

1 John 3:3 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. ([NASB: Lockman](#)):

[kai pas o echon](#) ([PAPMSN](#)) [ten elpida tauten ep' auto hagnizei](#) (3SPA) [heauton kathos ekeinos hagnos estin.](#) (3SPA)

Amplified: And everyone who has this hope [resting] on Him cleanses (purifies) himself just as He is pure

(chaste, undefiled, guiltless). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ASV: And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

BBE: And everyone who has this hope in him makes himself holy, even as he is holy.

CEV: This hope makes us keep ourselves holy, just as Christ is holy ([CEV](#))

GWT: So all people who have this confidence in Christ keep themselves pure, as Christ is pure. ([GWT](#))

ICB: Christ is pure. And every person who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure like Christ ([CB: Nelson](#))

ISV: Everyone who has this hope based on him keeps himself pure, just as he is pure.

KJV: And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Macent: he that hath such an expectation should purify himself, even as he is pure

MLB (Berkley): And everyone who has this hope resting on Him, purifies himself as He is pure

Moffatt: And everyone who rests this hope on him, purifies himself as he is pure.

Montgomery: And every one who is holding this hope in him is purifying himself, even as he is pure

NCV: Christ is pure, and all who have this hope in Christ keep themselves pure like Christ. ([NCV](#))

NET: And everyone who has this hope focused on him purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure). ([NET Bible](#))

NIV: Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure ([NIV - IBS](#))

NJB: Whoever treasures this hope of him purifies himself, to be as pure as he is ([NJB](#))

NLT: And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Everyone who has at heart a hope like that keeps himself pure, for he knows how pure Christ is. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TEV: Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure.

TLB: And everyone who really believes this will try to stay pure because Christ is pure

Weymouth: And every man who has this hope fixed on Him, purifies himself so as to be as pure as He is

Wuest: And everyone who has this hope continually set on Him is constantly purifying himself just as that One is pure.

Young's Literal: and every one who is having this hope on him, doth purify himself, even as he is pure

And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure: kai pas o echon (PAPMSN) ten elpida tauten ep' auto hagnizei (3SPA1) heauton kathos ekeinos hagnos estin. (3SPA1):

- Romans 5:4,5; Colossians 1:5; 2Thessalonians 2:16; Titus 3:7; Hebrews 6:18) (purifies - Acts 15:9; 2Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; 2Peter 1:4; 3:14
- 1Jn 2:6; 4:17; Matthew 5:48; Luke 6:36; Hebrews 7:26)

[Click to listen to the timeless, raspy voiced exposition of 1Jn 3:3 by Dr J Vernon McGee](#)

1Jn 3:1: WHAT WE ARE
1Jn 3:2: WHAT WE SHALL BE
1Jn 3:3: WHAT WE SHOULD BE

Doctrine always demands duty. What you believe should motivate and energize how you behave. Proper creed should always breed proper conduct. Supernatural truth calls first for a surrender of self and then for a supernatural response!

John has just explained the doctrines regarding the believer's privileged position as **children of God** and then elaborated on their prophetic **hope** of being like Christ. Based on and motivated by these great doctrinal truths, John now insists that all believers **pursue purity** in their life using as their example the perfect purity of their Lord.

The Costa Ricans have a saying known as "pura vida" which means "pure life", and this is exactly what John is calling for in the life of all God's children --

"Pura Vida"!

Restated, the apostle John's "template" for Pura Vida is...

Those who have become children of God in the past now have the sure hope of glory in the future which motivates holy living in the present !

Note that believers don't live holy lives to **prove** they are children of God, but they live holy lives **because** they are children of God. To invert the divine pattern is to open one's self to the subtle trap of legalism and self-righteousness. Paul's words ring true 2000 years later...

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?(Gal 3:3)
(Take a moment and speak this question to your own soul dear holy one [saint] of the Holy One of Israel.)

Warren Wiersbe comments that John...

has told us **what we are** (1Jn 3:1-note) and **what we shall be** (1Jn 3:2-note). Now, in 1Jn 3:3, he tells us **what we should be**. In view of the return of Jesus Christ, we should keep our lives clean. All this is to remind us of the Father's love. Because the Father loved us and sent His Son to die for us, we are **children of God**. Because God loves us, He wants us to live with Him one day. Salvation, from start to finish, is an expression of the love of God. We are saved by the grace of God (Ep 2:8, 9-note; Titus 2:11-note, 12-note, 13-note, 14, 15-note), but the provision for our salvation originated in the love of God. And since we have experienced the love of the Father, we have no desire to live in sin. **An unbeliever who sins is a creature sinning against his Creator. A Christian who sins is a child sinning against his Father. The unbeliever sins against law; the believer sins against love.** This reminds us of the meaning of the phrase so often repeated in the Bible: **the fear of the Lord** (Ed: See the 25 uses = 2Chr 19:7, 9; Job 28:28; Ps 19:9; 34:11; 111:10; Pr 1:7, 29; 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; Isa 11:2, 3; 33:6; Acts 9:31; 2Cor 5:11) This phrase does not suggest that God's children live in an atmosphere of terror, "for God hath not given us the spirit of fear" (2Ti 1:7-note). Rather, it indicates that God's children hold their Father in reverence and will not deliberately disobey Him or try His patience (cp 1Pe 1:17-note) ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor or Logos](#)) (Bolding and color added)

And (kai) is the very first word which reminds us that the truth of this passage is intimately connected with and predicated upon the previous verse, especially His appearing and our glorification.

Hiebert...

The past experience of regeneration brings with it a living hope for the future, and this hope motivates present Christian living ([The Epistles of John An Expository Commentary by D. Edmond Hiebert](#))

Lloyd-Jones writes that in the previous passage (1Jn 3:2)...

We have been on the mountain of God, and we were shown things unseen. We were given that glimpse of glory, of the glory that awaits us and the astounding and amazing things to which we are heirs. But here we are now, as it were, back to earth again. We are reminded that before we enter into that glory and enjoy it in all its fulness, certain things remain and abound. We are still men and women in the (physical) flesh, in this world (Jn 17:11, 15, 16, 18) which, John has already told us, does not know us (1Jn 3:1). It does not understand us and, indeed, it is opposed to us and inimical to our highest and best interests (Jn 15:18, 19, 20). Yet though we do feel that, we must be very careful—and that is the point I want to emphasize most of all here—we must be very careful lest we regard this third verse as some sort of anticlimax after the second. It is not an anticlimax, and to regard it as such is simply a manifestation of our sinful nature...

There is a sense in which we can say that the whole object of 1Jn 3:2 is to lead to 1Jn 3:3, and if we fail to regard the second verse in that light, if we fail to see that its real object and purpose is to prepare the way for this third verse, then we have abused the second verse entirely, and we have failed to appreciate its true message to us...

You and I, having had a vision of glory, have to come down and translate it into practice and put it into daily operation, and if it does not lead to that, then we are abusing the Scripture.

Now there is a logical connection between these two verses. John does not argue about it, he just states it

—'every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' There is no need to discuss it; the one thing follows the other as the night follows the day. Therefore this third verse is one which comes to us as a very real and a very sure test; the extent to which I have really grasped the teaching of 1Jn 3:2 is proved by the extent to which I implement verse 3. We can put it this way: it is what we are and what we do that really proclaims our belief and our profession.

That is the great theme in the epistle of James which has been so misunderstood—'faith without works is dead' (James 2:20)—and no one must dispute it. There is no disputation between James and John; both are saying the same thing—namely, that the **profession** of faith is of no avail unless it leads to this particular **practice**. Therefore we can put it the other way round with James and say that the real test of our profession is not so much what we **are** as what we **do**. (Lloyd-Jones, D. M. (Children of God)

Everyone (3956) (**pas**) means all without exception who have made a point to focus their eyes on the Eastern skies, the things above, the things of eternity, the unseen over the seen, the eternal over the temporal...all of these is who John is referring to in this verse. Sadly not all believers will fix their eyes on Jesus, waiting expectantly in anticipation of His return which is imminent. Nothing is left to be fulfilled on God's prophetic timetable in order for Christ to return. He could come at any moment. He might come today! Are you ready for His appearing (cp 1Jn 2:28)? Are you living for His appearing? The purifying impact of this eschatological hope should be operative in the life of every true believer.

Who has (2192) (**echo**) means to have, to hold or to possess and the **present tense** "pictures the individual as actively possessing and treasuring this hope as a sure possession." (Hiebert) This possession is not a tangible object to be touched but a truth which transforms.

Paul explains that a Biblically based...

hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Ro 5:5-note)

Paul encourages the saints at Colossae with the truth that there is a...

hope laid up (perfect tense = has been laid away in times past with the present result that it is reserved for and awaiting you, out of reach of all enemies and sorrows) for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel (Colossians 1:5 - note)

Comment: The Gospel is good news for many reasons but here we see it is such good news because it provides a sure (laid up) hope to all those outside of Christ, who are hopeless ("having no hope" Eph 2:12-note).

Wuest: This hope is laid up in heaven, all of which means that the saints will enjoy it in the future life. There are treasures in heaven earned by the saints while on earth (Mt 6:20-note), our citizenship is in heaven (Php 3:20-note), and we have an inheritance reserved for us in heaven (1Pe 1:4-note).

Believers have an eternal hope in eternal life for they have been...

justified by His grace (and)...made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7-note)

We can pray for one another based on the certainty of the **good hope** our Father graciously bestows on each of His children...

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. (2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17)

This hope - It is interesting and somewhat surprising that this is the only use of the word **hope** in all of John's writings (not even found in the Revelation!).

Hope (1680) (**elpis**) (See also left column labeled "Definition of Hope") in Scripture is not the world's definition "I **hope** so" with rare exception (see Acts 27:20). Instead Biblical **hope** is a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it. **Hope** is confident expectancy. It's the absolute certainty of future good. It is full assurance (Heb 6:11). Hope is the opposite of despair (a state in which all hope is lost or absent). In fact the believer's cry (to other believers) could be "Don't despair--help {the "Helper"} is on the way!"

As believers, our **hope** is not in circumstances or optimistic desires for a better tomorrow. Our hope is not centered in a concept but focused on a living person, Paul explaining that "**Christ Jesus** [is] **our hope**" (1Ti 1:1YLT)

The NLT translates **hope** in 1Jn 3:3NLT as "**eager expectation**" which gives a good picture of the action that hope in the heart

should produce.

Jesus said that He was returning to heaven to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). Then He added these wonderful words of hope (Jn 14:3),

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

He didn't leave us forever! He's coming back for us, and when that happens, we will go to be with Him in the place that He has prepared for us! All of our hope should be fixed on Him.

The **UBS Handbook Series** has an interesting analysis of the nuances of Biblical hope noting that

There are to be distinguished four main semantic components which combine in various ways to represent the concept of "hope." These are, (1) time, for hope always looks to the future; (2) anticipation, for there is always some goal to the time span; (3) confidence, namely, that the goal hoped for will occur; and (4) desire, since the goal of hoping is represented as a valued object or experience. ([The United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#) or [Logos](#))

Hiebert says that

Christian hope is assured of future realization because it is grounded in the person of Christ and His sure word...Our eschatological hope has objective validity and will certainly be fulfilled because Christ Himself is the guarantee of its fulfillment. ([The Epistles of John An Expository Commentary by D. Edmond Hiebert](#))

Hope as the world typically defines it is a desire for some future occurrence of which one **isnot** absolutely assured of attaining. The ancient world did not generally regard **hope** as a virtue, but merely as a temporary illusion. Historians tell us that a great cloud of **hopelessness** covered the ancient world. Philosophies were empty; traditions were disappearing; religions were powerless to help men face either life or death.

Hope is the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment. Peter used this truth to encourage the suffering saints writing

Therefore (on the basis of the salvation and the "living hope" they now possessed) (to) gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** (elpizo - verb form of elpis) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1Pe 1:13-note)

Click in depth study of Biblical hope: chart summarizing the definition of, source of, stabilizing effect of and sanctifying effect of hope.

Elpis - 53x in 48v in the NAS -

Acts 2:26; 16:19; 23:6; 24:15; 26:6, 7; 27:20; 28:20; Ro 4:18; 5:2, 4, 5; 8:20, 24; 12:12; 15:4, 13; 1Co. 9:10; 13:13; 2 Co. 1:7; 3:12; 10:15; Gal. 5:5; Eph. 1:18; 2:12; 4:4; Phil. 1:20; Col. 1:5, 23, 27; 1Th 1:3; 2:19; 4:13; 5:8; 2Th 2:16; 1Ti 1:1; Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7; Heb. 3:6; 6:11, 18; 7:19; 10:23; 1Pe 1:3, 21; 3:15; 1Jn. 3:3

Spurgeon...

Oh, what a blessed hope this is, — that, though we fall asleep, we shall surely wake again; and when we awaken, it will be in the likeness of the great Head of the family, and we ourselves shall be heirs of an inheritance in which there will be no sin and no corruption. That inheritance is kept for us, and we are kept for it; so the double keeping makes it doubly sure. Happy are the people to whom these verses apply. (1Peter 1-Commentary)

The hope John describes in this verse is not "**a**" hope, but is "**the**" (definite article is present in the Greek) hope. So what? The preceding definite article (like our English "the") defines this hope as specific and not general. Our hope is not in our government, not in mankind, not in angelic beings, not in anything this world or the invisible world has to offer, save one thing and that is the sure hope, the blessed hope of the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And coupled with that hope is the hope (the certainty) that we will be changed and we will be like Him when we see Him as He is!

Steven Cole notes that...

Hope is one of the three cardinal virtues that Paul mentions in 1Cor 13:13, **faith**, **hope**, and **love**. Christians should be people of **hope**, because we fix our **hope** on Jesus, Who never disappoints... God promises hope to His people. Memorize some verses on hope, such as Ro 15:13 (note)

Now may the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound (perisseuo - present tense = continually superabound) in hope by the power (dunamis) of the Holy Spirit.

Our God is the **God of hope**, and the hope that He gives centers on the Lord Jesus Christ. ([The Purifying Hope](#))

Fixed on Him - Literally the Greek reads "who has this hope upon Him", *fixed* having been added by the translators. The NET Bible utilizes the verb "focused" to add clarity. **Moffatt** renders it as "everyone who rests this hope on Him".

On Him ([ep' auto](#)) This phrase pictures the sure, unchanging foundation of a believer's hope. It pictures the believer's hope "resting" on Him, grounded on His promises, which are "yea and amen" (2Co 1:20KJV). And so this hope not upon a generality or even a truth (which it is in one sense) but better yet rests upon a the Person, Christ Jesus. John has just explained that the believer's hope is based upon the truth that Christ has promised to return.

I WILL RETURN

From 1942 to 1945, General Douglas MacArthur served as the commander of Allied forces in the Pacific. When it became clear in 1942 that Bataan, the last American foothold in the Philippines, would fall to the Japanese, President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to leave. As he left on March 11 MacArthur uttered his famous promise, "I shall return. Don't give in." And a little Pilipino answered "I will not give in...I will fight until you return." General MacArthur kept his promise and did return in October of 1944.

When Jesus left His disciples, He promised He would return (Jn 14:2, 3) and when He did return He would take His own to be with Him (1Th 4:16-note, 1Th 4:17-note). As Jesus ascended from the mount of Olives two angelic beings encouraged the forlorn disciples...

Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11)

Jesus had ascended but the battle was still raging and in fact would get worse. But He promised to return again. How will believers today survive? Jesus Christ is coming again and He is our Blessed Hope.

Note how the truth of our Blessed Hope motivates us to holy living...

For the grace of God has appeared (= incarnation of Christ), bringing (making available) salvation (**justification** = past tense salvation) to all men ("all" who believe), **11** instructing (paideuo = in the present tense = continually rearing us up like a parent does his children! What is "child rearing" us? In context the "Grace of God"! How else could we "deny ungodliness" except by the transforming power of amazing grace?!) us to deny (arneomai) ungodliness (asebeia) and worldly desires (epithumia) and to live sensibly (sophronos), righteously (dikaos) and godly (eusebos) in the present age (cp Gal 1:4) (= **progressive sanctification** - present tense salvation - This parallels the one who continually "purifies himself just as He is pure"), **12** looking for (prosdechomai - present tense = looking expectantly for Jesus' return as the habit of one's life) the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus (**glorification** = future tense salvation. This parallels the time "when we see Him we shall be like Him" 1Jn 3:2). (Titus 2:11-note, Titus 2:12-note, Titus 2:13-note)

Beloved child of God, you can mark down this maxim --

What you are looking for

will determine

What you are living for

Either...

**TIME
or
ETERNITY!**

Purifies himself - Note that John does not say everyone *ought* to purify himself. Instead he flatly states that purification is what a believer does, and therefore this passage becomes a stringent test of what/who we really are! John's point is that everyone who genuinely possesses the objective hope of the Lord's promised return **purifies himself**. The verb **hagnizo** (see below) is in the

present tense which calls for an ongoing practice of purification - we are to make and keep ourselves pure. It describes a process and hopefully progress but not an "arrival" in this life, and yet a goal we can run toward as we contemplate His appearing when we will "arrive" (glorification). The **active voice** indicates that this purification of calls for a volitional choice. The one who possesses the hope of Christ's return and of being like Him, is the one who willingly and repeatedly exercises self-purification.

It is important to emphasize that on one hand believers are responsible for carrying out their own (self)**purification**, but on the other hand, this supernatural work necessitates continual dependence on the power of the indwelling Spirit (cp Ro 8:13-note; Gal 5:16-note). Paul outlines the two aspects of our present walk and work of purification (God's sovereignty, Man's responsibility) in his letter to the saints at Philippi commanding them to...

work out (present imperative = calls for a lifelong pursuit of purity and holiness, continually striving to be like Christ, realizing in this life we will continually fall short) your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God Who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13-note)

Purifies (48) (**hagnizo** from **hagnos** = freedom from defilements or impurities; see also word study on related word **hagios** [word study] = holy, saint) in the literal sense refers to ceremonial washings and purifications undertaken to purify oneself from ritual defilement. In the context of this ceremonial purification the idea was withdrawal from the profane (common) and dedication to God, thereby making one ceremonially ready. This sense is seen in the OT uses in the Septuagint (LXX), where **hagnizo** was used of the the **Nazirites** who took upon themselves a temporary or a life-long vow to abstain from wine and all kinds of intoxicating drink, from every defilement and from shaving the head. Luke seems to make allusion to a similar Nazirite-like practice by Paul in Acts 21:24, 26, 24:18.

Vincent adds that **hagnizo** was used in...

The Septuagint translation of the Old-Testament (as a) technical term for the purification of the people and priests (Jos 3:5; 1Chr 15:12; 1Sa 16:5). Also, of the separation from wine and strong drink by the **Nazirite** (Nu 6:2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

Hagnizo basically denotes a removal of that which disqualifies one for acceptable worship, the removal of which results in a condition of purity and chastity. The figurative uses of **hagnizo** emphasize the idea of one's heart being fully devoted to the Lord and to His will and way.

The only other use of **hagnizo** by the apostle John describes is with a literal sense to describe Jewish ceremonial purification...

Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to **purify** themselves. (Jn 11:55)

Three NT uses of **hagnizo** emphasize are figurative and speak of ethical/moral or internal/heart purification -- 1Jn 3:3 and in the following two passages...

James 4:8-note **Draw near** (eggizo in the aorist imperative = command to carry this out immediately. Don't procrastinate beloved. Do it now and do it effectively!) to God and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse** (katharizo in the aorist imperative) your hands, you sinners (hamartolos); and **purify** (hagnizo in the aorist imperative) your hearts (kardia), you double-minded (dipsuchos).

Since you have in obedience (hupakoe) to the truth **purified** (katharizo in the perfect tense = past completed action with ongoing effect/result) your souls for a sincere (anuopkritos) love of the brethren, fervently **love** (agapao in the aorist imperative = command to carry this out immediately and effectively. God's commands always include His enablements = You now have a new heart and His supernatural power) one another from the heart (1Pe 1:22-note)

Comment: Peter says a person is purified when he obeys the truth (the Word of God, the Gospel ~ "seed which is...imperishable...the living and abiding Word of God" 1Pe 1:23-note) and in this context Peter is referring to the initial experience of salvation (justification = past tense salvation) by grace through faith (Eph 2:8, 9-note).

The **NET Bible** comments that...

In this context the use of **hagnizo** would remind the readers that, if they have the future hope of entering the Father's presence ("seeing him as he is" 1Jn 3:2-note), they need to prepare themselves by living a purified lifestyle now, just as Jesus lived during His earthly life and ministry (cp 1Jn 2:6) This serves to rebut the opponents' claims to moral indifference, that what the Christian does in the present life is of no consequence. ([NET Bible](#))

In sum, while **hagnizo** can refer to ceremonial purification (external), the apostle John uses it to describe daily spiritual purification of one's heart (internal).

Hiebert makes the point that in 1Jn 1:7...

John states that it is the blood of Christ that cleanses us, whereas here in 1Jn 3:3 he speaks of self-purification. Both are true and necessary. As the begrimed workman must personally apply the soap and water to be cleansed, so the believer appropriates the God-given means of cleansing from moral defilement that may have been incurred in daily life. Included in this self-purification is the believer's renunciation of objects, activities, and attitudes which he finds to be defiling. (**Ed**: And I would add doing so in reliance upon the filling and controlling of the indwelling Spirit and the strengthening power of the grace in Christ Jesus - cp 2Ti 2:1-note, 2Co 12:9-note; 2Co 12:10-note)

Theology speaks of this repeated cleansing as "progressive sanctification" (cf. 2Cor 7:1). In 1Pe 1:22 Peter uses this verb in the perfect tense, "seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth" (ASV), to denote the cleansing that took place at regeneration (cf. Jn 13:10; 15:3; 17:19). That initial purification with its transforming result is the necessary antecedent to this personal self-cleansing in daily experience. The more intimate the believer's fellowship with God, who is "light" (1Jn 1:5), the more conscious he becomes of his need to cleanse himself from all that is moral darkness (1Jn 1:5, 6, 7). The more he contemplates this assured hope of being conformed to the image of Christ, the more eagerly will he strive for present personal purity (Php 3:13,14). ([The Epistles of John An Expository Commentary by D. Edmond Hiebert](#))

THREE TENSES OF SALVATION IN 1John 3:1-3

As alluded to above, there are three tenses of salvation (See Three Tenses of Salvation) **past tense** (justification), **present tense** (sanctification, growth in holiness, increasing Christ-likeness) and **future tense** (glorification) and 1John 3:1,2,3 the apostle alludes to each of these three tenses. In 1Jn 3:1 (note), John states we are **children of God** which implies that we have been justified by faith or **past tense salvation**. In 1Jn 3:2 (note) he explains that we shall be like Him which equates with **future tense salvation** (glorification). Finally here in 1Jn 3:3 he describes the saint's daily spiritual purification, which equates with **present tense salvation** (progressive sanctification).

Moral purity or holiness is a frequent theme in the New Testament. The word for saints is **hagios** (word study) which is translated "holy" or "holy ones" and means those who are sanctified or set apart from the profane world and unto the holy God. It follows that we who are now positionally holy or set apart in Christ (justified = past tense salvation) should strive according to His power which mightily works within us to be experientially holy (progressive sanctification = present tense salvation) as He is holy (1Pe 1:15, 16-note) (See also the Three Tenses of Salvation)

Acts 15:9 and He made no distinction between us (Jews) and them (Gentiles), **cleansing** (katharizo) their hearts (kardia) by faith (pistis) (referring to their initial sanctification or setting apart = justification = were declared righteous by faith [cp Ro 3:24-note, Ro 3:25NLT-note, Ro 3:28-note]).

Titus 2:14 (Christ) gave Himself for (= in our place = substitutionary sacrifice) us, that He might redeem (lutroo) us from every lawless (anomia) deed and **purify** (katharizo) for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Hebrews 12:14-note **Pursue** (present imperative = make this your habitual practice, empowered by the indwelling Spirit, one fruit of which is peace- Gal 5:22-note) peace (eirene) with all men, and the **sanctification (holiness - hagasmos)** without which no one will see the Lord. (This verse describes present tense salvation = progressive sanctification)

2Peter 1:4-note For by these (What? His glory and excellence just mentioned - 2Pe 1:3-note) He has granted (perfect tense = past completed action with present ongoing result/effect) to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped (apopheugo) the corruption (phthora) that is in the world (kosmos) by lust (epithumia).

2Peter 3:11-note Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way (2Pe 3:10-note), what sort of people ought you to be in **holy conduct and godliness**, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

2Peter 3:14-note Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things (What things? "new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" 2Pe 3:13-note) , be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

Notice the following passages which illustrate a similar pattern of promises and privilege position as children of God followed by an exhortation to purify ourselves

THE PROMISES AND PRIVILEGED POSITION 2Cor 6:14-18

Do not be bound (present imperative) together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness (anomia), or what fellowship has light with darkness (skotos)? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer (pistos) in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols (eidolon) ? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, **I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.** 17 "Therefore, **COME OUT** (aorist imperative = Now! Don't hesitate or procrastinate!) FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE** (aorist imperative)," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** (present imperative) WHAT IS UNCLEAN; and **I will welcome you.** 18 "And **I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,**" says the Lord Almighty (pantokrator).

THE PROPER PERSUASION (EXHORTATION) 2Corinthians 7:1-note

Therefore (see term of conclusion), having (present tense = possessing = our present and continual possession now and throughout eternity!) these promises (see above), beloved (What would happen beloved if we daily recalled these precious promises to our mind? Would not our resolve and motivation for holy living be animated and strengthened daily?! Cp the motivating power of our privileged position as children of God in 1Jn 3:1-note), let us (Paul includes himself in this exhortation - we can never be pure and holy enough in this life!) cleanse (katharizo) ourselves (empowered by the Spirit - cp Php 2:13NLT - note) from all defilement (molusmos) of flesh and spirit, perfecting (epiteleo - present tense = this is a daily, lifelong process - it should be every believer's lifestyle) holiness in the fear (phobos) of God (cp 1Pe 1:17-note).

Himself (1438) (**heautou**) technically is a reflexive pronoun which refers the action of a verb back to its own subject. In this case the action is purification which one does to oneself. It serves to emphasize that believers are to look in the mirror at our "moral dirt" instead of pointing fingers at the unholy behavior of those around us!

Hiebert adds that

himself marks that the conscious need for purification centers in his own being. ([The Epistles of John An Expository Commentary by D. Edmond Hiebert](#))

Lloyd-Jones asks a pertinent question in light of John's declaration that everyone with this hope purifies himself...

Why do we therefore fail so much in practice? The answer, it seems to me, is that our belief is defective; if only we really did see ourselves as we are depicted in the New Testament, the problem of conduct would immediately be solved. So the real trouble with most Christian people is not so much in the realm of their conduct and practice as in the realm of their belief, and that is why the Church, whenever she puts too much emphasis upon conduct and behaviour and ethics, always leads eventually to a state and condition in which Christian people fail most of all in that respect.

This is a very subtle matter. Of course the tendency is for people to argue like this: 'Ah,' they say, 'there is not much point in talking to us about doctrine; you have to remind people of their practical duty.' So holiness teaching not infrequently becomes a constant repetition of certain duties which we are to carry out. I agree that we do have to do these things, but I say that the ultimate way of carrying out these duties, and really practicing these things, is to have such a grasp and understanding of the doctrine that the practice becomes inevitable. And that is, of course, precisely what the New Testament always does. (Lloyd-Jones, D. M. Children of God)

**PAUL AGREES WITH JOHN:
IT'S TIME TO
WAKE UP!**

Paul teaches a similar association of the anticipation of Christ's second coming (cp 1Jn 3:2) as motivation for the working out of our salvation by carrying out daily purification (1Jn 3:3)...

11 And this *do* (love - Ro 13:10-note), knowing the time (kairos), that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep (metaphor = spiritual sleep); for now salvation (soteria) is nearer to us than when we believed. (*When we believed* = were justified [declared righteous] = "past tense salvation". *Salvation...nearer* = "future tense salvation" = glorification, which will occur when Christ returns ~ 1Jn 3:2)

12 The night (this present evil age, Gal 1:4, cp "night people" in 1Th 5:5-note, 1Th 5:6, 7-note) is almost gone (cp fate of this evil world system = 1Jn 2:17-note), and the day is at hand (What day? His Second Coming). Let us therefore (Why "therefore"? What is the motivation for the following exhortation? Clue: Check your watch!) lay aside (apotithemi = throw them off like dirty, filthy, smelly clothes!) the deeds of darkness and put on (enduo) the armor of light (Believers are in one sense ["positionally"] already "light in the Lord" [Eph 5:8-note] but now based on our position each of us are called to "walk in the light" 1Jn 1:7 carrying out our daily process of purification or sanctification, 1Jn 3:3)

13 Let us behave properly as in the day (~ Walking in the light), not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy (~ Walking in the darkness, in the night).

14 But (Change of direction = from living like "night" [Jn 3:19, 20] people to living like "light" people. [Jn 3:21 - note all the verbs here are present tense = our daily practice is to come to the light]) **put on** (aorist imperative = Do it now! Don't hesitate or procrastinate!) the Lord Jesus Christ (In a sense we are already clothed in His righteousness [1Co 1:30, Jn 8:12] but now as part of our progressive work of purification we are to actively, continually pursue righteousness [1Ti 6:11, cp 2Ti 2:22-note]) and **make no** (present imperative = Stop planning your sinning! Remember sin begins with your thought life - there sin is hatched as lust carries you away and entices you - if you take the "bait" of that lustful thought, you're "hooked" Jas 1:14, 15-note) provision (pronoia = thinking about it beforehand - you know exactly what this means!) for the **flesh** in regard to its lusts (epithumia = strong desires which God gave us to be gratified according to His good and perfect will, but which we instead to often seek [urged on by our flesh] to gratify in an ungodly way, not in keeping with His will, eg, see 1Th 4:1-note, 1Th 4:3-note). (Ro 13:11-note, Ro 13:12-note, Ro 13:13, 14-note)

Summary: When the alarm goes off in the morning, you wake up! When you know the time of His return is nigh, you wake up spiritually and put on holy clothes that enable daily purification as an ongoing process.

Steven Cole writes that...

The holiness of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ is a frequent theme in 1John. In 1Jn 1:5, he told us, "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." In 1Jn 2:1, he refers to Jesus as "Jesus Christ the righteous." In 1Jn 2:20, he refers to Jesus as "the Holy One." In 1Jn 2:29, he again affirms that "He is righteous." Here, he says, "He is pure." The word originally referred to ceremonial purity, but it came to mean that which is "pure in the highest sense" (R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament [Eerdmans], p. 333). It refers to freedom from all defilement of sin, especially moral sin.

As we've seen, in that glorious future day when we see Jesus, that vision will transform us. But I also believe that to the extent that we presently see Jesus in His holiness with the eyes of faith, to that same extent He will transform us into His glory. Paul says essentially the same thing (2Co 3:18)

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

There is a similar thought in John 14:21, where Jesus says,

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

If we want Jesus to disclose or reveal Himself to us, we must obey Him. It becomes, not **avicious** cycle, but a **victorious** cycle, where when we obey, we see more of Jesus; this in turn makes us more like Him, which means that we see even more of Him. There is a transformational power in seeing Jesus for Who He is, the Holy One. Of course, our only source for this knowledge is His Word. Thus we must fix our hope on Him and

we must come to know Him in His holiness.

We must purify ourselves now so that we will grow to be like Him.- John says (1Jn 3:3),

Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself.

We need to maintain the biblical balance here. In Romans 8:29, Paul says that God has predestined us to become conformed to the image of His Son. In that sense, it's a done deal and clearly, God does it. Yet at the same time, John says that we must purify ourselves. Paul says (2Co 7:1), "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." He commands Timothy to keep himself pure [lit.] from sin (1Ti 5:22). James 4:8 commands, "Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." 1 Peter 1:22 says that believers have purified their souls. So, there is a definite sense in which we must be active in the process of purification from sin.

The other side is that only the blood of Jesus can cleanse us (1Jn 1:7, 9). We are clean through the washing of water with the Word (Ep 5:26). So God's Word and His Holy Spirit are like the soap and water. But we've got to apply it to the dirt of our sin. The Word is also like a mirror, revealing to us the dirt on our faces. When it does that, rather than ignoring it, we must confess our sins to the Lord, apply His shed blood as our source of cleansing, and take the necessary steps to avoid that sin in the future. In brief, if you can't imagine Jesus Christ, the righteous one, doing something, then you shouldn't do it either. Clean the filth out of your life, beginning on the thought level.

Conclusion - Maybe you're thinking, "But it's hard to let go of my sins!" If we're honest, we sin because we enjoy sinning, at least for the moment. We don't consider the long-term consequences. So we need motivation for purity. John says that our motivation should be that we are God's beloved children and that Jesus is coming to make us pure. These facts should motivate us to purify our lives now.

When Jimmy Carter was President, to promote his populist image, on several occasions he spent the night in the homes of common people. Of course, he didn't drop in unannounced! Those people had fair warning that he was coming on a particular date, and I'm sure that they had to agree to the visit. But, if you knew that the President would come at some unknown date to stay in your home, and that the news cameras would be there to broadcast the state of your living room to the entire world, I'll bet that you'd be motivated to clean house!

Jesus is coming. When you see Him in His glory, you will be like Him. If you have your hope fixed on Him, you'll start cleaning house now! You don't want the Lord who is pure to come to a filthy house! ([The Purifying Hope](#))

Just as He is Pure - Christ is our pattern for purity, our example of excellence. As John said "He must increase and we must decrease" (Jn 3:30).

Peter alludes to Christ pattern of purity in the way He responded to suffering, writing that...

For you have been called for this purpose (to suffer) , since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, (1Pe 2:21)

Earlier in first John, the apostle had emphasized the importance of a walk that corresponds to one's talk (profession) writing that...

the one who says he abides in Him ought (Not a suggestion but an obligation, we in a sense owe this to Him, however not in any meritorious sense) himself to walk in the same manner as He (Christ) walked. (1Jn 2:6)

Just as ([2531](#)) (**kathos**) is used in the sense of comparison, meaning in this way Christ walked while on earth.

He is ([2076](#)) (**estin**) is the **present tense** indicates Jesus' immutable (unchanging) holy nature. One of the very names given to Jesus is "Holy One" speaks of His uncompromising surpassing holiness. He was pure on earth and will remain pure throughout eternity! Note that John does not say "just as He (Christ) purifies Himself" because our Lord never had to purify Himself. For believers purification it is a gradual process (cp progressive sanctification) but with Jesus, it is a fact.

Hiebert writes that...

The added words "even as he is pure" set before the believer the pattern for his self-purification. **'Even as He'** makes clear that "we are not to judge our lives by other peoples', but by Christ's, who is the standard or goal toward which we are to move."

"He" renders the demonstrative pronoun "that one" (ekeinos), which in this epistle seems always to refer to Christ (1Jn 2:6; 3:3, 5, 7, 16; 4:17; 5:16), and sets Him apart from other individuals. As a man among men,

Jesus was "pure" (*hagnos*), morally blameless, uncontaminated and sinless in character and conduct.

John does not say "even as that one purified himself" but rather "is pure," thus asserting His unchanging nature. The incarnate and glorified Christ ever remains "pure" and "sinless." As such He is the perfect model, challenging believers constantly to purify themselves. Culpepper comments, "Those who hope for heavenly rewards but do not pursue righteousness have pipe dreams, not hope." ([The Epistles of John An Expositional Commentary by D. Edmond Hiebert](#))

Pure (*hagnos*) (*hagnos* means freedom from defilements or impurities and figuratively as used in this verse describes what is morally undefiled and when used ceremonially describes that which has been so cleansed that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God and used in His service. Although *hagnos* refers primarily to that which is inwardly pure, this purity also affects a person's conduct. Here it indicates the sinless and pure conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ, as summarized by the writer of Hebrews...

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. (He 7:26, 27-note)

The root word *hagnos* describes what is **morally** undefiled and when used **ceremonially** describes that which has been so cleansed that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God and used in His service. James uses this root word *hagnos* in his list of characteristics of heavenly wisdom (Jas 3:17). *Hagnos* describes a purity which affects a not only a person's motives but also their conduct.

Hagnos is always with a moral sense but is not limited to sins of the flesh, but covering purity in motives as well as in acts. In 2Co 11:2, of virgin purity. In James 3:17, as a characteristic of heavenly wisdom.

Hagnos means free from admixture of evil, and is once applied to God, John writing that

everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is **pure** (*hagnos*) (1Jn 3:3)

Barclay (critique) emphasizing the secular origin and use of the root word *hagnos* writes that....

hagnos and its root meaning is pure enough to approach the gods. At first it had only a ceremonial meaning and meant nothing more than that a man had gone through the right ritual cleansings. So, for instance, **Euripides** can make one of his characters say, "My hands are pure, but my heart is not." At this stage *hagnos* describes ritual, but not necessarily moral, purity. But as time went on the word came to describe the moral purity which alone can approach the gods. On the Temple of Aesculapius at Epidaurus there was the inscription at the entrance: "He who would enter the divine temple must be **pure** (*hagnos*); and purity is to have a mind which thinks holy thoughts." ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press or Logos](#))

NIDNTT has this note on the classic use in Greek...

hagnos, adj. from the verb. *hazomai* which is in turn derived from *hagiomai*, to stand in awe of someone, originally meant that which inspires (religious) awe, *tabu* (Godliness, art. *sebomai*). In secular Gk. usage *hagnos* is found from Homer onwards. In religious language it is primarily an attribute of deity; then it refers to things having some relation to the deity. It thus comes to mean holy, in the sense of pure. **Ritual purity** is in mind here, e.g. avoidance of blood-guilt, touching corpses. Since to the primitive mind sexual intercourse also makes a person ritually unclean, *hagnos* came to mean chaste. The originally cultic, religious term was then transferred to the sphere of morality, and is frequently used in the Hellenistic period in the sense of innocent, morally faultless. It is also used as a compliment for faultless execution of office. From *hagnos* are derived the verb *hagnizo*, to purify (by means of expiatory rites), first found in Soph., and the cognate noun *hagnismos*, purification. Both terms are limited to the cultic sphere. *hagneia*, a noun derived from *hagnos*, is likewise found first in Soph., and is used of cultic purity, chastity, purity of mind. Another noun derived from *hagnos* is *hagnotes*, which is unknown outside the NT and means purity, moral blamelessness.

More common in the LXX is the verb *hagnizo*, which describes the measures taken to achieve eligibility for the cult. Whereas **hagios** (holy) always includes the thought of the power and might of that which is holy, *hagnizo* expresses consistently the removal of what is not seemly (e.g. Ex 19:10, washing of garments; Nu 6:3, abstinence from alcohol [Nazirites]), especially in the sense, to purify oneself from sin or uncleanness (hith. of *chata'*, e.g. Nu 8:21; 19:12). *hagneia* also refers in the OT (Nu 6:2-21, law of the Nazirite; 2Chr 30:19, sanctuary) and Apocrypha (1Macc. 14:36, temple) to ritual purity. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International](#)

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Consider parallels between physical and spiritual birth. We've listed a few in today's study, but you'll no doubt come up with several more. For example, just as we are born into a certain physical family, so too we are forever born again into the family of God. Just as physical families have certain family resemblances, so too members of God's family resemble each other to the extent that they resemble their Father. What are some other ways in which physical birth and childhood illustrate being a child of God? ([MBI - Today in the Word](#))

MORE PURITY GIVE TO ME

THE "MEASURING DAY" Till we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:13 -

God wants us to grow in grace and advance in spiritual knowledge. Therefore, along with His Word, He gives us Christian leaders who, because of their maturity, can act as ministers and teachers to edify us (Eph. 4:11), give us a broader insight into the deeper life of consecration, and instill in our hearts a better understanding of the true wisdom which is from above. As we thus mellow and mature through grace we shall grow "unto . . . the measure of the stature . . . of Christ!"

Peloubet's Notes relates in substance the following incident: It is said that those who wished to qualify for positions in the elite guard of King Frederick of Prussia were required to measure up to a certain commanding stature. A Christian lady thought so much about this annual "Measuring Day" ceremony that when she went to bed one evening she had a dream in which she imagined there was a day when everyone's growth in grace was similarly computed. An angel stood with a tall, golden rod in his hand over which was fastened a scroll on which appeared these words: "The measure of the stature of the perfect man." The angel inscribed in a large book all the important statistics as the people came up one at a time in response to the calling of their names. The instant anyone touched the rod an astounding thing happened — each shrank or increased in size to his or her true spiritual dimensions! Everyone, including the recording angel, could thus miraculously see what otherwise would have been perceived only by the eye of God.

If today were the "Measuring Day" (and it may well be if Jesus suddenly returns), would you be ashamed of your spiritual stature? Take inventory; is your soul shrinking from "malnutrition," or are you feeding on the Living Bread, and thus daily attaining a little more of the "stature of the fullness of Christ"?

More purity give me, more strength to o'ercome;
More freedom from earth-stains, more longing for Home;
More fit for Thy kingdom, more used would I be;
More blessed and holy, more, Saviour, like Thee.
—P. P. Bliss

**Live now as you shall wish you had lived
when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ! —Culbertson**

Thomas Watson warns of the deceptive danger of a false hope for...

A false hope is an UNCLEAN hope. A man hopes—but continues in his sins. It is vain to speak of hopes of salvation—and have the marks of damnation. True hope is a helmet made of pure metal. 1John 3:3: "He who has this hope purifies himself." ([The Fight of Faith Crowned](#))

J C Ryle speaking of the great worth of assurance of our salvation (this is point #4 of 4) writes that...

Assurance is to be desired because it tends to make the holiest Christians. This, too, sounds incredible and strange, and yet it is true. It is one of the paradoxes of the gospel, contrary at first sight to reason and common sense, and yet it is a fact. Cardinal Bellarmine was seldom more wide of the truth than when he said, "Assurance tends to carelessness and sloth." He who is freely forgiven by Christ will always do much for Christ's glory, and he who enjoys the fullest assurance of this forgiveness will ordinarily keep up the closest walk with God. It is a faithful saying and worthy to be remembered by all believers: "**He who has hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure**" (1 John 3:3). A **hope** that does not purify is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.

None are so likely to maintain a watchful guard over their own hearts and lives as those who know the comfort

of living in close communion with God. They feel their privilege and will fear losing it. They will dread falling from the high estate, and marring their own comforts, by bringing clouds between themselves and Christ. He who goes on a journey with little money about him takes little thought of danger and cares little how late he travels. **He, on the contrary, that carries gold and jewels will be a cautious traveler.** He will look well to his roads, his lodgings and his company and run no risks. It is an old saying, however unscientific it may be, that the fixed stars are those which tremble most. **The man that most fully enjoys the light of God's reconciled countenance will be a man tremblingly afraid of losing its blessed consolations and jealously fearful of doing anything to grieve the Holy Spirit.** ([Assurance](#))

Alleine writes that...

If your hope is worth anything, it will purify you from your sins (1 John 3:3)—but cursed is that hope which cherishes men in their sins. ([Alarm to the Unconverted](#))

Thomas Brooks speaks of the purification that hope provokes writing that...

The assured Christian knows, that it is dangerous to sin against light, that it is more dangerous to sin against love, that it is most dangerous to sin against love revealed and manifested to the soul. To sin under assurance, is to sin against the great mercies of God, it is to sin against the highest **hopes of glory**; and this will certainly provoke God to be angry. God may well say to such a Christian, "Is this your kindness to your best friend?" ([HEAVEN ON EARTH](#))

Bishop J C Ryle notes that...

The third mark of the new birth is "holiness." What says the apostle John again? "You know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him." (1Jn 2:29) "And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure." (1Jn 3:3) The true children of God delight in making the law their rule of life; it dwells in their minds, and is written upon their hearts, and it is their food and drink to do their Father's will. They know nothing of that spirit of bondage which false Christians complain of; it is their pleasure to glorify God with their bodies and souls, which are His; they hunger and thirst after tempers and dispositions like their Lord's. They do not rest content with sleepy wishing and hoping—but they strive to be holy in their whole life—in thought, in word, and in deed; it is their daily heart's prayer, "Lord what will You have us to do?" and it is their daily grief and lamentation that they come so short and are such unprofitable servants. Beloved, remember where there is no holiness of life there cannot be much work of the Holy Spirit. (See all 8 "marks" in **Ryle's** paper [Regeneration](#))

John Angell James, (1859) has a chapter entitled [A Purifying Hope](#)...

The apostle John has set this quality and operation before us in a clear and positive manner—**Every man that has this hope (in Christ), in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure,**" 1John 3:3.

Every view we can take of the work of redemption, shows its connection with holiness. The Father has "chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy." The Son did not die merely to save us from hell, and bring us to heaven—but to "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works." The Spirit is given to "create us anew unto good works." If we are called, it is "with a holy calling." If we are afflicted, it is that we might "be partakers of God's holiness." If we possess the Scriptures, it is "that we might be sanctified by the truth."

Holiness is the image of God, stamped upon man's soul at his creation—which Satan marred, when his malignity could not reach the divine original. And to restore us to holiness, is the ultimate object of redeeming mercy. What would justification be without holiness—but like throwing a vestment of purple and gold over a leprous body? What is heaven—but the region, the home, the very center of holiness? Take away holiness from an angel, and he becomes a devil. Add holiness to the nature of a devil, and he becomes an angel. Were a man without holiness to enter heaven, its blessed inhabitants would run from him with horror and alarm—as we would run from a person with the plague! Without holiness, a soul in heaven would be like a nauseated man at a feast; he would desire nothing, taste nothing, relish nothing. Hence, therefore, the meaning and force of the apostle's declaration, that hope is the great purifier. Fear of hell may do something in this way—hope of heaven will do more!

The MODEL of Christian holiness is Christ, not merely in his divine—but in his human nature; and that nature, not only in its heavenly—but in its earthly state. Christ as the man of sorrows—as exposed to temptation—as subject to affliction—as the servant of God—as the Son learning obedience by the things which he suffered—as separate from sin and sinners, though dwelling in the midst of them. Here is our model; the infinite, eternal,

almighty God, exhibited in the miniature form of the perfect man, presented in dimensions the eye can comprehend. In our zeal for Christ's divinity, let us not forget his humanity. The man Christ, the divine man, the model man, must be before us, and our eye must be ever upon our copy and our page.

"Every man who has this hope in him, purifies himself." While as a weak, ignorant and sinful creature, his dependence is to be upon the Spirit of God. But as a rational creature, he is to exert all his faculties of intellect, heart, will, conscience, memory, in this great work of moral purification. The apostle teaches us in this language that each individual's moral cleansing depends, under God, principally upon himself—not upon ministers, nor sermons, nor ordinances, nor books—but upon himself—upon his care to watch over the motions of his own heart—upon his vigilance to guard against temptations from without—upon his meditation upon Christ's example—upon his assiduity to seek, by prayer, the support of God's grace.

A man that would cleanse his person from defilement would not merely place himself beneath a falling shower of rain—but would collect the descending water and apply it to his body. He would purify himself—and so must we our souls.

Hope prompts to this purification; helps us in it; and gives energy and success to our endeavors. All men act as they hope—their desires and expectations dictate and ensure the appropriate conduct. This is an instinct of their nature, a moral necessity, an infallible result. If a man has before him any worldly object of desire and expectation—and there is some prerequisite which he must possess, in order to gain his ulterior end—he will labor to secure this prerequisite as absolutely indispensable. Now the Christian's desire and expectation are fixed upon heaven, his heart is upon heaven—but he is told "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Then he knows, he feels, he determines, that he must be holy.

If we have some cherished object of desire, and there is something which must fit us for enjoying it when it is possessed, we naturally labor to gain that preparedness. The Christian knows that he could not enjoy heaven without holiness, if he were admitted to its felicities—and therefore his hope sets him upon this personal purification as his "fitness for the inheritance of the saints in light." The desire and expectation of an earthly object makes us eager at once to get as much of it as we can, even before we come into full possession and fruition.

The Christian knows that the chief felicity of heaven consists in absolute sinless perfection. It is his bliss to think that there he shall, according to his measure, be as holy as God is holy. It would be no heaven to him—if he must take his sin with him. Holiness is the richest, ripest fruit that grows on the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God. The believer's hope therefore prompts him to hunger and thirst after righteousness, as a means of enjoying a pledge, a foretaste of heavenly bliss. Hope like the truehearted spies sent by Joshua to search the promised land, crosses the Jordan, and plucking the grapes of Eshcol, returns to bid the soul go forward.

When we are very intent on gaining an object, we are very glad to meet with evidence that we are in the right way to obtain it, and we search very diligently for as much proof as we can accumulate. What is the evidence, the only evidence, that can be depended on that we are going to heaven? Holiness—conformity to the example of Christ. Now he who is in earnest to reach the heavenly Canaan, whose heart is set on that sublime and glorious object, will feel an intense solicitude to know if he is in the way to it. A serious doubt on this subject is distressing to him. Knowing that holiness is the proof of safety, he will ever be anxious to conform himself to the example of Christ. He who is studying the life of Jesus, as a child studies his copy to do reproduce it, need not doubt his state. He may not, and will not be a perfect resemblance to Christ, any more than the boy at school will equal his copy—but the great Master will approve of the sincere and diligent attempt to do well, although there may be some defects, and dissimilarities, and the writing have some irregularities, and the page some blots.

Nor is this all; the very contemplation of heaven, in which hope indulges—has a transforming power. This passion naturally and necessarily assimilates the mind of the person who cherishes it, to the object which he has before him. The miser becomes more miserly; the sensualist more sensual; the ambitious man more ambitious; the warrior more warlike—by their hopes. Desire and expectation, in relation to earthly things, have a mighty power of assimilation, and may be carried to such an extent, that the man's soul becomes quite possessed with the object on which his heart is set. So is it, in rational measure, with the expectants of eternal glory.

What is heaven? We have again and again answered that question. It is not a Roman Elysium; nor a Mohammedan Paradise—but a state where we shall see Christ as he is, and be like him. It is the region of

moral purity. Its inhabitants are holy—the holy Father, the holy Savior, the holy Spirit, holy angels, and holy men. Its occupations are holy—the service of God—the song of cherubim and seraphim, crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; and all other things in harmony with this sacred employment and felicity.

Now every contemplation of this holy heavenly state tends to assimilate the soul to its likeness. While gazing upon it, delighting in it, longing for it—we grow in resemblance to it. Like as when a man turns his face to the sun, its rays fall and dwell upon his countenance; or as when a polished mirror is turned to the great luminary, it reflects its splendor—so the soul of the believer turned heavenwards, becomes heavenly.

If, then, hope produces holiness, how important is it to keep up the power of the cause—in order to the production of the effect. Despondency has a chilling, withering influence upon the holy energies of the soul, like the cold north wind on flowers and blossoms. While hope is the sunshine of the soul, which cherishes the moral vegetation, and makes it look verdant and flourishing. The Christian who would grow in grace, and make advances in spiritual purity, should keep up a good hope. His doubts and fears are not only hindrances to his happiness—but to his holiness also. Despondency is not only uncomfortable—but unholy. (From the book [CHRISTIAN HOPE](#))

We Must Be Holy!

J. C. Ryle

Reader, We must be holy on earth before we die—if we desire to go to heaven after death! If we hope to dwell with God forever in the life to come—we must endeavor to be like Him in the life that now is. We must not only admire holiness, and wish for holiness—we must be holy.

Holiness cannot justify and save us. Holiness cannot cover our iniquities, make satisfaction for transgressions, pay our debts to God. Our best works are no better than filthy rags, when tried by the light of God's law. The righteousness which Jesus Christ brought in, must be our only confidence—and the blood of His atonement, our only hope. All this is perfectly true, and yet we must be holy.

We must be holy—

because God in the Bible plainly commands it. "As He who has called you is holy—so be holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be holy—for I am holy" (1Peter 1:15, 16-note).

We must be holy—

because this is one great end for which Christ came into the world. "He died for all, that those who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again" (2Cor. 5:15).

We must be holy—

because this is the only sound evidence that we have a saving faith in Christ. "Faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone." "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:17-note, Jas 2:26-note).

We must be holy—

because this is the only proof that we love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. What can be more plain than our Lord's own words? "If you love Me—keep my commandments." "He who has my commandments, and keeps them—he it is that loves Me." (Jn 14:15, 21).

We must be holy—

because this is the only sound evidence that we are God's children. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "Whoever does not righteousness is not of God" (Ro 8:14-note; 1Jn 3:10).

Lastly, we must be holy—

because without holiness on earth, we should never be prepared and fit for heaven. It is written of the heavenly glory, "There shall never enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie" (Rev. 21:27-note). Paul says expressly, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord!" (Heb 12:14-note).

Ah, reader, the last text I have just quoted is very solemn. It ought to make you think. It was written by the inspiration of God—it is not my private fancy. Its words are the words of the Bible—not of my own invention. God has said it, and God will stand to it:

"Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

What tremendous words these are! What thoughts come across my mind as I write them down! I look at the world—and see the greater part of it lying in wickedness! I look at professing Christians—and see the vast majority having nothing of Christianity, but the name! I turn to the Bible, and I hear the Spirit saying, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

Surely it is a text that ought to make you consider your ways, and search your hearts. Surely it should raise within you solemn thoughts, and send you to prayer.

You may try to put me off by saying you feel much, and think much about these things—far more than many suppose. I answer, This is not the point. The poor lost souls in hell, do as much as this! The great question is, not what you think and what you feel—but what you DO. Are you holy?

You may say, It was never meant that all Christians should be holy, and that holiness such as I have described is only for great saints, and people of uncommon gifts. I answer, I cannot see this in Scripture. I read that **"every man who has hope in Christ, purifies himself"** (1John 3:3). "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." (Heb 12:14-note)

You may say, It is impossible to be so holy, and to do our duty in this life at the same time—the thing cannot be done. I answer, You are mistaken—it can be done. With God on your side, nothing is impossible. It has been done by many: Moses, and Obadiah, and Daniel, and the servants of Nero's household, are all examples that go to prove it.

You may say, If you were so holy—you would be unlike other people. I answer, I know it well—it is just what I want you to be. Christ's true servants always were unlike the world around them—a separate nation, a peculiar people; and you must be so too, if you would be saved.

You may say, At this rate, very few will be saved. I answer—I know it. Jesus said so eighteen hundred years ago. Few will be saved, because few will take the trouble to seek salvation. Men will not deny themselves the pleasures of sin and their own way for a season; for this they turn their backs on "an inheritance that is imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading!" (1Pe 1:4-note) "You will not come to Me," says Jesus, "that you might have life" (John 5:40).

You may say, These are hard sayings—the way is very narrow. I answer, I know it! Jesus said so, eighteen hundred years ago (Mt 7:13, 14-note). He always said that men must take up the cross daily (Mk 8:34), that they must be ready to cut off hand or foot (Mt 5:30-note)—if they would be His disciples. It is in true religion, as it is in other things, "There are no gains without pains." That which costs nothing is worth nothing!

Reader, whatever you may think fit to say, you must be holy—if you would see the Lord in eternal glory. Where is your Christianity, if you are not holy? Show it to me without holiness, if you can. You must not merely have a Christian name and Christian knowledge, you must have a Christian character also. You must be a saint on earth—if ever you mean to be a saint in heaven. God has said it, and He will not go back, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." "The Pope's calendar," says one, "only makes saints of the dead; but Scripture requires sanctity in the living."

"Let not men deceive themselves," says Owen, "sanctification is a qualification indispensably necessary, unto those who will be under the conduct of the Lord Jesus unto salvation. He leads none to heaven—but whom He sanctifies on the earth. This living Head will not admit of dead members!"

Surely you will not wonder that Scripture says, "You must be born again" (John 3:7). Surely it is clear as noon-day, that many of you need a complete change—new hearts, new natures—if ever you are to be saved. Old things must pass away, you must become new creatures! (2Co 5:17) Without holiness, no man, be he who he may—no man shall ever see the Lord.

Reader, consider well what I have said. Do you feel any desire to be holy? Does your conscience whisper, "I am not holy yet—but I would like to become so"? Listen to the advice I am going to give you. May the Lord grant you may take it and act upon it!

Would you be holy? Would you become a new creature? Then begin with Christ! You will do just nothing, until you feel your sin and weakness—and flee to Him! He is the beginning of all holiness. He is not only wisdom and righteousness to His people—but sanctification also. Men sometimes try to make themselves holy first—and sad work they make of it! They toil, and labor, and turn over many new leaves, and make many changes—and yet, like the woman with the issue of blood—they feel nothing bettered, but rather worse. They run in vain, and labor in vain! Little wonder, for they are beginning at the wrong end! They are building up a wall of sand—their work runs down as fast as they throw it up. They are baling water out of a leaky vessel; the leak gains on them; not they on the leak. Other foundation of holiness, can no man lay, than that which Paul laid, even Christ Jesus. Without Christ, we can

do nothing. It is a strong but true saying of Trail's, "Wisdom outside of Christ—is damning folly! Righteousness outside of Christ—is guilt and condemnation! Sanctification outside of Christ—is filth and sin! Redemption outside of Christ—is bondage and slavery!"

"But from Him you are in Christ Jesus—who for us became wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." 1 Corinthians 1:30

Would you be holy? Would you be partakers of the Divine nature? (2Pe 1:4-note) Then go to Christ! Wait for nothing! Wait for nobody! Do not linger! Think not to make you yourself ready. Go, and say to Him, in the words of that beautiful hymn—

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Your cross I cling!
Naked, flee to You for dress;
Helpless, look to You for grace!

Rock of Ages

There is not a brick nor a stone laid in the work of our sanctification, until we go to Christ. Holiness is His special gift to His believing people. Holiness is the work He carries on in their hearts, by the Spirit whom He puts within them (**Ed**: See especially Ezekiel 36:27. Who accomplishes the first part of the verse? ...the second half of the verse?!). He is appointed a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance as well as remission of sins. To as many as receive Him—He gives power to become sons of God (Jn 1:12KJV). Holiness does not come by blood—parents cannot give it to their children. Holiness does not come by the will of the flesh—man cannot produce it in himself. Holiness does not come by the will of man—ministers cannot give it to you by baptism (Jn 1:13). Holiness comes from Christ! It is the result of vital union with Him. It is the fruit of being a living branch of the true vine. Go then to Christ, and say, "Lord, not only save me from the guilt of sin, but send the Spirit, whom You did promise, and save me from its power. Make me holy! Teach me to do Your will."

Would you continue holy, when you have once been made so? Then abide in Christ. He says Himself,

"Abide in Me, and I in you. He who abides in Me, and I in him—brings forth much fruit" (Jn 15:4, 5).

Jesus is the Physician to Whom You must daily go, if you would keep well. He is the Manna which you must daily eat (Mt 4:4, cp Job 23:12-note), and the Rock of which you must daily drink (1Co 10:4, Jn 7:37, 38). His arm is the arm on which you must daily lean, as you come up out of the wilderness of this world. You must not only be rooted, you must also be built up in Him (Col 2:7-note).

Reader, may you and I know these things by experience, and not by hearsay only! (cp Jas 1:22-note, Jas 1:25-note, Jas 1:26, 27-note) May we all feel the importance of holiness, far more than we have ever done yet! May our years be holy years with our souls, and then I know they will be happy ones! But this I say once more, "**We must be holy!**" (Lev 11:44) (**We Must Be Holy**)

HOLINESS

1JOHN 3:3

Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (**The Martyn Lloyd-Jones Recordings Trust Web Site**) also speaks to the subject of holiness based on 1Jn 3:1-3. He reasons that based on our position as children of God (1Jn 3:1) and our sure hope of being like Him in that future glorious day when we see Christ as He is now (glorified in splendor and majesty) (1Jn 3:2), His children will volitionally, actively, continually seek to purify their hearts from the contamination of the world, the flesh and the devil's fiery missiles (1Jn 3:3). With this background, the good doctor writes that...

We cannot very well look at this verse (1Jn 3:3) without observing the way in which the New Testament always presents its teaching with regard to this whole question of **holiness**.

HOLINESS...

DEDUCTION FROM DOCTRINE

Here, I think, is a great corrective to what has so often taken place, and still does take place, in connection with this matter.

Holiness, according to the New Testament, is an inevitable deduction from doctrine; it must never be regarded as something in and of itself.

In other words, we must never approach the holy life simply in terms of living the holy life. And that, I think, is

where the whole idea of monasticism and asceticism went astray. But the monastic conception of holiness is not, of course, confined to Roman Catholicism by any means. There are large numbers of evangelical people who clearly have a false idea of holiness; it is regarded as something in and of itself, something one has to go in for because of its nature, because it is a particular kind of life.

But that is never the teaching of the New Testament.

Holiness is something that follows and is an inevitable deduction from doctrine, from an understanding of our position as Christian people.

And especially, I think, we must admit that the New Testament presents its teaching and doctrine of holiness in terms of this great truth concerning the blessed hope (**Ed: See relationship between living for Christ in Titus 2:12-note and looking for Christ in Titus 2:13-note**).

It is after it has told us **what** we are and **who** we are and of the **hope** that lies before us that the New Testament brings in this doctrine of holiness and sanctification and Christian behaviour. I must therefore never talk about this idea of living the holy life because it is a good life in and of itself. **Rather, my only reason for being holy is that I am a child of God (1Jn 3:1-note) and that I am destined for glory (1Jn 3:2-note), and if I do not practise holiness in those terms I will sooner or later inevitably go astray.**

That is, of course, what has happened with this other teaching of holiness. When you make holiness a thing of itself, you then produce your **rules and regulations**. You begin to pay too much attention to little details; you become **legalistic** without realising it; you become **self-righteous** because you have carried out your duties, and you forget the real objective for which you have originally set out.

HOLINESS WE...DO BECAUSE...WE...ARE

Secondly, holiness is not something we are called upon to do in order that we may become something; it is something we are to do because of what we already are.

Take this whole question of Lent. There is a great deal of teaching on this subject which really amounts to this: that we are to be holy and live the holy life in order that we may become truly Christian. Every phase or aspect of the doctrine of justification by works really teaches that; so any suggestion we may have in ourselves that we are to deny ourselves certain things, that we are not to do certain things, and that we are to discipline ourselves in order that we may become Christian is a denial of the doctrine of justification by faith (**Ed: Contrast "grace denial" in Titus 2:12-note**). But I am not to live a good and holy life in order that I may become a Christian; I am to live the holy life because I am a Christian (**Ed: This is the apostle John's "template" - Those who have become children of God in the past and have the sure hope of glory in the future will live holy lives in the present!**). I am not to live this holy life in order that I may enter heaven; it is because I know I am going to enter heaven that I must live this holy life.

That is the emphasis here—

‘Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.’

I am not to strive and sweat and pray in order that at the end I may enter into heaven. No; I start rather from the standpoint that I have been made a child of God by the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am destined for heaven; I have an assurance that I have been called to go there and that God is going to take me there, and it is because I know this that I am preparing now. I must never regard that as contingent and uncertain in order that I may make it certain. It is exactly the other way round: it is because I know I am going to meet God that I must prepare to meet Him.

HOLINESS... ALL...ARE CALLED

Thirdly, I must never conceive of holiness or sanctification as a kind of higher or happier or holier life which we are meant to enjoy as Christians and into which I ought to be entering.

I must regard it rather as a life to which all Christians are inevitably called and which every Christian ought therefore automatically to be living. Now far too often the subject of holiness is handled like this:

We are told that there is a wonderful life which you can live—a life with a capital L—a life of happiness and joy

and peace. 'Why don't you enter into this life?' we are asked. Indeed, we are told that there are two types of Christians, the ordinary Christian and then the Christian who has had some kind of double blessing. You can be a Christian without that, but how foolish you are not to take this higher something which is there for you. I say there is no such definition in the New Testament at all. Holiness is something that is applicable to every Christian, not something which is some kind of extra. It is the norm of the Christian life, the life that everyone who has truly seen the doctrine is doing his or her utmost to live and to practise, with none of this division or dichotomy. All Christians, if they understand the doctrine truly, may be, and are, living this kind of life. It is not something in a separate category and department; it is something that flows out of the life that is in them; it is an inevitable expression of what they have received.

HOLINESS... SOMETHING...WE WORK OUT

Or, lastly, let me put it like this: The holiness of which the New Testament speaks and the holy life, the life of sanctification which John talks of, is not so much something which we receive as a gift—it is rather something which we work out. Now here again I think this correction is needed. How often is the holiness doctrine presented in that form. We are told that as you have received your justification by faith as a gift, so you must now receive this gift of sanctification and holiness as a gift. So people get the idea that this life of holiness is something which comes to you perhaps in a meeting or a convention. You suddenly get it; you went to the meeting without it and then suddenly you got it.

But surely this is a denial of this very teaching which John is holding before us. No; the position is rather this—not that it suddenly comes to me and I receive some special or exceptional blessing; the position, rather, is that I am reminded of the doctrine, I am reminded that I am a child of God, I am told of the inheritance that awaits me. I have been given a glimpse of the vision of the glory that awaits me beyond death and the grave, and having seen it I am told,

'Now then, in the light of that, proceed to work this out, purify yourselves even as he is pure.'

It is not a gift received but something which I must work out and put into practise. Consider how the Apostle Paul puts the same thing in Philippians 2:12 (note), Php 2:13 (note):

'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do. ...'

And because of that you work it out. It is not some mystical experience that suddenly comes to us, but the outworking of the doctrine and the truth which we claim to believe.

Now all that is surely something of which we are reminded as we take a superficial glance at this third verse in its connection with the second verse, and we can put the teaching like this:

IF I REALLY BELIEVE...

If I really believe what that second verse has told me, if I really know that I am a child of God, with all that that means, if I believe and know that I am destined for eternal glory in the presence of God the Father, if I really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return again (Jn 14:3), to be 'manifested,' as John puts it, in this world as the King of kings and Lord of lords (Re 19:16-note, Re 1:7-note), if I believe He is coming to judge the world and to destroy everything that is evil and vile out of the universe as a whole (2Ti 4:1-note), if I believe that I am going to be with Him in that glory (2Cor 5:8, 1Th 4:16-note, 1Th 4:17-note), if furthermore I believe that I am going to see Him as he is (1Jn 3:2-note), if I really believe that I am going to be like Him (1Cor 15:51, 52, 53, 54), that my very body shall be glorified (Ro 8:30, Php 3:20, 21-note), and that I shall be faultless and blameless and spend my eternity in His holy presence (Col 1:22-note, Jude 1:24, 25), if I really believe all that, says John, then of necessity this must follow.

What is it, then, that follows? The first thing that John tells us is that anyone who really believes that and has 'this hope in him purifieth (hagnizo) himself.' Now it is very important that we should realise that 'him' does not refer to the man himself, but to Christ. John does not say, 'Every man that hath this hope within himself,' but 'Every man that hath this hope in him,' in the Christ of whom he has just been speaking in 1Jn 3:2, in the Second Coming and in the power of our Lord to change our vile body so that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. It is the hope that is in Christ (1Ti 1:1), in all that He is going to bring into the world and in all that He will do.

So, then, men and women who have this hope purify (hagnizo) themselves, and this is a very interesting and a most important word. It is a very positive word; we must never think of it as negative. There is a difference between purifying (hagnizo) and cleansing (katharizo). We have considered 1Jn 1:9

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse (katharizo) us from all unrighteousness,'

and the main difference between the two words is that between an external action and an internal action. To **cleanse** is to deliver, on the surface, from evil and pollution and all that is unworthy; **purification** is something that happens within, in the spirit and in the mind and in the essential nature. Therefore to purify means, in a sense, not only to get rid of the tarnishing effect of sin upon me, but also to avoid sin in my whole nature and in my whole being; so what I am told is that, as a Christian, I inevitably purify myself.

This means not only that I try to separate myself from the sins which I have committed in the past; it includes that, but it goes well beyond it. It means that with the whole of my being I shun sin, I avoid it (cp 1Pe 2:11-note). I have a desire within me to be like Christ; I am striving to be like the Lord Himself. It is not just that I do not sin, but that I am positively and actively pure even as He was pure (**Ed: This is ever a progressive process in this life and only an "arrival" in the life to come!**). That is the whole idea of this word (hagnizo); it is a deeper and more profound word than just the idea of cleansing and of getting rid of the effects of sin upon the surface.

It is indeed perfectly expressed in just one phrase; people who are concerned about purifying themselves are those who want to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not any longer merely think of just being a little bit better than obvious sinners in the world, nor a little bit better than they once were. Their whole idea is intensely positive and active. They say, 'I want my nature to be such that I shall love the light and hate the darkness instead of loving the darkness and hating the light. (cp Jn 3:19, 20, 21, Ep 5:8-note, Ep 5:9-note, Ep 5:11, 12-note) I want my whole being to be a positive desire to be like Christ and to be well—pleasing in His sight.' (2Co 5:9, cp Ep 5:10-note, Col 1:9-note, Col 1:10-note, 1The 4:1-note, Heb 13:20, 21-note) **That, according to John, is the feeling of the men and women who truly understand this promise of the glory that yet awaits them.**

HOW AM I TO PURIFY MYSELF?

Secondly, how do I do this? And here again we have to put it in the form perhaps of a criticism of a particular teaching. How am I to purify myself? Well, according to John, it is an active process, not a passive one; 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth (hagnizo = present tense = process; active voice = volitional choice) himself.' **He does not submit to purification; he purifies himself.** The whole emphasis is upon the activity. In other words, the New Testament teaching about holiness is not one which tells me that all I have to do is to let myself go and to surrender myself, to give up effort and striving. It is not just telling me that all I have to do is to die and get rid of myself and forget myself and then life will come in. No! It is active, and I am told to purify myself 'even as he is pure.'

Now that is a doctrine which is not confined to John; you will find it everywhere in the New Testament. Take, for instance, the Apostle Paul in 2Corinthians 7:1-note

'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

That is an identical statement with the verse that we are considering here. Let us 'cleanse ourselves,' not submit passively to some process which will cleanse us. Take also Hebrews 6:11, 12 (note) where we are exhorted to show some diligence in this matter of 'the full assurance of hope unto the end'; we are not to be slothful, but, like those who have gone before us, we must be diligent and press on and strive to perfect ourselves because of the hope that is set before us.

There are many other terms in the New Testament which suggest the same thing. Take those words which are used by the Apostle Paul in various places:

Mortify (aorist imperative = command to do this now! Don't hesitate or procrastinate!) therefore your members which are upon the earth (Colossians 3:5-note).

I have to do that; these members will not agree to be mortified; I have to take them, and I have to punish my body (1Cor 9:27, cp Ro 6:13-note). I am enabled to do that by the Holy Spirit Who has been given to me (Ro

8:13-note, Gal 5:16-note, Gal 5:18-note; Gal 5:25-note); yes, and that is included in the fact that I am a child of God (See Jn 1:12; Jn 11:52; Ro 8:16-note; Ro 8:21-note; Ro 9:8-note; Php 2:15-note; 1 Jn 3:1-note; 1Jn 3:2-note; 3:10; 5:2). I have been born again, I have received a new nature (2Co 5:17), and the Holy Spirit is in me (Ro 8:9-note). Therefore, because of that, I must do this, I must purify myself even as He is pure.

HOW AM I TO DO THIS?

LOOKING AT HIM...

HIS PERFECT LIFE...

THINGS ABOVE

But, still more in detail, how am I to do this? Well, this is the way in which the New Testament indicates that the process must be followed up: I purify myself by considering Him, by looking at Him and His perfect life (Heb 12:2-note; Heb 12:3-note; cp Nu 21:7, 8, 9, Jn 3:14, 15; Isa 45:22KJV - saved the first time [justified] and then saved every day [progressive sanctification] - see Three Tenses of Salvation, cp "know God" = this counters lustful passion - see 1Th 4:5-note); that is the pattern I am to follow (1Pe 2:21-note). We are reminded of that by the Apostle Paul. God has called us that we may be 'conformed to the image of his Son' (Romans 8:29-note). So if that is God's plan and purpose for me, then the first thing I must do is to look at the Lord Jesus Christ, to look at the way He conducted Himself in this life and world (Mt 11:29, Jn 13:15, 16, 17, Jn 14:35, 2Co 11:1, Ep 5:2-note, Php 2:5-note, 1Jn 1:7, 2:6, 1Jn 3:16). I am to be like Him, so I consider Him. I realise that is what I am destined for, so I begin to put it into practise.

The other way in which it is put is this: we are told to

'set (present imperative = command to do this daily) your affection on things above, not on things on the earth' (Colossians 3:2-note, cp Col 3:1-note).

Again observe the activity—set your affections on things above. Read your Bible every day; **meditate** upon eternity and the glory that awaits you (1Pe 1:13-note); think about these things (Php 4:8-note, Php 4:9-note); reflect upon the glory. Do not let your mind be set upon things that are on the earth; deliberately refuse to do so.

Or consider again:

for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while **we look not at the things which are seen**, but **at the things which are not seen** for the things which are seen are **temporal**; but the things which are not seen are **eternal**' (2Corinthians 4:17, 18).

We must look at the things that are not seen, so we **meditate** upon them; and having looked at Him and having followed Him, and while we are looking and setting our affection on the things which are above, we must do our utmost to see that vision of glory more and more clearly (1Jn 3:2). We must not love the world (cp 1Jn 2:15-note). We must mortify our members that are upon the earth. We must crucify the flesh (Gal 5:24-note). And as we do all these things we shall be purifying ourselves even as He is pure. That is how it is to be done.

THE ENCOURAGEMENTS...

THE MOTIVES...

TO PURIFY

Then, lastly, what are the encouragements and the motives for Christians to purify themselves in this way? I think they are quite self-evident. Is it not a matter of what we might call Christian common sense? If I believe that I am a child of God and that I am really going to heaven and to glory, if I believe that this uncertain life of mine may suddenly come to an end at any moment (Jas 4:14, Ps 39:5-note, 1Pe 1:24-note) and then I shall be with the Lord in all the glory and perfection, is it surely not common sense that I ought to be preparing myself for that? Is it not hopelessly illogical and unreasonable to go on living in antithesis to that to which I am called? It is not a matter to be argued; there is a sense in which we should never have to appeal to Christian people to live a holy life. What John does is what we all ought to do. If we believe this, if we claim this, then it is consistent, it is a matter of common sense, it is a matter of logic, it is a matter of being reasonable that we should do so.

But there are further inducements given us in the Bible. Because of our frailty, another great reason for purifying ourselves is that we may not find ourselves feeling ashamed when we arrive in glory. John has told us that in the previous chapter and the twenty-eighth verse:

And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (1Jn 2:28)

This means that if you are a child of God, you are going to see Him when He comes; you will see Him as He is, for the first time. You will really understand what your salvation meant to Him and what it cost Him when you look into His face and into His blessed eyes. 'And if you do not want to feel ashamed,' says John, 'if you do not want to feel you are a cad and that you have been a fool because you have kept your gaze fixed upon the little things of earth with their foulness and their unworthiness, then prepare for the vision now; be ready for its coming, and avoid that sense of shame.'

But that is negative. An even stronger reason for purifying ourselves is that we all ought to have a positive desire to be like Him. We ought to be filled with a yearning and a longing to live this glorious, wondrous life that Christ has made possible for us by His death and resurrection. Should not we all be animated by a desire to please Him if we really believe He came from heaven to earth? If we really believe that He suffered the agony of the cross and shed His holy blood that we might be redeemed and rescued, if we really believe that and love Him, should not our greatest desire be to please Him?

That is the reason for holy living, that is the New Testament appeal for holiness; it is an appeal to our sense of honour, to our sense of love and gratitude. But if you want a final appeal, let me appeal to you in terms of the time element. **'He that hath this hope in him,'** those who believe they are going to see Him and be like Him and be with Him, purify themselves even as He is pure, and they feel there is not a moment to be lost. Oh, the unworthiness that is in me! Not only the sins I have committed and still commit, but the evil nature, the unworthiness in me, all these things which I have to mortify. There is so much to be done, and time is uncertain. We do not have a moment to spare or to waste. We may find ourselves with Him, facing Him, at any moment.

That is the spirit of the New Testament—people pressing on towards the mark, straining at the leash, looking forward, going forward with all their might (cp Php 3:14-note). And because they are looking at the vision of glory for which they are destined, they are pressing on towards it and towards Him, forgetting the things that are behind (Php 3:13-note), redeeming the time (Eph 5:16-note, Ro 13:11-note), buying up the opportunity (Gal 6:10, Col 4:5-note, Eccl 9:10), using every second because of the certainty that they will see Him as He is and that they will be like Him. God grant that this inevitable logic may be plain and clear to each and every one. (Lloyd-Jones, D. M. Children of God)