

# A BOOK STUDY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER



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# **BOOK STUDY ON FIRST PETER: Outline**

Book Study on First Peter.

Title : True Passion: Suffering for the Sake of Christ.

Teacher: Bro. Tim Gibson

Time : Sunday 11th April - Sunday 30th May (1-2pm every Sunday)

Description:

Do you wonder why the Lord allows suffering in the world and even in your own life ? Are you concerned about the times we live in and especially concerned about the coming times of trouble prophesied in Scripture ?

First Peter holds the answers. In this study we will see God's purposes in allowing suffering and the places in which we will have to endure it. Above all we will see in practical terms how to go through suffering with great joy and come through refined and more like Christ.

Course Outline:

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION: Background to First Peter .

LESSON 2: The Purpose of Suffering Part 1 (1 Peter 1:1-1:21)

(a) To Magnify the Christ.

LESSON 3: The Purpose of Suffering Part 2 (1 Peter 1:22-2:12)

(a) To Mature The Church.

LESSON 4: The Place of Suffering Part 1 (1 Peter 2:13-2:25)

(a) Suffering in Society.

(b) Suffering in the Work Place.

LESSON 5: The Place of Suffering Part 2 (1 Peter 3:1-7)

(a) Suffering in Marriage

LESSON 6: The Practice of Suffering Part 1 (1 Peter 3:8-4:6)

(a) Conduct in Suffering.

(b) Christ's example of Suffering.

LESSON 7: The Practice of Suffering Part 2 (1 Peter 4:7-5:14)

(a) Commands in Suffering

(b) Church in Suffering

LESSON 8: Conclusions and ministry time.

# LESSON 1:INTRODUCTION - Background To First Peter

In this first lesson we will look ‘behind the scenes’ of First Peter to get a general overview which will be helpful as we go through verse by verse. Just like when we put together a puzzle we must view the big picture first before attempting to piece it together.

## (1) Outline and Overview of First Peter:

The previous page has already stated the outline of First Peter which we will follow in this material. Following is a overview chart of the letter:

<b>OVERVIEW CHART OF FIRST PETER</b>									
<b>Focus:</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF SUFFERING</b>			<b>PLACE OF SUFFERING</b>			<b>PRACTICE OF SUFFERING</b>		
<b>Ref.</b>	1 Peter 1:1-2:12			1 Peter 2:13-3:7			1 Peter 3:8-6:14		
<b>Division:</b>	To Magnify the Christ	To Mature the Church	In the Society	In the Work place	In Marriage	Conduct during suffer'g	Christ's example of suff'g	Commands concerning suff'g	Church in suff'g
<b>Ref.</b>	1:3-2:1	1:22-2:12	2:13-17	2:18-25	3:1-7	3:8-17	3:18-4:6	4:7-19	5:1-14
<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER</b>			<b>SUBMISSION OF THE BELIEVER</b>			<b>SUFFERING OF THE BELIEVER</b>		
	<b>BELIEF OF THE CHRISTIAN</b>			<b>BEHAVIOUR OF THE CHRISTIAN</b>			<b>BUFFETING OF THE CHRISTIAN</b>		
	<b>HOLINESS</b>			<b>HARMONY</b>			<b>HUMILITY</b>		

## (2) BACKGROUND TO FIRST PETER:

Divide into four groups and read the relevant material for each group, answering the questions in the time given. The team must share back in a creative way as outlined in their section...

### GROUP 1: Authorship, date and literary value of First Peter:

As a group read through the article and discuss the following points...

- (i) Who dictated (was the author of) the letter ? What events were fresh in his memory as he speaks it out ? (and indeed are referred to in the epistle)
- (ii) Who actually penned the letter (i.e. wrote it down on paper and structured it) ? See 1 Peter 5:12.
- (iii) What would be the main motivation in writing the letter ? What main themes does the author wish to convey ?
- (iv) What are the difficult passages in first Peter which are problematic to interpret ? We will look more in detail at these when we come to them.

**CREATIVE PRESENTATION:** Act out the scene of the writing of this letter - have a narrator, a person dictating the letter and the one writing it. The rest of the team can act out events remembered by the author. The ‘play’ should only last no more than 5 minutes and be recounting only the MAIN aspects of writing this letter

## GROUP 2: Historical Background To First Peter:

Read through the article as a group and discuss the following....

- (i) What was the main historical event that happened just before the writing of this letter ?
- (ii) How were the author and recipients of this letter affected by this event ?
- (iii) Where was this letter written from ? By whom ? To whom ?
- (iv) What is the main purpose of this letter ? To the original recipients ? To us ?

CREATIVE PRESENTATION: As a group you must act out the historical event that is mentioned here and show how it affected Peter and those to whom this letter was written. You need one narrator and the rest of the team should all be involved in acting. The 'play' should be no more than 5 mins.

## GROUP 3: The Use of the Greek Words For Suffering In First Peter:

Read together through the article about the Greek words used for 'suffering' in this letter.

- (i) What is the main Greek root word used for 'suffering' and what is its basic meaning ?
- (ii) Read through all the verses in first Peter this word is used. List out all the lessons learnt about suffering for the sake of Jesus.
- (iii) What other kind of sufferings do you notice are mentioned ? What does Peter say about these ?

CREATIVE PRESENTATION: Prepare a 5 minute 'visual teaching' on what first Peter teaches regarding the topic of 'suffering'. Have one of the group read out the answers to the above questions whilst the rest of the group acts out each point.

## GROUP 4: Peter's Life As Related to the Message of First Peter (Suffering):

Read together through the article on Peter's life in terms of suffering.

- (i) What was Peter's initial view about suffering ? Was he really prepared for it when it came ?
- (ii) What event/s matured Peter's understanding of suffering for the sake of God ?
- (iii) What happened as a result of those events ?
- (iv) This was all preparation for Peter's eventual martyrdom. How was this accomplished ?

CREATIVE PRESENTATION: Prepare a 5 minute skit about Peter's life in relation to suffering. All should be involved. One can narrate whilst the others act to portray the change in Peter through the years in relation to suffering for Christ. Go right up to his martyrdom.

Each group should be given 30 minutes to read through the article, answer the questions and prepare their creative presentation. Another 20 minutes will be used for the presentations themselves and the remaining time to evaluate what each group presented.

## **(3) PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:**

Each person should take a copy of each article home and read through the ones their group did not do. Read again through each group activity and answer on your own. Read first Peter through.

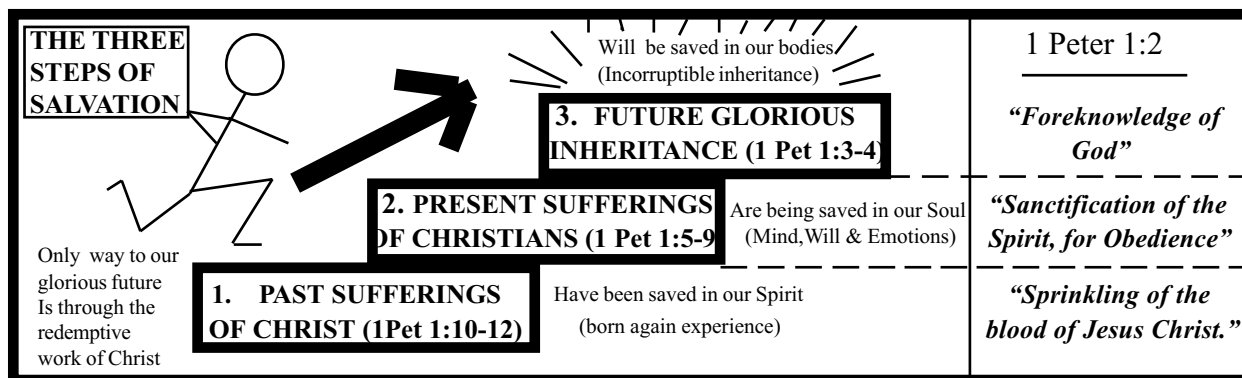
# LESSON 2: The Purpose of Suffering - Part One.

## :To Magnify The Christ (1:1-12).

### (1) INTRODUCING THE PROCESS WHEREBY GOD IS GLORIFIED:

The opening thoughts of First Peter show us that our Christian lives are to bring glory to God which is accomplished by yielding to His process of salvation for us. This will mean having to submit to times of suffering.

The following chart shows us the process of salvation we must yield to to give glory to God by the magnifying of Christ in the midst of our suffering....



Verse 1: Peter writes to those he calls ‘pilgrims’ (Gk. ‘parepidemos’ = an alien alongside, a resident foreigner). He considers himself and those to whom he writes as such. What characterizes such a person and why is this term significant as used here ?

Verse 2: This verse gives a summary of the verses to follow (verses 3-12) as we can see in the diagram above. We are ‘elect’ (chosen) by God because of His foreknowledge (He knew beforehand the state of our hearts). We are chosen for the process of SANCTIFICATION (being made holy) which is by the Spirit as a result of our obedience. The way we are sanctified is always by His grace, through the sprinkling of His blood (See Hebrews 10:22 and 12:24) - His redemptive work is the only foundation on which to build our lives and step forward into His will.

*“Grace to you and peace be multiplied”* - Peter had experienced the grace of God (unmerited favour) and prayed for the Christians to whom he wrote that they too would experience it. His grace is mentioned ten times in this letter (see 1 Peter 1:2,10,13; 2:19,20 ; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5,10,12). See especially 2:19,20 and note that the same greek word for Grace (‘charis’) is used for ‘commendable’. It should read *‘this is grace’* instead of *‘this is commendable’*.

### (2) THE THREE STEPS OF SALVATION EXPLAINED:

#### (A) STEP THREE: OUR FUTURE GLORIOUS INHERITANCE: (1 Peter 1:3-4)

Read Verse 3: What provision has been made for us to reach this step ?

In Verse 4 Peter shows us the future ‘inheritance incorruptible’ we have waiting for us. It is a glorious inheritance that is for eternity in heaven. Read the following cross references and note down the nature of this future inheritance... Acts 20:32; 26:18 and Ephesians 1:11, 14,18 and 2 Timothy 4:8.

This 'glory' (greek 'doxa') is mentioned nine times in 1 Peter. See 1 Peter 1:7,11,21; 4:11,13,14 and 5:1,4,10 and note what is mentioned about God's glory....

Indeed, when Jesus went to the cross to suffer He looked ahead to this glory and was full of the joy and peace of the Lord in the midst of His sufferings (See Hebrews 12:2). We are to do likewise and fix our eyes on that future place prepared for us in heaven. 1 Peter 4:13-14 sums up this step.

**(b) STEP TWO: OUR PRESENT SUFFERINGS : (1 Peter 1:5-9)**

Verse 5: What sustains us through this present time of SANCTIFICATION (being made holy) ?

Verse 6: Why do we have reason to rejoice even if we now go through suffering ?

(NB. The word for 'greatly rejoice' is 'agalliao' which means 'to jump for joy'.  
The word for 'grieved' literally means 'distressed' or 'heaviness' and the term 'various trials' can be rendered 'sufferings of all kinds').

Verse 7: What is a secondary purpose of our suffering ? (the primary one being to glorify God)

How does God receive glory in the future (when Jesus returns) by our suffering for Him?

Verse 8: This verse beautifully shows us how our faith is proven in the midst of suffering.

By our unwavering loving belief in Him though we don't see Him. This quality of faith enables us to experience 'inexpressible joy' which is 'full of glory' (a foretaste of the glory to come) - see John 20:29.

Verse 9: It is during this step (the saving of our souls - mind, will and emotions) that we must endure to the end (Matthew 24:13). We are already saved in our Spirits (eternally) but this speaks of salvation into our reward in heaven (inheritance) which is based on our faith (or faithfulness) in this present age.

The Bible shows us that we will only reign with Jesus (in our inheritance) if we also suffer with Him (See Romans 8:17). We must now endure suffering for His sake if we are to enter into the full joy of His inheritance (See Philippians 1:29; 3:10 and 2 Tim 3:12).

**(c) STEP ONE: THE PAST SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST : (1 Peter 1:10-12)**

This is the foundation step. If we suffer on any other foundation there will be no glory. Our suffering must always be based on the sufferings of Christ (i.e. For His sake).

Verse 10: This process of salvation was prophesied by the prophets of old - as they searched the Scriptures God revealed the prophecies about the coming Messiah - Jesus, who is the *“grace that would come to you”*.  
Can you think of examples of such prophecies in the Old Testament ? Write them down..

Verse 11: This specifically refers to the sufferings the Messiah was to go through as prophesied in the Old Testament. The Prophets had the same Spirit of Christ in them and would also have partaken in the sufferings of Christ for His glory.  
Scriptures that reveal Christ’s sufferings are ones such as Genesis 3:15 and Isa 53.  
Note that *“the glories that would follow”* is used here of our glorious inheritance if indeed we join in the sufferings of Christ.

Verse 12: This verse shows us that what the Prophet’s prophesied by the Spirit has now come to pass in the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are to preach this and report it to others even if it means suffering (which it indeed will do if we desire to live a godly life- see 2 Tim 3:12). We have boldness to preach this message by the Holy Spirit just as the early church did (See Acts 1:8).

*“things that angels desire to look into”* - What does this little addition speak to you ?

See also 1 Peter 2:21; 3:18 and 4:1 and comment on how they show that Jesus suffering in the past is the foundation of ours in the present...

### **(3) SUMMARIZING THIS SECTION:**

We have seen that the main purpose of our suffering is to glorify God by magnifying Jesus in our sufferings for Him.

This is only done as we enter into Christ’s sufferings by being born again and accepting His redemptive work on our behalf (STEP ONE).

Then we must be saved in our souls by enduring suffering for His sake which refines our faith and makes us more holy to give Him more glory (STEP TWO).

If we endure this process to the end with great joy, then we will obtain a glorious inheritance which again will give all glory to Him (STEP THREE).

In the space below see if you can draw the ‘step diagram’ without looking back to the first page of this lesson (how does it compare with the original ?).....

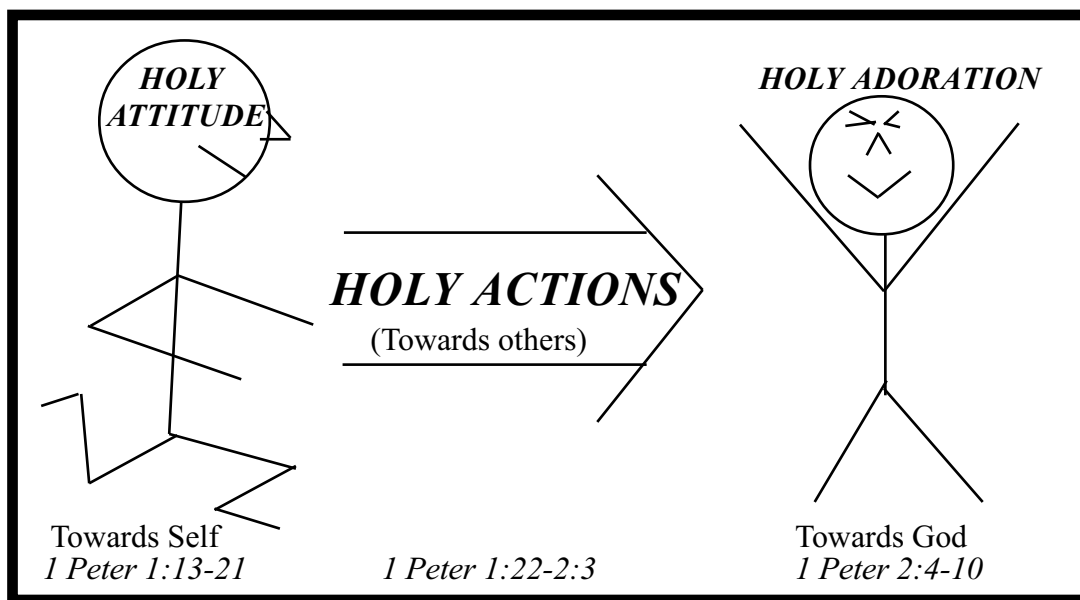
# **LESSON 3: The Purpose of Suffering -Part Two.**

## **: To Mature The Christian (1:13-2:12)**

### **(1) INTRODUCTION: The Three Steps of Holiness in a Maturing Christian.**

The first section of First Peter dealt with the main purpose of suffering, the giving of glory to God. This is the PRIMARY purpose. The SECONDARY purpose is to mature the Christian. This process is called SANCTIFICATION which means 'to be made more holy'. Literally 'holiness' means to be 'set apart' to God and for God.

God will allow us to go through times of suffering so we can become more like Jesus, more holy. This section looks at the three step process of becoming more mature, more holy which may be summed up in the following diagram....



In order for us to mature in the midst of sufferings to be more holy, we must firstly have the right attitude. This right attitude will produce the right actions which in turn will lead to adoration in us and others (among those who are being saved).

### **(2) THE THREE STEPS OF HOLINESS: Looking at each in detail.**

#### **(i) STEP ONE: Holy Attitudes (1 Peter 1:13-21).**

As sanctification (maturing) is to do with the SOUL (mind, will and emotions), the attitude our mind has is of vital importance. This step shows us the kind of mind we must have as we endure suffering for the sake of Christ....

#### **(a) A Mind that knows READINESS (1 Peter 1:13).**

What does 'gird up the loins of your mind' mean? (Compare with 1 Peter 4:1)

What is the significance of 'be sober'?

What are we to continually hope for until it comes? How does this make us ready?

(b) A Mind that knows RENEWAL (1 Peter 1:14).

What kind of mind do obedient children have ?

We have been disobedient children and our minds have dwelt on unwholesome things - by conforming (put itself in the mould of) to the world - to former passions. What must happen for our passion to be for the Lord ? (See Romans 12:2)

(c) A Mind that knows the REQUIREMENTS (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Here, Peter quotes a familiar phrase from the Old Testament 'Be holy; for I am holy' (See Leviticus 11:44,45;19:2 and 20:7). This was used as a precursor to listing what was required of God's people to live holy lives. We are to be holy as God is holy by keeping His Word. But our mind must know what it is we are required to do. How can we ensure this is so ?

(d) A mind that knows REVERENCE (1 Peter 1:17).

What must our minds know about the nature of God in order to live in reverential fear of Him?

This kind of fear is that of a son to a perfect father - the Father loves the son and will execute punishment lovingly, to mature the son. The son will respond with a healthy fear.

What will a mind that lacks this healthy fear of God be like ? How do we cultivate this fear ?

(e) A mind that knows REDEMPTION (1 Peter 1:18-21).

Read this passage .What are we to know in our minds about God's redemption? List them out.

What's the result of this knowledge when we fully believe it ?

(ii) STEP TWO: Holy Actions (1 Peter 1:22-2:3).

Having the correct 'holy attitudes' ,as outlined above, will lead to the correct 'holy actions'. 1 Peter 1:22-25 lays down the basis and nature of such holy actions and 1 Peter 2:1-3 lists specific activities we must do to manifest maturity and show the process of sanctification is under way.

(a) The Basis and Nature Of 'Holy Actions': (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Verse 22 shows the process whereby our souls are purified (SANCTIFICATION). Draw a picture that summarizes this process....

The nature of our 'holy actions' is seen to be what ? (esp v22) Define this.

The basis or reason why we can act in such a way is what ? (vv23-25) Explain.

(b) Specific Activities ('Holy Actions') (1 Peter 2:1-3).

We have seen that God's Word is the basis for us to reach out in love even in the midst of severe suffering. The greatest commandment is to Love God with all we have and love our neighbour (including those causing us suffering) as ourself. But how do we practically do this ? For each verse list the one activity we are to do in order to grow and mature and give suggestions as to how we may do such things...

(1) 1 Peter 2:1 -

(2) 1 Peter 2:2 -

(3) 1 Peter 2:3 -

(iii) STEP THREE: Holy Adoration (1 Peter 2:4-10).

Read through this whole section. This would have meant a lot to Peter personally. His name means 'stone' and he has experienced the Lord's dealings to build him into the temple of the Holy Spirit. Also the rejection of the 'cornerstone' (Jesus) is something he experienced first-hand.

Only by coming to Him (Jesus) (verse 4) can we be built up (matured)...only by offering up 'spiritual sacrifices'. This is comparing us to the Old Testament Priests - we are all Priests now under the New Covenant...discuss what this means...as a Priest what should we be doing ?

**(3) CONCLUSION: How our Christian Maturity is Demonstrated (2:11-12)**

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12 where Peter gives us a concluding overview of this section.

Show how these two verses show the three steps of holiness (from Holy Attitudes, through Holy Actions to Holy Adoration)...

(1) HOLY ATTITUDE:

(2) HOLY ACTIONS:

(3) HOLY ADORATION:

## **LESSON 4: The Place Of Suffering - Part One:** **: In Society and in the Work Place (2:13-25).**

### **(1) INTRODUCTION: The Place of Submission (Verse 13):**

In verse 13 of Chapter 2 we see the word 'Therefore'. We must ask, what is it there for? Referring to what has gone before, Peter is stating that because we are called to holy attitudes, actions and adoration, because we are a special kingly and priestly people, we are called to a life of submission.

In terms of submitting to man, it is so we can be a powerful testimony, not causing them to stumble at our rebellion. But we need to determine what exactly this term 'submit yourselves' really means.

The greek definition for the word 'submit' (hupotasso). It means to 'rank or arrange oneself under' - to know our place, our level of authority.

Yes, as Sons of God, we have a 'right' to live above earthly law, but we give up that right in order to win people to God (see 1 Corinthians 9:12).

It is correct then to say that the place of suffering is to be 'submitting ourselves' - but to what? Let us look the first two places we are to be in submission....

- (a) Submitting In The Society (1 Peter 2:13-2:17).
- (b) Submitting In The Work Place (1 Peter 2:18-2:25).

### **(2) THE PLACES OF SUFFERING: Submission in Society and The Work Place.**

#### **(a) Submission In Society (2:13-17):**

In this section we see Peter urges the Christians to be in submission to the political/governing bodies of that time.

This is especially interesting in the light of how the Roman government (the ruling power at that time) had been treating them (Read again the Historical Background to First Peter).

Verses 13-14 - Here we see that we are to submit ourselves to every ordinance/institution of man. The Bible clearly shows us that to be a good Christian means you have to be a good citizen. We have a threefold responsibility to human governments....

(i) We are to recognise and accept that the powers that be are ordained by God (Read Romans 13:1-7 for the clearest Biblical teaching on this concept). Note that the wicked Roman Emperor Nero was in power when Paul wrote Romans 13 and also when Peter wrote this letter.

This truth applies even to atheistic human governments unless, of course, the law is anti-scriptural. In that situation the believer must obey God rather than man (See Acts 4:18-20).

See also Titus 3:1.

(ii) We are to pay our taxes to human governments (See Romans 13:7, Matthew 17:24-27 and Matthew 22:21).

(iii) We are to pray for the leaders in human governments (See 1 Timothy 2:1-3) - we are to pray that we may live a quiet life and that the leaders may rule in godliness and honesty.

Peter exhorts the readers to submit to the 'king as supreme' (in their case this meant the wicked Roman Emperor Nero).

A 'governor' was a ruler under the emperor who ruled over a certain province (delegated authority).

Human governments are given authority by God, but God allows Satan a certain amount of influence. As Christians we are to pray for Satan's influence to decrease but be willing to suffer for proclaiming His truth in anti-Christ societies.

Verses 15-16 - The will of God is for the salvation of mankind. This is only accomplished as we willingly submit even if it means suffering.

Political resistance, fighting back, rebelling against the government are all contrary to the will of God as it alienates both parties. God's will is that we do good in our society to silence 'foolish men' (those ignorantly acting in opposition to God's will).

We are free, but we must not use our 'rights' so as to offend others and stumble them so they do not accept the gospel.

Verses 17 - Honouring all people means respecting levels of authority (even if they act in a way you disagree with but does not cause you to disobey God) and submitting to them. This in turn must be full of sincere love and in the Fear of God (which means that if any course of action the government asks for that dishonours God, Christians can have no part in it).

#### CASE STUDIES - Submission in Society:

Following are some case studies that you can go through as a group...

(1) Your country's government has ruled that all Christians must pay 50% more in taxes than all other citizens. You have been issued your Tax bill and now have the choice of what to do. Discuss the possible responses. What would be the Biblical response ?

(2) Your country's government has decreed that to be a citizen you have to bow down to worship an image of the King. If you do not you will be considered an outcast and hunted to death. Discuss the options available to a Christian. What would be the Biblical course of action ?

(3) Your country's government has ruled that all Christians should wear in public a pointed hat and an armband with a cross on it. This will invite jeering from onlookers and may incite them to throw rotten tomatoes at you. Discuss the courses of action available to a Christian. What would be the correct Biblical response ?

Write your comments here.....

## **(b) Submitting In The Work Place (2:18-25):**

In this section Peter shows us how to submit in the work place. He specifically mentions servants here, but the principles apply in all spheres of work and business.

Verse 18 - In our work place we are to submit (place ourselves willingly under their authority) to our boss whether they are good (patient towards you and fair in their dealings) or harsh (unfair and even abusive).

We are to work under their authority in 'fear' ('phobos') - fear of causing them to stumble and miss the grace of God. Fear of missing God's will in this relationship (remember that the aim is always to respond in sincere love in order, if possible, to win the souls of those concerned).

Verse 19 - Literally this verse states 'for this is grace (charis)' - Grace = Gladly Receiving All Christ Endured.

If we have a pure conscience towards God and we suffer because of that then we are demonstrating the grace of God. His grace is sufficient in these times of suffering and will also testify to others.

Verse 20 - Again, here it explains that 'this is commendable' (literally 'this is grace'). If we suffer because of our own misdeeds then there is nothing commendable in that. But suffering for the sake of Christ shows forth the finest form of humanity.

Verse 21 - We have been 'called' (literally 'invited') to enter into the sufferings of Christ. His suffering is an example for us. We cannot suffer as a sacrifice for sins, but we can suffer so others may accept Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf.

Verse 22 - In this verse Peter quotes Isaiah 53:9 which is about the suffering servant. Peter saw first hand how Jesus had no guile (deceit) in Him and was sinless. This is one of the flesh items we are to lay aside (See 1 Peter 2:1).

Verse 23 - See Luke 22:63-65 . Peter observed Jesus as He was mocked and reviled. Jesus did not fight back in the flesh and this became a powerful testimony (the centurion at the cross recognised Jesus as being a righteous man).

Jesus committed Himself to God, the righteous Judge. We too must do this and not try to take justice into our own hands (the modern practice of suing our bosses and fellow-workers is against the Spirit of Christ).

Verse 24 - Again quoting from Isaiah 53 Peter shows what Jesus accomplished on the Cross - He bore our sins and by his stripes we are healed. We too must die to sin (reacting in the flesh in times of suffering or under a harsh boss) and partake in the sufferings of Christ (suffer as He did with great calm and joy, not fighting back but knowing God is Judge).

Through Christ's sufferings mankind can enter into God's kingdom. As we partake in His sufferings, we give others a chance to enter into that Kingdom too.

Verse 25 - Jesus has been seen as the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 (like a sheep going to the slaughter), now He is seen as our Great Shepherd who oversees our souls (in the process of Sanctification).

Peter must have thought back to Jesus' parting words ('feed my sheep') as he wrote this. We too are sheep being prepared as a sacrifice. Jesus has paved the way and we must follow Him.

## CASE STUDIES - Submitting in The Work Place:

How do we practically apply these principles in the nitty gritty of the work place ? Following are some case studies you can ponder over as a group...

- (1) Your boss asks you to lie on the phone to say he's not there when he is.  
You know that if you don't do as he says his anger will arise and he'll probably fire you! What are the possible courses of action ? What would you do ?
  
- (2) You are in a company that discriminates against Christians. Your boss has just employed a new non-Christian employee who is much younger than you and less experienced and less qualified. Your boss places them in a superior role to you with better pay and they give you all the dirty jobs to do. One day the new employee comes and asks you to clean the toilet which is not your responsibility. What are the possible courses of action ? What would be the best course according to Scriptural principles ?
  
- (3) Your boss tells all of the staff they have to pray at the company altar. You know that not doing this will probably mean losing your job. You have been happily employed for many years in this company and earn a good salary to support your family. Leaving the job would mean you would be unable to support your family unless you quickly get another source of income. What are the possible courses of action ? What would be the best thing to do following Biblical principles ?

Write down your comments below.....

## **LESSON 5: The Place Of Suffering - Part Two:** **: In The Marriage Relationship (3:1-7)**

### **(1) INTRODUCTION: Submission In Marriage:**

We have already seen that this section is dealing with Submission which comes from the greek word meaning 'to place oneself willingly under'. This will inevitably mean suffering for the sake of Christ. The primary goal of this suffering is to give glory to God and the secondary goal is 'salvation' (our own spiritual maturity, salvation of the soul, and the salvation of others). Within the marriage relationship this principle is also relevant, particularly for the wife whose main responsibility in marriage is to Submit.

### **(2) Submission of the Wife (3:1-6):**

#### **(a) Returning to the Shepherd.**

1 Peter 3:1-2 - This verse starts off with the word 'likewise' or 'in the same way'. The question is, 'In the same way as what?'.

The context points back to 1 Peter 2:25 which talks about returning to the 'Shepherd and Overseer of your souls'. This is primarily referring to Jesus but also to those we are placed under the care of by the Lord. The husband is to be Shepherd to the wife, overseeing the state of her soul (mind, will and emotions).

#### **(b) Submission To An Ungodly Husband So As To Win Him To Christ.**

Read also Ephesians 5:22-24 and note how this submission of wife to husband is 'as to the Lord' - what does this show us?

The husband is placed as head in the marriage relationship (this is his role and does not make him any greater). The woman can be seen as the 'heart' and the man the 'head'. Which is more important? What is the difference?

As 'head', man is the 'thinker' for the relationship and makes the final decisions. These decisions should be based on the Word of God. However, if his decisions are contrary to God's Word (he disbelieves and does not obey God's word) what does this verse say the wife should do? Why? (Read 1 Peter 3:1-2 again carefully before answering)....

This type of submitting (when the husband acts contrary to God's will) is where the wife will go through suffering. As we have seen, if she looks to the Lord for strength and equips her mind for suffering, she can go through this time with great joy and be a powerful testimony.

Think of some examples of such suffering of the wife and think about her proper reactions - again, the only time the wife cannot submit (as in the society and in the work place) is where the husband asks her to compromise in her worship to the living God.

In 1 Peter 3:1-2 verse 1b and verse 2 we see the purpose of the wife's suffering by submitting to an ungodly husband is to win him for Christ. Note that he is not won by her words but by her conduct (same greek word used in both verses).

What is the nature of this conduct? Verse 2 says 'chaste conduct accompanied by fear'. This means that the wife should win an unbelieving husband by godly conduct with reverential fear ('phobos' - used of the fear of God).

### **(c) True Beauty That Is A Powerful Witness In Times Of Suffering.**

1 Peter 3:3 - A wife's beauty (the Greek word 'kosmos' which means 'orderly arrangement') is not external (ie. her physical looks).

It is not to be the elaborate plaiting of the hair, or of wearing gold ornaments all over the body, or even putting on fine clothing that give true beauty. (See 1 Timothy 2:9-11 to see Paul's godly counsel to women concerning physical adornment).

Indeed, Scripture shows us we are to adorn ourselves spiritually with godly instruction and wisdom (See Proverbs 1:8-9).

Gold denotes the nature of God (faith purified - see 1 Peter 1:7) and we are to clothe ourselves with the garments of praise and the robe of righteousness (See Isaiah 61:10).

These are the true characteristics that make a wife beautiful and this beauty may win the unbelieving husband to the Lord (NB. Even Christian husbands sometimes do not believe and obey God's word and act in ways that can cause the wife suffering. Still she is to submit).

1 Peter 3:4 - Meekness and quietness of heart is that quality that is truly of great price (precious) in the eyes of God. These are hidden qualities speaking of a lack of boasting and showing off. A humble disposition.

This kind of 'adornment' is imperishable or incorruptible and will not be burnt up in eternity. (See also Romans 2:29).

### **(d) The Example Of Sarah.**

1 Peter 3:5-6 - Peter uses the example of godly (or chaste - the same root word is used) women of the past, here the example of Sarah is called upon.

Sarah trusted (literally - hoped and expected for God's best) in God and adorned or beautified herself by submitting herself to Abraham (think about their story and how she did this).

She called Abraham 'Lord' (See Genesis 18:12). What does this reveal about her submission to Abraham? How does Genesis 12:12-20 show Sarah's obedience to Abraham even when he was probably making an unwise decision that Sarah may not have agreed with?

She obeyed her husband (literally 'listened under his authority'). Wives who follow this pattern are 'daughters' (i.e. of the godly seed) of Sarah if they do good (live according to the revealed will of God to reach out in love)..

Here Peter says that the fear ('phobos') the wives have (see 1 Peter 3:2) must not be with terror (literally 'alarm'). This is the kind of dread that causes them to run away.

What he seems to be saying is that the godly wife must endure mistreatment from ungodly husbands and not run away. By her gentle actions of love she may win him to Christ (are there exceptions to this? Talk about it and write down your answers.....

## **(2) Submission of the Husband (3:7)**

1 Peter 3:7 - Again the term 'likewise' or 'in the same way' is used. This means that just as the wife is to submit to the husband so is the husband to submit to the wife. But this submission is not to compromise to his role as the head of the relationship.

Just as at times the head must submit to the heart (a heart felt prompting which goes against current reasoning) so the husband is to be willing to submit to the wife's wise counsel of the heart.

### **(a) Dwelling With Understanding:**

Husbands are to dwell with (literally 'live together as a united family') their wives. This rules out times of separation because he cannot stand her nagging (can you think of any situation where separation cannot be avoided?).

God is for marriage and will do everything to bring a marriage into harmony as long as we are willing to cooperate!

This dwelling together is to be with 'understanding' (literally according to knowledge) - not seeking to be understood but rather to understand (the comment 'she doesn't understand me' should not be uttered by the husband!). It is to be based on knowledge of the Scriptures (especially, in this instance, the meaning of Ephesians 5:25).

### **(b) Giving Honour To the Weaker Vessel:**

This is similar to 1 Thessalonians 4:4. Husbands are to give (literally 'to apportion out that which is due') honour (literally 'treasure as precious') to their wives.

This means that husbands are to treat their wives as very precious, giving them the needed attention and time (see also 1 Corinthians 12:22-24 and comment).

'As heirs together of the grace of life' - The wife is not just excess baggage in the marriage to do the 'dirty work' - she has as much part in God's ministry (inheritance) as the husband. The husband and wife should be a team ministering in the grace of God together.

### **(c) That Their Prayers May Not Be Hindered.**

A husband's or wife's prayers to God may be hindered if they are not living in the truths outlined above.

(eg. a husband who is 'lording it over' his wife in a over-controlling way may find his prayers only hit the ceiling and don't break through to heaven. Also a wife who is unsubmissive and rebellious will find her intercessions to God empty and without life.)

This passage also shows that it's God's desire for a husband and wife to pray together (a couple that prays together stays together).

## **(4) Conclusions:** Write down your conclusions here...

## CASE STUDIES:

You can discuss the following case studies with your friends and apply these principles above...

*(1) A Christian woman is married to an unbeliever who is very violent and has beat her up a few times. One day he threatens to beat her up if she does not go and buy him cigarettes and alcohol. What should she do ?*

*(2) A Christian husband has a wife who disrespects his authority and is very controlling. She has just gone behind his back and got another job in another town. Now she is demanding they sell their house and move to the new town. What should be the husband's correct course of action ?*

*(3) An unbelieving husband will not allow his believing wife to go to Church on Sundays. He usually sleeps very late on Sundays and it would be possible for the wife to slip out unnoticed and go to Church. He also demands that she come with him to the Temple, not to worship but just to accompany him as he worships. What should she do ?*

*(4) A believing wife insists she is more spiritual than her believing husband and she should make the main spiritual decisions (i.e. what church meetings to go to, mission/ministry trips etc.). She actually prays more, has deeper spiritual insights and know more about the Bible. She feels God's called them to go on a particular church camp but the husband doesn't want to go and says you need to stay at home with him to look after his needs. What should the wife do ? What does the husband need to do more of ?*

## **LESSON 6: The Practice of Suffering - Part One (1 Peter 3:8-4:6)** **: Conduct in and Christ's Example Of Suffering**

### **(1) INTRODUCTION: What Christ did and what we are to do:**

In this lesson we look at the correct actions to have in the midst of suffering for the sake of Christ. Peter discusses the conduct Christians are to display both within the Church and in the world in general. Then he focuses on the One we are to imitate in suffering - Jesus himself. Peter beautifully shows how Christ set the perfect example for us to follow and fellowship in His sufferings.

This section starts up in verse 8 with the word finally (Greek 'telos') which literally means 'this is the goal' or 'this is the required destination'. Peter is saying here that this section shows the goal of all that has gone before. The goal of knowing the purposes and places of suffering is so we can conduct ourselves properly in suffering, so we can put into practice what we theologically know to be true.

- (a) Conduct in Suffering (1 Peter 3:8-17).
- (b) Christ's example of Suffering (1 Peter 3:18-4:6)

### **(2) CONDUCT IN SUFFERING (1 Peter 3:8-17)**

Peter shows the correct conduct the Christians should have firstly towards the Body of Christ (3:8-12) and secondly towards their unbelieving persecutors (3:13-17).

This order shows that the Church must firstly be living correctly within itself so it can be ready for sufferings from without. If the church is full of backbiting and jealousies and you have a part in that, you will not be ready for persecutions from without when they arise.

#### **(i) Conduct Within The Church (1 Peter 3:8-12)**

1 Peter 3:8-9 shows the seven important activities the Church must engage in within its own walls in order to be ready for suffering from outside.

#### ***ACTIVITY ONE : Be of One Mind. (Verse 8a)***

This is the mind of Christ (See 1 Peter 4:1).

Think about what it means for a group of believers to be of the same mind. It is that quality that enabled the Spirit to descend in power on the day of Pentecost and enable the early Christians to endure sufferings together joyfully.

What practical actions need to be taken by a group of Christians to be of the same mind ?

For related verses see Acts 2:1; 4:32; Romans 12:16;15:6; 1 Corinthians 1:10 and Philippians 3:16.

#### ***ACTIVITY TWO : Having Compassion For One Another. (Verse 8b)***

Literally the Greek word 'sumpathes' (compassion) means 'to sympathize with' or 'to suffer with'. This is the quality of our actions towards other in the Church who are suffering. When one member suffers then all should have compassion and suffer with them.

What are some of the practical actions you can think of in order for us to show this kind of compassion ?

For related verses see Zechariah 7:9; Matthew 16:33; Luke 10:33; Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 12:26 and James 2:13;3:17.

**ACTIVITY THREE : Love As Brothers. (Verse 8c)**

This is 'philadelphos' love (from 'phileo') - it is the quality of love displayed between pure brothers. Think about specific activities this would mean between God's people.

For related verses see Romans 2:10; Hebrews 13:1; 2 Peter 1:7; 1 John 3:14;3:18-19;1 Peter 1:22 and 1 Peter 2:17.

**ACTIVITY FOUR : Be Tenderhearted. (Verse 8d)**

This literally means to be full of pity in the innermost parts for others. This is similar to 'having compassion for one another'.

For related verses see Psalms 103:13; Proverbs 28:8; Matthew 18:33;Ephesians 4:32; James 5:11.

**ACTIVITY FIVE : Be Courteous. (Verse 8e)**

This literally means 'to be humble-minded' - to be humble towards others. Can you think of practical actions that would demonstrate this word ?

For related verses see Acts 27:3;28:7; Philippians 4:8-9 and Colossians 3:12.

**ACTIVITY SIX : Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling . (Verse 9a)**

This literally means not retaliating when others do evil (literally 'worthless', opposite of 'kind, gracious and useful') deeds towards you or slanders/is abusive towards (reviles) you.

For related verses see Matthew 5:39,44; Romans 12:19-21; 1 Cor 4:12-13 and 1 Peter 2:23.

**ACTIVITY SEVEN : Blessing knowing that you were called to this that you may inherit a blessing. (Verse 9b)**

This is 'contrawise' to activity six. It is acting in the opposite Spirit which is what we are called ('kaleo'- invited) to. Indeed since Abraham's time all the Godly seed is called to such blessing (See Genesis 12:1-3).

For related verses see Genesis 12:1-3 and Matthew 19:29;25:34.

**The Equation For A Good Life In The Midst Of Suffering (1 Peter 3:10-12):**

Here we see the elements that make up a person who will ('thelo' - to desire, delight in) love life and will see (experience) good days (See 1 Peter 3:10.).

This whole section is a quote from Psalm 34:12-16 (it was actually written when David pretended madness before Abimelech ( 1 Samuel 21:10-15) and is in the context of a suffering saint.

<b>LOVE LIFE + GOOD DAYS = A + B + C = God's Blessings</b>
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**Where A, B and C are qualities of a person who will love life and see good days.**

**A** = In verse 10b we see this kind of person is one who refrains his tongue from evil ('worthless conversation') and doesn't speak deceit('trickery or craftiness in speech').

**B** = 1 Peter 3:11a - They are the ones who turn away (to deviate, shun, eschew, turn aside) from evil (worthlessness) and do (literally 'abide in') that which is good (literally 'of benefit').

**C** = 1 Peter 3:11b - Also this kind of person will seek (desire) peace (harmonious relationships/ rest and contentment in spirit) and pursue (follow after - the same Greek word is also used for 'persecution' as in 2 Timothy 3:12) it.

1 Peter 3:12 - For related verses on the eyes of the Lord being on the righteous see Deuteronomy 11:12; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 11:4; Proverbs 15:3 and Zechariah 4:10.

God sees our hearts in times of suffering and will give us 'good days' if we are upright in these times before Him.

For related verses on God hearing the prayers of the righteous see Proverbs 15:2,9; John 9:31 and James 5:16.

God turns his eyes and ears to the godly but His face (countenance) to the wicked (See Leviticus 20:3).

## **(ii) Conduct Outside The Church (1 Peter 3:13-17)**

There are four areas revealed in 1 Peter 3:13-17 that show how our conduct should be in suffering for Jesus outside the Church:

### ***(1) Do Not Fear The Threats of the World ( 1 Peter 3:13-14) (Not acting in fear).***

If we are zealous (literal meaning of 'follower') for what is good (beneficial in its effect) we will not be harmed (literally 'made evil or exasperated').

We become zealous (passionate) for Jesus by realizing that even if we suffer ( 'pascho') for righteousness' sake we are blessed (literally 'happy') .

Then, if the above is true, we will not be afraid ('phobeo' - frightened, alarmed) or troubled (literally 'stirred or agitated like water') because of the world's threats (literally 'terror' - 'phobos'). (The last part is a quote from Isaiah 8:12-13 ).

### ***(2) Sanctify The Lord In Your Hearts ( 1 Peter 3:15a) (Practically setting your lives apart for God).***

We are to set our lives apart for God in times of suffering that no temptation to compromise or give in would overcome us. Our hearts signifies our mind, will and emotions. Think about how this can be practically achieved. (See also Numbers 20:12;27:14 and Isaiah 5:16;29:23.)

### ***(3) Be Ready To Give A Defence ( 1 Peter 3:15b) (Preparedness to share your faith in all situations).***

We must be practically prepare to give a defence (literally 'an apology' - 'apologia' from 'apo' = 'to give away' and 'logos' = 'word').

This account is to be given:

(i) To everyone who asks the reason for the hope (confident expectation) in us. (Note that it is people asking and not us forcing or beliefs on them)

(ii) In Meekness\* and the Fear of God.

\*Same as that used in 1 Peter 3:4 - 'gentle and soothing disposition'.

### ***(4) Having a good Moral Conscience ( 1 Peter 3:16) (Pure conscience due to pure actions).***

When unbelievers speak against us and slander us ('katalaleo') and falsely accuse us, they will be ashamed (dishonoured or disgraced) because of our proper behaviour in suffering.

1 Peter 3:17 - The conclusion is that it is better to suffer ( 'pascho') for doing Good (if it's in the will of God) than suffering for doing evil (punishment).

Why do you think this is so ?

### **(3) CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING (1 Peter 3:18-4:6)**

In this section we see Peter remembering from His own experience the suffering that Jesus went through on our behalf. In 1 Peter 3:18-22 he shows us what's Christ's death and resurrection have accomplished for mankind and in 1 Peter 4:1-6 he exhorts us by the Spirit to follow Christ's example of suffering .

His suffering is seen to be a model for us (see 1 Peter 2:21) . Of course we cannot suffer to take people's sins away as Jesus did, but as we allow Christ to Suffer in us (fellowship in His sufferings) He will do that for those we witness to in suffering.

#### ***(i) Christ's Accomplishment Through Suffering (1 Peter 3:18-22):***

We see five aspects of the suffering of Christ....

##### *(1) He Suffered Once For Sins, The Just For The Unjust ( v18a).*

Christ death was conclusive and final in relation to taking away the sins on mankind. This was accomplished at the Cross.

##### *(2) He suffered That He Might Bring Us To God ( v18b).*

The purpose of Christ's death on the Cross is to draw mankind to Himself and to His purposes. See also Ephesians 2:16-18.

##### *(3) He Was Put To Death In The Flesh But Made Alive In The Spirit ( v18c).*

This is Christ's example. He was quickened in the Spirit by mortifying the flesh even though His was sinless flesh.

##### *(4) He Preached To The Spirits In Prison By The Spirit ( vv19-20).*

Who are these Spirits in Prison ?

This seems to be the time when Christ was dead in the tomb, His Spirit declared victory over the demonic fallen angels in prison.

The word 'prison' is a figurative state. Demons hold people who don't know Christ in a spiritual prison. Christ has declared freedom for these prisoners but this must be claimed. Verse 20 could be referring to the Sons of God (fallen angels) who came to the daughters of men (see Genesis 6:2-4).

##### *(5) His Resurrection And Ascension To Heaven Give Him Authority To Forgive Sins And Set The Prisoners Free (vv21-22)*

An Antitype is the completion of an earlier truth as revealed in the Bible. The flood is a type of Baptism. This is not water baptism (we are not saved by this) but the Baptism into the body of Christ (not external removal of filth, but the internal answer of a good conscience towards God.

See Romans 6:3-5 and Acts 8:36-38 for further study.

This washing clean in our hearts (being born again) is only possible because of Christ's resurrection and glorification to the place of authority at the right hand of God

We were prisoners to Satan but now through belief in Jesus and His work for us we are set free to join in His sufferings and see other prisoners set free.

***(ii) Following Christ's Example Of Suffering (1 Peter 4:1-6):***

In this section Peter outlines four points concerning our joining in Christ's sufferings. He starts with 'therefore' - because of what Christ has done for us we follow suit and suffer with Him....

*(1) Arm Ourselves With The Same Mind As Christ (v1).*

As Christ has suffered in the flesh we are to arm (equip as with weapons) our minds with the same attitude as Christ (that of preparedness to Suffer for God).

*(2) Not Live In The Flesh But For The Will Of God (vv2-3).*

This literally says we are not to live for the desires (passions) of men but for the desires (Will ('thelema' - delight, desire, pleasure)) of God.

Verse 3 shows us the various passions will ('boulema' - purpose) of man we are to flee. [Click here to see the Greek meanings of each of the words used for these passions of men.](#)

*(3) We Will Suffer Ridicule From Unbelievers (v4).*

We will be like a strange foreigner to them. This will surprise unbelievers because they expect us to think and do as they do. Our actions will cause them to speak evil ('blasphemo') of us as we don't 'run' (literally 'to rush together') with them in their excess of riotous (no self control) living.

*(4) Those Who Persecute Us Will Give Account (vv5-6).*

Though man may judge us (the evil may be judged as being worthy of much honour on this earth and the righteous of much ridicule), God is the righteous judge and will ultimately bring true justice.

**(4) CONCLUSION:**

Write , in your own words, a summary of this section.....

## **LESSON 7: The Practice of Suffering - Part Two (1 Peter 4:7-5:9)** **: Commands in and the Church in Suffering**

### **(1) INTRODUCTION: End Times Commands and Exhortations For Suffering.**

In this section Peter continues with his advise on conduct during times of suffering. The opening statement here ('But the end of all things is at hand' - 1 Peter 4:7a) is a reminder that we are living in the last days. Because of this Peter steps up a gear by issuing ten specific commands to the Church in the light of the times we are living in.

Suffering is to be expected and the commands he gives help us go through these times as Christ endured for the sake of the Gospel.

Then Peter returns to encouraging the Church in suffering, this time giving specific words to the Elders and Shepherds of the Church, then to the young people and to the congregation as a whole.

### **(2) COMMANDS IN SUFFERING (1 Peter 4:7-19):**

*THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SUFFERING FOR JESUS:*

#### **(1) Do Be Serious And Watchful In Your Prayers (1 Peter 4:7).**

Literally Paul is commanding Christians to be of a sound, temperate mind (self-controlled) and not intoxicated by the wine of this world in their prayers. What could this practically mean ?

#### **(2) Do Have Fervent Love For One Another (1 Peter 4:8).**

Christians are to have fervent (literally 'stretched out') love (agape - self-sacrificial love) for one another. This kind of love covers (literally 'to steal away and hide secretly') a multitude (literally 'a great throng') of sins.

Think practically how this kind of love is demonstrated.

#### **(3) Do Be Hospitable To One Another (1 Peter 4:9).**

Literally, Peter commands them to be fond (phileo - brotherly affection) of guests (foreigners, strangers). This is not just an external show of hospitality but must be without grudging (grumbling or murmuring). Think about what it means to be hospitable without grumbling - how are you in this area ?

#### **(4) Do Minister To One Another (1 Peter 4:10-11).**

We must use the Spiritual Gifts we have received (literally 'laid hold on') as good (literally 'beautiful') stewards of the manifold (many-sided) grace of God, ministering to one another.

Verse 11 says that as we minister in utterance (words) or in actions we must do it as the Lord gives us words and as the Lord furnishes (the greek word is 'choregeo' which means 'to be a dance-leader' and is where we get the modern dance term 'choreograph'). This must be in His power and enabling.

Think about what this practically means.

Through us doing this God is glorified (the primary goal of our existence).

**(5) Don't Think It Strange Concerning The Fiery Trial (1 Peter 4:12).**

We are not to consider suffering for Jesus as foreign (Strange) to us, but consider it as something to try (test, refine as through fire) us.

**(6) Do Rejoice To The Extent That You Partake Of Christ's Sufferings (1 Peter 4:13).**

We are to be calmly happy in sufferings as we are sharers with Christ in this truly noble cause. Notice that rejoicing is to the extent of how much suffering we endure for Christ! If we allow His joy to be manifest in us in suffering then we see Jesus returning in glory (when His glory is revealed) we will be glad (same greek word as 'rejoice' used here) but also with exceeding joy (literally to 'leap with gushing joy').

**(7) Do Be Blessed (literally 'happy') If Reproached For The Name Of Christ (1 Peter 4:14).**

If we are reproached (literally 'defamed' or 'slandered' - 'dragging our name in the mud') for Christ's sake we are commanded to be happy because God's Spirit of glory rests on (literally 'refreshes') us. This clearly shows the common theme in this letter of God's glory coming after and during suffering for Him.

**(8) Don't Suffer As An Evildoer (1 Peter 4:15).**

No Christians are to suffer ('pascho') as a murderer, thief, evil-doer or a busy body. This means that we are not to suffer because we deserve it (this is just punishment) but suffer for Christ when we don't deserve it.

See also 1 Peter 3:17.

**(9) Don't Be Ashamed For Suffering For Christ (1 Peter 4:16).**

Peter commands suffering Christians not to have the feeling of being ashamed because of this. Instead they are to glorify God in the midst of their trials. What does this practically mean ?

The verses 1 Peter 4:17-18 serve as a parenthesis stating that God's judgement comes first to the Church before the world is judged. The church will be judged as to whether it can go through suffering without being ashamed (judgement of fire).

Peter states that if judgement comes first on His people (the righteous), how much more will come on the unrighteous.

**(10) Do Commit Your Soul To Him In Doing Good (1 Peter 4:19).**

We are to 'place alongside' our souls in doing good - i.e. align our lives to doing that which is pleasing in God's eyes. This is as to a faithful (trustworthy) Creator (author of all things - He knows the end from the beginning).

**(3) THE CHURCH IN SUFFERING (1 Peter 5:1-9):**

In this section Peter focuses on the conduct of the Shepherds and sheep towards each other in the Church. In the midst of suffering it is essential for the Church to be properly arranged in love and united so that God's glory may be seen.

It is divided into two parts, Peter's advice to the Elders (Shepherds) and then to the rest of the congregation (sheep).

## **(i) Exhortation the the Elders (Shepherds) (1 Peter 5:1-4):**

This section would have been based largely on Peter's experience of the event in John 21:15-19 where Jesus appeared on the sea shore to the Disciples and made them breakfast. He asked Peter questions about his love for the Chief Shepherd and said if Peter really loves Him he'll Shepherd the sheep (God's people).

### **A. Peter's Qualifications To Be Able To Exhort The Elders (1 Peter 5:1)**

Peter exhorts ('parakaleo' - to call alongside for counsel and comfort- the same word used of the Holy Spirit) the Elders on the basis of the following qualifications....

#### ***(1) He is a fellow elder (Verse 1a).***

Literally this says he is a co-elder as indeed he was a leader among equals.

#### ***(2) He is a witness of the sufferings of Christ (Verse 1b).***

Indeed Peter witnessed first hand the sufferings of Christ and had witnessed them in his own life as he partook of them.

See Matthew 26:37 for one instance of Peter witnessing Christ's suffering.

#### ***(3) He is partaker of the glory that will be revealed (Verse 1c).***

As Peter wrote this he would probably have been thinking back to the Transfiguration experience. Also it could refer to the joy inexpressible and full of glory (see 1 Peter 1:8) he has experienced personally in the midst of suffering for Jesus.

### **B. Peter's Exhortation To The Shepherds (Verses 2-4)**

#### ***(1) Shepherd (feed) the flock among you (verse 2a).***

Peter must have thought back to Jesus' parting words ('feed my sheep') as he wrote this. Peter passes on this advise to his fellow Shepherds.

Note that he says feed the 'flock among you' and not another Shepherd's flock!

#### ***(2) Serve as overseers (verse 2b).***

This is the same word as Elder.

#### ***(3) Serve not by compulsion but willingly (verse 2c).***

They are to feed the sheep willingly (because they want to) and not out of compulsion (because they have to).

#### ***(4) Serve not for dishonest gain but eagerly (verse 2d).***

They are to minister not for dishonest gain (filthy lucre - the root meaning being 'for shameful reasons') but eagerly(willingly,of a forward spirit).

#### ***(5) Don't be Lords over those entrusted to you (verse 3a).***

They are not to lord it over those who are their inheritance (literal rendering). Think of ways this could be so.

#### ***(6) Be examples to the flock (verse 3b).***

The word for 'example' here is 'tupos' where we get the word 'Type' (eg. David is a Type of Christ) which literally means to show forth the image of someone special (in this case Jesus).

#### ***(7) Will receive a crown of glory when Chief Shepherd appears (or is manifested) (Verse 4).***

Good shepherds will receive the victor's Crown (used of wreath given on winning a race) - this is being put in a place of rulership and recognition when Jesus comes again.

## **(ii) Exhortation to the Congregation (Sheep) (1 Peter 5:5-9):**

In this section Peter writes to the rest of the congregation, starting with the younger members. He urges them to get in proper rank and file as God's army so the enemy has no foothold in times of suffering.

### ***(1) Submit yourselves to the elders (younger people) (1 Peter 5:5a).***

Those who are youthful or new in the flock are to submit (hupotasso- come under rank) to the elders .

These are the ones who tend to have rebellious streaks and that is why Peter singles them out (See Hebrews 13:17).

### ***(2) Be submissive to one another (all congregation) (1 Peter 5:5b).***

This submission must also be to one another within the flock.

### ***(3) Be clothed with humility (1 Peter 5:5c).***

Literally this means to prepare yourself for labour (girding oneself) by having a mind of humility (or modesty).

The last part of verse 5 is a quote from Proverbs 3:34. He urges the Christians to have a humble attitude to receive grace and not pride which God resists.

1 Peter 5:6 - This is a Biblical principle (See these Scriptures). If we humble ourselves (NB. it is our responsibility not God's) then He will exalt us in His timing (kairos - a season pregnant with divine opportunity).

### ***(4) Cast all your cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7).***

We are to cast (used of casting robes on the colt Jesus entered into Jerusalem on) our anxious thoughts (literally 'to be drawn in all directions') on Jesus for He cares for us (this word for care means "something is an object of care," especially the care of forethought and interest, rather than anxiety).

### ***(5) Be Sober (1 Peter 5:8a).***

This means to have a mind of self-control - not being intoxicated on things of this world.

### ***(6) Be Vigilant (1 Peter 5:8b).***

This literally means 'to awaken', 'to collect ones faculties'. To be watchful and alert in the spirit, aware of the enemy's tactics.

We must be alert as the nature of Satan is as a devouring lion roaring for it's prey. He is a counterfeit of the real Lion of Judah (Jesus).

### ***(7) Resist the devil (1 Peter 5:9).***

We are to actively stand against the devil, withstanding and opposing his attacks. Also we must be steadfast (literally 'strong', 'abiding', 'in covenant') in our faith (trust in God).

Knowing such sufferings are experienced by Christians all over the world exposes a main strategy of satan (making us guilty thinking we are the only ones suffering in such a way).

### **(3) THE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT SUFFERING (1 Peter 5:10-14):**

#### ***(A) THE CLOSING BENEDICTION.***

1 Peter 5:10 - This verse really sums up the message of this letter. God is a God full of Grace who has called (invited) us to inherit His glory. We can partake of this glory in part now if we suffer('pascho') for a while (a brief time). We will enter fully into that glory when Jesus returns for His Bride, the Church.

Through this suffering He will perfect (mature and restore) us , establish (set us fast in our appointed place/inheritance) us, strengthen (literally 'to confirm us in spiritual knowledge and power') us and settle (to ground on a firm foundation) us.

1 Peter 5:11 - This verse once again reiterates the primary goal of all our suffering for Christ - glory and dominion to God forever Amen! (See Revelation 1:6).

#### ***(B) PERSONAL FOOTNOTES OF PETER***

1 Peter 5:12 - This shows that Silvanus (also known as Silas) actually wrote the letter as dictated by Peter.

Peter says this letter has been exhorting (parakaleo) and testifying (epimarturio - to further witness) that in the midst of suffering we stand (abide) by God's Grace.

1 Peter 5:13-14 - Greetings are sent from the church in Babylon (probably a code name for Rome) and also from Mark (who Peter calls his 'son' - his close disciple).

The letter ends with a command to greet one another with a kiss (usual greeting in the Middle East - on the cheek) of love (agape - self sacrificial love). The fact it is a kiss of love distinguishes it from the usual insincere greetings people would give. Can you think of the cultural term of greeting for your nation that could be used ? How can it be insincere ? What would make it a greeting of love ?

Finally Peter prays for peace to all who are in Christ (only they can have true peace).

Amen.