

Maintaining a Good Conduct

It would be hard to imagine how difficult it was for the early Christians to live under the rule of Nero, emperor of Rome. Peter's first epistle is considered to be written during the reign of one of the world's most corrupt and vicious rulers. It would seem from his writing; Peter was concerned for the spiritual condition of his fellow saints and the persecution they had to endure. He reminds them of their inheritance ([1 Peter 1:4](#)) that does not fade away and how they can find praise and joy in the face of trials ([1 Peter 1:6-9](#)). His plea to live a holy life ([1 Peter 1:13-16](#)) was to remind them they were a "*chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*" ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).

The conduct before the Gentile world needed to be with the spirit of holiness. People who are 'chosen' live in the world as chosen people and embody the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Those who serve in the royal priesthood present themselves as holy priest. A nation that is holy lives holy. A peculiar people are different from the world and do not present themselves in the same manner as the world. The Christian lets his "light shine" ([Matthew 5:16](#)) so that others can see Christ living in them. This is how we show forth the praises of God.

Peter begins in [1 Peter 2:11](#) with clear admonitions for the saints to "*abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation*" ([1 Peter 2:11-12](#)). The 'conversation' or 'conduct' of the Christian should be above reproach. There will be challenges enough for the child of God to live separate from the world. The actions of the disciple of Christ should be with good works as found in the example of Jesus Christ ([1 Peter 2:21-23](#)).

Maintaining good conduct among the Gentiles is an admonition to live in such a way that those of the world will not have evil to say of us. This is a difficult task but with the Lord's guidance, it can be done. Paul told Timothy to be "*an example of the believers, in word, in manner of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity*" ([1 Timothy 4:12](#)). This example should extend to everyone we come in contact with. Our speech should be "*always with grace, seasoned with salt*" ([Colossians 4:6](#)). The behavior of our life should be "honest" ([1 Peter 2:11](#)). A Christian should express love in his dealings with his fellow man - "*Honor all men*" ([1 Peter 2:17](#)). The spirit, faith and purity of the follower of Christ should be evident to all ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)).

The apostle Paul exhorted Titus to remind the Christians "*to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men*" ([Titus 3:1-2](#)). Maintaining good conduct before those in the world is found in the spirit of gentleness. Peter said in [1 Peter 3:8-9](#): "*Be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*" Jesus is the perfect example of His firm gentleness toward all men. As we follow in His footsteps, we are admonished to make those giant steps of faith and live before all men in purity ([1 Peter 2:21](#)).

Peter's task in writing his epistle was to exhort the Christians to maintain their lives in such a way that even when others would find evil to say of them, it would only be from a life that was filled with good works. The result of this examination would be for the glory of God. Living for Christ is letting people see Christ in us - nothing else.