

1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Week 2 - Obedience: A Key To Gospel Living

Learning Objectives

- Contemplate the nature of obedience as it pertains to righteous living.
- Explore obedience as an appropriate response to a holy and gracious God.

Pray for your time together!

Read Out Loud: 1 Peter 1:13-2:3 (NIV)

¹³ Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ 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 ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

2 ¹Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

? Verse 16 quotes Leviticus 20:26: “You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.” How is God’s holiness different from our holiness?

Possible Answer: God is the only inherently holy thing that exists. He is eternally, completely untouched by sin and impurity. As followers of God, we are made holy by Him, set apart.

? How do verses 14-16 describe the relationship between holiness and obedience?

Possible Answer: Part of being set apart is living in obedience to God instead of under the control of our own desires. Verse 15 shows holiness in direct opposition to our independent choices, and obedience is intended to shape our actions, and ultimately our desires, to be in line with God's.

? Optional: What does it mean to live as “foreigners” in reverent fear?

Possible Answer: We live as foreigners in the sense that this world isn't our final home. In this earthly life, we are called to live in awe and respect of God, obediently following Christ's example.

? In verse 18, Peter refers to “the empty way of life handed down” to the Jews from their ancestors. What way of life is he referring to?

Possible Answer: Their ancestors sought right-standing with God through obedience to the Law, not recognizing their inability to earn God's favor through human effort.

? How does obeying the truth result in our purification (verse 22)?

Possible Answer: When we believe and put our hope in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, we have a direct path to God the Father. He sees us clothed in the righteousness of His Son. Jesus' redeeming work calls us to a life of both grateful and reverential obedience.

? What does community look like in light of our obedience to the truth?

Possible Answer: Verse 22 calls for believers to love one another “deeply, from the heart”. Strength to love like this only comes from the imperishable spirit that we've inherited from God (verse 23). As seen in the passage, this expression of love through biblical community always begins with obedience to Christ.

? How can we continue to crave the “pure spiritual milk” of the Gospel?

Possible Answer: Experiencing the Gospel in community (small groups, serving at church), through personal relationship with God (prayer, time in Scripture), and by seeking the growth of God's kingdom in our daily lives (living “on mission”).

Optional Transition: The passage we're studying refers to “spiritual milk,” in a completely positive light. Hebrews 5 uses a similar analogy, but with a different tone.

Read Out Loud: Hebrews 5:12-14 (NIV)

¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

? What differentiates an “infant” believer from someone who is more mature in their faith?

Possible Answer: In both passages, “infant” refers to a new believer who lacks knowledge of Christ and obedience to His teachings. Like an infant attempting to eat solid food, it would be foolish for a Christian to spend time learning peripheral doctrines before first understanding and exemplifying Christ and His Gospel.

? How can our small group community encourage one another to both see the Gospel as our primary spiritual food and see the need for spiritual growth?

Possible Answer: Preach the Gospel to each other every week and draw out Gospel themes in each passage we study. Encourage each other with Gospel truths when we confess sin, but keep one another accountable to let those truths change us. Challenge each other to consider larger meaning and implication of scriptures we study.

For Discussion And Accountability

? What is one way that you can increase your craving for the Gospel this week?

? How can we encourage each other to continue to act in obedience, even when it is not convenient or involves sacrifice?