

We begin this passage of Scripture with that all inspiring question; what is the word "therefore" there for"? It really refers back to the previous subject matter of the holiness of God. Because God is holy, a Triune God, we must act in accordance with His holiness, and now we are given steps to do that. We can call these different steps, action points, things that we can begin to implement in each of our daily lives. As we put them into practice, they will eventually spill over to those who are around us, and will be known by those who worship together.

1. Prepare your minds for action: Notice that this is not something that you do by yourself, this is a group activity. It begins inside of each person, spurred on by the attitudes and actions of others, and is caught by those around us. Preparing your mind is not a narrow intellectual matter, but rather, a mental and spiritual attitude change in a person's life.
2. Be self-controlled: Since we are speaking of a transformed mind, this command stands in star contrast to the former way of life. This speaks of a self-disciplined life in Christ, compared to the reckless way of self-indulgence we used to live in. Our pleasure now comes in serving Christ and others, not ourselves, but it takes self-control to get over ourselves. We do this as we look for the soon return of Jesus.
3. Set you hope fully on the grace of Christ: Just before John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, he said "From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another." When we think of all that God has given to us, instead of all we don't have, we can live more like Christ. We have been set apart, sanctified in Christ, so we are different than we used to be. We are different because we have invited not only Jesus into our lives, but the Holy Spirit as well and that makes us way different.
4. As obedient children do not conform to evil desires: Again this is dealing with the changed life of a believer. Obedience is the nature of Christ and obedience should be our new nature as well. Speaking of our former way of life, without Christ, the apostle Paul writes to the **Ephesians 4:20-24** "That's no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything-and I do mean everything-connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new

way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces His character in you.”

Without self-control and the power of the Holy Spirit in us, it is like spitting into the wind to try to take on the nature of Jesus and be changed into His likeness.

5. Be holy: The emphasis here is that we are to take on the very nature of Christ, which is impossible without the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Like the whole process of sanctification in the life of a believer this is a progressive work. The Greek stresses that this is a future indicative, not an imperative. When we see something in someone else’s life that needs to be changed, we like to use this verse; “be holy” as a command, but it is telling us what is ours now and in the world to come.

This is the same thing God gave through Moses to the Israelites in **Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:2, 20:7**. Peter is emphasizing what the Holy Spirit continually expects from each of us: “I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.”
Leviticus 11:44-45

For you and me, the idea of holiness has two sides: We must no longer do what we have always done, follow the world and its ways; and we must become something that we have never been, Christ-like. That’s holiness. These five action points will get us closer to Jesus.

Let’s look at the practical application of making this a reality in our lives on a daily basis, how can holiness actually happen? Verse 17 tells us to “live in the world as strangers”. In other words, don’t get close to what pulls you down. Some things are easy to recognize as what we need to avoid, drugs, alcohol, pornography, idol worship and things like that. But, some things we seem to slide into almost naturally, that we need to avoid; like slander, gossip and greed.

Why does it seem that the very things we are to avoid come most naturally to us? Remember **Proverbs 6:16-19**? “There are six things the

Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush to evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among the brothers."

We are to be strangers to all of these things, sins that so easily entangle us.

In avoiding certain things, we must also be attracted to God. We are not just to live as strangers to the world; we must also live in this world in "reverent fear of God. No matter how we try to spin it, money is not the answer to everything. We each need to be redeemed, ransomed, and bought back from being caught up in the ways of the world we live in. We need to be changed from the "empty way of life" that sucks us in. We can only be redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. **Rev 12:10-11**

Our real life is in the Word, and the Word is Jesus. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." **John 1: 1, 14**

Jesus has always been there to rescue us from ourselves and each other, and He will always be there. Our only hope and faith are in God (**1 Pet 1:21**). When we immerse ourselves in being Christ-like, we are purified by our obedience to the truth - no matter what the world says or believes. The man or woman who lives a Christ-like life, through obedience, exemplifies the love of God for others. It is love that is deep (**1 Pet 1:22**) and comes from the heart. It may take a while for that love to actually be seen and believed, but it will rise to the surface of our lives and affect others.

A changed heart is the result of being "born again" (**John 3:7**). Being born again, of the Spirit, into the "imperishable, living, enduring Word of God." Sometimes the born again, need to be born again, again!

Peter ends with this quote from **Isaiah 40**, about how fragile and perishable flowers and grass are. In ourselves we are like grass and flowers, we can have yards that are lush, and beautiful because of a lot of

hard work in preparing, planting, fertilizing and careful weeding, all spring and summer. All of that is just that to show our houses are presentable—for a season. But the fall season is here now, we can begin to relax and let the cyclical winter take over and give the ground rest from all of our hard work.

Our lives, which take a tremendous amount of work, still fall apart and die. But the Word of God, which is active and living in each one of us, must not rest, it stands forever, it is always active in each of us, and it cannot lay dormant for any season of our life.

Friends, this is what God continually preaches to us, salvation, filling of the Holy Spirit, conformity to the likeness of Christ, and this is the stuff that angels long to be involved in, but we mostly take for granted. Let's change that, let's make it a life mission to be Christ-like and to take as many people to heaven with us, in as Christ like condition as possible.