

**The Way God's Children Behave**  
**"Imitating the character of our Father..."**

**Intro:** Let's turn again to 1 Peter 1. Let's not lose sight of where we are in the Peter's conversation with God's people.

*Just as he had denied the Lord because he did not want to admit who he was; so now he reminds the people of God who they are and why they should rejoice in that. They have been selected by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, made submissive to Jesus and sprinkled with His blood. They are God's children and thus they have an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and that fades not away. And though their faith may be tried by persecution, their proven faith will result in salvation at the revelation of Christ. They are privileged to experience that which the prophet, and even angels, longed to know about.*

**But then having stressed to God's people who they are and what they have, Peter now urges them to live like God's children. Just as there are some things we have a right to expect of our children, so God has a right to expect some things from us as well! Here's how God's children behave:**

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:14-16)*

**All of us have seen the tendency of little boys to imitate their Dads. The first obligation of the people of God is to imitate their Father.**

**We must begin with an obedient attitude**

*"As obedient children..."*

Peter uses a Hebrew idiom "children of obedience" meaning "children who are characterized by obedience".

Paul had in contrast referred to alien sinners as "sons of disobedience".  
*... in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. (Eph. 2:2)*

There are only two kinds of people in the world. This tells us then that as disciples, we must be people who are characterized by an obedient attitude.

*Can you mark a time in your life when you made the transition from a self-directed life to a God-directed one?*

*Here is how that is reflected in our lives:*

**We must lay aside the practices of the past**

*Do not be conformed to your former lusts which were yours in ignorance...*

Peter is no doubt thinking of things like sexual immorality, drunkenness, and idolatry (cf. 1 Pet. 4:3).

God's people are no longer "fashioned or conformed" to the sinful desires of the past.

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom. 12:2)*

We have ceased to live like we did when we did not know God and His ways. Godliness is a matter of education or enlightenment.

***Have we put our past lives behind us? Do we seek to live a new life enlightened by the truth of the Lord?***

### **We must make God the standard of comparison**

***..but like the Holy One who called you be holy in all your behavior, for it is written, "Be holy for I am holy."***

It is not enough merely to put off a sinful past. There must be godly replacement behaviors. Peter appeals to this timeless principle of consecration.

#### **Under the old covenant:**

##### **Israel was holy by calling.**

*"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 7:6)*

##### **Israel was holy by conduct.**

*'For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 'For I am the Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; thus you shall be holy for I am holy.'"* (Leviticus 11:44-45)

God in the OT taught this principle by the various laws that distinguished Israel from the Canaanites (laws of both moral and ceremonial purity). Virtually every aspect of their lives that was affected by their relationship to their holy God. The purpose of all them was to remind the Israelites of their special relationship to Him. They would have constantly thought, "We are different people!"

These earthly regulations were intended to guide God's people until He could release them into the freedom of a new way in which God's character is the standard for all our thoughts and actions!

#### **Under the new covenant:**

##### **The church is holy by calling.**

*to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: (1 Cor. 1:2)*  
Interestingly the Corinthians were called “saints” even when their lives were still far short of the character God sought to create in them. But already they were separate from the world and consecrated to God. And this was to instill within them the need and the desire to demonstrate holiness in their lives.

**The church is holy by conduct.**

This is what Peter is talking about as well.

*“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)*

***because it is written, "Be holy for I am holy"***

All too often we compare ourselves to others, when we ought to be comparing ourselves with God. Doing so changes the way we look at ourselves as well as others.

When we see that it is God that is the standard, we are humbled by our own failings and more gracious toward those who also fail.

When we compare ourselves with others, we may proudly speak of our superiority to others, our superior faithfulness or our superior knowledge. But if we are sinners saved by grace and in constant need of grace, then we see room for increasing holiness in our own lives rather than a smug complacency that grows out of a “holier-than-thou” mentality.

***In all your behavior!***

KJV “conversation” has changed meanings since 1611. Then it meant “manner of life”; today it means “speech”.

God’s actions and thoughts are the standard in all aspects of our life.

Later Peter will explain how God’s holiness will impact all our relationships. But here let’s stress that holiness must be pervasive!

We cannot carve out an hour or two a week for “holy” living and then spend the rest doing like we wish. It is a 24-7 lifestyle.

**Conclusion: God seeks children who want to be like Him in everything! Only when we strive for this lifestyle have we appreciated our true calling as children of God!**