

Canceled
A Roadmap for Living In Exile
1 Peter 2:11-17
Act Like You Know Who You Are!

Intro: In the previous verses Peter reminded the believers living as exiles in Asia Minor, and consequently us as well, of who they are. Peter wrote,

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Peter then launches from this incredibly inspirational truth of who we are as followers of Christ, to a very straightforward conversation on how we ought to act given who we are! We are not of this world but of His Kingdom, and as such we have a purpose to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (2:9). As such, Peter makes it very clear that our conduct needs to demonstrate who we are AND serve our purpose. Most of the rest of letter is going to flesh this out in very practical scenarios. Its why D.R. Helm wrote,

“In a very real way these two verses function as the threshold to the remainder of the letter. Enter through them and you enter fully into the home of 1 Peter, where rooms upon rooms explore how the beloved are to live. From here on we learn of true grace (5:12) in action—what it looks like to stand firm while living far from our heavenly home.”¹

So, let’s get started in our study of the rest of this incredible letter called first Peter! Today we are going to look at 1 Peter 1:11-17.

Proposition: 1 Peter 1:11-17 gives us 4 instructions on how we are supposed to live.

The first instruction is ...

(1) Don’t make room for your sinful desires. (2:11)

A. 11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

B. Imagine you live in a city and an army showed up and set up camp outside the city walls. There is no doubt of their intentions. They have announced they are there to conquer and control you. The problem is your city is a part of a great Kingdom with freedom and power. Your kingdom is full of the opportunity to live! However, the army encamped outside your city serves a dark King who

¹ Helm, D. R. (2008). [*1 & 2 Peter and Jude: sharing christ's sufferings*](#) (p. 80). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

enslaves and terrorizes his people for selfish gain. He promises happiness but it always ends in misery and bondage. Your King has sent word that this army is coming to destroy you and will likely attack in ways you would never expect. Therefore, the King ordered your city to place guards on the towers at all times; guards who will stay alert for any activity that appears to be the precursor of an attack. However, one night, as the guards in the tower closely watched the enemies camp, they noticed everyone there seemed to be having tons of fun! About that time some of the enemy soldiers approached the wall and called up to the guards and invited them to join them. They assured the guards, that despite what both Kings had clearly communicated, they would never follow through with destroying them. They said their plan was just to keep camping outside the city having fun until their King told them to come back home! As they looked across the field, they saw the campfires and heard the laughter of what seemed to be a huge celebration, and they thought to themselves, these people seem innocent enough, after all, how could an army that serves an evil King have that much fun? How could an army of darkness appear to have so much light? Could their King really be that evil? The more they listened to the celebrations, the more they thought, these people can't be that bad! So, they decided to sneak out of the city and join the party. They were so excited to get in on the fun. The enemy raised up a ladder for them to climb down off the tower and head over to the party. The closer they got to the party the more they could see the enjoyment of those in the enemy's camp, so much so that by the time they got to the camp they truly felt everything was going to be ok, not just in the party, but for their entire city. How could anybody having this much fun ever be a threat! Furthermore, how are you supposed to understand your enemy if you've never walked in their shoes and seen life through their eyes? However, the moment they walked into the camp the enemy stripped them of their weapons, killed them and tossed them into the fire. The enemy then sent soldiers with more ladders to climb the now abandon tower and attack the city from the most strategic position in their entire city! The place of protection had now become the place of attack.

- C. Now first, let me assure you, in no way is my illustration suggesting people who don't know Jesus are trying to kill us, nor that we are at war with them. In my illustration the city is our soul, and the enemy is sin and Satan!
- D. In addition, you may think my illustration is a little extreme, however, Peter is very much using extreme language to try and get his readers to understand just how important this subject matter is!
- E. The tone is set by the word "Beloved." It's an obvious term of endearment and care but when used at the beginning of a sentence it expresses a high degree of urgency and importance to what's about to be communicated. It's a way of saying because I love you, you need to pay special close attention to what I'm saying and as such never forget it!

- F. He then follows up the word “beloved” with the phrase, “I urge you”! K.S. Wuest noted, **“The Greek word “beseech” is literally, “I exhort, urge, I beg of you, please.” While it is Peter writing, yet it is the great God of the universe saying to His blood-bought children, “I beg of you, please.””**²
- G. The phrase “passions of the flesh” is not any passions, but lusts or desires that stand in opposition to God because they are not meant to serve or honor him but rather to serve an honor yourself! They are rooted in the part of us that is opposed to God rather than submitted to Him.
- H. So, putting that all together, Peter is begging them to abstain, that is, to have nothing to do with the sinful passions. Not only should we never give them the benefit of the doubt, but we should also completely abandon them, and as such, give them no room in our life whatsoever; no opportunity to even consider the idea of appeasing them! I beg you!!!
- I. The reason is that these desires are waging WAR against life itself! Sin and Satan are waging a war against you to own you. All the freedom of life and living; those sinful passions within you are using instant gratification and short-term gain as the temptation to own, rule and as such destroy everything in you that has to do with life and living!

The second instruction is to ...

(2) Live in a way that causes others to eventually praise God! (2:12)

- A. **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.**
- B. **“Gentiles”** – most scholars believe he is using this not to identify people that are not Jewish but rather, metaphorically to categorize those who are not followers of Christ.
- C. **“Honorable”** – implies that both what is done and why it’s done are praiseworthy. That is, what is done is valuable and as such it matters. In addition, the motives for why it’s done are morally and ethically pure. Both are key for something to be truly honorable.
- D. **“speak against you as evildoers”** – slander you as a person who is doing deceitful and terrible things that unjustly harm others.

² Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 11, pp. 58–59). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

E. “the day of visitation” – Some view this as pointing to the return of Christ and the judgement seat. However, critics of this viewpoint to the wrath of God that will be poured out on that day, and thus, the likelihood that nobody in that moment will be glorifying God. Others view this as meaning the day when the Holy Spirit softens the heart of the lost, convicts them of their sin and saves them by God’s grace. It is on that day they will praise God for the good works done by the Christians around them that testified of the worthiness of living their lives in total submission to Him, loving Him with all their heart and loving others as He loves them, no matter how they are treated! The second view seems to me to be most supported interpretation. To read more check out my notes online.

1. “The startling conclusion of verse 12 is open to various interpretations (see Isa. 10:3; Luke 19:44). Scholars try to determine when and how unbelievers glorify God. First, some say that the phrase *the day he visits us* refers to the last day of this age when God judges everyone. But we can hardly expect unbelievers to glorify God on that day when they receive their condemnation. Next, other scholars are of the opinion that Peter thinks of a trial before earthly magistrates. Still others believe that God’s visitation is one of grace and mercy whereby non-Christians accept the offer of salvation and glorify God in thankfulness. This view seems to offer the best interpretation, for then the expression *glorify God* is meaningful (Matt. 5:16).”³
2. “2:12. The negative exhortation of verse 11 is now followed by positive instruction. A positive Christian lifestyle is a powerful means of convicting the world of its sin (cf. Matt. 5:16). Peter used the word **good** (*kalos*) twice in this verse to define both Christians’ **lives** and their works. A “good” life is composed of **good deeds** (cf. Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; Titus 3:8; James 2:18). Before the critical eyes of slanderous people and their false accusations, the “good deeds” of believers can **glorify God** (cf. Matt. 5:16; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 6:20) and win others to belief. **On the day He visits** is literally “in the day of [His] visitation” (*en hēmera episkopēs*; cf. Luke 19:44). Some say this refers to God’s “visiting” or looking on the wicked in judgment, but it probably refers to their salvation (i.e., when God looks in on them in His mercy and brings them to conversion; cf. *epeskepsato*, Acts 15:14)”⁴
3. “**in the day of visitation**” This refers to any time that God draws near, either for blessing or for judgment (cf. Isa. 10:3; Jer. 8:12; 10:15; 11:23; 23:12; 46:21; 48:44; 50:27; 51:18; Hos. 9:7; Mic. 7:4). It can be temporal or eschatological (cf. Luke 19:44). Some see this as relating to believers on trial,

³ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). [*Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*](#) (Vol. 16, pp. 96–97). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

⁴ Raymer, R. M. (1985). [1 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 846). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

but in context it seems to refer to any opportunity for the unsaved to hear and respond to Jesus as Savior before they face Him as Judge.”⁵

- F.** So, putting this all together, Peter has now transitioned from a priority of what not to do in verse 11, to what we should do in verse 12. He makes it clear that it’s not just the war on our own soul that he’s addressing, but also the very real effect our conduct has on our purpose of **proclaiming the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light!**
- G.** As massively important as it is to not destroy your own life with sin, there is still another reason we need to act right, and it has to do with how it effects our purpose.
- H.** He says, don’t give in to the desires of the flesh, but instead, live HONORABLY among the Gentiles; that is, let your conduct have such a positive impact on others that when the Holy Spirit finally opens their eyes to repent and believe in Him they start praising God for how He used you in their life! Specifically he says when the people who used to accuse you of being evil doers finally meet Jesus they will then realize they were dead wrong in their accusations!
- I.** When they finally see the HONOR that is due to the LORD, they will praise God that they saw conduct from you who they once accused of being evil, to actually be somebody who brought life to others! Live in such a way that when they finally meet Jesus, they will see that your actions, attitudes, and words resemble the actions, attitudes and words of Jesus! Live with such honorably conduct that when they finally understand who Jesus is, they will see where it all came from and as such PRAISE HIM!
- J.** When people slander somebody as being an evildoer, they most often do so by attacking their motives. You generally don’t have to convince people that somebody who’s doing something that’s obviously evil is an evildoer. So, for somebody to undermine the honor that would come to the Church for all the honorable things churches do in their communities, they need to attack the motives of the Church. They need to somehow convince people that what’s really going on is deceitful, dubious and in the end evil. If they can convince others that a person’s conduct is actually evil, then they can justify the person being reviled or even punished.
- K.** For instance, as Christians defend life in the womb we are accused of hating women. Pro-Life men are accused of being misogynistic male chauvinists and Pro-Life women are accused of being brainwashed and controlled by misogynistic male chauvinists! The love that the typical Pro-life person has for both the mother and the child is “slandered” as something it’s not.

⁵ Utley, R. J. D. (2000). [*The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*](#) (Vol. Volume 2, p. 231). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

L. A perfect example of this is growing within the Pro-Choice movement. Ironically, the Pro-choice movement which used to say it didn't encourage abortion, only the opportunity to choose, is now increasingly becoming a very open Pro-Abortion movement that sees being a mother as a tactic to enslave women. To no surprise then, those in this movement are now publicly slandering Pro-life organizations like the Crisis Pregnancy Centers. These attacks are not just on social media and cable new shows, but literally being offered in official speeches on the floor of the United States Senate. For instance, this past summer, Senator Elizabeth Warren and Senator Robert Menendez introduced a bill called the "*Stop Anti-Abortion Disinformation Act.*" In Senator Warren's speech to introduce this bill to the United States Senate she accused Crisis Pregnancy Centers of unethical and dangerous practices. She said in her speech, "Deception is at the heart of the operation for many CPCs,"⁶ and "We must do everything we can to ensure that patients get the health care and reproductive services that they need – and that includes protecting patients from the deceptive practices of some so-called "crisis pregnancy centers," or CPCs."⁷ She claims that when CPC offers "free abortion consultations" they are deceiving women because CPC's consultation focuses on the negative impacts of an abortion in an attempt to consult women on why they shouldn't have an abortion, rather than why they should. Both Senator Warren and Menendez communicated that if a CPC convinces a woman to not get an abortion, something they could still walk right out of the CPC and do whatever they want, that somehow those women have been denied "services that they need."⁸ In other words, if a woman, after seeing her baby on an ultrasound, and finding out how the CPC can help her with her pregnancy; if she decides she no longer needs an abortion, Senators Warren and Menendez claim her beliefs of her own needs are now incorrect. The woman, that they claim to want to have a choice, is no longer capable of making the right choice if she is indeed given all her available options to make a choice! They suggest it is only ethical to give somebody encouragement to do whatever they want, rather than give them all the facts so they can objectively decide what they want! They are literally defending the nonsensical and totally self-defeating position that a woman can't possibly have the right perspective of her needs if she is allowed to know all the information about her pregnancy and the resources available to her as a mother! It's completely irrational! Senator Warren and Menendez's slanderous attacks are not new. Their rhetoric, as well as others on the left who agree with them, has fueled attacks on CPC centers around the country. On July 17, 2022, The Boston Globe reported nearly 60 facilities had been attacked in just the previous two and half months.⁹ Centers right here in our region of North Carolina were even attacked.

⁶ <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/icymi-on-senate-floor-warren-calls-for-crackdown-on-deceptive-and-misleading-practices-used-by-many-crisis-pregnancy-centers>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/07/17/opinion/attacks-pregnancy-centers-like-attacks-abortion-clinics-should-be-intolerable/>

- M. So, what are we to do when people like Warren and Menendez say such outrageously egregious things about us. What are we to do when they slander us and call us evildoers. Well,
- N. **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.**
- O. Honorable is not mocking those who disagree with us. Honorable is not standing outside of Congress with pictures of these Senators with horns coming out their heads. Honorable is not throwing blood all over their cars. I believe Senator Warren and Menendez sincerely believe they are doing what's best for women. I believe they are sincerely wrong, but I believe they are nonetheless, of the full belief, that they are protecting women and thus morally righteous in their attacks. As wrong as their specific application of their desire to protect a woman is, it's still not of itself evil to want to protect a woman. For instance, I think we can all agree that if a pregnancy legitimately threatens the life of a mother, then that mother should have the right to decide if she wants to take that risk or not, and I think we can all fully agree she should be totally supported if she decides to terminate the pregnancy.
- P. So, meanwhile, as we endure being labeled evil doers for trying to save a baby and help a mother, our behavior in this world ought to be so honorable, that when God's grace finally opens the eyes of the lost who slander us as evil doers, they flip from attacking us, to instead praising God for the testimony of the love and character that had shined through us to them!
- Q. Jesus said,
- R. **14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)**
- S. Now on the flip side of this,

The third instruction is to ...

(3) Do so much good it makes false accusers look ridiculous. – (2:13-15)

- A. **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.

- B. “Verse thirteen** The words “submit yourselves” are the translation of a Greek military term meaning “to arrange in military fashion under the command of a leader.” One could translate, “put yourselves in the attitude of submission to.” The exhortation is not merely to obey ordinances, but to create and maintain that attitude of heart which will always lead one to obey them. “Ordinances of man” refer to human institutions, such as the laws of the land. Christians are to do this because of their testimony to the Lord Jesus. ... The words “put to silence” are the translation of a Greek word which means “to close the mouth with a muzzle.” It was used of the muzzling of an ox (I Cor. 9:9). It means here, “to reduce to silence.” Matthew uses it (22:34) of our Lord putting the Sadducees to silence, and Mark, of stilling the storm on the Sea of Galilee (4:39). The word “ignorance” in the Greek text speaks of want of knowledge, not in the sense of want of acquaintance, but want of understanding. The word “foolish” is the translation of a Greek word speaking of lack of reason, reflection, and intelligence.”¹⁰
- C. “2:13 “submit”** This is an AORIST PASSIVE IMPERATIVE, but NASB and NKJV translate it as a MIDDLE (cf. 2:18). “Yourselves” is not in the Greek text. It implies that they are to make a decisive choice to submit (cf. 2:18; 3:1). This is a military term used for the chain of command. It literally means “to arrange oneself under authority.” This is a common theme of Peter (cf. 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5, 22; 5:5). Submission does not imply inequality, for Jesus is described by this term. It is an attitude of service under authority. In Eph. 5:21 it is one of the five characteristics of the Spirit-filled life (mutual submission to one another in Christ).”¹¹
- D.** “As the representative of Roman authority the governor had the power to inflict punishment on condemned criminals. The governor received this power from the emperor and the emperor received it from God. Thus Jesus said to Pilate, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above” (John 19:11). Paul parallels Peter’s teaching on the role of government, for he points out that rebelling “against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted” (Rom. 13:2). Paul adds that the one in authority is “God’s servant to do you good” and “an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:4). The role of the magistrate, then, is to restrain evil, maintain law and order, and promote the welfare of the people.”¹²

¹⁰ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 11, pp. 60–61). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

¹¹ Utley, R. J. D. (2000). *The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter* (Vol. Volume 2, p. 231). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

¹² Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). *Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude* (Vol. 16, p. 100). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

- E. “silence”** This is literally “muzzle” (cf. Mark 1:25, 4:39). **“the ignorance”** This refers to someone who lacks spiritual discernment (cf. 1 Cor. 15:34). **“of foolish men”** This term is listed in a series of sins in Mark 7:22. It describes unbelieving Jewish teachers in Rom. 3:20, but it is used to describe believers in Eph. 5:17. Therefore, it implies a lazy mental state that affects both the saved and the unsaved. Here it refers to uninformed pagans who are accusing believers of things which are not true.”¹³
- F.** This builds off the previous instruction in verse 12 by adding a specific way to live honorably. Peter is saying if you want to live honorably then you live in submission to every human institution that has been given authority over you in this life. Now understand, Peter is writing this while Nero, one of the most, if not the most, psychopathic, narcissistic, flat out evil emperors that ever ruled the Roman Empire was in charge!
- G.** Specifically, scholars are unsure exactly when Peter wrote this letter, but most conservative scholars believe it was either slightly before or right after Nero insighted on of the worst persecutions of Christians in Roman history. In AD 64 half of the city of Rome was destroyed by fire. The Roman Emperor Nero, who ironically is the person who was most likely responsible, blamed Christians. He then began to crucify Christians, feed them to the lions in the Coliseum to entertain the crowds, and even burn their bodies in his gardens to light them for parties! So, whether this letter by Peter was written before or after this persecution started, the principle is still the same. Peter is telling Christians to silence the ignorance of foolish people that would accuse Christians of such things, not by protest, but clearly by living in submission to any human institution of authority over them, including that of the emperor who was insanely immoral and evil! They were not even to justify rebelling against the governors appointed by this evil emperor. To read more about Nero read my notes online.
1. “Peter wrote this epistle apparently just before or shortly after the beginning of Nero’s persecution of the church in a.d. 64. Since Peter referred to the government as still functioning (an institution which commends those who do right and punishes those who do wrong; 2:13–14), some believe that the church was not yet facing an organized Roman persecution. Evidently repressive laws had not yet been enacted specifically against Christians. It was still possible for Peter’s readers to “honor the king” (2:17). The persecution and suffering that Peter did refer to was primarily social and religious rather than legal. A hostile pagan society would slander, ridicule, discriminate against, and even inflict physical abuse on those whose lifestyles had radically changed because of their faith in Christ. However, Peter seemed to indicate that greater persecution was imminent. He assured

¹³ Utley, R. J. D. (2000). [*The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*](#) (Vol. Volume 2, p. 232). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

his readers (1:6) that they could rejoice though they “may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.” Peter exhorted them to prepare, to be self-controlled (1:13), possibly to suffer as Christians according to God’s will (4:19). So perhaps Nero’s severe persecution had already begun in Rome and was spreading to the provinces to which Peter was writing. This would place the date of the letter in late a.d. 64 or early 65. The suggestion that the persecution had already begun in Rome also explains why Peter would refer cryptically to his location as “Babylon” (5:13). Peter was in Rome during the last decade of his life. His martyrdom is dated about a.d. 67. At the time of the writing of 1 Peter he was not in the custody of the Roman officials, and evidently wished to conceal his true location. (Other scholars, however, say that Peter was in the literal city of Babylon, where a Jewish community then flourished.)¹⁴

2. “In view of what was said above about Christians being persecuted, a date in the reign of Nero (ad 54–68) would seem best. Since Peter makes no reference to Paul’s martyrdom, which is thought to have taken place during the out-burst of persecution in Rome in 64, the letter was probably written before then (see also 2:13). Links with other writings are thought to suggest a date after 60. So far as we can draw any conclusions from the evidence, the letter was probably written c. 63–64.”¹⁵

3. “Originally named Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, he was renamed Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus in 50, when at his mother’s urging her husband, the Emperor Claudius, adopted Nero and made him guardian of his own son Britannicus. In 53 Nero married Claudius’ daughter Octavia. After Claudius died, reputedly poisoned by Agrippina in 54, Nero’s mother arranged for the Praetorian Guard to proclaim him emperor. At first Burrus, the chief of the Guard, and the philosopher Seneca administered Nero’s government, while the emperor’s private life became increasingly dissipated. Agrippina, losing control over her son, intrigued in favor of Britannicus, whom Nero poisoned in 55. Subsequently Nero murdered his mother in 59 and his wife in 62, marrying Poppaea Sabrina, the ambitious wife of Nero’s companion Otho; in the same year Burrus died and Seneca retired. *Ca.* A.D. 60 the apostle Paul, tried before Felix the procurator of Caesarea, appealed to “Caesar” (Acts 25:10–12, 21, 25; 28:19), i.e., Nero, who was an unlikely protector of Christians. In 64 a fire destroyed half of Rome, and rumors accused Nero of setting it as a dramatic backdrop for his recital of the fall of Troy. For his part, Nero accused the Christians of the arson and instituted the first Roman persecution. Universal Christian tradition reckons

¹⁴ Raymer, R. M. (1985). [1 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 838). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁵ Wheaton, D. H. (1994). [1 Peter](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1370). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

the apostles Peter and Paul among Nero's victims (Tertullian *Scorpiace* 15:3; Eusebius *HE* ii. 25; Sulpicius Severus *Chronicorum* ii:39), commemorating their martyrdom on June 29. Although Nero rebuilt the city magnificently, Rome had tired of him. When he discovered in 65 a widespread conspiracy to make Gaius Calpurnius Piso emperor, Nero had many Romans murdered, including Seneca. In 67, fancying himself a great artist in the Hellenistic tradition, Nero visited Greece and competed for prizes at festivals. After returning to Italy in 68, Nero was faced by a series of revolts. When the Praetorian Guard recognized Servius Sulpicius Galba as emperor and the Senate declared Nero a public enemy (Lat. *hostis*), Nero committed suicide."¹⁶

- H. The point is, Peter says it is God's will that the good you do, while living in submission to the authorities in your life, should be so clearly good and so clearly in abundance, that people who hear accusations like Christians burning a city down, would mock the ones who made the accusation; that they would literally be shamed by the response of a lost society that knows how absurdly out of character and unsubstantiated the evidence of our life says about the accusation.
- I. But listen, it can't be overlooked that good here is done in submission to every human authority of our life – whether in government, the workplace, or the family! Peter is going to get into all of these as he progresses, so for now, I just want to make sure you understand that the good is being done not out of, but in the context of submission to every human authority in your life!
- J. Now, am I saying that we are supposed to submit to authority even if the authorities tell us to do something immoral, unethical, or idolatrous? The answer to that question is a strong no. I don't want to go down that road very far today, but I do think it's important that I remind you of what we saw in our previous series. This summer we were studying the Book of Daniel. In Daniel chapter 6, King Darius issued a decree that for the next 30 days all prayers had to be prayed to him. That is flat out idolatry. Therefore,
- K. 10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. (Daniel 6:10)**
- L. Daniel ended up being thrown into the lion's den over this. However, if you know the story, you know that God not only saved Daniel, but also, when Darius realized the men around him, that had encouraged him to issue and enforce this law, had done so with the sole purpose of trying to force Darius to kill Daniel; he ended up tossing those men and their entire families in the lion's den!

¹⁶ Myers, A. C. (1987). In [The Eerdmans Bible dictionary](#) (p. 758). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

M. So how then do we know when we are supposed to do what Daniel did, and not submit to the authority over us? Well John Piper wrote a great blog on this. He concluded the matter this way,

N. "We can sum up in several sentences. 1) There is no authority except from God. The greatest human ruler should humbly confess he is where he is by virtue of God's sovereign appointment. 2) Nevertheless, some rules and governments are good, and some are bad. Some reward the right and punish the wrong. Others do the reverse. Most do a little of both. 3) Therefore, the demand for subjection is relative, not absolute. It depends on whether the demands of the governing authorities require us to disobey Jesus. If they do, we will not be subject at that point but will say with Peter, "We must obey God rather than men." We will honor God above the state. But if the demands of the state do not require us to disobey Jesus (as with speed limits, stop signs, income taxes, curfews, building codes, fishing licenses, and many other laws), we will be subject for the Lord's sake (1 Peter 2:13). And it is very important to stress that, just as we may have to disobey the civil authorities for Christ's sake, so all our obedience should be for his sake as well. We never have two masters. All our submission to man is not only limited by the lordship of Christ; it is also an expression of our yieldedness to that lordship. Every time we say yes to any law, it should be a yes to Jesus."¹⁷

O. We, as believers, live on this planet with the eternal and God ordained purpose to live out and proclaim His excellencies, and as such, lead people out of darkness and into the glorious light and life of Jesus Christ! To do that, we cannot treat the world as our enemy, even if it treats us that way. Therefore, whenever it is not morally or ethically impossible to our allegiance to Christ, we must live in submission not just to government, but to every human institution that affects us!

The fourth instruction is to ...

(4) Live empowered to serve God, not entitled to be served. (2:16-17)

A. 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.

B. So, verse 17 tells us to honor everybody, which, by writing "everyone" necessarily includes those who persecute us! To honor somebody means to show them respect and treat them with value. It means to hold them in high esteem both by our words, actions, and attitude! It means to recognize their

¹⁷ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-limits-of-submission-to-man>

humanity and treat them with dignity no matter what. It means to recognize them by hearing them, responding to them, and truly taking their opinion and needs into consideration. It means to truly see them.

- C. Likewise, we are to love the brotherhood, that is all who love, know and follow Jesus. The word for love here is agape and implies an unconditional love. Loving the brotherhood is put on par with honoring everyone, that is, both commands have equal weight and expectation!
- D. We are to fear God, and consequently not fear man. To fear God means His approval outweighs man's approval and as such His judgements, His rules and His ways outweigh man's as well! Therefore, no matter what man does, we have no trepidation with man; however, we do stand in fear of The One who has the authority to cast us into Hell; before The One who is all powerful and does whatever He wants; before The One who controls the universe. We should stand before God wanting and only needing His approval; and to the praise and glory of Jesus Christ and his penal substitutionary death, we should rejoice that we have it!
- E. Finally, we are to honor the emperor. Again, this is huge that he makes this statement so bluntly because whether Nero had already accused Christians of burning down Rome or not, there was still nothing about this man that had any integrity whatsoever. He was truly a terrible person who of himself deserved no honor at all, yet Peter tells believers to specifically respect him, hold him in high esteem, and as such submit to his leadership!
- F. So, how are we to do this. Well, the answer is in the previous verse. In verse 16 Peter said,
- G. **16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.**
- H. The word for servant in verse 16 can also be translated as slave. We are his children, but we are also to live as those who have been purchased by Him to serve Him! In part because we are purchased by Him through the blood of Christ! The price that was paid for us can leave us no conclusion other than we owe him our life!
- I. So, if we are slaves to God how then are we free? What does Peter mean that we are free? Well, as believers we are free from the curse of sin that left us judicially and practically incapable of knowing God. We are free from the threat of death. We are free from the authority of Sin and Satan over this world. We are free from the weight and burden of the Mosaic Law. We are free from the wrath of God on sin (eternal separation from Him). However, in all that freedom we are not free from GOD! Listen to the word of God!

- J. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:20-23)**
- K. 1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)**
- L. So in other words, this world is no longer your home and you have been freed from the rule of Sin and Satan, however, that doesn't give you the right to abuse God's grace, nor this world and the people in it like a rental car you paid the insurance for and now you think you can drive it like you stole it!
- M. God did not set you free from the rule of sin and Satan so that you can run around in His Kingdom living as if you were under the rule of sin and Satan. Christ didn't pay the penalty of sin so that you can now do it without worry of punishment!
- N. As a matter of fact, Paul wrote,
- O. 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? (Romans 6:1-2)**
- P. So, in NO way is grace ever a license to sin. And as such, His mercy and grace that has redeemed us out of this world should never be seen as justification to do anything but live as SERVANTS (literally slaves) to God! It should do nothing but serve as motivation to fulfill our purpose of worshiping Him (1 Peter 2:5) and proclaim His glory (1 Peter 2:9).
- Q. In everything we do we are to be serving HIM, which means, laboring with Him to do what He's doing, and what He's doing is redeeming His people to Himself! God is bringing light and life to the world! God is proclaiming His love to every tribe and tongue! He's not using His son's death and resurrection to cover up evil, but rather to rescue people from it! He has honored the world by offering His son to save the world!

Challenge: Does your conduct match the actions and attitudes of a servant of Christ who represents His love, or an entitled child who thinks they deserve whatever they want?

Recently my actions demonstrated an entitled child rather than a servant of Christ. I was at a national franchise business in Gaston County trying to help a person that was in a real rock and a hard place. I don't want to say anything that would give away the person or the business, so forgive me for my somewhat generic confession, but the long and short of it is that this business refused to serve this person because the person owed them money. Understandably they didn't trust this person to do business with them. However, the person truly needed their services, and they needed them that day, so I offered to pay for it myself. And by pay for it I mean literally pay for it right there on the spot with real money. However, the manager refused my money because she said it was to help somebody that owed them money. At first, I was floored by the stupidity of not taking my money. Last I checked businesses are there to make money and I was giving it to them right there on the spot! However, as I went back and forth with them trying to literally give them my money, I found myself personally offended that they wouldn't take it. The more this manager resisted, the madder I got by the sheer ignorance of the situation. Trust me, if you knew the service, I was asking to be done you would understand just how ridiculous it was that they wouldn't take my money! So anyway, here's where it all went south. I started taking their rejection of my hard-earned money personal and I finally spouted out, "I've been a pastor in this community for 20 years, but you won't trust me enough to take my money so that I can help somebody who's trying to get their life together."

FYI – they finally took my money. But listen, some of you may not understand just how incredibly arrogant and utterly stupid sounding that statement was. Some of you may think being a pastor in a community should earn you the right to be given the benefit of the doubt. But let me help you with that, being a child of God and serving in His Kingdom NEVER gives you any rights! WE are never entitled to anything! Through Christ, I have the right to call God my Father, the right to approach the throne as His favored child, the right to inherit the Kingdom of God and eternal life; the right to live under his leadership and power instead of sin and Satan, but none of those rights give me any rights or privileges in this world! We are not of this world. This is not our Kingdom. We have no rights here! We have no rights in this world, but we do have very clear responsibilities! Therefore, if we ever feel like our identity in Christ, or our service in His church, entitles us to be owed anything from anybody we are, in that moment, living in total rebellion to our Master who has clearly stated HE alone is owed everything! If I ever live acting like I'm owed anything from anybody I'm living in rebellion to the God that I owe everything!

Furthermore, for everybody in that business that didn't know Jesus, the moment those words came out of my mouth, I slung mud all over the cause of Christ and the reputation of His church. I made Christians out to be spoiled rotten brats who think they deserve something from people rather than servants of Christ who honor everybody!

As Christians this is NOT our home. We are aliens in this world. We are here on a work visa!!! The world has been handed over to the rule of Sin and Satan. Our mission is not to

conquer and claim this world; only our King can do that and make no mistake Jesus is going to do that very thing! In the meantime, our mission is to point everybody to our King, while we live out the life that is only found in His Kingdom.