

## Before A Watching World

In a land of opportunity, you can literally be anything if you try hard enough, and there is some things you cannot be, no matter how hard you try, but there is one thing you will always be, whether you try or not -- an example. Everybody is an example! In 1 Peter 2:11-17, Peter teaches that the un-saved world is watching us. We need to behave accordingly. Let's look at four points made in these verses about our influence.

First, we need to abstain (vs. 11). Worldly lusts are to be avoided. Peter says that they "*war against the soul.*" The desires that we have in the body were given by God. Those desires must be kept under control lest they tempt us to sin. In being tempted to sin, they war against our soul. Paul wrote in Romans 7:23, "*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*"

Second, we need to advertise (vss. 12, 15-16). Honest behavior should always be named among those who propose to follow Christ. If the world sees us as dishonest and deceptive, our influence will be destroyed. Colossians 3:9 says, "*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*" When we act righteously, we silence those who would criticize us. They will instead behold our good works and glorify God.

Third, we need to adhere (vss. 13-14). We are to submit to those leaders God has placed over us. Romans 13:1-7 further explains our allegiance to earthly rulers by stating that they were ordained by God. Therefore, whoever resists their power, resists the ordinance of God. A child of God should be a law-abiding citizen. The world cannot see us faithfully attending services, pretending to be righteous and then see us trying to do all we can to subvert earthly laws.

Fourth, we need to abound (vs. 17). As we put into practice Peter's admonitions, they will help us prosper as an example of godliness. Honor is to be given to all men, including our rulers, and love should be given to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Honor is simply a valuing or esteem that is placed upon an important object. Hence, we esteem all men, including our rulers. Love teaches us to be kind, patient, longsuffering, but firm in the truth with one another.

Influence is important because it can only go one of two ways: good or evil. Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 5:6 and Galatians 5:9 that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. A little evil spreads evil to the entire group. If you do

not consciously make the effort to be a good influence, you will most certainly end up with a bad one. So be careful because the world is watching!

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