

An Appeal and an Alternative

Abstaining from fleshly lusts and pursuing Godly living without compromise.

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- Let's begin with our own observations. Was there a moment where God spoke to you, showed you something new, or reminded you of a familiar truth through the message this week?
- Peter made an appeal to Christians that they should abstain from fleshly lusts, and instead, should embrace the alternative of pursuing Godly living without compromise. Let's make a run at a few initial spiritual truths. Does God expect His people to live a holy life? Is holding a high standard for Christian living the same as Christian legalism? What does the Bible say about continuing in patterns, habits, or lifestyles of sin after a person meets Jesus?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- Pastor Joel taught us that human beings can control themselves. We're not like animals that operate solely on instinct or nature. We have the ability to embrace what's healthy and to resist what's not. Just because a person has an appetite doesn't mean that we have to feed it...and whatever we feed will grow! Let's discuss our role in cooperating with the Holy Spirit as He sanctifies us in Christ. What is the believer's role in his or her own holy conduct?
- One thing that we learned in this lesson is that sin often offers a believer short term pleasure with long term consequences. Christians should stop and think about the high cost of sin before giving in to the impulses of the flesh. Will it cost you your reputation, your integrity, your family, your position in the church? Someone once said, sin will take you farther than you want to go, leave you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. How does calculating the consequences of our actions influence us to make godly decisions, and to choose holy living over sinful expressions, even when we're tempted?
- We discussed six reasons why a Christians would want to make holy living a priority. Of the reasons that we discussed from 1 Peter 2:11-12, which ones stood out to you as the most significant from the list, and why? Here's the list one more time...
 - Because fleshly lusts are fleshly.
 - Because we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
 - Because fleshly lusts war against our own soul.

- Because we live as spiritual examples among the lost.
- Because a person who lives for God can correct misconceptions about Christ and Christians.
- Because God often stirs the heart of a lost person by the witness of a saved person.

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Philippians 3:20
- Matthew 5:13
- 2 Corinthians 2:15

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

1. Is there an area where you need to heed Peter's appeal to abstain from fleshly lusts? Would you commit that particular area to the Lord and make a plan to push back at that appetite when it appears next time?
2. Do you need to make a general commitment to pursue Godly living, and to do so without compromise. Perhaps a focus on pleasing God hasn't been a very high life priority up to this point. Would you decide that living for God will be a priority for you as you move ahead from here, and take clear action steps to make this a reality?