

The Real War

6-26-22

1 Peter 2:11 (ESV)

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

In the previous verses which we covered in the last 2 weeks identified us as living stones, a holy nation. Now as a chosen people of God we are identified as visitors to a foreign country. Therefore, as visitors we should abstain from the passions of the flesh associated to this foreign country. Earthly “passions” or “sinful desires” which wage war against our soul will prevent us from living out our full potential. The literal meaning is ‘passions which are continually waging war *against our soul*.’ To be unaware of this war and the devastating damage will prevent us from living a joyous and powerful Spirit filled life. Even dabbling in these passions of the flesh is dangerous. The Bible summarizes these passions!

Gal.5:19-21 (NIV) NO O/H

¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

You ever see someone walking with Jesus, then over time they seem to wander from the faith. Sometimes we see this wandering within ourselves. We see the passions of the flesh as momentarily attractive and entirely harmless. However, they are in reality enemies which inflict harm on our ‘soul’ making it impossible for us to hear God.

This is not about being good or bad but being able to hear God. This is about not being able to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit making us spiritually weak. This is a choice. These inward desires of the flesh are not uncontrollable but can be consciously nurtured or restrained. Passions of the flesh when fed will grow with an ever-increasing appetite. In Ephesians 4:19 the NIV give the fulness of this progression.

Ephesians 4:19 (NIV)

Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more and they are full of greed.

When we indulge in the flesh we become “callous” therefore losing all sensitivity. **We become less sensitive emotionally and spiritually. Even worse, from Romans 1:24-28, we learn that in such prolonged circumstances, God turns the sinner over to his sin along with the full associated consequences. Giving oneself to the passions of the flesh leads to all kinds of filthy practices, which are so absorbing that the sin becomes a total preoccupation with a continual lust for more. Sin is insatiable or impossible to satisfy. Summary: These passions unrestrained result in losing sensitivity which produce a continual lust for more indulgence in impurity! These warnings are to keep us alert in order to protect us from the chains of bondage. God is protecting us and making us a witness to others. We are free and are a witness to the freedom of Christ. God will use our conduct as an example of freedom to others.**

1 Peter 2:12 (ESV)

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.

Christians living in an unbelieving society should maintain exemplary patterns of life which will impact others. The unbelievers, evildoers, who are currently slandering us will be converted when God visits them, and they will *glorify God* for our good witness. The phrase “On the day of visitation” is misleading because the definite article “the” suggests the one last day, the final judgment. But there is no definite article “the” in the Greek text. It is better to understand it simply to mean ‘on a day when God visits’. **Then they will *glorify God* who used our *good conduct* to lead them to Christ.**

Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV)

You are the light of the world. ... Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Question: How do we do this without being under the yoke of the Law and associated rules and regulations.

#1 Remember only Jesus can live the Christian life.

#2 Only through the Holy Spirit is it possible to live the Christian Life.

#3 By being occupied with the Holy Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 (ESV)

But I say, (be occupied with) the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Please note, the word “walk” literal means “be occupied with”! The passions of the flesh take our eyes off Jesus. Looking to Jesus takes our eyes off the passions of the flesh. The issue is not so much self-discipline, but a decision. **What are we occupied with?** If we are occupied with the Spirit and the Word of God, we will not gratify the desires of the flesh. A heart for Jesus is a heart occupied with the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit empowers us, it impacts our behavior.

In order to win the war, we must have a relationship with Jesus and be occupied with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Christianity made simple:

Jesus I believe you forgave my sins.

Fill me with the Holy Spirit.