
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 1 Peter

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1 Peter 4: 1-11: "We Are To Have the Attitude of Christ!"

General idea: Are you chasing your desires or our Lord? The answer to this question will determine what direction in life you go as well as if, when, and how sin will entice you to fall! Sin is coming; we can either draw near to God to stay clear, or draw near to sin and thus away from God and His best for us. The great news is that Christ gives us the ability to stand firm in Him. The key is, we need to want to! Peter's people were being slandered and taken advantage of, and they were becoming disillusioned. Peter's call was to stand firm in faith and not worry what others do as long as we look to Christ wholeheartedly (1 Pet. 2:12,15, 23; 3:9, 16; 4:4,14). Thus, the best defense is the offense of righteousness and demonstrating the good life in Christ!

This passage gives us comfort in suffering because Christ Himself suffered. He, who is God incarnate, who totally did not deserve to suffer, suffered on our behalf. He endured great physical, mental, and spiritual pain on our behalf, and exemplified the attitude and conduct we are to have when we go through the tough stuff of life. The call for us is to be prepared and equip ourselves for what lies ahead in life. We must have our expectations based on reality and in faith, so when something comes our way—whether it is a blessing or a problem—we can take it, handle it with excellence, learn, and grow from it. Then, in turn, we can be a blessing to others because of it. However, we cannot do that if we are not following Christ and taking heed to His example, His grace, and His love so we want to respond. Otherwise, our desires will fill that gap and will get the best of us. The sins of others and the sins of our heart will break us down and take us over unless we focus on Christ, His ways, and His path.

Vs. 1-6: The challenge to this call is the world's ways. Sin is so enticing we can easily slip off God's path. Thus, we need to be willing to suffer so sin does not entice us. We become more guarded against sin because a bigger picture is in our sight—Christ, His example, and our willingness and commitment to follow. When we see Him and not our personal viewpoints and desires, we will grow, mature, and be prepared for anything!

- *Therefore* is a parenthetical term that refers to a conclusion from the previous chapter, 3:18-22, and is now presenting us an application. We are in union with other Christians as we are all bonded to Christ and we may suffer unfairly when we do good. Suffering also bonds and helps form us deeper in Him. It is not to be seen as shame. Rather, it is an honor to serve our King (Rom. 6:1-14; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 3:21).

- *Christ suffered.* Our Lord withstood the full brunt of all human temptations needlessly, yet purposely (Mark 1:12-13, Heb. 2:12; 4:15). He was a man, subject to the power and enticement of sin. He did not need to do this, but for our sake He did. He was fully man and identified with us. He remained sinless and took our sins upon Himself. Now, sin has no power over Him or us other than what we allow on ourselves (Rom. 6:1-10; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 5:14; 1 Pet. 2:22)!
- *Arm yourselves* refers to as soldiers train and prepare for battle, we are to be trained and are to be prepared with Christ's attitude, outlook, knowledge, and experience. We are to prepare for injustice and suffering!
- *God's will* is the determining factor in life! It all comes down to this; *will you follow His will, or yours and the world's?* Which one do you think brings the most blessings and contentment?
- *Time in the past* refers to sin and its power to weigh us down so it defines who we are and traps us in the past. We all have past mistakes and wrong choices, but Christ freed us so we no longer need to be weighed down by them! Peter's congregation had a pagan background that was very alluring; he is telling them (and us) not to let it draw them or become a part of their new life (Rom. 1:12:13; 6:1-14, 19; Gal. 5:19-21)!
- *Debauchery* means unrestrained indulgence, seeking sinful, physical gratification, or giving into one's desires. This leads to being merciless and unscrupulous in one's dealings with others! When we fight against one another, especially in the church, it is hurtful and even pathetic in God's eyes (Gen. 4:8; Duet. 25:17-19; Joshua 7; Matt. 21: 1-17; Luke 9:54; Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; Eph. 4:19).
- *Lust* refers to sexual immorality, meaning evil desires that trap us and bring down others who are around us—the very opposite of God's call for us.
- *Orgies* refers to great excess, such as over-eating and Bulimia, sex, and multiple partners. This was considered common practice to the Greeks. They used the rationale that they were pleasing their gods, yet it ended their civilization and led to the Dark Ages!
- *Carousing* refers to wild parties, over-drinking of alcohol, and general excess.
- *For this reason.* Peter is strengthening his position, referring to the power of the Gospel and our responsibility to heed it. These early Christians were seeing their friends, families, and neighbors in sin and were confused about their role. This is also a *heads up* for judgment that is coming! There will be no occasion for people to be saved after they die (John 5:24; Heb. 9:27).

- *Preached to those who are dead* probably refers to the people who had died since Peter's church was started and the arrival of this Epistle. This may also refer to 1 Peter 3:19-20 (see last study). The definitive reason for us to proclaim the Gospel is so that God's elect in a wicked world may see faith demonstrated and explained, to see the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, and to have eternal life.
- *Be judged* refers to that we will all die and be held accountable for what we have done with Jesus' dying for us. Also, we have to realize that the world will not understand Christ; therefore, it will not understand you (Acts 2:22-24, 36; 3:13-15; 5:30-32; 7:51-53).
- *Regard to the Spirit.* We now have spiritual renewal and assurance because Christ has obtained for us victory and triumph over death and sin (Rom. 6:5-9; 1 Cor. 15:25-26).

Vs. 7-11: The end of the world is coming! Life and our opportunities are limited; thus, we are to make every effort to represent Christ and make the most of what we are given for His glory. We are stewards of all that we have, whether small or great. The better we use our gifts, the more generous He is with us with more gifts, abilities, and opportunities. We are called not to waste our opportunities, but to be diligent and faithful with our call, abilities, and prayer with love and hospitality. Do what God has called you to do and do it with passion, truth, and in love!

- *Is near* refers to the period from the Resurrection of our Lord to His Second coming; this is called the *Last Days*. This is not a time reference, meaning either limited or unlimited time, although it does mean that the longer we go, the less time we have. We can have a week left or another two thousand years. The point here is the *End of Days* is a period of time and covenant with Christ, and it will be marked by great sufferings. No one will be immune; we will all have to give account for our life. Looking forward to the End of Days and Christ's return is also meant to encourage and influence the attitudes and actions of suffering Christians (John 5:27; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5, 16), therefore be in serious prayer (Dan. 12:1-2; Acts 2:17; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 1:20).
- *Pray* is meant to line us up in His will and with His empowerment (Luke 18:1; 1 Cor. 7:5; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 5:14-15).
- *Love covers* means that real love continually forgives (Matt. 18:21-22; 1 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 4:32; 1 Thess. 4:9-10; 2 Pet. 1:7; 1 John 4:7-11). This means we are to overlook the faults and transgressions of others against us within reason and with love. We are also not to gossip or slander one another (Prov. 10:12; James 5:20)!

- *Hospitality* specifically refers here to taking in travelers with generosity—not grudgingly or with complaining. In general, since we have Christ’s love flowing in us, it should flow to others around us. This means we are to be willing to give preference to others, to look out for and look after one another, and to share, with discernment, what God has given us, including our family, home, finances, and food. We are to have an attitude of stewardship where we do not own anything because we are merely the caretakers for the real owner, God. He desires us to share His stuff, and we comply out of reverence and gratitude to Him. Thus, as we come along side others, we are to welcome them and act out our faith in real, helpful kindness, generosity, and deeds. This includes providing help and lodging to fellow Christians, helping those who are being persecuted, and helping out in our community (Matt. 25:34-43; Luke 10:30-37; Rom. 12: 3-8, 13: 16:33; 1 Cor. 12:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:10; Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:2; 3 John 1:5-8).
- *Use whatever gift* means to practice your spiritual gifts, and realize that the diversity we have is beneficial for one another. It also means being charitable or generous to others with what Christ has given you, and to serve Him without being held back by fear, time, or lack of talent. As Christians, we are to typify faith and reason together so we can exhibit the maturity needed to make wise decisions and have a purpose in life. This also means directly caring for those in need, such as the sick, infirmed, and poor. However, some Christians will have a specific call and empowerment to do this. People in the world may be more concerned for their own needs and agendas than they are for God’s clear doctrine and purpose, but as Christians, we are called to go beyond ourselves to serve others well (Titus 2). Kindness is the proof of authenticity (Rom. 2:1-4; 12:4-21; 16:1; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:16-23)!
- *Very words of God* refers to Scripture, the words that God has spoken to us. This means to be careful how you speak and minister as we sometimes speak for God as He uses us!
- *God may be praised.* Here, this means for us to be good stewards, as we are called to live, serve, and do all that we do in life for the honor and glory of our Lord and Savior (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Jude 24-25)!

Does Love cover you? Do you use it to cover others? We are to be fueled and empowered by love in all situations. Christian love is the turning of our backs on our self-concerns and facing our neighbors. It is the surrender of our will to His. If love does not take us beyond our self-interests, then we have only lust and pride, not real love! God's love must be our model for life. It must flow into us from Christ, and in return, flow out from us to those around us. God's love is the ultimate power for the Christian. Love is more than a feeling; it has segments and characters to it. Love is also a choice, a decision that must be perused and worked on (John 13:1; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 13:3; 1 John)!

God does not want us to be controlled by the past or to be fearful or cowardly. Rather, we are to learn from our experiences and grow from them, but not be tied to them so they become our identity. We have been born again in Christ; our old life is old, and it is no longer who we are. Thus, we are to grow closer to Him and be an example to others who are still in the old life without being influenced and enticed by them. Our focus needs to be what is going on now, what God is doing, and how we can contribute to it. Not just what can I get, but what can I learn and gain to be better for His glory? Take comfort; God does indeed have a plan for you even when you cannot see it. His will for your growth in Him is clear! He wants you to be faithful and good so others can see in you a demonstration model for the new life that they can have too. He gives you the ability, the power, and the strength to endure and to enjoy (Gal. 6:7)! The most important aspect is for us to keep our eyes focused on Christ, with racehorse blinders on to block off the rest.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me? How am I encouraged and strengthened?
4. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
5. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
6. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
7. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
8. What can I model and teach? What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. How would you describe your personality—a person who likes to just do it, or one who would rather watch others carefully and then do it, or one who just likes to think about it and never gets around to do it?
2. Are you chasing your desires or our Lord? How can the answer to this question help determine what direction you take in life?

3. How has sin enticed you in the past? How has it become an “identity” for you or for others whom you have known?
4. When others come against you, how is the best defense an offense of righteousness and demonstrating the good life in Christ?
5. Knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ did not deserve to suffer, yet still did, and endured great physical, mental, and spiritual pain on our behalf help motivate you in times of hurting and confusion?
6. What does it mean to exemplify the attitude and conduct of Christ? What would that look like in your life?
7. When something comes your way, whether it is a blessing or a problem, how can you take it, handle it with excellence, and learn and grow from it? How would your walk with Christ grow and in turn be a blessing to others if you did this?
8. What does it mean to wholeheartedly look to Christ? How can you better implement this in your life? What would your life look like with this mindset at full blast?
9. Why does God not want us to be controlled by the past or to be fearful or cowardly? How can you have a better mindset to learn and grow from your experiences?
10. What can you do to be on guard against the sins and enticements of others? If you are not, how do you suppose the sins of your heart would break you down and take you over? What can you do about it?
11. How does the fact that the great news of Christ gives us the ability to stand firm in Him take you through your tough days? How can it better keep you from stress and worry?
12. What has caused people you know to become disillusioned? What can you do to stand firm in faith and not worry about what comes along in life?

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5 – 8)