

## 1 Peter 1 13-25

### Abundant Life 3 The Call to Holiness

Key Verse: 'As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness'

God has given us a new hope and a new identity - but to flourish in the abundant life we have been given requires that we make changes to how we live. Holiness is not about being serious about everything, but letting God's love transform us day by day.

*(Note, the questions are written around the Message version of the passage, and will work better if you use the Message)*

#### A Future in God (Message translation)

<sup>13-16</sup> So roll up your sleeves, get your head in the game, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives. Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, "I am holy; you be holy."

<sup>17</sup> You call out to God for help and he helps—he's a good Father that way. But don't forget, he's also a responsible Father, and won't let you get by with sloppy living.

<sup>18-21</sup> Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God. It cost God plenty to get you out of that dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in. He paid with Christ's sacred blood, you know. He died like an unblemished, sacrificial lamb. And this was no afterthought. Even though it has only lately—at the end of the ages—become public knowledge, God always knew he was going to do this for you. It's because of this sacrificed Messiah, whom God then raised from the dead and glorified, that you trust God, that you know you have a future in God.

<sup>22-25</sup> Now that you've cleaned up your lives by following the truth, love one another as if your lives depended on it. Your new life is not like your old life. Your old birth came from mortal sperm; your new birth comes from God's living Word. Just think: a life conceived by God himself! That's why the prophet said,

The old life is a grass life,  
its beauty as short-lived as wildflowers;  
Grass dries up, flowers wilt,  
God's Word goes on and on forever.

This is the Word that conceived the new life in you.

## Talk Summary

In our series about abundant life, we looked at 'The call to Holiness'.

Holiness, is a foundation of abundant life because it is about living in the way in which God designed us to live.

However, this is easier said than done. Peter recognises this – he knew that we could slip back into old grooves of evil, and that we need to be pulled into a way of life that is shaped by God's holiness. We need to establish ways of doing things that become grooves or tracks that will help us live in a holy manner.

We looked at how we might do this under three headings, knowing Him, loving Him and following Him.\*

We need to spend time just being with God. Dwelling with Him – experiencing His love for us just as we are without the need for doing, or finding out, just a space for being.

When we do this, we become convinced of our identity in Him, but we need also to find out more about Him. To find out what He wants from us, and to understand how holiness is described in the Bible. It is really important that we base our understanding on Scripture, and use Scripture as a yardstick for this as the world has many ideas about what is acceptable that are not necessarily based on God's perspective.

Experiencing God's love, feeling close to Him spiritually and knowing what He wants are vital. The hardest part can be following Him on a day to day basis.

Sometimes we may think we are going the right way, but in fact we are not! Other times we know we've gone the wrong. God's scrutiny of our lives is cross shaped. He applies His standards as we journey towards personal holiness, but He provides a solution when we don't quite get there! We need to come back to Him in repentance. He promises to help us because He is a good Father. However, He is not the type of Father who will just ignore what's happening, He's not going to let us get away with sloppy living.

The challenges we face won't always be easy. But, if we allow God to shape the way we respond to them, we will grow strong roots in Him. Peter encourages us to have a deep consciousness of God in all that we do, as this will help us respond to God's command that we be holy in the same way that He is holy.

*\*These are sections in St Richard of Chichester's prayer, the full version of which is at the end of the notes, in case it would be helpful to use as part of a meditative/worship section of the evening.*

## Questions

1. Icebreaker. Ask everyone to write down what they think of when they hear the word tracks. Then go round the group and see what each person has written. The aim is to come up with a track that no one else has thought of! (No cheating!!!)

2. What do you think of when you hear the word 'holy'? What do you think holiness in every day life looks like?
3. God said 'I am holy. You be holy'. How do you feel about that statement?
4. In the journey to become holy, Peter describes a tension between falling back into the old grooves of evil and being pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life.
  - What do you think 'the old grooves of evil' means? How might you fall back into those grooves?
  - What is the meaning of being pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life?
5. God's scrutiny is cross shaped. Why does this matter on our journey to personal holiness?
6. In verse 17, God is described as a responsible Father who won't let you get by with sloppy living.
  - How do you establish right tracks to live by so that you can live in a holy way?
  - Can you recall times when it has taken courage to respond to a situation in a holy manner?
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7. Peter writes that our life is a journey that we must travel with a deep consciousness of God (v18)
  - How do you think this will help us live in a holy way
  - When do you find it easiest to be conscious of God? When things are hard? When good things are happening? Or what about when life is just 'ordinary'?
  - How do we deepen our consciousness of God through our day to day living (as compared to times when we are specifically focussed on him eg church, small group, prayer group, quiet times etc etc)

### **Prayer of St Richard of Chichester**

Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ,  
 for all the benefits you have given me, f  
 or all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
 O most merciful Redeemer, friend, and brother,  
 may I know you more clearly,  
 love you more dearly,  
 and follow you more nearly,  
 day by day.