

# 1 Peter 3:15

by John Gill

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of sanctifying God in our hearts and being prepared to share the hope of the Gospel with humility and respect.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 8:13, Matthew 7:6, Romans 9:33, Hebrews 10:23, 1 Peter 3:15

**Topics:** "Sanctification", "Readiness to Share Faith"

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## Description

John Gill emphasizes the importance of sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, which involves recognizing and proclaiming His holiness rather than attempting to make Him holy. He explains that this internal sanctification is crucial for overcoming fear of men and is rooted in a childlike fear of God, grounded in faith and His promises. Gill also stresses the necessity for Christians to be prepared to give a reason for their hope in Christ, doing so with humility and reverence, and being knowledgeable about the foundations of their faith. This readiness to respond is not just for intellectual debate but is a reflection of one's relationship with God and understanding of the Gospel. Ultimately, believers are called to live out their faith authentically and be prepared to share it with others.

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## Transcript

Ver. 15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,.... Still referring to Isa 8:13 not by making him holy, which need not, nor cannot be, he being essentially, infinitely, and perfectly holy; but by declaring and proclaiming his holiness, as the seraphim in Isaiah's prophecy, and the four living creatures in the Revelation did; and by glorifying of him, praising and applauding all his perfections, and among the rest, this of his holiness, and giving thanks at the remembrance of it; which he has so much displayed in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace; hence the Arabic version renders it, bless the Lord God in your hearts: the Lord God is sanctified by his people externally, when they regard his commands, attend his ordinances, and call upon his name, and praise him; but here an internal sanctification of him, a sanctification of him in their hearts, is intended, and what is opposed to the fear of men, and unbelief, and lies in the exercise of the grace of fear upon him; see Isa 8:13 and which has for its object his goodness, and is a fruit of the covenant of his grace, and is a child like and godly fear; and in the exercise of faith upon him, upon his covenant and promises, his faithfulness, and power to help, assist, and preserve; whereby glory is given to him, a witness borne to his truth, and he is sanctified: some copies, as the Alexandrian, and one of Stephens's, read, sanctify the Lord Christ; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and certain it is that he is intended in Isa 8:13 as appears from 1Pe 3:14 compared with Ro 9:33

and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear; by the hope that is in the saints, is not designed the grace of hope itself, which is given to them, and implanted in them in regeneration; the reason, ground, and foundation of which are, the love, grace, and mercy of God, through Christ, and his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and redemption; but the Gospel, the whole Christian doctrine, the doctrine of faith, and which the Syriac version here calls the "hope of faith"; and the profession of Christianity, called in Heb 10:23, the profession of hope; in which persons profess their hope of eternal life and happiness through Christ, as doctrine of the Gospel directs them to.

Now, a "reason" of this is to be given; not that they are to account for the Gospel, upon the foot of carnal reason; for that is not of men, nor according to the carnal reason of men; nor is it to be thought that every Christian should be capable of defending the Gospel, either in whole, or in part, by arguments and reasons, in a disputatious way, or to give a reason and argument for every particular truth; but that he should be well acquainted with the ground and foundation of the Christian religion; at least, with the first principles of the oracles of God, and be conversant with the Scriptures, and be able to point out that in them, which is the reason of his holding this and the other truth, though he is not able to give a gainsayer satisfaction, or to stop his mouth: and this is to

be done with meekness and fear; with meekness, before men; in an humble modest way; not with an haughty air, and in a morose and surly manner, which serves only to irritate and provoke: and with fear; either of God, and so the Ethiopic Version renders it, with the fear of the Lord; considering the subject of the argument, and the importance of it, and how much the honour of God is concerned in it; and taking care lest the answer should be delivered in a light, trifling, and negligent manner, and that no part of truth be dropped or concealed, in order to please men, and be screened from their resentments; or with all due reverence of, and respect to men, to superiors, to the civil magistrates, who may ask the reason; for they are to be treated with honour and esteem, and to be answered in

an handsome and becoming manner, suitable to the dignity of their persons and office; as the sanhedrim was by Stephen; and as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, by the Apostle Paul: and this answer, or reason, is to be given to every man; that has authority to ask, and that asks in a modest manner, and with a reverence suitable to the subject; for the phrases, "with meekness and fear", may respect him that asks the reason, as well as him that gives the answer; for that which is holy is not to be given to dogs, to impudent persons, mockers and scoffers, nor are pearls to be cast before swine, filthy and irreverent persons; see Mt 7:6 the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, "but with meekness and fear"; for if it is not asked in such a way, there is no

obligation to give an answer: and this is to be given "always"; whenever it is asked in such a manner, and by proper persons; when there is a necessity of it, and as opportunity offers: and saints should be always "ready to" give and therefore it becomes them daily and diligently to search the Scriptures, meditate on them, and get all the help and assistance they can, to lead them into an acquaintance with them, that they may be so; for though the apostles had extraordinary assistance promised them, and therefore were bid not to consider beforehand what they should say, when brought before kings and princes; yet this is not to be expected by ordinary persons, nor in ordinary cases.

Agreeably to this is the advice of R. Eleazar {z};

"be diligent to learn the law, and know what thou shouldest answer to an Epicure,"

or heretic: says R. Jochanan {a},

"in every place where the Sadducees object, Ndyub Ntbwvt their answer is at their side,"

or ready; that is, in the same Scriptures on which they form their objections.

{z} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 14. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-gill/1-peter-315/>

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