

1 Peter 1:13-16

“Christian Conduct”

Here’s the deal; saving faith will change your life. There is a progression in the life of the believer (though the power and person of the Holy Spirit) that takes us from *salvation* to *sanctification* (or *consecration*), that is, a life of practical *dedication* to God. Which is to say that if you claim to be a believer, you claim that Christ has come into your heart yet there’s nothing really different about your life *now* than there was *before* Jesus came into your heart then the odds are that Jesus didn’t come into your heart. Odds are you’ve never really received Christ, oh you may come to church, you may’ve had some kind of emotional encounter but when Christ comes into your life things change. I’m not saying you’ll never struggle with sin or war with the flesh but there is a definite and distinct difference that takes place in a person’s life when Jesus is a part of the equation.

Now, not only should notable change take place in you once you’ve been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb but the longer you abide in Christ those things that you’re now *learning* in God’s word should continue to impact and mold the way you’re *living*. There is a point whereby the doctrine translates to duty, the principle becomes practical, the concept becomes conduct. That’s where we’re at in 1st Peter Ch 1 beginning in Vs 13, Peter has been informing us of all the things that God has done *for us*, what we’ve inherited in Christ, now this is how we’re respond *to Him*.

Vs13-16

Peter issues a whole fist full of exhortations to you and me in these 4 Vs that comprise Vs 13-16. 4 Things that we *are* to do, and 1 thing that we’re *not* to do; he says there in Vs 13, “Therefore”, you’ve probably heard me mention before that as a general rule when you run across the word “therefore” in the NT more often than not it’s a pivoting point. It’s a word that serves as a hinge that opens the door for us bringing us out of a principle into something practical. “Based upon what you’ve *learned* this is how you ought to *live*.” “This is how the *revelation* translates into *real time*.” “These are the things you’ve *received* now this is how you’re to *respond*.”

To keep it brief Peter has been talking about all the incredible things that God has done for us in Christ. He’s spoken of our election, the inheritance that awaits us, the eternal work that God is doing *in* us, the salvation that’s so great that the prophets of old could only speculate on that which would be revealed and made known *to* us, the grace that would come to us in the person of Jesus Christ

We've received such an abundance of revelation, how does that translate into practical application? How do we respond to what we've received? 5 things; #1 "Gird Up The Loins Of Your Mind." Now this is a phrase that has heavy cultural connotation, it sounds foreign to us and that's because it is. When Peter was writing this the men in that culture wore long ankle length robes, but when you wanted to get down and work hard, or you needed to get somewhere fast and efficiently a robe could be rather cumbersome.

So they would take it and bring the bottom of it up into the belt that they wore around their waist making a mini-skirt more or less so that their legs were free to dig in, root down, or run fast...whatever. By girding their robe they were prepared for action. Today we'd say, "Roll up your sleeves and prepare to get busy."

So he's saying that we need to have our minds poised and prepared for action, studied up and sharp concerning the word of God. Able to discern and distinguish things that are safe to engage in and things we do well to avoid. To the Corinthians Paul said it like this, "*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,*" 2 Cor 10:4-5 It comes up occasionally around here, primarily because it's not an uncommon theme in the bible. God's word places tremendous emphasis upon the disposition of a person's mind. It's amazing how much attention God places *on* our minds compared to the priority that we place upon that which goes *in* our minds. But as the saying goes, "Garbage in garbage out."

It's been said that as believers we live in the future tense, meaning we make decisions today based upon an eternal perspective. Outlook determines outcome; attitude determines action. A Christian who sets his sights on glorifying God *eternally* will have a much greater motivation for obedience *presently* than a one who doesn't really set his mind on things above or give credence to (or simply ignores) the Lord's return/eternal perspective.

Maybe you've heard it before; you can't change your heart, but you *can* change your mind. God can change your heart, He won't change your mind, but if you choose to change your mind, God will change your heart. The mind acts as a seedbed of sorts for the heart. As we meditate and contemplate things in our mind it somehow translates into our heart. and From the heart (the bible says) spring the issues of life. God is always looking to and searching our heart; the things you say, the things you do are a direct reflection of the position of your heart. It's really that simple, and if we keep our mind stayed on Him, if we set our mind on things above we won't be tripped up by things on the earth.

We're to control the things we let our minds dwell on, some people don't do that. Some have a tendency to let their mind wander, oh we all day dream from time and again but I'm referencing meandering down unhealthy pathways.

Some are loose concerning their *theology*, they don't keep their mind sharp through scripture so any new wind of doctrine that blows through the church they're quick to jump on and try out. Whether it's uncontrollable laughing, or barking, being knocked down or whatever, if it gives them the warm fuzzies it must be the Lord; these are people who are way more experiential than they are doctrinal, doesn't really matter how solid it is as long as it's exciting.

Others are loose concerning morality, they'll go places or engage in things that as believers they have no part in. They'll rationalize or justify themselves visiting websites that poison them with pornography, they have loose standards morally.

Some are loose with the way they do business, they think they can separate business life from spiritual life, partnering with people and doing whatever it takes to make a buck regardless of whether or not it's fair, or just, or right before God.

How many times we'll squirm our way through a bible study but never react or respond in repentance? All of those things are the fruit, or the outcropping of a certain *mindset*. Peter says, "Gird up the loins your mind." Control the things that you let take root in your mind, no one wakes up one day with the intention of committing adultery, before something becomes a reality it's entertained in my mind inwardly. Gird up the loins of your mind.

#2 Be Sober. Now I guess I should state the obvious and say this exhortation does include literal sobriety. Absolutely Peter is telling us that as believers there is no place for drunkenness. The bible is clear, "*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*" 1 Cor 6:9-11 As he'll mention momentarily these are the things that we were delivered *from*, they're not things we're to continue to live *in* once the blood of Christ has been imputed to our account. But beyond staying sober literally, the idea here (along with girding up the loins of our minds) is that of being clear headed and self controlled. Be it physically, be it mentally or spiritually Christians are to maintain self control. It's the fruit, or the overflow of the Spirit of God in your life. Galatians Ch 5, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*" Gal 5:22-23 Believers aren't to be governed circumstantially but rather they're to be directed from within by the Spirit of God specifically.

#3 “Rest Your Hope Fully Upon The Grace That Is To Be Brought To You At The Revelation Of Jesus Christ” Quite a bit we could spend time on here (we’ll keep it relatively brief). We’ve spoken recently on the reality of hope, biblical hope is not a wishful desire mingled with a degree of uncertainty. It’s an assured expectation, a concrete realization and absolute certainty. Here Peter says that we’re to rest (or fix, even anchor) our hope (our assured expectation) *fully* upon the *grace* that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (speaking of His 2nd coming). 2 important words there #1 “*Fully*” it means “to the end” or “completely” “perfectly” 100% with nothing lacking or held in reserve. Remember when Jesus issued the words from the cross, “It is finished”? The word finished is directly related to this word “Fully” meaning there’s nothing left, nothing lacking, it’s complete, perfect. You’re to place all of your eggs in *this* basket. When it comes to our retirement we’re told to diversify, don’t put all your investment in one place, it may not come through for you. When it comes to your *eternal well being* the bible teaches just the opposite, you better place *all* your confidence, *every bit* of your faith in 1 place, 1 person, and count on 1 thing. The Person of course being Jesus Christ what are we counting on fully in Him? The 2nd word, “Grace.” We place our hope fully in the grace of God that’s to be brought to us when Christ comes back. We don’t trust in what we’ve done, what we’re doing, or what we’ll do, our confidence is 100% in His *grace*; the unearned, unmerited favor that will be brought to us at the return of Christ.

So many of us think about God’s grace in the past tense, it was through grace that we *were* saved. But God’s grace isn’t only for the past, neither is it limited to the present, it’s God’s grace currently *keeps* us. We’re *saved* by grace, we *stand* in grace. God’s grace is also for the future and will be *brought to us* when Christ comes back. We’ve only scratched the surface of God’s grace, we’ve just begun to see the riches of God’s grace, so much more will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ

Anchor your *hope* to it, set your sights *on* it...however don’t take advantage *of* it, notice.

Vs14

“As obedient children,” you see rest your hope *upon* grace, but don’t take advantage *of* grace, with revelation comes responsibility. To whom much is given much more will be required, the Christian that banks on grace to act as a cloak, or a cover to entertain his/her vice doesn’t at all understand grace. Grace isn’t simply an instrument or an object that we utilize to justify or somehow eradicate or vindicate our sin. Grace is an instructor, a teacher of righteousness. Listen to Paul’s words in Titus 2:11-14, “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*”

Sounds like another way of saying the exact same thing that's before us in 1st Peter doesn't it? We rest *in* and *on* God's grace, not as *disobedient* children doing whatever whenever banking on endless do-overs thanks *to* that grace. But rather as *obedient* children growing *in* God's grace.

The Holy Spirit through the apostle Peter would have us to understand that obedience is a conscious act of the will. Christians in conflict need a mind that is resolved in/on holiness and prepared to pursue the appropriate path, there is a certain demand for determination, and what Peter is ultimately pointing to is the fact that Christians are to exercise *mental diligence* and *moral discipline*.

This is the 4th thing in the list of exhortations and the 1 that's in the negative or what we're *not* to do as children of God. Notice, "*Not Conforming Yourselves To The Former Lusts, As In Your Ignorance.*" When he speak of ignorance it's not a slam on anyone's intelligence but rather a reference to our moral blindness before Christ was in our lives. Again it's what we referenced in the beginning of our introduction, saving faith will change your life.

We're not to use God's grace as a means to justify our slipping and sliding, stumbling and stammering back into the ways of the world from which we were redeemed. We're not to conform ourselves to former lusts, which is to say that we're not to fashion or pattern ourselves after the habits of our old sin nature. It's not that you'll never make a mistake, or never sin again, but if it's a pattern, or a consistent cycle, then there's a problem. John the Baptist would say that we're to bear fruits *worthy of repentance* that demonstrate true repentance and a turning from sin in our lives. No we're not sinless, but as believers as we're growing in Christ we *should be* sinning less and less.

We read in Rom 12:1-2, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*" You see, the things we're talking about today isn't something that's unique to this particular portion of the NT. All the elements that we're considering today are right there as well; not being *conformed* to this world, but being *transformed*, how? By the renewing of your *mind*, for what purpose? Obedience, proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, or as we'll see in a minute; leading a life that's holy.

There was a time when you were morally blind, you did what you want when you wanted.

You were driven *by* and had a passion to feed the appetites of your flesh, you were dead to Christ. But now being alive in Christ you're to be dead to self, no longer living to feed the appetites of the flesh but seeking to walk in Spirit. The bible teaches us that we're to put to death the members of our body, that drive and insatiable desire/lust of the flesh by the Spirit. I could give you several references here's just 1, "*And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*" Gal 5:24-25 The pattern, the cycle of sin is to be broken in our lives. Before you were in Christ you didn't really think through the ramifications, you didn't carefully consider the consequences of your ways, you were ignorant of such things, not any more, now you're called to obedience, or as Jesus said, and then James said again under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we're to be doers of the word, not hearers only. Vs 15

Vs15-16

#5 Be Holy In All Your Conduct. Really all these exhortations revolve *around* or find their root *in* these 2 things, Vs 13 "Have Hope" and Vs 15 "Be Holy."

"As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." Or all your behavior and manner of life, we start talking about conduct there's nothing in your life that's not included in that word. The idea is simple; children inherit the nature of their parents and if God is your Father (if you are a partaker in the Divine nature) and He is holy in all He is and does, than you too should be holy in all your conduct.

"Wait a minute, is this legalism?" No, it's a simple affirmation of fact, we're talking about the fruit, the overflow of the believer's inward consecration and its outward manifestation in our lives. Now will we ever achieve absolute holiness in this life? Positionally in Christ that happened the moment you received Him, practically you won't achieve it until you see Him, then you'll be like Him. Nevertheless we should be growing toward and maturing in practical holiness more and more throughout the process of time. Or to understand that another way we should be continually *decreasing* that Christ might be continually *increasing* in our lives.

You will, I will, we all become like our God, if your God is this world, the things *of* this world, pursuits *in* this world, you will become worldly. If the 1 true Living God who created the heavens and the earth is your God, then you will become godly, holiness will manifest itself both in and through you, because God is holy.

Now, with all this talk about holiness, let's take just a minute here before we wind down and wrap to discuss exactly what holiness is. We're to be holy in *all* our conduct or manner of life, our friendships, our marriage relationships, business dealings, at our place of employment or at school, our life is to reflect the character of Christ...holiness.

Often times when people think about holiness the thought of a pious attitude, abnormal eccentric living quickly surfaces. It's viewed often times as a superficial/shallow thing whereby someone presents themselves as better than someone else. That's not at all the idea behind biblical holiness.

Now, does it deal with moral purity? Absolutely, but beyond that the idea is that of being set apart.

We read in 2 Cor 6:17-18, “*“Come out from among them And be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters,’ Says the Lord Almighty.*” The idea is being separate, or set apart for a specific purpose (in this case to be used of the Lord).

Now we have a pretty good grip on this because we have all sorts of things that are set apart for a specific purpose. You use frying pans to cook in, washing machines for clothes, dish washers for the dishes, lawn mowers for your grass. You don't use a dishwasher for your clothes, nor do you wash dishes in the washing machine, you don't cook with a lawnmower or mow with a frying pan, those things are “set apart” for a specific purpose.

Now, God is holy, He's separate from sin, He's different than you are and I am, both in His essential nature and the perfection of His attributes. It's important that we grasp that or we can simply view God as sort of a “super-man” He's not, He's of a different order altogether than you are or I am. He's holy, separate, but He doesn't build a wall around His apartness, He invites us to share in it. He calls us out of the darkness, out of the realm of sin and into the light, to partake of His holiness through the work of His grace and the power of His Spirit in our lives. You see holiness isn't something that we possess so much as it is something that possesses us, again it's us decreasing and Christ increasing in our lives.

But not simply so we can be these idol blobs that are simply separate from sin or the unclean things of this world, but that He might use us to accomplish His purpose through us, He wants to do a work in your marriage, in your work place, in your business dealings, in your friendships, He wants your life to shine forth His image. Does holiness have a grip on you today? Are you growing in Christ-like character, or seeking to rationalize or somehow justify a pattern, or cycle of sin in your life? The Christian life centers in hope, and holiness, both of which root in Christ; you're holy not because of what you *do*, but because of what Christ has done *for* you and is doing *in* you.

You're a new creation, your passions are different, your pursuits have changed, your priorities aren't the same, don't squirm through a study and not respond in repentance. If God is dealing with you for the very 1st time, calling you to come out from the world and become a new creation in Him don't resist Him, receive Him. If you've been walking *with* Christ but have drifted *from* Christ and He's calling you back into the fold today, back to that 1st love relationship, receive grace gracefully, repent of your sin and come home...

Prayer Points:

Father You've done so much for us, may we respond to You in an appropriate manner. May we *get out* of Your way that You might *have Your way* in us... Teach us to lead lives of holiness, drawing near *to* You walking intimately *with* You that You might use us fully, completely in whatever way brings You glory. If there are changes You're wanting to make in us individually, as a body, may we not resist You, but receive Your loving correction, being pliable and submitted to You.

If you don't know the Lord, have never given your heart *to* the Lord, God wants to do a tremendous work in You, He wants to make you a new creation, old things passing away, all things becoming new. Will You give Him His way today? He wants to make you holy, with out blame in His sight by the blood of Jesus Christ