

A Life of Integrity

Webster's defines integrity as "the quality or state of being complete or undivided." Another way to say it is that our private and our public lives match. We all want that, right? We want our behavior to be consistent with what we believe. We want a consistent, integrated life. In today's passage, Peter describes a life of integrity. He will give commands concerning our internal desires and our external behavior. Essentially, he gives us a vision for a consistent, integrated life. Such a life is one that God can use in powerful ways.

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12

1. Think back to the previous passage (2:4-10). How does this passage naturally flow from that one? In what sense is this passage an application of that one?
2. Peter says that our passions of the flesh wage war against our soul. Based on the immediate context (and anything else you can think of in Scripture) how do passions of the flesh war against us? What do they do to harm you?
3. Is Peter being realistic in commanding believers to abstain (rather than to just "avoid" or "cut back") from the passions of the flesh? Why or why not?
4. What strategies can you think of from Scripture for abstaining from the passions of the flesh?

5. What does it mean to keep our conduct among the Gentiles honorable (v. 12)?
6. Where are the main contexts in your life in which people who do not yet know Christ have a chance to observe your conduct? Make a list.
7. As you think about these various contexts, what are some practical ways to keep your conduct honorable?

Steve said:

Christians were sometimes accused of being anti-social or even atheist because they didn't worship the gods of the dominant culture. And in our day people "speak against us as evildoers" for various reasons. Of course, sometimes people have legitimate critiques of the church; we misrepresent Christ sometimes. And when we do we should admit as much and repent. But many times people slander us for simply believing what the Scriptures to teach. A biblical view of human sexuality, for example, often brings accusations of being narrow-minded and bigoted. Our commitment to take the gospel to the ends of the earth is sometimes met with the charge that we want to force our religion on people who are otherwise happy and fulfilled. Peter will instruct us later in the chapter to follow Christ's example when people revile us.

8. In addition to the areas Steve mentions, what are some ways that we are sometimes spoken of as evil because of our beliefs and actions? In other words, how is our faith sometimes offensive to the culture around us?
9. How can a godly life, a life of integrity, be an attractive thing to those who do not yet know God?