

This verse used to **frighten** me - even as a Xn I was **terrified** by this verse. It states that we **must** be holy or we will not see heaven! But does the Bible not teach that if you are **trusting** in Jesus, that is **all** that is required. Yes, but it also teaches that if we **are** trusting in Christ, we **WILL** be **holy** and our lives will change to holy lives!

In virtue of being **united** to Christ **we receive grace** from Him that **will make** us holy!! Paul said the Lord *saved us and called us to a holy calling...because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus* [2Tim 1:9] God *chose us in Him...that we should be HOLY* [Eph 1:4] Paul said *Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace* [Rom 1:5] and John said *from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace* [John 1:16]

It is **impossible** to be 'in Christ', saved, forgiven, and **not** be holy! They all **go together**. *if anyone is in Christ he is new creation. The old (life) has passed away* [2Cor 5:17] *such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* [sanctified=hagiozo to make holy -1Cor 6:11] The whole purpose of our calling is to be **holy** *He who called you is holy, YOU also be HOLY in all your conduct, since it is written 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'* [1Pet 1:15]!! So Xns are **called** to be holy!

But **that** creates a **tension** within us! How can we be holy when we still have a **bad heart**! We know very well, that **sin** is involved in the **very best** of our good deeds! We Xns know we are far from perfect even when we do good, for we can be **hypocritical**, we can have **hidden agendas**, we can **lust** within, we can **lie**, we can **deceive**, we can be **bitter**, we can be **jealous**, we can **hate**, we can **cheat**! True?

So does God really **expect** us to be **holy** when He knows we still have a corrupt nature? Yes! He **commands** it and without it we shall not see the Lord! It **IS** possible to be holy before God in this life. There **IS** a standard that we can attain to that pleases Him. God said Abel was **righteous** before Him. Noah was **perfect** before Him. Job was righteous **before** Him. Many saints were **blameless** before God!

It would be wonderful to be among those about whom the **Lord** said we were **blameless/righteous** before the Lord, like Zacharias+wife! They were not 100% perfect! But they were godly and holy.

The Scripture sets before us **TWO important** aspects of salvation. One is our **regeneration!** Xns are **renewed** by the power of God, **changed** from being *by nature children of wrath* [Eph 2:3] to being *partakers of the divine nature* [2P1:4] We become new creatures = new **DESIRE!** That is the main difference between a Xn and a nonXn. A Xn **desires** to be holy - he **wants** to be holy and he **tries** to be holy! *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*, ie, those who **desire** it, **not** those who have it! This change is something that **GOD ALONE DOES!** We **cannot** change ourselves.

Although a Xn has been renewed/regenerated, it is **only** the **spiritual** aspect of his being that is renewed - he is still joined to his **body** which is **not renewed** until the resurrection! That is why Paul exclaimed *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this BODY of death* [Rom 7:24] and *we wait eagerly for...the redemption of our BODIES* [Rom 8:23] This sinful body pulls us down! There is this **struggle** between the **flesh** and the spirit *For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out* [Rom 7:18]. *the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do* [Gal 5:17]

With regeneration, there **IS** a **FUNDAMENTAL BREAK** with **sin!** **Every** sin! Not just one. People can quit **smoking, alcoholism** etc without being regenerated! In regeneration something **radical** happens regarding **all** sin. Every sin is hated/loathed **fought against!**

The **2nd** important aspect of salvation is something **WE DO!** In the struggle with the flesh, **the spirit does DOMINATE!!** *Those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires* [Gal 5:24] *+for sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace* [Rom 6:14] *+ everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world* [1John 5:4]

What does **that mean?** These 3 verses does **not teach** that we are

perfect or that we have no problems with sin - but it means we **can achieve a high standard** of holiness that **is acceptable** with God. We are more righteous than wicked! We must have holiness. Listen: *our old self was crucified with Him...so that we would no longer be ENSLAVED to sin* [Rom 6:6] We are **NOT ENSLAVED** to sin! We sin, but it is not our master - we do not serve the devil. When we do we are grieved and upset and **long for deliverance** from our sin! Our lives are changed the **whole DIRECTION** of our lives are Godward and it is obvious to all who you serve and love - despite conflict!

Its like the situation we have just now in **Libya!** Gaddafi is not free, he is defeated, yet he is alive and winning some skirmishes! It is just a matter of time before he is vanquished. Applies to Xns too!

Scripture **reminds** the Xn that he **already has** grace which is designed to equip him to defeat and conquer sin in his life. Scripture **encourages** and **reminds** Xns that they **can** be holy - but they **must** make the effort! It will not just happen. Xns have to *be all the more diligent to make our calling and election sure* by *supplementing/ adding to our faith* us to continue fighting against sin! **WE** are to **grow** in grace; **WE** must *build yourselves up in your most holy faith*, **WE** have *lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely and run with endurance*. **WE** must continue to the end!

Living the Xn life is like a **farmer**. As Jerry Bridges says ‘A farmer ploughs his field, sows the seed and fertilises and cultivates - all the while knowing that in the final analysis he is utterly dependent on forces outside of himself. He knows **he cannot** cause the seed to germinate, nor can he produce the rain and sunshine for growing or harvesting the crop. For a successful harvest, he is dependent on these things from God. Yet the farmer knows that **unless he diligently** pursues his **responsibilities** to plow, plant, fertilise and cultivate, he cannot expect a harvest at the end of a season... He cannot do what God must do, and God will not do what the farmer **should** do’! We are in it **together!** *See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth* [Jam 5:7] We **WILL** have the **fruit** of holiness if we **diligently APPLY ourselves** to spiritual development.

Applying ourselves to holiness does **NOT MEAN** a **series of specific prohibitions** as many imagine it is. It has nothing to do with bunned hair, long skirts, no lipstick, smoking, drinking or dancing. The **cults** can manage these prohibitions and all the outward appearances some religions demand. Holiness is far more **germane** to God's **Spirit** and **nature** than to form and style. Holiness is living like Jesus Christ lived! Living with His **priorities**, His values!

A lot of Xns have what Jerry Bridges calls '**cultural holiness**'! Ie, holiness in conformity with the pattern of the Xns around them. They adopt the behaviour patterns and characteristics of the Xns in the church they grow up in. But we are **not** called to be like those around us, but like Jesus Christ *to this you have been called... Christ... suffered... leaving you an **example**, so that you might follow in **HIS** steps [1P2:21]* God wants us to follow Christ. Xns are predestinated *to be **conformed** to the **image** of His **Son** [Rom 8:29]* God *chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, **THAT** we should be **holy** and **blameless** before him [Eph 1:4]*

So the Bible speaks of a holiness which we have in Christ, but it also speaks of a holiness that we have to **strive for** - and without that holiness we will not see the Lord. You **cannot** have one without the other! Even with a new heart, even with God's Spirit in us, we have to **STRIVE...for holiness** - it is not easy, it does not come naturally! In fact it can **only** be done by those who are regenerated.

The type of sins that we must be out and out against, is not about outward appearances which are easy to copy, but the **inward sins** of the **heart** - such **pride, jealousy, materialism, impatience, lust!**

Xns need to remember that we '**died to sin**' **WITH Christ!** At the Cross when He took **your place!** Paul says *you must **consider yourselves** dead to sin and **ALIVE TO GOD** in Christ Jesus.* And then he **appeals** to us *let not **sin** therefore **REIGN** in your mortal **BODY** to make you obey its passions... For sin shall **not have dominion** over you [Rom 6:8-14]* Xns **CAN** live to God's glory and be call 'righteous' and 'perfect' before God by *seeking **first** the kingdom of God and **His righteousness!***