

## How to Behave as We Are at War 1 Peter 2:11–12 (NKJV)

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Peter has finished telling us of all the blessings that we have in Christ and now comes to tell us how we are to behave.

We sort of like the former rather than the latter.

He discusses a problem that we all have. How to deal with improper desires. It is not an easy task.

Romans 7:14–23 (NKJV)

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

I. Who we are.

A. Sojourners and Pilgrims

1. Philippians 3:20 (NKJV)

a. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

B. Aliens (paroikous) literally means “alongside the house.” The word came to denote any person who lives in a country not his own and is therefore a foreigner. The term fits Christians who do not belong to this world’s system but live alongside those who do. *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 137.*

C. The word “pilgrims” who travels through a country and perhaps makes a brief stay there. *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 137.*

D. Hebrews 13:14 (NKJV)

1. 14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.

II. We are at war.

A. John MacArthur, “Even though regeneration produces a new disposition with holy longings, that new life force remains incarcerated within the old, unredeemed human flesh, precipitating an ongoing battle between the spirit and the flesh.” “The command to abstain signifies that saints have the ability by the new life and the indwelling Spirit to restrain the lustful flesh, even in a postmodern culture dominated by sensuality, immorality, and moral relativism.” *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 137–138.*

B. With our fleshly lusts.

1. 1 John 2:15–17 (NKJV)

- a. 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

2. John 15:19 (NKJV)

- a. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

3. 1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

- a. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

4. It is not simply refraining from doing worldly things. It is very positive action. It includes honesty and good works. All believers in any kind of business dealing show forth the praises of God by their honesty. That is a witness to the world. *J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary: The Epistles (1 Peter), electronic ed., vol. 54 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 57.*

C. Because they war against the soul.

1. Colossians 2:8 (NKJV)

- a. 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic

principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

2. James 1:27 (NKJV)
  - a. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.
3. Wage war is a strong term that generally means to carry out a long-term military campaign. It implies not just antagonism but a relentless, malicious aggression. Since it takes place in the soul, it is a kind of civil war. Joined with the concept of fleshly lusts, the image is of an army of lustful terrorists waging an internal search and destroy mission to conquer the soul of the believer. *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 138.*

III. Having an honorable conduct.

- A. Among the Gentiles is equivalent to the lost.
- B. The world is watching the Christian to see if our walk matches our talk.
  1. Whether we like it or not, every Christian is an advertisement for Christianity; by his life he either commends it to others or makes them think less of it. The strongest missionary force in the world is a Christian life. *William Barclay, ed., The Letters of James and Peter, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 202.*
- C. Our “love relationship” to Jesus Christ ought to be motivation enough for us to live godly lives in this godless world. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). There is something deeper than obedience because of duty, and that is obedience because of devotion. “If a man love Me, he will keep My words” (John 14:23) *Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 403–404.*

IV. That the world might glorify God.

- A. That is what it is all about.
  1. Matthew 5:16 (NKJV)
    - a. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
- B. It is not about us, what we do or give, or give up.
- C. After careful examination many a lost person has marveled and said to the Christian, “I want what you’ve got.”

V. In the day of visitation.

- A. “The day of visitation” could mean that day when Christ returns and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. But I think the “visitation” Peter mentioned here is the time when God visits lost sinners and saves them by His grace. *Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 404.*
1. In this context it is the day in which God comes to the sinner with special grace.
  2. We are either a help or a hindrance depending on how we have been living our lives in their view.
- B. May we be found faithful to give a good witness.
1. Not just with our speech but also with our lives.