

**Text:** 1 Pt 1.17

**Proposition:** Your salvation puts in you in a new relation to God, which obligates you to conduct your life on a heavenly pattern.

I have to say, I fully intended to cover three verses tonight, but as I worked on the message, I found so much to talk about in verse 17 that I am compelled to camp out there for tonight.

Let's remind ourselves where we are in the study of 1 Peter.

After the opening greeting, Peter goes into a long blessing of God in vv. 3-12, one sentence in Greek, where Peter extols the value and glory of our salvation.

Then Peter starts in on the consequences of that salvation. Our English translations tend to give us these consequences with a series of imperatives, but I've noted that the original uses participles as foundations of the main imperatives of Peter's points.

So, the imperatives so far are:

1. Fix your hope completely on coming grace (13)
  - a. After clearing your minds for action (gird up the loins of your mind)
  - b. While keeping sober in spirit
2. Be holy in all your behaviour (15)
  - a. While not conforming yourselves to your former lusts (14)

We have a similar imperative in v. 17, which Peter leaves until the last word of the verse in Gk, giving it a strong emphasis (just as he did with "be" in v. 15).

"As with the two previous imperatives (vv. 13, 15), this one is also apparently 'decisive' (Greek aorist): 'set your way of life.'"<sup>1</sup>

Another feature of the aorist tense is that it comprehends "all the rest of life" in one word. This is a command for life.

There is a difference in this verse, however, as we don't have underlying participles. That doesn't mean the command lacks underlying support!

Let's now take a look at the basics of this verse.

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Picirilli, *Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Peter*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 1992), 127.

**Proposition:** Your salvation puts in you in a new relation to God, which obligates you to conduct your life on a heavenly pattern.

## I. The ground of the command: our new condition

A. Our passage is a conditional statement “if ... then”

1. The way Gk conditions are constructed imply different kinds of “potentiality”
2. This is a “first class condition” – it assumes the condition as real for sake of argument (at least): in this case, it is real

B. If you call on the father

1. Peter is writing to Christians
2. By definition, they do call on the father
3. You could translate, “since,” but one commentator observed:

“Nevertheless, translating ‘if’ as ‘since’ is mistaken. Peter intentionally wrote the sentence as a hypothesis to provoke the readers to consider whether they call upon God as their Father, desiring, surely, that they would answer in the affirmative. The word ‘since’ does not have the same effect, and therefore ‘if’ should be retained.”<sup>2</sup>

C. The conditional construction puts more force on the conclusion, however

1. “If” you call on the Father forces you to answer, “yes, I do”
2. “Then” ... conduct yourself in fear

Wallace says that the protasis is assumed for sake of argument, the apodosis is the part that is uncertain.

- For believers, the question mark is their conduct. We all know our own selves, and we observe others... the part that is conditional is much more our response than the fact of our salvation.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 82.

Since we have a new condition, will we follow through on the command?

## II. The potentiality of the command: our response

A. First, to get the word order, Young's Literal Translation:

<sup>1</sup>Pe 1:17 and if on the Father ye do call, who without acceptance of persons is judging according to the work of each, in fear the time of your sojourn pass ye,

1. "pass ye" = "conduct yourselves" in NAU
2. Notice that it comes at the end of the verse
3. The conditional statement: "If you call on the father ... [description of the Father as judge] + [description of conduct and state of persons] ... conduct yourselves"

B. The condition, the question, is "will you conduct yourselves in this way?"

1. A low view of God (over-familiarity) compromises conduct
2. A diminished attitude towards God (weakening concept of 'fear')

## III. The motivational factors supporting the command

A. The fact that God *is* our father

1. One commentator pointed to Jeremiah

<sup>Jer 3.17-19</sup> "At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and **all the nations** will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart.<sup>18</sup> "In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance.<sup>19</sup> "Then I said, 'How I would set you among My sons And give you a pleasant land, The most beautiful inheritance of the nations!' And I said, '**You shall call Me, My Father**, And not turn away from following Me.'

2. This relationship is God's good grace to us, Jew *or* Gentile

## B. The fact that our Father is an impartial judge

1. **Impartially:** the Gk word is the negative of προσωπολήπτης, which is a combination of πρόσωπον and λαμβάνω, *i.e.* “to receive the face,” or “to respect the person, show partiality”
2. The way this is constructed makes “impartiality” an inherent aspect of his character

Our relationship has no effect on God’s face towards us.

The word “face” came to refer to the mask that the actor (the “hypocrite”) would wear in stage plays. We can’t get God to take us at our “face” value — he knows who we really are.

## C. The fact that our Father is a *just* judge: “according to each one’s work”

1. In our day, “justice” seems to mean “let me do what I want” (slogans of activists)
2. God is just. He judges *according to* (proportionately) to the real value of our doings

## D. The fact that our appropriate response is rooted in fear

1. You are familiar with the idea that “fear of God” for the believer is more “reverence” than “craven fear”
2. The problems with the idea of “reverence” as a substitute for “fear”

“Abject terror certainly does not fit with the joy and boldness of the Christian life. Reverence, however, can be watered down so that it becomes rather insipid. ... There is a kind of fear that does not contradict confidence. A confident driver also possesses a healthy fear of an accident that prevents him from doing anything foolish. A genuine fear of judgment hinders believers from giving in to libertinism.”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Schreiner, 81.

“The word reverence has suffered through being almost confined in common parlance to behaviour at worship: it has its focus in worship, but, as this passage shews, should govern the whole conduct of life and every thought of men.”<sup>4</sup>

3. Our attitude towards our Father must be submissive and respectful
  - a. Some greatly err in treating God as “daddy”
  - b. God is our Father, but he is holy, just, pure, far above all that we are, and we are what we are: so fear

E. The fact that our appropriate response is comprehensive

1. Comprehensive in the scope of the command
  - a. The root has the idea of “turning hither and thither” in the course of life – anywhere that you might go
  - b. Then it comes to parallel the Heb. idea of “walk” – the whole course of life

So you are called to live (conduct yourself) in fear through *all the days that remain to you*.

2. These days that remain are your days of sojourning (“during your stay”)
  - a. The word emphasizes that you are “just visiting”

“The compound noun *paroikias* basically means ‘alongside the house,’ having the position of an outsider and not a member of the household. It is used in Acts 13:17 of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt. The present earthly life of the believer has that character because Christ’s call has taken him ‘out of the world’ (John 15:19).”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Edward Gordon Selwyn, ed., *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan & co. Ltd, 1946), 143.

<sup>5</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 100.

b. This world is not your home — you don't belong here

- 1) Your home is in heaven
- 2) When converted, you are immediately living once removed from this world

Sojourners: “social dislocation is rooted, however, in their eschatological inheritance and their new birth (cf. 1:3–5). Their heavenly destiny raises a social barrier in the here and now between them and unbelievers.”<sup>6</sup>

- 3) Just as impartiality is an inherent quality of God, your “sojourning” is an inherent quality of your new life

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** Your salvation puts in you in a new relation to God, which obligates you to conduct your life on a heavenly pattern.

So many remarkable ideas in our verse tonight. I hope it encourages you to consider your conduct.

There is nothing in our world (transitory as it is) that has enough value to hang on to.

Yesterday, I was in my home town, perhaps for the last time. I cleared out my parent's safe deposit box. Mostly my dad had stored just keepsakes — papers that had value to him.

Dad is gone now. I found pleasure in finding these things (a report card of mine from high school and from my first year of university among them).

But we can't hold on to these things. They are transitory — only our relationship with God lasts forever. Let's set our hearts and fix our conduct there.

---

<sup>6</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 82.