

ABSTAIN FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD – 1 PETER 2:11-17

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12]Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. [13]Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, [14]or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. [15]For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. [16]Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. [17]Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (ESV)

Abstain from the passions of the flesh – 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Timothy 6:3-11, 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Corinthians 10:14, Colossians 3:5-8, Romans 13:14

What are “passions of the flesh”? – Galatians 5:16-24, James 4:1, Ephesians 2:1-3

“The carnal desires Peter has in view may include, but are not limited to, sexual sin; the noun (*epithymion*) is used elsewhere to refer to any uncurbed human impulse.” - Jobes

What does it mean that these passions war “against the soul”? - Matthew 16:24-26, Romans 7:17-8:13

Why keep your conduct honorable?

- For God – Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 1:15-18, 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2 Peter 3:11, 1 Peter 4:16
- For Others – Matthew 5:14-16, 1 Peter 2:15, Titus 2:7-8

What is “the day of visitation”?

- Peter frequently points to Christ’s return – 1 Peter 1:5,7,13; 4:7,13,17; 5:1
- Other examples of visitation – Luke 1:68, 7:16, 19:41-44; Genesis 50:24-25, Jeremiah 29:4-14

When will those who speak against you glorify God?

- Some will glorify God in this life – 1 Peter 3:1, 1 Peter 3:15-16, Acts 6:8-15, 7:54-60
- All will one day glorify God – Philippians 2:9-11, Revelation 5:13

“The day of visitation should probably be understood as a reference to the future final judgment, by which time Peter hopes that unbelievers who have observed the good works of the Christians they have slandered will have come to faith in Christ. The future visitation of God in Christ will be a day of blessing for God’s holy nation but a day of judgment and condemnation for the nations who are not God’s people. The witness of a sustained good lifestyle by Christians who are being maligned by their society will be a testimony on the final day of judgment, which will vindicate the Christian’s faith. Those who reject the gospel will be condemned by their own harsh judgment of Christians, who refused to indulge in the values and practices of an ungodly society.” – Jobes

Be subject to every human institution – Matthew 17:24-27, Matthew 22:15-22, Romans 13:1-7, Titus 3:1-3, 1 Timothy 2:1-6, John 18:36, 19:11; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

“Submission to the state and its laws is one of the means by which Christians are helped to fight against sin with their own lives. Even an ungodly state can enact wise laws which are designed to restrain evil behavior and Christians will wish to recognize that, for the Lord’s sake, it would be wise for them to conform to the law, as a means of fighting against sin.” - MacLeay

Live as people who are free – Romans 6:16-22, Galatians 5:13-14

Not just abstain from evil but also do good

1. Honor everyone
2. Love the brotherhood – John 13:34-35, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 5:1
3. Fear God – 1 Peter 1:17
4. Honor the emperor

“Peter’s instructions are firmly positive toward the Roman emperor and provincial governors. He seems to assume that if Christians live as good citizens, the ruling authorities will look with favor upon them – or at least not trouble them. His assumption must be considered in the attempt to date this letter. It is difficult to imagine such an irenic exhortation being issued during the time of Nero’s horrific persecution of the church in Rome or anytime after Christians began being martyred by state-sponsored persecution – especially in comparison with the attitude toward Rome presented in the later book of Revelation. The relatively optimistic outlook reflected here comports better with the earlier decades of the church, toward the end of the reign of Claudius or the very beginning of Nero’s. At that time Christians were socially and perhaps professionally ostracized in various ways, but they had not yet suffered state-sponsored persecution as a matter of policy.” – Jobes

Questions to consider (from MacLeay except where noted)

1. How are verses 13-17 and application of verses 11-12?
2. Are there “good” things you could do in your own community which might have the effect of silencing opposition to the gospel?
3. In what sort of ways could Christians be better at making an impact on our society?
4. What [is your] attitude toward the government at both local and national level?
5. What about situations where the state does not punish evildoers and commend good deeds, but where Christians are punished and evil is rewarded? – Acts 4:19, 5:29
6. How do pro-life Christians honor a pro-choice president? (Piper)