

THE BEREAN

"... examining the scriptures daily..." (Acts 17:11).

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Children Of Obedience

The expression with which Peter describes Christians was used to indicate quality, nature, or character. "As children of obedience..." (1 Pet. 1:14a). Obedience is essential to sonship; it is the basic character of a Christian.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21). The opposite are "sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). In Christ we must direct our whole being to eternal matters "in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2).

If we are children, God is Father. Peter's appeal is based on the fatherhood of God. Surely He is Lord, but Peter's stress is on His Fatherhood. The appeal is much different. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48).

There are positives and negatives in living lives of obedience. Thus Peter exhorts, "Not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance" (1:14b). The Christian must be fashioned according to the holiness of God (Rom. 12:2). Worldly minds con-

form to worldly fashions in dress, language, and conduct. We have a common and dangerous disposition to take on the manners, morals, and modes of conduct of those around us. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. 23:2).

The fashion of our life is within our control. Maybe we can't change what we have to work with, but we can determine what we will do with it. We can't blame anyone else for what we are. We must abstain from the pleasures of the paganism that surrounds us and in which we formerly indulged. Such things destroy our spiritual life. If we look back on our old life, it should not be with regret that we have given it up, but that we spent enough time there and do not need any more (1 Pet. 4:3). Life cannot be what it used to be because of the great realities of God, salvation, and hope.

"Lusts" signifies passionate desires. From the context we understand he means evil desires. A life lived for lust is that of a pagan who is ignorant of God. As we are no longer ignorant, we should act according to our knowledge of the character of God as He is the Holy One. Those outside of Christ, untaught by His gospel, are in ignorance. Things that are repugnant to us, they do without feeling guilt because they do not know. Paul describes them as "alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them" (Eph. 4:18).

If ignorance of God is bad, how much worse it is to know God and His nature, and then choose the way of life identified with those who are ignorant of God! As the world goes further and further from the influence of God's word we can expect more and more ungodliness due to the ignorance of mankind. The only hope is to get people to study the Bible and learn of God. When one is ignorant of God, what will be his guide? His lusts. There are only two ways to fashion your life: obedience to God or to your own lusts.

The positives begin with the exhortation, "But like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (1:15). The word "but" makes a strong contrast with the preceding. In looking for a model, look to God. We will never have a

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true concept of life until we have a correct concept of God. God's character is holy. The influence of God is to lift us up to Him. God is the standard for the Christian. Heathen deities, who were thought of as practitioners of vice, influenced worshipers to corrupt morals. With Christians it is different for we have a holy God.

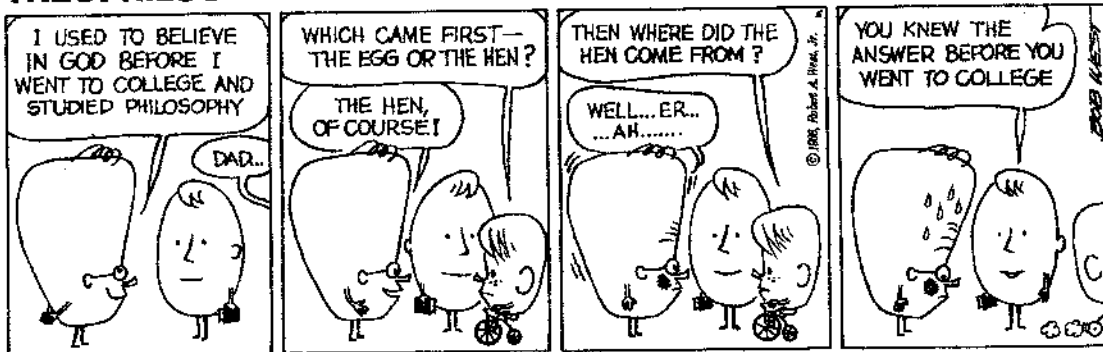
Peter looked upon the nature of a Christian's living as something of great importance. In no part of the New Testament is it possible to lose sight of the moral obligations of God's calling. The epistles are filled with practical counsel in regard to very elementary moral duties. This was necessary then for the same reasons it is necessary today. The world that surrounds us is full of lying, stealing, lusts, hatred, and strife. The gospel must influence all of

our life. We are to seek a certain manner of life. "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (1:16).

This has always been God's desire for His people. "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44b). Holiness is necessary in us because of the character of God. That God is holy makes the demands of holiness in us reasonable. Yet how difficult it is to live up to the level of a thought so high. One area of holiness is separation. We must be separate from sin. As saints we are set apart for God. The world is divided between saints and profane persons. There is no middle position. We cannot have fellowship with the Holy One unless we are holy. But holiness goes beyond separation and takes on the idea of positive goodness, lofty morality, and a new man.

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