

Study 14

BE OBJECTS OF PAGAN ADMIRATION

First Peter 2:11-12



Much imaginative dribble has been taught about spiritual warfare. Suggestions of believers entering into cosmic battles with spirits of a varying degree of demonic intensity has been presented as the essence of spiritual warfare by some popular preachers. This is despite the Bible clearly stating what the grounds of true spiritual warfare are. Rather than warring with some external powers, the Scriptures reveal that the main battle-front is actually internal.

1. Where does James say that "wars" start? (James 4:1)

2. Paul also talks about our warfare in Galatians 5:16-24. What does he see as warring against the Christian?

Peter's solution to this warfare was to abstain from fleshly lusts. He doesn't say that a believer should battle with these things. He says that a believer should keep away from these things! Abstain not only means keep away from, but it also means to hold back from, as well. We must hold ourselves back from entertaining temptation. Jesus taught His followers to pray to God that they would not even be led into temptation (Matt. 6:13). This shows us how serious God regards the threat of sin against His children.

3. Note what things the Bible tells believers to specifically abstain from-

- a) Acts 15:20 _____
- b) 1Thess. 4:3 _____
- c) 1Thess. 5:22 _____

LIVE THE TALK

How can we increase our chances of winning our lost community to the Lord? Peter is about to state a principle of Christian living that vitally affects our evangelism. He will repeat this principle further in his letter. The principle is simply: *actions speak louder than words*. Some Christians have failed to recognise the value of *Christian works* in evangelism. Often they are heard describing an area as too hard for the gospel. But no area is too hard for the gospel. Especially if we apply this principle that Peter is going to elaborate on.

4. What similar thought is contained in Matthew 5:16?

A person's message is either verified or disqualified by their conduct. Proverbs 20:11 says that even a child's true character is known by their conduct, while Proverbs 21:8 says that the innocent are proven to be such by their conduct. Paul urged the Philippians to conduct themselves in accordance with the Gospel (Phil. 1:27).

5. What does the Scripture tell believers to do to each other in regard to this? (Heb. 10:24)

6. How are Christians described in 2Corinthians 3:3?

AMONG PAGANS

Our conduct is constantly being scrutinised by the world. When our conduct reflects Christ in us, people notice it. We don't talk like them. We don't spend our time like they do. We don't laugh at the same things they find funny. We feel compassion for those that the world is rejecting. We display loyalty and respect. We reflect a life that is untroubled by the uncertainties in life.

7. Note 1Peter 2:12.

a) What should unbelievers see or observe in us?

b) What will this cause them to do?

c) This is despite them doing what?

If we want to emasculate our evangelism, then we should lead lives that disgrace the teaching of Christ. If we want to advance the kingdom of God into our community we should take careful heed to how we live our lives. May God both help us and make to change into a people that delight Him in our conduct and evangelism.

Amen.

