

**The Way God's Children Behave**  
**"Imitating the character of our Father..."**  
**1 Peter 1:14-16**

Intro: Perhaps you've seen the Comcast commercial where a Dad is with his little boy. They are watching a game together and he is explaining baseball to his youngster. The child asks, "Which ones do you like? Dad answers, "I like the ones in the blue hats". The little boy responds, "I like the ones in the blue hats too!" In it we see the natural tendency for a little boy to want to be like his father.

We've seen the little fellow following Dad in the snow and trying really hard to stretch his strides long enough to put his feet right where Dad had stepped.

If only we could capture that spirit of a little child who says, "I want to be like my Dad when I grow up!" and apply it to our relationship to God. If so, we would have captured to some degree the spirit Peter commands in our next section in 1 Peter. Consider v. 14-16.

*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 Peter 1:14-16)*

In chapter one Peter is saying to us--"We are God's children and because of it we have reason to rejoice. But...if we are God's children, then we must act 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! Here's how God's children behave: First, we must imitate the character of our Father!

**We must begin with an obedient attitude**

*"As obedient children..."*

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

Paul refers 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. (Ephesians 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*

We have changed the standard of our lives! We are no longer “fashioned or conformed” to the sinful desires of our 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. (Romans 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**

***Be holy as He is holy!***

Peter appeals to the timeless principle of consecration. God’s people must by their actions be consecrated to God.

Under the OT:

### **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 (moral laws, but food laws and laws concerning what seems to us trivial things like mildew on the walls of their houses). The point is that there was no aspect of their lives that was not 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 NT:

### **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 Corinthians 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)*

***As He is 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 pridefully 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!**