

1 and 2 Peter Bible Study
Lesson 7 - Notes
1 Peter 2:11-12

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12

Romans 7:18-25

How those who come to Jesus are to live:

1. We must understand that we are sojourners and pilgrims.
2. We are to abstain from fleshly lusts.
3. We should clearly know what fleshly lusts are.
4. We need to understand how our fleshly lusts war against our soul.
5. Our conduct must be honorable, not only within the church, but outside of the church. (gentiles-unbelievers) (those who judge believers harshly)
6. So that by what they see in your life and behavior will glorify God.

Through this study today, our 'goal' was to clearly find instruction from God as to how to live out the excellence God has called us to live on this planet as strangers and foreigners.

We see again Peter describing believers as aliens/strangers. Interesting how he continues to remind the believers in Rome that this is not their final home, so don't live like it, this is only temporary, the hope we have is that our real home is eternal. We are citizens of heaven, with all the privileges of being a joint heir with Jesus. So then why do we continue to fight and argue over the things here on this earth? We must realize that we are just passing through the earth on a journey towards our permanent home. Therefore, we should not get attached to this world. We should not love it. We should be in the world, but not of the world. Philippians 3:20, John 17:14

In 1 Peter 2:11 Paul is giving clear direction in how we carry out the goal of living in excellence before the world as a testimony. First, he says that we abstain from the fleshly lusts that war against our soul. That is an inward battle. One often fought privately, in the presence of God, through His Word as we battle for truth and integrity, which when accomplished is lived out in the outward realm, for others to witness and see. As the Holy Spirit convicts, we are the only ones aware at first what battle is taking place. If we don't do diligent battle, it becomes

obvious to those around what that battle has been. Peter here is 'urging', the same word used by Paul in Romans 12:1 when he said I 'beseech' you by the mercies of God...a heartfelt urgency to encourage the believers to show the results of the love of God in how they work on obedience that starts on the inside.

There is a war between our new man and our old man. Romans 7:18-25. How can we ensure victory? If we want to win, we may have to take drastic steps to dig out the sin in our lives. We have to take defensive steps by reading the Bible and putting on the spiritual armor. Ephesians 6:10-18. We have to take offensive steps by examining our lives for sinful areas and then mercilessly dig it out. Mark 9:43-47. Sometimes not being conformed to this world looks like radical amputation. Painful as it is, it is better to step away from a strong temptation than to go down with it.

Because our souls are saved and we've received a new heart and we've been washed, and because we've been regenerated, there is a newness in us. But like we have discussed in the past, our new heart lives in our unredeemed human flesh. That's why we have a spiritual battle because the new man in us is battling the flesh. And the flesh is where lust comes from, and so we are called to abstain (hold oneself back voluntarily) That is hard because the fleshly lusts are in us. It is especially hard in our society, because we live in a society that believes all things are acceptable pretty much, we are constantly barraged by the visual images of anything and everything goes, and the vileness of verbal language that is unfit for anyone. We deal with that around us all the time. We can understand why this is a great challenge for the Holy Spirit in us, to give us victory.

So, we are reminded that in spite of what is going on in this world that we are just passing through, we are to be a good testimony to the people around us. Our behavior is to be excellent. It is not to be just "good" or "acceptable" but EXCELLENT! As I look at scripture, Daniel and Joseph are two I can think of that had excellent reputations. In Daniel's case, it is documented how his enemies strove to find something, ANYTHING, bad about his life to accuse him about.

But you see, Daniel's life and example stood up to the scrutiny to the point where his enemies could only say "He prays too much. He is too faithful to God." I pray that is what people will say about me. Don't you want to have this kind of

excellent testimony said about you? We can. Remember that God wants us to be holy as He is holy and He gives us the resources to achieve victory over sin. 2 Peter 1:3 reminds us that He has already given believers 'everything' they need for life and for Godliness. We already have it, now we need to practice it. Live it out.

So we're aliens in the world. We are strangers in the world. We must testify to this world of the truth of Christianity and the validity of the gospel, and that starts with a disciplined life on the inside. But we don't stop there, the Holy Spirit not only calls for discipline that is inward and private, but He calls for our outward behavior or manners to reflect what is going on inside. Verse 12, is so simple we don't need to spend a lot of time on it. "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." He's saying to keep your behavior above reproach. Behavior means your daily conduct, your manner of life. "Excellent" is the word *kalos* in the Greek, and it has such a rich meaning it takes about six or seven English words to give you understanding of it. It means lovely, fine, winsome, gracious, fair to look at, noble, excellent; it is the purest, highest, noblest kind of goodness. It is the kind of good that inspires and motivates others. Now Peter is talking about the outside. Having been disciplined on the inside or private side, you now show the results on the outside or public side that reflects the inward discipline. He says that your behavior is to be excellent among the pagans, the nations, the people. He is referring to the unsaved world. If you're going to try to witness to the unbelieving world, then you've got to have your behavior honest, your behavior excellent, your behavior lovely, fine, winsome, gracious, fair to look at, noble, righteous. In other words, the quality of our transformed life must be visible to the unsaved world. There are no secret disciples. This is the heart of evangelism. Let your light (from within) shine outside!!

A great example is a story told by John MacArthur of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley.

"Our text focuses on the fact that we are to live a kind of life that makes our evangelism believable. I remember when Sam Ericsson was in our church before he went to Washington to be involved in the Christian Legal Society. One day, Sam, when he was a part of our church staff, I should say prior to the time when he was a part of our church staff, he was working for a law firm in Los Angeles, a large law

firm, and as he was having lunch with a group of attorneys in the city of Los Angeles, he was very active as an elder at our church already and it was his custom and habit to invite men to come to the church and hear the Word of God, and he said to one attorney that he had met.

He said, "I would like you to come to my church with me. I'd like you to be my guest."

And the man said, "What church do you go to?"

He said, "I go to Grace Community Church out in the San Fernando Valley."

And the man hesitated for a moment and looked a bit shocked and then said, "I would never go to that church under any circumstances."

And Sam said to him, "Well what makes you say that? Have you been there?"

He said, "I've never been there and I will never go."

And Sam said, "Well how can you make that kind of judgment about the church?"

He said, "It's very simple. The most crooked attorney I know of in this city goes to that church."

And I remember when Sam told me that, how distressed I was. So, the following Sunday I got in the pulpit, told this story and said, "I don't know which one of you attorneys is that one, but I wish you'd get your act together or quit saying you belong to this church, because the character of your life is making evangelism impossible."

John MacArthur – Grace Community Church

The last part of verse 12 is important as we think of the our story here, on the day of visitation, the day when God makes Himself known to unbelievers, they will desire to know Him, in part because of the way we have lived our lives. They will say, oh, I know Him, you have reflected Him in the way you have lived out your life. I can believe in your God.