



was loved by His Father. As a result, He was able to undergo suffering and to die on the cross for us. When we settle the question of who we are to God, we can be secured in His love. When we are secured in God's love, we will be able to live an unapologetic counter cultural life – one that honours God.

**We are called to live as strangers and pilgrims on the earth (v11-12).**

There is an urgency for us to abstain from the passions of the flesh. The reminder is for us that as “pilgrims” that we are not part of this world. God calls us to live holy lives, consecrated and set apart for Him. We can do so as God empowers us! In Scripture, we have the example of Daniel. He did not bow down to the idols of his day and walked through suffering and persecution as a result. He was in Babylon, but Babylon was not in him. He is a picture of what it looks like to be faithful and be set apart, expectant for the deliverance of God. The early Christians lived such exemplary and counter-cultural lives that they were able to overcome evils and slanders to survive and thrive in a pagan world, and ultimately, glorify God through their good deeds – see also Matthew 5:16.

**We are called to live in submission to the human authorities set in place by God (v13-15).**

Part of this counter cultural life is living in submission to the human authorities over us. This is part of what it means to live holy lives. Regardless of how we are treated by the authorities, our posture towards them must be one of submission and not of dishonour. The context when Peter made the call was stunning as the government then were persecuting Christians, putting many to death. Yet, Peter was calling for the church to submit! It comes down to Trust and Humility. We can submit to evil rulers because we trust in God's sovereignty. In John 19:1-16, we see Jesus standing before Pilate saying that Pilate had no power over Him if it is not given from God. In Philippians 2:5-8, we see Jesus willingly embracing humility to be handed over to suffer death on the Cross.

**We are called to live in freedom, as servants of God (v16-17).**

In Matthew 10:28, Jesus tells us not to fear the powers of this world. We can embrace a life of submission like Jesus did and we can honour the “emperor” in complete freedom as servants because our stay in this world is only temporary.

**Discussion Questions**

- 1. We are called to live as strangers and pilgrims on the earth (1 Peter 2:11). How should we live in the light of this? [10 mins]**

*Leaders' Notes*

*This is a recap question. As Christians, we must remember that our fundamental identity is that of God's beloved. We are not to live with an orphan spirit nor be deceived to prioritise the temporary things of this world above what are in God's heart and what He desires for us in eternity. We are strangers on a sojourn. Sojourners are people who do not belong in the country where they are currently residing. Believers are just passing through and are temporary residents on this earth. We really belong somewhere else. Our true home is where God is, and He dwells in heaven. We must therefore store up treasures in heaven and live exemplary lives marked by holiness. This means to abstain from sinful desires as these fleshly desires war against our souls.*

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to the Next Question)

We are to be not of this world. Yet, we live in this world. While we live here, we are faced with practical problems. Similarly, 1 Peter deals with practical issues that the early church faced. One of these is how to deal with human authorities over us.

- 2. Read 1 Peter 2:13-14. We are called to submit and to do so for the Lord's sake. This does not come naturally to us and is counter cultural. Share on the struggles that you face in submitting to human authorities. [15 mins]**

Leaders' Notes

*This is a relate question. Which ones? In verse 13, we are called to submit to "every human institution." They would be parents, bosses, government, church leaders, etc where they have rightful authority. During Peter's time, the Roman emperors were marked by cruelty and were unsavoury characters unworthy of respect. Yet, Peter calls us to obey for two reasons: (a) these are institutions ordained by God; and (b) our humble submission to authority and civic goodness are God's ordained ways to silence the ignorance of foolish people (see verse 15). We have a new citizenship! Our conduct should speak of this reality and not what the standards the world around us goes by.*

*Why do most people submit? They do so because they must, either through pain of punishment (or to avoid it) or if they have something to gain. As Christians, we obey not out of fear nor to get ahead. We have a new motivation. We are servants of God and we submit to human authorities for God's sake!*

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to the Next Question)

The world speaks of submission (or insubordination) to human authority out of fear or to seek profit. The Christian response is markedly different. The next question discusses practical ways to live out our faith.

- 3. Read 1 Peter 2:16-17. We are called to fear God and "honour the emperor." What practical ways can we as Christians live from a place of freedom as bondservants of God? [15 mins]**

Leaders' Notes

*This is a response question. An immediate application would be obeying the governing authorities as good citizens. Another would be to refrain from unconstructive criticisms against the government, our bosses or any human authority over us in conversations or on social media. To what extent is our problem with submission to earthly authorities a problem with authority in general. We do not like anybody telling us what to do, including God. God is known only when we surrender to Him and submit to His authority.*

*Peter is calling Christians to submit to human authorities for Jesus' sake, not for personal gain nor fear of punishments. We are to honour people irrespective of whether they can pay you back. When we are devoted to doing good and blessing others, we are fulfilling what God puts us on earth to do.*

*Members can ponder on how we, as Christians, can respond to unjust sufferings under human authorities. It is not about saying nothing when such sufferings happen as sometimes, we need to. Our response to suffering must show that we have the living Hope and reveal God's love. This love goes beyond what the world knows.*

## Closing

Considering the nearness of Jesus' return, the uncertainty of the times and the inevitability of suffering, it is important to have our heart postured rightly before God and before the authorities. We must know how to navigate difficult seasons by submitting to God's sovereignty in humility and trust. Only in Christ, can we run the good race and fight the good fight!

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## WORKS [10 min]

Let's pray:

- 1. Pray to commit to live a counter-cultural life based on what God values:**
  - by identifying ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on this earth;
  - by living in submission to human authorities set in place by God; and
  - by living as bondservants of God serving His purpose for our lives wherever we are.
- 2. Pray for Phase 2 of the Circuit Breaker:**
  - that God will protect each and every one of us from COVID-19.
  - that the community and dormitory cases will decrease till zero.
  - that all active cases in hospitals and community facilities will be cleared and declared virus-free.
- 3. Pray for God's sovereign control and favour in the global COVID-19 pandemic**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1. Bible Reading Plan.** You can access the latest Bible Reading Plan by visiting [www.riverlifeorg.sg/brp](http://www.riverlifeorg.sg/brp).



### Church Vision

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

### Mission

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.