

Explore the Bible: March 9

Our Mandate • 1 Peter 1:13-25

By Arthur Story

We all want to know that our life has been lived well, benefitted others, and its impact will outlast our years. This week's study of 1 Peter 1:13-25 reveals three elements of a well-lived Christian life.

The first element of a well-lived Christian life is holiness. In verse 16, we are called to be holy because God is holy (Leviticus 11:44, 19:2). This means we live differently. We don't live like we did before coming to Christ or like those who are following the lifestyle of this world. How do we do this? We see a clear answer in verses 13-17. To start, we live with disciplined minds. We live mentally prepared, unencumbered, and ready to take action like a soldier ready for a battle (2 Timothy 2:3-5, Hebrews 12:1). We also live sober-minded. Unlike a drunk person who cannot control their thoughts and emotions, the Christian is calm, steady, and maintains a controlled thought life. Next, we decide to completely trust God for His promised future. This isn't an emotional decision. It's a commitment to live trusting God because He is trustworthy and He keeps His covenant promises. These three internal decisions lead to a visible difference in our actions (Titus 2:10-13). We live differently than the world (1 Peter 1:14, Romans 12:1-2) because we live knowing we are resident-aliens here, and we are accountable to God for how we live here as His ambassadors.

The second element of a well-lived Christian life is reverence. In 1 Peter 1:17 we are directed to live in reverence, which means we live our lives with a sense of our accountability to God for how we live as His Children. We live this way because of the understanding we have of the great

cost paid to redeem us (1 Peter 1:18). God willingly purchased us back by paying a price we couldn't pay ourselves. In the Old Testament, we see a picture in the first Passover of this saving work of Christ. An unblemished lamb is sacrificed to buy back the first born son of each Israelite family. In God's providence, well before the first Passover, Joseph was unwillingly taken to Egypt. Over time Joseph was elevated to power, brought his family to Egypt, and directed his brothers to ask Pharaoh to live and shepherd in Goshen. As a result, Pharaoh directed Joseph to make them shepherds over his flocks, and then hundreds of years later the lambs were ready for the first Passover. God had a plan before there was a need with the first Passover and likewise God had a plan to send Jesus (1 Peter 1:20-21). Our understanding of God's perfect provision and the cost Jesus paid for us in dying for our sins (Hebrews 9:22, Ephesians 1:7, Romans 3:21-25, Romans 4:10-12) leads us to live a reverent life. As a result, we esteem God and the things of God, and we reject the wisdom and desires of this world.

The third element of a well-lived Christian life is love. As Christians, we are not of this world. We are born not from a perishable seed, but an imperishable seed (1 Peter 1:23). This is important because seeds produce like fruit (Genesis 1:11-12). We are born of the seed of the Word of God and so we bear fruit that is in accord with God's Word (1 John 3:9-10). An essential fruit from God's Word is love. In 1 Peter 1:22-25, we are instructed to love each other. In John 13:34-35, Jesus tells us that the world will know we are His disciples by our love for each other. Jesus takes us further in our commitment to love with a call to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:37-40). Jesus takes us still further in His instruction to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). If we love others, we treat them with dignity and respect. For the lost, that means our love compels us to tell them of their need for Jesus. If we won't tell them, where is our love? Penn Jillette, a magician and atheist, said it well, "How much do

you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?"

As you embrace the truth from this week's lesson, remember that your personal holiness, your reverence of God and His Word, and your love of others can either empower or undermine your testimony.

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