

How Can You Be Holy Without Being Holier Than Thou

I Peter 1:13-21

1 The process of sanctification is the spiritual journey genuine Christians take towards the ideal of being like Christ. They want to be godly and strive towards maturity and perfection. They want to hear “Well done, good and faithful servant” from the One Who died for them.

So what does it mean to be “Holier Than Thou”? Most people, when they use that phrase, are referring to people who think they have a monopoly on biblical truth. They contend that what they believe is “what the Bible says”.

“Holier Than Thou” people may live good Christian lives themselves but look down on others who don’t seem to be keeping their standard of conduct. They tend to be legalistic and critical of others.

So, how can you strive towards Christian perfection without being snooty about it? You can be holy without being holier than thou . . . 2.

I. By Monitoring Your Conduct - v13-16

. . . By monitoring your conduct. Notice verses 13 through 16 here. **Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”** ³

First, verse 13 states that you need to be prepared to change your life. ¹ ⁴ You do that by preparing your mind. The King James Version says **gird up your loins**. First century men wore robes. When they were out in the fields working, they got their robes out of the way by pulling the garment up from their ankles and knees to tie to their belt. This freed up their legs. This is another way of saying “get prepared to go to

¹ v13 - Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

work"! So, get into the word of God to find out what to change in your life to please your Lord. ⁵

Use self control. The King James Version states here, **be sober**; instead of being drunk. Don't lose it when you're tempted to. ⁶

Focus on the Lord's revealing party; His Second Coming. ⁷ Peter, here, pictures salvation being given when the Lord comes again. ⁸ The word "given", here, means to carry a burden. ² So, when Lord Jesus comes again, He will carry His grace to you. ⁹

Verse 14 tells us that you must realize that your new life will be different from your old life. ³ ¹⁰ In your old life you allowed your desires to rule you. When Eve was tempted at the forbidden tree certain things happened. ⁴ She knew what the restriction was (**v2-3**),

² Φέρω = carry a burden.

³ v14 - As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

⁴ Genesis 3:1-6 - Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or

she would learn more than God wanted her to know so she would lose her innocence (v5) and, after all, the fruit was attractive and tasted great (v6). What this event illustrates is that you won't find happiness doing your own thing. You'll only find it doing God's thing! So don't let your old habits rule you. Get out of the world! ¹¹

In your new life be like obedient children. The Lord put it this way, **I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.** ⁵

So, what do you obey? ¹² Second Thessalonians, Chapter 1, verse 8 says you are to obey the gospel. ⁶ ¹³ Romans, Chapter 6, verse 17 states that you are to

you will die.' ” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

⁵ Matthew 18:3.

⁶ II Thessalonians 1:8 - He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

obey the Lord's teachings.⁷ ¹⁴ In Second Corinthians, Chapter 10, verse 5, you are to make your thoughts obedient to Christ!⁸

This scripture continues in verses 18 through 21 with the second way you can be holy without being holier than thou . . . ¹⁵

II. By Remembering the Cost - v18-21

. . . By remembering the cost. **For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.** ¹⁶

⁷ Romans 6:17 - . . . you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.

⁸ II Corinthians 10:5 - we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Verse 18 tells us that holiness did not come from this world. ⁹ ¹⁷ Certainly not from material gain or social status that the world pressures us to believe we need.

¹⁸

Material things get corrupted. Matthew, Chapter 6, verses 19 through 21 says, **Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** ¹⁹

Social status just doesn't count with God. ¹⁰ You call on a Father Who judges each person's work impartially!

Notice what His word says about this. Romans, Chapter 2, verse 11, **For God does not show**

⁹ v18 - For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers . . .

¹⁰ v17 - Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

favoritism. Ephesians, Chapter 6, verse 9, And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. Colossians, Chapter 3, verse 25, Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. ²⁰

Remember the Lord's response to the young man who had wealth and status. ¹¹ He came to the Lord one day and asked, "What good thing must I do to get eternal life?" The Lord told him to get rid of his wealth and social status, those things that made him favored by the world, and follow Him. ²¹

Holiness does not come from your family heritage. Verse 18 continues, **the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.** All the things gained from your earthly heritage are **an empty way of life** in comparison with your new life in Christ! ²²

¹¹ Matthew 19:16-22.

So, where does your holiness come from? Verse 19 says, **the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.** Your holiness comes from the blood of Jesus Christ. Don't you ever forget that! ²³

What's the significance of blood? In the Old Testament law the sacrificial death, or the blood of an animal, was accepted by God as a substitute for the death the sinner deserved. ¹² ²⁴ A lamb without spot or defect was required. ¹³ ²⁵

Verse 19 says that Lord Jesus became that lamb for you! He was the only sinless person who ever lived. ¹⁴ ²⁶ He was, therefore, the only person without spot or defect. ²⁷

Why is this the only way? Verses 20 and 21, **He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was**

¹² Leviticus 17:11 - For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

¹³ Leviticus 1:10 - If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, from either the sheep or the goats, he is to offer a male without defect.

¹⁴ Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. This plan of salvation is the way to establish a relationship with God. All religions don't get you to heaven simply because you believe in them. ²⁸ Lord Jesus tells us that He is the only way! John, Chapter 14, verse 6, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ²⁹

So, don't be "Holier Than Thou" by focusing on how good you may be in comparison to others. Instead, focus on improving your own conduct and remembering the cost!

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