

Living Godly

1 Peter 2:11-25

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1 Peter 2:11-25 (NIV)

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. ¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. ¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor. ¹⁸ Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹ For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. ²⁰ But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." ²⁵ For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

v11 – Why are Christians called foreigners and exiles?

We are in this world but not of this world... we are just passing through as sojourners and pilgrims (NKJV).

From what should Christians abstain?

Abstain from fleshly lusts: We can only **abstain from fleshly lusts** as we live **as sojourners and pilgrims**, as those who recognize that this world is not their home, and that they have a home and a citizenship in heaven.

What is the problem with sinful desires?

They **war against the soul**. To be a Christian means to fight against the lusts of the flesh, and the battle continues as long as we live in this flesh.

How do sinful desires war against the soul?

Sin separates us from our Creator-God who made us to have an eternal relationship with Him. The more we persist in sin, the wider the gulf between us and Him widens.

v12 – How should we live among pagans?

Live honorably... This kind of godly living makes our conduct **honorable among** those who don't know God yet. Though we can expect that they will **speak against you as evildoers**, they can still be brought to **glorify God** by seeing our godly conduct.

What kinds of evil were the early Christians accused?

Christians 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 idols.

- But over time, it was clear that Christians were not immoral people — and it was shown by their lives.

What kinds of things are Christians accused of today?

- Holding society back
- Imposing our morals on others
- Trying to bring about a theocracy

What is *the day of visitation* (NKJV)?

This is probably a reference to their ultimate meeting with God, either when they go to meet Him or when He comes to meet them.

What is implied by *the day of visitation*?

The day of visitation refers to a time in which punishment should be inflicted...

Isaiah 10:3 – *And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from afar? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?*

How can the pagans glorify God on the day of visitation?

The idea is that **the Gentiles** might be persuaded to become Christians by seeing the lives of other Christians, and that they would **glorify God** when they meet Him instead of cowering before His holy judgment.

v13 – What should we do as followers of Christ?

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man: As Christians we should be good citizens, submitting to government. This was very different from those zealous Jews in Peter's day who recognized no king but God and paid taxes to no one except God.

- Peter wrote this in the days of the Roman Empire, which was not a democracy and no special friend to Christians. Yet he still recognized the legitimate authority of the Roman government.

Why should we obey the government?

For the Lord's sake: Since governments have a rightful authority from God, we are bound to obey them — unless, of course, they order us to do something in contradiction to God's law. Then, we are commanded to obey God before man...

Acts 4:19 – *Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.*

v14 – What does it mean that governing authorities are sent by God?

God is in control... Governments are sent by God for the **punishment of evildoers** and for the recognition of those who do good.

What is God's purpose for governments?

God uses governing authorities as a check upon man's sinful desires and tendencies. Governments are a useful tool in resisting the effects of man's fallen nature.

- Based also on what Paul wrote in Romans 13, we can say that the greatest offense government can make is to fail to punish evildoers, or to reward evildoers through corruption.

v15 – Why should Christians do good works?

That by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: Peter knew that our conduct is a way to defend the gospel. He knew that those who never read the Bible will read our lives, so it is by **doing good** that we **put to silence the ignorance of foolish men**.

v16 – What does it mean we should live as free people?

We are warned against taking the **liberty** we have in Jesus as an excuse for sin. Instead, we use our **liberty** in Jesus to show the kind of love and respect that Peter calls for.

What does it mean we should live as God's slaves?

A better word here used by the NKJV is "bondservants" ... we are the Lord's servants by choice.

v17 – What else should Christians do?

Respect everyone, love fellow Christians, fear God and honor the governing authorities.

How do we honor ungodly governing authorities?

We should show respect for their office but not their perspectives. We should criticize their policies but not their person.

Is there significance to loving the brethren and only respecting everyone else?

Everyone deserves respect as being made in the image of God but we are characterized by loving our fellow Christians...

John 13:35 – *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

v18 – Who should be submissive to their masters?

The command to submit to masters isn't just to those who work for masters that are **good and gentle**, but also to those who are **harsh**. If we must endure hardship because of our Christian standards, it is then **commendable** before God.

What is the application of submitting to masters today?

Today's equivalent of bondservants are employees... so, our work bosses are our masters.

v19-20 – Why should we bear up under the pain of unjust suffering?

To be punished for our wrongs is no **credit** to us. But when we are punished for doing good and endure it **patiently**, we are complimented **before God**.

Why might Peter have included this admonition to bear unjust suffering?

It appears that the poor Christians, and slaves who became Christians were abused because they would not join with their masters in idolatrous worship.

v21 – Why were we called to be God’s children?

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example: Jesus is our **example** as someone who endured punishment unjustly. When **He was reviled** Jesus **did not revile in return**, but in His sufferings He **committed Himself** to the Father.

- He suffered, but not on account of any evil he had either *done* or *said*. In *deed* and *word* he was immaculate, and yet he was exposed to suffering.
- As Christ’s followers, we should expect the same, and when it comes bear it in the same spirit.

Which of the Lord’s sufferings might be most deeply engraved upon the memory of Peter?

Probably when He was mocked and buffeted in the hall of the high priest. While Peter sat and warmed his hands at the fire, he saw Jesus being abused, and feared for his own life declaring, “I don’t know the man.”

v22 – How do we know that Jesus committed no sin?

The record in Scripture...

Hebrews 4:15 – *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Even the pagan ruler Pilot recognized this...

John 19:4 – *I find no fault in Him*

What does it tell us that Jesus had no sin?

This reveals His deity... only God is without sin.

v23 – How could Jesus not retaliate in His suffering?

- Jesus entrusted Himself to God the Father.
- God’s ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9)
- We are like Christ when we leave justice to Him... *"vengeance is mine, I will repay"* (Romans 12:19, Deuteronomy 32:35)

v24 – How was Jesus’ suffering on the cross more than just an example for us?

He also **bore our sins** as sin-bearing substitute, and provided for our healing (**by whose stripes you were healed**).

- Peter clearly meant the cross of Jesus when he mentioned the **tree** (NKJV; literally *wood*).
- Jesus **bore our sins in His own body on the wood** — the wood of the cross.

Why did Jesus bear our sins for us?

That we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness: Peter reminds us that when Jesus died on the cross, *we also died to sins*. Our life is permanently changed by our identification with Jesus on the cross, even as the Apostle Paul described in Romans 6.

What does it mean we have died to sins?

Our debt of sin and guilt was paid by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. When we **died to sins** with Jesus on the cross, it means that He paid our debts.

- We do not trouble ourselves over debts that are paid so now I am dead to those debts; they have no power over me.
- I am dead to my sins; They are gone as much as if they had never been committed.
- Also, our passion for the Lord Jesus Christ is greater than our previous passion for sin and thus we seek to please Him through obedience.

How is it we were healed by the Lord’s wounds?

Peter quotes Isaiah 53:5, which primarily refers to spiritual healing but also includes physical healing. The provision for our healing (both physically and spiritually) is made by the sufferings (**stripes**) of Jesus.

- The physical aspect of our healing is received in part now, but only completely with our resurrection.
- In context we see that Peter’s main point is that if a master treats us unjustly, we should not fear whatever harm he causes. We can be healed and restored by Jesus’ suffering for us.

v25 – What is the impact of Jesus paying our sin debt?

If not for Jesus’ patient endurance under the persecution of the ungodly, we would still be **going astray**. But because of His work for us, we have **returned** to the **Shepherd** (pastor) and the **Overseer** (bishop) of our souls.

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- God has given us guidelines for living as Christians; we honor Him when we are obedient.
- Submitting to authorities are effectively submitting to God.
- As Christians we are dead to sin, both the ultimate consequence of sin and even the desire to sin.