

1 Peter 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims,
abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Analysis

Peter issues urgent appeal based on believers' identity. "Dearly beloved" (agapētoi) expresses pastoral affection. "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims" (parakalō hōs paroikous kai parepidēmous) recalls their status (1:1)—temporary residents journeying to permanent home. The command: "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (apechesthai tōn sarkikōn epithymiōn, haitines strateuontai kata tēs psychēs). "Fleshly lusts" are desires originating from fallen nature. "War" (strateuontai) employs military imagery—constant battle waged against spiritual wellbeing. Believers must actively resist, not negotiate peace.

Historical Context

In pagan Roman culture, sensuality and self-indulgence were celebrated, not condemned. Mystery religions promoted sexual rituals; philosophical Epicureanism encouraged pleasure-seeking. Peter calls Christians to radical counter-cultural holiness. The warfare metaphor indicates Christian life is spiritual battle requiring vigilance and self-discipline. Early church's moral purity distinguished it from pagan debauchery, attracting those disillusioned with empty pleasures.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What specific 'fleshly lusts' are currently waging war against your soul, and what strategies help you resist?
2. How does remembering you're a pilgrim (not permanent resident) affect your relationship with worldly desires?

Interlinear Text

Ἀγαπητοί	παρακαλῶ	ὥς	παροίκους	καὶ	παρεπιδήμους
Dearly beloved	I beseech	you as	strangers	and	pilgrims
G27	G3870	G5613	G3941	G2532	G3927
ἀπέχεσθαι	τῶν	σαρκικῶν	ἐπιθυμιῶν	αἵτινες	στρατεύονται
abstain from		fleshly	lusts	which	war
G567	G3588	G4559	G1939	G3748	G4754
κατὰ	τῆς	ψυχῆς·			
against		the soul			
G2596	G3588	G5590			

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 5:24 (Parallel theme): And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

1 Peter 4:2 (Parallel theme): That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Hebrews 11:13 (Parallel theme): These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Romans 8:13 (Parallel theme): For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

James 4:1 (Parallel theme): From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

1 Chronicles 29:15 (Parallel theme): For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Love): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Timothy 2:22 (Love): Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Romans 12:1 (Parallel theme): I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Ephesians 4:1 (Parallel theme): I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,