



Sunday Sermon Study Guide

January 22, 2023

Pastor Brian Bales

Alien Living: *Proper Freedom*

1 Peter 2:12—3:9

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor supreme,¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

³ Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,² when they see your respectful and pure conduct.³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you^[d] of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. (1 Peter 2:12-3:9 ESV)

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

INTRODUCTION

Today we are exploring a greatly misunderstood, and often misused section of Scripture and highlighting the importance of context (adjacent passages as well as cultural and historical context) in understanding the author's intent.

LESSONS TO EXPLORE

1. What does the Bible mean by submission or subjection?

2. The goal of freedom
3. Suffering is the call of the alien (expect it)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. The Emperor Nero was evil; God does not condone or promote slavery; women and men (Jew and Greek, slave and freeman) are all one in Christ.
 - a. The Apostle Peter gives us three institutions or areas of submission. There may be other examples, but Pastor Brian places these three distinctly within the historical context of Rome. How do these three challenge you and I today?
 1. Submission to political authority.
 2. The workplace?
 3. Within the home and the familydynamic?

 - b. Where else could our freedom in Christ run counter to today's culture here in NOVA?

 - c. What is the Big Picture purpose of submission Peter is laying out for us and how do submission and freedom relate to one another in this teaching?

2. Our concept of "alien living" is being challenged.
 - a. Peter acknowledges our differences (sojourners and exiles whose home is Heaven) yet seems to be saying that we should live like our neighbors. This seems contradictory so what is the purpose behind Peter's teaching? How might our conduct and our good deeds advertise or proclaim the goodness of God to those around us? 1 Peter 2:12,13

- b. How do we “*live as aliens*” in the freedom Christ gives us, and yet submit to the rules/regulations of our society and government? How would Christian Privilege and Christian Duty inform our decisions? Which can we give up in order to proclaim Christ?

3. Brian speaks about our having a “freedom problem” in the United States: *freedom has become our idol*.

- a. We have been set free for a purpose; what is our purpose both individually and as a church community? How can we be both free and yet servants at the same time?

- b. When our personal freedom comes into conflict with someone else’s eternal freedom, what are our options? What are we asked to do?

4. We don’t like to talk about (suffering).

- a. “*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you.*” 1 Peter 2:21?

MAKING IT REAL

Brian gives us three questions to consider this week:

1. Where might our personal freedom become more important than God's call on our lives?
2. Who might God be calling us to treat differently that is in authority over us?
3. What is God asking us to do in response to His call on our lives to live as *people who have been set apart*?