

“Fighting The Flesh!”
1 Peter 2:11-12

Introduction:

1. Thanksgiving Is Just Around The Corner!
 - Don't Forget About Our Thanksgiving Praise & Prayer Service This Wednesday! It Is A Way To Get Your Thanksgiving Celebrations Off To A Great Start!
 - Of Course, The Main Story We Remember Is The Pilgrim Story!
 - And Their Great Feast Of Thanksgiving To God!
 - For His Protection!
 - Over The Long Voyage From England & From The Harsh Winter & Sickness!
 - For His Provision!
 - Of A Harvest After Almost Starving!
 - For His Providence!
 - Of Providing An English-Speaking Indian, Squanto, To Help Them Make It Through!
 - But, Not Long After This “First Thanksgiving” By The Pilgrims In 1621, They Discovered That They Had Another Problem!
 - The Problem Was Not Hostile Indians!
 - The Problem Was Not The Hostile Weather!
 - The Problem Was Not The Diseases That They Faced In The New World!
 - In Fact, The Problem Was Not From The Outside At All!
 - The Problem They Had Was On The Inside!
 - Upon Arriving At Plymouth Massachusetts, The Pilgrims Set Up A System Of, What Governor William Bradford Called, “Communism!” Property Was Owned & Cultivated By The Entire Community! Women Did “Communal” Chores! ***Everything Belonged To Everybody, And Eventually Everybody Had Nothing!***
 - This System Caused: Laziness! Discontent! Bitterness! “The most able and fit young men in Plymouth thought it an “injustice” that they were paid the same as those “not able to do a quarter the other could.” Women, meanwhile, viewed the communal chores they were required to perform for others as a form of “slavery.” (Heritage.org)
 - They Were Ready To Fight Their Enemies From The Outside!
 - But They Forgot About Their Enemies On The Inside!
 - 2. Peter Is Telling Us ***Not*** To Forget About These Enemies!
 - 2:11-12 - “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; / Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation!”
 - Peter Is Writing This To Christians!
 - Those Of You Who Have Admitted / Believed / Confessed!
 - And If You Are One Of These Christians:
 - Then, Your Home Is Now A Heavenly Home!
 - John 14:2-3 - “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. / And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also!”
 - But, You Are Still Living In This World! “As Strangers / Pilgrims!”
 - & You Will Have Many Enemies / Foes!
 - & You Will Go Through Many Battles!
 - But, The Greatest Enemy You Will Face Is Not From The Outside, But From The Inside!
 - 3. ***Your Greatest Foes Is Your Own Flesh!***
 - That Former Nature Of Sin, That Has Been Defeated, But Is Still Present Within You!
 - You Must Continue To Fight Against Your Flesh!
 - As Peter Puts It: “Abstain From Fleshly Lusts!”
 - Or “Abstain From Your Sinful Desires!”
 - “Abstain” - Keep Away From! Keep Your Distance From!

- **IE**: Foreigners Usually Stay Away From Things: Water!
- How Many Of Us Are Doing This?
 - How Many Of Us Realize That Our Greatest Foe Our Own Flesh?
 - How Many Of Us Have Given Up? And Given In? To Our Sinful Desires?
- If The Mayflower Pilgrims Had Given Up / Given In – We Would Not Have The Country & Freedoms We Have Today!
 - How Much More Impact Could You Have For The Lord, If You Would Just: “Abstain From Fleshly Lusts!”
- Peter Gives 3 Things To Remember!
 - So That We Will “Abstain From Fleshly Lusts!”

* Remember:

1. Your Relationship With This World!

- 2:11a - “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims!”
 - A Christian Is To Have A Different Kind Of Relationship With This World!
- Because Of Your Family As A Christian!
 - Because Of Your Foundation As A Christian!
 - You Are A Foreigner To This World!
 - So, “Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts!”
- Remember Your Family:
 - “Dearly Beloved!” – This Is What Peter Calls Them!
 - An Address Of Love & Tender Affection!
 - We Are Part Of A New Family!
 - But, God Himself Has Set His Love & Affection Upon You!
 - And We Can / Ought To Love Him In Return!
- Remember Your Foundation:
 - “I Beseech You!”
 - A Strong & Loving Appeal By Peter! Implore!
 - The Reason / Foundation For His Appeal Is What God Made You To Be!
 - Remember 2:9-10! These “Badges Of Honor!”
 - Remember What Kind Of Person God Has Called You To Be!
- Remember That You Are A Foreigner To This World!
 - “As Strangers & Pilgrims!” Two Similar Words That Remind Us Of:
 - Our Reality In Christ!
 - “Strangers” - Alien - You Are Not A Citizen Of This World / Country - But Of Another Heaven!
 - Our Residency In This World!
 - “Pilgrims” - Strangers - You Have No Permanent Home Here!
- Remember What Your Relationship With This World Is To Be!
 - And “Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts” – “Which War Against The Soul!”

* Remember:

2. Your Resistance In This War!

- The Second Part Of 2:11 Teaches That You Are In A Real, Spiritual Battle!
 - Enemies / Foes On The Outside - Ephesians 6:11-12 - “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. / For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places!”
 - Our Greatest Foe Is On The Inside – Our Own Flesh!
- The Foe Of Our Resistance!
 - “Fleshly Lusts!” An Unholy Trinity!
 - 1 John 2:16 - “The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life!”
 - The Temptation To Satisfy Your Human Desires In Ways That Are Contrary To God’s Will!
 - We All Have Natural / Human Desires!

- Not In & Of Themselves Sinful!
- But, When We Seek To Satisfy Them Apart From God's Revealed Will, They Become Our Greatest Enemy!
- Desires For Food & Drink / Sexual Desires / Possessions!
 - Turn In To Gluttony / Drunkenness / Fornication / Covetousness!
- "These Lusts Constitute An Army Of Soldiers Engaged In Constant Warfare Against The Soul, Aimed At Capturing The Believer And Making Him Useless To God!" (Hiebert)
- The Fight Of Our Resistance!
 - "War!"
 - Translated From A Word That Is Similar To "Strategy!"
 - It Is As If Your Own Flesh & Sinful Nature Is Waging A Military Campaign Against You! With Strategy & Tactics!
 - You Are In A War! With Your Own Flesh!
 - Called To: "Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts!"
- The Field Of Our Resistance!
 - "The Soul!"
 - It Is A Battle Within, Not Without! Inside, Not Outside!
 - Battle Against Your Mind / Heart / Will!
- Remember What Your Resistance In This War Is To Be Like!
 - And "Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts!"

* Remember:

3. ***Your Responsibility As A Witness!***

- 2:12 - "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation!"
 - Think About The Great Impact You Can Have For The Lord, If You Took Your Personal Responsibility Seriously To "Abstain From Fleshly Lusts!"
 - It Will:
- Reveal The Fruit Of Your Life!
 - "Having Your Conversation Honest!"
 - "Conversation" - Lifestyle / Way Of Life!
 - If You "Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts":
 - Your Lifestyle Will Be Good! Noble! Beautiful!
 - Is This What Your Life Is Like Before The World?
 - Or Is There Any Difference At All?
 - No Difference - Because You Have Given Up / Given In To Your Fleshly Lusts & Sinful Desires!
 - ***If You Live Like The World, You Will Have No Impact Upon The World!***
- Reveal The Falsehood Of Their Lies!
 - "They Speak Against You As Evildoers!"
 - "This World Is Not Our Home!"
 - "This World Is Not Our Friend!"
 - But, If You "Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts":
 - You Will "With well doing . . . put to silence the ignorance of foolish men!" (2:15)
 - Don't Give The World Any Ammunition For Their Accusations!
- Reveal The Future Of God's Love!
 - "They May By Your Good Works, Which They Shall Behold, Glorify God In The Day Of Visitation!"
 - Remember: The World Is Always Watching!
 - And They See Your Lifestyle!
 - Are You ***Abstaining*** From Your Fleshly Lusts?
 - Are You ***Indulging*** In Your Fleshly Lusts!
 - This Can Have An Impact On Their Own Relationship With God!
 - They Can Be Won By Your Walk & Your Works!
 - "Christians Are Living In Glass Houses; They Are On Display! Their Conduct, Deeds, And

Words Are Evaluated Constantly By Non-Christians Who Want To See If Christians Indeed Live Up To What They Profess!" (Simon Kistemaker)

- Remember That You Have A Responsibility As A Witness!
- And "Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts!"

Conclusion:

1. What Happened To The Pilgrims?
 - They Didn't Just Give Up / Give In!
 - They Fought Against Their Own Flesh! (William Bradford)
 - And They Created A System Of Capitalism, That To This Day Emphasizes Personal Responsibility! They "assigned private property rights of land to all members; and, gave them the right to profit from their industry. What happened next? Bradford wrote about this institution of Christian capitalism: "This had very good success for it made all hands industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been."
2. You Too Are Strangers & Pilgrims!
 - How Are You Going To Live?
 - "Abstain From Your Fleshly Lusts!"
 - "Keep Your Distance From Your Sinful Desires!"
 - Don't Give Up!
 - Don't Give In!
 - If You Are Today Indulging In Your Fleshly Lusts!
 - Stop! Confess! Abstain!
 - Your Greatest Foes Is Your Own Flesh!
3. But When You Do Abstain!
 - Consider The Great Impact It Can Have!
 - Matthew 5:16 - "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven!"

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