

**“Be holy in everything.”** When we were in Brazil this past December, we stuck out. It was obvious we were not Brazilian. You could tell by the way we spoke, the way we couldn’t understand what anyone said, the way we dressed, the way we carried ourselves—everything. We stuck out as Americans and it was obvious to everyone who saw us and interacted with us. It is the same in our neighborhood. You can tell the folks who have recently immigrated to the United States. They are different, they are distinct, they are set apart in how they dress, speak, act, carry themselves, and even in how they think.

This is what it means to **“be holy.”** To be holy is to be different, distinct, and set apart. And Peter, in his first New Testament letter, repeatedly calls us to **“be holy.”** He says we are **“strangers”** and **“exiles”** and **“outsiders”** in our world. We must not fit in—we must be different, we must be distinct, we must **“be holy.”** This holiness, this differentness, this distinctness, is not limited to only certain parts of our lives—he urges us to **“be holy in everything,”** in **all** our conduct, decisions, and actions we must be different and distinct.

This holiness starts with **not** being like the world around us, **not** being like our culture, **not** being like our society. Our world and culture conform themselves to the desires of the flesh. They chase after what feels good, they chase after survival, they chase after happiness. Therefore, Peter urges us, **“do not be conformed to the desires of your previous ignorance.”** We have been saved from the way of life of our ancestors—the way of life we have inherited from our family, society, culture, and nation. We have been called out of it, we have been called to stop living in the way of Civilization that was handed down to us.

Instead we must be **“obedient children”** of our heavenly Father. Our Father is holy, so if we are to be his children, then we must be conformed to his image and pattern. The Lord himself tells us, **“You will be holy because I am holy.”** We must imitate and follow the example of our heavenly Father, we are to be shaped into his character. Peter tells us we need to **“fear”** the Lord. Our heavenly Father is the impartial judge of every person and all of their actions, works, and practices. Our heavenly Father sees how we live. He knows what we do. He knows how we speak. He knows how we think and feel. And through Christ’s self-sacrificial love for us—his enemies—the Lord has bought and purchased us out of our old lives, out the ways of the world around us, and brought into his love. He has done this so that we can love, as he loves. So we can **“be holy in everything,”** as he is holy.

If we are to do this, then we must immerse ourselves in our Father’s Word. We must **“prepare our minds to be focused completely”** on him and his Word. We have to spend time with the Lord. We have to learn from him. We have to trust him, we have to be faithful to him—completely and fully. It is our trust and faith that attaches us to our heavenly Father. It is our faith that leads us to be **“obedient children.”** Peter tells us our faith is **“more valuable than money.”** Money is corrupt. Money will fail. Money is passing away. But our faith comes from the Word of the Lord. It is the Creator’s Word, the Gospel of Christ, that has been planted within us that is changing us and transforming us and empowering us to **“be holy in everything.”** Everything else will fade and die, **“all flesh is like grass,”** but the Word of our Lord will never fade. And if the Lord’s Word is planted within our bodies and souls, then, even though we fade and wither, we will be born again—we will be renewed, restored, and raised from the dead. Our faith attaches us to the one who does not decay, who does not pass away. And when we are attached to him, our souls are saved and we are promised to share in the resurrection of the body.

**“Be holy in everything.”** Are you being **“holy in everything”**? Do you stick out in a crowd? Are you distinct like a stranger and an outsider in a foreign country? Do your choices and decisions and speaking and actions and way of carrying yourself highlight that you are not part of Civilization, not part of this world, but are part of something different and holy? Are you **“being holy”** in how you handle money and possessions? Are you **“being holy”** in how you handle conflict?

If someone were to observe your life—outside of church gatherings—would they know you are a follower of Christ? Would they see your life as distinct and different from our culture and society? Would they see your practices with money and with conflict and know that something was distinctly different about you, something strange and foreign?

As you go about your life, are you living by **faith** or by **fear**? What is motivating you and driving you from the inside? Are you living for the fleeting desires of the **flesh** or for the eternal matters of the **spirit**?

What are you being **conformed** to—what is shaping you? Are you being conformed to the desires of your selfish flesh? Are you being conformed to your family system? Are you being conformed to the way of life of this culture and nation? Or are you being conformed to the image of your heavenly Father and his Son Jesus?

**“Holiness”** starts from the inside out. The Lord’s holy Word and Spirit are planted within our souls. This changes and transforms the thinking of our minds and the feelings of our hearts. This then changes the speaking of our mouths and the actions of our hands. So open your ears and listen to the Word of the Lord. Let his eternal Word into your heart and mind. Hold his Word within your soul—treasure it and keep it. Then obey his Word and practice it. The Lord is **“holy.”** His Word is holy. And with his holy Word planted within you, you too will **“be holy.”** You will be his obedient child—distinct, different, and set apart from the world around you.

Jesus says to you, **“You are the light of the world.”** Our world is full of darkness and he says, **“Let your light shine before others so they may see your good practices and give praise to your heavenly Father.”** When a light shines in darkness it stands out—it is different, distinct, set apart—it is **“holy.”** Our world is filled with darkness and ignorance. You are called to shine the light of the Creator’s love in this darkness—stand out, be different, be distinct, **“be holy.”** When you are at church gatherings. When you are at work. When you are at home. When you are on vacation. When you are with your family. When you are with strangers. When you are working. When you are resting. **“Prepare your mind to be focused completely”** on the Lord and his Word. Let his Word, planted within you, shine. Let it make you distinct and different in all you do. **“Be holy in everything.” Amen.**