

Sunday, October 3, 2021 pm

## STUDIES IN 1 PETER (13)

### Honorable Conduct Among the Gentiles

#### 1 Peter 2:11-12

In our study of 1 Peter thus far, we have noted Peter's encouragement to these brethren who are facing trials and tribulations. His focus has been upon their hope and need for each other. The past few lessons have emphasized relationship both with God and one another – a spiritual building, a royal priesthood and a chosen and special people. Today, we turn our focus in a different direction – how we act in a world that is against Him and us. This will be our focus through chapter 4.

#### I. Sojourners and Pilgrims

- a. ***We are Beloved*** – this is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 8 times this expression will be used in Peter's letters (2x in 1 Peter). It is a word often used by Paul, and others, including God in describing His Son (Matthew 3:17, 17:5, etc.). It is a derivative of the root word *agape*. It is a term of endearment showing that those to whom Peter is writing as special to him.
- b. ***A pleading*** - urging or begging or beseeching (KJV) – Peter here is exhorting these brethren concerning their behavior. Peter sees this text we are addressing as something that crucial in dealing with their troubles.
- c. ***We are sojourners and pilgrims*** - we are AGAIN reminded of our temporal placement here. We often speak of our citizenship being in heaven – Ephesians 2:19, Philippians 3:20. Here we simply remind ourselves with these words that we must NOT become overly attached to this world – 1 John 2:15-17
  - i. ***Sojourners*** – a compound word that in the Greek literally means to dwell beside. The idea is we are not citizens. We may be conducting business here, but it is NOT our spiritual home.
  - ii. ***Pilgrims*** – this means to live like a foreigner. Because you are a foreigner, you will NOT seek to let its foreign influences shape your life. It all goes back to where your treasure is (Matthew 6:19-21).

#### II. How to conduct yourself

- a. As we continually emphasize, our example is crucial in influencing others – Philippians 2:15, Matthew 5:13-16.
- b. ***Abstain from fleshly lusts***
  - i. The word *abstain* means to refrain from doing something. Do not participate in this.
    1. This is the reminder that we are different, and our lives are to be shaped by God's will, especially as manifested in His Son – cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1.
    2. Concerning being sojourners and pilgrims – I know that in going to a foreign land, you may want to assimilate with their customs that are good (foods, manners, dress, etc.). You seek to blend in from a cultural standpoint (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 – Paul became all things to all men so as to win some). BUT, you do NOT adapt to those ways that are contrary and derogatory to your citizenship. In this case we are dealing with morals!
  - ii. ***From fleshly lusts*** –
    1. A lust is an intense craving, most often used in a negative sense (we have other words for this craving in a good sense – such as desire (cf. Luke 22:15 – Jesus used it of His desire to eat the Passover with them, 1 Thessalonians 2:17 – Paul's great desire to see them, etc.). HOWEVER, translators typically distinguish by only using the word *lust* when it is in its bad sense.

2. **Fleshly** – our desires are described here.
  - a. These are the desires of the flesh – 1 John 2:15-17 – the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Galatians 5:19-21 speaks of the works of the flesh.
  - b. The Greco Roman world was known for its lewdness and lasciviousness (much like today, but perhaps even worse. We have not yet degenerated to killing each other for sport, though it is certainly being suggested in movies, and we have some pretty brutal “sports”).
  - c. We could list many of these lusts, but here we note that they can include:
    - i. Fleshly lusts – Ephesians 2:3 – fulfilling the desires of the flesh
    - ii. Lusts of the heart – Romans 1:24
    - iii. Passions of lust – 1 Thessalonians 4:5
    - iv. Youth – 2 Timothy 2:22
    - v. Our own desires – James 1:14 (*desires* is the same word)
    - vi. Etc.
- iii. **They war against the soul** –
  1. We are here again reminded that we are at war. And we are reminded of the texts describing this war – Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. Note that it is a spiritual war.
  2. It is for the *soul* – which in this text would have reference to that part of us that will live eternally. It is that which we have purified in obeying the truth – see 1 Peter 1:22.
- c. **Having your conduct honorable**
  - i. **Conduct** is a description of one’s life. KJV uses the word “conversation”, NASB “behavior”. It has been addressed in 1 Peter 1:15 – holy in all your conduct; & 1: 18 – former aimless conduct.
  - ii. **Honorable** – or “honest” (KJV), “behavior excellent” (NASB).
    1. Thayer gives a good definition here, *good, beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, and hence praiseworthy; morally good, noble*<sup>1</sup>
    2. L&N defines the word as, pertaining to a positive moral quality.
    3. We need to be living our lives in respectful and decent ways. This includes HONEST conduct. We know what it means to be honorable and dishonorable. Keep that in mind as a Christian.
  - iii. **Among the Gentiles** – likely, in this case a reference to the world, as opposed to Christians (rather than Jews).
  - iv. **So that when they speak against you**
    1. Be reminded, as Jesus warned His apostles – and Peter will emphasize this again later in this letter – that we will be maligned (Matthew 10:24-25).
    2. **As evil doers** – to many in the world, Christians are evil. When we take godly (Biblical) stands against immorality which is perceived as good by the world (e.g. homosexuality, abortion, divorce, sexual promiscuity, the world’s definition of tolerance, etc.) we are considered evil. When we say the Bible means what it says, we are considered evil to a selfish world. And we are seeing an increase in the villainization of Christians today.

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<sup>1</sup> Thayer, J. H. (1889). [\*A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti\*](#) (p. 322). New York: Harper & Brothers.

3. We know that one of the tactics used by those who do not have answers to an accusation, or those whom one despises is to attack their character or “neutralize” them.

v. ***They may, by your good works which they observe glorify God***

1. As much as in us, we are to live peaceably with all men – Romans 15:2, 12:18, Hebrews 12:14 – pursue peace with all people
2. We need to be a people of good works – the world needs to observe in us godly dispositions and a genuine care for others, even those (maybe especially) who are not believers – the “gentiles” of this text. Again, Matthew 5:16 notes that when they observe our good works, they glorify God. 1 Timothy 6:18 speaks of the rich being rich in good works. Ephesians 2:10 speaks of how *we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*. See **also 2 Timothy 2:20-21** which speaks of one cleansing himself and thus being useful to the Master and prepared for every good work.
3. Sometimes, we do not do a good job of this. There are many professed believers, who in the name of liberty, will act harshly or rudely. There are many godly causes that I believe in, but I see activists who are “on my side” getting in the mud and acting just like the worldly and wicked opposition. They do NOT do the cause of the Lord any good. We must never forget that we are to be gentle – 2 Timothy 2:24, 1 Timothy 6:11, James 3:17 – the wisdom from above is...Philippians 4:5, Ephesians 4:1-2, etc. NOTE: I am not saying that we should not advocate for what is right, but I am saying HOW we do is important!

vi. ***In the day of visitation*** – two different views of this are considered

1. The day of God’s judgment – when every knee will bow – Philippians 2:9-11, Romans 14:10-12. And again, we can take comfort in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9.
2. The day of their “visiting” you and thus they respond positively – for some this is their obeying the gospel, while for others it might be simply showing you respect because they know your sincere motives. This fits the text better. Again, consider Matthew 5:16.

This passage will set the tone for much of the rest of this letter. Peter will describe specifically how to act in various relationships and speak more of how we are to conduct ourselves. We conclude this lesson by reminding ourselves that God is watching us. He has done so much for us, as Peter has expressed. How does our conduct before others portray that? Are you living honorably in this world? Think about it.