

## Study 24

# YOU'RE STRANGE!

First Peter 4:4-6

It's interesting how the world defines "normal". If you cheat (and get away with it), flirt, swear, drink alcohol, live promiscuously, you're considered normal. If a teenager gets drunk every Friday night, vandalises public property, gets (or gets someone) pregnant, drops out of school, loafers around all week, and verbally abuses his/her parents, they are considered "normal". But, if a person becomes a Christian and starts living honestly, soberly, and morally they are considered "strange". If a teenager becomes a Christian and stays at home with their family on a Friday night, shows respect for public property, abstains from illicit sex, studies hard at school, spends their time throughout the week productively, and speaks highly of their parents, they are considered "troubled" or "strange".

1. What does Christ warn His people against in Luke 21:34, that Peter also mentions as an activity of non-Christians?

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"Dissipation", "riotous excess", "wild and wasteful things" are some of the ways that translators have rendered this thought of Peter's. It directly implies the abuse of alcohol. The overall message of Scripture is that alcohol relieves a person of self-control. It becomes an illusory way of escape. One of the earliest Biblical references to the use of alcohol is when Noah got drunk. The result was an irreparable family breach that would eventually become Israel's biggest stumbling block in possessing the Promised Land of Canaan (Gen. 9:21ff). The next reference is when Lot's daughters got their father drunk and committed incest with him. The eventual result was that Israel was hedged by the nations that descended from this incestuous act, who were generally antagonistic towards them (Gen. 19:33).

2. When parents were forced to expose a rebellious child before their community, what were among the accusations presented? (Deuteronomy 21:20)

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3. How does Proverbs 20:1 describe the use of alcohol? (Note also Prov. 21:17; 23:20-21; 31:4-5)

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Alcohol is something that can control. Isaiah says that people who live for parties and pleasure have no understanding of what they are doing, or any respect for the LORD (Isa. 5:12-13).

4. While the world admires someone who “can hold their drink”, what does the Bible think about such people? (Isa. 5:22)

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The other implication of dissipation is *excess in eating delicacies*. The word often used for this is *gluttony*.

5. When people become obsessed with eating whatever they want, and however much of it they want, what will it lead to according to Colossians 3:19?

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6. What hyperbole does the Bible suggest for those who are getting into gluttony? (Prov. 23:2)

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Drunkenness and gluttony are two of the things that Peter describes as normal living. When someone becomes a Christian they stop doing these things. No longer are they being controlled by their appetites (either for drink or food), they are now led by the Holy Spirit. This self-control in a believer's life is evident to the world.

7. What response can Christians now expect from those still in the world? (vs. 4)

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8. If a Christian might be tempted to backslide into their former practices with their worldly friends, what sobering thought should be taken into account based on what Peter says in verse 5?

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What the world thinks as normal and acceptable, God often sees as abhorrent. When Jesus was describing the condition of the world in the last days immediately before His return, He used the following shocking description-

"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building."

**Luke 17:26-28**

Why is this a shocking description of a society? It seems that Jesus is saying that the worst description of a society is when total disregard for God becomes normal. When people go about their daily lives with no regard for God, they are living for themselves. This is the worst kind of idolatry.

## THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

The expression that *God will judge the living and the dead* (Acts 10:42; 2Tim. 4:1) has two possible interpretations. It could mean that God is going to judge all those who have previously died, and, that He will judge all those who are currently living. Secondly, it could mean that God will reward the spiritually alive, and condemn the spiritually dead, when He judges. In either case, the following verse can not mean that the dead are given a second chance. Because the Gospel can only be preached to the living, the expression those who are now dead must refer to people who heard the Gospel and became Christians, but have since died. *Judged according to men in regard to the body* must refer to the judgment that is common to all people: *physical death*. This was the original judgment that Adam and Eve incurred. Despite a Christian dying, they live on beyond the grave in God's eyes. The end result of a Christian who refuses to conform to this world is eternal life. This requires endurance, but it is an endurance that reaps a priceless and eternal reward.

*Amen.*