

Live as Servants of God

1 Peter 2:11 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

***11** Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul.*

Where is your Bible? Hopefully it is an arm's length away at most times, sitting on your nightstand, in your work bag, on your smart phone or iPad, or even better yet open in your hands. For more than one thousand years the Bible has been the most widely read and circulated book in history. Why then are we experiencing a culture that seems to be devoid of its teachings and standards?

Unfortunately, many Christians have become a bit too comfy-cozy in the world, all the while forgetting that this time spent here on earth is only a rest stop on the timeline of eternity. Our students are faced with situations daily that could compromise their faith; we must do all we can to equip them in advance to stand firm as alien residents in this world.

When I think of alien residents, I am reminded of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo. After Babylon conquered Jerusalem, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered some of the younger Israelite men of royalty and nobility to be brought back to Babylon to be taught the language and literature of the Babylonians. Among these young boys were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo. Imagine how these young boys must have felt after being separated from their families and taken to a foreign environment. The boys were trained for three years prior to entering into the king's service. The king ordered the boys to consume a daily ration of food and wine from his own table, but they refused the king's food and opted instead for vegetables and water. No doubt, the majority of young Israelite boys in captivity chose to conform to their new environment, readily accepting the king's rich food and wine. To Daniel and his friends, it was a matter of the conscience, something they felt would compromise their faith.

Most likely, Daniel and his three friends were trained early on to put the Lord their God above all else in the world. As workers in the Lutheran ministry we are called to guide our students who, like Daniel and his friends, refuse to sample the forbidden delicacies on the world's table. God was kind enough to leave us the Bible, His divinely inspired Word, which He intends to be our road map for living. When we develop the habit of filtering our thinking through God's Word, we are

able to “test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”
(Rom. 12:2b)

The Bible is man’s moral compass, clearly defining good from evil, and right from wrong. Further, it is divinely inspired by God. It contains the one “absolute truth” in this world—Jesus Christ. It is impossible to counteract the negative influences of our culture unless we use the truths set forth in the Bible as our standard of measure. So be purposeful, as servants of God, in teaching students that Christians are called to live in the world without being of the world.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for this opportunity to live as your servant! Help me to abide by Your absolute standards consistently and with permanence. Our world is in desperate need of more “Daniels.”

AMEN