

1 Peter 1:22-25; 2:1-16 Privileges and Responsibilities

In his first letter Peter gives us a seven-fold description of believers, and the description is true of Christians today. Peter tells us what true believers are, and he emphasizes their privileges; but every privilege carries with it a responsibility, and so he tells us what our responsibilities are as Christians.

1 Peter 1:22: “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth”

- **Grammatical Usage:** “**purified**” or in the Greek, “hēgnikotes” meaning, “cleansed, holy, sanctified”; “**obedience**” or “hypakoē” meaning, “to listen and obey”; “**truth**” or “alētheias” meaning, “straightforward revelation”.
- **Literal Interpretation:** Now that you have, by listening to and obeying God’s revelation, made your souls clean, sanctified and holy (set aside) enough for a genuine love of your brothers and sisters....
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. In the following seven-fold description of believers notice the relationship between this matter of privilege and responsibility:

1. In **1 Peter 2:2**, believers are described as ‘newborn babies’. We begin the Christian life – by being born into the family of God as spiritual babies. What an immense privilege it is to be a child of God, to be born into the Royal Family of Heaven and to have God as our Father (**1 John 3:1**)! Babies do not appreciate the privilege of their position and parenthood while they remain babies, but the privilege is there. But what is our responsibility as newborn babies? **1 Peter 2:2** gives us the answer: to feed on the Word of God in order that we may grow up into strong children and then into adulthood. We can only grow if we eat, and if we do not feed adequately on the right food we shall remain babies and our spiritual growth will be impaired. To prevent this from happening we must “**crave (the) pure spiritual milk**” of the Word. There is no substitute for this; later comes the ‘**strong meat**’ of the Word (**Hebrews 5:12; 14**).

2. In **1 Peter 1:14**, believers are described as ‘**obedient children**’. We are growing up and it is a privilege to be a child with the ability to understand what God has done in His grace in making us His own. Our responsibility as children is to be obedient. The Greek word in **1 Peter 1:14** means, ‘**As children of obedience**’. This tells us that when we are born again the conviction of obedience is placed within us. We are clearly told how this obedience expresses itself in **1 Peter 1:14-16**: “**Don’t let your character be molded by the desires of your unregenerate life, but be set apart in every department of your life.**” This is a matter of straightforward obedience. It is most important for us to see this and act upon it, for it is only as we obey the Lord that we shall become holy people.

3. In **1 Peter 2:5**, believers are described as ‘**lively stones**’. Here undoubtedly Peter is thinking of the incident recorded in **Matthew 16:13-20**. As believers we are ‘**living**

stones. When we were born again we were made partakers of the divine nature (**2 Peter 1:4**). What a privilege it is for us to be a stone in the spiritual building, the temple of God! But what about our responsibility in this? Per **1 Peter 2:5**, we are not dead, lifeless stones in the spiritual house of the Lord; we are **‘living stones’**, and our responsibility therefore is to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. We are a set apart priesthood; as believers we are priests (**Revelation 1:6; 5:10**) and we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices, some of which are mentioned in **Romans 12:1; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 13:15-16**. Are we exercising the privileges of our priesthood and discharging our responsibility in this matter by offering up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord?

4. In **1 Peter 2:11**, believers are described as ‘aliens and strangers’. Peter is saying that believers are like ‘strangers’ in this world, for they belong to another world to which they are travelling. This a great privilege for we are only temporary residents down here – look up and compare **Philippians 3:20**! But what is their responsibility in this matter? **1 Peter 2:11-12** gives us the answer: our responsibility as temporary residents is to see that we do not become engulfed in and stained with the life of the world, but that we are separate from sinful and worldly things and that our whole manner of life is marked by spiritual and moral integrity.

5. In **1 Peter 2:16**, believers are described as **‘servants of God’**. Here Peter says that believers are free men, for Christ has given us liberty, but we are not to make our liberty an excuse for sin. It is a great privilege to be God’s servant, but what a tremendous responsibility rests upon us as His servants, as His bond-slaves – because to own Him as Master and Lord means to be ready to do His will. A servant in the royal household of Heaven must be very disciplined and very loyal in his manner of life and in his service. He must also be ready for anything and be at the disposal of his Master upon His call in the moment; in a season; for a lifetime call.

6. In **1 Peter 4:9-10** (KJV), believers are described as **‘good stewards’**. We are to be hospitable to each other and we are to serve one another with the particular gifts which God has given to us. The fact that God has entrusted us with special gifts again emphasizes what privileged people we are. Some Christians have a lovely home, money, the gift of friendship...but they are only stewards of these gifts; their responsibility is to use these faithfully, not merely for their own enjoyment but for the benefit of others, and they are to do this for the glory of God (**1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Peter 4:10**).

7. In **1 Peter 4:15-16**, believers are described as ‘Christians’. What a tremendous privilege to be a Christian: to bear the name of Christ! – but what a responsibility this is, a responsibility to be like Christ, and therefore to be loving, gracious, kind, considerate, gentle, understanding and humble! It is also a call to be firm in our faith, true to God’s Word in a general sense as well as a personal sense as well as unyielding in the face of wrong doers who look to excuse, entice and wreck our testimony.

➤ **Conclusion:** Are you a Christian, a true believer on our Lord Jesus Christ? If so – are you like the Lord Jesus: compassionate, committed, focused, submissive and truthful?