

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

<sup>13</sup> Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. <sup>15</sup> For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. <sup>17</sup> Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

### Review the context.

- Why are these readers “foreigners and exiles”? How might that affect their spiritual self-understanding?

### Understand it.

- Verses 11-12 echo Peter's warning from 2:1 and declaration of purpose in 2:9.
- What is Peter referring when he mentions glorifying God “on the day he visits us”? In what ways could the Christian way of life persuade pagans (non-God-worshippers) be to abandon their idolatry for the truth of the gospel?
- How does it benefit the Christian movement to “submit” to earthly authorities? How might this encourage believers today in the American Church?
- Why might this be increasingly difficult in cultures and governments who oppose Christianity? (yet still worth obeying)
- Verse 15 describes the silencing foolish people. The context here is about the ignorant understanding about the Christian Church. How might our response to civil authorities “cure their ignorance” (as The Message translates)?
- Living as “free people” and as “God's slaves” might sound contradictory? In what ways does service to God enable our understanding of liberty?

### Apply it.

- What rumors and untruths have you heard said about Christians? How do the actions of believers validate those rumors? How should they invalidate them?
- What benefit is it to you whenever you deny yourself and submit to another?
- Name 1-2 ways that you experience opportunities to respect civil authorities.
- Is there ever a time when Christians ought to resist authority (civil disobedience or rebellion)? If so, what are some examples? (Does God's word condone such resistance?)
- How can you represent your identity in God (2:9-10) and reveal God's grace to others when officials might otherwise expect resistance?