

# The Christian Lifestyle for Christ's Servants: An Exegesis of 1 Peter 2:11-17

Micah Onserio Moenga  
Africa International University  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Email: barakamicah@gmail.com

---

## Abstract

---

*This article seeks to address the subject of living a distinctively Christian lifestyle for Christ's servants. It responds to the following question: What does the Bible teach about the Christian lifestyle and its cost? Inevitably, a distinctively Christian lifestyle comes with a cost, that is, of suffering for the sake of Christ. For instance, the first epistle of the apostle Peter addresses the subject of the suffering of Christians as one of the distinctive aspects of a Christian lifestyle (1 Peter 1:7). The apostle Peter, however, demonstrates that suffering for the sake of Christ is inevitable for Christ's servants and is part of their calling (2:21). The words "suffering", and "testing" occur frequently in the epistle. For instance, the apostle indicates that the sufferings of Christ were predicted by the Old Testament prophets (1:11) and that they were both redemptive and exemplary (2:21-24; 3:18). Redemptive, in that the resurrection and glory that ensued for Him (1:3, 21) spell secure salvation for His people (1:5); exemplary, in that Christians must share both the shame and glory of Christ (4:13). Hence, suffering for Christians is within God's will (3:17; 4:19). This article is an exegetical analysis of 1 Peter 2:11-17 to extricate the Christian lifestyle expected by Christ's servants. The article proposes the applicability of the message in the contemporary church context and the society at large. It argues that Christ's servants are expected to lead a distinctive lifestyle as witnesses of Christ.*

**Keywords:** *Christian lifestyle, Christian suffering, Christ's servants, submission, integrity, ethical conduct*

---

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most challenging aspects of the Christian faith is leading a distinctively Christian lifestyle. There are many professing the Christian faith but their praxis of the same remains questionable. It is against this background that the current study is a must undertaking to provide a panacea to the same. To respond to this, the current study analyzes the subsection of 1 Peter 2:11-17 which falls under section 2:11-3:12 of the epistle. The focus of this study is, therefore, both exegetical and theological to enhance our understanding of the message of 1 Peter 2:11-17. The study begins with a lexical study of the usage of the Greek term *δοῦλος* within its different contexts. Afterward, the study focuses on the exegesis of 1 Peter 2:11-17. The purpose of this is to enhance our understanding of the subject of Christian lifestyle for Christian servants and its implications on the church context and the wider contemporary society. The exegetical section is divided as follows: the Christian lifestyle in relation to God (vv.11-12), the Christian

lifestyle as pertains to human authorities (vv. 13-15), and the distinctiveness of the Christian lifestyle (vv.16-17).

### **The Use of the Greek Term δούλος**

Before getting into the exegesis of this study, we begin with a brief lexical study of the usage of the term δούλος in different contexts to enrich our understanding of its usage in first of Peter.

#### ***Greek Usage of the Term δούλος***

The Greek cherishes freedom as a distinctive feature of self-awareness (Kittel et al., 1964, p.261). Indeed, being one's slave was very demeaning in the Greek world. Slavery was tantamount to being deprived of one's freedom. Slaves were considered not to have any possibility of evading tasks laid upon them but also as not having a right of personal choice, but rather do what another will have done and refrain from doing what another will not have done (Ibid.). It is against this background that slaves were generally looked down upon in the Greek world. It is also argued that those who were not wise are slaves, no matter what form their bondage takes (Ibid., p.264). Generally speaking, the term δούλος was used in a very demeaning manner in the Greek world. Conversely, the apostle Peter seems to cherish slavery to Christ and urged his readers to live as servants of Christ to depict a distinctively Christian lifestyle.

For Plato, δουλευσαι τοις νομοις [slavery to the laws] is an essential mark of a true citizen (Kittel et al., 1964, p.262). The Stoics took the usage of the term δούλος in an even more interesting way, especially in our current study. They held that the call to service is issued by Zeus himself: hence the cynic, though he is free of all, is unconditionally bound to all, and responsible for what they do or leave undone (Kittel et al., 1964). Philo shares the same sentiment with Stoicism that no one is originally a δούλος [slave], but that a man makes himself a δούλος whether through κερδος [advantage, gain] (Spec.Leg., IV, p.3), ὀργή (Conf. Ling., p.48) or in some other way (cf. Leg. All. III, p.198) (Kittel et al., 1964, p.264). Having considered the usage of the term δούλος in the world of the Greeks, we can conclude that the term had not much connection to the religious sphere.

#### ***Jewish Usage of δούλος***

There are four cardinal ways in which the term δούλος is used within the Jewish community. First, in the Septuagint and Greek Judaism generally, the word is used for slave and his status and situation. The Septuagint does not speak of δούλος but the παις (young person, servant) of God, a usage followed by the New Testament (Acts 3:13, 26) (Kittel et al., 1964, p.266). Second, it is used to denote a relation of dependence or service which may be forced or sometimes voluntary, but which is always felt to be restrictive, and it is the usual linguistic form for a relation of subject to the king in despotic monarchies of ancient Orient (Ibid., p.266). Third, the word adopts ceremonial usage of which Kittel argues that "This ceremonial usage of the word group is of epoch-making importance because it provides the assumptions on which the word can be adopted into the language of worship" (Ibid., p.267). Fourth, the attitude of divine service expressed in the term is shared by the Jewish world with other Semitic peoples and tribes

and also with the Egyptians (Ibid., p.268). Looking at the above four ways the term δοῦλος was used in the Jewish world, we can conclude that besides its normal usage, that is, servitude in a general sense, the term is also used with worship in a religious sense.

### ***New Testament Usage of the Term δοῦλος***

In 1 Peter 2, the term δοῦλος probably follows the same Jewish perspective and Old Testament lines in that the members of Israel are called δοῦλοι (slaves) of God, this being the more likely view of the constitutive significance of the thought of the new Israel in this epistle (cf. 1:1ff. and 2:1ff.). Having looked at the study of δοῦλος in different contexts and its usage we now proceed with our exegetical analysis of the text of 1 Peter.

### **DETAILED EXEGESIS**

The apostle Peter opens the section of 1 Peter 2:11-17 with a direct address to his audience by addressing them as ἀγαπητοί (beloved). He uses ἀγαπητοί to begin new sections in his epistles as he does in 1 Peter 4:12; 2 Peter 3:1; 3:14 and 3:17. Paul prefers ἀδελφοί (brethren) in the place of ἀγαπητοί (1 Cor. 15:58; Phil. 4:1). The address depicts Peter's relationship with the audience. He had deep concerns for the people's status as believers in Christ who are to manifest good conduct among the Gentiles. However, more importantly, the believers are loved by God to whom he bestows titles of honor ("the elect" in 1:1). The apostle carefully couches this new section by beginning it with the catchword ("I beseech [you]") which is often used as a marker of new sections in the New Testament (see Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:1). The apostle, having gained the attention of his audience, goes further to describe who they are, that is, παροίκους and παρεπιδήμους (aliens and strangers). Goppelt argues that "to be a foreigner is the *signum* of Christians in society since it is the sociological expression of the eschatological character of their existence" (1993, p.153). The first verse of the epistle reveals that the audience was living in exile and thus the two terms the apostle uses best describe their status. Elliott argues that "1 Peter is addressed to resident aliens and visiting strangers who, since their conversion to Christianity, still find themselves estranged from any place of belonging. They are still displaced *paroikoi* (stranger) seeking an *oikos* (a home)" (Elliott, 1981, p.49). The two terms the apostle uses to describe his audience imply also that they had to manifest a certain behavior while in their exile. Just as a person who lives in a foreign land is expected to refrain from certain practices, so is Peter's audience. For purposes of proper analysis of our text, I have divided our pericope into three sections, viz. the Christian lifestyle in relation to God (vv. 11-12), the Christian lifestyle as pertains to human authorities (vv.13-15), and the distinctiveness of a Christian lifestyle (vv.16-17).

### ***The Christian Lifestyle as Relates to God (vv.11-12)***

The apostle Peter begins this section by addressing his audience using the vocative ἀγαπητοί "beloved". ἀγαπητοί is generally used to introduce new sections in the New Testament (see Phil. 2:7; 1 John 2:7; 4:1; 4:7). Beare opines that "the introduction using 'beloved' was probably the usual vocative in sermons also." (1958, p.135) It is, however, not convincing as to whether to treat 1 Peter as such. Peter, after addressing his audience, appeals to them, παρακαλῶ, "I urge." It has been noted by scholars that the construction poses some difficulty since it lacks an accusative and this makes its translation a bit awkward (Ibid.). The apostle makes his appeal on the grounds, as spelt out by the conjunction subordinate (ὥς), that the audience is both "foreigners and sojourners," παροίκοι and παρεπιδήμοι (see Heb. 11:13; Gen. 23:4; Ps. 39:12).

The description echoes 1:1, where the author used a similar expression with different wordings (παρεπιδήμοις διασποράς), that is, “the exiles of the Dispersion”. We may want to investigate the meaning of these two adjectives the author has used to describe his audience. The description has both a spiritual and literal application. Goppelt for, instance, holds both a spiritual implication of the term when he says, “Christians are ‘foreigners’ because they are called into eschatological existence and ‘sojourners’ because they are to live this existence in history” (1993, p.156).

For instance, Jesus’ admonition to His disciples before His crucifixion also stressed the spiritual implication of the two terms in that Christians, though they do not belong to the world (foreigners) are nevertheless to be preserved in the world (sojourners) (see also John 17:15,16). For Peter’s audience, both the spiritual and the literal implication is probable. Selwyn, on the other hand, argues that “though the meaning is almost identical παρεπιδήμοις (stranger) in 1 Peter 1:1 has special reference to the historical circumstances of the communities addressed, while παροικίας [sojourners] has a wider reference, connecting permanent conditions governing the life of a holy community, i.e. its detachment” (1947, p.169). Though the audience lived in the foreign lands as identified in 1:1, this was not by chance as it also spoke of their foreignness in the world in a spiritual sense. It is against this backdrop that Peter calls his audience into a commitment befitting their description. The parenetical section of the epistle is announced by the verb παρακαλῶ, “I urge [you].” Peter’s parenthesis opens with a list of steps of action to be undertaken by his audience to live a distinctive lifestyle as servants of God.

The first step is to practise abstinence (ἀπέχεσθαι) from “the fleshly desires”. The term ἀπέχεσθαι occurs only here in Petrine writings and it means “to avoid contact with or use of something, to keep away, abstain, and refrain from.” (Danker & Bauer et. al., 2000, p.103). The believers are urged “to stay away from” fleshly desires while living in their exile. Goppelt correctly argues;

To be a foreigner to the world, to experience the exodus, means first of all, therefore, that Christians are to be estranged to the world themselves. ‘keep yourselves from lusts’ is a rule of classical Greek- Hellenistic ethics from the time of Plato that is appropriated by Hellenistic Christianity, perhaps through the mediation of Hellenistic Judaism (1993, p.156).

Peter’s audience is urged to abstain from “fleshly desires.” The apostle Paul occasionally employs σάρξ (body) and σαρκικός (sensual) in the literal sense of the physical body of a human (Rom 2:28; 1 Cor. 15:39 ff.). However, when he uses the term in an ethical sense, the meaning is no longer the material body as such, but of the whole nature of man in its unregenerate condition (see also Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 5:16-25; Rom. 7:5). This is the same sense in which the apostle Peter utilizes the term as well. Goppelt puts it this way: It is the craving determined by this human life, which desires to constitute its own life instead of expecting it from the creator’s hand; it expresses itself, therefore, in excess and idolatry (1993, pp.156-7). Beare also notes that “σαρκικός ‘fleshly’ is used strictly in the Pauline or ethical sense” (1958, p.135). In consideration of these quotations, it can be concluded that the apostle Peter was concerned with the ethical conduct of his audience among the Gentiles.

It is logical to conclude that the “fleshly desires” are the “human desires” (4:2) that characterized Peter’s audience before their conversion (1:14). The “fleshly desires” are to be mortified because they are out to wage war (στρατεύονται) against the believer’s ψυχῆς (soul), that is, one’s life. The idea of the Christian life being viewed as warfare between the flesh and the soul/spirit is commonplace in the New Testament (see 2 Cor. 10:3ff; Eph 6:10-20; 1 Tim.

1:18; James 4:1ff). The apostle Peter reveals that if the flesh engages in a military expedition against one's soul then it means the destruction of that person's life. Therefore, the believer is in danger by not distancing himself from his fleshly desires. The apostle Paul also saw this kind of antagonism when he says, "For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want (see Gal. 5:17 NRS). Beare also observes that the phrase "abstain from fleshly desires" is Platonic and in this case, the idea is that the lives of wise men should be governed by basic principles of reason and knowledge, not by impulse (1970, p.135).

The believers, after being urged to deal with the state of affairs from within, are now urged to consider the state of affairs from the outside. This means that character transformation begins from within before it becomes manifest. Paul could have had the same thought in Rom. 12:1-2. The apostle Peter, then, challenges his audience as aliens and strangers to lead a distinctively Christian lifestyle among the Gentiles. The term *καλός* which means "good" would also mean "beautiful" or "attractive" and here implies that the believers were to live "attractive" lives among the Gentiles. The language the author uses is an import from the Old Testament whereby the Israelites were supposed to live a distinctive lifestyle from that of other nations, the responsibility which Peter now applies to the church as the new Israel. The purpose for living attractive lives among the Gentiles is so that the slandering Gentile may be challenged by the good conduct of the believer and glorify God. Peter could also be thinking about the saying of Jesus in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." The concept that believers would win nonbelievers over to Christ is Peter's understanding as to the purpose of good conduct by a believer. The apostle will later show that a non-believing husband can be won over to Christ through his wife's good conduct (3:1). Therefore, the purpose for the believers' good conduct is spelt out by the conjunction *ἵνα* (so that), "though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge (see 1 Peter 2:12, NRS). Just like a wife's good conduct is meant to win her husband over to Christ, so it is the good conduct of the believer that is meant to win a non-believer to Christ.

The phrase *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς* (on the day of visitation) poses some difficulties in interpretation. Grudem observes, "Peter's exact phrase (*ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς*) does not appear anywhere else in the Old or New Testament" (1988, p.117). However, the single word *ἐπισκοπῆς* (visitation) occurs in biblical literature and the Apocrypha. In the Pentateuch, the word *ἐπισκοπῆς* is used about God's salvation for His people (Gen. 50:24, 25). In the Apocrypha the word *ἐπισκοπῆς* is used to mean "examination" (Wis. 3:13), also punishment (Wis. 19:15; Sir. 23:24). In the Prophets, for instance, in Isaiah, the word refers to God's judgment (24:22; 29:6). In consideration of the various usages of the term *ἐπισκοπῆς*, it can be concluded that the term is used to refer to the time of God's judgment. Just like with the Day of the Lord which has a twofold meaning: Salvation for the righteous and punishment for the wicked, so it is with the day of God's visitation (Clowney, 1988, pp.103-4). If our analysis is correct, then it means that the day of visitation is the time when God will recompense his people for their good deeds. This is probably what Peter had in mind as he exhorted the believers to have good conduct among the Gentiles so that they may glorify God when He comes to approve of their deeds.

Still, there remains some difficulty as to how the unbelievers shall glorify God on the "day of visitation." Does it mean that unbelievers who glorify God will do so at their conversion which is the day of God's visitation as Grudem presupposes or is this a forced acknowledgment of God as Hort argues? (1988, p.117). Hort's interpretation is problematic in my view in that a

nonbeliever cannot glorify God against his will. Probably to settle this, one needs to read 3:1 where the apostle argues that unbelieving husbands would be won by their wives' conduct. Arguably, then, the good conduct urged by the apostle for the audience to manifest is for the salvation of unbelievers, so that they too may glorify God. Goppelt concludes that "the day of the gracious visitation of the individual could be intended here" (1993, p.160). On the part of Selwyn, the focus is more on gracious visitation as opposed to punishment (1947, p.171). Such an interpretation, however, does not prevent one from reading the future day of judgment as part of God's visitation. For instance, Jesus Christ applied the Greek term ἐπισκοπῆς (visitation) when He spoke about the coming judgement over Jerusalem (see Lk 24:42, 44).

### *The Christian Lifestyle as Relates to Human Authorities (vv. 13-15)*

The apostle Peter, once he has challenged his audience to abstain from fleshly desires and to demonstrate good conduct among the Gentiles, proceeds to state certain specific obligations needed to be undertaken by believers. The first is the call to submit to human authorities. Believers are called upon to submit to πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει, "every human creation." The term κτίσις also means "an institution or ordinance". In biblical Greek, it is always seen from the perspective of God as "creation" or the "created thing" (see Selwyn, p.172). Looking at these descriptions, the "social institution" is probably in view. Bruce argues that "every human creation" can be paraphrased as, "every fundamental social institution", i.e. the state (13-17), the household (18-25), and the family (3:1-7) (1979, p.1556). It is to these social institutions that Peter urges his audience to submit themselves to depict their distinctive Christian lifestyle.

The imperative ὑποτάγητε, "subject yourselves" also occurs in 3:1 as the guiding directive of the parenthesis of 2:11-4:1. The basis for the believer's submission in 2:13 is on the account of the Lord which is spelt out by διὰ + accusative construction. Selwyn argues that "as deserving not merely an outward submission, but an inward loyalty." (1947, p.172). The believer is first of all expected to submit to every kind of human authority beginning with the king who is regarded as ὑπερέχοντι, "supreme". Then, hierarchically comes ἡγεμόν, a "governor" whom the apostle states as one sent by him (the king) "as God's vice-regent" (Bruce, 1979, p.1556). The pronoun αὐτοῦ, "him" of verse 14 is rather ambiguous and not clear to whom it is referring whether the king or God. It is important, however, to read both verses 13 and 14 together to make good sense of the same. On the one hand, the submission of verse 13 was "for the sake of the Lord." It makes good sense to render the "him" of verse 14 as a reference to the Lord as well. On the other hand, the reference to the Lord of verse 14 should not be read directly because of δια, literally "through." In other words, the king who is supreme commissions the governor on behalf of the Lord. The governor is commissioned to εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν ἔπαινον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν, "to punish evildoers and to commend/praise those who do well."

The parenthesis here depicts a right relationship that should exist between the church and the state whereby the Christians are called upon to submit to the state. Other New Testament passages also agree to the content of 1 Peter by calling Christians to acknowledge the state (see Rom.13:1-7; 1Tim. 2:1-3; Tit. 3:1-3). While it is probable that the persecutions that broke out and led to the scattering of the believers in Asia Minor as stated in 1:1 were instigated by the Roman authorities, believers are however urged to submit to the same institution irrespective of their antagonisms to Christianity. It may sound contradictory, but in this manner, the believer will prove to be God's servant by obeying God-sent leaders (αὐτοῦ πεμπομένοις). Paul also urged the Roman believers to submit to the governing authorities stating that the authorities that

exist are appointed by God (see Rom 13:1). In this regard, both Paul and Peter acknowledge the divine origin and role of the state whereby Paul emphasizes its origin while Peter speaks of its divine role. The apostle Peter goes further to state the purpose for submission to the human authorities in that they punish evildoers (εἰς ἐκδίκησιν κακοποιῶν) and this is for the praise of those who do right. The point of Peter is that human institutions are not enemies of believers, instead, they are God-sent agents to deal with evil by punishing evildoers. The action by the rulers of punishing evil is per τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, “the will of God” to put to silence the ignorance of the foolish. In this regard, as Thuren notes, submissive behavior is the means of silencing ἀγνωσία (ignorance) and shows what the good life in the introduction (12) means in practice (Thuren, 1995, p.138). The causal ὅτι spells out the basis for performing this action by the state. In this regard, therefore, the state serves to complement what the church does in society. This should be the proper perspective of the relationship between the state and the church.

### *The Distinctiveness of the Christian Lifestyle (vv.16-17)*

The apostle Peter moves on to demonstrate the manner of submission of believers as God’s servants. The phrase “God’s servant” harks back to the Old Testament. For instance, individuals such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are regarded as servants of God (Ex. 32:13). The nation of Israel was commonly regarded as “God’s servant” (Lev.25:42; Neh.1:10; Ps.105:6). Moses in a profound manner is said to be God’s servant (Ex.14:31; Neh.1:8; 9:14; 10:29). David also in a special manner is God’s servant (Ps.78:70; Jer. 33:26; Luke 1:69). The elders of Israel who sought to rebuild the house of God considered themselves as servants of God (Ezra 5:11). Daniel and his friends were called servants of the “Most High God” by king Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:26), the same phrase which was applied to Paul and his companion (Acts17:16). The epistle to the Ephesians candidly indicates that believers are bond-servants of Christ (6:6, 7). The rulers are also God’s servants (Rom.13:4, 6).

In considering this brief survey on how the Bible applies the phrase “God’s servant(s)”, it is of importance for this study to investigate how our pericope uses the phrase. The phrase as we argued earlier derives from the Old Testament application to the nation of Israel generally. Peter views the church as a new Israel who is a rightful “servant of God.” In other words, the church as a new Israel is to assume the roles and responsibilities of the Old Testament Israel. One of the roles of Israel as a servant of God was to live a distinctive lifestyle (Deut.14:2). The church as the new Israel now assumes the same responsibility. The church’s responsibility is stated in fourfold imperatives. As the church executes her mandate, she needs to exercise her freedom responsibly. They are to live as free but not to use their freedom as a cover-up for evil.

Considering the four imperatives Peter uses, it is not clear as to why only the first imperative is in the aorist while the other three in the present. Michaels notes that “the single aorist-imperative at the beginning of the series gives the entire an unambiguous imperatival quality (by themselves the present imperatives could be read as indicatives)” (1988, p.130). Achtemeier argues that “perhaps the first imperative was attracted to the aorist tense of v.13, while the remaining three indicate the author’s intention that such activity becomes a regular and repeated part of the Christian life” (1996, pp.187-8).

The first responsibility of the church is πάντα τιμήσατε ‘to honor all.’ It is important to note the absence of an article with πάντα. This implies that the believer is to honor all without an exception. The verb τιμάω means “to set a price on, estimate, or to honor or revere.” In

Peter's context, the verb means "honor or respect." It is the same word used about honoring both God and the parents (Mat 10:19; John 5:23; Eph. 6:2). Therefore, this calls for high respect for all humans. The believer's due responsibility is to respect all people irrespective of their status. While earlier on the apostle spelt out the believer's role in submitting to every human institution without discrimination (v.13), he now calls upon the believers to honor all men without discrimination. The extent to which a believer is to exercise respect is to every man. This probably is meant to stress the high position man occupies in God's creation (Gen 1:27, 28). Man is a special creation of God and deserves respect. Humans are to be honored not so much because they are good, but because they are God's special creation.

The second responsibility of a Christian is to love the brotherhood (τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε). It is important to take note of Peter's narrowing down of who is to be loved. At first, he urged respect for all, but her love is for the brotherhood of believers. In other words, the believers are to love fellow believers. The virtue of love, unlike that of honor, is reserved for the brotherhood of believers. The apostle of love, John, noted that love is a clear indication that we have been saved (1 John 3:14; 4:7). Jesus stated that love is the greatest of the commandments (Matt. 22:36-40). Love is the distinctive marker of true brotherhood. Christians love because they belong to the same family and home.

The third responsibility of the believer is to fear God. The injunction is taken from Proverbs 24:21, "My child, fear the LORD and the king, and do not disobey either of them." It should be observed that the verb φοβέομαι (to fear) is replaced with τιμάω (honor) in relation with the king. This is based on Christian tradition. Jesus differentiated between duties to God and Caesar (Matt. 22:21) and told his disciples to fear only God (Matt. 10:28). The verb φοβέομαι, 'to fear' has three possible meanings (1) be afraid (2) respect (3) worship (Nida & Louw, 1988). The context of Peter suits the second meaning "respect or revere God." Achtemeier observes that "in the command to revere (φοβεῖσθε) God, the author employs a verb that, except when used in a quotation, he uses exclusively to God." (1996, p.188).

The last responsibility is to honor the king. In the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament the term "honor" is used either about God, king, or parents (see Ex.20:12; Job 4:10; Tob. 4:3; Matt. 15:4). While it is quite convincing for the believers to honor God and parents, the entreaty to honor the king is not easy to reconcile since the believers came under severe persecution under kings in history. However, as stated in verse 13, the believer is expected to honor the king for the sake of the Lord. The author begins verse 17 with the verb "honor" and closes with the same. Achtemeier comments;

The repetition of an imperatival form of the verb τιμάω in the first ("honor all people") and last ("honor the emperor") of the four imperatival clauses that constitute this verse rehearses the emphasis of v. 13 on the inclusion of the emperor among all human creatures." (Achtemeier, 1996, p.188).

Others, for instance Selwyn, have simply taken this as Peter's style of writing (1947, p.175).

## CONCLUSION

The study has demonstrated that the Christian lifestyle needed by servants of God is one of distinctiveness. The first epistle of Peter which we have analyzed utilizes various examples which were taken from injunctions to Old Testament Israel to admonish Christians. The first such application is the description he gives of the church as "strangers" and "foreigners." The



nation of Israel was supposed to live as resident aliens and by their status, the nation was expected to live in a certain way among the heathen nations. One such expectation for the nation of Israel was to live as “a royal priesthood and holy nation and God’s special people” (see Ex. 19:6 LXX). Peter had earlier applied this role to the church as the new Israel (see 1 Peter 2:9). After spelling out the church’s new status, Peter demonstrates that the new status comes with a new responsibility. First, the church, as the new Israel, is to abstain from fleshly desires of their pre-conversion condition. Second, they are to live distinctive lifestyles among Gentiles as God’s witnesses. The third responsibility is to live in submission to human authorities, as well as showing respect to all men. The believers are also to show love among themselves as a sign of being one family.

### References

- Achtmeier, P. J. (1996). *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Beare, F. W. (1958). *the First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*. Oxford: B.Blackwell.
- Beare, F. W. (1970). *The First Epistle of Peter*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Bruce, F. (Ed.) (1979). *New International Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Clowney, E. P. (1988). *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Elliott, J. H. (1981). *A Home for the Homeless. A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, its Situation, and Strategy*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Danker, F., Arndt, W. and Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek -English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Goppelt, L. (1993). *A Commentary on 1 Peter*. Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- Grudem, W. (1988). *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*. Africa: Inter-Varsity.
- Kittel, G. and Freidrich, G. 1964). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Michaels, R. J. (1988). *Word Biblical Commentary*. Waco, Texas: Word Books.
- Nida and Louw. (1988). *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (1st ed.). New York: United Bible Societies.
- Selwyn, E. G. (1947). *The First Epistle of St. Peter. The Greek Text*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London: Macmillan.
- Thuren, L. (1995). Argument and Theology in 1 Peter. *The Origins of Christian Paraenesis, Journal for the study of the New Testament*, 138.