
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 1 Peter

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1 Peter 2: 11-12 "Living Honorably!"

General idea: This passage is about living honorably, even in the face of oppression and enticement. This is a call and challenge for us to see the world differently so we can respond in kindness and virtue. The world, with all of its lusts and evils, is not to be the place of our identity or the place in which we want to be enveloped; rather, it is to be the place we are to influence.

We can be influencers even if we are being influenced from the wrong areas and guidelines. Our guidelines come from the character and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. If they come from any place else, our thinking is influenced, and thus, all we think and do becomes inclined toward the negative. Then, we become the carnal Christian who repels people from the Lord, giving the message that Christ is not sufficient or adequate.

We are on a journey in life. Basically, we are not made for this world; we are made for eternity. We are here on this earth to live and learn, to experience and grow so we can personally and passionately know Christ and make Him known to others. We do this best with our good character and virtue, seeking Him, so all that we are (as in our will, thinking, heart, and direction) is permeated by His care and call. This all comes down to how we are in this world and that all we do is to be glorifying to God. When we are lined up to this, then our conduct is honoring to God and others.

Vs. 11: We are called to stay away from evil desires because they will entice us and lead us away from His loving and best plan for us. When we are thinking in a wrong or dysfunctional way, it affects all we are and all we do because our lusts fight against our very soul! Our relationships, how we treat others, and how we proclaim God's Word through our attitude and lifestyle all stem from how and what we are thinking. Our thinking must come from the precepts of His Word. Our opinions, judgments, outlook, and approach to life and people need to come from the heart of a will that is bought by Jesus Christ.

- *Beloved/Dear friends.* Our position in Christ is as His friend; we are dear, cherished, and fully, deeply loved by Him! As Christians, we are all bound together in and by love (John 14)! We are loved not because we are lovable or there is something within us He sees as good; rather, we are loved in spite of our sinful rebellion. This is a much greater love, which is what Grace is all about.
- *Sojourners/aliens* here refers to being "resident aliens" (see 1 Peter 1: 1-2). We are not native to the world. We Christians are on a journey, separated

from the home for which we are made—eternity. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are only on this earth temporarily. This is about how we view our place in this world, how we conduct ourselves, and where we place our loyalties (Gen. 23:4; 47:9; Lev. 25:23; 1 Chron. 29:15; Psalm 39:12; 69:8; 119:19; Acts 10:34; Heb 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:1, 17). The saying that “Christianity is not just a destination; it is a journey,” applies here. We are made for heaven and destined to be there in time; meanwhile, we are to live, learn, grow, and show His love and holiness to all those with whom we come in contact.

- *Pilgrims/strangers* conveys a similar thought as above, with the point that we are “God’s people (1 Pet. 2:4-10).” We are not here permanently; rather, we are “pilgrims” on a journey until we reach our permanent home in eternity. Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish philosopher born in 25 B.C., viewed the soul as on a journey and us as strangers in our bodies and in the world. His point, as well as Peter’s, is that we are not made for this world, so let’s make the best of it while we are here for God’s glory. Our “homecoming” will come soon enough.
- *Abstain* means to control sinful desires toward immorality in a pagan culture, and to live as God’s people in a hostile world. The argument is that because we are aliens here on earth, we are called to be separated from the corruption of the world so we should not let it influence us. When we refuse to yield, we will avoid its destructive consequences.
- *Lusts* refers to “fleshy passions” or sexual desires,” things that lure us away from God’s path, holiness, and the character to which He calls us. The call? Stay away from lust! This *lust* here can refer to anything that distracts us from God! Some of the lusts are not wrong. For example, sex is not wrong, but becomes so when our sinful nature gets involved and we pervert or seek to use it against that for which it was designed. Sex is meant for intimacy only between a man and woman who are married to each other (Rom. 1:18-32; Gal. 5:19-21).
- *War*. We are at war with God’s desires versus ours. Thus, we must know what a mortal threat there is to us! Since our soul is not made for this world but for eternity in heaven, it is in foreign occupied territory. Thus, our soul is at war between the ways of God versus the ways of the world. The question is, which side are your heart and mind on (James 4:1-17)?
- *Soul*. We will never truly be able to free our soul from earthly temptations and distractions. We have to learn self-control and to keep our focus on Christ rather than the lure of lust! The philosophers sought to free the soul from earthly passions, producing *Gnosticism*. The call of God is to be on guard so we can still live in a proper, pleasing way to glorify our Lord and people will see Christ exhibited in us!

The Church has taught for centuries that sex is for procreation only and there are still Christian groups proclaiming this. However, this is not what the Bible teaches. Sex was created by God to populate (Genesis 1:28), to express unity (Genesis 2:24), to know your mate (Genesis 4:1), to express love (Genesis 24:67), to meet each other's needs (Genesis 24:67; Deuteronomy 24:5; 1 Peter 3:7), to play (Proverbs 5:19; Song of Songs 2:8-17; 4:1-16; Ecclesiastes 9:9), and to prevent sin (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). Intimacy also includes our being available to our spouse (1 Corinthians 7:3-5), and showing him or her our undivided interest as an expression of love (Song of Songs 4:16; 5:2).

Sex causes a bond and is meant for a sacred occasion. When it is misused, it is devastating to all involved. This is also the reason sexual abuse is so devastating for people! The victim is bonded to his or her attacker in a perverse way, so the act stays in the mind as he or she keeps living it out. So, in the case of abuse or mistakes, we have to be diligent to seek professional counseling to overcome the experience through God's grace, love, and forgiveness. In a marriage, where one or both of the spouses were not previously faithful, extra work and care needs to go into the relationship to seek the healing and forgiveness of that broken bond (Gen. 2:24-25; 34:1-3, 8; Prov. 5:15 -22; Rom. 8:12-17; 1 Cor. 6: 12-20; 7:3-5; 2 Cor. 10:5-6; Eph. 1:3; 2:4-10; 5:21-32; Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 13:4).

Vs. 12: We are called to be careful how we live. People will be watching us wherever we go; how we are, and what we are will be scrutinized. Therefore, we must strive to do our best, so our Lord is represented with excellence through us. Even if we never do wrong, we may be accused of wrong. However, character always triumphs because it convicts those who do not have it. They will see Christ through us, but we have to remain firm in our trust and obedience in Him. Others have the option to believe in Christ, but the key may be in how you remain faithful to Him as His witness!

- *Conduct.* A modern reflection in this context is "traditional family values." We are to act nobly to others in spite of how they may treat us. We must work out a biblical character balance between exhibiting holiness and setting boundaries from potential harm. In Peter's time, Christians were accused of being cannibals because of the Lord's Supper, of being disloyal and atheists because they did not worship Caesar (John 19:12), of causing civil unrest (Acts 16:16-24), of being hateful because they did not participate in pagan practices (Col. 2:16), of teaching that slaves are free (1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 3:30), and of being antisocial (Acts 15:29).
- *Gentiles* normally refers to anyone who is not born in or converted to Judaism. Here, it is referring to those who are anti-Jewish or anti-Christian who use their agenda to slander and manipulate those who are in God. It means when we make a commitment to Christ, people will come against us either because

they do not understand or they refuse to know or be convicted, and we become a threat to their complacency and smugness.

- *They observe/see your good deeds* refers to people who are “carefully watching” what we do over a period of time to determine whether it is good (Matt. 5:16). This is about our influence on the unbeliever!
- *Day of visitation/the day He visits us* refers to God’s coming in judgment (Isa. 10:3; 60:3). This phrase can also mean when God “visits” someone and gives him or her salvation. Here, it means that when the end times occur, the Gentiles will finally recognize God’s sovereignty. Some commentators have stated that this means the return of Christ. Perhaps so, but this is problematic because of context and the quotes from Isaiah.

We are called to have lifestyle, character, outlook on life, and behavior that is about living honorably! Who and how we are make up the things we bring with us into eternity that will echo and resound, so let our actions be worthy of His praise. In this way, we can be the windows through which people can see Christ.

The attitude in this passage is like that of a missionary who studies a culture and then lives among those people. His or her job is to learn and to model Christ, but he or she is never an active part of or consumed by the culture. He or she is to be active in representing Christ and the virtues He proclaims as ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). The call is to remain in Christ and in His percepts and virtue, and not become contaminated by what the world offers us. What may seem good may be misleading and will cause us to rot physically by disdain and disease, erode our mind with dysfunction and false thinking, and then eat away our soul spiritually.

As we are the mirrors of Christ, He is seen by who we are. When we stand up for the faith and act in good character, people will come against us with gossip and slander because their plans become disrupted and their desires are found guilty. But, when we remain faithful, regardless of the circumstances, they will see virtue and honor in action and, thus, have a glimpse in God’s character and call even if they reject Him and seek to kill us. There will be times when it seems our efforts are weighted because people do not listen or do not repent. But, they are not. Each action we share is looked upon by others. We are watched! So, when we live to honor God, people will have the example they need to accept His grace or reject Him. We may never see the fruits, but they are there. We have a God who will judge and return, so let us get busy and make sure all those who come across our path see Him in us!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?

2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me? How am I encouraged and strengthened?
4. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
5. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
6. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
7. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
8. What can I model and teach? What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Have you ever backslidden or turned your back on God? How so, and why? What made you return to Him?
2. What are some of the things that distract you from loving and worshiping our Lord? What are some of the things that cause you or others oppression or enticement?
3. What does it mean to you to live honorably? How have you succeeded? How have you failed? Remember, we all succeed and fail at times!
4. What happens when we are the ones being influenced from the ways and evils of the world? How do they entice you and lead you away from His loving and best plan for you?
5. Does knowing that we are not made for this world, but made for eternity give you hope and confidence? How can this eternal thinking help you stick it out in life and do all that you are called to do with excellence?
6. What does it mean that we are here on this earth to live and learn, to experience and grow? How can this mindset help us personally and passionately to know Christ more so others can see Christ exhibited in us?
7. What do you need to do to stay away from evil desires? What can be a mortal threat to you? Which side is your heart and mind on (James 4:1-17)?
8. How does thinking in a wrong or dysfunctional way affect all you are and do?

9. What does it mean to act nobly to others? How can we do this in spite of how they may treat us?
10. What can you do to work out a biblical character balance between exhibiting holiness and setting boundaries from potential harm?
11. What does it mean to your self-esteem that Christ says you are His friend, that you are dear, cherished, and fully and deeply loved by Him? How can this help your outlook to the church, community, and people who are close to you?
12. What is a place or situation that may need your positive, godly influence? What will you do about it? When will you do it?

Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Psalm 119:1

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