

Awestruck: Reigniting the Awe of our Salvation

January Week 3 Devotional: “Living in God’s Holiness – Our Calling”

In 2003, Aron Ralston went hiking alone in Utah’s Blue John Canyon. When a shifting boulder trapped his arm, he spent five agonizing days pinned in place with little water and no food. Eventually, he realized a painful truth: if he was going to live, he would have to let go of something he loved—his own arm. In an act of unthinkable courage, he amputated it and walked out alive.

Later, Ralston said he wasn’t choosing death—he was choosing life. Letting go wasn’t loss; it was salvation.

That picture helps us understand biblical salvation. To follow Christ genuinely requires repentance—turning away from sin and turning to Jesus. God’s call to “be holy” is not a call to deprivation but to life. There are sins, habits, and attitudes that cling to us so tightly they feel like part of who we are. But God, in His love, calls us to let go—not to harm us, but to save us.

To be holy means to be “set apart”. God does not call us to holiness because He wants less for us, but because He wants fullness of life for us.

Holiness and Grace: Restored for a Purpose

Holiness can sound intimidating—like perfection, distance, or something unattainable. But Scripture paints a different picture. Holiness begins with being set apart for God’s purpose.

Consider an old church bell left outside for decades—rusted, cracked, and seemingly beyond repair. Most people saw only damage, but a restorer saw purpose. He cleaned it, repaired it, and carefully tuned it. When the bell rang again, it wasn’t new—it was restored. It sounded as it was always meant to.

That’s what God does with us. He does not call us to holiness because we are flawless; He calls us to holiness and then provides the means to become holy through Jesus Christ. Through grace, God restores us, cleans us, and reshapes our lives so that we reflect His character and proclaim His glory.

Holiness is not a burden meant to crush us. It is an invitation to become who we were always created to be.

Seeing God Rightly: Why Holiness Matters

At the heart of Scripture is this truth: “God is holy”. His holiness is not one attribute among many—it is the attribute that harmonizes all others. God’s love is holy love. His mercy is holy mercy. His justice is holy justice.

God's holiness is what sets Him apart from all creation. It is also what exposes the problem of sin. Humanity's sin placed a barrier between us and a holy God, because God's holiness cannot coexist with sin.

Yet the glory of God's holiness reaches its climax at the cross. There, holiness and grace meet. God does not ignore sin, but He makes a way for sinners to be cleansed.

When we draw near to a holy God, two things happen:

1. We become aware of our sin.
2. We discover that God's holiness always provides a way for cleansing.

Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6 shows us this clearly. When Isaiah encountered God's holiness, he confessed his sin. God then cleansed him—and only after that cleansing did God send him out with a calling. God's holiness reveals, cleanses, and then sends.

Three keys to living out God's call to holiness:

Peter writes to believers living as “elect exiles”—citizens of heaven in a world that does not share their values. Facing pressure and suffering, they needed to know how to live faithfully. In 1 Peter 1:13–16, Peter gives us a practical picture of what holiness looks like in everyday life.

1. Change Our Mindset

Peter tells believers to “gird up the loins of your mind” and to “be sober-minded.” In ancient times, this phrase meant pulling in loose garments so you could move freely. Spiritually, it means preparing your mind for action.

Holiness begins with how we think. We must pull in the loose ends of our thinking—rejecting worldly patterns and setting our minds on things above (Colossians 3:2). Paul echoes this in Romans 12:2, calling us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Think of it like a GPS system. If it hasn't been updated, it may confidently lead you in the wrong direction. The world constantly tries to program our thinking, but Scripture recalibrates us. When our minds are renewed, our lives begin to follow God's true direction.

To be sober-minded means to live with spiritual clarity and self-control. Instead of reacting impulsively, we pause, pray, and respond wisely. We move through life alert, steady, and aware of God's truth.

2. Change Our Motivation

Peter commands believers to “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Biblical hope is not wishful thinking—it is confident expectation.

Our motivation for holiness flows from the future God has promised. Christ will return. Our salvation will be completed. Because the future is secure, the present is transformed.

Like a runner training for a guaranteed race, Christians discipline their lives not to earn salvation, but because the finish line is real. Or like Shackleton’s crew stranded in Antarctica, believers endure hardship because they know they are going home.

Hope anchored in Christ changes how we live now. We are no longer driven by fear, comfort, or self-fulfillment, but by a desire to glorify God.

3. Change Our Conduct

Peter addresses believers as “obedient children.” Identity comes before behavior. We pursue holiness not to become God’s children, but because we already are.

Holiness means refusing to return to old patterns that once defined us. Our past no longer controls our desires. Our standard is not culture or comparison, but God Himself.

“Be holy, for I am holy.” This call is comprehensive—it touches every area of life. Holiness is not isolation from the world, but distinct living within it. We are meant to resemble our Father in how we speak, act, love, and respond.

Holiness is not about earning grace; it is evidence that grace has taken hold.

Conclusion:

An embassy sits on foreign soil, yet represents another nation. Its conduct reflects the country it belongs to. It does not try to become a nation—it already is one, set apart by claim and purpose.

Peter reminds us that Christians live the same way. We are citizens of heaven living on earth. Our hope is fixed on Christ’s return. Our identity is secure as God’s children. And our holiness is how heaven becomes visible in a watching world.

We do not live holy to earn citizenship—we live holy because we already belong to another kingdom. Holiness is not about being strange for the sake of being different. It is about being faithful to the One who called us, restored us, and set us apart for His glory.