



Show Honor

November 21-27, 2021

MAIN POINT

As God's chosen people, believers are called to point others to Christ by living lives of integrity.

INTRODUCTION

Who in your life is a model for integrity? Share an example of a time when he or she demonstrated integrity in a situation where it would have been easy to compromise.

Who from the Bible stands out to you as an example of integrity?

What would you like for people to truthfully say about you after you die?

It's been said that integrity is what we do, what we say, and what we say we do. The apostle Peter explains what integrity in the Christian life looks like to persecuted Christians struggling in their faith.

UNDERSTANDING

This passage from 1 Peter highlights three ways Christians are to have integrity: by staying away from temptation, by showing respect for authorities, and by seeking God in the midst of suffering.

READ [1 PETER 2:11-12](#).

In what way does seeing ourselves as temporary residents of this world help us avoid temptation?

How can you live as a "temporary resident in this world" with the following resources: money, vacation time, family relationships, work relationships, and church relationships?

In what ways does the world tempt you to use these resources contrary to the way the Bible commands you to live?

READ [1 PETER 2:15](#).

Do you find it ironic that living like this world is not your home makes you better at sharing Jesus with those who live like this world is their home? Why or why not?

We are not able to grasp the vast extent of God's love for us on our own. To comprehend God's love, you must pursue it alongside other believers. Each one grounded in God's great love, grows to comprehend that love more deeply together by God-given spiritual strength. As Paul beautifully expressed it, God's love cannot be measured, but we can grow together in our understanding of it.

READ [1 PETER 2:13-14](#).

In what ways do you find it particularly difficult to yield to: government authorities?

authorities at work? Pastoral authorities?

In verse 14, Peter defines “good citizenship” as “respect for authorities.” Most of us likely have a firm grasp regarding good citizenship through obedience to the law. Is it disrespectful to be passive or indifferent with regard to one’s rights and responsibilities as a citizen? For example, is it disrespectful to not vote in elections? Why or why not?

First Peter 2:14 implies that a biblical show of respect for authorities includes proactively participating in civil affairs. In order for Christians to be praised for doing good (v. 14), they must be actively participating in civil life as the Lord wills.

READ 1 PETER 2:17.

Compare and contrast “respect” and “love.” What might the relationship be between these things and “fearing God”?

When we fear people instead of God, we worship them instead of God. We look at people to fill us up, hoping they will give us what we need. But when we believe in Jesus and fear the Lord instead of man, we can love people for the sake of God’s glory and not for what they do for us. In the words of 1 Peter 2:17, our fear of God leads us to show respect, love others, and honor the government.

READ 1 PETER 2:21-23.

What are some of the kinds of suffering early Christians experienced? Can we draw any parallels from our lives to such suffering?

Are there any modern-day experiences you have read about or heard of that might be similar to what these Christians experienced?

What was Jesus’ motive for not sinning when experiencing unjust suffering (v. 22-23)? When we become angry or frustrated at the simplest of inconveniences, what does that reveal about our integrity?

If we are suffering and become angry or bitter, it reveals idols in our hearts. It shows us that we have become entitled to whatever it is we are not getting. To feel entitled to something is to worship it. Peter points out that Jesus “entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly” (v. 23). In other words, Jesus worshiped the Father, not His right to be treated justly.

APPLICATION

What are some specific ways you anticipate being tempted this week, and what can your plan be to stay away from those temptations?

Are there any authorities in your life who you need to reconcile with as a means of showing them respect and honor? How might this humble act lead you to share your faith?

Is it enough to show integrity by responding to inconveniences and suffering in a biblical way? What are some ways we can proactively exhibit integrity by avoiding temptation, showing respect for our authorities, or demonstrating faith in suffering?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for the character checks provided to us in Scripture. Pray that your group members will have an increased desire to serve God and His church this week and will live with integrity by resisting temptation, respecting authorities, and seeking God in suffering.

COMMENTARY

1 PETER 2:11-25

Peter wrote this letter to several congregations in what is now Turkey. These believers were undergoing persecution. This persecution probably did not come from the authorities but from their neighbors who misunderstood the nature of the Christian faith.

2:11-12. Many false rumors circulated about Christians. They sometimes were accused of weakening families. After all, family stresses did arise when one family member trusted Jesus as Savior and others did not. This stress was particularly acute when a wife trusted Christ and not her husband. Christians in some places were accused of cannibalism. Did they not meet weekly to eat the flesh of a man (misunderstanding of the Lord's Supper)? And others claimed Christians participated in immoral and even incestuous activities (misunderstanding of the "love feast" or fellowship meal that often accompanied the Lord's Supper).

Peter reminded these believers they were called to live as those set apart to God's service. Their lives were to exhibit a total transformation from the pagan lifestyle they had known prior to meeting Jesus Christ. If they simply lived so as to reflect the holiness of their Savior and God, they would put all such slanders to rest.

2:13-14. The verb "submit" also can be translated "be subject to" or "rank yourselves under," and normally includes the idea of obedience. Believers are commanded to submit to government at all levels. Christians are not permitted the freedom to choose the regulations or officials to which they will submit. Believers are to respect human authorities even if they don't agree with them. Of course, such submission does not include obeying commands that are sinful or contrary to Scripture. The king to whom Peter referred was most likely Nero (A.D. 54-68), the degenerate emperor who cruelly persecuted Christians. In stating that Christians should submit to the king, Peter was focusing on the authority of the office rather than on the character of the officeholder.

2:15-20. Peter first offers an evangelistic reason to respect authorities. Unbelievers are always watching believers to see whether their behaviors match what they profess. Thus, when Christians are "caught" doing good, the government may commend them. When Christians live as good citizens, their actions will counter false accusations made against them. Such behavior may result in unbelievers being more receptive to the gospel.

But if Christians are mandated to submit to the governing authorities, in what sense have they been "set free" by the gospel? Peter says that Christian liberty is always a responsible freedom—the freedom to choose what is right and good. Believers are to live as free persons, delivered from bondage to sin. Christian liberty is never to be used as a cover-up for evil. Therefore, there is a sense in which Christians are not free at all. They always live as servants of God. The word translated "servants" means "bondslaves," those owned by a master. Here is one of the great paradoxes of Christianity: Only those who have become God's slaves enjoy true freedom. Christian liberty does not mean being free to do only what we want; it means being free to do what we ought to do.

2:21-25. Peter identifies with his suffering audience, reminding them they, like Jesus, have been called to suffer. Suffering because of one's faith is not a probable or possible: It is certain. Just as Christ's suffering led unbelievers to repentance and faith in Jesus, so may the suffering of Christians. Identifying with Jesus' suffering gives purpose and solace to suffering Christians.