

## How Should We Live in This World?

[1 Peter 2:11-17](#)

1 Peter, Day 10

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

*Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

- 1 Peter 2:11-17, ESV

Have you ever seen someone driving really aggressively, weaving in and out of traffic and tailgating dangerously, and thought to yourself, "Who does that person think he is?" Why is it that we see poor behavior, and the question which comes to mind is one of self-identity? It's simple, really: How you behave in the world should be grounded in who you are. In other words, identity should drive behavior. So, when we see out-of-control behavior, we think there must be a core out-of-control self-identity.

Peter has been unfolding our identity as believers in 1 Peter. He opened by reminding us that we are elect exiles. We are loved and chosen by God, but we do not belong in this world. He then unpacked some of what this involves for us:

- We are born again to a living hope.
- We have been given an imperishable inheritance.
- We are kept by the power of God.
- We rejoice, with a joy inexpressible, as we think ahead to the hope of glory.
- We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.
- We have received mercy from God.

If we have been following along with Peter as he's been laying this foundation of our identity in Christ, we're ready now for the next step: How do we live out our identity in this world? Or, to put it a different way, to go back to the opening identity of elect exiles, if we know now what it means to be elected by God, chosen in love by Him, what does it mean to live as exiles? How should we live in a world we know is not our final home?

First of all, sojourners and exiles should not indulge too deeply in the passing pleasures of a fallen world. We need to not attach our hearts and desires to a world in rebellion against God and a flesh that craves the things of this world. So, we need to abstain as those who know they're in a war, a war with lasting consequences.

Secondly, we need to live honorably. While we don't give into the cravings and live for the pleasures of the world, we also don't live as grumpy, angry, militant, self-righteous people. We need to treat others the way we'd want to be treated. We need to be honorable and respectful.

Unbelievers in the world should be able to look at us as believers and see good deeds, respect for authority, and love for our neighbors. They should see us walking in freedom in Christ, but not a freedom that is self-indulgent or self-righteous, but a freedom that serves others in humility and love. In other words, they should be able to catch a glimpse of Jesus in us.

How is the world realistically going to see Jesus in us? Only as we're abiding in Him, living in His love, walking in His light, loving Him deeply and drinking from the fountain of the Holy Spirit as dearly loved children of God. The stronger and deeper our dependence on Christ, the stronger and clearer our witness to a watching world will be.