



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N10 March 10, 2024

HIGHER UP

“Bulletproof”

1 Peter 2:11-12

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Evangelism

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8



What is the best way to handle cancel culture?

Cancel culture... we know the drill. A rising star with an impressive message, perky personality, compelling package, and powerful impact catches the attention of multitudes. Books are written, movies are promoted, media abounds and millions are made. But then come the “gotcha” interviews or the scandalous exposés. Careless words may be spoken or reckless decisions may be made. The “influencer” may have done nothing wrong but is at risk if the choice is made to swim against popular opinion. If disqualifying words are not found, then scandals are uncovered and pundits shake their heads in disbelief. Even with unilateral apologies, PR professionals directing high-dollar damage control campaigns and rebuttals made galore, cancellation is often the inevitable result. An impressive and compelling message can be easily and irreversibly gutted by ill intentions, hypocrisy or sloppy language. The hero may be trapped, tricked or a victim of his own vices; cancellation is often the inevitable result. Sometimes cancellation can happen regardless of your intentions or your integrity.

Jesus has won the battle over sin and death. Our faith is secure. If the enemy of our Lord cannot defeat the Christian faith with logic he will often seek to silence it with shame, reproach and the removal of any and all communication platforms. Cancellation is perhaps more effective than restriction of freedoms or rights. If a reputation can be tarnished or an argument dismissed because of peer pressure, no measures of enforcement or eradication are necessary. A message that implodes under the weight of its own messengers requires little effort or few resources from its opposition. Stopping a message by disqualifying its messengers is often more strategic and efficient than counter-messaging.

Joseph, Jacob’s favorite son, is a great biblical example of being cancelled (Gen. 37-50). Joseph also serves as a pattern for overcoming such an unfortunate predicament. Joseph was a “star” among his brothers and had all the favor of his father. He was despised by his siblings

and ultimately disappeared by them. Sold by his brothers as a slave into Egypt, Joseph was never to be heard from again by Jacob or his sons. While a forgotten slave, Joseph rose to prominence in the house of Potiphar, becoming large and in charge due to his competency and efficiency. Joseph caught the eye of his master’s wife and was tempted with scandal. He resisted but was falsely accused by those in power over him. As a result, he was cast into jail, again cancelled. In prison, Joseph again rose to prominence through his diligence, but lived in forgotten silence when his fellow prisoners failed to plead his case before the Pharaoh. How did Joseph finally prevail? By his continued service and faithfulness, God exalted him in Pharaoh’s court. Joseph’s personal integrity and faithful service of others saved a nation and even his own treacherous brothers from starvation. The best counter many times to cancel culture is living faithfully and loving others whether you are given recognition for doing so or not. Joseph reversed his cancellation by loving God and loving his neighbors. Keeping the Greatest Commandment is the best antidote for cancellation.

Serving God and others in a way that is beyond expectation can cause jaws to drop and heads to shake in wonder. “Why are you doing this?” is often the response of unbelievers to Christians who are quietly living out their faith, despite injustice or unfairness. When we live for God and love our neighbors well, we are creating a showcase for God to display the good news of his grace. Consistent piety and compassionate service to others may be the best way to generate genuine questions from those fluent in cancel culture. 1 Peter 3:15 states, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15). Preparing an answers for cancel culture may require more focus on living our faith consistently in private and serving others with little or no glory for ourselves. This may be the best way to silence those who slander us (1 Peter 3:16).

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. [NIV]

11 Beloved, I urge you as foreigners 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 on the day of visitation. [NASB]

11 Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to keep away from fleshly desires that do battle against the soul, 12 and maintain good conduct among the non-Christians, so that though they now malign you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God when he appears. [NET]

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle the term of affection identifying the recipients of this charge in v. 11.
- Double underline the word in v. 11 that shows the intensity of the writer's plea.
- Draw a box around the words in v. 11 that show the identity of the recipients of this message.
- Draw an arrow from the word "abstain" to the phrase modifying it v. 11.
- Draw an arrow from the words "wage war" to the phrase modifying it v. 11.
- Draw a line connecting the contrasting words in v. 11.
- Underline the phrase in v. 12 that shows where good lives are to be lived.
- Place brackets around the phrase in v. 12 that reverses bad accusations.
- Double underline the end goal to "live...good lives" as found in v. 12.
- Write the references 1 Peter 1:5, 7, 13, 4:5, 7, 13; 5:4, 6, 10 near the phrase "he visits us" in v. 12.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. How does Peter's description of his readers (v. 11) influence his challenge for holiness and evangelism?
2. What are "sinful desires" and with what are they contrasted?
3. What does "abstain" mean and how does Peter describe "abstaining" elsewhere in 1 Peter (1:13-14, 22; 2:1; 3:2, 11; 4:1-4; 5:8-9)?
4. How do "sinful desires" "wage war" against your soul?
5. How do "good lives" and "good deeds" contribute to abstaining from sinful desires?
6. Where are we supposed to live "such good lives"? How is this even possible in light of v. 11?
7. What is to be anticipated from those who live around followers of Jesus (v. 12)?
8. What does Peter encourage as a counterstrategy to accusations or slander against Christians?
9. What is the desired effect of living a good life with unbelievers (v. 12)?
10. What connections do you see between personal holiness and personal evangelism?

Commentary On The Text

The book of 1 Peter is classified as an epistle. This written form of communication was the correspondence of the ancient world. In the New Testament (NT), 1 Peter is categorized as part of General Epistles, those not written by Paul. Like many other NT epistles, 1 Peter begins with a detailed presentation of a theological theme and then finishes with ethical and practical instructions for living. The book of Romans presents the theme of the Gospel in chapters 1-11 and then finishes with instructions for holy living in chapters 12-16. In similar fashion, 1 Peter begins with an unpacking of the many facets of salvation (1 Pet. 1:1-2:10). After this theological treatise, 1 Peter then outlines a number of ethical and lifestyle exhortations (1 Pet. 2:11-5:11) including what are often called household management codes. These challenges include how we should live in our families, neighborhoods, churches and nations. Because of our new birth (1 Pet. 1:3-2:3) based upon the Cornerstone of Jesus and our new identity as a royal priesthood of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:4-10), we should live as holy people sojourning in what is not our final home (1 Pet. 2:11-5:11). 1 Peter 2:11-12 serve as a governing thought for the rest of the book.

1 Peter 2:11 begins with a label of affection (“Dear friends”) and a command (“I urge you”). 1 Peter marks shifts in subject matter with a similar formula in 1 Peter 4:12; 5:1 and 5:12. Within this introduction of a new topic, Peter reaches back into his description of “the saved” to highlight their identity as “foreigners and exiles.” This phrase combines descriptions of believers in 1 Peter 1:1 and 1:17. The phrase also echoes back to a description of Abraham who was also a “foreigner and exile” (Gen. 23:4). “Peter’s readers need to reorient their self-understanding with respect to the society in which they live. The terms Peter uses to describe them basically mean that as Christians they are citizens first of God’s holy nation and therefore not primarily citizens (i.e., aliens and foreigners) of the society in which they live, to whatever extent the two conflict. With the allusion to Abraham, he reminds his readers that they stand in a long tradition of people who were chosen by God and called to be aliens and strangers in the places where they lived” (Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary, 167). Holy living rests within the mindset of a higher loyalty and an expectation of a different final destination than this world. We live differently because of our true identity is in another world. True, vibrant and biblical Christians are rarely a majority in our world.

Living differently includes turning away from things that might seem normal or culturally acceptable. We are urged to “abstain from sinful desires” (1 Pet. 2:11). This is a “pushing away” or a “refusal to engage” with thoughts or actions that would conflict with the God’s expectations of holiness. 1 Peter is replete with a variety of commands challenging believers to refrain from evil thoughts and actions (1:13-16, 2:1, 21-22; 3:2, 11, 16; 4:2-5; 5:8-9). Part of living as born again followers of Jesus in a fallen world is to resist and push away from sin. The

description of these negative desires is that of being “fleshly” or “natural” and stand in contrast to our immaterial souls. These desires are also in contrast with the good lives we are called to live (1 Pet. 2:12). These “sinful desires” include bodily appetites (1 Pet. 4:2-3) but can also be relational and verbal as well (1 Pet. 2:1).

Sinful desires are to be avoided most notably because of the damage they do to our souls. Giving in to “fleshly desires” is like introducing a virus or infection into the body. Sin may begin small, but can spread rapidly, destroying all that it touches. “To entertain such desires may appear momentarily attractive and entirely harmless, since the desires do not usually break forth into wrongful actions, but they are in reality enemies which inflict harm on the Christian’s ‘soul’, making him spiritually weak and ineffective. To be unaware of this spiritual damage indicates a low level of spiritual perception” (Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 123).

Peter follows up his negative corrective with a positive challenge in 1 Peter 2:12. Another way to abstain from sinful desires is to live such a good life that others benefit greatly. The action of 1 Peter 2:12 is ongoing and continuous, filling the void of empty desires. We are to live a life of excellence and maintain this goodness not in isolation but for and with unbelievers. This “good life” or “excellent behavior” comes from a word that means literally “our turning” or “our revolutions” of life. Peter uses this word six times in the book (1Pe 1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1-2, 16). Perhaps the clearest example of this “good living” is found in Peter’s instructions to wives (1 Pet. 3:1-6). Unbelieving husbands can be “won over” to faith by the holy lives of their partners. Living a life with “good deeds” can change the opinions of those who slander us. One of the best apologetic arguments for faith in God is doing well what the unbelieving world selfishly neglects. Eternal life may be made more appealing to skeptics when they see the present life lived excellently with humility and compassion.

Roman Emperor Julian, nephew to Emperor Constantine, rejected Christianity and sought to revitalize the worship of Roman gods. He wrote a number of critiques of Christians whom he labeled the “Galileans.” Even though he revitalized idol worship, he could not overcome the influence of Christians upon Roman culture. As the last pagan emperor of Rome, he bemoaned, “It is their [Christians] benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase atheism [pejorative term for “Christianity”]? I believe that we ought really and truly to practice every one of these virtues.... For it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg because they take of their own and the impious Galileans support not only their own poor but our own poor as well. From this, everyone sees that our people lack aid from us” (W. C. Wright, “Letter to Arcadius, the High-Priest of Galatia,” in *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, Vol. III, 67-73). Christian living done well can catch the eye of emperors. Don’t stop privately and publicly living your faith in Jesus!

Word Studies/Notes

V. 11 *Dear friends* “[one word in Greek text] embodying the love (agapē) of God. Peter addresses his readers as those who are bound (1:22) to one another and to him, not simply by natural affection but by their common sharing in God’s great love (agapē) for them as believers in Jesus Christ, God’s beloved (agapētos) Son (Mark 1:11)... Although agapētoi was an expression in general use at the time, Christians gave the term a new depth of meaning, for it described the quality of the Father’s feeling for Jesus: ‘This is my beloved (agapētos) Son’ (Matt. 3:17, KJV, RSV). The writer’s address to his readers as agapētoi also occurs in 4:12; 2 Pet. 3:1, 14, 17” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 73-75).

V. 11 *urge* “This first instance of the author speaking directly (1st -person sing of *parakaleō*) introduces a combination of exhortation and encouragement that dominates the remainder of the letter. ...The introductory verb *parakalō* (see also 5:1), like beloved in 2:11 and 4:12, signals the commencement of a new, hortatory unit. ... The verb customarily is used to establish a fraternal atmosphere in which to make specific requests in a diplomatic fashion. Its force is somewhat more than “request” but less than “command” (John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 37B, Anchor Yale Bible, 457).

V. 11 *abstain* “Peter urges the Christian believers to ‘abstain from’ evil desires. His advice is similar to what was given at the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15:1-29, and he uses the same verb ‘abstain’. The council’s letter contained this advice to the new Gentile Christians: ‘You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things’ (Acts 15:29). Similarly, Paul the apostle admonishes the Thessalonians: ‘It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality’ (1 Thess 4:3) and ‘reject every kind of evil’ (1 Thess 5:22)” (Dennis R. Edwards, *1 Peter*, ed. Scot McKnight, The Story of God Bible Commentary, 101).

V. 11 *sinful desires* “The meaning here appears to be close to the Pauline understanding of the term ‘flesh.’ These are the natural desires that human beings have apart from the work of the Spirit. In 1 Peter the ‘flesh’ (*sarx*) represents the weakness of human beings in this age (cf. 1:24; 3:18; 4:1-2). The verse is instructive because it informs us that those who have the Spirit are not exempt from fleshly desires. Such desires cannot be confined to sexual sins or sins of the body like drunkenness. We have already seen in 2:1 that believers are warned against ‘social’ sins like slander and envy” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary, 120).

V. 11 *war* “A term from military life, *strateuontai* (‘wage war’) figuratively depicts the devastating internal effect of Gentile-like desires upon believers. A related military metaphor (‘arm yourselves’) is similarly employed in 4:1, within a context already shown to be related to this verse. These constitute two of the four military metaphors used in 1 Peter. The verb *strateuomai*, used literally, means ‘serve as a soldier,’ ‘do battle,’ ‘wage war.’ Plato (*Phaed.* 66C; cf. 86C) had already linked actual war with craving (evil desire), noting that *epithymia* [desire] is the sole cause of wars and revolutions” (Elliott, 464).

V. 12 *pagans* The Greek word used is *ethnos*, which can mean “nation” (1 Pet. 2:9) or “Gentiles.” “Given that many in Peter’s audience would have been drawn from the ranks of the Gentile world, this may seem an odd move. However, we have just seen in vv. 9-10 how Peter applies Israel’s own self-descriptors to Christians (e.g., ‘a royal priesthood, a holy nation’). In the same way, he now uses the collective term ‘the Gentiles’ in a manner analogous to Israel’s own usage. Whereas Israel deployed the term in designations of non-Jews (people who lived outside Torah), so in Peter’s hands ‘Gentiles’ can refer to all who do not follow Jesus... Importantly, ‘life among the Gentiles’ ought still to be ‘life among the Gentiles’: engagement and witness, not withdrawal and isolationism” (Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary, 67-68).

V. 12 *accuse* “It was often the very abstaining ‘from fleshly desires’ that caused pagans to despise Christians (so 4:4). They accused them of a number of crimes, such as practicing murder, incest, and cannibalism in their secret church meetings (from expressions such as ‘love feasts,’ ‘brother and sister,’ ‘eating the body,’ and ‘drinking the blood,’ transferred to pagan contexts), and especially of disturbing the peace and good order of the Empire. ... Such slander was the common fare of public discourse and, when brought to the attention of the authorities, became the basis for judicial persecution” (Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 97-98).

V. 12 *good deeds* “Peter’s advice sounds like Jesus’ advice recorded in Matthew 5:16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven’ (Matthew 5:16 NKJV). If believers’ actions are above reproach, even hostile people might end up praising God. Peter’s readers were scattered among unbelieving Gentiles who were inclined to believe and spread vicious lies about Christians, accusing them of wrongdoing, blaming them without cause. Attractive, gracious, and upright behavior on the part of Christians could show these rumors to be false and could even win some of the unsaved critics to the Lord’s side” (Bruce B. Barton, *1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude*, Life Application Bible Commentary, 64).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Because of your identity as born again foreigners in this world, push away from and cease soul-harming habits by doing good for God's glory, even for those who hate you.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

We've all seen the cute little videos of kids that really stand out in a crowd – the preschool ballet dancer who goes entirely rogue or an elementary child who performs at his school choir concert with extreme passion. Most of our elementary kids just want to blend in with the crowd. They want to wear the same clothes, have the same hair style, carry the same name brand backpack and speak with the same vernacular as the rest of the kids in their class. As parents we need to realize that asking them to stand out is asking a whole lot. We often forget they don't have the same confidence that an adult has. Which is kind of ridiculous because adults can really struggle with this as well. If you have a hard time going against the cultural grain and standing up for your Christian beliefs, imagine the panic your child feels when asked to do the same thing. But we know this is the right way to live and we want to encourage our kids to stand strong on the foundation of biblical truth at a young age as practice for the teen and adult years. There are some things you can try that will be helpful. Encourage an ongoing and open dialogue with your child to talk through their struggles. Give them a safe place to express their worry and concerns. Pray with and for them regularly. Celebrate the wins. Also, pray for your kids to trip up and then use these times for positive coaching with overflowing grace. We're cheering you on and praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12

1. What three words does Peter use to describe the readers of the letter?
2. What does Peter tell the readers to turn away from?
3. How does Peter suggest the readers live their life?

What Do You Think?

How can living a good life encourage others to believe in Jesus?

What Do You Do?

With your family, have opposite day where you say and do things in opposite mode. What are some things that people of this world might do but the Bible says to avoid?

CORE COMPETENCY: Evangelism

I share Jesus with others with my words and actions.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Peter 1:3

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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