

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

IX. Relating Righteously To Godless Neighbors In The World

(1 Peter 2:11-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states of the nation have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 2:11-12 calls us to relate righteously to godless neighbors in the world, and we view it for our insight:

II. Relating Righteously To Godless Neighbors In The World, 1 Peter 2:11-12.

- A. Peter's readers were living in the Roman Empire "just before the outbreak of Nero's persecution" in A. D. 64, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to The First Letter of Peter: Circumstances of Writing," p. 1757. At that time, "the Christians, whose withdrawal from the close knot framework of pagan society had won them the animosity of the Roman mob," Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, vol. Four, p. 411.
- B. Accordingly, Peter needed to address believers facing tremendous negative pressure from lost pagans who despised them for their holiness, and 1 Peter 2:11-12 addresses this need (as follows):
 - 1. First, believers facing negative pressure for their lifestyles from the godless world must view themselves as true outsiders to the world, 1 Peter 2:11a:
 - a. Peter "exhorted" (*parakaleo*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 795; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 622) believing readers as "aliens" who lived in a place that was not their home (*paroikous*, Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 846) and "strangers" who were foreign nationality and who lived as temporary residents in this present world (*parepidemois*, Ibid., p. 846, 839), 1 Peter 2:11a.
 - b. Indeed, Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:20 said we believers are ambassadors for Christ who represent Him in this foreign, godless world and in Philippians 3:20 that our "citizenship" (*politeuma*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 689; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 662) in heaven above.
 - c. We believers in Christ must realize that we truly are spiritual foreigners in this lost world!
 - 2. In view of this spiritually foreign state and experience, *for our own welfare*, we believers must "abstain from" (*apechesthai*, present imperative **middle** of *apecho*, "abstain from," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 795; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 39) -- the middle voice indicating the believer's functioning for his own benefit -- the fleshly lusts that "make troubles" (*strateuo*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 778; Moulton & Milligan, The Voc. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 592) against the *pseuche*, the "seat and center of the inner life of man in its many and varied aspects," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 901-902), 1 Peter 2:11b. Peter's exhortation indicates that we believers already have enough pressure to face in living in a spiritually foreign world without adding to that pressure substance abuse, alcoholism, sexual immorality and gluttony, gratifying earthly lusts, that only tear down the health of the whole inner man besides alienating us from fellowship with God that we desperately need to handle the pressures of the lost world!
 - 3. We should rather have our "conduct" (*anastrophe*, Ibid., p. 61) *kalos*, "morally good, noble, praiseworthy" (Ibid., p. 401) while living among pagan neighbors in this world in order that when they "defame, slander, speak evil of" (*katalaleo*, Ibid., p. 413) us as [if we were] "evil-doers" (*kakopoios*, Ibid., p. 398), out of our "morally good, noble, praiseworthy" (*kalos* again, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) works that they "observe" (*epopteuo*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 305) they might glorify God in "the day of 'visitation,'" "visitation" rendering the noun *episkope*, a Hebraistic expression that refers to God's day of judgment between the guilty and the innocent, Ibid., p. 299. (1 Peter 2:12) In other words, avoiding indulging in the ungodly lusts of this world serves not only to protect the believer's own inner man from great harm (1 Peter 2:11b), but it helps shield him from spiritual defeat upon being harmed by slander from a hostile world as God eventually deals out punishment on the wrongdoers who malign His godly people. (1 Peter 2:12)

Lesson: *In view of our life in a spiritually hostile, godless world, for our own inner health and best to handle godless opposition from the world, we believers in Christ MUST avoid indulging the lusts of the flesh that war against the welfare of our entire inner man and provide vindication for us when God punishes our ungodly foes.*

Application: *May we see our HUGE need to avoid indulging in lusts and rely on the Holy Spirit to live righteously.*