

Beliefs Matter

Discovery Starters

Holiness

We are called to **lead holy and righteous lives** that exemplify the nature and character of God

[Lev 19:1-2](#); [Psa 51:7-11](#); [Jer 18:1-11](#); [Eze 20:10-12](#); [Zec 13:9](#);
[Luk 1:68-75](#); [Eph 4:21-32](#); [Tit 2:11-14](#); [1Pe 2:9,21-25](#); [1Jo 3:1-3](#)

Belief #2 – Holiness: Distanced from Sin

Biblical Foundation:

For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds (Tit 2:11-14).

Discovery Starter:

This pithy passage is an amazingly rich summary of the gospel. It affirms that Jesus gave his life “to free us from every kind of sin.” The Greek preposition which is translated “from” is *apo*. It is a very dynamic word. As with all prepositions it describes the relationship between two objects. In the case of *apo*, it describes a relationship in which one object is distancing itself continually “from” the another object; as when one steps out of a house and walks away “from” it, each step leading one further and further from the house. This vivid image is also reflected in words of the angel Gabriel, who tells Joseph, “you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from [*apo*] their sins” (Mat 1:21).

Jesus’ salvation doesn’t just forgive us and leave us mired in our sins. His redemption transforms us and draws us away from sin; distancing us from that which previously enslaved us. Jesus has indeed “freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us” (Rev 1:5). He then proceeds “to cleanse us” (Tit 2:14). Paul’s words are echoed by John, “If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from [*apo*] all wickedness” (1Jn 1:8-9). Forgiveness and cleansing. This is our sure hope in Jesus.

Paul affirms that God “saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit” (Tit 3:5). Now that we are God’s “own people” we are to live our lives “totally committed to doing good deeds” (Tit 2:14). God’s grace now equips us for a life empowered by the Holy Spirit – a life characterized by “wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God” (Tit 2:12). Because we have been set “free from the power of sin” we are exhorted to “do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life” (Rom 6:22).

Keep Going:

Seven times the four main authors of the New Testament use the word ‘from’ [*apo*] in relation to sin [*hamartia*], to describe how God’s redemptive work in our lives is ever distancing us from the oppression of our past sinful habits and conforming us more into a reflection of his holiness. Meditate on these passages and ask God to continue to break the power of sin over your life as you – by his powerful transformative grace – continue on the journey of holiness, distancing yourself every day further and further from the power of sin.

MATTHEW (quoting Gabriel speaking to Joseph): And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from [*apo*] their sins (Mat 1:21).

LUKE (quoting Jesus speaking to Paul): And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes, so they may turn from [*apo*] darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in me (Act 26:17-18).

PAUL: For when we died with Christ we were set free from [*apo*] the power of sin... Now you are free from [*apo*] your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living... But now you are free from [*apo*] the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life... And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from [*apo*] the power of sin that leads to death (Rom 6:7,18,22; 8:2).

JOHN: But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from [*apo*] all sin. If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from [*apo*] all wickedness (1Jn 1:7-9).

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