

PRAYER NIGHT **SLIDE**

INTRODUCE **SLIDE** 1 PETER

So, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Peter chapter 2.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 1 Peter 2,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find 1 Peter 2 on page **1014**.

INTRODUCTION: MY DAD

I'm calling today's sermon **SLIDE** THE BATTLE

- That's because Peter uses the language and metaphor...
- of war in these two verses.

So, my Dad is a veteran of the Vietnam War.

- Dad went to West Point.
- Was an Army Ranger...so, special forces.
- Did two tours of duty in Vietnam.
- And years later, retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

So, war is something he knows well.

Now, growing up, he rarely, if ever, talked about his time at war...

- and that's a rather normal experience from war vets.

But last summer...

- I was able to take my Dad on a memory trip
- to up-state New York
- to spend time at our family's lake house
- where we grew up going every summer.

It was a special time as my dad is almost 80.

But there's one night at the lake I'll never forget.

- We were sitting on the porch overlooking the lake,
- and my uncle, who is also a Vietnam vet,
- started reminiscing with my Dad about their time in the war.

And if it wouldn't have been terribly inappropriate,

- I would have pulled out my phone to capture the moment,
 - but some moments are so important
 - and dare-I-say, holy,
 - that i just soaked it in.

Because my uncle started asking my Dad questions...

and Dad started talking.

- He talked about his fears the first night in combat.
- He talked about the friendships he made with other soldiers.
- He talked about the first time he discharged his weapon,
 - and the first time he was fired against.

It was two men,

- nearing the end of their lives...
- talking about life...
- and THE BATTLES they were in...

It's a night I'll never forget.

TRANSITION

The Bible often uses war language...

- To describe the life of a disciple...
- as a BATTLE.

But that comes with questions:

- What does it take to fight THE BATTLE?
- What are we even fighting THE BATTLE for?
- And how do we survive THE BATTLE?

That's some of what we'll see in our two verses today.

Just two verses today, and I've just got two points from those verses.

So, let's go. 1 Peter 2 starting in verse 11:

1 PETER 2:11

[11] Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

POINT 1: THE BATTLE FOR YOU

So, we need to pick this verse apart.

Because we see in these verses that THE BATTLE has two aspects to it.

And the first part, in this verse, is **SLIDE THE BATTLE FOR YOU**

- The life of a disciple is a BATTLE,
 - and part of that BATTLE...
 - is being fought FOR YOU...
 - for **your soul**.

Now, let's quickly explain some things in this verse,

And then we'll pull out some applications.

EXPLAIN: ABSTAIN

Peter starts by urging these Christians with a command.

He says **to abstain**. That means:

- *Take no part in it.*
- *Have nothing to do with.*
- *Abstain from it.*

And hey, I don't want us to miss this:

- **But for the Christian...**
 - **OBEDIENCE IS NOT OPTIONAL...**
 - **IT'S COMMANDED!**

Gosh, I meet far too many people...

who would SAY they are Christians,

- and yet have NO INTENTION of obeying
 - the things that he commands!

He commands...it's an imperative...**to abstain**

OBEDIENCE IS NOT OPTIONAL!

EXPLAIN: PASSIONS OF THE FLESH

But what's really interesting is WHAT Peter commands us **to abstain from**.

He says **abstain from the passions of the flesh**.

Now, the Greek word for **passions** here is *epithymia*.

- That means
 - a desire,
 - or a craving,
 - or a longing,
 - or a lust...
- for what is forbidden.

That's *epithymia*.

And what Peter is saying is that we are in a war against these **passions!**

EXPLAIN: ENEMIES

Now, here's something to know...

- in every BATTLE...there is an enemy.
 - There is a person,
 - or a force...
 - that is coming against you...
 - that's attacking.

And ancient Christians believed that there were three enemies to the soul.

The enemies to our souls are...

- the WORLD,
- the FLESH,
- and the DEVIL.

Let's define these quickly.

THE WORLD

SLIDE The WORLD is...

- ideas, values, morals, practices, and norms...
 - that are culturally accepted...
- but are in rebellion against God...
- and redefine good and evil.

So, let's think about some things:

- Lust has now been redefined as love.
- Marriage is not a covenant of lifelong fidelity,
 - but a contract for personal fulfillment.
- Divorce is an act of courage and authenticity,
 - rather than a breaking of vows.
- Greed is now, responsibility to shareholders.

- Racism is a past issue.
- Marxism is justice.
 - Notice, that's one example from the political left,
 - and one from the right...
- And I know I've preached on abortion before...
 - but I cannot think of a more egregious example...
 - the greatest infanticide in human history...
 - cast as reproductive justice.

This is the WORLD.

And every follower of Jesus has to constantly ask the questions:

- *In what ways have I been assimilated into the host culture?*
- *Where have I lost my status as exile?*

You see, the temptation for us, my brothers and sisters...

- is not often toward atheism...
- But rather, towards pure worldliness.

THE FLESH

SLIDE The FLESH is...

- our base, primal, animalistic drive
- for self-gratification,
- especially as pertains to sensuality and survival.

And the FLESH shows up in popular slogans such as:

- *"The heart wants what it wants."*
- *"Follow your heart."*
- *"You do you."*
- *"Speak your truth."*
- *"Be true to yourself."*

ILLUSTRATION: FROZEN

And this is summed up so perfectly in the words of the modern prophet...

Elsa from Disney's Frozen:

Listen to her words...

- *"It's funny how some distance makes everything seem small.*
- *And the fears that once controlled me can't get to me at all.*
- *It's time to see what I can do.*
- *To test the limits and break through.*
- *No right, no wrong, no rules for me.*
- *I'm free...*
- **LET IT GO!"**
 - Oh...you've been disciplined by her as well?

Self...is the new god!

That's the FLESH.

THE DEVIL

And then, finally, the DEVIL.

- **SLIDE** The DEVIL is a real, immaterial, but intelligent being
- whose end goal is to spread ruin in our souls and society.

And I don't have nearly enough time to go all into the DEVIL.

- But these are the enemies
- who use our *epithymia*...
 - our passions...
- against us!

And there's another passage that is closely linked to ours.

The Apostle John says this in his book:

SLIDE 1 JOHN 2:16

[16] For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

So, that's the same word there:

- The *epithymia* of the flesh.
- The *epithymia* of the eyes.

They both mention the passions...

And so,

- think about these passions...
 - like the weapons our enemy, the devil,
 - uses to fight against us...
 - in **SLIDE THE BATTLE FOR YOU**.

ILLUSTRATION: LURES

Think of it like this: our enemy is kinda like a fisherman...

- Anyone in here fish?
 - Fly fishing?
 - Ok? Me too!
- Anyone have a good secret spot to fish?
 - Ok, I'd like to pray with you after the service.

Listen, Jesus did a lot of ministry fishing...and I'd like to follow his ways.

- Well, our enemy is like a fisherman,
- and he only has three different flies.

And like any good fisherman,

- when you start fishing,
- you tie on the fly that you think the fish you're after will bite on.

And those flies are meant to imitate the bugs that the fish like to eat.

- It's why they're called lures...
- because they are alluring.

Now, what do you do if the fish don't bite on the fly you've tied on?

- Well, you cut that thing off,
- and you try something else.
 - Maybe they are surfacing,
 - and you wanna move to a dry fly...I dunno.
- But you switch up the bait...
- until you entice that fish into biting.

But every lure has a hidden hook...

- and once you've got him on the hook,
- man, you've just got to reel him in.

APPLICATION

That's what the enemy is doing in this BATTLE.

He's throwing lures of temptation:

- passions...lusts...*epithymia*.
- You see,
 - the thing about temptation...
 - is that it's tempting!
- These passions...these lusts...they're alluring!

But every lure has a hidden hook.

And this is what he uses against you and me.

- Desires of the eyes tend to be things...
 - money...toys...security...
 - It's a desire to have something.

- Desires of the flesh tend to be appetites...
 - food, or drink, or drugs, or sex, or porn...
 - it's about a feeling.
- And the pride of life...that's about being somebody.
 - It's about position, it's about status, it's about power.
 - It's about click, and likes, and comments.

TRANSITION

So, Peter says, this is a BATTLE FOR YOU...

So, *abstain from the passions of the flesh*

- Don't fool around with those passions...
- don't flirt with those passions...
- don't think, well, I'm young,
 - I'll take those passions more seriously when I get older.

NO! **Abstain!**

EXPLAIN: WAR

And he says these passions *wage war against your soul.*

So, there's our metaphor.

- These passions must be quite strong...
- if they are described in terms of warfare.

The image implies that this is no easy matter.

So, how do we do this?

In THE BATTLE...how do we fight?

ILLUSTRATION: APEX PREDATOR

Well, I've always used this illustration from Matt Chandler.

Have you ever seen one of those shows on the Discovery Channel...

- where someone who raises bears, or wolves, or tigers?
 - Remember the Tiger King?
 - During COVID?
 - Yeah, like that!

Ok, Maryse and I were watching one of these a number of years ago,

- and it showed this one guy who had a grizzly bear cub,
 - and raised him as a pet.
 - He named the bear, Rocky.

Now, Rocky the Bear was trained and would do tricks...

- But one day: during a filming session,
- the guy was in the cage with Rocky,
- and they were practicing one of their tricks,
 - and there was a video camera capturing it all.
- Well, out of nowhere Rocky the Bear attacked
 - and ripped the man's throat out...
 - he got the guy's jugular...
 - and the trainer died.

Now that was crazy!

I watched it again on YouTube this week!

But what's even crazier...is that on the show they cut to interviews...

- with the man's friends and cousins...

And they were just shocked that the bear would kill this man.

- They said things like,
 - *"Rocky loved him.*
 - *I cannot imagine why he would do something like this.*
 - *He's such a sweet bear."*

And I'm, like, incited! Screaming at the TV,

- *"Are you kidding me?"*
- *I know why he killed him...*

Because he's a bear!

- *He's a 700-pound APEX predator!*
 - *It's built in his DNA to kill prey,*
 - *and you are the prey!*
- *Just because you give him a name...*
- *doesn't make him safe!"*

APPLICATION: KILL IT

But oh, my friends, this is all-too-often what we do with sin.

- We treat it like a pet.
- And we let it come into our lives
 - when it seems small,
 - and innocent,
 - and inconsequential.

But it will grow, and it will eventually turn into the APEX predator that it is.

- And one day it will attack you...
- and its intent is to kill you.

Don't pretend that this isn't a big deal, because it is!

Peter is telling us to wage war against these things!

Don't try to keep a predator as a pet.

- No! What you do is...
 - you take that bear out into the street,
 - and to put two bullets in the back of its head.

- Just turn that thing 90-degrees
- and do it executioner style. Ok!

And don't email me some PETA nonsense...it's an illustration, ok?

TRANSITION

But John Owens famously said, *"Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you."*

This is THE BATTLE FOR YOU!

- Don't give your sin a chance to kill you,
- but rather, put it to death!
 - You don't manage your sin...
 - or simply keep it in check...
 - you launch a militant campaign to war against it!

But that's not the whole battle.

Look at verse 12:

1 PETER 2:12

[12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

POINT 2: THE BATTLE FOR OTHERS

Now this is an interesting turn.

In THE BATTLE,

- Peter commands us to **abstain** from sin
- because THE BATTLE is for **your soul!**

But the second purpose of THE BATTLE...

is that your conduct might affect the unbelievers around you.

So this is also **SLIDE THE BATTLE FOR OTHERS**

Isn't that interesting?

- Peter says your obedience...
 - your abstinence...
 - your conduct...
- is how you BATTLE for others to be saved!

Christians are to live exemplary lives...

- with the kind of good deeds
- that will make unbelievers take notice.

This is why at Fathom we say,

- we want you to GO DEEP
- and to REACH WIDE.

HOW YOU BEHAVE AROUND UNBELIEVERS MATTERS GREATLY!

- The goal is to provoke unbelievers
- *to glorify God on the day of visitation.*

So, you've gotta know this:

- You are NOT only OBEDIENT FOR YOURSELF!
 - You are OBEDIENT FOR OTHERS!
- It's not just a BATTLE FOR YOU...
 - it's a BATTLE FOR OTHERS!

APPLICATION: HOW YOU LIVE MATTERS

Now, let me linger here for just a minute.

What Peter is saying is...

- there are some people in this world...
- who ONLY YOU can reach.

Listen,

- it's great that you can give your unsaved friends
 - books and resources to read
 - by wonderful authors
 - who can articulate the gospel
 - with such clarity and eloquence.
- It's great that you can share
 - videos and podcasts and social media posts
 - to engage their thoughts towards the things of God.
- It's even great that you can invite your friends
 - to come to Fathom with you
 - and be exposed to great worship experiences,
 - and hear...decent preaching,
 - and meet other Christians who believe these things.

It's great that those resources are available to you!

But Peter is saying, that's NOTHING...when compared with your conduct.

HOW YOU LIVE MATTERS MORE!

- Listen, I heard Tim Keller say this...
- and as hard as this is for me to say,
- it's Keller, so it's probs true:
 - in the end, very few people...
 - will be really drawn to God...
 - through preaching.
- Doesn't bode well for my career, does it?

But listen, I've been in vocational ministry for 20 years now...

- **and people don't often come to Christ because of preaching.**
- **People come to Christ because of OTHER PEOPLE!**

- Almost none of us became Christians...
- because of some skilled preacher...
- who just blew you up!

No! It's...

- *"My neighbor started loving me."*
- *"My co-worker walked through this difficult season with me."*
- *"My mom continually prayed and shared the gospel with me."*

Your life is a BATTLE FOR OTHERS!

Listen to me...THIS IS HOW WE REACH WIDE.

- It's not about giving people resources,
- or sharing spiritual stuff on social media,
 - or God help us,
- just inviting people to hear me preach.

Now, gosh, I want you to do all those things.

- Please invite people to church...ok?
 - But do that as a PART...
- HOW YOU LIVE MATTERS.

APPLICATION: SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

So, I think about this BATTLE FOR OTHERS in what I call SPHERES OF INFLUENCE.

- Every single one of us has spheres of influence.
- We have spheres of relationships.
- And I'll just put them in three neat categories:
 - WHERE YOU LIVE...
 - WHERE YOU WORK...
 - and WHERE YOU PLAY.

WHERE YOU LIVE

One sphere of influence is WHERE YOU LIVE...your family.

So, my wife is already saved...

But maybe your spouse isn't...

- But take my 8-year-old daughter,
 - HOW I LIVE around her matters.
- I am in a BATTLE FOR HER.
 - So, I pray for her,
 - and I share Christ with her,
 - and I'm trying to show her in my life
 - how Christ would want me to live.
- This then extends to my parents...
- and to my extended family...
 - to my aunts and uncles and cousins.

I'm in a BATTLE FOR OTHERS where I live.

WHERE YOU WORK

The next sphere of influence is WHERE YOU WORK...

- your job or career...this would also include your school.

But at your work, HOW YOU LIVE MATTERS.

- Is your conduct honorable?
- Do you see those around you...
 - as people who you are in a battle for?
- I mean, do you ever invest in them deeper than talking
 - about work,
 - or the weather,
 - or how terrible the Broncos are?

Gosh, this can be as easy as...

- asking them about their lives.
- Asking if there are things you can pray for them about.
- Asking them what things are most important to them.

I said this a couple weeks ago,

- but if you are in contact with non-Christians
- and they don't notice anything different about you...
- you better check to see if you're actually a Christian.

WHERE YOU PLAY

And the final sphere of influence is WHERE YOU PLAY.

- Where do you play?
- Where do you recreate?
- Where do you hang out?
 - So, for me this includes the neighbors on my block.
 - This includes my daughter's soccer team.
 - This includes the softball team I play on.

HOW I LIVE MATTERS in those spheres.

APPLICATION: YOU ARE THE PLAN

So, where you live, where you work, and where you play.

- In those SPHERES OF INFLUENCE,
- you are in a BATTLE FOR OTHERS

Whenever I teach on evangelism,

- I always say that YOU ARE THE PLAN...
 - for how God wants to see
 - more men,
 - women,
 - and students
 - come to Christ.
- YOU ARE THE PLAN!

Keeping your conduct honorable among the gentiles is how.

See, many of you think that pressure is on me.

- Cause I'm the pastor.
- Like, it's my job to get your friends saved!

You bring your lost friend to church and you're like,

- "Man, I hope Chris is there...
 - and I hope he's good.
- I hope that dude is good today.
- Cause I brought my lost friend.

I'll be in the hallway and you're like,

- I've hyped you up, Pastor.
- Don't let me down.
 - What we talking about?
 - Not money, right?"

And I love it, ok? Keep bringing 'em!

And I'll do my part.

But this text says, it's YOUR BATTLE!

So, we're stealing Home Depot's tag line:

- YOU CAN DO IT...
- WE CAN HELP.

This is YOUR BATTLE...and the church is here to HELP you fight!

CONCLUSION

So, that's **SLIDE W/PADS THE BATTLE**

- It's a BATTLE FOR YOU
- And it's a BATTLE FOR OTHERS

So, let's start with YOU...

- Hey, how you doing with abstaining from the passions...
 - the *epithymia*...of your flesh?
- You biting on some of the enemy's lures right now?

Hey, my friends:

- Today's the day to drag them into the light.
- Today's the day to put them to death.

How do you do that?

- You confess.
 - Confession is dragging sin into the light.
- You gotta tell someone.
- Secret sin is robbed of its power when you tell someone.

So, confess...

- man this is one of the reasons
- we have prayer partners
- every Sunday available to you.

- You can come to them,
- confess what's going on,
- and they will pray with you.

You're not gonna find any judgment for any confession here!

So, confess AND repent.

- If confession is dragging the sin into the light...
- Then repenting is shooting that bear in the head.

Repent means to make the changes necessary.

- You change the direction of your life!
 - So, if you confess to us,
 - we commit that we will walk with you
 - in your repentance.

Confess and repent.

But what about OTHERS?

Is your conduct honorable in your spheres of influence?

- Goodness, do you even know who's in those spheres?
- And are you being intentional with them?

This is a BATTLE FOR THEM, too!

So, my homework for you, is to make a list of your spheres...

- write down some names of those folks...
 - work on this on your own...
 - or maybe with your D-Groups...
- But work on some ways you might start the process
- of BATTLING FOR THEM!

Maybe that will include sharing stuff with them or inviting them to church.

But it should include HOW YOU LIVE, too!

This is THE BATTLE, my friends.

- Obedience for the sake of your soul...
- And obedience for the sake of your people.

Let's pray towards that end.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

- Chandler, Matt. *The Gospel on the Ground*.
- Comer, John Mark. Live No Lies.
- Greear, J.D. *The Exile Resolutions*.
- Jobes, Karen H.. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. 1 Peter.
- Keller, Tim. *Practicing Faith in a Pagan World*.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. The New American Commentary. 1, 2 Peter, Jude.