

Live as God's People

13 October, 2010

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – 1 Peter 1:22 – 2:12

Unit Theme: Counsel for Christlike Living

Central Truth: Christians glorify God by loving one another and trusting God's word.

Focus: Recognize we are sojourners in this world and live as citizens of God's kingdom.

Key Verse: 1 Peter 2:10 - who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Introduction:

What does it mean to live as God's people? This is a phrase that is as ambiguous (more than one meaning) as any. Yet perhaps it is the most important one for us to get right, the alternative (to not live as God's people) is an option with dire consequences. Let's begin by looking at some of the benefits of living as God's people. The Bible says that God's people have peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7). This means that our circumstances don't affect our faith or our outlook on life. One of the reasons for this peace is our knowledge that nothing in this life can affect our future salvation or our promised eternal life (Romans 6:23). We don't just have a promise of eternal life the Bible says that He will wipe away every tear and that all sorrow, mourning and pain will depart from us (Revelation 21:4)! Furthermore, we have the benefit of living righteous and holy lives as God's people. We don't have to wonder if we're getting it right – God's people know that they serve the “right God” and He is able to make them right in return. This brings me to the concluding point of my introduction. Who decides what's right? If we're going to live as God's people, who says how we shall live? Many have tried throughout the generations to establish rules of righteousness so to speak, but all they really do is bring condemnation to people. Romans 8:1 says that God's people don't live in condemnation. So then, men's rules become problematic for anyone who desires to live a godly life. The answer to the question is only found in God's word. God decides what is right and how we shall live and because He's God, this may mean that I am permitted to do something that my brother or sister is not permitted to do (1 Corinthians 10:23-30). I'm not talking about sin however. But I may be talking about things that the “men” of religion have made rules against and perhaps even labeled themselves as sin. To live as God's people is simply to love God and desire to please Him in every way – this is our guard against the flesh and the ways of the world.

I. Love Each Other – 1 Peter 1:22-25

Earlier I talked about living right – now we will see how we're doing. God's people love one another, period. John 13:35 says that they (the world) will know that we are His disciples (people) by our love for one another. Wow! I'll be the first to tell you I need help here...if this were the only test for being a “Christian” I'm not sure how I'd fare compared to some. However,

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God's grace is sufficient even for me and He is continually giving me more love for my brothers because I love Him. You cannot love God and remain the same. Your love for God will transform you and provide the world around you the evidence that you are a Christian. Love God first and loving others will be a byproduct of your love for Him.

➤ **Note Taker:** What is the connection between truth and love?

II. Believe the Word – 1 Peter 2:1-8

Through the years of studying, preaching and teaching God's word I have discovered and seem to continually discover that the more I do these things (study, preach and teach) the more aware I become of my continual need for Him. My testimony is this, I'm born again and empowered to live for Him, but I need Him more now than the day I first met Him! For further study on this look at what Paul says in Philippians 3:12. God's people don't live in malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking because our love for one another is greater than these things. Now you see why I need Jesus so bad – I suppose I'm not alone? We have to decide today whether we're going to believe the word or not. Simply put, God's people believe the word even when they don't understand it. God will always work with a surrendered vessel, that is, those who choose to believe. However, those who choose to not believe, God is restrained by His own nature. Where there is a little belief, there is hope, but where there is no belief there is also no hope!

➤ **Note Taker:** What should Believers "lay aside" and what is the impact if they fail to?

III. Glorify God – 1 Peter 2:9-12

I really love this concept – we were created to glorify God and for nothing else were we created! Look at what we are called "chosen generation" "royal priesthood" "holy nation" "special

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people” this is what God expects of us. Our acknowledgment of this is the first step toward fully glorifying Him. The most sobering thing about all of this is not in what God thinks of us, but in the fact that we can glorify God at all! We can glorify Him at any time, in any place, in every circumstance and in almost every vocation. The exception being the vocations that we can't glorify God in (I'll leave you think on that one). God's people are proclaimers of His greatness, this is our testimony and our testimony is our secret weapon against the enemy that is always triumphant (Revelation 12:11). Glorify God! What more can I say?

➤ **Note Taker:** How should a believer's life influence others?

Conclusion:

I used to think that being a Christian (God's People) meant that we had to live a certain way, and give up so much, but I was mistaken. Look, it's not in how we live as much as it is in whom we live for. Now having said that, I need to caveat it with this, God expects us to live righteous and holy lives free from sin and the practice thereof. I am not at all suggesting that we can live any way we want. What I am saying is that God has set us free from the law of sin and death and He does not want us to live under the bondage of anyone's rules – rules don't make us righteous, faith makes us righteous (Romans 4:5). Men's rules that are not founded in God's word bring condemnation to the heart of men and those who attempt to live by men's rules are in essence living for men and not God. God wants us to live for Him above all else and for those who do, well, we'll all tell you, we have not lost a thing, but on the contrary have gained everything! I challenge you to find a better deal than the offer of salvation; this is what we as God's people have to hold to. Salvation is a genuine hope that will not disappoint – God's people proclaim His salvation because it's just too good to keep to ourselves!

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Except where I have paraphrased all scripture is taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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