

1 Peter: The Life That Lasts

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The Purpose of 1 Peter

Years ago the Russian scholar Berdyaew wrote, "Life in time remains without meaning if it does not receive its meaning from eternity." If this is true, which no doubt it is, then we ought to consider very carefully the path down which we want our lives to march. Since we have but one life, it is eternally crucial that we make the right decision in how we spend it. If we give our life to things which mean nothing in eternity, then our life really will be meaningless here on earth. It will be gone once it is lived and eternity will bear no lasting imprint as the result of this squandered existence. If, on the other hand, we spend our lives on things that last forever (God's word, men's souls, character, etc.) then our lives will be eternally etched upon the pages of time and we will "still speak" after our earthly sojourn is finished. The philosopher William James put it well when he said, "The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." Apparently the Apostle Peter was also keenly interested that we make our lives count for eternity; for he devoted an entire letter of the New Testament to this very issue. It is the book of 1 Peter, written sometime between 64 and 68 A.D.

The "controlling purpose"¹ of this great epistle is found in 1:9 which reads, ". . . receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

The crucial phrase for us to fully understand here is the phrase "the salvation of your souls" (*soterian psuchon*). Our usual response to this phrase is to assume it is referring to our eternal destiny, i.e., "salvation from the penalty of sin." Yet upon closer examination we will find that it is impossible for this to be referring to simply getting into heaven. The word used for "receiving" cannot be used in reference to the salvation which is a free gift from God. (See notes on 1 Peter 1:9.) Also "the goal" of our faith is not getting into heaven, it is to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29). Finally, this salvation is coming as a result of suffering (1:6-9) whereas salvation from eternal destruction comes as a result of faith and faith alone (Rom 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9).

What then is this phrase referring to? What exactly did Peter mean by the phrase "salvation of your souls"?

No doubt Peter was greatly and eternally influenced by our Lord's teaching on this matter. And Christ talked frequently during his ministry about "saving our soul (or life)." The same Greek word *psuche* is translated "soul" or "life." And Christ talked about this very issue in Matthew 10:39; 16:24-27; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:24-26 and John 12:25. Perhaps the best of these passages for us to look at would be Mark 8:34-38 since Mark was most greatly influenced by Peter. Mark's account reads, "Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever wishes to save his life (*psuche*) shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life (*psuche*) for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul (*psuche*)? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His father with the holy angels."

One thing that should immediately become evident is that these are not verses on how to get into heaven. If this were so, then the conditions for becoming a believer would be self denial, cross bearing, following Christ, and losing one's life for the gospel. And if this were so, it would be in direct contradiction to all the rest of Scripture which clearly asserts that salvation (from the penalty of sin) is a free gift (Eph 2:8,9) which comes by faith alone (Rom 5:1) apart from our own good works (Titus 3:5). These verses are talking about discipleship, (Lk 14:26-35). It is one thing to **come to** Christ by faith in His finished work for the forgiveness of our sins. It is quite another thing to **come after** Christ by following Him down the rugged and perilous road of discipleship. To follow Christ is a costly decision and therefore should be considered very carefully before beginning (Lk 14:28-31).

Since Christ is not referring to getting into heaven in these verses in Mark, what then is it that our lives or souls will be "saved" from? What exactly does Christ mean by, "For whosoever will save his life will lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."?

The answer is given to us by the beginning of the very next verse: "For what shall it profit a man . . .?" Christ is talking about being saved from a profitless life, or in other words, a life that is of no eternal value. The man who uses his life to pursue the pleasures and possessions of this world will take hold of nothing that will last for eternity. Even if he gains "the whole world" he will not have one ounce of eternal gain among all his earthly treasures. The accomplishments and pursuits of his entire life will be reduced to ashes at the Judgment Seat of Christ, though "he himself will be saved, yet as through fire" (1 Cor 3:12-15), and so Christ is telling us in these verses how to save ourselves from this eternally poor investment of our lives. If we will use our lives for His "sake and the sake of the gospel," then we will ensure that our lives count for eternity and are eternally profitable. This is the way Christ appears to be using the term "save" in this account and the other gospel accounts I have listed.

It would not be surprising then to find one of Christ's closest disciples and friends to be using this term in the same way. And so I would like to suggest that this is very much what Peter had in mind here (1:9). Notice that the prologue (1:3-12) centers very heavily on future glory and rewards which will be the result of a life that counts for eternity. And so Peter is telling us that suffering (6-8) is one of the primary means God uses to mold us into the image of His Son. And the result of this Christ-like character is the "salvation of our souls"--a life that truly counts for all eternity.

There are other things besides suffering, however, which are necessary for us to become like Christ and thus "receive the salvation of our souls." And so Peter devotes this great epistle to describing them. They basically fall into three categories: Personal sanctification; personal submission; and personal suffering.

Here then, is the purpose for this letter . . . to show us the kind of life that counts for eternity. In each of the sections Jesus Christ Himself is held up as the impeccable illustration of one who made His life count for the greatest eternal value. And so, as we follow in His footsteps, we too will ensure that ours is a "life that lasts."

Principles from 1 Peter 1:1-12

There is an old legend which says that the elephant before drinking from a pool of water, will first trouble the water with his feet. The reason he does this, we are told, is that the elephant does not want to see his reflection while drinking.

I believe Christians are not unlike the elephant in this respect. For many of us walk through this life without ever really getting a clear picture of ourselves, unaware of who we are in true reality. For this reason Peter begins his first epistle by calming the troubled waters of our self image and by giving us a crystal clear reflection of who we are from God's vantage point.

1:1

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect sojourners of the dispersion . . ."

After making reference to his apostleship, Peter addresses his readers by the terms "elect sojourners of the dispersion . . ." Each of these terms is very significant in **gaining** a clear picture of who we are as revealed from the pages of scripture.

"Elect" (*eklektois*) Those who are "called out" by God. God, in His sovereign will and without violating His perfect justness and fairness; calls out all Christians to salvation (1 Thess 1:4, Eph 1:4, Rom 9:11, 2 Thess 2:13-14, John 15:16). For some reason totally beyond our comprehension, God "has chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame, in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory Or his grace, through which he has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:4-6). As the Spirit of God opens our eyes and minds to the reality of these truths, our hearts should sing out with the hymn writer, "love so amazing, so divine; demands my life, my heart, my all."

"Sojourners" (*parapedemois*) means "to stay in a place as a stranger" (Kittel) (Heb 11:13; Gen. 23:4; 1 Pet. 2:11).

In Philippians 3:20 we read these words: "For our citizenship is in heaven . . ." We, by virtue of the new birth, have become citizens of the kingdom of light though we are stationed in the kingdom of darkness for a short time. We are living in enemy territory and for this reason should never really get comfortable with this world and its system. The hymn writer expressed it well, "This world is not my home, I'm just passing through, my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue, the angels beckon me to heavens open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore."

"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His own, that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."
1 Pet 2:9.

"Dispersion" (*diaspora*) to be scattered throughout this darkened world in order that we can light up our particular corner. "You are the light of the world (Matt 5:14). I saw a poster recently which speaks to this principle. It was a picture of a blossoming flower and underneath were the words, "Bloom where you're planted." God scatters Christians throughout this world that we can "bloom where we are planted" and "bear much fruit" (John 15:8).

1:2

Note the reference to the work of the Trinity in this verse. God the Father foreknows; the Holy Spirit sanctifies; Jesus Christ shed His blood to make atonement for our sins.

1:3

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy has regenerated us (caused us to be born again) to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (vs. 3).

During the Napoleonic Wars there came a strategic battle fought out upon the English Channel. The citizens of England lined the cliffs of Dover as they tried to look out upon the waters to determine which side was winning. Several hours into the battle, the English semaphores began flashing as the message was relayed across the waters, "Wellington defeated." Suddenly a deep fog rolled up and cut off the vision of the English citizens. A fog likewise rose in their hearts and they went back to their homes and shops and began preparing for what they considered to be sure defeat. A few hours later, however, the fog lifted and the English citizens were able to see the message clearly, "Wellington defeated the enemy." Their spirits were instantly rejuvenated as they began to greatly rejoice.

There is a tremendous spiritual principle to be gleaned through this historical incident. It is the principle of perspective which reveals to us that where we focus our eyes will greatly determine how we live our lives. This is why in the Sermon on the Mount Christ said,

The light of the body is the eye: if, therefore, your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light. But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. Matt 6:22-23a

What I understand Christ to be saying here is that our life inevitably reflects that which our eye is fastened upon. This world with its trials and tribulations has a way of rolling in and fogging our perspective of life. And so in verse 35, Peter lifts the fog of this present, passing world by giving us a clear picture of the ever-brightening lights of the world to come.

In verse 3 he first brings to our remembrance the great hope which we have because we have been born again. Because of this we can know that we will spend all eternity with our Lord. "These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13 also 1 Pet 1:23). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith; proof positive of the person we trust in (1 Cor 15:14, 17).

1:4-5

"to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are being kept (guarded) by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Peter now pulls back the curtains to give us a full view of what awaits us when this temporal world is terminated: An "inheritance" which will never decrease in perfection, purity, or permanency. There is no treasure upon this earth which is totally perfect, pure, or permanent; all will be destroyed sooner or later (2 Pet 3:10). Thus Christ exhorts us to "lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust do corrupt and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal" (Matt 6:19-20).

The concept of inheritance in the New Testament is very often predicated upon personal sacrifice and faithfulness. "That you be not slothful. but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Heb 6:12). "He that overcomes shall inherit all things . . ." (Rev 21:6,7). Also compare Matt 5:5; 19:29; Col 3:24; Heb 12:17; 1 Pet 3:9).

While being born again gives us entrance into heaven (Rev 21:6), the life of self-denial and sacrifice secures in totality our eternal inheritance inside of heaven (Rev 21:7). There is far, far more to the term "salvation" than simply getting into heaven. The "overcomer" is promised that he will be rewarded in great abundance for his life of sacrifice (Matt 5:10-12; Luke 18:28, 30; John 12:25; Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 6:10-12, 10:34-36, 11:6, 26, 35; Jam 1:12; 5:10-11; 2 John 8; Rev 2:7,10,11,17,25,28; 3:5,11,12,21). What we do with this life will have eternal repercussions in the world to come; and it is only in losing one's life here and now that one can be assured of truly preserving it for eternity.

This inheritance is reserved [kept] (*tereo*) in heaven and ready to be revealed at Christ's coming. "And, behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Rev 22:12). This inheritance belongs to those who, through faith, have appropriated the power of God in their lives and are thereby being guarded (*phroureo*) from falling short of the full-orbed experience of salvation i.e. "the salvation of your souls" vs. 9.

1:6-9

The story is told of a man who was visiting a gold factory and became very interested in watching the goldsmith purify the gold by heating it in a large vat. Finally he asked the goldsmith how he knew when the gold had been heated enough so that all the impurities were gone. The goldsmith responded, "When I can see my face clearly reflected in the gold."

This is the principle we see in vs. 6-9. God watches over us very carefully, like a divine goldsmith; allowing the fires of suffering to refine us until He can see the character of Jesus Christ more and more clearly reflected in our lives. ". . . when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

Verse 6: "In this you greatly rejoice (*agalliaithe*), literally "jump for joy." This is probably referring to verses 3-5. The key to persevering in the present is learning to intently focus on the future. "Though now for a short time, if need be, you are in heaviness [sorrow or grief (*lupethentes*)] through manifold trials . . ." The crown is always preceded by the cross.

There is an Arab proverb which reads, "All sunshine makes a desert." God knows that it takes the rains of suffering for us to bring forth the fruit of righteousness. However when one superimposes the length of future reward over the length of present trial, the inevitable conclusion is that our affliction is "but for a moment" (2 Cor 4:17).

Verse 7 begins with a *hina* purpose clause which is of great significance. God doesn't allow suffering to come to us without being keenly aware of it and having a definite purpose for it. The imagery of verse 7 correlates with 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. The word for trial (*dokimazo*) speaks of the trying of metals for their purity and value. Peter is saying that we can jump for joy when suffering (cf. Jam 1:2) because the fires of suffering purify our faith so that it can be found unto "praise and honor and glory" at the judgment seat of Christ. Trials endured in a godly man-

ner are the deposits we pay for an undiminishing future glory which is "much more precious than gold which perishes."

Verse 8: There is a present benefit to suffering as well as a future. We see in verse 8 that these Christians had a vital and dynamic love affair with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are promised increase of the intimacy of Christ when suffering increases (2 Cor 1:5). Christians who have been imprisoned and tortured for Christ will bear witness to the fact that they experienced new levels of the intimacy of Christ never experienced before.

Verse 9: This verse is, in my opinion, the key verse of the entire book. The term "salvation of your soul" is a common and crucial theme in the New Testament, especially in our Lord's teaching and preaching (Matt 10:39; 16:24-27; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:24-26; 17:33; John 12:25; Heb 10:39; Jam 1:21). Note: The word "life" and "soul" are the same Greek word (*psuche*).

"Salvation of the soul" encompasses far more than simply escaping eternal damnation. It also includes:

1. Salvation from the present Power of sin (Jam 1:21)
2. Salvation from the presence of sin which takes place when we receive our glorified bodies (1 John 3:1-3)
3. Future glory which is predicated upon faith which presently triumphs over trials (Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12; Jam 1:12; Mark 8:35)

This last aspect of salvation is especially important for our study of 1 Peter, for suffering plays an integral part in the "salvation of our souls."

Two things are very significant about the word "receiving" (*komizomai*).

1. It is in the present tense which signifies that the salvation spoken of in 1 Peter 1 is definitely more than simply the salvation from the penalty of sin, i.e., escape from damnation. That salvation is a one time experience (2 Tim 1:9).
2. This particular word carries a strong connotation of receiving as a result of merit. *Komizomai* often in all Greek and always in the New Testament means not simply to receive but to receive back, to get what has belonged to one's self but has been lost, or else promised but kept back, or to get what has come to be one's own by earning" (Hort), "recovering a debt, getting it paid" (Moulton & Milligan) (Matt 25:27; 2 Cor 5:10; Eph 6:18; Col 3:25; 1 Pet. 5:4).

Thus we can see that the term "salvation" used within 1 Peter 1 encompasses a far greater spectrum than simply getting to heaven. "Whereas salvation from judgment is contrary to what is our due, salvation of the "*psuche*" (soul or life) is received as a thing due by virtue of a faith triumphant in sufferings. (Hodges)

1:10-12

As though verses 3-9 were not enough to motivate us to "live godly in Christ Jesus," Peter gives us some more food for thought as to why we should rejoice greatly in our salvation. Because of our place on God's timetable, we have a more clear and concise view of salvation than two other spiritually elite groups. The prophets and angels.

Also, Christ is held up to us in verse 11 as the perfect example of why suffering comes. "The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." There is no crown before the cross, no resurrection before crucifixion, and no glory before shame.

"Some men seem destined for power
Some men seem born to great fame
But the Son of God was destined
To die on a cross of shame
He left all the splendor of glory
Yet he knew on a cross he would die
For compelled by a love transcending
He was born to be crucified"
-- Bill Gaither

"To this you were called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow in His steps" (1 Pet 2:21).

Principles from 1 Peter 1:13-25

An artist several years ago painted a very interesting and instructive picture. It portrayed a night scene in which a solitary man is rowing a little skiff across a lake; the wind is high and stormy, the billows, white and crested, rage around the frail bark; and not a star, save one shines through the dark and angry sky above. But upon that lone star the voyager fixes his eye, and keeps rowing away--on, on, on through the midnight storm. Written beneath the picture were the words, "If I lose that, I'm lost!"

This picture well illustrates the plight of the Christians whom Peter was addressing in his first epistle. They were crossing the difficult and dangerous waters of the reign of that mad emperor, Nero. The waves of undeserved suffering were beating furiously against them and gusts of persecution were howling throughout the Empire. Yet Peter knew that if he could redirect their focus from off of their present trials and tribulations onto the ever brightening light of the resplendent glory of the age to come, they would be able to persevere in the present and "completely fulfill" their ministry. Thus verses 3-12 were written to help redirect the focus of these suffering saints and to give them a divine perspective on undeserved suffering.

1:13-14

Verse 13 is really a short synopsis of the principles he has been driving home in verse 3-12. "Therefore (1:3-12), girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, hope to the end for the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ . . ."

In the ancient world of that day the men's garments came down around their ankles. When they got ready to work, run, go to battle, etc., they would "gird up" their garment around their waist so they could move and work freely. Oftentimes, we as Christians allow our thoughts to flow down to this earth, rather than setting our mind on things above. Thus the exhortation to be prepared for God's work by "bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). Emerson once wrote, "Beware of what you set your mind on for that you will surely become." The writer of Proverbs points out this principle by writing "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it comes the issues of life" (Prov 4:23).

There is some dispute as to how the phrase "hope to the end" should be translated. The NIV says, "set your hope fully." The NASB says, "fix your hope completely." The major import of this phrase (*teleios elpisate*) is that our lives are to be controlled by our focus on the ever present reality of Christ's return and the glory to be revealed at that time. Note the use of the word "grace." "Grace" has three primary aspects to be aware of in the New Testament:

1. PAST GRACE--Unmerited favor in physical or eternal salvation (Eph. 2:8-9).
2. PRESENT GRACE--The desire and power to live the Christian life (1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 1:12).
3. FUTURE GRACE--Resplendent glory to be revealed at Christ's return (1Pet 1:13).

Our focus on the future should bring Christlike consequences to our lives in the present "as children of obedience." The great test of our love for God is our obedience to His commands. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments . . ." (1 John 5:3) "not fashioning (*suschematizomenoi* = to mold together, co-form) yourselves according to your former lusts in ignorance."

One man has well defined the Christian as "a walking civil war." This is exactly what we are told in Galatians 5:17 "For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; and these are opposed to one another: so that you cannot do the things you would."

What is the answer to this dilemma? I think an old Indian chief summed it up beautifully. This Indian had become a Christian and his life was of such impact and importance that a local newspaper sent a reporter to interview him. One of the questions the reporter asked him was, "How are you able to live such a pious life?" The old chief

thought for a moment and then replied, "Well, it's like this. Inside of me I have two dogs, one is black and the other is white. These two dogs hate each other and are constantly fighting and attacking one another." Very puzzled, the reporter asked, "Well, uh, which one wins?— The classic reply came back, "the dog that I feed the most."

I don't know if that story is actually true, but there is no doubt whatsoever to the veracity of the principle described. The nature we feed the most will be the nature which wins out in the spiritual struggle going on inside of us. "For to be fleshly minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom 8:6).

1:15-16

On the cross of Calvary God demonstrated the two great avenues of His character: Love and Holiness. Being a holy God, He had to punish sin. Being a God of great love and mercy, He took the punishment of sin upon himself by allowing his only Son to die in our place (Rom 5:8-9).

And these two great qualities of Love and Holiness should so be the two great distinguishing features of our lives. For this reason James penned the words;

"Pure and undefiled religion (i.e. true spirituality) before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction (love) and to keep oneself unspotted from the world (holiness). Jas. 1:27

The word translated "manner of life, behavior," is noteworthy. It is *anastrepho*, which means to "turn above, back, again, etc." Each of us are like a diamond in God's hand, and He wants to be able to turn any facet of our life to this darkened world so they can see Jesus Christ reflected in that particular area.

1:17-19

These verses are replete with reasons for living the Christian life.

1. Position in Christ: ". . . and you call upon Him as Father." Because of our position in Christ, we should live according to our family heritage, i.e., in holiness. "For you were once darkness, but now are you light in the Lord, walk as Children of light" (Eph 5:8). It has been well said that the goal of the Christian life is "to practice your position."

2. Judgment Seat of Christ: ". . . who judges every man according to his work . . ." We tend to back off of these sharp warning passages in scripture, yet we ought to take even "more earnest heed" to them.

We know that the day will come in which we must all give account of our lives since we became Christians (Rom 14:12; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:10). On that day no amount of remorse or regret will recover the time lost for eternity.

Jeremy Taylor once wrote, "God has given man but a short time here on earth, but upon this time, eternity depends."

The Russian scholar, Berdyaev wrote, "Life in time remains without meaning if it does not find its meaning in eternity."

Just as Eve forfeited the entire garden for a piece of fruit, we likewise will forfeit the eternal significance of our lives by reaching out for various frivolous fruits of this world. One can only lay up treasures on heaven or else on earth; there is no happy medium though many Christians would have us believe. And we need to seriously consider the awesome significance of the day of the Lord.

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light" (Amos 5:18).

No wonder Peter exhorts us to "pass the time of our sojourning in fear."

3. The Love of Christ: (vv 18-19) The word "redeemed" (*lutroo*) speaks of being released for a price (cf. also Titus 2:14). The price God paid to release us from enslavement to sin was no less than the life of His only Son. God save our hearts from becoming callused and insensitive to this tremendous truth.

The story is told by an aged missionary of an example of this truth. One day he and another man were driving along the mission compound and happened to notice a young native boy standing on a large field just off the road. Completely unknown to the boy was a lion right behind him, ready to spring upon him at any moment. Quickly and quietly, the missionary took his rifle and shot the lion through the head just before it tried to maul the young boy. A few days later the missionary was sitting on his porch when he saw a large procession of natives coming toward him. They were carrying different items and the young boy was leading the procession. The missionary went out to see what was going on and as he approached the procession, the young boy fell to the ground and knelt at the missionary's feet. The missionary was very puzzled and asked the meaning of the whole situation. The young boy looked up and replied, "Sir, it is the law of the jungle that whenever one man saves another man's life, then the man who was saved becomes the other man's slave for life. And I have come to you with all my possessions to give you. I will be your slave from now on and forever.

This is the law of not only the jungle but of the kingdom of heaven. ". . . and that He (Christ) died for all, that they who live should no more live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again (2 Cor 5:15; also Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:24; 4:1-2).

1:20-21

The wisdom and unsearchable understanding of the infinite God is manifested in these verses. Note the reason for Christ's invasion of this earth: "for your sakes." The hymn writer expressed it well, "He left his Father's throne above, so free so infinite his grace emptied himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race."

Note the correlation between "who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory" with "that your faith and hope be in God."

- Our faith is rooted in the fact that Christ not only died for us, but also rose from the dead (1 Cor 15:14, 17).
- Our hope is rooted in the fact of Christ's coming glory. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

1:22

The apostle has been dealing with one's relationship with God and now he switches over to one's relationship with the people. But note carefully that the New Testament writers deal with interpersonal relationships only after they have first dealt with one's personal relationship with God. Our relationship with people ought really to be the overflow or the spill over of our relationship with God, so that our "cup runneth over" into the lives of others. This is why Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 3:12 "And the Lord cause you to fill up and overflow in love

towards one another and all men. . . ." The word for "fervently" (*ektenos*) is a very interesting one. It is used of a horse at full gallop to describe the full stretch and extension of his legs. Thus we could paraphrase this verse to read, "have stretching out love for one another . . ." Hannah Hurnard put it this way:

"That love is far too weak and small which will love some but not love all
If love to one it will decline 'tis human love and not divine.
Love cannot be content to rest until the beloved is fully blest.
Love leaps to secure all who fall And finds its joy in giving all."

1:23-25

The contrast now is seen between that which is temporal and that which is eternal. Man and his glory is likened unto the grass and the flower which grows with the grass. The sun which God has created will wither the grass and cause the flower to fade away. Likewise, all of man's striving and success will one day wither in the light of what is of eternal importance. Who remembers the top 100 yard dash runner of even 20 years ago? Or the top Rhodes scholar? Or Miss America? Or Miss Universe? Or the NFL champions? "For all flesh is as grass and the glory of man as the flower of grass." Very few people remember these things, and just think of how few will remember in 100 years. Bob Lewis put it so well, "like a faded leaf down the sewer of history, nobody will remember."

But there are some things which will give eternal significance to our lives. One, mentioned in this passage is the word of God. The other is the souls of men. If we would have eternally significant and successful lives, then

we must pour our lives out to building the word of God in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Consider the crucial choice which the prophet Isaiah lays before us:

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall grow old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in the like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

Principles from 1 Peter 2:1-10

There is an ancient fable which is told concerning three men in their journey across a Mid-East desert. Late one evening as they were traveling across the desert sands, a stranger mysteriously appeared before them from out of nowhere. The stranger then informed them that soon they would be crossing a dry river bed and that they should pick up stones from the river bed and put them in their packs. He went on to inform them that they should look into their packs the next morning and the result would be that they would be both glad and sorry. Then suddenly he disappeared as quickly as he had come.

Just as was told them, the three travelers soon came upon the dry river bed and so decided to take the advice of this stranger. They spent an hour or so picking up rocks and placing them in their packs and then went to bed. The next morning they opened up their packs and discovered an amazing thing--all the stones had turned into precious jewels! They also discovered their stranger's prediction had come true--for they were very glad for the stones they had picked up, but sorry they hadn't picked up more!

I believe this fable well illustrates us and the amount of quality time we spend in the Word of God. For like our three friends, most of us will look back at the end of our lives and be glad for the time we did spend, but probably be sorry that we didn't spend more.

And so, as we begin Chapter 2, Peter points our perspective to the word of God, that we may see the impact and importance it holds for our lives.

2:1-3

We see three basic callings in these verses. The calling to (1) Remove the works of the flesh; (2) Receive the Word of God; (3) Remember the goodness of the Lord.

Remove the Works of the Flesh (2:1)

The word for "laying aside" (*apotitheemi*) speaks of putting off one's clothing. Malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, evil speaking, etc., are all garb of the old man who is now dead (Col 3:3). There was a time when these were the only garments we could wear. Even the good things we did were "filthy rags" (Isa 64:6). But because we have been born again, the Holy Spirit has given us a new wardrobe consisting of garments such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, etc. (Gal 5:22-23; 2 Tim 1:7).

For this reason, God calls out to us from the fourth chapter of Ephesians: "That you put off the former way of life of the old man which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts . . . and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:22-24).

Receive the Word of God (2:2)

What a beautiful picture is painted for us here! Note carefully that he is not calling them baby Christians; he is telling them to earnestly yearn (*epipotheo*) for God's Word as a newborn babe does for milk. This hunger of the heart should characterize all Christians from the newly born to the most mature. This word for "earnestly yearn" is also used in the LXX in Psalm 42:1 where the psalmist says that his soul pants after God "as the hart pants after water brooks." (Cf. also Psalm 119:174.) How much do we yearn for the rich fellowship of God?

The word used for "pure" (*adolos*) means without any deceit. There is only one source to which one can go to find truth which is absolutely untainted by deceit--God's holy word. Man's wisdom is a mixture of truth and deceit (intentional or unintentional) in varying degrees. The word of God alone stands the test of being pure, unadulterated truth (Psa 19:7-9). John Greenleaf Whittier put it this way:

We search the world for truth; we cull the good, the pure, the beautiful, from all old flower fields of the soul. And, weary reekers of the best, we come back laden from our quest, And find that all the sages said, is in the Book our mothers read.

We are told that through the "pure milk of the word" we grow in our Christian lives. James affirms this in a verse which perfectly parallels verses 1 and 2:

"Wherefore, having laid aside all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, in meekness receive the implanted word which is able to save your souls (Jas.1:21).

Again we see that key phrase "save your soul." We saw earlier from 1 Peter 1:9 that this phrase means far more than simply getting into heaven and being saved from eternal damnation. And just as we have seen that suffering plays an integral part in the full-orbed experience of salvation, we are now being told that the Word of God also plays a very vital part in this salvation. No wonder Peter tells us in his second epistle that when it comes to the Word of God in our lives, we do well to take heed to it "as unto a light shining in a dark place . . ." (2 Pet 1:19).

Remember the Goodness of the Lord (2:3)

There is debate as to whether the verse should begin "Since" or "If so be." In either case, this is a quote from Psalm 34:8: "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man who trusts in him."

The word for "gracious" (*chreestos*) is used in Matthew 11:30, "for my yoke is easy (*chreestos*) and my burden is light." David Livingston put it this way, "I had rather be in the heart of Africa in the will of God than on the throne of England out of the will of God."

Truly God's will is always that which is best, well pleasing, and perfect (Rom 12:2).

2:4-5

Peter now launches into an exposition on the living word (i.e. Christ) and how we relate to Him. In verse 4 he establishes the fact that Christ (the living stone) was highly esteemed in the sight of God but rejected in the eyes of man. The phraseology is very significant here. We are told that Christ was rejected under (*hupo*) men but chosen and precious alongside (*para*) of God. To be trampled upon by men is often the price to be paid in order to truly triumph in God's eyes (Phil 2:5-9; Heb 11:36-38).

Undoubtedly, the words of Christ in Matthew 16:13-19 play a very significant role in verses 4 through 9. It is clear from this passage in 1 Peter that Peter never thought himself to be the rock upon which Christ would build his church. Christ alone is the foundation and we are "being built up" together unto a holy place of inhabitation for God (Eph 2:20-22).

At the end of verse 5 we switch over from the analogy of us being a "spiritual house" to **that of being a "holy priesthood."** The priest offered up sacrifices to God, and we are to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, good works, etc. These sacrifices are acceptable because of Christ's presence in our lives (Heb 13:15-16; Rom 12:1).

2:6-8

We have quotes from Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22, and Isaiah 8:14 in these three verses. In verse 6 we are promised that those who believe on Christ shall never be put to shame. Verse 7 assures us that whether men honor Christ as Lord or not, Christ remains the head "Cornerstone." Verse 8 describes the dilemma of the disobedient. Note that disobedience is equated with unbelief. (Cf. also 2 Thess 1:8.) Because, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God" (Rom 1:21); the stone which should have been the most precious gem of their lives has now become "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." The only true freedom any man or woman has in this life is the freedom to choose who their master will be. And if a man chooses against Christ, the inevitable consequence is that he is then "appointed" to "stumble at the word." This is why a man's theology is not dictated by his intellect but by his willingness to obey. "If any man desires to do His (God 's) will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it by of God, or whether I speak of "myself " (John 7:17).

2:9-10

We enter into one of the great passages which describes who we are from God's point of view.

Just after the Civil War an extremely wealthy man up north died and left his huge estate to his closest relative. It so happened that all his really close relatives had already died and so the attorney began searching for the next closest relative. After much searching he finally discovered a far removed nephew who lived in Philadelphia. When he went to talk with this nephew he found the nephew on the streets of Philadelphia begging for his livelihood. At first the nephew would not believe this attorney when told of the great inheritance which was his. But finally he came to the point that he really believed the attorney and began his new life of wealth. You see, once he really understood who he was his whole life was completely transformed.

In our lives as Christians it is absolutely essential for us to see who we are because of the riches of Christ which have been shed upon us. After we see who we are, we can then live accordingly. The book of Ephesians is a perfect example of this. Paul spends chapters 1-3 describing who we are by virtue of our position in Christ. And once we see who we are from God's perspective, then, and only then, comes the call to practice. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation to which you were called" (Eph 4:1).

Here we see Peter doing the same thing. We are not children of disobedience, but on the contrary, we are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession . . ." What, then, should be one of our practices as a result of realizing our position? ". . . that you should show forth the excellencies of Him that has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." This is one of the key features of being effective in sharing Christ with unbelievers. As we show forth the excellencies of what Christ has done in our lives, these spiritual grains of salt will create a thirst for the living water Christ offers. David stands out as a great example of this principle. "I have not hidden your righteousness within my heart; I have declared your faithfulness and your salvation. I have not concealed your lovingkindness and your truth from the great congregation" (Psa 40:10).

This should be one great desire of our hearts as we remain continually aware of the fact that we "in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." As one missionary put it so well, "witnessing is simply one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

Principles from 1 Peter 2:11-25

One man has well said, "It is not enough for the gardener to love the flowers, he must also hate the weeds."

This principle holds true not only in the lives of gardeners but also in the lives of Christians. We must learn not only to love the fragrant flowers of righteousness, but we must also learn to hate the wretched weeds of sin. For this reason God cries out through Amos, "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate . . ." (Amos 5:15).

2:11-12

Peter also points out this principle in verse 12, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

In verse 4-10 he has been driving home their identity in Christ. He uses many metaphors: "living stones, a spiritual house, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession," etc. Now that he has established their position, he exhorts their practice: Live lives which portray their position.

The word he uses for "abstain" (*apecho*) literally means "to hold away." A common practice of running backs in football is to stiff arm the oncoming tacklers to avoid being brought down. A fitting paraphrase of this might be "stiff arm fleshly lusts which will try to stop your spiritual growth." These fleshly foes are described in Galatians 5:19-21, Colossians 3:5-9, and other passages.

It is quite a sobering thought to realize that there is a satanic attack for control of our soul (mind, emotions, will). The Christian can never lose his place in heaven (1 John 5:11), but he most certainly can lose the struggle for spiritual maturity here on earth. In fact, other than Christ; the most morally perfect man (Adam), the physically strongest man (Sampson), and the wisest man (Solomon) all lost this battle. "Wherefore let him that thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall" (1 Cor 12:12). Truly, each Christian is a walking Civil War.

The key to victory? Cut off enemy supply lines and constantly replenish our own spiritual sustenance (Rom 8:6)

While we are to "hold away" fleshly lusts, we are likewise exhorted to "hold to" (*echo*) a good life. Our lives are the only Bible many people will ever look at closely. One man expressed it thus:

You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day;
by the things that you do and the words that you say.
Men read what you write, distorted or true,
what is the gospel according to you?"

Note that we are not promised to be attractive to everyone even if we do live the kind of life God desires. In fact, just the opposite can many times be our reward for righteousness. "Yes, and all those desiring to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (1 Tim 3:12).

Our response to being badly treated and talked about should be supernatural. We should "see that no one repays evil for evil; but ever follow after that which is good, both among yourselves and toward all" (1 Thess 5:15). One reason for this is that somehow these men who have persecuted us will glorify God in the day of visitation. The word for visitation (*episkopes*) can refer to a visit to show either mercy or judgment. I think Peter is primarily referring to a principle he will use in 3:1-2. He says there that the way a Christian wife should try and win her non-Christian husband to the Lord is through her attractive life style. The same word for "behold" used here in verse 12 is also used in verse 2. In essence we are being told that the wife will be used by God to bring him to Christ, not through her words, but through her good works. This principle also is alluded to here in verse 12.

The skeptic, sarcastic unbeliever is not really interested in talking about Christianity except, perhaps, to argue. Yet more than one such unbeliever has been won to-Christ through the godly lifestyle of a faithful believer.

I think particularly of one man who stood next to his family preacher as his mother was laid in her grave. As he watched the casket being lowered he commented to the preacher, "You know, as I heard your sermons I could find an explanation for all the things you said. I could refute all your evidences for the Christian faith. But the reason I am a Christian today is that I couldn't find a way to explain that godly woman's life."

The reason they will glorify God on the day of visitation is that God used the good works of other believers as the primary drawing factor in bringing them to Christ. Words were helpful but works were the key (Ezek 36:23b).

2:13-25

We now begin a section on submission which runs to 3:7. We see three major headings of submission in this chapter:

- The Call to Submission--verses 13-18
- The Cost of Submission--verses 19-20, and
- Christ's Example of Submission--verses 21-25

1. The Call to Submission (2:13-18)

The word for submit (*hupotasso*) is a combination of two words which mean to "place or arrange under." This is very significant in light of the fall of man and our fallen nature. When Satan rebelled against God and began his own kingdom, the Magna Charta upon which he based his kingdom was the phrase, "I will be like the most High." (Isa 14:12-14). When Adam and Eve were in the Garden, Satan used this same basic phrase in enlisting them to join his Kingdom. "For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as Gods . . ." (Gen 3:5) And every man and woman born since Adam and Eve has inherited this same self-exalting nature (Rom 3:10-18).

For this reason submission is not something which comes naturally to us, but usually it requires a conscious effort to "place or arrange" ourselves "under." We are given a list of what we should place ourselves under: (1) Governmental laws; (2) kings, (3) governors; (4) masters. These are a few of the authorities over us which God tells us to obey (Rom. 13:1-7).

We see some important principles Of submission in these verses.

- God uses non-Christian authorities to accomplish His will (vs 14; also Prov 1:1; Rom 13:1)
- Our lives should silence those speaking badly of us (vs 15)
- We serve others because of our enslavement to God (vs 16) Freedom is not the right to do what we want but the ability to do what we ought (Phil 2:3,4).
- Submission focuses not on personality but position (vs 18).

We need to see authority over us not acting on their own, but as instruments in the hand of God. If we look at people as acting on their own we will eventually become bitter, but if we can see them as acting as God allows, we will become holy. A beautiful example of this is found in the life of Joseph. His brothers consistently mistreated him and it would have been very easy for him to become bitter at them. Yet he had a divine perspective on the whole situation and it helped him become a holy man of God. "As for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good . . ." (Gen 50:20).

2. The Cost of Submission (2:13-18)

A.W. Tozer once remarked, "To be right with God has often meant to be in trouble with men." Tradition records that at the Nicene Council, not more than a dozen of the 318 delegates had not lost an eye or a hand or did not limp upon a leg shrunk in its sinews by the burning iron of torture.

We see in these verses the cost of submission to God. The word translated "acceptable" (*charis*) can be translated "thanks worthy, favorable, grace, etc." The basic import of the passage is that disciplinary suffering and undeserved suffering are two distinctly different kinds of suffering. Disciplinary suffering comes as the result of sin in our lives. This is not to say that God is looking over us to punish us each time we commit a sin. But "whom the Lord loves he corrects, even as a father does the son in whom he delights" (Prov 3:11,12).

Undeserved suffering on the other hand is not the result of sin but of righteousness. God expects us to patiently endure disciplinary suffering, but we can please God greatly by enduring undeserved suffering in a God honoring fashion. Especially significant is the last phrase of verse 20, ". . . but if doing good and suffering you endure it, this is thankworthy to God."

The word for "endure" (*hupomeno*) comes from two words which mean "to repair under." It is the picture of a plant which was crushed down and trampled upon, yet kept rising back up again. This critical character quality is one of the primary factors which will determine whether or not we finish God's course for our lives (Heb 12:1-2). One man put it like this:

Who walks with God must take His way
Across far distances and gray
To goals that others do not see,
where others do not care to be
Who walks with God must have no fear
When danger and defeat appear
Nor stop when every hope seems gone
For God, our God, moves on."

3. Christ's Example of Submission (2:21-25)

Finally we see Christ's example of submission and how this example should influence our lives.

First we see that undeserved suffering is not a possibility for our lives but it is a promise. We are called not only to receive eternal glory (1Cor 3:4), but also to patiently endure temporal afflictions (cf. Phil 1:29, 1 Thess 3:3,4). There is an Arab proverb which says, "All sunshine makes a desert." Just as the rain is necessary for plants to grow, unjust suffering is just as necessary for us to grow in godliness.

One of the mayor reasons we know this is because of the example Christ set for us. ". . . because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example . . ." Undeserved suffering was a critical component in God's plan for

Christ's life. ". . . in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author (pioneer) of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb 2:10; 5:8).

The word *hpogrammos*, for example, is a word used for the wax tablet which young Greek boys learned to write on. At the top of the tablet was the Greek alphabet and they learned to write by copying these letters. And so if we truly want to become like Christ; we must be willing to copy His lifestyle of suffering as well as sympathy, persecution as well as peacemaking, affliction as well as affection. This is why Paul's primary goal in life was not just "to know Him and the power of His resurrection"; but also "the fellowship (*koinonia*, partnership) of His sufferings" (Phil 3:10).

The word for follow (*epakoloutheo*) comes from two words, which mean to "follow or accompany upon." We are called to follow upon the same path and footprints of our master (John 20:21).

No trifling in this life of mine;
Not this the path the blessed Master trod;
But every hour and power employed
Always and all for God.

In Hebrews 2:10 Christ is referred to as the "author" or "pioneer" of our salvation. Christ blazed the trail ahead of us and is now in the process of "bringing many sons to glory" by the same path. And this path involves going through the valleys of undeserved suffering just as Christ did almost 2,000 years ago.

Note Christ response to His affliction. He could easily have retaliated and overthrown His persecutors. But He "committed Himself under the mighty hand of God, knowing He would be exalted in due time." He could have avoided the cross and all the shame and agony it involved; "but for the joy set before Him, He patiently endured to the end" (Heb 12:2). We, too, are called down this rugged road to glory.

In verses 24 and 25 we see a basic principle for undeserved suffering. Christ was hurt in order that we might be healed. Suffering in our lives always has purpose behind it *and* often its purpose is that God wants others around us to see a supernatural response to undeserved affliction. Augustine once said, "When God allows us to suffer it is either to improve our imperfections or to prove our perfections." As we respond in a godly manner to undeserved suffering, that response becomes a blinking light which sets us apart in this darkened world. And we too can be hurt in order that others might be healed.

Principles from 1 Peter 3:1-12

The story is told of a hen and a hog who were walking down the street one Sunday morning. As they were walking they passed by a church and saw a sign which read, "Today's Sermon - Helping the Poor." The hen remarked to the hog, "I sure wish there was something we could do to help the poor and hungry." The hog agreed but couldn't really think of anything seeing as they had no money. Suddenly the hen blurted out, "I've got it! We can fix them a ham and eggs breakfast." The hog wasn't very impressed by that idea and let the hen quickly know by replying, "That's easy for you to say. For you that breakfast would be just a contribution, but for me it's total commitment!"

I think this story well illustrates the plight of Christians today. We're willing to do God's will when it's convenient, but we back off when it's costly. We say "yes" when presented with that flavor of God's will we enjoy; but we are suddenly silent when asked to "taste some of the bitter herbs involved in discipleship. And Job asked a critical question many years ago which each of us must answer for ourselves. "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity"? (Job 2:10).

We see in chapter three the continuation of this same theme from chapter two. We have seen very clearly that submission is a very prominent principle in God's will for our lives (2:13-18). It is easy, however, to submit when we're asked to do the convenient. But what about when we are asked to do the costly? Peter gives us no room for backing out as he brings in 2:18-25. We are given two primary reasons for why we should do God's will when it will cost us.

(1) Character Exemplified -- When we are willing to suffer because of a "conscience toward God," this exemplifies character which is truly well pleasing in God's sight (18-20). The thrust of our concern should be much

more focused on our inward character than our outward circumstances. Our major battle in life does not involve changing outside conditions but refining inward character (2 Pet 1:5-8).

(2) Christ's Example -- Christ did the will of His Father at all costs. His life was not simply one of sporadic contributions but of total commitment. And Christ's life is handed down to us as a *hupogrammos*, an example to be copied (21-25).

And now 3:1 begins with the word "likewise." This word continues our theme of doing God's will even when it costs into the marital relationship. In verses 1-6 we see the wife's responsibility and in verse 7 we see the husband's responsibility.

The Wife's Responsibility (2:1-6)

1. Be submissive to own husband: God's design for marriage is that the man be the head of the house (Gen 3:16; Eph 5:22-24). A marriage which does not follow that pattern is destined for trouble (Psa 127:1). This is why it is so important for the woman to very seriously "count the cost" before she gets married. Lincoln once said, "love is blind, but marriage is a real eye opener!" Far, far better for the woman to clearly see the cost of submission prior to marriage than to be surprised in the midst of it. Some key questions for any woman before getting married are, "Can I submit to him when it is costly as well as convenient? Am I open to his rule as well as his romance? Do I see him as God's ordained authority over me or as acting on his own?" Until you can answer yes to these, you are not ready for marriage.

We can see that the Christian wife should be submissive to her Christian husband. But what happens in the case of a Christian woman who is married to a non-Christian husband. Does she still have to submit to his authority? The answer is very clearly "yes." The only exceptions would be in instances where she is being commanded to do something which is in direct opposition to the word of God. And then, like Daniel, she should first try to find a creative alternative before disobeying.

2. Win husband by maximizing works and minimizing words. Don't try to drive your husband to the Lord, draw him. The lips are to be still while the life shouts it from the housetops.

Concentrate on beautifying the inner woman. Here are some of the cosmetics which make any woman truly beautiful (verses 2-4).

- **Purity** (*hagnos*) -- "chaste conduct." Refers to inner character which is unblemished by the impure actions and attitudes of Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-9; 2 Corinthians 7:1; and Titus 2:5.
- **Fear** (*phobos*) -- "reverential respect." Refers to fearing God or reverencing husbands. Probably carries both meanings. Because she is a woman who fears God she also reverences her husband. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised" (Prov 31:30).
- **Meekness** (*praus*) -- not to be confused with weakness. This woman does not cling to her rights because she knows God will meet all her needs. Sarah is a beautiful example of this. Twice she subjected herself to her husband's cowardly wishes and each time God showed himself strong on her behalf (Gen 12:11-20; 20:1-18).
- **Quietness** (*hesuchios*) -- probably not much difference between meekness. Solomon had much to say from personal experience about the necessity for a woman's quiet spirit. Note how opposite this is to the spirit of today!
- **Obedient to husband** -- note her godly attitude as well as actions. ". . . Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord . . ." (vs 6). The reason Sarah was able to do that was she had learned to distinguish personality from position. Submission comes out of response to another's position and not personality.

These are some of the qualities which are precious in the sight of God. And these are far more important to a man than makeup, jewelry, fine clothing, etc. The man who is more interested in the external than the internal is not worth attracting anyway.

Verse three has been used by various groups to say that women should not wear makeup, jewelry, braided hair, etc. This is a misinterpretation of that verse; for if their interpretation were true, then clothing would also be prohibited!

The real spirit of the passage is that real beauty is not the result of cosmetics but of character, not golden jewelry but godly genuineness, not the outward man who is perishing but the inward man who is being renewed day by day. If you look at a picture and your eyes are drawn to the frame surrounding the picture the artist made a big mistake. The frame of a picture is only there to accent the painting, not take attention away from it. Our body is simply the frame which encloses our soul and spirit, and it is upon our soul and spirit God is trying to portray the image of Christ. Our body and clothing should help in this purpose and not hinder. We are called to become "mighty in spirit" (Luke 1:80) and not necessarily mighty in looks.

In view of the E.R.A., and women's liberation movement, etc., a truly godly woman will stand out today as a very different person. And there will be constant pressure upon that woman to re-evaluate her beliefs and conform to this world system. Alas, I am afraid that the spirit of the age has already crept into the church and taken many Christian women captive in its tentacles. May the spirit of 1 Peter 3:1-6 also take many godly women captive and use them to show this world true beauty.

The Husband's Responsibility (3:7)

There is an Italian proverb which reads, "When a wife sins the husband is never innocent." I don't believe that is always true but there is an important truth implanted within that proverb. The wife very much reflects to the world whether her husband is a success or failure as a marriage partner. When the wife is unhappy outside of her house, chances are it is because she is unhappy inside of her house. When she is a joyous, loving woman it is probably due largely to the way her husband has been caring for her needs. One man has said that "the countenance of a man's wife is the barometer of his success as a husband." Of course there will be exceptions (Hosea for example). But one of the main reasons that the woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 became such a godly example, I believe, is verses 28-29, "Her Children rise up and bless her; Her husband also and praises her, saying: 'Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.'" His consistent concern for her needs resulted in helping produce a woman whose "price is far above rubies."

In verse 7 Peter gives husbands some divine "secrets to success" in the art of being a godly husband.

1. Love your wife whether it is costly or convenient. The verse begins "likewise, you husbands . . ." Christ loved us at the cost of His very life (1 Pet 2:21-25), and likewise "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it" (Eph 5:25) True love truly costs.

2. Make spending time with her a top priority. "Dwelling together with them . . ." The word used here is *sunoked* meaning "to dwell together." A husband and wife are no longer two independent people, but are now "one flesh" (Gen 3:16). If a husband and wife are spending too much time away from each other, it won't be long before the relationship begins to tear apart.

3. Put a premium on attaining wisdom. It is difficult to say for sure what the phrase "according to knowledge" (*kata gnosis*) is referring to. I believe that it is referring primarily to understanding the ways of God and the ways of your wife. It is looking at life from God's point of view. What tremendous security it gives the Christian wife when she knows her husband is trying to guide the house by the edicts of God's Word! Truly this is the house which will stand long after the house built on the shallow sands of man's wisdom has collapsed. It is crucial also to understand the wife's strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities (cf. Prov 3:13-26).

4. Let her know her great value in your life. ". . . giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel . . ." A man lives for what he truly values. God should have no rivals for first place in our hearts. The wife should have no rivals for second place. We give time, attention, and effort to that which we truly value. These are the things which the wife truly needs and desires to fulfill her need for security. Also, the wife is spoken of as "the weaker vessel." This means that she was not designed to handle certain pressures which will cause her to crack. The husband needs to be aware of this and be sure he is handling those pressures.

We are given two reasons for following these principles:

- **We are co-heirs of the grace of life.** The married couple either enjoys -life together or endures life together. Marriage is usually heaven or hell without too much middle ground. If a couple would enjoy life instead of simply endure it, then the husband needs to take very seriously his biblical role and responsibilities.
- **So that our prayers are not hindered.** Breakdown in the relationship with your wife will result in breakdown of one's relationship with God.

Guidelines for Godliness and Growth (3:8-12)

Now in verses 8-12 we see guidelines for godliness and growth. There are callings to be:

- Likeminded (Phil 1:27)
- Sympathetic (Heb 13:3). Literally "to suffer with."
- Having Brotherly Love (1 Pet. 1:22)
- Compassion (*eusplanchna*)--"to have insides turned with compassion" (Matt 9:36)
- Friendly
- Forgiving (Col 3:12-13)

Note our response to being railed upon: to bless and do good (1 Cor 4:11-13). The reasons are worth noting:

1. ". . . for you were called to this. . ." The ability to love the unlovely is one of the great characteristics of our heavenly Father. This characteristic should also mark His children on earth (Matt 5:43-48).
2. ". . . that you should inherit a blessing." Two great principles were involved in this, I believe:

First, as we endure undeserved suffering a godly manner (i.e., "not returning evil for evil or railing for railing") we lay up further eternal inheritance which cannot diminish in value or time (Jam 1:12; Heb 10:34-36; Col 3:23-24; see notes on 1 Pet 1:5). When we look back at the end of our lives from the vantage point of what was of true value; we will see that the undeserved suffering we endured here is not even worth comparing to the glory to be revealed (Rom 8:17-18).

To that old rugged cross I will ever be true,
 Its shame and reproach gladly bear,
 Then He'll call me someday to my home far away,
 and His glories forever I'll share.
 So I'll cling to the old rugged cross
 Till at last my trophies lay down
 Yes, I'll cling to the old rugged cross
 And exchange it one day for a crown.

Earthly suffering is meant to result in eternal satisfaction.

Secondly, I believe there is an aspect of inheriting a present blessing by enduring afflictions. God will provide supernatural peace, joy, love, etc., which outside conditions do not provide (1 Cor 1:4-5).

He gives more grace when the burdens grow greater
 He sends more strength when the labors increase
 To added affliction He addeth His mercy
 To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.

". . . as your days, so shall be your strength" (Deut 33:25).

Verses 10-12 are another quote from Psalm 34. We had an earlier quote from Psalm 34 in 2:3. It seems possible that Psalm 34 was in the backdrop of Peter's mind as he wrote this book. Psalm 34 was written by David after he had feigned to be a mad man in the presence of Achish (1 Sam 21:10-15). The reason he fled into the camp of the Philistines was because of being unjustly persecuted by Saul. What a picture this provides of

the plight of the people which Peter was writing to. The emperor Nero was persecuting them unjustly and they were being tempted to flee for refuge to the camp of this world system. In order for them to do this it would require that they change their normal behavior as Christians. This is why Peter spends so much time exhorting them to not compromise, but to "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." And so he says that if we want a truly abundant life ("For he that will love life and see good days") we need to purify our lips, life, and personal relationships. "Let him refrain his tongue from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it." The main reason for this kind of life is found in verse 12. "It is pleasing to God and it is this kind of life God's eyes are searching for (1 Cor 16:9).

Principles from 1 Peter 3:13-22

3:13-14

James Barrie once wrote, "Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves." Another man pictured this principle by writing, "That heart beats happiest which beats for others."

As one surveys the Scriptures it is not long before he discovers a basic principle for happiness: Living to benefit others is essential for benefiting self. The writer of Proverbs put it this way, "The liberal soul shall be made fat and he that waters shall be watered himself" (Prov 11:25).

In verses 10-12 of chapter 3, Peter has been driving home this vital truth by using a quote from Psalm 34. He continues building upon it in verse 13, ". . . and who is he that shall harm you if you be followers of that which is good?" Do you want to live peaceably among men in this world? Then be followers (lit. imitators) of that which is good in the sight of God. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7).

This however, immediately raises at least one important question. What about the promise of 2 Timothy 3:12 that all who "live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"? Peter hastens to expound in verse 14, "but and if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are you . . ." This optative phrase indicates that suffering is not the day in and day out experience of one who is living godly in Christ Jesus. However, it is still a very real possibility and something to be aware of. Yet he points out to us a tremendous truth concerning suffering "for righteousness sake." We can actually be happy in the midst of this undeserved suffering!

The word he uses for happy (*mabarios*) is the one Christ used for "blessed" in the beatitudes (Matt 5:3-10). One of the major thrusts of the beatitudes was that of finding true happiness in life. And Christ made it crystal clear that happiness springs not from outside conditions but from inward character. Like the air conditioned car in the middle of a blistering summer, we can go through the heat of outside persecution and yet remain content inside (1 Cor 1:5).

This is one good reason we need not fear those who would trouble us. ". . . fear not the reproach of man neither be afraid of their revilings . . . for even I, am he who comforts you . . ." (Isa 51:7,12).

3:15

Verse 15 gives us another key to overcoming the fear of man. "But sanctify (set apart) the Lord God in your hearts." This is a quote from Isaiah 8:12-13. The Israelites are being tempted to join hands with the Assyrians in order to avoid attack. Isaiah is warning them to trust in God alone and to seek the living God for safety, not the godless Assyrians. The root of the whole problem was that they were afraid of the wrong person. "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread" (Isa 8:13). One man has said that "the fear of God displaces all other fears."

John Witherspoon wrote, "It is only the fear of God that can deliver us from the fear of man." And what we are being told here in verse 15, I believe, is that we are to set our hearts upon pursuit of the praise of God. We are to be consumed with the passion of being "approved unto God, a workman who needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). The world system would have us join hands with it and seek refuge in its false security. Yes, we, like the Israelites of Isaiah 8 need to learn to fear the right person.

Riches I need not, nor man's empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;

Thou and Thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven my treasure Thou art.

Peter anticipated that such a life will make an impact on those around us. He writes, "and be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you . . ."

The word for "answer" (*apologia*) speaks of making a defense. It is used in Acts 22:1 and 2 Timothy 4:16 as a legal appeal. The Christian should be prepared to give a good defense for why he believes what he does. "The heart of the righteous studies to answer; but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things" (Prov 15:28).

There are a number of excellent books which will give one a surplus of apologetic material to use in defense of the faith. It is well worth one's time and money to invest in this area.

Note that he says people will ask about the "hope" that is in you. Obviously this hope must be clearly visible in one's life in order for others to ask about it. May I suggest two visible by-products which will be the inevitable result of this hope. Joy and Peace. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:13). These two characteristics of peace and joy are proof positive as to how real our hope is.

There is a certain manner in which we are to impart this defense for the faith. ". . . with meekness and in fear." May we always maintain the attitude of being one beggar sharing with another as to where to find bread.

We have seen the need for godly content in verse 15. Now in verses 16 and 17 we are shown the need for godly character. Content and character appear to be the two primary legs upon which Christlikeness stand. Content without character nullifies the drawing power we have on others (i.e., character acts as the salt which creates thirst). On the other hand, character without content nullifies the changing power we have on others (i.e., content satisfies that thirst). This is why Christ in sending out the disciples told them, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be you therefore wise as serpents (**content**) and harmless as doves (**character**)" (Matt 10:16). Both must be properly balanced and vitally united in order to really make an impact on others (1 Tim 4:16).

3:16-17

We begin with an exhortation to maintain a "good conscience." George Washington once commented, "Labor to keep alive in our breast that little spark of celestial fire, called conscience." The conscience is one of the great gifts God has given man. One man has said our conscience is "the compass of our soul" helping direct our steps along the paths of righteousness (cf. Acts 24:16, 1 Tim 1:19; 3:9).

There are various benefits to be gained through the maintaining of a good (clear conscience). Two are mentioned here in verses 16 and 17.

1. No real cause for accusation can be made to stick. Though men may speak badly of us now; one day they will be ashamed of their false accusations.

There is a far greater satisfaction to suffering undeservedly than for suffering deservedly. When my conscience tells me that I am at fault when I am suffering, then I can really only endure it (Heb 12:5-10). But when my conscience clearly tells me that I am suffering for godliness, then I can truly rejoice in it (1 Pet 1:6; 2:19; Jam 1:2).

3:18

The supreme example of suffering for doing well is given to us in verse 18. As Peter has done so often in this letter, he holds up to us the Lord Jesus Christ as an impeccable illustration of this important principle. Christ lived His entire life for the benefit of others yet His reward was not worldly congratulations but a wooden cross. He alone one was completely pure and He alone died for the completely perverse.

Alas and did my Savior bleed, and did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?
Was it for crimes that I have done He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity: grace unknown, and love beyond degree.

Note the phrase "once and for all." Christ died one time for all our sins. To say that a person can lose his salvation is not only to contradict this passage but also to diminish God's glory in the whole realm of salvation. It is,

in fact, to say that Christ's death was not quite enough to get me to heaven. "This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic" (Jam 3:15). This view of God's grace is an out and out slander on the character of the Father of lights who alone can offer salvation as an utterly free gift. "For by grace are you saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God . . ." (Eph 2:8-9). May the crystal clear water of God's grace never be muddied by the works of mortal man.

Christ was "put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit." This phrase is crucial to understanding the rest of chapter three. In chapter 4:1-2 Peter will pick up this theme again and show its awesome significance for our lives. The major thing to keep in mind now though, is that the Spirit is the energizing force of all true living. It is God's means for achieving His lifestyle through us.

Justin W. Nixon put it well: "The difference between physical power and spiritual power is that men use physical power, whereas spiritual power uses men." "It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh profits nothing . . ." (John 6:63). "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall so make alive your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you" (Rom 8:11).

Just as a candle is dependent upon its flame to fulfill its purpose for being created, we also are utterly dependent upon the holy Spirit to fulfill our purpose for being created (Isa 42:5-7).

3:19

In verse 19 we see that the Spirit of Christ is not new, but has been in existence for a very long time. In Chapter 1:11 we saw that the Spirit of Christ spoke through the O.T. prophets. We now see in 3:19-20 a specific example of one of these O.T. prophets which Christ's Spirit spoke through--Noah. Of all the prophets which Peter could have picked, why did he choose Noah do you suppose? It seems to me that the answer would be very helpful in interpreting the rest of the passage. May I suggest that Noah is chosen because of the similarities of his time with the time in which Peter was writing Peter and all the N.T. writers felt that they were living in the last time before Christ's return. In 1 Peter 4:7 he writes, "But the end of all things is at hand . . ." And Peter would well remember the words of Christ in Matthew 24:37 "But as were the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

A.	Impending judgment Noah--water (Gen 6:17)	Peter--fire (2 Pet 3:10)
B.	God's longsuffering Noah (1 Pet 3:20)	Peter (2 Pet 3:9)
C.	Spiritual condition of people--disobedient Noah--ark (1Pet 3:20)	Peter (1 Pet 2:7-8)
D.	Building program Noah--ark (1 Pet 3:20)	Peter--church (1 Pet 2:5)

Other parallels could be drawn but these are enough to illustrate our point.

Verse 19 has been taken to prove that Christ descended unto hell and gave the prisoners there a second chance to be saved. We know from Hebrews 9:27 that there is no "second chance" after death to be saved. What this verse is saying rather, I believe, is that the Spirit of Christ spoke through Noah (Noah is referred to as a "preacher of righteousness" in 2 Peter 2:5) to those spirits which are now in prison. The "spirits in prison" could refer to:

- Fallen angels (who are a prominent part in pre-flood history) Note the reference to these fallen angels being chained in darkness (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6).
- Men who refused to repent and are now in the prison of hell as a result choosing against God.
- Men who were imprisoned by their sin nature (Isa 42:6-7). Since this is a Messianic prophecy it would fit in well with the Spirit of Christ who preached through Noah.

I lean more heavily towards the first option, primarily because of the word he uses to identify these beings (*pneumasi*) "spirits." When Peter refers to people in verse 20 he uses (*psuchai*) "souls." Actually these beings of Genesis 6 may very likely have been fallen angels who were inhabiting human bodies, so a combination one and two is also possible.

3:20

In verse 20 we see that God is longsuffering toward man but his judgment will come. Each day that Noah worked on the ark brought the world a day closer to judgment. The writer of Hebrews put it this way, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is of God by faith . . ." (Heb 11:7). Noah's entire life was enslaved by his focus on the future. Knowing what was to come (i.e., the flood) completely gripped his priorities and pursuits in life. How crucial this is to our lives. We know that another Judgment will be coming from 2 Peter 3:10. This judgment is one of fire and it will consume all the earth. Are we spending our time and effort to **build** things God has vowed to destroy? This is not to say that it is wrong to **build things** and be constructive. Look at Christ and Paul, a carpenter and a tent maker. Yet their consuming passion in life was not building the physical but building spiritually into the lives of men and women. Only two things are going to last eternally from this planet: the word of God and the souls of men. If we want a life which will be eternally significant, then we need to spend it for these two things.

"Only one life 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

"Life in time remains without meaning if it does not find its meaning in eternity" (Russian scholar Berdyaew)

"The secret of life is to set the hours against the centuries" (Emerson)

"The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it" (William James) See Isaiah 51:6

3:21

Verse 21 has been used to say that water baptism is essential for salvation. We know that this cannot be true from 1 Corinthians 1:17; Gal 3:26; Rom 3:28 and many other passages.

The ark with eight people passing through the waters of God's judgment appears to be the "like figure" which baptism represents. This fits in perfectly with Romans 6:1-13 and Colossians 2:12, etc. We have died, been buried, and resurrected with Christ (Rom 6:3-5). We have been placed inside the ark, have passed through the waters of God's judgment, and are now resting on top of Mount Ararat. And all this is possible because of Christ (the ark in Peter's analogy).

Is this referring then to water baptism or Spirit baptism (1 Cor 12:13)? There is great controversy on this point. I think Peter is really referring to both. When we are born again, we are baptized into the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13; John 3:5). It is this baptism which saves us as far as getting into heaven. However, in order for us to get a vivid picture of exactly what happens when we are baptized into the Holy Spirit, Christ commanded the ordinance of water baptism (Matt 28:19). Water baptism does not save us but it graphically illustrates Spirit baptism which does save us.

I personally think (and may I hasten to say that this is pure conjecture) that the writers of the N.T. assumed that all the Christians they wrote to had followed the command of water baptism as an expression of their faith. And so they could freely write about being saved by baptism yet never mean at all that water baptism was essential for salvation. Rather it was the vehicle through which saving faith toward God had been expressed and Spirit baptism illustrated. The rest of verse 21 seems to support this. Peter hastens to explain in essence that baptism is not an outward ritual ("not the putting away of the filth of the flesh") but rather the expression of an inward reality ("but the answer of a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead").

3:22

Verse 22 Just as the ark passed through the waters of God's judgment and rests triumphantly atop Mount Ararat, Christ passed through the flood of attacks and assaults upon Him and is now seated triumphantly at the right hand of God.

Crown Him the Lord of life: Who triumphed o'er the grave.
Who rose victorious to the strife of those He came to save;
His glories now we sing, Who died and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die."

Principles from 1 Peter 4:1-11

During the Great Depression there occurred a very interesting incident on a farm in West Texas. This particular farm produced very little and the family who lived on it was just able to get by. Life was always uncertain and financial pressure never seemed to relax its grip. One day some men knocked at the door and asked if they might drill on part of the land. After getting permission they proceeded to drill and soon struck oil. As a result the family received several million dollars and moved to a new home and began a completely new way of living. The ironic thing about the whole incident was that this family had lived for many years in poverty because of being unaware that they possessed great wealth. They lived in rags though they possessed great riches.

Unfortunately, this story is repeated everyday in the lives of many (if not most) Christians. We learn from Ephesians that when we were born again God "blessed us with all spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph 1:3). Peter describes this vast reservoir of spiritual wealth like this: "According as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue: By whom are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet 1:3-4).

Why is it then, that though we possess these many gifts of God's grace our lives remain ragged in many areas? To put it simply, the answer many times I believe, is the failure to understand and apply **positional truth**.

Calvary is the secret of it all. It is what He did there that counts and what He did becomes a force in the life of a Christian when it is appropriated by faith. This is the starting point from which all godly living must take its rise." Miles Stanford

"This passage (Rom 6:1-10 which describes positional truth) is the foundation as well as the key to the possibility of a "walk in the Spirit." L .S. Chafer

As we begin chapter four, we find Peter driving home this critical and crucial principle to the hearts of his readers.

4:1

"Therefore since Christ suffered for us in flesh . . ." We need to see what "therefore" (*oun*) is referring to. It seems most likely to be referring back to the previous section 3:18-22. In verse 18 we read "having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit." To illustrate this he uses Noah and the ark. The ark passed through the water of God's judgment and came to rest triumphantly atop Mount Ararat. When we are baptized into the Spirit (we become Christians 1 John 4:13), then Christ does for us what the ark did for Noah--keeps us safe from God's judgment because of Calvary, and sets us triumphantly above the powers of this world because of His resurrection. "Therefore we have been buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4).

Ponder carefully over these words by Watchman Nee as he expounds these truths:

"The trouble with us today is that we think crucifixion with Christ is an experience we have somehow to attain. It is not. It is something God has done and we have only to receive it."

". . . it is made clear that the death of the Lord Jesus is representative and inclusive. In His death we all died. None of us can progress spiritually without seeing this. Just as we cannot have justifi-

cation if we have not seen Him bearing our sins on the Cross, so we cannot have sanctification if we have not seen Him bearing us on the cross. Not only have our sins been laid on Him but we ourselves have been put into Him."

". . . arm yourselves likewise with the same mind..." Once we know these tremendous truths of our position in Christ, we next need to commit our lives to them. The word he uses for "arm yourselves" (*hoplisasthe*) speaks of "equipping with weapons." Understanding and applying these truths of position are essential to "fight the good fight." There is an interesting progression of one's mindset through Romans 6:1-13 (a parallel passage on positional truth).

- Know (3-7)
- Believe (8-10)
- Reckon (11)
- Yield (13)

It requires all four of these mental and volitional choices for the doctrine of positional truth to become a practical reality in one's life. Yet one's life will never be the same once these truths are comprehended and applied.

". . . for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. Because Christ has already suffered on our behalf and died for our sins, we can count upon the triumphant truth that, "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (lit. rendered inoperative) that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom 6:6; cf. also 2 Cor 5:14-17). We are told that our old man was crucified with Christ and because of this we no longer are slaves to sin's dominion. We are free in the biblical sense of the word.

Through the crucifixion of the old man with Christ the believer has been made dead to sin, he has been completely freed from sin's power, he has been taken beyond sin's grip, the claim of sin upon him has been nullified. This is the flawless provision of God's grace but this accomplished fact can only become an actual reality in the believer's experience as faith lays hold upon it and enables him moment by moment, day by day, though temptation assail him, to reckon it true. As he reckons the Holy Spirit makes real; as he continues to reckon, the Holy Spirit continues to make real. Sin need have no more power over the believer than he grants it through unbelief. If he is alive unto sin it will be due largely to the fact that he has failed to reckon himself dead unto sin" (R. Paxson).

4:2

Here we are given our response to these dynamic truths of our position in Christ. Live in accordance to who we really are. Since we have been set free from the chains of the "flesh" and from the bands of "the lusts of men," we can now live the rest of our lives to the "good, well pleasing, and perfect" will of God. Note again that true freedom involves not simply being unchained from the wrong master, but it also involves being chained to the right master. The only real freedom a man has in life is the freedom to chose who his master will be.

4:3

We see here another reason for living godly in Christ Jesus--the factor of time. After John Brown was arrested at Harper's Ferry he made this very significant observation about life: "There is an eternity behind and an eternity before, and this little speck in the center, however long, is comparatively but a minute."

James graphically captures this truth by writing, ". . . for what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." (Jam 4:14).

In view of the extreme brevity of this life, it greatly and eternally benefits us to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:5). Since we have already spent a certain portion of our life in pursuit of earthly trinkets which have no lasting value, surely we would see the wisdom of laboring now "for that food which endures to eternal life . . ." (John 6:27). How clear it is from an eternal perspective that our past life as an unbeliever is "sufficient" or enough time to have "worked out the will of the Gentiles (non-Christians)."

Rousseau once wrote, "When a man dies he clutches in his hands only that which he has given away in his life." While we were unbelievers the only thing we could give away were the works of the flesh; let us therefore, ". . . knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom 13:12,13).

4:4

We see here two responses that we can expect to encounter from our old friends:

1. Think strangely of us. The word used here (*xenizo*) speaks of entertaining a guest or stranger. Interesting that one's position in Christ not only alters God's view of us (Col 3:3), but also alters other's view of us. The psalmist put it thus, "we have become a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing and derision to these around us" (Psa 79:4).

2. Speak badly of us. ". . . being reviled, we bless; being persecuted we bear; being blasphemed (same word as this verse) we entreat . . ." (1 Cor 4:12-13).

Note: It is one thing to be persecuted for righteousness sake; it is a very different thing to be persecuted for self-righteousness' sake. Though we reject the lifestyle of our old friends we must make it clear that we still accept and love them

4:5

Those who speak badly of us here will one day "give back word" (*apodidosousin logon*) to God. Perhaps this helps us see how they will "glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet 2:2). Though they speak badly of us now; in that day when true reality is revealed to all men, they will have to confess that our words and works were truly good.

4:6

This verse has been used along with 3:19 to show Christ went and gave a second chance to the dead. Again we need to remember the truth of Hebrews 9:27, ". . . and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment"

In looking at this verse we need to recall the context which precedes it. The phrases "judged according to men in the flesh" and "live according to God in the Spirit" should take us back to the similar phrases found in 3:18 and the following verses. If this whole section from 3:18 is talking about positional truth then it should not be surprising that 4:6 also talks about positional truth. Note also that 4:7 is definitely the beginning of a new thread of thought in this book. Therefore, it would seem to me that this verse is a short summary of the exposition of positional truth which he began in 3:18.

The "dead" in this verse would be the "spiritually dead." When the N.T. writers expounded positional truth they very often referred to believers as being "dead." "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin (Rom 8:10). ". . . if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him" (2 Tim 2:11). "For you have died and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col 3:3, cf. also Rom 6:2-11).

The gospel was preached to the dead (Christians) in order that:

- The old man be crucified ("judged according to men in the flesh") (Rom 6:6).
- The new man take the old man's place and live by the power of the Spirit ("but live according to God in the Spirit") (Rom 8:11).

4:7-11

These verses fall into two main categories.

- Our perspective (7a)

- Our practice in light of this perspective (7b-11)

Our Perspective (4:7a)

"But the end of all things is at hand" (verse 7a). The first century church was gripped by the reality that Christ could invade their timetable at any second. Though history proved them wrong in their estimation of Christ's return, they proved beyond question the immense value of possessing this perspective. No other generation has come close to having the same impact on their world. Alexander McLaren described their perspective like this:

"The primitive Church thought more about the second coming of Jesus Christ than about death or heaven. They were not looking for a cleft in the ground called "the grave," but for a cleavage in the sky called "glory." They were not watching for the "undertaker" but for the "uppertaker." They felt man's chief end was to get right with God or be left behind when Christ returned."

No wonder they were called, "These that have turned the world upside down . . ." (Acts 17:6). May we each regain this purifying perspective of the first century church.

Our Practice (4:7b-11)

1. **Soberminded (*sophroneo*) (4:8).** This word speaks of one whose mental faculties are alert and sharp. Let us not become intoxicated by Satan's three vintage wines: the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life (1 John 2:15-16).
2. **Watch unto prayer (4:8).** This is an area which Satan attacks relentlessly because it is such a great weapon. In James we read, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (Jam 5:16) the word for "avails" (*iskuo*) is used in Acts 19:16 to describe the man with an evil spirit who "overcame" the seven sons of Sceva and caused them to flee. There is tremendous power in prayer yet we neglect it because it requires work. Yet of all the work we do, prayer is the work which supports and undergirds all our other work (Rom 15:30; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2-3; 1 Thess 1:2; 3:10; 1 Tim 2:1; 2 Tim 1:3; Rev 8:3).
3. **Love one another fervently (4:8).** This word used for "fervently" (*ektenee*) is the picture of a horse whose legs are fully extended while galloping. We're told to have "stretching out" love for each other. Peter quotes from Proverbs 10:12 which says, "Hatred stirs up strife: but love covers all sins." This is probably referring to that aspect of true love in I Corinthians 13 which is unceasing in flow." "Love bears all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:7). Human love can cover some sins, but only God's love can cover all sins. Note the premium placed on love. It is the true "mark of maturity" in our spiritual growth.
4. **Be sincerely hospitable (4:9).** The word "hospitality" (*philoxenos*) means "love of guests or strangers." God would have us to gain the same attitude he commanded of Israel in Isaiah 60:11, "Therefore your gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night; that men may bring unto you the forces of the Gentiles . . ." The test of truly sincere hospitality is given also in this verse: "without grudging (or murmuring)." Rom 12:9 tells us, "Let love be without hypocrisy (lit. "without a mask")." If our hospitality is mixed with feelings of resentment, then we may need to check our sincerity.
5. **Do God's work God's way (4:10-11).** In verse 10 we have the only calling to the ministry in the entire N.T. and note very carefully who it is addressed to--every believer!

Bud Wilkinson was once asked his opinion of football as a national sport. He replied that football was definitely lacking, for it consists of "twenty-two men who are desperately in need of rest being watched by twenty-thousand people who are desperately in need of exercise."

Unfortunately this statement fits the church today like a glove. How often we can see ourselves in this little poem.

"I gave a little party this afternoon at three
 'Twas very small, three guests in all
 Just I, Myself, and Me.
 Myself ate up the sandwiches

While I drank the tea
And it was I who ate the pie
And passed the cake to me."

And so Peter calls us out of the bleachers and away from our private tea parties by writing, "As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

We want to see two primary principles from this verse.

1. Every Christian is of vital importance in the body of Christ. When we were born again we not only received the gift of eternal life but also a gift for present service (Eph 4:7; Rom 12:6-8). This gift is essential for: (a) the success of the body (Eph 4:11-13), and (2) the significance of the individual. When a person fails to use and exercise their gift, both these causes are crippled. One man has well said that each Christian is a "spiritual snowflake" in that he is unique from all others.
2. Every Christian is responsible for the gift entrusted him. Note that we are called "stewards" a steward is in charge of properly handling another man's possessions. Christ is the only man who had all the gifts of the Spirit. ". . . When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men" (Eph 4:8). When Christ ascended to the Father, He entrusted His gifts to men. We need to see very, very clearly that our spiritual gift is not ours in the sense of ownership but ours in the sense of stewardship. And Christ let us know in no uncertain terms that we will be held accountable for what we did with His gift (Matt 25:14-30).

We see now the two main categories which spiritual gifts fall into: speaking and serving (Rom 12:6-8). And we find through this verse the way to accomplish God's work.

1. **Speak God's word.** It is God's word which is promised to bring forth fruit (Isa 55:10). In John 3:34 we find a vital characteristic of Christ-likeness. "For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God . . ." If one's primary gift is one of speaking, then his source of success is God's word ". . . behold, I will make my words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer 5:14). It is an awesome thing to realize that when we speak God's word we speak for God himself. God has given earthen vessels like ourselves the privilege and responsibility of communicating His eternal word to our present generation.
2. **Serve in God's strength.** If our primary gift is one of serving, then our source of success is God's Spirit. Note that anything God asks us to do He also wants to do for us and through us. It is interesting that in Acts 6 when men were chosen to wait on tables; one of the key qualities they had to have was to be "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:3).

"Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew;
That I may love the things you love
And do what you would do."

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech 4:6).

The result of doing God's word God's way will be God's glory. Any crowns we have in heaven will be the result of God's work and wisdom through us. And as we fully realize and reflect upon this tremendous truth, it is prophesied that our response will be to take these crowns which he has given us and "cast" them before the throne, saying, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and created (Rev 4:10-11).

Principles from 1 Peter 4:12-19

"I am my love's and He is mine, and this is His desire,
That with His beauty, I might shine in radiant attire.
This will be when all of me is pruned and purged with fire."

In this poem Hannah Hurnard well expressed the need for suffering in our lives. Did you ever stop to think that just as we need food, water, exercise, etc. to grow physically: we also need suffering to grow spiritually. Underserved suffering is not an elective but rather a required course in God's training program of "bringing many sons to

glory" (Heb 2:10). The cross precedes the crown as the night does the day; and in the fires of earthly suffering, heavenly character is forged.

As we look at verses 12-19 of chapter four, we find Peter once again gives us a divine perspective on earthly suffering.

4:12

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is come upon you as though some strange thing is happening to you:"

First we are exhorted to gain the right perspective on persecution. The word used for strange (*xenos*) speaks of a stranger or guest. We are being told that when a trial comes our way we shouldn't look upon it as an intruding stranger or an unexpected guest. Rather we should realize that suffering knocks at the door of every Christian and that in the quest for sanctification, suffering plays a vital role. "Though He were a son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb 5:8). "For even hereunto were you called, because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps" (1 Pet 2:21).

The word for "happening" (*sumbaino*) comes from two words which mean "to walk together." As we walk the path of discipleship we can expect to join hands with "various trials," (Jam 1:2). Yet though our natural tendency is to pull away from these trials and to part company immediately; we are given the supernatural reaction to these unwelcomed companions in verse 13 -- rejoice!.

4:13

"But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's suffering; that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Every four years a new president is put in the White House. That presidential victory is the culmination of countless hours of arduous labor and hard work. Many people have sacrificed time, money, and effort in order to see their candidate voted into office. And one of the primary things which keeps these workers "going" during the campaign period is the hope that their candidate will win.

You and I are privileged to be involved in the campaign of helping establish God's kingdom here on earth. At Christ's second coming He will establish His rule here on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

And just as those who help in the presidential election are rewarded for their work, we who have worked for the kingdom of God will be rewarded for our work. "He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev 2:26).

Note that we are told that there is present and future joy for being "partakers [partners (*koinoneo*)] of the sufferings of Christ." Let's look closer at these tremendous truths.

1. **Present Joy:** We see from 2 Corinthians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:8, and other passages that an increase of undeserved suffering also means an increase in the intimacy of Christ. C. S. Lewis once commented, "God whispers in our pleasures, but shouts in our pains."
2. **Future Joy:** As we patiently endure sufferings for Christ's sake we increase our eternal recompense and rejoicing in the life to come (1 Matt 5:11-12; 2 Cor 4:17-18). Note the different levels of sonship described in Romans 8:17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." In the Jewish culture all sons received a part of the father's inheritance, but the firstborn received a double portion of the inheritance. We have the opportunity to share (be co-heirs) in the inheritance of the firstborn (Christ), but there is a cost involved -- "If so be that we suffer with Him." All Christians are heirs, but certainly not all will be co-heirs. For many Christians will decide that the price tag involved in discipleship is too high and will settle into a comfortable, complacent Christian life. But those who opt for the path of discipleship will discover that the sufferings of this life are not even "worth comparing" to the "glory that will be revealed" (Rom 8:18).

4:14

This verse continues Peter's discourse on successful suffering. We can see that being reproached or reviled for being a Christian is actually a means to being "happy" (*makarios*). The non-Christian world is looking for happiness through earthly conditions: God wants us to be happy through heavenly character (Matt 5:3-10). "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house, and you shall make them drink of the rivers of your pleasures" (Psa 36:8). ". . . for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you . . ." The wondrous work of God's Spirit empowers us to move through persecution in a God honoring manner. In Acts 6 we have the account of Stephen being brought before the Jewish council who reproached him for speaking in the name of Christ. In verse 15 we read, "and all that sat in the Council, looking steadfastly upon him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." The "spirit of glory and of God" was resting upon Stephen so that he brought great glory to God on his behalf. This likewise is God's desire for our lives when He allows us the privilege of suffering for Him.

4:15

While on one hand we are exhorted to be ready to suffer for being rightly related to God; We are likewise told to be sure not to suffer for being wrongly related to men. It's worth noting that Peter didn't think it inconceivable that a Christian could murder, steal, etc. When we think we've got an area of our life licked, then there is a good chance we are heading for trouble. "Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12).

The word for "busybody" comes from two words which mean "overseer of others." How easy it is for us to become an overseer of other's business. Yet Proverbs very graphically portrays the wisdom of being a busybody; "like one who takes a dog by the ears, is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him" (Prov 26:17). Whenever we put our hands in another's business uninvited; we shouldn't be surprised if God allows us to suffer. To summarize, we are being told that suffering will be the result of (1) being controlled by the Spirit, and (2) being controlled by sin; yet only one is thankworthy.

4:16

We are given another key response to suffering for Christ's sake--be not ashamed.

"And tho this world, with devils filled
should threaten to undo us ;
We will not fear, for God has willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim;
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure;
for lo! his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him."

Can we express the desire of our hearts like this? "According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but in all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or death" (Phil 1:20). This was the response of Paul who wrote from a Roman prison cell because of his Christian faith. The hymn writer, Isaac watts, expressed it thus:

"Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause, or blush to speak His name?
Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease
While others fought to win the prize and sailed through blood seas?
Sure I must fight if I would reign
Increase my courage Lord,
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word."

As we courageously endure the opposition of a godless world, we bring glory to God. "The wicked flee when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov 28:1).

4:17-18

We see in these verses some very sobering truths in regards to man and the place he allows God in his life.

While we hasten to hear of God's love and mercy; we tend to turn a deaf ear to God's judgment and justice. Yet Scripture is replete with sharp warnings about the results of disobedience, and for this reason we ought to carefully consider the importance of these warnings.

We see a very important principle in verse 17. To those who have been given much, much will be required. Judgment first will come to the house of God (Judgment Seat of Christ, 1 Cor 3:12-15, 2 Cor 5:10) and then to the unbelievers (Great White Throne, Rev 20:11-15). There will be a final reward for obedience and disobedience. Note that the writers of the New and Old Testaments did not back off from talking about hell and judgment. Christ himself talked about hell ten times more than any biblical character. How well Jeremiah described the condition today in many churches when he prophesied: "They have healed also the hurt of my people slightly saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer 6:14).

People need to know not only of the great mercy extended to them through Jesus Christ, but also need to be made aware of the awesome consequences of rejecting His offer of salvation. "Woe unto them who call evil, good and good, evil who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa 5:20). God calls us to speak truthfully though it may be offensive at times.

Verse 18 is a quote from the LXX of Proverbs 11:31 "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more, the wicked and sinner." Since the word "recompensed" definitely has to do with the concept of reward, it seems that Peter is using "saved" here in verse 18 in the sense of "the salvation of your souls" (i.e., the full-orbed experience of salvation. See notes on 1 Peter 1:9).

It is hard to know for sure exactly how to translate "scarcely" (*molis*). It can mean "with difficulty, not readily (i.e., only rarely), hardly," etc. I think the basic import of the passage is that the road of discipleship ("salvation of the soul") is one of rugged terrain and contains many pitfalls. Because of this, out of the myriads of Christians, comparatively few walk this rugged road to its completion.

4:19

We finish this section on suffering by seeing what reaction God desires to see in our life.

Josh Billings once wrote, "Life is a grindstone, and whether it grinds a man down or polishes him up depends on the stuff he's made of." I think this accurately portrays the path of each man or woman's life. As the grinding edge of undeserved suffering makes close contact with our lives, our response will cause us to become either a more polished vessel (i.e., Christlike), or else it will mar us with a deeper root of bitterness. In short we will either become holy or bitter, depending on our response to undeserved suffering.

And so we are told that those who suffer "according to the will of God" are not to be resentful but rather are to "commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

We need to look at a few poets to really understand the force of this verse.

The word for "commit the keeping" (*paratithemi*) speaks of a deposit such as one makes in a bank. When suffering comes we all look for some source of comfort and, if possible, relief. There are many things into which a man can deposit his soul in order to alleviate the pains and heartaches of life. Money, alcohol, sports, business, even a favorite hobby can all be used to temporarily stifle the cries of the soul. Yet all these things are really ruthless bankers because they promise much but never fully keep their bargain. And so we are being told that in the midst of suffering, we need to be sure and "deposit" our soul into the hands of God. He alone is a faithful banker who will abundantly increase the value of our life.

"My soul wait thou upon God;
for my expectation is from Him.
He only is my rock and my salvation:
He is my defense; I shall not be moved."

A good example of this is given to us by Christ as He was dying on the cross. He was offered a stupefying drink of vinegar and gall in order to lessen the pain of the cross. Yet He refused this drink and was willing to experi-

ence to full pain of the cross. There are many drinks which this world holds out for us that we might deaden the pain of the cross by "depositing" our souls with one of them. Yet, like Christ it will be to our eternal benefit to "deposit" our soul only with God, no matter the cost.

The proof positive that we have sincerely made this divine transaction will be our "well doing" in the midst of suffering. The natural reaction of undeserved suffering is retaliation, yet God is calling us to a lifestyle which exemplifies that of Christ's, "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously" (1 Pet 2:23).

Principles from 1 Peter 5:1-14

The story is told of a young boy who came home from church one Sunday and announced that he had decided to become a preacher when he grew up. When asked by his parents for the reasoning behind his decision: he replied, "Well I figure I'm gonna have to go to church the rest of my life anyway. And it sure would be more fun to be yelling down at the people than to be one of the people getting yelled at!"

Needless to say this boy had an incorrect view of church leadership and a poor motivation for Christian service. Unfortunately, many churches today are filled with church leaders whose motivations are not much better than this young boy's. I know of one minister who, when asked why he was in the ministry replied, "It's a good job." I have a friend at Harvard who tells me that the wildest (and in his terms - "best") parties of the school are put on by the ministerial students. God is greatly angered by hypocrisy on the part of church leaders. "Woe unto scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites . . ." (Matt 23). And so as we come to the last chapter of I Peter, we are given some divine directives for sincere, effective church leadership. In 5:1-3 we see the Elder's Responsibilities in the Body, and in verse 4 we see the elder's reward for faithfulness.

Responsibilities of Elders to the Church (5:1-3)

The word used here for "feed" (*poimane*) can also be translated "herd," shepherd, tend the flock," etc. The great thrust of the passage is that the elders are responsible for the spiritual well being of those in their church just as the shepherd is responsible for the welfare of his sheep (Heb 13:17). In Acts 20 we gain significant insight into some of the major areas of responsibility which the elders of Ephesus were given by Paul.

- Provide for spiritual nourishment - verses 28, 32
- Protect from spiritual harm - verses 28-31
- Pattern the spiritual man - verse 35

Interestingly, these are the three primary responsibilities given in 1 Peter 5:1-3

Provide for Spiritual Nourishment

"Feed the flock of God which is among you . . ." This has to be one of the great priorities of any group of church elders. In the book of Hosea, God cries out in condemnation against the priests of Israel as He says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). In Ezekiel 34 we are given a vivid picture of God's judgment upon spiritual leaders who fail to feed those under their care. Woe unto those who go into spiritual leadership for personal prestige rather than to benefit and pastor God's sheep. ". . . Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock"? (Ezek 34:2).

It is God's word which will change lives and bring men to maturity (Jam 1:21). For this reason God places heavy responsibility on the elders of every church to see that the word of God permeates each function of the church. "And now brothers, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Note please, however, that the intake of God's word is a means to an end (i.e., Christlikeness) and not an end in itself. A church can be saturated with God's word and still be sterile as far as spiritually reproducing itself. The primary purpose of God's word is to radically alter our way of life not simply add new cars to our train of thought (Deut 29:29).

Protect from Spiritual Harm

One of the great responsibilities of the shepherd is to watch out for the safety of the sheep. ". . . taking the oversight thereof . . ." Because the sheep are virtually incapable of fending for themselves, the good shepherd is constantly on guard for wolves, poisonous plants, snakes, etc. To fail to watch may result in irrevocable harm to the sheep.

The word used for this elder responsibility is *episkopeo* and comes from two words which mean "to watch over or watch intensely" The elders of the church are to intensively watch over the flock to guard against the various dangers which could harm the fold. False teaching, unresolved conflicts, etc., all need to be carefully guarded against. For like the sheep; failure to do this can very easily bring irrevocable harm. "And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered" (Ezek 34:5).

Please note that virtually every great man of God has been called on to speak out against the religious leaders and parties of his day. Many of these men lost their lives as a result of condemning men and systems "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof . . ." (2 Tim 3:5). Yet the welfare and vitality of God's program required not simply the "speaking forth" of God's perfect word but also the "speaking against" of men's vain imaginations.

God commissioned Jeremiah not only "to build and to plant"; but also "to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down . . ." (Jer 1:10). The elders as well as others in spiritual leadership must watch over God's sheep by making them aware not only of God's word but also of false concepts perpetrated by "wolves in sheep's clothing."

Pattern the Spiritual Man

". . . not by constraint (being forced) but willingly; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not lording over God's heritage but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2b).

The word for "examples" (*tupoi*) originally meant the mark left by a blow. Our lives should be such that we visibly reflect the unmistakable impact Christ has had on our lives. "In all things showing yourself a pattern (*tupoi*) of good works" (Tit 2:7).

The crying need in churches today is not more programs, money, attendance, etc., it is simply examples.

When Henry Stanley related the experience of his salvation, this is what he said.

"I went to Africa as prejudiced as the biggest atheist in London. But there came for me a long time for reflection. I saw this solitary old man there and asked myself, 'How on earth does he stop here - is he cracked or what? What is it that inspires him?'"

"For months after we met I found myself wondering at the old man carrying out all that was said in the Bible - "Leave all things and follow me! But little by little his sympathy for others became contagious; my sympathy was aroused; seeing his piety, his gentleness, his zeal, his earnestness, and how he went about his business, I was converted by him although he had not tried to do it."

In Acts 20 we see this same principle for motivating men. "I have shown you all things . . ." (Acts 20:35). In 1 Thessalonians Paul gives a short synopsis of their secret of success in Thessalonica, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much conviction; as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (1 Thess 1:5). The elders are being exhorted to follow this same principle. Don't stand over people's shoulders and tell them what to do; rather stand at their side and show them personally how to do it.

Reward of the Faithful Elder (5:4)

The theme of an eternal undiminishing inheritance from chapter one is picked up again in this verse. Faithfulness to God's flock will be richly rewarded at the return of Christ. We find five different crowns in the New Testament for faithful service.

- (1) Crown of Rejoicing - 1 Thess 2:19
- (2) Crown of Righteousness - 2 Tim 4:8
- (3) Crown of Glory - 1 Pet 5:4
- (4) Crown of Life - Jam 1:12
- (5) Crown of Life - Rev 2:10

All these crowns are predicate upon two primary things: (a) Faithfulness in Service (1 Thess 2:19, 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet 5:4), or (b) Faithfulness through suffering (Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10).

The wise servant in the parable of the talents was commended not for being able, but rather for being faithful. "Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of your Lord" (Matt 25:21).

5:5-7

In verses 5 and 6 we find two critical keys to unlocking God's power in our lives and maintaining unity with one another. They are submission and humility. "Likewise, you younger submit yourselves to the elder . . ." This verse seems to indicate that the elders had a distinct age difference from the young adults of the body. I'm afraid that today in our zeal to begin churches, we elect elders who aren't really qualified for this office. And it is unfair to the man, his family, and the church to put him in such responsibility before he has had the necessary experience and exposure to qualify as an "elder" in a truly biblical sense.

The elders are to be highly regarded and willingly obeyed. But submission doesn't end with simply being subject to the elders. ". . . and all of you be subject to one another . . ." This exhortation portrays one of the great guidelines for godliness in the word of God.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory: but in lowliness of mind let each look upon others as more important than himself" (Phil 2:3).

"And whosoever will be greatest among you, let him be your servant" (Matt 20:27).

Listen to the words of John E. Mitchell in his estimation of greatness.

The great leaders of men in all fields have not been the arrogant and the greedy, but the servants. The real servants are the true nobility. The greatest of all, The Son of God Himself, declared that He had come not to be served but to be a servant, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Christ became the supreme example of servanthood that we could marvel at His grace and follow in His example. ". . . and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble."

The word for "clothed" (*endomboomai*) speaks of putting on a garment in preparation for service, such as an apron. This brings to mind the washing of the disciples feet in John 13.

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God: He rose from supper and laid aside His garments: and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded" (John 13:3-5).

What a striking illustration of the Sovereign of the universe becoming a servant of men. The disciples should already have washed Christ's feet before the dinner began. Christ could very easily have rebuked them for not giving Him the honor He was rightfully due. Yet He didn't press His own rights but rather humbled Himself and washed their unworthy feet. What application can we gain for our lives from this incident? "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done" (John 13:15).

This poem expresses well the honor of humility.

"Master where shall I work today?
And my love flowed warm and free;

And He pointed out a tiny plot
And He said, 'tend that for me.'

But I answered quickly, Oh no, not there;
Not anyone could see
No matter how well my task was done
Not that little place for me!

And His voice when He spoke: it was not stern
But He answered me tenderly
Disciple search that heart of thine:
Are you working for them or for me?

Nazareth was just a little place:
And so was Galilee."

There is an extremely important reason as to why we so desperately need a life characterized by humility. It is the key to receiving the power to live the Christian life! ". . . for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." "Grace" not only implies unmerited favor in salvation but also the present power to live godly in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 15:10).

It is the "humble" who receive this grace to live for God. The proud not only are refused this grace but it says that the God of creation "resists" (*antitasa*) or literally "sets himself against" them. God has a "hate list" in Proverbs 6:16-19, and the number one enemy listed there is "a proud look." One man has well said that God's in the business of "casting down the proud and lifting up the humble." "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit" (Prov 29:23).

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet 5:6)

Humility is the pathway which leads to honor. In 2 Chronicles 16:9 we discover that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. . ." But how can we know what the "perfect" heart that God is searching for is like?

Isaiah 66:2 gives us a divine x-ray into the heart which is healthy in God's sight. ". . . but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word." This, then is the "perfect" heart God is searching the masses for.

"He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride
He that is humble, ever shall
Have God to be his guide." - Bunyan

Both Saul and Uzziah were men of God who began well but finished poorly. We see that failure in the area of humility caused them both to fall from the perch of God's blessing.

"When you (Saul) were little in your own sight, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed you king over Israel?" (1 Sam 15:17)

"But when he (Uzziah) was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction . . ." (2 Chr 26:16)

We need to take heed to the lives of these men by daily "humbling ourselves" under the mighty hand of God," knowing that He will exalt us at the proper time.

"Casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you." The word for "casting" (*epirrhpto*) speaks of throwing one's clothing on something. We are being told to take off the garments of financial worries, making good grades, having a girlfriend or boyfriend, etc., and to give them to the One who is more concerned than anyone for our welfare. This poem well portrays our lives so often:

"It is His will that I should cast My care on Him each day;
He also bids me not to cast My confidence away.

But oh! how foolishly I act When taken unaware,
I cast away my confidence and carry all my care.

One man has well said that the entire-Christian life is the process of "correcting an incorrect view of God." When it comes to the daily cares of life it seems that we often fail to maintain a correct view of our loving Father. We feel He is distant and often unresponsive to our requests. Yet Christ corrects that view of God by asking,

"Or what man is there of you, whom it his I son ask for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt 7:9-11).

Note the words of this wonderful old hymn:

"Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.

He whose heart is kind beyond all measure,
Gives unto each child what He deems best.
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure;
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Everyday the Lord Himself is near me,
With a special mercy for each hour.
All my cares He fain would bear and cheer me,
Be whose name is Counselor and Power.

The protection of His child and treasure,
Is a charge that on Himself He laid;
'As thy days, thy strength shall be in measure,'
This the pledge to me He made."

Who are we entrusting our cares to? There is only one who can handle them successfully. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psa 46:1).

5:8-9

We have seen our relationship to each other and God in verses 5-7. We now see our relationship to Satan in verses 8 and 9. The Spirit of God here warns us to be on guard, and to courageously resist the onslaught of Satan.

"Be sober, watch; because your adversary, the devil, walks around as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

In 2 Corinthians we read "lest Satan should get advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor 2:11). Satan has various "devices" which he would like to use in winning the "war against our soul" (1 Pet 2:11). It is critical that we be "sober" and "watch" so that we are not caught unexpectedly and become easy prey for his attack.

In 1 John 2:16 we are given three of Satan's primary weapons in attacking our souls:

- The lust of the flesh (over-desire for pleasure),
- The lust of the eyes (over-desire for possessions), and
- The pride of life (over-desire for position or power).

These are the three key area which we will be tempted in, just as Christ was (Matt 4:1-11). Christ also gave three primary areas which He warned the disciples to "beware of." He likened each of these areas unto leaven, which can ruin the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" which is to characterize our lives (1 Cor 5:8).

Let's look at each of these leavens individually:

a. Leaven of the Pharisees - Matthew 16:6

This leaven Christ defined as "hypocrisy" (Lk 12:1). The word for hypocrisy means "to play a part" and is used of actors wearing a mask during their performance. How easy it is to begin "playing the part" of a Christian. We go through the motions but are devoid of the motivation (Rev 2:2-4). The key to overcoming this is to be consumed with being well pleasing in God's sight and thereby becoming freed from our natural addiction to the "praise of men." (John 5:44).

b. Leaven of the Sadducees - Matthew 16:6

This is the leaven of liberalism. The Sadducees did not believe in angels, the resurrection, or anything that was supernatural in origin. Christ very accurately pointed out their dilemma when He said, "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matt 22:29). This leaven has greatly infected the churches of today. *Red-book* took a full survey of our seminaries in 1961 and discovered these startling statistics:

- 56% rejected the virgin birth of Jesus Christ
- 71% rejected that there was life after death
- 54% rejected the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ
- 98% rejected that Christ would personally return to this earth

How well **this** fits in with the words of Paul in I Timothy 4:1 "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the last times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons."

There are very clear instructions on how a person should deal with this leaven of the Pharisees. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. " Often Christians will stay in a Church - which has discarded God's Word as it's basis; thinking they can be missionaries in that church and bring it around spiritually. Though it is a worthy motive, it is nonetheless unscriptural and definitely dangerous. "Be not deceived; bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Cor 15:33). God calls us to come out of false worship systems and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. (Related verses on the call to separation: Rom 16:17-18; 2 Cor 6:14-18; 2 Thess 3:14-15; 2 Tim 2:19-21; 3:5; Tit 3:10-11; 2 John 10; Rev 18:4).

c. Leaven of the Herodians (worldly compromise)

The Herodians were Jews who worked with the Roman government in order to benefit themselves. They were holding onto their spiritual identification with one hand while holding onto the temporal benefits of this world with the other hand. This leaven is spoken of by Christ in the parable of the soils. "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection (Luke 8:14).

Our affection for God will render our hearts apathetic toward the things of this world or our affection for this world will render our hearts apathetic toward the things of God (1 Jn 2:15); and there is no happy medium though many Christians try to live as though there is. It has been well said that "the men who move the world are not moved by the world."

These three leavens along with the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are Satan's great teeth in his attack to "devour whom he will."

The means of defense is given to us in verse 9, "whom resist steadfast in the faith . . ." The word for "resist" (*antistete*) means "stand against." The word for "steadfast" (*stereoio*) means "firm, strong," etc., and is used in 2 Timothy 2:19 of the foundation of God which stands "sure." Thus we are being exhorted to stand against the onslaught of Satan by having our feet firmly cemented in faith toward God.

On Christ the solid rock I stand,
all other ground is *sinking* sand."

The only way we can have the strength to withstand Satan's attacks is to be dependent upon a source of power superior to that of us or Satan.

Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, nor is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He gives power to the faint and to them that have no might He increases strength" (Isa 40:28,29).

5:10

To encourage us to "resist steadfast" we are given an example. Other brothers and sisters are suffering along with us *in other* parts of the world. We are not "lone rangers" riding the trail of suffering by ourselves; but rather we are part of the cavalry of Christ, enduring hardship as a team (vs. 10). This verse is a summary statement of the entire book; it is the peak which caps this great mountain of spiritual truths.

"But the God of all grace who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus . . ." God has called us to enjoy all eternity in His kingdom. How glorious it will be to dwell in that place where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away" (Rev 21:4).

But did you know that the world to come will be more abundant for some Christians than for others? That some Christians will have a greater capacity to enjoy the coming kingdom than others?

"If we endure, we shall reign with Him" (2 Tim 2:12)

". . . and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb 11:35).

"And they that be wise shall shine as the righteousness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan 12:2).

These are just a few of many verses which speak of special reward in the world to come based upon faithful service in this world. In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30; we have a very significant insight into the potential abundance of the world to come. Let's look carefully at three aspects of reward to one who qualifies as a "good and faithful servant." These are found in verse 21.

Special Commendation

"Well done you good and faithful servant." At the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be two basic responses. To those who did God's will--praise and therefore joy. To those who did not God's will--disapproval (in the sense of rewards, not entrance into heaven) and therefore shame. "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2:28). What a thrill it would be to hear those words at the end of one's life! The most treasured praises of men would become insignificant in comparison to this special commendation by Christ.

Special Privileges

"You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things . . ." Special privileges and possessions await those Christians who use this life to "completely fulfill the ministry" God has given them.

"And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him I will I give power over the nations . . ." (Rev 2:26).

"He that overcomes shall inherit all things: and I will be his God and he shall be my son" (Rev 21:7).

Especially significant is Romans 8:17,

"And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."

Every Christian is an "heir" of God, but only certain Christians will be "co-heirs with Christ." Those who qualify as co-heirs will share with Him in His dominion and kingdom. Special privileges will be an eternal recompense for the one who "hates his life in this world" (John 12:25).

Special Joy

". . . enter thou into the joy of your Lord." While all Christians will experience great joy in heaven, it appears that some Christians will eternally experience a greater joy and intimacy with Christ than others.

"He that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne," (Rev 3:21)

Note that the good and faithful servant is called to enter into "the joy of *your* Lord." We are told that Christ has a special joy above all other angels and men. "Therefore God, even your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows" (Heb 1:9). We have the opportunity to enter into this special joy of Christ by what we do in this life. "For we are made partakers (*metochio*) partners, as in a business) of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb 3:14).

These, then are three special results of qualifying as a "good and faithful servant." How then can one qualify for these privileges? The next phrase of verse 10 helps us to find the answer. ". . . after you have suffered for a little while . . ."

As rain precedes the rainbow, so suffering on earth precedes glory in heaven. The price for the crown is the path of the cross. The winning athlete is not only rewarded but also exhausted. The price which Christ paid "for the joy set before Him" was that He "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb 12:2).

What exactly then, are the sufferings of Christ? Does one have to be physically beaten to share in Christ's sufferings? I believe a simple definition of the sufferings of Christ is "personal sacrifices which one makes in order to become more like Christ or to demonstrate His character. In the parable of the soils we see two great principles of sacrificing in pursuit of Christlikeness.

1. Enduring Worldly Afflictions and Persecution - "And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness: and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a times afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mark 4:16-17).

2. Denying Worldly Affections and Pleasures - "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Mark 4:18-19).

It would seem that the callings (1) to endure worldly affliction and persecutions, and (2) to deny worldly affections and pleasures dovetail to comprise "the sufferings of Christ." Note that these two things were the greatest temptations Christ faced in completely fulfilling His ministry: The tempting in the wilderness (worldly affections and pleasures) (Matt 4); and the temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane (worldly afflictions and persecutions) (Luke 22).

We see finally the glorious result of having "suffered for a little while." He "will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." In other words when we have finished the required courses of undeserved suffering we will receive the most significant degree any person can gain, "being conformed to the image of His Son." To put it another way, your retribution for this suffering will be "receiving the end (goal) of your faith, the salvation of your souls!"

In chapter one we began the search for "the salvation of your souls"(i.e., the full-orbed experience of salvation Having seen various facets in 1:13 - 5:9 necessary in order to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12), Peter concludes the search for "the life that lasts" in 5:10. Suffering, again we are told, is the earthly fire which forges heavenly character.

"Do not fear the cutting knife, do not shrink in pain,
Let the red drops of thy life fall like bleeding rain
That which thou to death dost give is the seed which yet shall live.

Do not rear the winter's breath, let the seed drop to the earth,
Everything laid down to death waits a resurrection birth.
Let the flower drop on the thorn, fairer glories shall be born.

Do not try to hold life's joys, or the past years golden store,
Love it is who thus destroys, to make room for so much more.
Love it is, with radiant face, leading to a wealthier place.

Do not let self-pity bleed, bitterness, not fierce regret.
These are worms which kill the seed, and sad misery beget.
With a willing heart let go, God will richer gifts bestow.

Learn the lesson fast or slow, this is heaven's law
We must let the old things go, to make room for more.
We shall reap in some glad way, fairer joys than lost today."
Hannah Hurnard

Doxology and Conclusion (5:11-14)

It is difficult to know what "Babylon" in verse 13 is referring to. It seems though that Rome would be a good option here.

- Rome was the center of wickedness and false religion.
- Many of Peter's readers were Jewish. He addresses them as the "dispersion" in 1:1. This would bring to mind the past Jewish dispersion in Babylon which corresponds to the present dispersion of Christians throughout Rome.
- The testimony of early Church fathers.

1 This writer is assuming that each book of the Bible, like all good literature, has one controlling purpose from which all the details of the book hang. It is this single controlling purpose which causes all the details of the book to flow logically and orderly. For this reason I must reject the view that 1 Peter is a book on "suffering." No doubt suffering is a large part of the book, but it cannot be the controlling purpose of the book since large sections of the book (1;13-2:12) do not really deal with suffering. Thus, we must find a controlling purpose which will account for all the sections of the book. For a greater discussion on this read, "Validity and Interpretation" by E. D. Hirsch.

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