

RELATED SCRIPTURES

Colossians 3:1-17 | Romans 13:1-7 | Daniel 3:1-30

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 5.14.23

SUMMARY

To this point in Peter's letter to the churches and Christians scattered across Asian Minor, his emphasis has centered around the concept of identity. Peter has been reminding Christians of who they are in Christ. Peter's messaging shifts its focus to, "In light of who you are in Christ, now do this," and he proceeds with specific instruction on how Christians should carry themselves before a world that often vehemently opposes them. He begins by reminding them that they are "sojourners and exiles," As such, their loyalties and affections lie not on the temporal things of this world but with the eternal inheritance of Christ that awaits them. Living in this truth, we shouldn't allow the world to seduce us with "passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." This behavior which Peter calls "honorable," serves a twofold purpose: It conforms us to the image of Christ, *and* it serves as a testimony to a watching world, and through that testimony, people *will* believe in the saving power of Jesus Christ. The honorable behavior that Peter begins to detail includes submission to human authority. In our honoring the civil magistrates, we, as Peter puts it, do "the will of God." This instruction is challenging in numerous ways, especially if we deem the governing authorities ungodly or evil. But Peter's teaching reminds us (as does Paul's in Romans 13) that God grants *all* human authority. Earthly governments are put in place to maintain order and exercise justice which are reflective of heavenly ethics that will one day be made perfect with the completion of all things. But in the meantime, Christians should honor and support their work (so long as it doesn't contradict God's commands) and in doing all they can to reflect the future, perfected reality of Christ's kingdom. The call of Christ remains constant; we should love God and our neighbor—or, as Peter summarizes, "Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God" (v. 17).

GROUP QUESTIONS

From the sermon or your direct reading of 1 Peter 2:11-17, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you.

What are the most challenging elements of living in this world yet maintaining a heavenly citizenship? How does this truth also allow you a sense of freedom?

Does Peter's call to honor civil authority apply to all civil leaders? Why are we called to do this? Does honoring the civil authority mean we should submit to them in all scenarios?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.