

Beloved Wanderers (1 Peter 2:11-12)

1 Peter 2:11–17 (NAS): Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.

17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

1. Beloved Wanderers.

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“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers...” (2:11).

Aliens and strangers... This world is not our home

Beloved... God loves you

John 3:16 (NASB95): 16“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

God has given every believer salvation, a precious, eternal, loving gift.

1 Peter 1:1–5 (NASB95): 1Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen

2according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

**who according to His great mercy
has caused us to be born again to a
living hope through the
resurrection of Jesus Christ from
the dead,**

**4to obtain an inheritance
which is imperishable and undefiled
and will not fade away, reserved in
heaven for you,**

**5who are protected by the
power of God through faith for a
salvation ready to be revealed in the
last time.**

His great love is the motive that
enables us to endure hardship as we
live as pilgrims.

“Alien” and “stranger”

Life is short, eternity is forever.

In every generation God's people have been keenly aware of the transient nature of life.

James 4:14 (NASB95): 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Howard Hendricks has said, "Most people think that they're in the land of the living, heading toward the land of the dead. But the truth is, we're in the land of the dying, heading toward the land of the living."

We are wanderers that should want to take as many others with us to an eternity with God.

2. Beloved Warriors.

Warrior language is present throughout Scripture, see Eph. 6 (The armor of God). This is an internal battle.

“Abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul” (2:11). To abstain means “to hold oneself constantly back from.” Waging war points, not to a single battle, but to a military campaign. Every believer faces the struggle of flesh against the spirit.

There are many spiritual sources of conflict:

1 John 2:15–17 (NASB95): 15Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the

world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

This world and the battle of earthly, fleshly lusts is passing away.

Ephesians 6:12 (NASB95): 12For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

We have an enemy, Satan.

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB95): 8Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The battle against sin and lusts is waged in the mind

**1 Peter 1:13–16 (NASB95):
13Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15but like the Holy One**

who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”

The mind prepares us through the Spirit, through the Word to do battle in waging war against fleshly desires (lusts).

James 4:1–3 (NASB95): 1What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3You ask and do not receive, because you ask with

wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

This warfare takes place within us but has its impact outside of us, affecting all of our relationships.

If you can win the war against sin in your thought life, you will win in your behavior.

**2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (NASB95):
3For though we walk in the flesh,
we do not war according to the
flesh, 4for the weapons of our
warfare are not of the flesh, but
divinely powerful for the
destruction of fortresses. 5We are
destroying speculations and every
lofty thing raised up against the
knowledge of God, and we are**

taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

All sin starts in the mind and must be defeated there. **We must learn to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).**

What are “fleshly lusts”? Not limited to, wrong sexual desires. They also include “all kinds of self-seeking, whether directed toward wealth, power, or pleasure”

Believers have everything they need to be successful in this battle. We need to know that we all will have these battles and be prepared to deal with the sins of self.

Also, note that we are able and responsible to obey this command to

abstain from these fleshly desires. Certainly, such fleshly desires are powerful. The word “war” points to a fierce, constant struggle which implies a fair amount of effort on our part. If we yield, we can become enslaved to them (2 Pet. 2:18). But through saving faith in Jesus Christ and through the power of the indwelling Spirit and the Word of God, we can abstain from these lusts. We can experience God’s victory in the war.

But sexual addiction is not a recent problem, it is a prevalent one. I have to wage war against these things.

We are beloved Wanderers and Beloved Warriors; we are also Beloved Witnesses.

3. Beloved Witnesses.

“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles” (2:12).

Gentiles means unbelievers.

The word **“behavior”** means **conduct, way of life or lifestyle**. It points to the overall flavor of our lives.

The word **“excellent”** means good in the sense of **beautiful** or **attractive**. Our lives should be marked by **“good deeds”** (Eph 2:10) which conform to God’s Word. The world should look at the lives of Christians and admit, even if they do not accept Christ or the Bible, that we are good people.

The “**excellent**” behavior will be radically different.

Note that the unbelievers (“**Gentiles**”) **observe** our good deeds. Social media is negative, demeaning, calling whole groups of people names. Not so for believers in Jesus.

But Peter is not saying that our good deeds will result in the immediate conversion of the lost. **Rather, out of jealousy, guilt, or insecurity, they may slander us.**

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

The early church was often accused of murder, incest, and cannibalism in their “secret” church meetings. After all, they met to eat some man’s flesh and drink his blood, they called one another brother and sister and were loving toward each other! They were even called atheists because they refused to worship the “gods” of their age.

We will face criticism as believers.

Abraham Lincoln knew what it meant to face criticism. He is quoted as saying, “If I were to try to read, much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how - the very

best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what's said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference.”

Lincoln, against huge opposition, went on to reunite the fractured United States, win the Civil War, and abolish slavery in the US. Had he allowed his critics to derail him, Lincoln would have accomplished none what he did.

Criticism can consume our lives to the point of emotional paralysis, or we can set our hearts to serve God faithfully undeterred by that criticism and put our God on display. When we

do that, we will not need to answer our critics with words—our lives will say all that is needed. We will use our words to proclaim the gospel and share the love of Christ.

The most powerful testimony is a godly life.

But Peter says that as beloved wanderers, warriors and witnesses, we are to maintain a lifestyle of attractive deeds, even in the face of ugliness from those who are lost. It will result ultimately in glory to God (2:12), which is the overall aim of the Christian life.

A beloved witness is a missionary. As a missionary
Would you be complaining that
you were the only one there?

You would be rejoicing that your God had placed you in such a strategic position.” That is the attitude we ought to have. God has placed us in strategic positions no matter what. If we can catch that vision, if we can see ourselves as the missionaries we truly are, then I think we can accomplish something significant.

We are Beloved Wanderers,
Beloved Warriors, Beloved Witnesses
and finally Beloved in Waiting

4. Beloved in Waiting.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your

good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Peter says that those who observe our good deeds will “**glorify God in the day of visitation**” (2:12). What is “the day of visitation”?

Either it refers to God’s visitation in saving these unbelievers, or it refers to the future day of judgment. Some Bible students say it means that these pagans who slander Christians will glorify God when they later get saved as a result of observing the Christians’ good works.

Many people will not receive the gospel:

1 Peter 4:3–5 (NASB95): 3For the time already past is sufficient

for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. 4In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; 5but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Every person will have a face to face with Jesus. For believers that is a great day, for an unbeliever it is a day of reckoning.

All will confess that **“Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father”** (Phil. 2:9-11).

For us, the point is that as pilgrims, we keep in mind that we are the Beloved in waiting. There is that great day of **visitation** in ahead. We live now knowing that one day everyone must stand before God, either for commendation or condemnation. Thus, we should seek to live with that day in view, so that we will hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” And as we live with that day in view, we should seek to persuade those who are on the road to condemnation to receive God’s mercy before it is too late.

Conclusion

Are you living life the way the world does? Are you living for the here and now, storing up treasures on

earth or are you living in light of eternity?

Live life for eternity and you will live well in the here and now.

Jesus spoke of the futility of living for this life alone:

Matthew 16:24–26 (NASB95):
24Then Jesus said to His disciples,
“If anyone wishes to come after Me,
he must deny himself, and take up
his cross and follow Me. 25“For
whoever wishes to save his life will
lose it; but whoever loses his life for
My sake will find it. 26“For what
will it profit a man if he gains the
whole world and forfeits his soul?
Or what will a man give in
exchange for his soul?

*You are a Beloved Wanderer, a
Beloved Warrior, a Beloved
Witness and you are Beloved in
Waiting!*

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