"Abstain From Fleshly Lusts"

I Peter 2:11-12

11-21-2021

INTRODUCTION:

***We as Christians must abstain from fleshly lusts!**

Four motivating reasons:

I. We are *"FOREIGNERS"* to the lustful lifestyles of the world (v. 11a)

II. We face a MILITARY CAMPAIGN against our souls (v. 11b)

III. We have a TESTIMONY to uphold (v. 12a)

IV. We desire God to be GLORIFIED (v. 12b)

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INTRODUCTION:

Abstinence is not a popular subject in this day of lawlessness, no self-control, pre-occupation with personal fulfillment.

V. 11

"Abstain" - lit. to hold one's self away from; to remove yourself (NOTE: This requires a knowledge of what's right and wrong for you; a conviction to abstain from the wrong; and the personal decision to remove yourself from it).

EX: To push yourself away from the table (of the "food" this world offers)

EX: To avoid the alleys (roads) that lead to such sinful ways and practices

"Fleshly" - (*sarkikos)* - that which pertains to the flesh; i.e. the impulses which belong to the selfish and lower side of man's nature (Reinecker, p. 752).

The adjective *"fleshly"* is used to qualify and define the *"lusts"* Peter speaks about.

"Lusts" - (*epithumia* - lit. to be hot toward something; to passionately desire something)

NOTE: This word basically refers to strong desires or appetites. To have desires and appetites is not necessarily sinful; they are sinful when they are *fleshly"* appetites - that is, the old nature crying out for that which is against the will of God.

An "appetite" becomes sin when we seek to satisfy it outside of the boundaries or limits that God has established for our benefit.

A fleshly lust is an obsession to satisfy any appetite to an extreme (too much) or in a twisted (perverted) manner [wrong way]).

--A covetousness toward something not belonging to you (Exod. 20:17 - *"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."*

--An obsession with sexual matters

--An uncontrollable appetite for food (gluttony)

--An uncontrollable appetite for sleep (laziness)

--A greed for money or material goods

--Substance abuse of alcohol or drugs

--A desire for revenge

--A thirst for fame or success

The motive behind most obsessive fleshly lusts is self-pleasure (which is a prime characteristic of society in the last days - II Tim. 3:4).

A catalog of the lusts of the flesh is listed in Galatians 5:17-21

***"Beloved"* =** Peter is addressing people who are the special objects of God's love.

God loves the world (Jn. 3:16), but He has a special love for His own children. We are loved by the God of the universe! Nothing can sever us from that love (Rom. 8).

Knowing God's love for us is the greatest motivating power to fulfill the imperatives Peter is about to give.

***We as Christians must abstain from fleshly lusts!**

Four motivating reasons:

I. We are *"FOREIGNERS"* to the lustful lifestyles of the world (v. 11a)

"Beseech" - to appeal as a friend, to warmly encourage or to urge with a heart of care and concern.

The Holy Spirit inspired Peter to give a rousing, positive encouragement to God's people to do right (cp. Rom. 12:1).

"Strangers" - lit. one who dwells in a foreign land (cp. 1:1); an alien; to live outside of your real homeland; to live in a place not your own. Hymn: "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through. . ."

"Pilgrim" - one who travels to a land foreign to him; a traveller who is away from home; a sojourner in a strange place. "This world suggests a visitor making a brief stay" (EX: when I went to India in 1994).

Whereas the first word ***"strangers"*** emphasizes the idea of one staying in a foreign home, this word ***"pilgrims"*** emphasizes the brevity of the visit.
Like Abraham, Moses, and Daniel or old, we look for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:8-16).

The fact that we are ***"strangers and pilgrims"*** in this world teaches these truths:

1) We should not feel at home in this *kosmos* (we should have a longing [a great affection and loyalty to] for our true homeland [heaven] - "*our citizenship is in heaven"*)

2) As long as we are in this world, there should be in our lives as Christians a certain detachment (Stibbs, cited by Reinecker, p. 752) (we are not married to the things and ways of this world).

3) We are only here on "temporary visas" that could expire any day (the brevity of our stay should affect how deep our roots get

4) The customs, practices, and lifestyles of the people here may not match our own

> Our standards of living received from our native land - Heaven - are superior to those of the pagan culture in which we live (Hiebert, p. 155).

The ways of the world are not necessarily our ways. What they do here is often not what we do. Their manner of living (their entertainment and pleasures) does not match our own.

So Peter appeals to us to ***"abstain from fleshly lusts"*** based on the fact that we are ***"strangers and pilgrims"*** here. Because we are foreigners to this world, our lifestyle should be foreign.

II. We face a <u>MILITARY CAMPAIGN</u> against our souls (v. 11b)

"War" - to wage a military campaign (be ready for continual warfare).

Lust leads to <u>sin</u> and sin leads to <u>death</u> (James 1:15).

"War" - to fight, battle, combat against. The fleshly lusts fight against the inner soul of man.

The world ***"soul"*** here is used practically synonymously with the world ***"spirit."***

When we don't have the discipline to abstain from the lusts of our old nature (and we give in and yield), we strike at and wound our spiritual life (this attacking does not rob of us our salvation; but it does rob us of victory in living the Christian life).

Whatever nature you feed the most will dominate in your life (ILLUS: the Indian and the 2 dogs).

These fleshly lusts are enemies to your <u>growth</u>, <u>service</u>, <u>witness</u>, <u>joy</u>, <u>worship</u>, etc.

When we give in to a fleshly lust, we feel most miserable because we have grieved the Holy Spirit and have opened the door for the accuser of the brethren tot stir up doubt and discouragement in our hearts.

"Our real battle is not with people around us, but with passions within us" (Wiersbe, p. 404).

D. L. Moody said: "I have more trouble with D.L Moody than with any man I know": (cited by Wiersbe, p. 404).

III. We have a <u>TESTIMONY</u> to uphold (v. 12a)

"Conversation" - manner of life; conduct; behavior; way of living.

"Honest" = excellent; morally good

Gentiles" = the nations of the world; the heathen, pagans.

Every Christian's lifestyle must be above reproach even among the heathen w ho think nothing contrary to indulging in sexual immorality (they may do it, but we cannot)

"They speak against you" - the pagan world is looking for reasons to discredit Christianity, the Bible, Church, or anything related to Christ.

"<u>As</u> evildoers" - God's people must never be doers of evil, but many times we will be treated (talked about) <u>as</u> if we were.

"If you have ever lived in a foreign land, you know that the citizens watch you and are prone to find things to criticize (in all fairness, we must confess that sometimes we are critical of foreigners in our own country)" (Wiersbe, p. 404).

"Suffering for righteousness" is the major theme of I Peter (SEE: 2:19-21; 3:13-18; 4:12-16)

"Behold" - to observe carefully; to look upon or view as a spectator

Our lives are being scrutinized by the world (I think one reason they examine us so closely is that they want to see if what we have is for real. Does having Christ affect one's life practically?)

Believers live like "pheasants under glass" (EX: window shopping; in a fish bowl).

As your unregenerate family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc., evaluate your life, do they see ***"good works"***? Or do they see a Christian who indulges in fleshly lusts?

IV. We desire God to be <u>GLORIFIED</u> (v. 12b)

"Glorify" -hold a high opinion of; to give God the praise and credit He so rightly deserves

The reason for our *"good works"* is always that God be glorified (Mt. 5:16 - *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven")*

Glorifying God and leading others to do the same is why you were created.

"In [the] day of visitation" - Views:

1. The day He knocks on their heart's door (there is a particular day of "salvation" - I Cor. 6:2 - *"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold today is the day of salvation")*

** 2. The day Christ returns at the Rapture (when Jesus visits earth again - the word *"visitation"* was used of Christ's first coming - Lk. 19:44 - *"And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."*)

3. The day of the Lord's Judgment immediately after the Rapture (Is. 10:3)

Does your life refute any charge that may be brought up against you?

"Do our lives commend Jesus Christ in such a way that our enemies ultimately will be forced to bring glory to God by confessing that they saw the truth in our lives?" (Barbieri, p. 51).