

Be Holy

by Tricia Berg

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as 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." 1 Peter 1:14-16

The above passage began like this:

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. 13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:6-13 (see top of page)

We need to heed the Bible's advice and remain steadfast under trial, because the One who is testing us (not tempting) is faithful and worthy. We need to take seriously the exhortations to be set apart from the world, unstained.

*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to **those who love Him**. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. 19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the*

righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. 26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. James 1:12-27

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." 20 Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. 22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:19-26

Let's show by our actions and not just words that we want to be worthy to walk with Him. **If we don't even feel the desire to do as Jesus said, then we don't belong to Him.** Only those who are born again, indwelt by His Holy Spirit, will have this urge. **If we do feel Him convicting us of anything that displeases Him at all, then we mustn't resist His Spirit prompting us to do His will--accept His correction.**

I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them— 3 since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. 4 For He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but in dealing with you we will live with Him by the power of God. 5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not

realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! 2 Corinthians 13:2-5

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. Romans 8:7-9

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is **God** who works **in you**, both to **will** and to **work** for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:12-14

The seal of the Holy Spirit marks us as the property of Jesus, our Redeemer, just as the evil beast will be "marking" people as his property during the great tribulation (and they will then become unredeemable, ever).

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our **hearts** as a guarantee. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." Revelation 14:9-11

The promises of inheriting the Kingdom of God are made to those who LOVE God (1Cor. 2:9). Jesus explained that IF we love Him, then we will obey (and

remember, He summarized the commandments into two because they FULFILL ALL of them - Rom. 13:8-10, and we are NOT able to keep the second one if we don't first obey the first), and we will be indwelt by His Spirit. This is how He manifests Himself to true believers. They are those who believe in their hearts and love Him by obeying, who have made Him their Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:5-10) in spirit and truth (John 4:23)--not with empty confessions.* He is not manifested to the whole world in this way. The ones who are indwelt are those who are born again. They are the ones He KNOWS. (Matt. 7:13-27, Matt. 25:10-13, Luke 13:25) They are the heirs of the Kingdom.

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John 3:3, 5

And the scribe said to Him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that He is one, and there is no other besides Him. 33 And to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask Him any more questions. Mark 12:32-34

*"If you **love** Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be **in** you. 18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.** 21 Whoever has My commandments and **keeps** them, he it is who **loves** Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to **us**, and not to the **world**?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 Whoever **does not** love Me **does not** keep My words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent Me." John 14:15-24*

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, 4 by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped

from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 **For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.** 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you **practice** these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an **entrance into the eternal kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:3-11

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for **God's seed abides in him**, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. 1 John 3:9

*Remember, Judas partook of the Last Supper and even had his feet washed by Jesus. Jesus referred to him as being present, both after He had washed their feet and during the Passover meal where He instituted the Lord's Supper, when Jesus revealed who the betrayer was. (John 13:10-12, John 13:18, John 13:21-30, Luke 22:17-21) This confused the other disciples greatly, because Judas appeared to be one of them. (Matt. 26:22, Mark 14:19, Luke 17:23, John 13:22, John 6:66, 1John 2:18-19) People in the end times who have a false faith like Judas will take the mark of the beast during the tribulation and be lost forever. For them, their allegiance to Jesus is only on the surface--they mostly want benefits of being associated with Him, just like Judas. (John 12:4-6, Mark 14:10-11, Matt. 6:33 - seek FIRST.) The loyalty of people like that is for sale, as we see in Daniel's prophecy of what will happen during the great tribulation. (Dan. 11:32, 39) The last thing they would do is to stand firm under fire for Jesus' sake. (Matt. 24:10, Mark 4:14-19, Luke 8:11-14, Luke 21:12-18, John 16:1-3, 1Cor. 15:58, Eph. 6:11, Heb. 3:12-13, Heb. 12:4)

Be sober-minded; be watchful. *Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:8-11*

Judas agreed to follow Jesus and on the surface, it appeared that he did. He appeared to "eat of the Bread of Life," but it was a lie. (John 6:35) He was accepted by the other disciples, but only Jesus could see inside his heart to

detect the evil that lurked there. Judas was not sincere and his actions eventually proved it. (1Tim. 5:24)

*For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood **abides in Me, and I in him**. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." John 6:55-58*

Jesus clarified the above words as being spiritual, as referring to believing in His sacrifice of His body on the cross for our sake, a few verses later in the same passage:

*It is the **Spirit** who gives **life**; the **flesh** is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray Him.) 65 And He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father." 66 After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the **words of eternal life**, 69 and we have **believed**, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." 71 He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray Him. John 6:63-71*

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17

Judas called Jesus "teacher" (Rabbi) but he was not a good student. He made a pretense of giving Him a kiss, but didn't really love Him. (Matt. 26:48-50, Mark 14:44-46, Luke 22:47-48) We need to be aware that NOT everyone who rubs shoulders with us (and advises us of what pleases God) is born again. We need to be on guard against both working for salvation and "perverted grace," which tells us that Jesus died so that we could be free TO sin after we are saved. (Jude, Dan. 11:33-35, Eph. 5:8-10, Gal. 1:6-10, 1Thess. 4:1-7, Heb. 13:16) Jesus said that people had tried to "seize the kingdom by force" (by works) up until then, rather than through faith (as was intended all along). (Matt. 11:12, Rom. 3:21-31) God neither approves of people who want to Lord it OVER others by trying to enforce obedience out of fear (whereas we obey voluntarily out of LOVE as a natural result of His regenerating our dead spirit - Titus 3:5), nor those who

refuse to submit to HIS Lordship over US. (Eph. 1:22-23, Eph. 5:23-24, Col. 1:18, Rev. 2:14-15, Rev. 2:20-23)

*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His **will** in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, **fully pleasing to Him**, bearing **fruit in every good work** and **increasing** in the knowledge of God. 11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to **His glorious might**, for all endurance and patience with joy, 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
Colossians 1:9-14*

*And why not **do evil that good may come?**—as some people slanderosly charge us with saying. Their **condemnation** is just. Romans 3:8*

*For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who **pervert the grace** of our God into **sensuality** and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jude 1:4*

*Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, **be diligent** to be found by Him **without spot or blemish**, and at peace*. 15 And count the patience of our Lord as **salvation**, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which **the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction**, as they do the other Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:14-18

Let's not "dabble" at our faith, but be sincere in our hearts and show it by our actions (love God and love our neighbor, including our brothers and sisters in Christ--don't sin against anyone or cause anyone to sin against each other or God--love in deed not only in word). Let's not be lukewarm--how can someone like that overcome? Everyone whose name is not in the Book of Life will be deceived by the signs and wonders performed by the beast doing his imitation of God. (Rev. 13:7-18) Those who are IN Christ have eternal life. (Matt. 3:11, Rom. 6, Gal. 3:27, John 15:4-6, John 15:16, 1John 5:10-13)

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. John 15:10

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** 5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "**He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us**"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 7 **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.** 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. James 4:3-10

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. 15 "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. 21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" Revelation 3:14-22

If God is tugging at our heartstrings, asking why we have put Him on the back burner (and is it even ON?), let's not ignore Him. Being in the company of a multitude who did the same thing will be no consolation if we're standing on the outside of the door because our lamps ran out of oil and He doesn't recognize us in that darkness. At the time we came to believe in Jesus, receive salvation and call Him "Lord," there should have been evidence of it in our behavior as a NEW creation in Him. (2Cor. 5:17, Rom. 6:4, Rom. 7:6-7) These are the "works you did at first" in the following passage—a lamp burning brightly with love for our Savior. (Matt. 5:15-16). If nothing changed, then there's still time to seek Him from the heart. He loves us faithfully and truly—let's give Him back the same kind of sincere love and faithfulness.

But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Revelation 2:4-5

*"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was **shut**. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 **Watch** therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. Matthew 25:1-13*

*Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their **hardness of heart**. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 **assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus,** 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through **deceitful** desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:17-24*

Let's be on the GOOD side of the passages above and below written to the churches (these claim to believe). We want to be among those who are "clothed in white," the Bride, inviting others to "come and drink" of the free "water of life," along with the Holy Spirit and those who hear and accept the invitation--among those who have "washed their robes"--the "righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy." The church in Laodicea was told that contrary to what they thought about themselves, they were really naked, wretched, pitiable, poor and blind. God despises pride and oppression. (Luke 1:50-53, Jam. 5:1-6) The church in Sardis was warned that many had soiled their garments and unless they **repent,** they would not walk with Jesus in white. (Daniel 12:9-10) Let's not be like that. Is there anyone like or God, or has there ever been or could there ever be? (Is.

46:9) No, He alone is God and He is worthy of ALL we can give in love and gratitude for who He is and what He's done. (Rev. 4:11)

*"To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 **'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.** 3 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. 4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are **worthy.** 5 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" Revelation 3:1-6*

And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy." 12 "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. 16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." 17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. 20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. Revelation 22:10-21

The entire time Jesus was ministering to the sick and lost on earth, He knew He was under a death sentence, but it didn't discourage Him. (Luke 12:50) It was what He came for. (Matt. 20:26-28, John 10:17-18, John 12:27, John 18:37) That was OUR death sentence (eternal separation from God) and because of Him, we are FREE of it. Because of His Spirit within us who truly believe, we are even free of the enslavement to the desire to sin that had shackled us. Practicing sin

is not the same as "slipping" now and then, but is a way of life--without making effort to turn from sin. (Rom. 6:17, 2Pet. 2:19) We can overcome by HIS power. (Col. 1:9-14 above, Rev. 2:7, Rev. 2:11, Rev. 2:17, Rev. 2:26, Rev. 3:5, Rev. 3:12, Rev. 3:21) Even the church at Philadelphia, who is told they have already endured and will be spared from the "hour of trial to come on the whole world" (Rev. 3:10), is told to "overcome" and "hold fast to their crown [of life]" until He comes, which He says will be quickly. (Rev. 3:11-12)

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-36

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. Titus 3:3-8

Let's carry our cross and FOLLOW Him in order to be worthy of Him, because of our great love for Him--because He loved us FIRST. (Luke 9:23, Luke 14:25-27, John 8:42, John 12:26, John 21:15-19, 1John 4:10, 1John 4:18-19)

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. Luke 23:26

Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. Matthew 16:24

Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. 39 Whoever finds his

life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. Matthew 10:37-39

*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.
14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. John 15:13-14*

*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. 3 For **this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments**. And His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For everyone who has been **born of God** overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John 5:1-5*

*In this is love, not that we have loved God but that **He loved us** and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10*

*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 **We love because he first loved us.** 1 John 4:18-19*

I can't say it enough, the more you KNOW Him (through His Word and observing all He has done in His creation), the more you will LOVE Him. Then the thought of sinning against Him *deliberately*, including putting anything or anyone *above or before Him*, will be abhorrent. On the contrary, the desire to be conformed to His image and made useful to Him for service resulting in His glory will become stronger every day. Read your Bible, pray, praise, worship and serve Him faithfully. The more you do those things (in spirit and truth), the more you will have the desire to do them. Truth.

*Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us **cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light**. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.** Romans 13:11-14*

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