

BELOVED

You didn't belong at all.

You were not His people.

But now you have received mercy.

Now, you are God's beloved!

Life was hard for "the diaspora." Peter knew what these hardships were like firsthand, and has spent a good part of this letter reminding these sojourners of the precious One to whom they now belong. Sometimes we need the reminder of what we are to be doing, and who are we doing it for because life gets hard.

Maybe you even need the reminder today that the difficult things in your life are not caused, nor allowed by an unfeeling, self-absorbed deity that is playing some large game with you as the pawn. Maybe you need the reminder that you are loved completely with a self-sacrificial love. A love that is ultimately and always faithful in your relationship, He's seeking your best.

It's so easy to lose focus, and forget, when our eyes start looking at the world around us, rather than on our Living Hope, so, I commend you for continuing on in the word of God, Keep on studying and seeking His thoughts and plans for you.

As we begin today, read 1 Peter 2:11-12.

Peter has established the blessings of belonging to God, the basis of their joy, now he moves on to the crux of this letter, laying out some instructions as to their role in

1 Peter - Week 4, Day 1

representing their loving God in this foreign land. Leaving their homes because of persecution didn't mean they would escape suffering altogether, living for God in this fallen world will bring persecution on various levels, however, our choices can make the difference between them having ammunition to use against us, or not. Even choices that seem small can have large ramifications. There's no such thing as a small sin in God's economy.

What does Peter say in v 11 that we are to do regarding "fleshly lusts"?

What does he say those lusts are doing?

This is serious business. Sin is not to be taken lightly, Jesus certainly didn't. Your soul weighs in the balance, for sin breaks our fellowship with God, not to mention destroying our testimony to others. Doesn't that defeat the very purpose God has left us here for?

I briefly mentioned "lusts" in Week 2, when we talked about the "former lust which were yours in your ignorance" mentioned in Ch. 1, v 14, and since it's such an important aspect of living life here on earth, it's probably good to look at it a little deeper.

Read 1 John 2:16.

As we break this verse down, we see three patterns of sin that can take hold of us. As mentioned before, every sin we commit falls under one of these three categories.

1 Peter - Week 4, Day 1

Dr. Welch explains the three categories of sin listed in 1 John 2:16:

- *"lust of the flesh" = (sensuality) is the satisfaction of the senses and covers a broad spectrum of sins. It is related to touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. We are to abstain from sinful things that come from satisfying our senses. This is not only related to sexual sins, but any sin that relates to our senses including, and not limited to sins of overeating, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.*
- *"lust of the eyes" = (materialism) is the inappropriate ordering of priorities with a focus on the accumulation and control of material assets or things. We are to abstain from making material things our priority. Sins of coveting, envy, poor stewardship.*
- *"the pride of life" = (ego) is the elevation of one's self in the pursuit of approbation and praise and in the pursuit of power and control. We are to abstain the idea of an inflated self-worth. Pride can even come in the form of a show of humility.*

Recognizing any patterns in your own life yet? Sometimes they seem to overlap, or at different times, one maybe more prominent than other times.

What type of behavior are we suppose to have, according to v 12?

Knowing the stem of our sin pattern can help us keep our "behavior excellent" among the unbelievers around us, as we are then able to avoid the "triggers" or temptations. It goes back to "preparing your mind for action" in Chapter 1:13. You know, Satan and his minions are very good at the art of subtlety in order to woo us into sin. They have declared war against your soul and, we just naturally walk right into trouble because we want what he's offering. God says, "abstain!" and He gives us His Spirit to empower us to just say "no."

1 Peter - Week 4, Day 1

It's really hard to do God's will and represent Him when we are set on living like the world.

It's equally as hard to try to live "good" on the basis of our own willpower! If we are going to keep our behavior excellent, then we better stay in step with His Spirit.

What does 2 Timothy 1:7 say about the power He's given us?

There is never a sin we must give in to. What does Galatians 5:16 say is the answer?

It is possible to keep our behavior excellent, even living with our naturally sinful nature, even among those who aren't believers. The key is living and walking by the power of the Spirit of God constantly and consistently! Jesus was our example of that, living in constant fellowship.

Even then, Peter says, we can still expect to be slandered. They hated Christ, we can know they will hate His followers. If our minds are prepared with all truth, and our behavior is honest to who we are in Christ, their slander will have no negative impact. Quite opposite.

Look back at 1 Peter 2:12 - this "so that" explains why we are to endure by keeping our selves under God's power. This is the purpose of why we are sojourning in a foreign land.

What is the end goal?

It's astounding to think that the way we live can bring glory to God. It's only possible when we let His Spirit control us, rather than our old sinful self. Let's live Godly and biblically today, representing God well, so that in the thing they slander us they will find no proof, but instead, see only good deeds that bring Him glory, for we are His own, we are His beloved.

1 Peter - Week 4, Day 1

Review

- Text: 1 Peter 2:11-12
- Life is hard, but you are Beloved (1 Peter 2:11)
- Abstain from fleshly lusts (1 John 2:16)
 - Lust of the Flesh - Sins of the senses
 - Lust of the Eyes - Materialism
 - Pride of life - Ego
- Maintain Excellent Behavior (1 Peter 2:12)
- His Spirit is power (2 Timothy 1:7, Galatians 5:16)