

1 Peter 1:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Analysis

Peter presents the positive command contrasting verse 14's prohibition. "But as he which hath called you is holy" (alla kata ton kalesanta hymas hagion, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἄγιον) establishes the standard: God who called believers is "holy" (hagion, ἄγιον)—utterly pure, morally perfect, separated from all evil. "Called" (kalesanta, καλέσαντα, aorist participle) refers to effectual calling—God's sovereign summons bringing believers from death to life, darkness to light. The comparative preposition "as" (kata, κατά, according to, in conformity with) indicates believers must pattern themselves after God's character. The command follows: "so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (kai autoi hagioi en pasē anastrophē genēthēte, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἄγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ γενηθῆτε). The verb genēthēte (γενηθῆτε, aorist imperative of γίνομαι) means "become" or "be"—take on holiness as defining characteristic. "In all manner of conversation" (en pasē anastrophē, ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ) uses anastrophē meaning conduct, manner of life, behavior—not just speech but entire lifestyle. "All" (pasē, πάσῃ, every kind) excludes no area—holiness must characterize private and public life, thoughts and actions, words and deeds. Holiness isn't optional add-on for super-saints but normative Christian life flowing from regeneration.

Historical Context

Peter echoes Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7 where God repeatedly commands Israel: "Be holy, for I am holy." This isn't arbitrary divine demand but ontological necessity—God's people must reflect God's character. In Levitical context, holiness

involved separation from pagan nations, ceremonial purity, moral righteousness, and wholehearted devotion to Yahweh. Peter applies this to the church—the new Israel—with emphasis on moral/ethical holiness rather than ceremonial regulations fulfilled in Christ. For first-century believers surrounded by pagan immorality (temple prostitution, sexual license, drunkenness, violence, exploitation), holiness demanded radical counter-cultural lifestyle. This wasn't legalistic moralism but Spirit-empowered transformation flowing from new birth. The Reformed tradition emphasizes that justification (right standing) necessarily produces sanctification (right living)—those declared righteous are progressively made righteous. Calvin taught that election's purpose is holiness (Ephesians 1:4)—God chose believers not despite their sin but to transform them into Christ's image.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. In which specific areas of your 'manner of life' does God's holiness most challenge you to change?
2. How does understanding holiness as conformity to God's character (not arbitrary rules) motivate your pursuit of godliness?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ	κατὰ	τὸν	καλέσαντα	ὑμᾶς	ἅγιοι	καὶ	αὐτοὶ
But	as	G3588	he which hath called	you	holy	so	ye
G235	G2596		G2564	G5209	G40	G2532	G846
ἅγιοι	ἐν	πάσῃ	ἀναστροφῇ	γενήθητε			
holy	in	all	manner of conversation	be			
G40	G1722	G3956	G391	G1096			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:48 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Holy): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Hebrews 12:14 (Holy): Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

James 3:13 (Parallel theme): Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

1 John 3:3 (Parallel theme): And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1 Peter 2:12 (Parallel theme): Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Philippians 1:27 (Parallel theme): Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

1 Peter 2:9 (Holy): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Hebrews 13:5 (Parallel theme): Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Isaiah 6:3 (Holy): And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

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