

# Lesson 9 | May 2, 2021

## A Holy People

**Study Text:** 1 Peter 2:4–17; 3:1–9

**Central Truth:** Christians must live as citizens of God’s kingdom, not worldly kingdoms.

### **Key Verse: 1 Peter 2:11**

I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (KJV).

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul (NIV).

### **Learning Objectives**

- Understand the importance of living a holy life.
- Accept how holy living should impact the Christian walk in relation to the world.
- Put holy living into practice in everyday life.

## **Introducing the Lesson**

**Say:** Last week’s lesson touched on the concept of holiness, and this week we are focusing on the practical aspect of God’s people as a holy people. Peter gave his readers specific instructions on how to live holy. We would do well to adopt the same standards he presented to them.

### **Opening Activity—Title**

*Ask: How has the Church’s perception of holiness changed over the past several years? Is the change positive, negative, or a mix of both? How can individual Christians exemplify holiness?*

**Say:** Believers sometimes decry the unholy state of our world. Yet all too often, we become caught up in being entertained by or even participating in unholy activities. This does not mean that Christians should become legalistic about trivial matters, but it does mean that **we must set an example of holy living for those around us.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The concept of “holiness” may seem forgotten in our culture today. Movies, television, and other media often utilize suggestive scenes, innuendo, and more. Standards of speech and behavior in the public arena are far less constrained than in times past.**

As we ponder the unholy state of our society, we ought not be surprised. Those who do not follow Christ will certainly not follow His Word. Yet the state of society is all the

more reason for Christians to consider what the Bible says about being holy and living a holy lifestyle. **What Peter wrote in the Scriptures in this study can help us understand what it means to be holy, and to live holy lives.**

**We must know God intimately in order to live a Godly life pleasing to the Lord. Adrian Rogers says this about knowing God intimately. “To know God intimately begins with two things: (1) time in His Word and (2) time in prayer. You know God intimately by direct dealing with God. You can’t know anyone you don’t spend time with. Commit today to spending time in His Word and prayer.”**

## **Part 1—Chosen by God**

### **The Living Stone**

1 Peter 2:4–8

**[1Pe 2:4-8 KJV] 4 To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.**

**Say:** Peter refers to Jesus as a “living Stone.” People may choose to accept Him as the Son of God and receive salvation, or to reject Him, which leads to judgment. As the cornerstone, He is the basis for our lives and for the Church. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Peter wrote to people who were continually drawing near the Lord Jesus. He referred to Jesus as “a living Stone,” rejected by some, but priceless in God’s sight (1 Peter 2:4). Isaiah wrote about God laying a “foundation stone” in a city called Zion (Isaiah 28:16), which is mentioned in the Bible more than 150 times.**

**[Isa 28:16 KJV] 16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone], a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.**

**In Scripture, Zion referred primarily to Jerusalem (Psalm 87:2–3) or specifically the mountain of Jerusalem, and as such it extended to similar concepts, such as the Old Testament temple (Psalm 2:6), God’s people (Isaiah 60:14), and even “the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22, NIV).**

[Psa 87:2-3 KJV] 2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

[Psa 2:6 KJV] 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

[Isa 60:14 KJV] 14 The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

[Heb 12:22 KJV] 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Peter related “Zion” to the original audience of his writing, in 1 Peter 2:4–8. He pictured them (and all Christians) as “living stones, [who] are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (verse 5, NIV). **In this sense, Christians are like the temple, the dwelling place of God, which the apostle Paul also described in 1 Corinthians 6:19. (Note that “house” is commonly used in Scripture to refer to the temple.)**

[1Co 6:19 KJV] 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Jesus is the cornerstone of this house, (verses 6–7). This is fitting in that the cornerstone forms the basis upon which the whole house is measured and constructed. **Also, here the term “cornerstone” can also be taken to mean “keystone,” which forms the center of an arch and therefore, enables it to bear a tremendous amount of weight, which the individual stones could not bear in themselves.**

**For those who do not believe in Jesus, He is a stumbling stone (verse 8). Unbelief, then, leads to stumbling, as the unbeliever follows the way of sin rather than the way of Christ, and therefore is subject to the consequences of sin.**

**There are politicians that profess to be Christians yet their actions do not equate to following Christ. They will stumble in the darkness. Stumbling, can be painful.**

### ***Discuss***

? Explain the role of Jesus as a cornerstone in the believer’s life.?

? How can Jesus be both a cornerstone and a stumbling stone?

### **Resource Packet Item 1: Analogy Analysis**

Distribute the work sheet, and divide your class into small groups, assigning each of the three analogies to a different group. Give them a few minutes to read the Scriptures and answer the accompanying questions, then discuss each analogy.

## Chosen People

1 Peter 2:9–10

**[1Pe 2:9-10 KJV] 9 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.**

**Say:** Do you remember playing games as a child when two team captains took turns choosing the players for their team? It was exciting to be chosen for the team. As Christians, God has chosen His team and it consists of those who have accepted the gift of salvation. Unlike the team captains from elementary school, He isn't looking for people who are already "good players." He's looking for people who will receive His Son, Jesus, to make Him the Lord of their lives. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**I always hated it when two team captains were chosen and they picked players for their team. I was generally last. I wasn't talented or popular.**

The conjunction "but" informs us that a contrast begins in 1 Peter 2:9. There is, of course, a very significant difference between how Christians receive Jesus and the unbelief of those who refuse Him.

In 1 Peter 2:9–10, Peter described God's people (then and now) in five ways. **First, they are a chosen generation, or chosen people. They are chosen by God to be His people.** While the enemy may tempt believers to question their worth, God values them and sent His only Son, Jesus, to redeem them as His own.

**Second, Christians are a royal priesthood. They have dignity and position through Christ.** As believers, we are included in this and have a corporate role in worship, prayer, and ministry to others.

**Third, Christians are a holy nation.** The word "holy" indicates **separation from sin and dedication, or consecration, to God.** In both of Peter's Epistles, he emphasized holy living, calling on believers to turn away from sinful practices and live so as to honor and please the Lord.

Fourth, **Christians are a “peculiar people”** (verse 10, KJV). Peculiar here is used in **the sense of “belonging exclusively to” rather than as being “odd” or “strange”** (seen in the NIV translation as **“God’s special possession”**). **They are a people purchased for God’s own special possession.**

Fifth, **Christians have now become the people of God.** Although they did not previously have God’s mercy, now they do. It has transformed them.

Note that verse 9 clearly states Christians are to declare God’s praises. The transformed lives and holy living of His people are to be a witness to the world of God’s love and power. God has brought believers out of the darkness of sin. As sinners, people are outside of God’s family. Because of His mercy, they can belong to Him (verse 10). **God desires Christians to share their testimony with others.**

### ***Discuss***

? How should the realization that you have been chosen by God affect the way you live your life daily?

? What are the five ways that Peter describes the people of God? Committing this verse to memory can help you remember who you are in Christ.

## **Part 2—Sojourners, Pilgrims, and Servants**

### **Set a Good Example**

1 Peter 2:11–12

**[1Pe 2:11-12 KJV] 11 Dearly beloved, I beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by [your] good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

**Say:** If you have traveled internationally you have likely been in a situation where you felt as if you just didn’t fit in. You didn’t understand the language and customs around you, and you may have looked different from the people around you. **As people of God navigating our world, we are called to view ourselves as strangers and foreigners. We shouldn’t even try to “fit in.” Instead, we should be actively inviting those around us to join the family of God and prepare to live with Him, just as we will do someday.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Peter went on to describe believers as “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Peter 2:11, KJV; “foreigners and exiles,” NIV). **These terms not only spoke of how believers had to live then, but how believers must see their lives now. The word “stranger” indicated how Peter’s original readers ought to view themselves. They were “foreigners” (verse 11, NIV) in the culture they lived in—sojourners, just traveling through, rather than permanent residents in this world. The word “pilgrim” likewise indicated that they lived in a culture that was not their own. These believers had made themselves a home in this world, but they needed to keep in mind that their true home lay elsewhere, in heaven. In the meantime, they neither belonged to the world they lived in, nor were they a part of the culture in which they lived.**

This kind of worldview requires certain commitments of believers. They must resist the carnal desires unbelievers around them might readily accept (verse 11). Peter explained the problem with yielding to such desires: They would ultimately clash with spiritual desires, as such desires “wage war” against the souls of believers (verse 11, NIV). This is a good reminder that evil can be an active force at work against us. **But we can avoid needless inner conflict by rejecting the sinful things that bring about this inner war.**

Peter further emphasized the importance of living godly lives (verse 12). **Good, godly living would have a very real and positive impact in the godless world in which believers live. While unbelievers may not accept the godly life they see, and even jeer it now, they might one day celebrate this lifestyle. This implies that the godless may one day be converted through the example of the godly living of believers.**

### ***Discuss***

? How does being a believer impact the way you interact with the people around you?

? What examples can you give of times when you have been a stranger or foreigner in your own culture?

### **Resource Packet Item 2: Not of This World**

Distribute copies of the case study. Allow the students to read the study, and answer the questions at the end as individuals, or complete the study as a group activity.

## **Live in Submission and Freedom**

1 Peter 2:13–17

**[1Pe 2:13-17 KJV] 13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto**



**governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 As free, and not using [your] liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all [men]. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.**

**Say:** Submission and freedom seem like contrasting terms. Since Christ brings freedom, it seems contradictory to talk about submission, especially submission to government, even when that government may oppose Christianity. Let's look at what Peter had to say. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Peter moved forward to the matter of the Christian's relationship to government in 1 Peter 2:13. Here he called on believers to submit themselves to government. He said this knowing that government stood in opposition to Christianity in his day.**

**This command can be difficult to follow, or even to understand, especially in countries where the Christian faith directly conflicts with the government. Christians face persecution in many areas of the world, and in many other areas their views are mocked in the public arena. Even when we face difficulty, God calls us to honor Him with our lives—which means paying proper respect to governments even when we disagree with them, as well as enduring the consequences of an oppressive government. Such realities ought also to compel us to pray for the persecuted church.**

So, how do we know whether we should submit to an ungodly authority or resist, based upon our allegiance to God? **Here is a basic principle: Submit to authority except when laws lead to disobedience of God. Living as law-abiding citizens is God's will for believers (1 Peter 2:15). By doing good, Christians can silence the criticisms of those who foolishly assume living for God means people are not able to meaningfully contribute to society.**

**Peter then called on believers to live as people who are free (verse 16), a reference to freedom from bondage to sin and no longer following their own selfish wills (see Romans 8:1–2). Many people think of freedom as being able to do whatever they want. However, for the Christian, "freedom" means freedom from sin, guilt, and shame, and freedom to serve Christ. This freedom must not be used to cover up or excuse wrong behavior, such as refusing to pay taxes or failing to show proper respect to those in places of authority.**

### **Discuss**

? How can a Christian submit to government when government opposes the beliefs of Christians?

? How can believers practice good citizenship with the realization that they live as “pilgrims” in their culture?

## **Part 3—Submissive and Loving Submit in Marriage**

1 Peter 3:1–7

**[1Pe 3:1-7 KJV] 1 Likewise, ye wives, [be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation [coupled] with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.**

**Say:** Submission is important for a successful marriage, but it doesn't require anyone to be a doormat. Instead, it is **a matter of mutual respect**. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Peter also provided teaching to married couples (1 Peter 3:1–7). First, he addressed wives, instructing them to submit to their husbands (verse 1). **This word refers to a voluntary adjustment of one's actions in response to an authority that is recognized as proper.** If the husband is not a Christian and does not obey the Word, he may be won to the faith by the wife's behavior and respectful attitude (verses 1–2). **Note that the word “conversation” (verse 2, KJV) does not refer to how we talk, but our manner of living.**



**Peter also noted that the inner beauty of the heart is more valuable to God than the limited value of external adornment (verses 3–4). This does not mean things like makeup and jewelry are wrong. However, the value of inner beauty is superior to external beauty.** Peter noted the Old Testament matriarch Sarah as an example for Christian wives to follow (verses 5–6). Sarah followed her husband Abraham’s leadership even when she could have used fear of the unknown and possible dangers as an excuse not to be submissive to her husband. Fear is a natural human response, but it can also become an excuse for not doing what God wants. **Women who overcome fear with faith and do what is right in God’s sight are considered daughters of Sarah.**

Verse 7 examines the husband’s responsibility in the area of marriage. **It should be noted that the word “weaker” is a reference to physical strength. Although most husbands are physically stronger than their wives, this does not mean the husbands are morally stronger or stronger in character—sometimes, in fact, the opposite might be true. Husbands are to respect their wives as co-heirs of salvation. A man who does not show respect toward his wife should not expect to be regarded as mature in faith. His disrespect toward her can even hinder their prayers.**

### ***Discuss***

? How would you describe the wife’s submission to her husband?

? How would you describe the husband’s respect for his wife?

## **Love One Another**

1 Peter 3:8–9

**[1Pe 3:8-9 KJV] 8 Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.**

**Say:** Jesus taught that His disciples would be known by their love for one another. Peter was present to hear that teaching, and he continued to teach that same concept. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Sometimes believers define the Christian life in terms of the amount of time they spend in Bible reading, prayer, or attending worship services. But these things represent only outward, personal acts and fruit of the Christian life. Peter made it clear in 1 Peter 3:8–9 that our interactions with and treatment of others are critical. The believer’s relationships in church, marriage, business, and friendships should be seen as opportunities to bless others.**

Spiritual growth also dictates that Christ's influence on us be seen in these relationships with others. Believers are to be "of one mind" (1 Peter 3:8, KJV; "likeminded," NIV).

**That doesn't mean that their thoughts are always uniform. Rather, it points toward a commitment to unity and compassion, tenderheartedness, and mutual love. This will happen only as people in a congregation get to know each other and work through their various preferences, differences, and conflicts that arise.**

Through this process, the qualities of sympathy, love, compassion, and humility emerge. They develop and are expressed through interaction with others. **In light of Peter's teaching, believers should see unity as part of God's fundamental intention for the Church.**

### ***Discuss***

? What behaviors distinguish believers from unbelievers?

? How should differences of opinion between believers be resolved?

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Love in Action**

Distribute the work sheet and give students a few minutes to prayerfully think of a loving action they can do and write it in the space provided. Encourage them to follow through by implementing the action they have written.

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** Ask volunteers in your class to apply this lesson to their church. Allow them to say what unity in the church requires of them. Also ask them what submission within the church requires of those who attend your church.

Ask your class to pray for your church leadership team. This would include the pastor and the pastoral team, along with the teachers and other educational staff. If there should be any disunity among your church family, make this a focus of this prayer time as well. Urge your class to continue lifting up your church in prayer in their personal prayer times throughout the week.

## **Living It Out**

### **Ministry in Action**

- Memorize 1 Peter 2:9, and reflect on how you can live it out in your daily life.
- Pray daily for your government leaders.
- Look for a tangible way to show Christ's love to someone outside your family and close friends.

## **Daily Bible Readings**

### **Monday:**

Sanctified Day.

Exodus 16:22–30

**[Exo 16:22-30 KJV] 22 And it came to pass, [that] on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one [man]: and all the rulers of the**

congregation came and told Moses. 23 And he said unto them, This [is that] which the LORD hath said, To morrow [is] the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake [that] which ye will bake [to day], and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. 24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. 25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day [is] a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. 26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, [which is] the sabbath, in it there shall be none. 27 And it came to pass, [that] there went out [some] of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? 29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

#### **Tuesday:**

Sanctified Priest.  
Leviticus 22:10–15

[Lev 22:10-15 KJV] 10 There shall no stranger eat [of] the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat [of] the holy thing. 11 But if the priest buy [any] soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat. 12 If the priest's daughter also be [married] unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things. 13 But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof. 14 And if a man eat [of] the holy thing unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth [part] thereof unto it, and shall give [it] unto the priest with the holy thing. 15 And they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, which they offer unto the LORD;

#### **Wednesday:**

Sanctified People.  
Joshua 3:1–5

[Jos 3:1-5 KJV] 1 And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. 2 And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; 3 And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. 4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed [this] way heretofore. 5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

**Thursday:**

Sanctified Through Truth.  
John 17:11–19

**[Jhn 17:11-19 KJV] 11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are]. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.**

**Friday:**

Sanctified Completely.  
1 Thessalonians 5:16–23

**[1Th 5:16-23 KJV] 16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 19 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil. 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Saturday:**

Sanctified by Christ's Blood.  
Hebrews 13:10–15

**[Heb 13:10-15 KJV] 10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name.**