

Excel Still More: Grow in your In-Between Life (1 Peter 1:13-17)

- As we strive to “*excel still more*” in our walk with the Lord as he commands us, we will become better disciples. Sometimes, we view this “*in-between*” life in time (on earth) with contempt since our future heavenly life in eternity will be one of full satisfaction in every way (God will “*make all things new*”).
- Paul understands this dynamic as he had “*the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better*” (Phil. 1:23), but then understanding the need “*to remain on in the flesh*” would be a blessing “*for your progress and joy in the faith*” (Phil. 1:25)
- Right now, we are living as “*aliens and strangers*” in this life, yet as privileged followers of Jesus Christ, this affords us great responsibility (Luke 12:48)
- Peter challenges the pilgrim church with three main verbs to help us navigate these “*in-between*” times in a way that keeps us focused and effective.

1. Live a hope-filled life (1:13)

- Paul uses three verbs in verse 13, but the main verb is “*fix your hope completely*”. It’s a direct, decisive command from the Lord. “*Hope*” is supernatural (Ps. 62:5), “*living*” (1 Pet 1:3), an “*anchor of the soul*” (Heb. 6:19), “*sure and steadfast*” (Heb. 6:19), a “*full assurance...until the end*” (Heb. 6:11), a “*blessed*” (Titus 2:13), purifying (1 John 3:3), joy-inspiring (Pr. 10:28), one to “*eagerly wait*” for (Rm. 8:25), and it “*does not disappoint*” (Rm. 5:5).
- **Question #1:** What is this “*hope*” all about?
 - Hope describes a belief of confident expectation, a guarantee that something will happen versus a wish that something might happen.
 - It is the future aspect of faith (Heb 11:1)
- **Question #2:** What are we supposed to do with this “*hope*”? “*fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*”
 - Do it “*completely*” (without any wavering, full on)
 - Do it “*on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Live with an eye on and eagerness about the Lord’s gracious return.
- **Question #3:** How do we live hope-filled lives?”
 - “*gird your minds for action*” (tighten up your mental loose ends and be ready to “*take every thought captive*” (2 Cor. 10:5)
 - “*keep sober in spirit*” (stay spiritually clear-headed and alert as you anticipate the Lord’s return)

2. Live a holiness-filled life (1:14-16)

- Hope leads to holiness as you see what you will become (1 John 3:3). The main verb is in verse 15: “*be holy yourselves also in all your behavior.*” Follow “*the Holy One’s*” standard for right living. He has made us “*saints*” and “*called us with a holy calling*” (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4; Col. 3:12)
- Holiness has a negative and positive side:
 - Negatively (v. 14) “*do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance*”. We are now sons of obedience who must not allow ourselves to be “*conformed*” to our former lusts.
 - Positively (v. 15-16), we are to “*be holy in all your behavior*”. This entails following God’s pattern of holiness (Eph. 5:1)

3. Live an honor-filled life (1:17)

- The final main verb in verse 17 is to *“conduct yourselves in fear”* which speaks of the pilgrim’s respect and honor before God. The fear of God is not often addressed yet addressed often in Scripture. There is *“no fear of God”* in the world (Rm. 3:11), yet fearing God is a vital part of living the Christian life (Ps 128:1; Phil. 2:12)
- **Question #1:** What does it mean to fear the Lord?
 - The word *“fear”* describes a reverential awe, holy dread or an honorable respect. It is an awesome awareness that every thought, word, and deed is open before God who is the ultimate authority in our lives and is able to evaluate and enforce a corresponding result, whether good or bad.
 - Prov. 8:13
- **Question #2:** Why should you and I fear the Lord?
 - It pays proper respect to God’s authority in your life (Deut. 10:12)
 - It pleases the Lord (Ps. 147:10-11)
 - It prolongs your life (Prov. 10:27)
 - It protects your life (Prov. 19:23)
 - It provides God’s blessing (Deut. 6:24)
 - It promises deliverance (Ps. 85:9)
 - It promotes a fear of sinning (2 Kings 17:25)
 - It prepares you for your future evaluation before our *“Father...who impartially judges according to each’s one’s work”* (v. 17)