

"The Believer's Duty"

Part 2

1 Peter 2:11-3:12

Introduction: The last time we were together in 1 Peter we started into the second section of the letter in which Peter focuses on the Believer's Submission. We looked at one verse which contained a great amount of information.

Notice 1 Peter 2:11

Here in this verse we learned that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world. This world is not our home and for we are to live in such a way that our lives reflect this truth. We are not to live FOR the world or for the things of the world. We are commanded to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. The last time we were together we consider how God never commands His children to do the impossible. Therefore we can be sure that abstaining from fleshly lusts is made possible in our new lives in Jesus Christ. We now have an ability that we never had as an unbeliever. Before we were saved, we were slaves to fleshly lusts. There was no way for us to abstain. But when we were saved our flesh was crucified with Jesus Christ and now, we have the power to abstain from the sinful desires.

Peter tells us also in this verse that these fleshly lusts war against the soul. We had considered what indulging in these lusts do to the believer.

1. It will sear the conscience.
2. It will rob you of inner peace.
3. It will break your fellowship with the Lord.
4. It will hinder your prayer life.
5. It will take you away from the Word of God.

Now as we move on Peter is going to remind us that while we are strangers and pilgrims in this world we still live here and as temporary residents in this world we are to live our lives in a way that honors God.

I. Living above the Criticism

Notice 1 Peter 2:12

There are several points to see within this verse. The first point we need to see is how the believers whom Peter wrote to were viewed.

The phrase, "**whereas they speak against you as evildoers**" tells us a great deal about what these believers were facing. Because of their faith in Jesus Christ they were being

slandered terribly. The term "evildoers" is believed by some to be an actual title given to these believers. These people were hated for their stand on the Truth and there were many misconceptions about them.

The believers were falsely accused of great crimes in the early church. Pagans said that at communion Christians ate the flesh and drank the blood of a baby in a cannibalistic ritual. They said that Christian "agape feasts" were wild orgies. They said that Christians were antisocial because they did not participate in society's immoral entertainment. They said that Christians were atheists because they did not worship the Ceasars. They were seen as family wreckers because many Roman woman came to Jesus and the faith of the women divided the family.

So, these believers were falsely accused, and they were slandered continuously. Being under this microscope would have been very stressful and the natural reaction of the flesh would have been to retaliate and argue in defense in order to silence the critics. But that was not the command.

Notice 1 Peter 2:12 again.

They were to have their conduct honest among the Gentiles. This means they were to live as upright citizens. In other words they were not to argue and dispute with the Gentiles who were slandering them, but they were to allow their everyday lives of righteousness speak for them. I want to draw your attention to the fact that they were **AMONG** the Gentiles. They were to be separated in their practice, but their practice was to be conducted **AMONG** the unbelievers. God does not tell them to get away from the ungodly, but He tells them to live righteously **AMONG** the ungodly.

Application:

I know there are times in our lives when it would feel really good just to separate from the ungodly society around us completely. But that is not God's plan. We are to be in the world but not of the world. We can expect there that we shall be hated for our stand with Jesus Christ.

John 15:18-20

¹⁸ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

¹⁹ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

²⁰ Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

To be hated by the world should be no surprise. In the midst of the hatred however, our responsibility is to live righteously among the unsaved.

Notice 1 Peter 2:12 again.

No matter how difficult life is it is expected of us to live lives that glorify our God.

Matthew 5:13-16

¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Application:

This is so important for us to grasp. We are to live in such a way that our lives are a testimony to the unsaved world even when we are being mistreated because of our faith. It is our responsibility to reach the unsaved with the message of the Gospel. This thought has been set to the side by many churches today. The focus has become one of saving America. Notice the words of Erwin Lutzer:

"God did not put us on this earth to save America but to save Americans."

Lutzer also made the following statement:

"The message of the Cross will not be received unless it is wrapped in the life of an authentic believer. The world must see our "good deeds" before they will listen to our "good words"."

Let us understand that we are in a war, and we are strangers in enemy territory. The battle is not with flesh and blood, but it is a spiritual battle. The Word of God is our

weapon. To be more specific it is the Gospel that has the power to change the lives of the ungodly.

Romans 1:16

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

But let us keep in mind that the Gospel's power must be seen in our lives in order to get the attention of the ungodly.

Notice 1 Peter 2:12 again.

Peter tells us that when we live a righteous life in the midst of a godless society then God will be glorified in the day of visitation. What is the "day of visitation"? It could refer to any day when the Lord draws near. It could refer to a day when the unsaved stand before God and bow the knee and on that day, they will then know that we were serving the Lord and they will glorify God. It could refer to a day when they accept the Lord as Savior and God then indwells them and, on that day, God will have used the life of the righteous believers to bring the lost to Jesus Christ.

Whatever the phrase refers to we can be assured that through the righteous works of the believer God will be glorified in the day of visitation.

Before we leave this thought let me say that there have been many believers who have not lived lives of righteousness for one reason or another and they ruined their testimony. Abram made that very mistake.

Genesis 12:11-20

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.

20 And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

Abram was kicked out of the world by pagan people. Lot was another man whose lifestyle hindered his testimony.

Genesis 19:12-14

12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

13 For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

II. Submitting to the Authorities

Notice 1 Peter 2:13-14

Here in these two verses Peter tells his readers how to conduct their lives honest among the Gentiles. They were to submit to the governmental authorities over them. Peter knew there was the desires of the flesh that wanted to rebel based upon what they were going through. Let us remember that this command is given to a people who were under the leadership of Nero. The condition in their day were much worse than what we see today. In our nation there is a constitution to keep the government in line but under Nero there were no such documents. I can assure you the government did many things which these

believers did not agree with, but they were still commanded to submit to those in authority. Let us notice what Paul wrote concerning the authorities.

Romans 13:1-5

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

³ *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

⁴ *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

⁵ *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

Whoever the authorities are we must remember they have been placed in the positions they hold by God. They are His ministers.

Daniel 2:20-22

²⁰ *Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:*

²¹ *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:*

²² *He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.*

Psalms 75:6-7

⁶ *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*

⁷ *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

One of the ways in which we are to live honest is to be in obedience to those whom God places in positions of authority. We will come back to this next week but in closing we need to see what this submission does.

Notice 1 Peter 2:15

Submission on the part of the believer silences those who slander us. In other words when we submit to the authorities, and we live honest lives they we leave nothing for the critics to use against us.

Conclusion:

This is not easy when a person is under ungodly leadership but let us keep in mind that whoever sits in authority they have been placed there by God. When we submit to them, we are submitting to the Lord. Next week will consider when the believer must stand in opposition to the authorities.

