



Abstain from Fleshly Lust

Scripture reading 1 Peter 2:11-12

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Happy New Year! Yes, it is here! A brand new year for you to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Year after year for the last 2,000 or more, Christians have faced the new year as our passage says, *“as strangers and pilgrims.”* We are not part of this world. We live in this world as ambassadors of Christ, representing Him. Peter calls us “dearly beloved” and he warns us that as we live in this world there is a war against our souls. The war is not waged by outside sources, but it is a war that is waged from the very bodies that we live in. Our fleshly bodies are still part of this world. It is absolutely essential that the believer learn to control the fleshly lusts of his body or his purpose for existence on this planet will be greatly hindered. Peter gives the New Testament believer the same warning. He goes on to say, *“your conversation [should be] honest”* (1 Peter 2:12). The word *honest* means genuine. The idea is that Christians should not try to live like or imitate the world. The Christian should live like a Christian, controlled by the Spirit, walking in love, representing Jesus Christ.

I was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada. In Las Vegas, we have gambling, drinking, and burlesque shows. Every type of immoral behavior is not only permitted but promoted. Las Vegas is known as sin city. But the sinners who live in Las Vegas and participate in all of these ungodly activities do not expect that behavior in me or from the members of Liberty Baptist Church. They expect good works and the fruit of the Spirit. Peter says when believers live as strangers and pilgrims and do not give in to their fleshly lusts, those who live ungodly lives may speak of the believer as an evil doer, but when they behold your good works, they will glorify God in the day of visitation. I encourage you in the year 2021 to live a genuine, godly life. By faith, determine to reflect Christ to others and you, as a believer, will SHINE.



Submit to Every Ordinance of Man

Scripture reading 1 Peter 2:13-17

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.”

The overwhelming evidence that a person is filled with Holy Spirit is a heart of submission to God. Ephesians 5:18 says, *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”* The result is in verse 21, *“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”* Submission is a very difficult thing unless we are surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

When I first met Anna, I wanted to date her immediately. Anna’s earthly authority was her mother. Though we were both eighteen, she and I were both still under parental authority. I did not understand that principle. God used her mother and several godly professors and pastors to teach me that God has authority figures in our lives to protect, guide, and keep us from evil. Through our submission to Anna’s mother, we were protected from making many mistakes that would have hindered our ministry for Christ. There are various authorities that God has established in this world: civil authorities, spiritual authorities, spousal authorities, and parental authorities. You may not always agree with those in authority over you, but it is important, as a believer, that you submit.

In America, your final authority is the Constitution of the United States. God has ordained the Constitution for the protection of the citizens of this country. As the leaders of our nation submit to its authority and as you submit to them, our nation will have God’s protection and you, as a believer, will have the opportunity to reflect Christ.

In 2021, submit yourself to God by faith. Trust God that He is working through the powers that be. Rely on His protection and His provision. As you submit to God-ordained authority, you, as a believer, will SHINE.