



Living as God's Chosen People

Study Guide: 1 Peter

1 Peter

Study Guide

Living as God's Chosen People
7 Studies
For Individuals or Groups

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{Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture verses are taken from the English Standard Version}

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Lesson 1 - Living Hope for Difficult Days

Bible Passage: [Peter 1:1-12](#)

Big Idea: *Our hope in Christ sustains us through suffering, reminding us of our secure identity and eternal inheritance, ultimately drawing us closer to God.*

Opening Thoughts

The Roman Empire of the first century looked a lot like our world today. The Caesar (government) desired to be worshiped as God. Immorality and sin were rampant among the people. There was a great desire for pleasure and self-indulgence. Truth was whatever one declared it to be. As in the day of the Judges, “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” ([Judges 17:6](#))

Peter’s first letter was written around 64 AD. This would have been some 30 years after the death and resurrection of Christ. Peter is believed to be in Rome at the time of the writing of this letter. Peter was the apostle to the Jews and ministered predominantly to churches that were Jewish in nature. The church was experiencing intense persecution. Some scholars believe the recipients of this epistle were Jewish Christians who fled Jerusalem after the initial persecution that followed the explosive growth of the church ([Acts 2:41](#); [4:1-4](#); [8:1](#)) Many have lost their homes, jobs, and families because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Some were being killed in the cruelest of ways because they refused to worship Cesar as a god. Peter is writing to encourage them in their faith. One of the central themes of this letter is “Believers are secure in Christ.”

Peter’s letter continues to be a source of encouragement to believers today. Some two-thirds of believers around the world live under governments more repressive than the Roman Empire of the first century. Even in our own country Christians are facing more conflict as our culture becomes more secular.

As American culture becomes more secular, the environment grows increasingly hostile to Christian beliefs. The workplace no longer can be called religion friendly, or even spiritually neutral. Godly adults have lost jobs or failed to receive promotions because they do not endorse unbiblical behavior celebrated by a pagan culture. Christian teens and children encounter ridicule from their peers if they do not embrace immoral standards.

As we study Peter’s letter to the early church, we will discover encouragement and hope as we learn to live as strangers in a hostile secular culture. In the opening twelve verses, Peter encouraged believers to have hope through Christ. In the one who overcame death, we can find security for life.

Hope: Heaven's Inheritance

[1 Peter 1:1-4](#)

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

As Peter opens this letter, we see that he no longer calls himself a fisherman. His life no longer revolves around his former occupation. He is now an Apostle of Jesus Christ serving the church in Rome. Peter no longer lives to catch fish. He lives to serve Christ by proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. As a fisherman he relied on himself to provide for his needs but now as an apostle he depends solely on Christ.

Peter's letter was intended to be copied and shared with churches throughout Asia Minor. The churches would read the letter and then pass it along. This letter was directed at the churches that were made up of exiles of the dispersion. These Jewish congregations were made up of believers that were forced to flee Jerusalem due to persecution. Many of these believers had lost their jobs, homes, and families because of their faith in Jesus. Many would lose their lives because they maintained the Jesus and not Caesar was Lord. It is in this hostile culture that Peter writes words of encouragement reminding them of their heavenly inheritance.

In the opening verses of Peter's letter, we find two truths that encouraged the early believers and can give us courage today.

FIRST, WE CAN HAVE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE BECAUSE OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN THE PAST. We were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God. The concept of being chosen by God refers to His omniscience. God knows everything eternally. He is not limited to time and space. His is not a linear existence. Thus, He knew before He created the world that man would sin. He knew before the creation of man that He would have to have a plan to redeem man. That plan was Jesus Christ. Thus, in His foreknowledge God knew that on an August night in 1969 during a revival service I would respond to the drawing of the Holy Spirit and come to faith in Christ. I was not saved because of my worthiness, but by His grace. In the same way, we can place our hope in our salvation not according to our abilities, but in God's grace.

SECONDLY, IT INVOLVES THE BELIEVERS' PURPOSE. God has set us apart from the world and unto Himself. Being set apart involves sanctification. Sanctification is a process that begins at salvation and is completed when we enter heaven. We may endure much grief from a secular culture, but our purpose for living cannot be bound by that culture. We are set apart for a greater purpose in Christ. He lives in us so we might live for Him. Peter wanted the persecuted believers of Asia Minor to have hope because of who they were in Christ. So too, Christ wants us to understand who we are as we strive to live in a culture that is becoming more secular every day. We are a chosen people, called to obedience, who have received grace, mercy, and peace.

Peter urges us to praise the Lord even when we are discouraged because of what Christ has done for us. We might not feel thankful for our circumstances, but we can exalt God with praise and worship as we gain a new perspective about God and the blessings that He gives us in Christ as we daily study scripture.

The word *blessed*, which is used here ([1 Peter 1:3](#)), is a different word from the *blessed* that is used in the Sermon on the Mount. The word used here is the Greek word from which we derive our word *eulogy*. It means "to praise." In the New Testament this word is never used in reference to man. God does not praise man, but man is to praise God.

We are blessed with a *Living Hope*. The lost culture has no hope. This has caused so much of the discouragement and unrest in the culture. A hopeless man will try anything to find happiness and fulfillment. They will spend enormous amounts of time, money, and energy to find some sense of hope

and fulfillment. The believer does not have to work for this hope; it is a part of their spiritual birthright. They are born again into this living hope. “Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” - [John 3:5](#).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead provided the means for new life. Because the wages of sin is death. ([Rom. 6:23](#)). Jesus paid the price for our sins with his death on the cross. But Jesus not only died for our sins, but He was “raised for our justification” ([Rom 4:25](#)). Without Jesus’ resurrection, we would still be in our sins ([1 Cor. 15:17](#)). However, because Jesus rose from the grave, believers not only can receive salvation, but they also can know God’s resurrection power even if they suffer for Christ’s sake ([Phil. 3:10](#)).

As believers our hope is not only a living hope; it is a lasting inheritance ([1 Peter 1:4–5](#)). Being born again into the family of God means that we share in the inheritance of Christ. This inheritance is reserved for us in heaven, where it cannot decay or lose its beauty and delight. Our security lies not in bank accounts and powerful positions, or even in good health. Our security rests in what God has done for us in Christ. He has deposited our inheritance in heaven’s bank and sent His Holy Spirit as the down payment of the wondrous joy we shall experience in His presence ([2 Cor. 1:21-22](#))

Just as Peter wanted the persecuted believers of Asia Minor to have hope because of who they were in Christ. So too, Christ wants us to understand we have an eternal hope that will give us the strength to stand against a culture that is increasingly becoming secular and anti-God. We must always remember that we are a chosen people, called to obedience and who have a great inheritance awaiting us in heaven.

In a world full of uncertainties and trials, remember that as a believer, you are chosen by God and set apart for His purposes ([1 Peter 1:1-2](#)). Instead of seeking validation and acceptance from the world, find your identity in Christ. Spend time in prayer and studying the Word to remind yourself of who you are in Him.

Hardships: Faith's Refinery

[1 Peter 1:5–9](#)

⁵ who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls

Peter wants believers to recognize that they are being protected even though their circumstances may be severe. Sometimes God’s protection keeps us physically safe in the midst of fiery furnaces, as it did for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ([Dan. 3:19-26](#)). In other situations, God has allowed His saints to suffer greatly. The catalog of champions in [Hebrews 11](#) includes not only people who triumphed, but also godly martyrs. Like the diaspora of Peter’s day, the faithful heroes of [Hebrews 11](#) wandered as homeless pilgrims and experienced persecution, torture, and death. Regardless of the trial, God’s faithfulness is always consistent.

Peter wants us to understand that the various trials that we go through will help to refine our faith. Peter says that our faith is like gold. Gold must be put to the fire in order to clean out all the impurities and dross

to make it pure and clean. Now, note that these verses say that we are much more precious than gold. Gold perishes, but we will live forever.

We can rejoice in our trials because it is a testing to see if our faith is genuine. We need to understand that our trials will be varied and not easy but are controlled by God. We are able to rejoice in trials because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who brings comfort and strength. The suffering we endure here on earth is a “light affliction” that cannot be compared with the glory that will be revealed by Christ, upon our arrival in heaven.

Remain steadfast in your faith, even in the midst of trials and challenges, knowing that your faith is being tested and refined like gold. Stay connected to a community of believers for mutual encouragement and support, standing firm in the hope of Christ's return.

Warren Wiersbe reminds us, *“The trials of life test our faith to prove its sincerity. A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted. A person who abandons his/her faith when the going gets tough is only proving that he/she really had no faith at all”* (Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Hopeful* [Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1982], p. 25.)

Heritage: Prophets and Promises

[1 Peter 1:10–12](#)

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Our joyous salvation has been the focus of attention by both prophets and angels. Throughout the Old Testament, prophetic voices declared the grace that God would bestow through His Messiah. They searched and carefully investigated the matter of the time and circumstances of the Messianic sufferings. Some prophets were able to search the sacred writings of Moses and other prophets who preceded them. Jesus also used these Scriptures to teach how the prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in Him ([Luke 24:27](#)). Jesus urged people to search the Scriptures because the sacred writings testified about Him ([John 5:39](#)).

The angels of heaven rejoiced at the incarnation of the Messiah, filling the sky above Bethlehem with songs of praise at His birth ([Luke 2:13-14](#)). We are told that joy breaks forth in heaven when someone repents and turns to God ([Luke 15:7](#)). Our salvation was the purpose behind Christ's advent and His agony. His suffering made our salvation possible, causing the angels to offer immense joy and praise to the Father.

From the beginning of time God has had a plan for our redemption. When we struggle with finding purpose in our daily lives or as we struggle with just going through the motions, take time to meditate on [1 Peter 1:10-12](#) and see the privilege that we have as believers to be a part of God's redemptive plan. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how to live each day with purpose and passion for His kingdom.

Application

You may struggle with living out your faith in a world that often opposes your Christian values. Apply the truths of the imperishable inheritance and the salvation ready to be revealed in [1 Peter 1:1-12](#) to your daily interactions. Let the hope of your ultimate salvation empower you to boldly live out your faith, standing firm in the face of opposition. Create a spiritual routine that includes prayer and the study of scripture. By anchoring yourself in the eternal truths of God's Word, you will find clarity and purpose amidst life's busyness and trials. You will find nourishment for your soul as you develop a consistent and vibrant walk with Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Who is the audience mentioned in [1 Peter 1:1](#), and what significance do you think this has for understanding the message of the letter?
2. What does Peter mean when he speaks of our salvation being 'ready to be revealed in the last time'?
3. How does your hope for eternal salvation in Christ help you get through the dark days of suffering and frustration?
4. Where do you find hope in your life? What are some areas of life where you could use more hope? How will you seek that out?
5. How have the trials you have been through strengthened and refined your faith?
6. What practical changes can we make this week to align more closely with our calling as 'exiles' while living in today's world?

Lesson 2 - Living as Strangers in Light of Christ's Sacrifice

Bible: [Passage: 1 Peter 1:13–25](#)

Big Idea: *In light of Christ's sacrifice, believers are called to live as strangers in this world, separate from its sinful ways, and to pursue holiness with reverence and purpose.*

Opening Thoughts

Our culture is becoming increasingly secular. Quickly disappearing are the Judeo-Christian beliefs that were at the heart of the founding of our country. As the culture becomes more pagan, the more it looks like the time in which Peter was writing. True believers today are facing many of the same trials that these early Christians were facing. Increasingly they are being cancelled from the public square.

In [1 Peter 1:3-12](#), Peter reminded us of what we have in Christ as believers. He told us about the new birth, our hope in eternity because of Jesus' resurrection and the wonderful inheritance that has been prepared for us in heaven. As believers we enjoy protection from this culture because of the salvation that we have in Jesus.

Peter having discussed our wonderful position in Jesus Christ, issues a challenge to believers to live a separated and holy life. If we are going to truly have an impact on our culture, we are going to have to live lives that are strange to the culture. The time has come that those who name the name of Christ, live in the light of Christ's sacrifice.

Preparation for Purposeful Purity

[1 Peter 1:13–16](#)

¹³ Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

The King James translates "prepare your minds" as "gird up the loins of your mind" Peter used a Middle Eastern phrase "gird up your loins" which referred to the custom of men who were wearing long, flowing robes. When they were preparing to run or to do physical work, they usually lifted their robes and secured them with a belt or girdle around their waist. This allowed them freedom of movement.

Peter is exhorting us to be proactive when it comes to preparing our minds for a life of holiness. Scientist have discovered that behavior is determined to a great extent by the subconscious mind. When working with computers there is a phrase "garbage in; garbage out" In the same way if we want to live holy lives it has to start with our preparing of the mind. Paul, in [Romans 12:2](#) says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." If we are going to have any impact on our culture, we are going to have to have minds that are prepared and sober and ready to accomplish what it is that God has called us to do.

It is important to always remember that our hope lies not in the culture but in the grace that was given to us when Jesus was revealed to us. That revelation will be shown to us more fully when Jesus comes again. Peter is urging us to be self-disciplined, getting our minds ready for action.

Believers have never been called to just be passive in a cynical society. Jesus gave the church a mission in the Great Commission ([Matt 28:19-20](#)). Believers are called to go and make disciples and tell the world of the love and mercy of God. This can only happen if we have prepared minds that are focused on the Word of God. Like soldiers that prepare for battle and athletes that prepare for a competition, we must daily prepare for completing the “Great Commission.”

[1 Peter 1:14](#) Peter reminds us that we must be like obedient children and conform to our new life in Christ. *Obedient* is translated from a word meaning “to hear and act on what one hears.” Peter reminds us that we are to be obedient to our calling in Christ. Like children who are to keep obeying their fathers, we are to keep obeying our Heavenly Father, especially with regard to His call to holiness.

[1 Peter 1:16](#) “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” God is Holy. He is completely set apart from all that is sinful, unrighteous, or morally corrupt. Since we have been called to serve a holy God, we too are to be holy in all our conduct. Everything we do or say must demonstrate we have been set apart to the service of Him who is holy. We are to exhibit the traits of one who has been set aside from all that is sinful, unrighteous, or corrupt.

We can learn to be holy by creating a habit of daily prayer and meditation on God's Word. Let His truth guided your thoughts and actions, helping you to live a life that reflects His holiness. When you encounter difficulties or uncertainties, seek God's wisdom through prayer and Scripture.

Price of Precious Redemption

[1 Peter 1:17-21](#) (ESV)

¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, ¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you ²¹ who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The next logical questions would be “Why should I practice this Holy Living?” Peter answers that question in [1 Peter 1:17-21](#). Simply put, it is because of the price that was paid for our redemption. Peter encourages us to be like obedient children in our desire to follow in our Lord's pattern. He held out the example of Jesus, who was holy. If Jesus, who called us out of the world was holy, then we should be holy, not merely in our spiritual activities but in all our conduct. Peter proceeds to explain why we are to live holy lives. We are to live holy lives because of the nature of our salvation. Our salvation calls us to holy living due to four distinct truths.

FIRST, WE ARE TO LIVE HOLY LIVES BECAUSE OUR TIME HERE ON EARTH IS SHORT. Peter says we are to conduct ourselves with reverence because this is our temporary residence, heaven is our permanent home. The short few years we live on this earth are nothing compared to the rest of eternity in heaven. Being aware of this truth should compel us to want to live holy lives that glorify God and work to build the kingdom.

SECONDLY, WE ARE CALLED TO LIVE HOLY LIVES BECAUSE OF THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID FOR OUR REDEMPTION.

The original readers of Peter's letter knew what it meant to be set free from a life of total depravity, The Roman culture, much like ours, was about idolatry and immorality. We have been redeemed from our sin. The price that was paid was more precious than silver or gold. When we were saved, we were bought out of sin's slavery by the blood of Christ. Jesus paid the cost for our freedom from sin with His own life, which He laid down at Calvary. The true Lamb of God, without defect or blemish, gave His life as the price of our redemption from sin.

THIRDLY, WE ARE CALLED TO LIVE HOLY LIVES BECAUSE OF THE SPLENDOR OF GOD'S ACTION ON OUR BEHALF.

From the foundation of the world God had a plan for our salvation. Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our salvation was no afterthought on God's part. God knew that man would rebel against Him. But God still wanted to have a restored relationship with man. So, before He ever created man, He had a plan to redeem sinful humanity through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Lastly, WE ARE CALLED TO LIVE HOLY LIVES BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF GOD. When God raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him to glory, He demonstrated His power over death. God's raising Jesus from dead proved that what Jesus had said or implied about being the Son of God was true. It also provided divine proof of Jesus' Deity. This demonstration of God's power means that we can confidently put our trust in Him as the One who raised Jesus from the dead ([Rom. 4:24](#)) and gave Jesus a share of His glory.

When we are feeling overwhelmed by the pressures of daily life and the uncertainties of the future? Remember that God has redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ. We should take time each day to reflect on God's sacrifice for our salvation, and let His love and grace strengthen and comfort us in all situations.

Permanence of Persevering Love

[1 Peter 1:22-25](#) (ESV)

²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ²⁴ for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Our new life in Christ should be characterized by obedience to the truth of God's Word and brotherly love for each other. It is important that we have a vertical faith in God and still live horizontally in love with one another. Particularly in the light of the opposition that comes from nonbelievers, we and other Christians must love and support one another.

When we are born again, we have a new life. This new life is not from perishable seed of our natural or physical birth. But it is from imperishable seed through the living and enduring word of God, the gospel. This means our salvation is permanent and can never be taken from us.

Peter goes on to quote [Isaiah 40:6-8](#) to support his point. In the Old Testament context, the prophet proclaimed God's promise to bring deliverance to His suffering people. Those causing the suffering could not stand against God's power. Their dominance was like the grass or a flower, temporary and brief. Unlike the things of this world that will perish, God's Word is eternal and will never perish.

In a world where trends and fads constantly change, we must ground ourselves in the unchanging Word of God as described in [1 Peter 1:24-25](#). Let go of the pursuit of material possessions and temporary pleasures that fade away. Instead, focus on building eternal treasures in heaven by investing in relationships, serving others, and sharing the Gospel.

Application

Living as exiles in a secular society, you may feel pressured to conform to the patterns of the world. Instead, intentionally surround yourself with fellow believers who will encourage and support you in your journey of faith. Spend time daily in prayer and the study of God's Word. Cultivate a "reverential awe" toward God. Remember you are only a temporary resident of earth.... your home is in heaven!

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to you to live as 'strangers in the world' as mentioned in this passage? How does this perspective influence your daily decisions?
2. Why do you think Peter emphasizes the importance of the resurrection of Jesus in this passage? What does it reveal about your faith?
3. How does your hope for eternal salvation in Christ help you get through the dark days of suffering and frustration?
4. What does it mean to have a disciplined mind? How do Christians develop disciplined minds?
5. In what specific ways can you cultivate a mindset of hope in your daily challenges, just as Peter instructs us to set your hope fully on the grace to be revealed?

Lesson 3 - Living Stones in a World of Rejection

Bible Passage: [1 Peter 2:1-12](#)

Big Idea: *The passage in [1 Peter 2:1-12](#) reminds Christians that rejection and opposition are part of the Christian journey, but in Christ, they find strength and purpose. Believers are called to stand firm in their faith, shine as lights in a dark world, and find solace in their identity as living stones in a world that may reject them.*

Opening Thoughts

The original recipients of Peter's letter came from a secular/pagan culture. Their former lives had been filled with some of the grossest immorality and pagan worship. That all changed when they responded positively to the gospel and believed in Christ. Their newfound faith alienated them from their neighbors. They found themselves strangers in their own communities, facing many hardships.

So far in Peter's letter to the congregations of Asia, Peter has been writing to help us as believers to learn how to live as followers of Christ in a hostile environment. He has reminded them that they have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ ([1 Peter 1:1-2](#)). They were reminded that they have a rich inheritance in eternity through the living Lord ([1 Peter 1:3-9](#)). They were reminded that the gospel that they had received had been spoken of by the prophets' centuries earlier ([1 Peter 1:10-12](#)). Peter challenged them to turn from their former immoral lifestyle and live one of holiness before God. ([1 Peter 1:13-21](#)). Because they had been redeemed through the gospel of Jesus, they must have love for other Christians. ([1 Peter 1:22-25](#)).

Peter wanted the believers to understand what it meant to live the Christian life while here on earth. Christianity is more than just going to heaven when you die. When we become a member of God's family it begins a lifelong building process. Just as a building under construction changes and improves in its appearance as it gets closer to completion, so, too, should our lives become more like Christ as we move nearer to our eternal reward.

[1 Peter 2:1-12](#) reminds believers that rejection and opposition are part of the Christian journey, but in Christ, we find strength and purpose. Believers are called to stand firm in their faith, shine as lights in a dark world, and find solace in their identity as living stones in a culture that will reject them.

Chosen Stones of Character

[1 Peter 2:1-4](#)

¹ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,

When a builder begins to build one of the first things that he does is clear the land. He removes all the obstacles that will prevent him from completing the project.

Peter is exhorting followers of Christ to remove actions and attitudes that will hinder their spiritual growth. Peter calls them to put them away:

MALICE (*kakia*) means doing evil despite the good that has been received; the desire to harm other people. Malice may be hidden behind good actions. Christians should have no part in evil actions toward others (see [Colossians 3:8](#); [James 1:21](#)).

DECEIT (*dolos*) means deliberately tricking or misleading by lying.

HYPOCRISY (*hupokrisis*) means that people say one thing but do another; playacting; presenting good motives that mask selfish desire.

ENVY (*phthonos*) means desiring something possessed by someone else. This causes discontent and resentment as believers make unhealthy comparisons to one another. It also makes them unable to be thankful for the good that comes to others.

SLANDER (*katalalia*) means destroying another's good reputation by lies, gossip, rumor-spreading, etc... Malice often manifests itself through slander. We should not treat fellow Christians the way the world treats us.

Not only will these sins hinder an individual's spiritual growth. They will cause strife and dissension among other believers.

Peter compares believers to "Living Stones" who will be rejected by the culture but are chosen and precious in God's eyes. They are called to be stones of character striving to build up the Kingdom of God.

Thus, we are to crave pure spiritual milk like a newborn baby, so that by it we can grow up in our salvation. We are to recognize that our spiritual nourishment comes from reading the Word of God, prayer, and worship. Unfortunately, many believers are weak and ineffective because they are feasting on the junk food of the world and not the milk of the Word. That is why is so important to set aside dedicated time each day to feed your soul with Scripture, meditating on its teachings, and engage in meaningful conversations with God through prayer. Allow the truths of the Bible to shape your thoughts, actions, and decisions.

Surround yourself with fellow believers who can encourage and challenge you in your faith. Join a small group or Bible study to deepen your understanding of Scripture and build a community of support. Doing so will make you stronger and more able to fulfill your new identity as a "living stone" in the kingdom of God.

Called to Communal Worship

[1 Peter 2:5–10](#)

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," ⁸ and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Many years earlier, Peter was given the name “Rock” (petros in Greek, from which comes the name Peter. Here in his letter, he describes Jesus as a living cornerstone. [Psalm 118:22](#) “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” refers to Jesus. The culture has rejected Jesus in large part, but God chose Him and declared Him valuable. Jesus is the chosen One, and we were chosen because we are in Him, our entire identity is wrapped up in our coming to Jesus.

Just as stones were used in the building of the great temple of God in Jerusalem, so are we, living stones, which are being built into a spiritual house, a temple, to God. Now God dwells in His people, not in a building. ([1 Cor 3:16-7](#); [6:19](#)). Jesus is the cornerstone of this spiritual temple.

Peter changed to another word picture and described believers as a royal priesthood who offer spiritual sacrifices. Under the old covenant the priests of Israel sacrificed bulls and goats in the temple. As Christians, we are priests of the new covenant who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. These sacrifices are truly acceptable to God because they are offered through Jesus Christ.

The New Testament identifies spiritual sacrifices as (1) offering our bodies completely to God for His service; (2) the offering of financial gifts; and (3) the serving of others with the love of Christ. We need to understand that spiritual sacrifices will involve our bodies, our money, and our time ([Rom 12:1-2](#)). When we come to Christ we become living stones in the building of the church. We will begin to see real spiritual growth in our lives as we offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

Unfortunately, many believers only see themselves as church members possessing certainty of heaven. They do not take hold of all that it means to belong to Jesus. As believers in Jesus Christ, we have been chosen to be a part of His kingdom, a royal priesthood with direct access to the throne room of heaven, and a holy nation separate from this world and set apart from this culture.

In a world that values conformity, standing out as a chosen race can be challenging. Embrace your uniqueness as a child of God and use your gifts and talents to glorify Him. Seek opportunities to share your faith boldly and authentically. Your authenticity and dedication to Christ can inspire others to seek a deeper relationship with God.

As living stones, you are being built into a spiritual temple ([1 Peter 2:5](#)). Embrace the process of growth and transformation in your spiritual walk. Take time each day to study the Bible, pray, and seek God's guidance, allowing Him to shape you into a vessel for His glory.

Conduct Amidst Condemnation

[1 Peter 2:11–12](#)

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

I understand what it means to be a temporary resident. Growing up I moved around a lot due to my father being in the military. As an adult I have moved around for schooling and work. I finally have settled into a city that I plan to call home until I am called home. Yet, in reality, even this location is not my real home. As a believer, I am on a journey to my eternal home that the Lord has prepared for me. My arriving there

will be the greatest gift of His grace, which has sustained me through every step of my journey with Him. Until then I will continue to live as a stranger in this secular culture, proclaiming the Word of God.

Peter reminds the church that we are aliens and strangers in this world. This is only our temporary home. This culture that we live in wants to drag us back into our former lifestyle. Peter describes it as a war against our soul. These fleshly lusts are not only sinful; they also are self-destructive. Thus, we must always be on guard and prepared to fight them.

We are to live such honorable lives that they will refute all the false accusations against us. Our good works will convince our accusers that God was at work in us. To glorify God means both to praise God and to confess that God is always right.

The day of visitation in Scripture usually means a time of divine judgment on evil. Sometimes, though, it means a time of divine deliverance from suffering. Either understanding or even both understandings are possible here. We should understand Peter that writes that Christians' lives were to be so good their accusers would be convicted of their false accusations and give God the glory when God came in deliverance of His people and in judgment on unbelievers.

We live in a day when Christians are accused of all sorts of evil. When we practice New Testament evangelism, we are condemned for trying to destroy other religions and cultures. When we adhere to high moral standards in sex and marriage, we are accused of being judgmental. When we hold to biblical ethics, we frequently are classified as "narrow minded bigots."

In such an environment we can refute our accusers best by our honorable and pure living. We can demonstrate the superiority of obeying God's Word by the beauty of our godly lives. We can refute our enemies of the accusation of prejudice by our open, loving, redemptive attitudes. We best defeat our enemies by demonstrating our identity in Christ Jesus.

[1 Peter 2:11-12](#) reminds us that as a Christian, we are called to live a life that reflects God's love and holiness, even in the workplace. It can be challenging to maintain your faith and integrity in a professional environment where dishonesty or unethical practices may be prevalent. To overcome this, make a conscious effort to treat your coworkers with kindness and respect, speak truthfully, and demonstrate integrity in all your dealings. Be intentional about your choices and actions, making sure they align with the values of the Kingdom. Resist the urge to conform to the patterns of this world and instead, let the light of Christ shine through you. Use your words to encourage and uplift others, showing them the hope and love found in Jesus. By doing so, you not only honor God but also show others the transformative power of living out your faith.

Application

In a world that often prioritizes individualism and self-centeredness, you can apply [1 Peter 2:1-12](#) by actively seeking to build the community of believers around you. Instead of isolating yourself in your faith journey, look for opportunities to connect with other believers, serve with them, and grow together in Christ. Focus on living a life that glorifies God rather than chasing after worldly achievements, trusting that true fulfillment comes from serving Him wholeheartedly. Look for ways to support and uplift fellow believers, sharing burdens and joys together in authentic Christian fellowship.

Discussion Questions

1. What practices do you think are essential for nurturing spiritual growth as described in [1 Peter 2:2](#)?
2. What does it mean that you are a living stone like Jesus?
3. We Christians are “like living stones” being built into a “spiritual house” (verse [5](#)). What does this image imply about how you should view yourself, other Christians, and the church as a whole (see [1 Corinthians 3:9–16](#); [Ephesians 2:19–22](#))?
4. What is one thing you appreciate about being part of a community of believers, and how does it compare to your other relationships?

Lesson 4 - Living Successfully Through Submission

Bible Passage: [1 Peter 2:13-3:12](#)

Big Idea: *Living as kingdom citizens involves respecting authority, enduring suffering with grace, and demonstrating Christlike behavior in all circumstances.*

Opening Thoughts

What does success mean to you? While attending Liberty Baptist College (Liberty University), Dr. Falwell would tell us that success is finding God's calling on your life, getting there and staying there. Submitting to whatever God called us to do was the most successful thing we could do.

As believers our greatest achievement is to hear the Master say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant."* Being servants means submitting ourselves to God. Following Christ, we can accept our roles as God's servants.

Peter was writing his letter to people who lived in a troublesome situation. The Roman Empire gave its citizens many advantages—good roads, safety from invasions, and law and order. At the same time, the empire could be highly unjust and oppressive in how it imposed law and order.

Nero had come into power in Rome as the new emperor. Many have considered him to have been mad with power. The Roman Empire boasted itself that it gave justice to man. However, it was like every other government, including our own. The poor man has never had a fair chance. The rich man has always been able to buy lawyers who were smart enough to evade the law. The poor man is the one who has the problems with the law.

Peter addressed believers who worked in situations of injustice or even cruelty, especially the slaves. Some women had to live under the authority of harsh, non-Christian husbands. Naturally, they struggled under these conditions. How did their situation square with the Christian doctrine of liberty in Jesus Christ? Did their newly acquired freedom in Christ authorize them to rebel against the authority of the state and their masters?

Peter turns to the issue of submission, which becomes the key word in 1 Peter 2:13–3:7. Christians are to have an attitude of submission that shows itself in our relationships and actions. When we live a life of submission to God's calling, we can have a positive influence on the culture around us.

Biblical Submission Recognizes God's Authority

In this passage Peter addresses God's authority in two areas that we all encounter. The government and our workplace.

Submission to Government

[1 Peter 2:13–17](#)

¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people

who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Peter wrote that believers are to be subject to every human institution. The context of the passage shows every human institution refers specifically to governmental authorities. The strong form of the command indicates it is a binding obligation.

Paul reminds us in [Romans 13:1](#) “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” We should obey all laws and respect all authority, unless we are called upon to do something God forbids. It was God who placed us under the authority of government.

One of the God given roles of government is to punish those who break the law. The other is to reward those who do good. Every Roman citizen shuddered at the thought of the power and willingness of Rome to punish those who defied its authority. Certainly, Christians knew well the coercive threat of crucifixion, an awful means of torturing a criminal to death.

We should not just obey the law to escape punishment. When we submit to the laws of the land we are being obedient to the will of God. By doing good, even when suffering at the hands of ungodly leaders, believers will silence the criticism of foolish people who oppose our faith. Peter tells us that when we submit to the government, our good will silence the “ignorance of foolish people.” Our good deeds will silence those making false charges, while glorifying our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our serving the one true God by living a peaceful, wise, and visibly good life, will be far more revolutionary and effective for the Kingdom of Christ than seeking to overthrow one corrupt regime and replacing it most likely with another. When we live in quiet submission it will give us the freedom to spread the gospel freely.

When feeling frustrated by government decisions that go against our beliefs? We should remember that God calls you to submit to authority. Instead of complaining, pray for wisdom for your leaders and look for ways to respectfully voice your concerns through proper channels.

Submission on the Job

[1 Peter 2:18–20](#)

¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

Unlike the pagan Roman society, our culture rejects the practice of slavery. Peter did not endorse slavery, but those to whom he was addressing were slaves so they would understand how to relate the concept of submission. While the modern workplace is nowhere near the environment of slavery, these principles can help us to apply biblical practices to our jobs.

As believers we must remember that God is the judge of everyone regardless of their status. As believers we should relate to others in the workplaces in such way that we demonstrate that we are under the Lord’s authority. When we do our job as unto the Lord we bring glory to His name.

When we demonstrate godly submission to those, who we work for we show them our faith in God. Even when we work for a supervisor that treats us unjustly, we are called to respond with the right attitude. When we respond with godly submission the others in the workplace will witness our trust in God. Remember we work not for our employer but as unto the Lord. We are to remember that amidst trials at work, our ultimate identity and worth come from being a child of God, not from our job or performance.

Biblical Submission Respects Christ's Example

[1 Peter 2:21–25](#)

²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Submitting to another's authority goes against our human nature. Submission is seen by many as weakness not strength, losing rather than winning. Most people will only submit when forced, and then only until they have the power to escape or overcome.

Peter reminds us that though we may be persecuted or discriminated against, as believers we are first called to follow in Jesus' steps. Jesus desires that we be formed into His image ([Rom 8:29](#)). This means that as followers of Christ we are going experience suffering, just as He did.

When we experience trials and difficulties, we need to remember how much Jesus suffered. Jesus the sinless son of God left His throne in heaven to come to earth and live among sinful man. He lived a perfect life and died for us. He suffered physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He embraced the anguish of the cross for us. The purpose of His pain was to provide salvation for anyone who would repent of their sins and receive Him as Savior.

Jesus' submissiveness to His father's will, even at the cost of suffering, has set for us a perfect example to follow. Jesus could submit to the Jewish and Roman authorities, who persecuted Him, because He had already submitted and entrusted himself to the heavenly father. Just because Jesus submitted to the authorities does not mean he agreed with them that he had done anything wrong. Jesus yielded Himself to the religious and political authorities for a purpose—to provide salvation for anyone who would believe and receive Him as Savior and Lord.

He did not have to die for His sin, for He never sinned. We were the ones who, like sheep, were constantly being led astray. Each of us has sinned and fallen short of God's glory ([Rom. 3:23](#)). God laid on Christ the judgment of our sins. By his wounds we have been healed. Peter reminded the persecuted believers of his day that the way they responded to suffering was a witness for Jesus to the unbelievers around them.

God has instructed us to follow Jesus' example of submission by having a lifestyle of submission to others. Biblical submission does not mean that we are inferior or weak. Biblical submission means that we are following Christ's example by relating to others unselfishly, graciously, and respectfully. By doing so, those around us will be able to see Christ in us.

Biblical Submission Requires Mutual Commitment

Biblical submission is best understood as the voluntarily yielding of yourself to someone else's wishes or demands as an expression of love for that person. Real biblical submission does not happen just in our public life but will be required in our private lives and will require a mutual commitment of all those involved. Peter turns to the domestic problems which Christian submission will inevitably produce. This is especially so when one marriage partner comes to Christ while the other is still untouched by the appeal of the gospel—and such a situation inevitably had difficulties.

Christian Wives Follow Godly Examples

[1 Peter 3:1–6](#)

¹ Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ² when they see your respectful and pure conduct. ³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— ⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Greek and Roman cultures expected a wife to follow her husband's religion. When a woman trusted Jesus as Savior and her husband did not, she immediately encountered difficulty. The culture and her husband would suspect her of disloyalty to her spouse.

She could become confused as to her proper attitude toward her husband. Should she defy her husband because she had found liberty in Christ Jesus? Should she witness to her husband and try to convert him? After all, wouldn't his conversion make her life a lot easier? Or should she simply buckle under to his demand that she return to the Greek or Roman gods of the household?

The nature of biblical submission is to live one's life before another in such a way that without words they will know of your faith. As a godly wife lives out her faith in Christ it will be silent testimony to her husband of the presence of the Holy Spirit in her life.

In addition to living Holy Spirit filled lives, godly wives demonstrate submission to the Lord and respect for their husbands by the way they adorn themselves. Pagan women sought to enhance their beauty with outward means, such as elaborate hairstyles and gold jewelry or fine clothes.

Peter was not implying that a godly woman cannot give proper attention to her appearance, but her self-image should not rely on external adornments. It does mean that wives are to dress modestly so that they bring honor to their husbands and to the name of Christ.

Christian women have the examples of holy women of the past who lived lives of biblical submission. Paul gives Sarah as an example of such a woman. In fact, Peter refers to godly wives as spiritual descendants of Sarah. Christian wives give evidence that they are Sarah's spiritual descendants by doing what is good and right and by not giving into fear of their husbands. Christian wives should not submit out of fear but want to do so out of love for Christ and their husband.

Christian Believers Show Spiritual Understanding

[1 Peter 3:8–12](#)

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Peter turns his attention back to the church. Peter instructs believers to exercise biblical submission in their relationships. By demonstrating biblical submission among other believers shows a love of God’s people.

As believers we are to be like-minded - that is we are to be of one spirit. The Greek word that Peter uses refers to sharing another’s feelings or identifying with another’s pain or joy. Believers who practice biblical submission will be like-minded and sympathetic. Believers demonstrate loving biblical submission in the way they respond when they are offended.

Believers should never trade evil for evil or insult for insult. If someone wrongs us, we should respond by giving a blessing. Peter’s illustration hearkens back to Jesus’ teaching to bless those who cause us pain ([Matt. 5:44-48](#)). Believers are called by God to this lifestyle and because when we bless others, they will inherit a blessing. Jesus said believers who have a submissive attitude will receive a great reward ([Luke 6:35](#)).

Biblical submission also involves the way we speak to one another. Quoting [Psalm 34:12-16](#), Peter cautioned each believer to keep his tongue from evil and to refrain from speaking deceit. Many Scriptures address the importance of guarding what we say. Proverbs warned that a multitude of words will often lead to sin ([Prov. 10:19](#)). On the other hand, the “lips of the righteous know” what is acceptable ([Prov 10:32](#)). Jesus taught that what comes out one’s mouth reveals what is in the heart—whether good or evil ([Matt. 12:34-37](#)). Peter echoed these sentiments and advised believers to avoid sin through how they spoke to and about one another. Such action would demonstrate they want to love life and to see good days.

Even believers can get out of sorts with one another. When conflict occurs in the church, participants should turn away from evil. They must not harm their opponents. Instead, they should do what is good. Jesus taught His followers to “do what is good” even to people who hate them ([Luke 6:27](#)). In doing so they are following Christ’s example of seeking peace. We are called to seek resolution of conflict and restoration of relationships with one another. This will only be possible when we are willing to engage in the principle of biblical submission.

Application

The principle of biblical submission challenges believers to rise above their base human natures and learn from the pattern set by Christ. Following Christ’s example, we set aside our personal ambitions and surrender our prideful spirits. Submission in each area of our lives demonstrates we believe God is truly sovereign over all of life. It shows we trust that Christ will work through the various authorities and relationships for His honor and glory.

Discussion Questions

1. What is a situation where you felt challenged to submit to authority, and how did you handle it?
2. To whom did Peter urge his readers to submit themselves? Why? ([2:13–14](#))
3. How can you exercise your freedom in a way that honors God?
4. Can you think of a practical way to demonstrate respect and honor to an authority figure in your life this week?

Lesson 5 - Living in Light of Eternity

Bible Passage: [1 Peter 3:13-4:6](#)

Big Idea: *Enduring suffering for doing good honors Christ, reminding us of His example and the eternal glory awaiting believers. Living in light of eternity helps us persevere with hope and faith, knowing that our present sufferings are temporary compared to the joy to come.*

Opening Thoughts

In 2017 I was diagnosed with stage 4 prostate cancer. I was not sure of what the future would hold. As I sat in my study one morning having my quiet time and listening to worship music the song by Mercy Me “*Even If*” came on. It was as if Jesus were telling me that He could cure me but even if He did not, I would still be blessed by coming into His eternal presence. It was at that moment that I received peace about my future. I placed and continue to place my life in His hands and trust Him one day at a time.

How many times have you heard these questions; Why do good people have to endure suffering? Why does a good God allow suffering to exist at all? Since there is suffering how am I as a believer supposed to respond? Peter is writing to encourage believers that have these questions. He gives us a biblical perspective to suffering that will help us to overcome doubt and fear.

Earlier in his letter, Peter, urged the embattled believers to submit to authorities even if these authorities abused their power. Their obedience would be a witness to Christ who set the example. In the same way their response to suffering could and would be used as a witness of their faith in Christ. As believers, we must always remember that we are to live our lives in the light of eternity.

Blessed in Suffering, Bold in Faith

[1 Peter 3:13–16](#)

¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Peter starts out with the observation that when a person is zealous for doing good, people are less likely to want to harm them. He is not saying that being committed to doing good will prevent suffering. Rather, he made the point that normally people who behave rightly are not the object of ill treatment at the hands of most authorities. In general, persons in various positions of power reward those doing good, while disciplining wrongdoing. We need to be committed to doing what is good, lawful, and right. Even when we are zealous for what is good, we can still face trials and oppositions to our faith.

The church is a source of much good in our culture. It operates hospitals, homeless shelters, and many other things to help the needy in our culture. But this does not stop a culture that calls evil good and good evil from attacking. We live in a culture that wants to eliminate Christianity from the public square, even when the church seeks to do good.

Peter is reminding us that we should not fear or be intimidated by the attacks of those who seek to harm us for doing good. We need to remember Jesus' promise from the Sermon on the Mount: "*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs*" ([Matt. 5:10](#)). We must remember that what we do is done in the light of eternity.

We prepare for suffering for our faith by establishing in our hearts that Jesus, the Messiah, is Lord of our lives. We can face suffering for our faith if our hearts are passionately committed to Jesus' lordship over every aspect of our lives. It requires us to go beyond a once-a-week relationship to a daily relationship with Jesus through daily prayer and study of the Word of God.

Having an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus and consistent study of the Bible will prepare us to make a defense of our faith. The word "defense" used by Peter is the Greek word "*apología*" from which we get our English word apologetics. Paul used this word when he made his defense before the Jews in Jerusalem ([Acts 22:1](#)) and when he made his defense to King Agrippa ([Acts 25:16](#)). To give an "*apología*" means simply to give reasons or a rationale for what you believe or for what you are communicating through your lifestyle.

The defense of our faith must be done with gentleness and reverence. If you are living your life as unto Jesus, then those around you will see Jesus in you. You will not have to be constantly telling them you are a Christian or make yourself obnoxious by constantly making some pious statement. The best defense you can make for your faith is to live it out. By doing so those around you will see the Jesus in you. This is what Peter is meaning by "yet with gentleness and reverence."

Our defense of our faith should not be offensive to others. We are to present the defense of our faith with gentleness and respect and thereby keep our consciences clear. In this way we can put to shame our accusers when they denounce our Christian lives. Notice the three-fold defense that believers are to offer to a hostile world. First, we are to offer the beauty of living passionately for the good. Secondly, we are to offer a rational, faith-filled explanation of our faith and hope. Thirdly, we are to do so with such tact and courtesy that our opponents are ashamed by their accusations.

If you experience discrimination or mistreatment in any form, recall [1 Peter 3:13-16](#)'s exhortation to respond with a clear conscience and a gentle spirit. Practice living out your faith consistently in all areas of your life, whether at work, at home, or in your community. Let your actions reflect the love and truth of Jesus, so that others may see the light of Christ shining through you.

Christ's Victory, Our Identity

[1 Peter 3:17-22](#)

¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

We need to remember nothing happens in the Christian's life that is not a part of God's will. This truth does not mean God causes suffering. However, God allows suffering to come into our lives for His purposes that are far greater than ours. God will not reward anyone who suffers for doing evil, but if we suffer for doing what is right, we demonstrate our submission to His will in all things.

Our suffering should always serve as a witness for Christ. When we experience pain, we must remember that Christ also suffered. Peter wants us to remember what Christ did for us on the cross. He died once for all our sins. *"The just for the unjust."* No longer does a priest have to offer a recurring sacrifice for our sins. We can be forgiven for our sins and have a personal relationship with the God of the universe. This is accomplished when we place our faith in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter goes on to tell us that God's patience with human wickedness in Noah's day is parallel to His patience with evil men now. Though God may appear to be inactive in the face of evil, He is giving evil people an opportunity to repent. The delay of God's judgment is an expression of His mercy.

Peter used the picture of Noah's family being carried to safety on the ark as a symbol of the Christian experience. Only Noah's family was carried to safety and life from the death-dealing waters of the flood. Baptism signifies both the death and resurrection of Jesus. *"having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."* ([Col 2:12](#)). Baptism also points to Christ's resurrection and our new life in Him as well as our future resurrection. In this way baptism corresponds to Noah's experience in the flood.

But we must always remember it is not baptism that saves us. Our salvation is made possible through the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. Thus, we receive salvation when we confess our sins and place our faith in Jesus. We bear witness to that confession in baptism.

When you feel overwhelmed by daily responsibilities and challenges at home, remember that just as Noah and his family were saved through the waters of the flood, you too can find salvation in Christ's sacrifice. Lean on God's grace and trust in His plan for your life.

Living in God's Will

[1 Peter 4:1-6](#)

¹ Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. ³ For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴ With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; ⁵ but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

The word *"therefore"* points us back to Jesus' victory over evil and calls us to share His point of view. "Arm yourselves" is a military term calling us to take up the spiritual armor of God that will give us victory. We are to have the same resolve that Jesus Christ had when He went to the cross.

Peter reminds us that suffering loosens sin's grip on us. That is, when we go through suffering, we no longer give in to the lusts of the flesh; we no longer succumb to sin with the same ease, the same vulnerability we experienced previously. Suffering will cause us to take a closer look at our lives and cause us to seek to draw closer to God.

Like the first-century culture of the believers to whom Peter wrote, our culture does not understand our refusal to join them in their wickedness. They are offended when we will not join with them into the flood of sin that swamps our culture and destroys the lives of our youth and many adults. Many of our contemporaries are offended by our objection to the prevailing climate of pornography and obscenity, sexual license and abortion, homosexual marriages, and ordained gay people. Consequently, they slander us, calling us intolerant Pharisees, narrow-minded Neanderthals, unloving hypocrites, and homophobic bigots.

We need not be intimidated by these slurs. Such opposition to commitment to the lordship of Jesus Christ is nothing new. We will suffer because of our stand on moral and ethical issues. Because of what Christ has done in our lives and the suffering we have experienced; we no longer can spend our lives in trivial pursuits. We have to be about the proclamation of the Gospel. The Gospel is God's good news that tells people who have sinned that they can be forgiven through Christ and find new life that is spiritual in nature and empowered by God's Spirit. Even if the culture refuses to accept the Gospel, we are to still be about preaching and living it out in our lives.

We must remember God has the last word. The verdict of our culture on us is irrelevant. All that matters is God's judgment and the life God gives us in Christ our Lord. In a culture that promotes materialism and consumerism, we must resist the pressure to find our identity and worth in possessions or wealth. Instead, investing our time, talents, and resources in advancing God's kingdom and meeting the needs of the marginalized. By living with eternal perspective and generosity, we demonstrate that true fulfillment is found in serving God and others rather than pursuing worldly gain.

Application

When you encounter unjust treatment or unfair circumstances, it can be disheartening and frustrating. Instead of seeking revenge or harboring bitterness, turn to God in prayer and entrust your situation to Him. Remember that God is just and that He sees all things. Choose to respond with patience and trust in His perfect timing for justice. By surrendering the desire for vengeance to God, you can experience peace and freedom from the burden of bitterness. We must seek to live lives in the light of eternity not the present.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways did Jesus suffer for "well-doing" as opposed to wrongdoing? Why does the cross give us direct access to God? (See [Rom. 5:1-2](#); [Eph. 2:18](#); [3:12](#).) What does this access look like? (See [Rom. 5:2](#); [Heb. 10:19-23](#).)

2. How does Christ's place of authority at God's right hand make you feel about your relationship with Him?

3. In [1 Peter 3:14](#), it talks about suffering for righteousness' sake. How can this be understood in our current cultural context?

4. What effect should that suffering have on how you approach the rest of your earthly life (see verses [1–2](#))?

5. What practical steps can you take to embody the teachings of this passage in your daily interactions with those around you?

Lesson 6 - Standing Strong in the Face of Persecution

Bible Passage: [1 Peter 4:7-19](#)

Big Idea: *Standing strong in the face of persecution not only demonstrates the reality of our faith but also reflects the power of Christ's victory over sin and death. By remaining steadfast and trusting in God's sovereignty, as believers we can be a shining light in a dark world, showing the transformative power of the gospel.*

Opening Thoughts

Recently I have been rereading “*Tortured for Christ*” by Richard Wurmbrand. I have read it several times over the years. It is the story of a Romanian pastor who experienced 14 years of imprisonment for his faith in Christ. Instead of denying Christ, he chose to go to prison. While in prison he was able to continue preaching the gospel. Many came to Christ because of his time in prison. Upon his release he was able to come to the west and share the struggles and persecutions that believers were enduring at the hands of the communist. Many believers have given and are still giving their lives for the gospel around the world.

The churches that Peter was writing to were undergoing persecution in the form of opposition and hostility from the culture. Nero had chosen to blame the Christians for the great fire in Rome. The persecution included arrest and many different means of inhumane torture and execution. Nero is said to have taken Christians and use them as lamps in his gardens by covering them with animal skins and tar and setting them ablaze. Many died in the arenas. It is to these believers that Peter is writing too in hopes of encouraging them to stand strong in their faith.

Here in America, we enjoy religious freedom. In some ways this freedom has caused us to become complacent in our faith. We may have even come to believe that we are immune from persecution. But if you listen or read the news you quickly begin to see that the culture is persecuting those who stand for Christ. If you do not agree with the new progressive teachings of the culture, you will be persecuted and ostracized. The day is coming when we are going to have to make choices about our faith. As believers we must be prepared to face the coming persecution and be steadfast in our trust in God’s sovereignty.

Preparation and Purpose in Persecution

[1 Peter 4:7–11](#)

⁷The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers ⁸Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: ¹¹whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The glorious hope of the believer is the return of Christ. Since Christ’s ascension back to heaven ([Acts 1:6-11](#)) believers have looked for and longed for the return of Christ. With this in mind, Peter is giving us six admonitions on how we are to live and prepare for the return of Christ.

Live each day as though Christ could return at once (1 Peter 4:7). Since we do not know the day or time of Christ return, we should live as if it were any moment. Therefore we are to live with an ongoing attitude of anticipation or expectancy.

Refrain from getting caught up in the things of the culture. (1 Peter 4:7). We cannot get so caught up in the things of this world that we do not think straight. It is easy in our culture to be constantly seeking the next best thing. Doing so will often cause us to take our minds off what is important. The culture seeks to satisfy the present at the expense of the eternal. Peter is admonishing us to not get carried away in self-indulgence but to stay “sober-minded” so that we can be of significant use to the Kingdom of God.

Develop and maintain a disciplined prayer life. (1 Peter 4:7). As believers we are called to be a people of prayer. Rather than only having a quick mealtime prayer, we should set aside dedicated time daily to have a sober and direct communication with God. Peter is reminding us that a lack of prayer will render us unprepared for the end of times and the persecution that comes from our culture.

Make expressing love a priority (1 Peter 4:8). As followers of Christ we are commanded to love one another; “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” (*John 13:34*). The Greek word Peter used for love was “*agape*,” it refers to a self-giving, sacrificial love that has the object of the love best interest at heart. We are called to have this kind of love toward others. In doing so we will be able to overlook the faults and shortcomings of fellow believers. As a part of having this kind of love we will be willing to show real hospitality.

Remain faithful by investing your gifts, time, and talents where they will make an eternal difference. (1 Peter 4:10). As followers of Christ we have each been given gifts and talents to be used for the work of the Kingdom. Peter is reminding us that as the return of Christ draws nearer it is vital that we use our gifts and talents faithfully. They are not to be used for self-advancement or as an attention-getter, but they are to be used for the benefit of others and the advancement of the gospel. We must always remember how we use our gifts will have an eternal significance.

Remember to always praise God, who is the source of our energy and the reason for our service. (*1 Peter 4:11*). Peter wants us to understand that we are to take seriously the gifts and talents that God has given us. A pastor friend, who is now in heaven, used to say, “*For our good and His glory.*” What he was referring to was that God gives to his children for their good but ultimately it is for His glory. God is the source of our strength, and we must remain dependent on His strength. We need to have the Apostle Paul’s attitude, “*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*” (*1 Corinthians 10:31*).

These admonishments of Peter will help us to be prepared and show us our purpose in persecution.

Perspective in Painful Trials

[1 Peter 4:12–14](#)

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Unfortunately, many times our response to suffering is “Why me?” Peter is telling us do not to be surprised when trials and suffering come. The mere fact that we are a follower of Jesus Christ will put us at odds with a culture that is controlled by Satan and his demons. Followers of Jesus are being told to conform to the culture or face persecution for nonconformity.

THE PURPOSE OF TRIALS IS TWOFOLD: TO TEST US AND TO ALLOW US TO SHARE IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. While the word *test* can be rendered temptation, in this context it referred to the process of purification. God does not introduce temptations into our lives in order to lure us into sin ([Matt. 6:13](#); [Jas. 1:13](#)). He does allow us to experience difficulties in order to prove us as fire refines precious metal. Peter had alluded to this kind of trial in [1 Peter 1:7](#).

Peter reminds us that when we suffer, we are sharing in Christ suffering. Peter was not equating Christians’ suffering with the atonement of Christ, but was emphasizing they were suffering because they were in Christ.

When we decided to follow Jesus and proclaim the gospel, animosity and persecution from an unbelieving culture was inevitable. Any time the followers of Christ take a stand against sin and evil, they can expect push back from the culture. The world hates the things of God ([1 John 3:13](#)). Jesus told us that being a disciple would have cost ([Matt 10:38-39](#); [16:24-26](#); [John 12:24-26](#)).

When we suffer and are persecuted, others can see the strength of Christ in us. They see that our faith in Christ is a living reality, and they can be drawn to Christ, to His salvation, love, care, and strength. When others see us suffering for the hope of salvation and eternal life, the Holy Spirit uses our suffering to speak to the hearts of the persecutors and observers. He convicts them, and some eventually turn to Christ. When we suffer persecution, it will drive us to have a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. When our faith is put to the test and proven to be true, it will bear fruit. We will be able to experience real joy because we can be confident in the fact that God is in control of every area of our lives.

Perseverance Through Godly Suffering

[1 Peter 4:15–19](#)

¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

The apostle concluded this section of his letter by summarizing his instructions. Followers of Jesus Christ can endure persecution by remembering three truths.

First, *Even our suffering is according to God’s will.* Peter did not mean God’s will is for His children to suffer. Instead, he is describing the fact we are suffering because we are living according to God’s will. More specifically, we are going to suffer because of doing what is good. When we choose to follow God’s commands and His will, it is going to bring us in opposition to a culture that wants to have nothing to do with God.

Second, *we can take comfort in that we suffer for doing good rather than for doing evil*. Peter wants us to make sure our suffering is because of our faith in Jesus and not because we are criminals. Doing the will of God and the good deeds of our faith will sometimes bring suffering. But in that suffering we will also experience blessings.

Third, *we can entrust ourselves to a faithful Creator*. God, who created us in the beginning and recreated us through the blood of His Son, can certainly sustain us. We have nothing to fear when we are suffering because we are doing the will of God. Our faithful heavenly father will victoriously sustain us to the end.

Suffering for Christ's sake should not confuse or dismay us. After all, Jesus warned His followers that persecution and tribulation would be the normal. Jesus glorified God by His sacrifice for our sin on the cross. We, too, can glorify God by courageously accepting persecution for His sake.

Application

When facing criticism or judgment from the culture, remember that your identity is found in Christ, not in the opinions of others. Choose to find your worth in God's love and approval, rather than seeking validation from the culture. Pray for humility and strength to remain steadfast in your faith, even when faced with opposition.

When confronted with trials, hold fast to your hope in Christ's return. Let the anticipation of His coming motivate you to persevere with joyful endurance.

When experiencing trials or suffering from the culture, remember that God uses adversity to strengthen your faith and reliance on Him. Choose to view challenges as opportunities for growth and transformation. Lean on God's promises and seek His presence through prayer and fellowship with other believers.

Discussion Questions

1. Why should love (verse [8](#)) be top priority for Christians awaiting the end?
2. What does commitment to God look like to you? In what ways is it more than one action? What are the ongoing actions you take to commit to God?
3. Why should a Christian not be surprised at rejection and hurt because of his faith (see [John 15:18–25](#); [James 1:2–4](#); [1 Peter 1:6–7](#))?
4. Trials—as difficult as they may be—can yield results ([1 Pet 4:12](#); compare [1:6–7](#)). Read [Matthew 5:11–12](#). What does Jesus have to say about serving him and what we should expect?

5. What does [1 Peter 4:15–19](#) say about the relationship between suffering and our identity as Christians?

6. Read [Mark 8:27–9:1](#). How can you find more boldness in your faith, even when it is difficult? How can you better embrace what it means to follow Jesus?

Lesson 7 - Leading with Humility

Bible Passage: [1 Peter 5:1-14](#)

Big Idea: *Leading with humility is essential in effective Christian leadership. By following Christ's example of selfless service and dependence on God's grace, leaders can guide and nurture the church effectively.*

Opening Thoughts

We must always remember that Peter was writing this letter to the persecuted believers of Asia Minor (present day Turkey). The main theme of this letter was to teach believers how to deal with opposition and persecution. These believers were going through severe persecution. Many with their lives. Peter wrote to show them how to live in such a way that their lives would prove that many of the charges placed against them were false.

As he drew toward the conclusion of his letter, Peter turned his attention to relations among the believers. Earlier he had exhorted readers to exercise humility and submission toward those in authority as a way of negating false charges against them ([1 Peter 2:16-3:12](#)). Here in chapter 5 the apostle again called for these attitudes as he instructed elders how to lead and other believers how to relate to one another.

Peter showed that humility and submission are more than a means of muting the criticism of outsiders. These attitudes are essential to Christian spirituality—for leaders as well as for those they lead. Humble service provides the necessary soil in which believers can grow in Christ. Then Peter concluded his letter with encouragement to beware of the Devil's attacks, a blessing, and personal notes.

Serve with Selflessness

[1 Peter 5:1-4](#)

¹ So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

It is often asserted that the most effective way to manage suffering is through providing service to others. When we are going through times of suffering, we have the tendency to remain focused inward. When we center our attention on the problem that is causing suffering, the suffering is magnified, it becomes harder to overcome because it seems so big. When we begin to serve others, we begin to have a better perspective of our own problems. As we become channels for divine grace to others, we will encounter His grace ourselves and begin to heal while finding the strength to endure our own difficulties.

The apostle, Peter, understood the healing dynamic of service and the strength sufferers can draw from it. As he concluded his epistle to the dispersed disciples of Asia Minor, he urged them to find strength for their suffering through service. As they cared for one another, they not only helped each other survive the persecution, they discovered God's grace ministering to them as well.

Peter closes his letter by addressing the elders of the church. Sometimes the term elder refers simply to someone who is older. But in this instance, it is one of three words used to describe a pastor. Peter is encouraging these elders to set an example by serving with selflessness.

Because Peter himself as a fellow elder, he could exhort the elders as one who understood their roles in the congregations. Keep in mind that 1 Peter was a circular letter that was meant to be read in the various churches throughout the provinces of Asia Minor. Pastors would understand that Peter was not trying to give orders to the churches as if he had authority over them. Instead, they heard him as a person who knew the kinds of pressures and trials they were facing.

Peter understood the suffering they were experiencing. When he says “*a witness of the sufferings of Christ*” it took on a double meaning. Peter had been a witness to the death and resurrection of Christ. Additionally, he too was experiencing the same trials and difficulties that these pastors were experiencing. Peter wanted them to see their trials and difficulties in the light of the sufferings of Christ. Jesus had endured the cross for us so we should be prepared to suffer for His name. If we are going to take a stand for Christ, it is going to come with a price ([Matt 16:24-25](#)).

Peter urged the pastors to shepherd God’s flock. The word rendered shepherd is a verb form of the term often translated as pastor. Persecuted people who had fled their homelands could easily be scattered as tyranny pursued them into their places of refuge. Peter urged the pastors to care for the people like shepherds who protected and provided for their flocks.

As today’s church faces opposition for the culture. It is important that those called to lead the church do so as shepherds that protect their flocks from predators that would seek harm and destroy the church. Peter offers four basic motivations for pastors to protect those they have been entrusted to lead.

First, *the church is God’s flock*. The church is God’s people, the “sheep of his pasture” ([Ps. 100:3](#)). God’s flock has been entrusted to pastors. They do not belong to the pastor, but he has been placed among to oversee and protect. Throughout Scripture, God directed the spiritual shepherds to care for His flock and warned them of dire consequences should they neglect or abuse His people.

Second, *pastors serve not out of compulsion but willingly*. They should be honored by the privilege of caring for God’s flock. Following God’s will in accepting His call to service, pastors do not view their charge as a duty or compulsion, but as a delight. Similarly, they serve not that they might receive anything from the congregation but should minister to the church with a willing mind and grateful heart.

Third, *pastors should care for the church by serving as examples to the flock*. Ministers should not exercise leadership, or oversight, by lording it over the people. Their service must not be onerous or heavy-handed, as if the pastor were superior to other people. Instead, they minister out of love.

Fourth, *the Master’s reward is the pastor’s greatest reward for service*. Peter had already reminded the churches about Christ’s return. While they did not know when the second coming would occur, they had no doubt the chief Shepherd would appear. Pastors are “under shepherds,” serving under the authority and direction of Christ. Ministers who serve the Lord’s flock with loving faithfulness can anticipate receiving the unfading crown of glory. The crown of glory represented God’s ultimate acknowledgement, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” ([Matt. 25:21](#)).

Leaders lead far more effectively by example than by the sheer power of their position. People bend reluctantly before overwhelming power, but they freely embrace the moral and spiritual example of a humble servant who walks with God. I may grudgingly obey someone who has power over me and exerts it forcefully or even unfairly, but I will joyfully work with one exhibiting the servant spirit of our Lord.

Submit with Serenity

[1 Peter 5:5–7](#)

⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you..

Peter continues his letter by addressing the members of the churches. It has been said that the enemy of a servant spirit is pride. Peter reminds us that if we are going to serve it must be done with humility. Peter describes putting on humility, like putting on a new set of clothes.

Peter gives several suggestions on why and how believers should wear the cloak of humility while serving others:

First, *believers should direct their humility toward one another.* [1 Peter 1:22](#), Peter urges believers to love one another with sincere love. and [1 Peter 4:9](#) urges believers to be hospitable toward one another without complaining. Unlike the unsaved culture that has a “me first” mentality, believer should seek to server others with humility.

Second, *by seeking to be humble we will resist the temptation of being prideful.* Peter reminds us that opposes the proud and gives grace the humble. We can become prideful when we serve others to see our works. Humility will lead us to place others ahead of ourselves.

It is important that we always remember that God’s saving grace is received by the person willing to repent of sin, recognize the need of forgiveness, and receive Jesus as Savior and Lord Only a humble person will take each of those steps to salvation.

Too often we resist the humble approach when undergoing difficult circumstances. Like the persecuted saints of Asia Minor, we can get so caught up in our personal struggles that we assert ourselves in self-defense. Peter taught that the opposite is true. When we humble ourselves before God and one another, we can enter a position of security and rest. The very act of humbling ourselves is made possible by our casting all cares on the Lord. Rather than wrestling with the cares of life, we trust God with our burdens.

The Greek word *epirrhianto*, translated “casting,” is interesting because it means to roll something that will most likely roll back upon you. So cast your cares upon God and keep doing it over and over again knowing we can trust Him with whatever circumstances we face. If He loved us enough to send His Son to the cross for us, we cannot doubt His care for us. In His love, we can humble ourselves and submit to His mighty hand.

Stand with Strength

[1 Peter 5:8–14](#)

⁸ *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* ⁹ *Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.* ¹⁰ *And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.* ¹¹ *To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.* ¹² *By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting, and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.* ¹³ *She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.* ¹⁴ *Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.*

Because those in his first-century audience were in a precarious position facing hostile neighbors, Peter warned them to be sober and on the alert. Their enemy was not the unbelieving folk around them but the *Devil* himself. He prowled their streets like a ravenous lion stalks its prey to devour them. As we serve, we should be diligent to watch out for those who would oppose us.

Peter used Hebrew parallelism in his warning to beware of those who seek to be harm us and the message of Christ. First he instructs us to be sober-minded, he had already emphasized this in the opening of the letter ([1 Peter 1:13](#)). We are to take seriously the threat and maintain a serious attitude to the danger.

Secondly, Peter instructs us to be alert. Like a soldier in battle, we must always be vigilant and watchful for the attacks of the enemy. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that our enemy is not merely “flesh and blood” opponents. [Ephesians 6:12](#) “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Our real enemy is Satan and his demons. The name devil literally means slanderer. Connected with Peter’s earlier warnings about people who would falsely accuse believers, this statement places the Devil behind the human weapons attacking them.

Peter also portrayed Satan like a roaring lion. His metaphor contained three aspects that illustrate the Devil’s methods:

First, this lion is prowling around, moving stealthily like a crouching beast on the hunt. In the same way, Satan, and his demonic minions roam about the earth.

Second, Peter described the Devil like a roaring lion, trying to frighten its prey with a deep-throated growl. If many modern Christians become intimidated merely by the sound of opposition, how much more will they be alarmed by actual persecution.

Third, the Devil is no empty threat; he is looking for anyone he can devour. He cannot steal our salvation, but he can stampede us into doubting our faith and seduce us into sin.

Our only defense is to resist him in the faith, that is, to trust in the power of Jesus Christ. We should not think we are experiencing something unusual, for believers elsewhere in the world are undergoing similar or worse opposition.

When we go through challenging times the one thing we desire most is hope. We may despair if we do not think there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Peter concludes his letter to these persecuted believers by encouraging them to server with the hope and anticipation of God’s ultimate victory. Peter wants them, and us, to understand regardless of how painful our circumstances we will overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Whatever we might encounter in a culture that hates us and our God, we can find security in knowing true dominion belonged to the Lord. Satan might think he is in control, but the Lord of hosts is still on the throne of heaven. Human kingdoms would fade, but God's reign is forever. Our citizenship is not in a culture that seeks to cancel or expel. We are citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Whatever opposition we experience from this culture is temporary. Not only in the end but throughout our lives, we can be encouraged that our God reigns. A day will come when we shall find rest in a place prepared for us by the very hands of Christ ([John 14:2-3](#) *"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."*)

Application

You may find yourself feeling overwhelmed by the pressures and responsibilities of life. Scripture encourages us to 'cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you' ([1 Peter 5:7](#)). This week, try journaling your worries and then in prayer, literally 'hand them over' to God. It can be as simple as writing each concern down and then burning the paper safely or placing it on an altar. This active outpouring reminds you that you are not alone, but rather, God is intimately involved in your struggles.

Discussion Questions

1. What specific instructions does Peter give to the elders in [1 Peter 5](#), and how do these reflect his understanding of leadership?
2. How does Peter describe the attitude that should characterize both leaders and followers within the church?
3. In what ways does this passage reveal the nature and attributes of God, particularly regarding His role as our chief shepherd?
4. In what ways can we actively support and encourage our church leaders as directed in [1 Peter 5](#)?
5. What are some practical ways you can practice humility in your interactions this week?
6. How does the concept of 'casting all your anxiety on Him' resonate with your current life circumstances?

7. What steps can you take to create a more prayerful and supportive environment for both yourself and your community based on this passage?

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