

1 Peter 2:11-12

The Meaning and the Significance of 1 Peter 2:11-12

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Addressees: believers in Christ: then/them....now/us

Beloved

A Command (Two-Pronged)

I urge you as aliens and strangers (1:1 parepidemois)

(-) to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul

(+) Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles (interaction > isolation)

Purpose Clause

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 in the day of visitation (personal accountability before God)

Question 1

Have You Ever Heard Someone Object to Christianity Because “The Bible Can Mean Anything Anybody Wants It to Mean!”

Question 2

How Would You Respond to That Kind of Critique?

Transforming Truth

1 Peter 2:11-12 and Other Verses Like It are a Major Key to a Good Answer to Q1

The Significance of 1 Peter 2:11-12

1: The Bible is a Revelation (Communication from God to Us) Not a Riddle-Written to Be Understood by Believers (1 P 2:1-2; 2 Tim 3:16-17) Who are In/Under the Word

2: While the Bible Does Contain “Some Things Hard to Understand” (2 Peter 3:16) the Main Things (Sin, the Savior, Salvation) are Plain Things and They Get Repeated a Lot.

3: Many Books of the Bible Contain a Purpose Statement Which Tells the Readers (Then and Now) Why the Human is Writing His Document:

A: Purpose Statements are sometimes at the very beginning of books:

The Gospel of Luke (1:1-3) and The Book of Acts (1:1-4); The Book of Jude (v3)

B: Purpose Statements are sometimes at the very end of books:

Ecclesiastes (12:13-14); The Gospel of John (20:30-31)

C: Purpose Statements are sometimes in the middle of books:

The Book of Ephesians (4:1-3) and the Book of 1 Peter (2:11-12)

What's the Point Pastor? AKA: Take This To Heart

Going back to the claim "The Bible can mean anything..." A good response would be something like: "You're right, and so can the US Constitution, the Reader's Digest and even a text from your spouse, if they are read apart from their context and/or without regard to how the author uses language, consistent with his/her intent." Example: if Stan Heath is out of town on a business trip and he texts Ginny "it is raining cats and dogs at the airport" would she think Stan was telling her felines and canines are dropping out of the sky OR would she instantly realize he was using a figure of speech to tell her it was raining hard...with the implication his flight home might be delayed?

The fancy term for this is the "grammatical, historical, contextual approach" to reading and studying the Bible. This is THE way to study God's Word for believers as we seek and submit to the Holy Spirit's illumination. IOWs: Christians in/under the Word must not approach the Scripture as individually wrapped Bible McNuggets. We must come to the Word as life changing (as in OUR LIVES) truth! As important as it is, we must not settle for accurate interpretation (what does this verse/passage mean in context?)...we must move from that point to active personal application (what does this meaning mean to me in my conduct: thoughts, words and deeds? IOWs: As God's Word emphasizes: We are not to be passive "hearers of the Word" but rather active "doers of the Word."

All of the above is why most Bible questions are answered in the verse before or the verse after (think Psalm 96:4). This is why it is important to note as "super-context" the purpose statements of biblical books as we read any part of those books. In this study of 1 Peter, I have made it a point to consistently refer to 1 Peter 2:11-12 regardless of what specific verse/verses we are studying on a given day. So rather than asking, "What does Brad or James think this verse/passage means?" TBFers should ask "What does this verse/passage actually mean in its context...and how does that meaning apply to me/my Christian life. Check out what our Lord says about this very thing in John 17:17.