

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

1 PETER & 2 PETER

FULL of Hope FULL

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF TIMES OUT OF YOUR WORST OF TIMES



SOMBODY'S WATCHING YOU!

1 Peter 2:11-25

We began our study through 1 and 2 Peter weeks ago entitled **“Full of Hope-full: How to Make the Best of Time Out of Your Worst of Times.”** The question is how do I develop that kind of life and faith that enable me to be full of “hope-fullness” even in the midst of the “worst of time”... in times of hardship, suffering, and the struggles of this life or as in the case of those in Peter’s day, extreme persecution. That is where First Peter comes in. The Christian life is an overcoming life. Even though we will definitely have problems and personal struggles in this life (trials of many kinds), we will be able to overcome because of Jesus. Because of Him, we have victory over the world, including sinful habits, bitterness, loneliness, guilt, fear, and discouragement. God desires for you to live an overcoming life! Jesus, Himself, said in **John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”** And in 1 John 5:4-5, **“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”** Christians are overcomers and truly are to live hope-filled Christian lives every day, but let’s be honest, there are many trial and struggles, heartaches and difficulties along... times of suffering that can daily rob us of our joy and paralyze our faith, steal our hope, and destroy our relationship and weaken our walk... times of suffering can embitter and defeat us if we let it. 1 Peter was written to help believer’s believe and grow even in times of suffering... to be “Full of Hope-full.”

Before we study the details of this fascinating letter... one of only two books in all of the Bible written by Jesus closest disciples and a leader of the disciples, and both very short... before we get into our study let’s be reminded of some of the most important background information for the book.

5 Important Background Information for the Book of 1 Peter:

1. **The author of the book of 1 Peter is the APOSTLE PETER, the head and lead spokesman for Jesus' twelve disciples** - The New Testament had four different names for Peter: Simeon (the Hebrew for Peter's original name, Acts 15:14, 2 Peter 1:1), Simon (the Greek name for Simeon applied 49 times in the New Testament), Cephas (a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word for rock [כִּפְּאִי קִיפּוֹס]; this is used to play off of πέτρος), Peter (Πέτρος) the leader and spokesman for the early disciples. This is how he is addressed in the greeting emphasizing his authority to speak. The early New Testament Church almost exclusively regarded Peter as the author of the letter. And of course there is the internal evidence supporting Peter's authorship, the letter claims to be from "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1), the writer claims to be the readers "fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed" (1 Peter 5:1), the writer identifies "Silas" (Silvanus) as one who helped him to write the letter (1 Peter 5:12; see also Acts 15:22 and 1 Thessalonians 1:1), the writer also sends greetings from Mark (1 Peter 5:13; see Acts 12:12).
2. **The book of 1 Peter (like Paul's letter to the Galatians) is actually a CIRCULAR LETTER, meant to be circulated to multiple early New Testament churches and believers** - Peter is a letter written in normal epistle form and style. The rhetorical and didactic nature of the letter may mean that it was intended to be read aloud to the congregations. It is best to see this letter as a circular type of letter in its present form which was directed to all the churches in the areas mentioned in northern Asia minor.
3. **The recipient of Peter's letter (also like Paul's letter to the Galatians) were probably a mixed group of JEWISH and GENTILE believers who were scattered throughout the five Roman provinces of ASIA MINOR in what is present day Turkey** – This is a circular (or general) letter, but unlike the others, it identifies its recipients. The letter is addressed to those who are from places in northern Asia Minor or modern Turkey (1:1): Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia.
4. **The letter was written around AD 64, either before or during the Neronian persecution, which helps to date the writing** – Tradition holds that both Paul and Peter were victims of persecution under Nero at Rome after the disastrous fire in the city of Rome on July 19 of AD 64. The death of Paul is considered to be before Peter's. The timing of Paul's death does not really affect the date of 1 Peter. The letter was written from "Babylon" (1 Peter 5:13) which was probably a cryptic title for Rome... the head of the then pagan, anti-God world (see Rev. 14:8, 17:5&18).
5. **The purpose of 1 Peter is to encourage and enable Christians/believer to face PERSECUTION and SUFFERING with hope in the grace of God** - Although 1 Peter does bare the form of a letter, the tone is that of a homiletical, teaching, instructional sermon designed to provide direction for believers under persecution; at times it also includes theological considerations which support the ethical exhortations, and to exhort his readers under persecution to follow the example of Christ whose life was characterized by patient suffering

Turn in your Bible to the book of James. I want to begin this evening at a familiar passage and some familiar words that you've heard many time, perhaps you have memorize, but I want us to really lean in this evening into what it is says. God to James, the first chapter. James 1 and look

at verses 2-4, **“Consider it pure joy, my brother (and sisters) whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” –James 1:2-4 (NIV)**

There is a Christian perspective and worldview of suffering communicate in those verses that is really quite radical. **What am I talking about? The idea that suffering/trial can be an occasion of joy.** Without “suffering” it is likely our faith may never really deepen and develop fully to maturity... and nobody, it seems, ever escapes the process. It seem, at least according to Scripture, we simply cannot become the people God intends us to be without some headaches and heartaches along the way... some bumps along the road... without suffering, trials, and hardships. Now think about this there are lots of ways we can respond to “suffering.” Let’s think about it. What effect can suffering have on our life? What can it do to us spiritually, emotionally, mentally? What are some possible responses to suffering? See if we can list some and talk about them:

How people respond to suffering inflicted on their life?:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) Bitterness | (6) Depression/despondency |
| (2) Anger | (7) Paranoia and withdrawl |
| (3) Resentment | (8) Suicide/Mental madness |
| (4) Hostility to God and others | (9) Violence/fighting |
| (5) Vengeance/revenge | (10)Lost faith/hopeless |

2 Possible Responses to Suffering:

- 1. Negative response... we can respond by becoming hardened** – Often when “trial of many kinds” (as James calls it) or suffering come our way, whatever that may be (failure, loss, discouragement, heartache, disappointment, or persecution), it often throws us so off guard... we are so unprepared, that it knocks the wind out of our sails. It may leave us reeling, perhaps hurting so deeply or so confused and bewildered that we find ourselves growing angry... sometimes even mad. We get mad at God, mad at the world and mad at others. We can lash out and allow our pains and disappointments in life to literally harden and callous our spirit. We may grow bitter toward God for apparently allowing this to happen to us.
- 2. Positive response... we can respond by faith with abiding joy and hope** – Our trials and suffering truly do either harden us, harden our heart or they can lead to something greater with God’s help. That is essentially what James says. He is telling us that for a believer, the suffering we experience in this life can actually serve to enable our faith to find an “in all circumstances,” full of hope and encouragement as we mature us and grow in the faith. So, suffering can be an occasion, with God’s help, to draw closer to God than we have ever been in greater dependence and reliance on Him, and be full of joy and hope.

So the question is how do I develop a joy/hope filled, mature, faith rather than become hardened, wilt and die in despair and bitterness when I’m hurting or going through times of suffering and trial? How do I turn moments of struggle, and hardship, and difficulty into opportunities to develop my faith? James mentions **“trials of many kinds”** which may also be translated as “many kind of trials” and, let’s face it, there are many kinds of trial that we face in this life. We have talked about a few of these in the past few weeks of this study. .

The Christian life is an overcoming life. Even though we will definitely have problems and personal struggles in this life (trials of many kinds), we will be able to overcome because of Jesus. Because of Him, we have victory over the world, including sinful habits, bitterness, loneliness, guilt, fear, and discouragement. God desires for you to live an overcoming life! Jesus, Himself, said in John 16:33, *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* And in 1 John 5:4-5, *"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."* Christians are overcomers and truly are to live victorious Christian lives every day, but let's be honest, there are many trial and struggles, heartaches and difficulties along that way that can daily steal our joy and paralyze our faith, destroy our relationship and weaken our walk... trials of many kinds that can embitter and defeat us if we let them.

*"A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor a man made better without suffering."
– Chinese Proverb*

Sure it doesn't feel good to go through abrasive moments of trials and struggles. Sometimes they are recurring. Remember this, life is full of rubbing shoulders and exchanging words. Every time life would seem to cut you and grind you, it means God is working in you to make you a better you.

Life really is marked by problems... struggles... hardships... trials. We all have them. No one is immune to them... not even Christians. Some are major, most are perhaps minor... some linger... many can be resolved about as quickly as they appear. When we are in the midst of a trying time... a trial, they can all seem major at the time, and life impacting in some ways. No trial is easy at the time, otherwise it wouldn't be called a "trial." In the process of growth toward maturity in our Christian lives, trials do actually play an essential role as we have seen. Trials put faith on the line, it may cause us to grow and mature in our faith walk, and it can actually create a greater reliance on the one who can truly handle the problems, and struggles and trials in our lives and cause us to grow closer to Him than we have ever been. This is especially true when a trial is especially challenging. In closing out our study on "The Magnificent Joy of Trials" there is no better help to be given for facing the trials in life that are sure to come than to point us to the One who can provide help and answers to our trial-prone lives.

A STARK REALITY FOR CHRISTIANS

New Christians will quite often have misconceptions about God, the Christian life and other believers and the things we face in this life... namely the struggles, the problems, the trials this life can hold. But that is not only a reality for new Christians, many who have been Christians for years may carry these misconception tucked neatly in their back pocket and when trial, and difficulties, and hardships come... when things don't go as they expected in their tidy Christian world these misconceptions reveal themselves. This look at the common misconceptions of Christianity is designed to dispel some of the myths that typically hinder Christians from growing and maturing in the faith even in the face of trials.

10 Commonly Held Dangerous Misconceptions Christians May Make: *(these misconceptions really contribute to our inability to deal with the trials we face and sometimes are themselves a catalyst for great trials themselves)*

- (1) **Once you become a Christian, God will solve all of your problems (John 6:33, 1 Peter 4:12-13)** - In other words, “no more trials”... “all my restless tossing and trials are over.” Not so! Christians are shocked when the first trial or serious crisis hits. Here's a reality check -- get prepared -- the Christian life is not always easy! You will still face ups and downs, challenges and joys. You will have [problems and troubles](#) to overcome. Jesus said in [John 6:33](#), *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* And [1 Peter 4:12-13](#) offers encouragement for Christians facing difficult situations, *“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”*
- (2) **Becoming a Christian means giving up all fun and following a life of rules (John 10:10, 1 Corinthians 2:9)** – This age old idea seem to imply that becoming a Christian will just be one problem after another...one trial heaped on another...that you will have to give up all your good times, all your friends, and that becoming a Christian is a real trial in itself. A joyless existence of mere rule-following is not true Christianity and the abundant life God intends for you. Rather, this describes a man-made experience of legalism. God has amazing adventures planned for you... not trial free, but amazing. As a matter of fact, Jesus, Himself described the life a Christian has as “abundant” when He said in [John 10:10](#), *“... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”* (NKJV) This verses gives a description of what it means to experience real life, full life... the best life even in the midst of a trial-prone existence. [1 Corinthians 2:9](#) says it like this and reminds us that though not problem free the Christ life is truly a blessed life, *“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”*
- (3) **All Christians are loving, perfect people (Colossians 3:13, Philippians 3:12-13)** – This misconception can pose serious problems itself for a believer. It doesn't take very long to discover that Christians are not always loving and perfect people. Quite the contrary can be true sometimes for any number of reasons. But being prepared to meet the imperfections and failures of your new family in Christ can spare you future trials of pain and disillusionment from the hands of others from whom you may be tempted to expect perfection. Although Christians strive to be like Christ, we will never obtain complete sanctification until we stand before the Lord. In fact, God uses our imperfections to "grow us" in the faith. If not, there would be no need to forgive one another. As we learn to live in harmony with our new family, we rub each other like sandpaper. It's painful at times, but the result brings about a smoothing and softening to our rough edges. Paul reminds us in [Colossians 3:13](#) that we are to *“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”* The very fact that he encourage us to have to do this “bearing with one another” implies that we are not always loving and perfect people, but rather a people who must be “beared” with. Do you get it? And he reminds us in [Philippians 3:12-13](#) that we aren't there yet, but rather still a work in progress when he said, *“Not*

that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead ...” In other words, I am not perfect yet... I’m still working on it, or rather He is still working on me!

- (4) **Bad things don't happen to truly godly Christians (2 Corinthians 11:24-26, 1 Peter 1:6-7)** - This point goes along with point number one, however, the focus is slightly different. Often Christians begin to wrongly believe that if they live a godly Christian life, God will protect them from pain and suffering... problems in this life... from trials. This just “ain’t” so according to God’s Word. Paul, a hero of the faith, suffered much. He lays out some of the bad things that happen to this truly godly Christian... just listen to it in **2 Corinthians 11:24-26**, *“Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers.”* Some faith groups believe the Bible promises [health, wealth and prosperity](#) for all who live a godly life. But this teaching is false. Jesus never taught this to his followers. You may experience these blessings in your life, but they are not a reward for godly living. At times we experience tragedy, pain and loss in life. This is not always a result of sin, as some would claim, but rather, for a greater purpose that we may not understand immediately. We may never understand, but we can trust God in these difficult times, and know he has a purpose. [Rick Warren](#) says in his [popular book](#), “The Purpose Driven Life” says *“Jesus did not die on the cross just so we could live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: He wants to make us like himself before he takes us to heaven.”* **1 Peter 1:6-7** says it like this, *“So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold--and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.”* [\(NLT\)](#)
- (5) **Christian ministers and missionaries are more spiritual than other believers (1 Timothy 1:15-16)** – This is a major “problem” in church and with many Christian. The problems associated with this misconception are varied, but deadly. This is a subtle but persistent misconception that we carry in our minds as believers sometimes. Because of this false notion, we end up putting ministers and missionaries on "spiritual pedestals" accompanied by unrealistic expectations. When one of these heroes falls from our self-constructed perch, it tends to make us fall too -- away from God. This creates a terrible “trial” for our faith... sometimes to the point of disillusionments and abandonment of our previous commitments to our Lord and to His church. Don't let this happen in your life. You may have to continually guard yourself against this subtle deception. Paul, Timothy's spiritual father, taught him this truth - we are all sinners on an equal playing field with God and each other. **1 Timothy 1:15-16** , *“This is a true saying, and everyone should believe it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--and I was the worst of them all. But that is why God had mercy on me, so that*

Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.” (NLT)

- (6) **Christian churches are always safe places, where you can trust everyone (1 Peter 5:8, Matthew 10:6)** - Although this should be true, it is not. Unfortunately we live in a fallen world where evil resides. Not everyone who enters the church has honorable intentions, and even some who do come with good intentions can fall back into old patterns of sin. People get injured in church, and words said in a heated moment can cut deeply. Disagreements and squabbles can seem to hurt even deeper in a church leaving their victim feeling like the one place they felt was a holy separate place is suddenly a war zone. “Trials” can come us even in the seemingly “safe” environment of the church, because churches are made up of imperfect people, and the enemy likes to disrupt and dis-unify the body of Christ whenever and where he can. Peter warned us of this very thing in 1 Peter 5:8, when he said, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (NKJV)* And Jesus, Himself, warned us in Matthew 10:6, *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (KJV)*
- (7) **Christians should never say anything that might offend someone or hurt someone else's feelings (Ephesians 4:14-15, Proverbs 27:6)** – This is a misconception. Many believers have a wrong understanding of meekness and humility. The idea of godly meekness involves having strength and courage, but the kind of strength that is submitted to God's control. True humility recognizes complete dependence upon God and knows we have no goodness except that which is found in Christ. Sometimes our love for God and our fellow Christians, and obedience to God's Word compel us to speak words given in love that to some, who are caught up in some worldly things or in a path of sin, may possibly be offended at or hurt by. Some people call this "tough love," and although some may use this approach too readily and carelessly injure others, there is a time and a place under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and done with the right heart attitude and in the Spirit that things must be handled and said. Be aware that this may create a crisis of faith for that one... a real trial for them. Paul states it like this in Ephesians 4:14-15, *“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” (NIV)* And listen to this wise proverb from Proverbs 27:6, *“Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” (NIV)* Wow! In other words, even hard words said in love from someone who really cares about you are flattering words from someone who just says what you want to hear.
- (8) **As a Christian you should not associate with unbelievers (1 Corinthians 9:22-23)** - I am always saddened when I hear so called "seasoned" believers teaching this false notion to other Christians. Yes, it is true that you may have to break off some of the unhealthy relationships you have had with people from your past life of sin if and when their pull and draw on you is so strong that it is leading back into that life of sin. At least for a while you may need to do this until you are strong enough to resist the temptations of your old lifestyle. However, Jesus, our example, made it his mission

(and ours) to associate with sinners. How will we attract those who need a Savior, if we don't build relationships with them? Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22-23, "When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ. I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so I enjoy its blessings. (NLT)

(9) **Christians should not enjoy any earthly pleasures (Job 1:21)** - I believe God created all of the good, wholesome, enjoyable, and fun things we have on this earth as a blessing for us to enjoy. The key is not holding on to these earthly things too tightly. We should grasp and enjoy our blessings with our palms held open and tilted up. Job 1:21 reads, "And (Job) said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." (NIV)

(10) **Christians always feel close to God (Psalm 63:1, Psalm 42:1-3)** – When a person first becomes a Christian he or she may feel very close to God. Your eyes have just been opened to a brand new, exciting life with God. However, you should be prepared for dry seasons in your walk with God. They are bound to come. A life-long walk of faith requires trust and commitment even when you don't feel close to God. Sometimes those dry seasons and distant feeling can come in the midst of the problems that we face. It is in those moments that we may feel at times like God has deserted us, or our own disappointment with life may cause us to feel not as close to Him. In these verses, David expresses sacrifices of praise to God in the midst of spiritual times of drought. Psalm 63:1, "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. (NIV) And Psalm 42:1-3, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'" (NIV) He is still there even when do feel as close to Him as we may have at one time. Go to Him! Seek after Him and don't stop even in those times when problems persist.

***QUESTION:** We stated that these misconceptions really contribute to our inability to deal with trials that come our way in this life and sometimes are themselves a catalyst for greater trial themselves. How do these misconception contribute to our inability to deal with trials and sometimes serve as catalyst for greater trials?*

I. A FRESH REMINDER ABOUT TRIALS

In the way of both a review and a reminder, we want to make some important statements about trial and the Christian life especially. These are very important in clarifying both our perspective about trials as Christians and our maintaining a healthy spiritual approach in dealing with the very real and certain trials we will face in this life.

4 Initial Clarify Statements About Trials:

1. **It is incorrect to think that because one is a Christian, he or she will never face any trials or that all his or her trials will automatically be solved.**

2. It is incorrect to say that all trials are specifically (exactly, explicitly) discussed in the Bible.

3. It is incorrect to believe that having a problem means one is unspiritual.

It is incorrect to assume that being exposed to Bible teaching automatically immunizes and inoculates one from trials in this life.

Now with that brief reminder of some of the background material let's get back into our study. We are going to be focusing on verses 18-25, but I want to back up to verse 11 and read on down to the end of the chapter. I feel like verses 11-25 really go together are a collective idea coming from Peter to these persecuted believers. (READ: 1 Peter 2:11-25) The central section of Peter's letter (1 Peter 2:11-3:12) emphasizes "submission" in the life of a believer. This is certainly not a popular topic in this day of lawless ness and the quest for "personal fulfillment," but it is an important one. Peter applied the theme of submission to the life of a believer in several applications and circumstances from 1 Peter 2:11 to 1 Peter 3:12. This forms a sort of outline for what he is writing to believers here and readily applies to our lives even today as Christians.

Peter applied the theme of submission to the life of a believer:

(1) As a citizen – 1 Peter 2:11-17 – That is where we have been the last few weeks.

(2) As a worker/employee – 1 Peter 2:18-25

(3) As a marriage partner – 1 Peter 3:1-7

(4) As a member of the Christian assembly – 1 Peter 3:8-12

"Submission" does not mean slavery or subjugation but simply the recognition of God's authority in our lives. God has established the home, human government, and the church, and He has the right to tell us how these institutions should be run. God wants each of us to exercise authority, but before we can exercise authority, we must be under authority. Satan's offer to our first parents (Adam and Eve) was freedom from authority, but they ended up losing both freedom and authority. The Prodigal Son found his freedom when he yielded to his father's will.

Peter shared with his readers three excellent motives for submitting to authority and thus living dedicated obedient Christian lives.

3 Excellent Motives for Submitting to Authority:

(1) For the sake of the Lost (1 Peter 2:11-12) – *"¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

(2) For the Lord's sake (1 Peter 2:13-17) – *"¹³ Therefore submit yourselves to every ^[c] ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."*

(3) For our own sake (1 Peter 2:18-25) – *"¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹ For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰ For what credit*

is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; ²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

We spent the last few week looking at the first two. Let turn our attention to third motive for submitting to authority in 1 Peter 2:18-25.

SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY FOR OUR OWN SAKE (1 Peter 2:18-25)

In this paragraph Peter addressed the Christian slaves in the congregations, and again he stressed the importance of submission. Some newly converted slaves thought that their spiritual freedom also guaranteed personal and political freedom, and they created problems for themselves and the churches. Paul dealt with this problem in 1 Corinthians 7:20-24 where he wrote, ²⁰ “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. ²¹ Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. ²² For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.” He also touched on the problem in his letter to his friend Philemon. The gospel eventually overthrew the Roman Empire and the terrible institution of slavery, even though the early church did not preach against either one.

There is no Christian slaves today, at least in the New Testament sense, but what Peter wrote does have application to employees.

3 Implied Principles for Christians to Live by in their Work/Employment:

- (1) **Christians are to be submissive to those who are over us, whether they are kind or unkind to us** - Some may object by saying, “I will not be anyone’s doormat.” “I refuse to let my boss or coworkers treat me that way.” Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:18-19, ¹⁸ “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹ For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.” Why do you think Peter might have said “be submissive... also to the harsh...”? What possible benefit could that have? Interestingly, though we often recoil at the idea, isn’t that what Jesus, Himself, taught in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:38-40, ³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.”
- (2) **Christian employees must never take advantage of Christian employers** - Simply stated Christian’s ought to make the best employees. Show up on time. Be courteous to others at work. Take no liberties with what doesn’t belong to you, but is company or employer property. Be respectful. Put in a good hard day’s work. Be disciplined while on the job and

conscientious of your work quality. I've always like Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 as a good principle for Christians to live by in their work and life. Paul writes, *"¹¹ That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹² that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing."* Ask yourself this question, "Does the way work represent my Christian faith?"

(3) Each worker should do a good day's work and honestly earn his pay -

Sometimes a Christian employee may be wronged by an unbelieving coworker or supervisor. For conscience' sake, he must "take it" even though he is not in the wrong. A Christian's relationship to God is far more important than his relationship to men. *"For this is [grace] commendable..."* The King James says "thankworthy" to bear reproach when you are innocent. Jesus said it like this in Matthew 5:10-12, *"¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."* Anybody, including an unbeliever, can "take it patiently" when he is in the wrong! It takes a dedicated Christian to "take it" when he is in the right. *"This is [grace] commendable with God."* God can give the grace to submit and "take it" and in this way glorify God.

CASE STUDIES:

Case Study 1 – Betty has worked retail at a major department store for many years, and for the most part has enjoyed her work. She works hard, and most would say she is one of their lead clerks and well-liked by everyone. A more recent employee in her department has started to take advantage of her, asking her to cover for her when she is late arriving for work, taking extra-long lunch hours that sometimes turn into two hours, and even refusing to wait on some customers. She often disappears from the floor leaving Betty with the full work load. Betty, being a more senior employee, has spoken to her about her neglect and her need to be more courteous and conscientious in her work, but the younger employee just shrugs it off. Betty feels she is at her wits end, she often vents to other employees and she has considered going to the store managers with her complaints. How should Betty handle this situation?

Case Study 2 – Things at work have recently become more stressful and demanding under new management. Although Mike has worked his position for over 12 years, it seems like his new boss just doesn't like him, and it seems personal, although others have felt the same way. Mike has always tried to be a good employee and is extremely conscientious about his work, but his boss is making it hard. He has even noticed that the new manager often takes advantage of him and other employees. 3 have already quit, and most recently one of those that quit shared with Mike that the new boss had asked her to do somethings that she considered unethical and dishonest. With that knowledge Mike is considering filing a complaint with HR in Corporate headquarters. How would you handle the situation if you were Mike?

Of course, the human tendency is to fight back and to demand out rights. But that is the natural response of the unsaved person, and we must do much more than they do. Jesus said in Luke 6:32-34, *"³² "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that*

to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.” Anybody can fight back; it takes a Spirit-filled Christian to submit and let God fight his battles. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:16-21, ¹⁶ *Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.* ¹⁷ *Repay no one evil for evil. Have^[a] regard for good things in the sight of all men.* ¹⁸ *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.* ¹⁹ *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.* ²⁰ *Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”* ²¹ *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

In the Bible, duty is always connected with doctrine. When Paul wrote to the slaves, he related his admonitions to the doctrine of the grace of God. Listen to his words in Titus 2:9-15, ⁹ *Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,* ¹⁰ *not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.* ¹¹ *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,* ¹² *teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,* ¹³ *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* ¹⁴ *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.* ¹⁵ *Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”* Interestingly, Peter connected his counsel to the example of Jesus Christ, God’s “Suffering Servant” in 1 Peter 2:21-25, ²¹ *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:* ²² *“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;* ²³ *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;* ²⁴ *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.* ²⁵ *For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* **(READ: Isaiah 53:1-12)** Peter had learned in his own experience that God’s people serve through suffering. At first, Peter had opposed Christ’s suffering on the cross (Matthew 16:21ff), but then he learned the important lesson that we lead by serving and serve by suffering. He also learned that this kind of suffering always leads to glory!

Peter encouraged these suffering Christians (suffering persecution under Nero) many of whom has served as slaves by presenting three “pictures” of Jesus Christ...

3 Pictures of Jesus Christ as Our Example in Suffering:

(1) He is our example in his early life (1 Peter 2:21-23) – ²¹ *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:* ²² *“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;* ²³ *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;”* All that Jesus did on earth, as recorded in the four gospels, is a perfect example for us to follow. But He is especially our example in the way He responded to suffering. In spite of the fact that He was sinless in both word and deed, He suffered at the

hands of the authorities. This connects, of course, to Peter's words in 1 Peter 2:19-20. We wonder how he (Peter) would have responded in the same circumstances! The fact that Peter used his sword in the garden suggests that he might have fought rather than submitted to the will of God.

Jesus proved that a person could be in the will of God, be greatly loved by God, and still suffer unjustly. There is a shallow brand of popular theology today that claims that Christians will not suffer if they are in the will of God. Those who promise such ideas have not meditated much on the cross.

Our Lord's humility and submission were not an evidence of weakness, but of power. Jesus could have summoned the armies of heaven to rescue Him! His words to Pilate in John 18:33-38, *"³³ Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' ³⁴ Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' ³⁵ Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' ³⁶ Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' ³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' ³⁸ Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all.' ... these words are proof that He (Jesus) was in complete command of the situation. It was Pilate who was on trial, not Jesus! Jesus had committed Himself to the Father, and the Father always judges righteously.*

We are not saved by following Christ's example, because each of us world stumbled over 1 Peter 2:22, *"who committed no sin."* Sinners need a Savior, not an Example. But after a person is saved, he will want to follow closely upon God's steps and imitate the example of Christ

- (2) **He is our substitute in His death (1 Peter 2:24)** – *"²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed."* Jesus died as the sinner's Substitute. This entire section reflects the great "Suffering Servant Chapter," in Isaiah 53... especially Isaiah 53:5-7, but also verses 9 and 12, *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth... ⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked— but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth... ¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."* Jesus did not die as a martyr; He died as a Savior, a sinless Substitute. The word translated "bore" means "to

carry as a sacrifice.” The Jewish people did not crucify criminals; they stoned them to death. But if the victim was especially evil, his dead body was hung on a tree until evening, as a mark of shame (Deut. 21:23). Jesus died on a tree – a cross – and bore the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13).

The paradoxes of the cross never cease to amaze us. Christ was wounded that we might be healed. He died that we might live. We died with Him, and thus we are “*dead to sin*” (Rom. 6) so that we might “*live unto righteousness.*”

- ➡ Warren Wiersbe says “The healing Peter mentions in 1 Peter 2:24 is not physical healing, but rather the spiritual healing of the soul.” (Psalm 103:3 says, “*Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases.*” Speaking of the “disease of sin” that destroys the soul and our relationship with a Holy God)
- ➡ Dr. John MacArthur says about the healing mentioned in 1 Peter 2:24, “Through the wounds of Christ at the cross, believers are healed spiritually from the deadly disease of sin. This is not a reference to physical healing.”

One day, when we have glorified bodies, all sickness will be gone, but meanwhile even some of God’s choicest servants may have physical afflictions (see Philippians 2:25-30 and 2 Corinthians 12:1ff)

- (3) **He is our watchful shepherd in heaven (1 Peter 2:25)** – “*For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*” In the Old Testament, the sheep died for the shepherd, but at Calvary, the Shepherd died for the sheep (John 10). Every lost sinner is like a sheep gone astray; ignorant, lost, wandering, in danger, away from the place of safety, and unable to help himself. The Shepherd went out to search for the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7). He died for the sheep!

Now that we have been returned to the fold and are safely in His care, He watches over us lest we stray and get into sin. The word “Overseer” (your “bishop”) simply means “one who watches over, who oversees.” Just as the an “Overseer” or “Elder-bishop/Pastor” has the charge of overseeing the flock of God, the local church (1 Peter 5:2), so the Savior in glory, Jesus Himself, watches over His sheep to protect them and perfect them (Hebrews 13:20-21).

CONCLUSION

Here then, is the wonderful truth Peter wanted to share...

3 Concluding Take Aways from Peter’s Teaching on Submission:

- (1) **As we live godly lives and submit in times of suffering, we are following Christ example and becoming more like Him.**
- (2) **We submit and obey, not only for the sake of the lost souls and for the Lord’s sake,**
- (3) **But we also submit for our own sake, that we might grow spiritually and become more like Christ.**

The unsaved world is watching us, but the Shepherd in heaven is also watching over us; so we have nothing to fear. We can submit to Him and know that He will work everything together for our good and His glory.