

Living a Godly Life

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1 Peter / 1 Peter 2:11–12

INTRODUCTION

- We have a glorious opportunity to look again at the Word of God
- Please take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 2
- Today we are looking at verses 11-12
- Peter has just finished talking about our spiritual blessings in Christ
- Now he turns back to the responsibility those blessings brings
- Listen to what he says in [1 Peter 2:11-12](#)

1 Peter 2:11–12 NASB95

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- There are 3 things that define who we are
- The first is how God sees us in Scripture
- The second is by what we keep ourselves from
- And third is what we maintain on a daily basis before an unbelieving world
- The 3 things that I'm referring to is how we are addressed, what we abstain from, and what behavior we maintain
- Essentially this is a call to living a godly life
- Godly living is the by product of our salvation
- It's not the means but it does serve also as the proof
- We are saved as [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

Ephesians 2:8–9 NASB95

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- And our obedience to live a godly life is manifested by our obedience to God's Word

1 John 2:3–5 NASB95

³ By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

- It is also manifested by our love for the brethren

1 John 3:14 NASB95

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

• Peter begins verse 11 with...

I. A Tender Address (v.11a)

- As "beloved"
 - This is agapetoi which is an adjective
 - It comes from agapetos which means "beloved, dear"
 - This is a term of affectionate endearment common to both Testaments (Pratt)

The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude Summary, v. 11, 12

He draws his readers closely to his heart with intelligent, purposeful love, a love that will call forth a corresponding love and a readiness to obey.

- Peter uses the term "beloved" 6 times in both letters

| [1 Peter 2:11](#) (NASB95)

| ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

1 Peter 4:12 NASB95

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

2 Peter 3:1 NASB95

¹ This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

2 Peter 3:8 NASB95

⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

2 Peter 3:14 NASB95

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

2 Peter 3:17 NASB95

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

- This same word is used by God when referring to Jesus

Matthew 3:17 NASB95

¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

- Christians are called “beloved by God”

1 Thessalonians 1:4 NASB95

⁴ knowing, brethren beloved by God, *His* choice of you;

Romans 1:7 NASB95

⁷ to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Peter’s address is similar to Paul’s as he appeals to them to a particular behavior
 - He says, “I urge you”
 - “Urge” is the word *parakalo*, which means “to come alongside” (Hiebert)
 - It is translated in various ways as “to implore, exhort,” “to encourage, to beseech” (Rienecker)
 - It should be used here as “urge” or “appeal”

1 Peter 1. The Tone of the Appeal (v. 11a)

Peter did not command his readers; he appealed to their own sense of what is right.

• Before he makes his appeal, he also refers to them...

- As Aliens
 - This is the adjective *paroikos* which literally means “alongside the house.”
 - The word came to denote any person who lives in a country not his own and is therefore a foreigner

- The term fits Christians who do not belong to this world's system but live alongside those who do (MacArthur)
- Peter already referred to them as “aliens” in 1:1
- We are “aliens” to this world but no longer to God

Ephesians 2:19 NASB95

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

• As Strangers

- Peter also used the term strangers (parepidēmous), which is a synonym for aliens.
- It refers to a visitor who travels through a country and perhaps makes a brief stay there (MacArthur)
- Peter also used this term in 1:17
- The writer of Hebrews reminded believers in [Hebrews 13:14](#)

Hebrews 13:14 NASB95

¹⁴ For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.

As long as we are in this world, there should be in our lives as Christians a certain detachment (Sibbs)

• Peter moves from his tender address to...

II. The Content of the Appeal (v.11b)

- He appeals to them to “abstain from fleshly lusts”
 - The word “abstain” (apechomai) is used in the middle voice and means “to keep oneself from” (WSNTDICT) or “to be holding yourselves off from,” and marks that as a constant need (Hiebert)
 - This is an internal discipline that is only possible with the help of the Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:22–23 NASB95

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

- The word “self-control” (enmkrateia) means “the holding in of passions and appetites” (Rienecker)

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Self-Control

The enkráteia word-group originally meant “mastery or power over oneself or something”; eventually it came to mean “control over oneself,” especially one's desires and actions. The opposite was akrasía, “self-indulgence” or “licentiousness” (cf. RSV “rapacity” in Mt. 23:25).

- A person with no self-control is defenseless, always subject to attack and defeat
- James, the Lord's half brother, told the council at Jerusalem in [Acts 15:20](#)

Acts 15:20 NASB95

²⁰ but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

- The council agreed and wrote in [Acts 15:29](#)

Acts 15:29 NASB95

²⁹ that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.”

- Paul instructed the Thessalonians to “abstain from sexual immorality” in [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)
 - [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#) (NASB95)

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

- He further called the Thessalonians to “abstain from every form of evil” in [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#)

| [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#) (NASB95)

| ²² abstain from every form of evil.

1 Peter: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Godly Inner Discipline

The command to abstain signifies that saints have the ability by the new life and the indwelling Spirit to restrain the lustful flesh, even in a postmodern culture dominated by sensuality, immorality, and moral relativism.

- Again the key is the Holy Spirit
 - It is only by His power that you can overcome the flesh
 - When we walk by the means of the Spirit we will not give in to the flesh

Galatians 5:16 NASB95

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

- It is by the Spirit that we kill sin

Romans 8:13 NASB95

¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

- The term that Peter uses for “lusts” is *epithumia* (noun) which is a neutral term, denoting strong cravings and desires whether good or bad (Hiebert)
 - It's used in [Luke 22:15](#) of Jesus' desire to eat the Passover before His sufferings

- It's used in [Philippians 1:23](#) of Paul's desire to depart and be with Christ
- It's used in [1 Thessalonians 2:17](#) of Paul's desire to see the Thessalonians
- It's used in [1 Timothy 3:1](#) of a man's desire to be a pastor of a church
- All those instances are "good" desires
- But it's more common use of for evil
 - It's used in [Mark 4:19](#) of having desires for other things causing the word to be choked out
 - It's used in [John 8:44](#) to speak of the desires of the devil
 - It's used in [James 1:14-15](#) to speak of why a person gives in to temptation
 - It's translated "coveting" in [Romans 7:7](#)
- Peter further characterizes these evil desires as those that "wage war against the soul"

1 Peter: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Godly Inner Discipline

Wage war is a strong term that generally means to carry out a long-term military campaign. It implies not just antagonism but a relentless, malicious aggression. Since it takes place in the soul, it is a kind of civil war. Joined with the concept of fleshly lusts, the image is of an army of lustful terrorists waging an internal search and destroy mission to conquer the soul of the believer.

1 Peter a. The Inner Self-Discipline Called for (v. 11b)

These sinful desires are the enemies of spiritual growth in the life of every believer. As Ross remarks, "The pilgrim of God, as we see him, carries about a battlefield inside his own personality."¹⁷

A.W. Pink writes "Unless the Christian devotes all his powers to a definite, uncompromising, earnest, constant warfare upon indwelling sin: unless he diligently seeks to weaken its roots, suppress its motions, restrain its outward eruptions and actions, and seeks to put to death the enemy within his soul, he is guilty of the basest ingratitude to Christ. Unless he does so, he is a complete failure in the Christian life, for it is impossible that both sin and grace should be healthy and vigorous in the soul at the same time. If a garden is overrun with weeds, they choke and starve the profitable plants, absorbing the moisture and nourishment they should feed upon. So, if the lusts of the flesh absorb the soul, the graces of the Spirit cannot develop. If the mind is filled with worldly or filthy things, then meditation on holy things is crowded out. Occupation with sin deadens the mind for holy duties."

Pink, Arthur W. *The Holy Spirit* (Arthur Pink Collection Book 34) . Priscilla Publishing. Kindle Edition.

- "fleshly lusts" is more than sexual sin. It includes everything the flesh produces

Galatians 5:17–21 NASB95

¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- The term “war” (strateuo) is translated “fight” ([1 Tim.1:18](#))

- The “flesh” “fights” against the soul everyday

- That’s why we must “mortify” it everyday

Colossians 3:5 NASB95

⁵ Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

· We hear Peter’s tender address as “beloved,” “aliens,” and “strangers.” We hear the content of his appeal to “abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.” Peter now moves from the inner self-discipline to the outward conduct...

· Notice in verse 12 where Peter focuses on...

III. The Outward Behavior Among Unbelievers (v.12)

1 Peter 2:12 NASB95

¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- This echos [Matthew 5:16](#)

Matthew 5:16 NASB95

¹⁶ “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- We are to maintain outward godliness (which can only be done when you maintain inner godliness)

- “Keep” (echo, pres.act.part.) has the idea “to keep, maintain”

- The use of the present tense gives the idea of “holding to” or “persevering in” to suggest the steadfast maintenance of the standard of conduct indicated (Hiebert)

1 Peter b. The Outward Winsome Conduct Needed (v. 12a)

The conduct called for constitutes the visible fruit of victory in the struggle against the inner cravings of the old nature.

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 2

Having been disciplined in the inward and private side, the Christian must outwardly live among non-Christians in a way which reflects that inward discipline.

- Our behavior is our way of life before others
 - The word “behavior” (anastrophe, noun) refers to “conduct, way of life”
 - They must maintain “excellent” conduct
 - The word “excellent” (kalos), primarily, of outward form
 - It means “beautiful, goodly” (Abbott-Smith)
 - It is “very good, of the highest quality” (Logos Factbook)

1 Peter b. The Outward Winsome Conduct Needed (v. 12a)

The readers’ behavior must be “good” (kalēn), beautiful, morally noble, and praiseworthy —conduct that commends itself to the moral judgment of those around them.

2 Corinthians 8:21 NASB95

²¹ for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

Philippians 2:14–15 NASB95

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

¹⁵ so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

- “among the Gentiles” (Gentiles, ethnos) refers to pagans, unbelievers, outsiders

Colossians 4:5 NASB95

⁵ Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

1 Timothy 3:7 NASB95

⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

- Peter gives the purpose of such behavior among unbelievers
 - “so that” (hina purpose clause) “For the purpose of”
 - “The thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation”
 - Peter said later in [1 Peter 3:16](#)

1 Peter 3:16 NASB95

¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

- The only thing which they can “slander” (katalaleo) you for is “your good deeds”
- They call your evil good and your good evil

Isaiah 5:20 NASB95

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;

Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;

Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

- They do that because your “good deeds” “as they observe them” convicts them

John 3:21 NASB95

²¹ “But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

- These are deeds that bring God glory (“glorify God in the day of visitation”)

Colossians 3:17 NASB95

¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

- “the day of visitation” is God’s drawing near either for judgment or mercy (R. C. Sproul, Ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)*, (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 2245).

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 2

A common phrase in the OT (Is. 10:3; Jer. 27:22) warning of God’s “visitation,” His drawing near to people or nations in either judgment or blessing. In the NT, “visitation” speaks of redemption (Luke 1:68; 7:16; 19:44). Peter was teaching that when the grace of God visits the heart of an unbeliever, he will respond with saving faith and glorify God because he remembers the testimony of believers he had observed. Those who don’t believe will experience the visitation of His wrath in the final judgment.

CONCLUSION

- As a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession” (2:9), are you living a godly life?
- Are you keeping yourself from “fleshly lusts” that fight against your soul?
- And are you maintaining an honorable conduct among unbelievers so they only complaint they have against you are your “good deeds”?
- Our testimony to unbelievers is a part of the gospel.

- It's living what we proclaim from verse 9, "...the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."
- As we prepare ourselves to receive the Lord's Supper this morning, examine this in your life!
- And as you examine your life, ask yourself, "Have I truly believed in Christ?"
- Let's pray.

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