worldliness and polluted by immorality or sin, but free from all mental drunkenness. In chapter 5 Peter alerts us to watchfulness because Satan, as a roaring lion, is always looking for an opportunity to destroy us. We cannot afford to allow our minds to be intoxicated by the impurities of the world.

King David will testify to the wisdom of this teaching with regard to what we allow our eyes to see (2 Sam. 11). The Bible also warns us about what we allow into our minds through our ears. That which we allow into our heart will likely come out of our mouths in unholy speech.

Our concentration upon holiness produces with us a keen sense of **ANTICIPATION**.

The Christians to whom Peter wrote were suffering great persecution. Their present circumstances would not encourage them to maintain a life of holiness. What they needed was a word of hope! They needed to be reminded of their future glory and reward.

Hope is among the most powerful motivations know to man. Hope of winning the gold medal motivates the Olympic athlete



1 Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." NASU

to the daily discipline of practice and training. Hope of finding a miracle cure motivates medical researchers to work tirelessly in the **BE HOLY** laboratory, and motivates the afflicted to continue their fight against terminal illness. And it is the hope Christians have in their eternal reward that motivates them to holy living.

Holy living may seem to be an impossibility in this old world of sin. But we have One who has promised to give us the resources to succeed. And He has promised to come again with His reward. It is this hope that keeps us on the path of holiness.

John testifies that “When [Jesus] appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” And “everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 Jn. 3:2b, 3). Peter goes on to say that we should be holy as the Lord is holy. This is **CONSECRATION**.

Our holiness will never equal God’s in **degree**. But we should be like god in our **nature**. Peter says we are not to conform to the evil desires we had when we lived in ignorance. Paul said we are not be **CONformed** to this world, but rather

TRANSformed by the renewing of our mind. Instead of living according to the pattern of this world, we should pattern our lives after God’s will.

The renewing of our mind may be compared to the process in military boot camp of training the recruit to **stop** thinking and acting like a civilian and to **start** thinking and acting like a soldier or sailor. Paul says holy living

BE HOLY (*Cont. from page 3*)

demands a holy sacrifice. We must **restrain** our fleshly appetite and **restrict** our conduct to that which glorifies God.

Being holy is not what we **DO** but what we **ARE**. Nor is it because of **WHO** we are, but **WHOSE** we are. Here, then, is the key to holy living — **BEING HOLY**. This demands preparation, concentration, anticipation, and consecration. This cannot be done apart from prayer. Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonian Christians (1 Thess. 3:13) is our prayer for you.

Lord, may You strengthen our hearts so that we will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. Amen.