

Review

It is unusual for us to take in such a large portion of Scripture on a Sunday morning all at once, especially one with content that could keep us busy for months. But I think the best way to teach the concepts contained in this passage is to get them all at once in their context.

2:11-12 Keep Your Behavior Excellent

Remember, Peter has been pushing Christians to love one another - saying that we're all bricks in the same wall - all of us being built into the temple of God. We need to get rid of malice, envy, and evil-speak.

Now, we're seeing that this love isn't just for our benefit. It is also for the benefit of unbelievers. The idea is that they will see our behavior, and as a result, turn to God. This is key, and every section of today's verses are going to come back to that point: unbelievers will see the way we behave, and hopefully they will get saved.

2:13-17 Governmental Authorities

Peter's main exhortation regarding our behavior in view of outsiders is in regards to submission to authority. The first example he uses is about the governmental authorities.

Paul the apostle wrote,

Rom. 12:21-13:2 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

We are called to be in subjection to the governmental authorities. They might infringe on our civil rights. They might push liberalism. They might kick God out of the schools and courtrooms. But until they try to force you to personally sin, you are called to submit to them.

And so by submitting to these God-ordained - but not God-fearing - authorities, we will be doing God's will. And by doing this, we will silence those who say, "Christians disobey the government. Christians shoot abortion doctors. Christians beat up homosexuals. Christians have no

regard for the laws of our nation."

2:18-20 Personal Authorities

There are other authorities that we're under besides the government. In Peter's day, it was servants being owned by masters. In our day, it is employees and employers. And Peter's commands are well-timed. Just this week, a man told me how hesitant he is to hire believers in his company. "Some of my worst employees have been Christians," he said. "At least when you hire somebody that's not, you know what you're getting."

What about your workplace? What do they think of your behavior? Maybe you have a boss that is good and gentle. That's great - submit to them. But maybe you have a boss that's unreasonable. That's a shame - but submit to them anyway! Why? Because of the main point: so that unsaved people will see your godly behavior, and hopefully get saved.

"This isn't fair," you might say. "I don't like this setup at all! Why should I have to bite the bullet? Why should people be allowed to be mean to me, or treat me badly? Why do I have to be the one that takes all the heat?" Fortunately, Peter is about to address that very question...

2:21-25 The Example Of Jesus

What happened to Jesus? He suffered unjustly and was treated horribly. He was beaten brutally and yet continued to love graciously. And what does Peter say? YOU have been called to this purpose. This is your EXAMPLE to follow.

And because it is our example, we must put ourselves in that place. Peter is saying, "You commit no sin. Don't let any deceit be found in your mouth. When you are reviled, don't revile in return. When you're suffering, don't utter threats, just keep entrusting yourself to God. And you yourself bear their sins in your body, in hopes that they will die to sin and live to righteousness. For by your wounds, they can be healed."

Wow. What an amazing example we must follow. And it's no wonder that Peter chose to tell us this before talking about some of the most difficult submission and behavior issues: the ones regarding marriage.

Notice how to both husbands and wives, Peter says, "in the same way." In the same way as what? In the same way as Christ did. In other words, "Following Jesus' example, wives, submit to your husbands. Following Jesus' example, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way."

Wives, why should you submit to your husband, knowing that he is disobedient to the Word of God? Because the best chance of him repenting, or getting saved, is when you follow what Peter has been saying all morning: unbelievers will see the way we behave, and hopefully they will get saved.

And husbands, is Peter telling you to do the impossible? "Understand a woman? Are you kidding me?"

Look, if Jesus can die on a cross to save you, then don't you think that you could turn off the TV, get off the couch, and find out what your wife is thinking?

If Jesus could endure excruciating pain and torture to pay the price of your sins, then don't you think you could possibly put out enough effort to help with the kids, the laundry, the trash, or the vacuuming?

If Jesus could die to meet your needs, then don't you think that you might be able to expend a little energy finding out what your wife needs?

Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

And again, I will remind you why we needed to take this all in at once. Our behavior will draw people to Christ or drive them away from Christ.

Citizens, when people observe the way you respect the government, they either want to get into the kingdom, or kick you out of the country.

Employees, when your coworkers see the way you work, and hear how you talk about your boss, it either makes them want to be a Christian, or call you a hypocrite.

Wives, depending on your behavior towards your husband, he either wants to be saved or be somewhere else.

And husbands, when people see the way you treat your wife, it either makes them want to know Jesus, or say no to Jesus.