

A MANNER OF LIFE

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The Greek word anastrophe, which is Strong's number 391, is translated every time in the King James Version as 'conversation'. However, the word has a much broader meaning, which includes conversation. It means 'conduct, manner of life', which is all that we do based on our thinking. Here is how various versions of the Bible translate the same word: 'manner of living' - AS; 'behavior' - NAS; 'conduct' - RS; 'activity' - NJ; 'do' - NIV; 'conduct (and) manner of living' - Amplified; 'behavior' - Young's; 'conversation' - Darby's; 'habits of life' - Weymouth's; 'manner of deportment' - Webster's. So you know when the word is used, I will put manner of life in quoted scriptures.

1 Pet 1:13, 15: *13 Wherefore having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, hope perfectly upon the grace (Divine influence) that is being brought to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ.. 15 ...according, as He who did call you is holy, ye also, become holy in all manner of life. [literal Greek] (comments for clarity)*

"Gird up the loins" is a metaphor which means 'be prepared'. This concept is used by God when he speaks to Job (38:3; 40:7) and Jeremiah (1:17). In Job's case God tells him to be prepared, I am going to ask you some hard questions. When God asks questions, it is not to belittle or condemn, but it is to teach us what we need to know. Jeremiah was told to be prepared because the Lord was going to speak through him to Israel things they needed to know about their apostasy. When Peter uses the metaphor he adds what is implied in Job and Jeremiah - *dianoia* ⁽¹²⁷¹⁾, which means *gird up your loins 'through the mind'*, that is, think about what you hear and read and gain understanding. Thoughts produce feelings, feelings cause us to take action; therefore our 'manner of life' is a result of our thoughts.

1 Pet 1:18-19: *18 having known that, not with corruptible things, like silver or gold, were ye redeemed from your foolish manner of life handed down by your fathers, 19 but with precious blood of Christ's, as of a lamb unblemished and unspotted.* Do not think for one minute that the Jews were the only ones living according to tradition handed down by their fathers. Every human being experiences this, and most Christians today continue to live according to religious traditions that have been passed down for generations.

Paul, before his conversion, conducted his life according to Jewish traditions: **Gal 1:13-14:** *13. For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14. And profited in the Jew's religion above many of my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* Brothers and Sisters, there are well known preachers and teachers today who are just as zealous for the traditions of man, who are teaching man's revelation. Paul was called to be an apostle, not by his church priest, or any other man; he was called when Jesus revealed himself during Paul's journey to Damascus. And the gospel Paul preached was not revealed to him by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ! (Gal 1:12)

A few years ago I was asked to present a study on the Holy Spirit at a series of Bible studies on the Godhead. Near the end of my study, the question was asked, "Do you mean that what my parents have believed all these years, and what they taught me is wrong?" This is a typical reaction to truth, whether verbalized or not. We all have accepted what we learned as the absolute truth of the Bible, without actually studying for ourselves. For one thing, I did not even know how to study - it takes time and effort to compare scripture with scripture.

Grace comes at the revelation of Jesus Christ - not the fact that a person knows about him, but Divine influence and power (grace) comes when you receive what Jesus reveals to you. "The words I speak to YOU,

they are spirit, and they are life.” (Jn 6:63) We are called to ‘be holy, as he is holy’, therefore, we need to be open, and remain open to Christ’s way of thinking - we need his thoughts if our manner of life is to be acceptable to God. **1 Pet 2:11-12:** *11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12. Having your manner of life honest among the nations: that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may from your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* You see, ‘good works’ are a result of ‘good thinking’ - Christ’s way of thinking.

Eph 4:21-24: *21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him (revelation of Christ), as the truth is in Jesus: 22. So that ye put off concerning the former manner of life the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24. And that ye put on the new man (a new manner of life), which according to God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.* We are not to sit in our places of assembly, accepting it’s creeds and doctrines, without questioning and studying out every point of belief; otherwise your revelation may be coming from man. The truth in Jesus is available to every individual, and not just the pastor or theologian. If our ‘manner of life’ is patterned after Christ, then there should be changes in what we speak and what we do, no matter where we assemble.

Am I saying ignore spiritual leaders? Absolutely not! They are gifts to the church. **Heb 13:7:** *Be mindful of those leading you, who did speak to you the word of God, considering the issue of the manner of life, whose faith (spiritual understanding) be imitating.* Pastors and teachers are called by God to minister to the flock. Their manner of life will reveal if they are imitating Christ, or man. Your responsibility is to seek the Lord to confirm or deny what is being taught. If what the Lord is showing you contradicts the teachings of the present group, then consider God may be telling you it is time to move to the next stepping stone.

I learned a valuable lesson from the testimony of an elderly gentlemen in a group I was visiting. He stated that he had attended many different denominational churches. He went, not to find error in their teachings, but to find truth that applied to him. The various groups with which he met, were the stepping stones God used to advance his understanding. While I have learned from others outside my present group, I am more guilty of looking to expose error, than to glean what I can. This can only be done as the Lord leads, and he will lead anyone out of error who is willing to listen and take a stand for truth, even if it contradicts tradition.

Here are some instructions from Paul to Timothy that are still valid today: **1 Tim 4:10-12:** *10. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all mankind, especially of those believing. 11. These things command and teach. 12. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in manner of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.* Why were the believers of Paul’s day suffering reproach? Because, by serving the living God, they were going against the traditions of the denominations of their day, whether it was Jewish or Pagan religions. It is no different today. Anyone making a major change in beliefs, most likely will change associates too.

James, very appropriately, described the unsanctified tongue, which truth seekers today will also encounter: *Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.* (Jam 3:10) By trusting your conscience, that God is leading you, the curses can be avoided and the blessings received. A decision today does not necessarily mean a person is accurate in all they believe. But in the process of time, God will clean that up, and, much more will be learned after the resurrection.

Jam 3:13: *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good manner of life his works with meekness of wisdom.* Remember, your manner of life should have it’s foundation in God’s knowledge, which is given to us in Christ Jesus. *This is my beloved Son: hear him.* (Mk 9:7)