

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



GROWING SOLID THROUGH SUFFERING *1 Peter 5:8-14*

“⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. ⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. ¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. ¹¹ To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. ¹² By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. ¹³ She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. ¹⁴ Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”
-1 Peter 5:8-14 (NKJV)

Our study, “Full of Hope-full: How to Make the Best of Time Out of Your Worst of Times,” of the book (or letter) of 1 Peter has covered quite a bit of territory so far. The question, “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? Has been at the forefront of our study, and perhaps nowhere in the book is that more pronounced than in the last few verses of the 4th chapter.

¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you

suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ *Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.* ¹⁷ *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?* ¹⁸ *Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"* ¹⁹ *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. –1 Peter 4:12-19 (NKJV)*

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 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. 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. This letter was written to help believer's believe and grow even in times of suffering... to be "Full of Hope-full."

Let's be reminded, once again, of some of the rich background of this great letter written by perhaps Jesus' closest disciple, Peter:

5 Important Background Information for the Book of 1 Peter:

- 1. The book of 1 Peter is written by PETER** - 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 [כִּפְיָא קִיפּוֹאֵס]; this is used to play off of πέτρα), 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 is actually a LETTER written by Peter** - 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 book of 1 Peter was written around A.D. 64** - We are able to date the letter with fair accuracy because of recorded world/historical events. We know that the letter corresponds to 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).

4. **The book of 1 Peter is written to CHRISTIANS recipient scattered throughout the five Roman provinces of ASIA MINOR** - This would be the area of present day Turkey. The letter actually 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.
5. **The book of 1 Peter is written to encourage Christians facing SUFFERING through PERSECUTION** - 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.

This great letter written by the Apostle Peter was written for the precise purpose of encouraging and supporting believers/Christians who were undergoing this extreme persecution under the rule of the Emperor Nero and the Roman Empire that ruled the New Testament world during this time. It's application would have been both instructive and highly useful in the lives of these first century believers, but it is no less relevant and applicable for our lives today. We may not face the extreme suffering through persecution of these believers in Peter's day, but our lives are no less plagued with times of suffering, struggle, heartache, disappointment, and discouraging trials. The reality is that we will face suffering times in this life. We have been quoting Jesus words in in John 16:33, ³³ *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Jesus' words remind us of the reality of suffering. It is not "if" you face times of struggle, tribulation, or trouble. It is "you will" face struggles, tribulations, troubles according to Jesus.

FIVE MYTHS ON CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

Christians suffer too. There is no getting around that. The healing which never comes despite our prays and pleading with God for His healing... the relationship, which despite everyone's best efforts just fell apart... the death of a loved one... the financial crisis which seems insurmountable... the impossible job situation... the desperate prayer which seems unanswered... It seems that a lot of Christians want answers to suffering. I'm not too sure that there are many. But sometimes in our search for a reason to that heartfelt "Why?" we can fall prey to one of these five main myths about suffering. Unfortunately, some of them are even put on us by other well-meaning Christians. We must be careful not to buy into these myths about suffering. Have you ever believed any of these myths?

5 Myths on Christian Suffering:

1. **MYTH 1: Christians should not go through times of suffering** - Deep down inside, there is a part of us which protests, *But I'm a Christian. I love God. He loves me... so bad things shouldn't happen to me because God protects His children. Right!* **How would you respond to this?** I believe that God does love His children, and sometimes He does protect us from

terrible things. But we still live in a fallen, messed up world, and sometimes Christians experience the consequences of living in a fallen world just like everyone else! The Bible actually tells us to expect trials and difficulties. After all, God doesn't cause suffering – and would not cause suffering for anyone, Christian or not. Life just happens, and sometimes it hurts. The only place we will ever be safe from suffering is when we get to heaven. Then, the Bible says, 'He will wipe away every tear' **Scriptural answer – 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."*

2. **MYTH 2: if Christians suffer it is because they have done something wrong** - We hear some say things like, "I must have really done something bad to be going through this. God must be punishing me." **How would you respond to this?** Is our suffering because we have done something wrong? Not necessarily. Of course there are consequences to wrong doing and sometimes suffering can be the result. God does discipline us for things that we do wrong too, BUT we usually know why it is happening. Right? What sort of parent would shout at their child and send her sobbing to the bedroom without ever telling them what they did wrong? That would be both cruel and pointless. God is a good Father, and never disciplines us without telling us what we have done wrong and what we need to do to put it right. So if you are suffering the consequences of a broken relationship because of your unkind words, God probably is disciplining you. But if, on the other hand, you are suffering with an illness and have been for a long time and you don't understand why, that is not discipline. That is living in a fallen, messed up world and God wants to pour out His mercy on you, not His judgment. Furthermore, God can actually use that kind of suffering in the life of a believer as a great witness. If a suffering Saint can exhibit a hope and a peace in the midst of this kind of suffering it can actually be contagious to a hurting world. **Scriptural answer – John 9:1-3** *"As he (Jesus) went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.'" What "work" of God do you suppose Jesus might be referring to?*
3. **MYTH 3: If I had enough faith, this would not be happening to me** - **How would you respond to this?** "If I had enough faith, this would not be happening to me." Pure condemnation. Yes, God does look for and reward faith, but suffering comes even to people who have the most enormous faith. Look back at some of the early Christian martyrs: they had the faith to die for what they believed, and they suffered for it. Sometimes we just have to walk through things and our faith will actually increase, even though we don't immediately see the answers to prayer that we most want. We must hold on to our faith through times of suffering, because God does reward faith, but sometimes the reward will come later and for now we just have to keep pressing on through. **Scriptural answer – Hebrews 11:1** *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."*
4. **MYTH 4: This is pointless and proves that life is meaningless and hopeless** - I've heard it said this way, "None of this makes sense. It just seems so pointless." **How would you respond to this?** Pain and suffering rarely does make sense to us in this life and it usually does seem underserved and pointless. Let's face it, undeserved suffering can just seem pointless, difficult, painful and beyond our understanding. But the problem with this myth is that it fails to acknowledge that nothing that ever happens in the life of a believer (one of

God's children) ever escapes God's eyes. He sees it all. He knows what we are going through. And there is nothing that happens to you or I that God doesn't intend to use for our benefit and His glory. I believe that. Remember the Bible says that we should *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its works so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."* Wow! That is difficult to do sometimes. God does not cause suffering but He will always teach us through it. C.S. Lewis once stated that *"Pain is the classroom of God"* and there is always more we can learn of Him when we are hurting. We might not want the lessons at the time, but later we will value them because they came at such a cost. **Scriptural answer – James 1:2-4** *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its works so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

5. **MYTH 5: God has abandoned or forsaken (turned His back) me. How would you respond to this?** God has never abandoned you. Not for a second. He has wept with you, felt your pain, sung His love song over you, been with you every painful, heartbreaking step of the way. Sometimes, in the darkness, we can feel that God is distant, or uncaring. It is so important in those times to cling to what we know is the truth of who He is, rather than relying on our emotions. We cannot trust our emotions. We can always trust our God. Keep tight hold of your faith in Him. You will not always feel this alone. He has not and never will abandon you. He loves you far too much to ever be able to do that. **Scriptural answer – Hebrews 13:5** *"...God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"*

One of the most crucial lessons to learn as a Christian is how to handle suffering. In this fallen world, suffering is a certainty.

- It may be the physical suffering that goes with living in these frail bodies that get sick and die.
- It may be the grief of watching a loved one suffer and die.
- It may be problems stemming from your own sin or from others' sins against you.
- It may be the common pressures of life, of providing a living and wondering how you're going to pay all the bills.
- It may be the emotional suffering of struggling with feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, anger, worry, or fear.

But wherever it comes from, suffering is inevitable. And, it will make you grow bitter or better, depending on how you handle it.

READ: Mark 4:3-9, 16-19 – The Parable of the Sower

- (1) **What do you see in this parable that may indicate a problem in how some handle suffering?** It is significant that in Jesus' parable of the sower, two of the three soils that failed to produce a crop represent people who did not know how to handle suffering. The rocky soil, Jesus explained, pictures those who receive the word joyfully at first, but do not sink down roots, so that when affliction or persecution comes, they fall away. The thorny ground reflects those who seem to grow for a while, but then allow, among other things, the

worries of the world to choke out the word so that it does not bear fruit unto eternal life (Mark 4:3-9, 16-19).

- (2) What do the “birds” in the story represent according to Jesus? And what might Jesus be telling us about the role of the enemy in our struggles, suffering and difficulties?
- (3) How does suffering and affliction, difficulties in life, hinder God’s Word/truth from taking root in our lives?
- (4) What do the “thorns” in the story represent according to Jesus? And why might Jesus be comparing the world to thorns in regard to our suffering and pain in this life?

You see the reality is we will face tribulation, struggles, pain and heartache, suffering in this life. It will come! It is inevitable! It was for these first century Christians a reality and it will be for us. Given that reality, Peter closes out his important letter to these suffering Christians with four strategies for growing solid through suffering.

FOUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING SOLID THROUGH SUFFERING

If you don’t learn how to handle affliction, worries, and other kinds of suffering, you will not persevere as a Christian. On the other hand, if you do learn how to handle suffering, you will grow solid through it. Peter here gives us four strategies for growing solid through suffering:

To grow solid through suffering, humble yourself before God, resist the devil, trust the Lord, and stand firm in God’s grace with the saints.

4 Strategies for Growing Solid Through Suffering:

1. **To grow solid through suffering, humble yourself before God (1 Peter 5:6-7) -** “⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” “Therefore” in in verse 6 connects verse 5 with verse 6 & 7. I would paraphrase (bringing out the nuances of the Greek text) this verse something like this... “Because God sets Himself in battle against those who lift themselves up, but gives unmerited favor to those who view themselves as lowly, therefore, lower yourself under God’s sovereign dealings with you, that He might lift you up in due time. You lower yourself by throwing all your anxieties on Him, knowing that He cares for you.”
 - The Greek word translated as “care” or “anxieties” in verse 7 comes from a word meaning “to divide.”
 - Anxieties divide our minds, so that we cannot concentrate on anything else.
 - Someone has defined “worry” as “a small trickle of fear that meanders through the mind until it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.”
 - **READ: Matthew 6:19-34** *Why do you think Jesus tell us not to worry and what is the significance of tying it to his previous words? What do you think is the danger of worry according to Jesus?*
 - Worries and anxieties distract us from the productive things God wants us to do and consume us by diverting all our thoughts into these channels of fear.
 - Why is there a need for humbling yourself in a time of trial? Because at the heart of anxiety is the proud notion that I can handle things by myself. We all have a sinful

tendency to lift ourselves up and to pull the Lord down. Even we who have trusted in Christ as Savior, who talk about trusting Him for everything, when it comes right down to it, really trust in ourselves and in our ability to work our way through life's difficulties. We'll call on God for a little boost now and then, to get us through something. But we don't know what it means to cast ourselves totally upon the Lord until He yanks the rug out from under us through some trial that is bigger than us. Even then we tend to scramble to regain control without submitting to God's mighty hand over us. At the root of this self-reliance is pride.

- **READ: Luke 8:22-25** *What pictures/words in this story may be readily related to the trials and struggles, times of suffering in this life? How are trials and sufferings like these?*
- Suppose you were on a ship which encountered a fierce storm at sea. You don't know anything about handling a ship in such rough waters, but the captain is a seasoned veteran who has brought his ship safely through many such storms. Wouldn't it be the height of arrogance for you to go up on the bridge and tell him how to run the ship or, even worse, to take the helm from him? If you were anxious in the storm, your fears would subside if you stopped to think about the captain's competency. If you had a chance to talk to him, and he assured you that he had been through many such storms, you could relax and trust that he will get you through this one. You still may be in for a rough ride, but you can go through it without anxiety because you humbled yourself (by not taking control) and exalted the captain by trusting him.
- George Muller used to tell the story of a boy who was walking along the road carrying a heavy load. A man came along in a horse-drawn cart and offered him a ride. The boy climbed in the cart, but he kept the heavy load on his shoulders. When the man asked him why he didn't put the load down on the cart, the boy replied that he didn't want to burden the horse!
- We've climbed into the cart of salvation through Christ. He is in fact bearing our load. Why don't we let go and put it all on Him?
- **We're prone to doubt two things in a time of intense trial:**

2 Things We Struggle with Doubting in Times of Intense Trial:

- (1) **We doubt God's sovereign control over our circumstances** - God's sovereign control over circumstances: **"Where is God in all this?"**
 - (2) **We doubt God concern for us in the midst of our trial** - And, we doubt His concern for us: **"If God is in control and cares, then why is this happening to me?"** Peter says that we must bow and acknowledge God's mighty hand—His sovereignty and power. He wasn't asleep at the helm when this trial hit me. And, we must bow and affirm His loving care—He cares for me personally, in spite of how it may seem in the middle of my crisis. No doubt Peter was recalling Jesus' teaching that if God cares for the birds and for the lilies of the field, then obviously, He cares for each of us (Matt. 6:25-30).
- Having acknowledged these two things--God's control and His care--we then cast all our anxieties on Him through thankful prayer as Paul says in **Philippians 4:6**, ***"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God"*** (Phil. 4:6).

- F. B. Meyer (Tried by Fire [Christian Literature Crusade], p. 173) helpfully advises, “Treat cares as you treat sins. Hand them over to Jesus one by one as they occur.”
- I find that often I have to do it repeatedly all day long, confessing my lack of faith, praying at times, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”
- Okay, so let’s talk about this one... How do I do that? How do I “cast my cares” on the Lord? It’s one thing to say it... easy to say just give it to the Lord. It’s is another thing entirely to actually cast our care on Him... give it to Him and let it go.
- Peter writes in verse 7, “⁷ casting all your *care* upon Him, for He cares for you.” How do you do that? I don’t really know how to get it off of me and onto Him. The word translated as “casting” in verse 7 means “to throw something on something,” as to throw a blanket on a donkey (Luke 19:35). Christians are to cast all of their discontent, discouragements, despair, and suffering on the Lord, and trust Him for knowing what He’s doing with their lives. As Paul said it in Romans 8:28, “*And we know that all things work together for the good to those who love god, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*” There is the idea that we are to rest fully in Him, throw our entire self on Him in the midst of our struggles and sufferings.

2. To grow solid through suffering, resist the devil (1 Peter 5:8-9) – “⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” No sooner has Peter got us to relax by casting our cares on the Lord than he yells, “Wake up! Be alert! There’s a lion on the prowl, and he’ll eat you for lunch if you aren’t careful!”

- George Morrison put it, “God does not make His children carefree in order that He may make them careless” (Morrison on James through Revelation [AMG Publishers], p. 34).
- The fact is, in a time of trial, you are especially vulnerable to the enemy of our souls. You must be sober and alert so that you can resist his attacks.
- When it comes to dealing with the devil, Christians often go to one of two extremes:

2 Extreme Views Christians Have for Dealing with The Devil:

(1) **Seeing a devil behind ever bush and under every rock** – Some see the devil in everything. The former are more prevalent in Christian circles now than the latter. These folks see the devil everywhere. They go around casting out the demons of every common cold, the demons of car trouble, the demons behind emotional problems, etc. They often blame the devil for problems that stem from their own sin or mistakes. Many popular books teach elaborate methods to overcome demonic forces, both personally and as a church. But the Bible just tells us to resist the devil. While I enjoyed reading Frank Peretti’s This Present Darkness [Crossway Books], I think we need to be careful to derive our understanding of Satan and demons from the Bible, not from such popular books.

(2) **Not seeing the devil at all** – In other words, some ignore the devil altogether as if he doesn’t even exist, don’t think about it, don’t talk about it, that just the way things are. A lot of Christians almost act as if Satan isn’t even real. Folks he is real and he is our to steal, kill and destroy your life. He is real. On the one hand, Satan is a powerful unseen foe, so powerful that Michael the archangel did not dare to pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you” (Jude 9). We dare not get arrogant and

start barking orders at Satan like some tinhorn general, or he will make quick work of us. Probably none of us has ever encountered Satan himself, although he has legions of demons to do his will. But on the other hand, Satan is neither omnipresent nor omnipotent. And, he is a defeated foe. The cross of Jesus Christ spelled his doom and the resurrection sealed it. So we can resist him, firm in our faith, and know that he will flee from us (James 4:7).

- Peter describes Satan, the devial as “your adversary, the devil” in verse 9.
- The word “adversary” means an opponent in a lawsuit.
- The name “devil” means “slanderer,” one who throws things against you.
- He is described as the “accuser of the brethren” (Rev. 12:10).
- His strategy is often to hit you when you’re under some intense trial by suggesting either, “God isn’t strong enough to deliver you,” or “Obviously He doesn’t care. If this is how He treats His people, then why are you following Him?”
- Or, if you’ve fallen into some sin, he will accuse your conscience, even after you’ve confessed your sin, by saying, “Some Christian you are! What makes you think you can be forgiven for that one?”
- Or, as suggested by Peter’s reminder in 5:9b, the devil will get you to think that you’re the only one in the world going through the kind of suffering you’re experiencing. Your trial is unique! Surely, no one else understands! “They have slain your prophets, and I alone am left!”
- But Peter says, “No, you’re not alone. Your Christian brothers throughout the world are going through similar trials.”
- Remember that verse 6 comes before verse 9, **We must bow before God before we stand against the devil.**
- Resisting the devil is a defensive posture.
- I don’t advise stalking him like a lion hunter. But if he roars against us, we stand firm in the full armor of God and he will flee.
- Also, we need to understand that we are to flee certain sins, but resist the devil. If you’re tempted with sexual immorality, don’t stand around rebuking Satan; get out of there (1 Cor. 6:18)!
- Many of God’s people are vulnerable to Satan’s attacks because they’re not alert to spiritual danger.
- If a real lion were on the prowl and had just been spotted outside, would you go for a casual stroll, admiring the flowers? Would you let your children play out there? And yet so many Christians watch filth on TV or in movies, and let their kids watch it, and wonder why they aren’t more interested in spiritual things.
- Or, they’re going through trials, but they forget that they are especially vulnerable. They tolerate their own grumbling or complaining, not realizing that they are playing right into Satan’s attack to devour their faith and to discredit the goodness of God.
- If my children always complained about how meanly I treated them, it wouldn’t speak well of me.
- As God’s children, we need to be careful to speak well of our Father, even when He’s taking us through trials.
- To grow solid through suffering, humble yourself before God and be alert so that you can resist the devil.

- Here are Peter's words again in verse 9, "*Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*" What does it mean to "resist" him. "Resist" means to stand up against.
- It is one of the Bible's many sweet and powerful promises James writes in James 4:7, "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7).
- The question is, though, how do we do this?
- In very practical ways, how do we resist the devil? In *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, Thomas Brooks offers a list of ten ways the Christian can resist Satan's temptations.

10 Ways the Christian Can Resist Satan's Temptations: Thomas Brooks, "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices"

1. Be ruled by the Word - Make the Word of God your rule and authority and live in obedience to all it says. It will keep you walking straight and guard you from all manner of temptation. "*When men throw off the Word, then God throws off them, and then Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into snares at his pleasure.*"

2. Beware of grieving the Holy Spirit - It is the Holy Spirit that gives the Christian the ability to discern Satan's temptations and to see his hand in and behind life's circumstances. If you grieve the Spirit, you drive off the one whose ministry involves guarding you against Satan's attacks.

3. Labor for wisdom - There is a great difference between knowledge and wisdom, between accumulating facts and applying Scripture to those facts so they become wisdom. It is not the Christian with the most knowledge, but the Christian with the most wisdom, who is equipped to battle Satan's temptations.

4. Resist the first stirring of temptation - It is safe to resist temptation and dangerous to dabble in it. "He that will play with Satan's bait, will quickly be taken with Satan's hook." God promises that we can resist *temptation*, not that we can resist *sin* once we have begun to dabble in that temptation.

5. Labor to be filled with the Spirit - The Spirit is a Spirit of light and power. The Spirit's light shines bright against the darkness of sin and his power is sufficient to overcome all evil and temptation. When it comes to fighting Satan's temptations, it is better to have a heart filled with the Spirit than a head filled with facts.

6. Keep Humble - A humble heart would rather lie in the dust than rise to prominence by sinful means; it would prefer to lose everything than to sin and be left with a guilty conscience. The humble person is neither drawn in by what Satan offers, nor terrified by his threats.

7. Be Constantly on Guard - A secure soul is a soul in a position to be led astray and ensnared. "That soul that will not watch against temptations, will certainly fall before the power of temptations." Satan strengthens his assaults when the soul grows drowsy and careless. So be constantly on guard. "Watchfulness is nothing else but the soul running up and down, to and fro, busy everywhere; it is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of what comes from within us, and of what comes from without us and into us."

8. Continue Communing With God - It is as you join in communion with God that he gives you strength to resist Satan's attacks. "A soul high in communion with God may be

tempted, but will not easily be conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death.” Take full advantage of God’s means of grace.

9. Do Not Engage Satan In Your Own Strength - You need to draw the power, and even the desire, to resist sin from Jesus Christ and you need to do this every day. “Certainly that soul that engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high, will fall before the power of new temptation.” Commune with God, be on guard, be humble—do all of these things! But do not rely on them in the battle; instead, rely on Christ.

10. Pray Constantly - “Prayer is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God and a scourge to the devil.” So pray and pray constantly. Tell God of your own inability to detect and respond to temptation; tell him that you are utterly dependent upon his grace; tell God that Christ’s blood has been applied to you; tell God that you are his child; ask God to deliver you from temptation for the glory of his name.

- **READ: Ephesians 6:10-20**

3. To grow solid through suffering, trust the sovereign Lord (1 Peter 5:10-11) – *“¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. ¹¹ To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”* Trust is implicit in verses 6-7, is stated explicitly in 5:9 (be “firm in your faith”), and is strongly implicit in 5:10-11.

- Peter is saying, “God hasn’t forgotten you in your trial. He is the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ in the first place. Thus you can trust Him to use the trial for His purpose in your life, because He is the sovereign Lord who has all dominion forever and ever!”
- But trusting God has fallen on hard times in Christian circles.
- It is viewed as about the most impractical thing you can do.
- If you came to me with a big problem in your life and asked, “What should I do?” and I said, “I think you should trust God,” you’d probably go away thinking, “What worthless counsel!”
- And yet from cover to cover the Bible extols the practical benefits of putting our trust in the living God as the way to deal with our problems!
- You ask, “How can I trust God? It seems so hard to do when I’m in the middle of a crisis!”
- There are at least four ways to nurture your faith suggested in these two short verses (9 & 10)

4 Ways to Nurture Trust in God in the Midst of Suffering: (Based on 1 Peter 5:9-10)

(1) Put the trial in perspective - It will only last “for a little while”... a season. You say, “For a little while! I’ve been going through this suffering for years!” But even a whole lifetime is a little while in light of eternity. Paul had this perspective when he wrote **2 Corinthians 4:17-18**, “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

(2) Put God in perspective - He is “the God of all grace.” He is not the God of a little bit of grace. He is not the God of a lot of grace. He is the God of all grace. His grace is

like the ocean, a limitless supply, that keeps breaking over our lives time and time again. It will never run out. But remember, God withholds grace from the proud, but gives it to the humble (verse 5), those who lower themselves by admitting their total need. So in your time of trial, come as a needy soul and ask, and He will give you abundant grace to meet your need. Also, to put God in perspective, remember that He is the God of dominion or strength, both now and forever (5:11). In other words, God is in control. Verse 11 says, *“To Him be glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”* He is mighty to save His people from every trial, if it be His will. Even more, He is mighty to save us from eternal destruction. Nothing can separate us from His love and care. In your trial, rehearse in your mind God’s mighty strength as seen over and over in the Bible.

(3) Put God’s calling and purpose for you in perspective - He “called you to His eternal glory in Christ.” You didn’t come to Him by your own strength or effort. He called you. He didn’t call you to condemn you, but to bring you to His eternal glory in Christ. You will dwell in His presence throughout eternity. In your trial, look ahead to what God has promised for those whom He has called, and you can trust Him to bring you through it.

(4) Put God’s purpose for trials in perspective – Peter writes in verse 10, *“¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”* He Himself will *“perfect, establish, strengthen and settle (or establish) you.”* Trials are to burn away the dross and refine the gold. *“Perfect”* means to equip, repair, or render complete. It was used of Peter “mending” his fishing nets (Matt. 4:21). God will put you back together after the trial so that you will be useful to Him. *“Establish”* means to fix, set fast, or strengthen. Jesus told Peter that after he was restored from his denial of Jesus, he would “strengthen” [same word] his brothers. The next word, *“strengthen,”* occurs only here in the Bible and rarely in extra-biblical Greek. We don’t know how it differs from the previous word. *“Settle”* means to lay the foundation. Jesus used it to describe the house founded on the rock that withstood the storm (Matt. 7:25).

- Thus the overall idea is that the sovereign God will use the trials to establish you in your faith and to equip you to serve others in His cause.
- So you can trust Him in the process.
- Thus, to grow solid through suffering, humble yourself before God, resist the devil, and trust the sovereign Lord.

4. To grow solid through suffering, stand firm with other saints in God’s true grace (1 Peter 5:12-14) – *“¹² By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. ¹³ She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. ¹⁴ Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”*

- This section is the concluding greeting of the letter. But it contains a powerful truth, stated also at the end of 5:9, that you don’t go through suffering alone.
- And there is a strong testimony that what Peter has written is God’s true grace and an exhortation to stand firm in it.
- Note first that we go through suffering with other believers.
- These final verses are brimming with warm relationships.

- Peter commends **Silvanus (Silas)**, his secretary who probably bore the letter to the churches mentioned in 1:1. He was a faithful brother. He had served with Paul on the second missionary journey. He had sung hymns with Paul at midnight in the Philippian jail, as his back was laid open and his feet were in the stocks. He was no stranger to persecution. Here he is, faithfully serving the Apostle Peter. What an encouragement it is when you're going through trials to have a faithful brother like Silas, who has been through it himself! Peter sends greetings from "she who is in Babylon, chosen together with you." This most likely refers to the church in Rome, going through the fires of Nero's persecution. Peter probably used "Babylon" as a code name to protect the believers there, as well as for the symbolism of Babylon as the place of exile and wickedness, the epitome of that which is opposed to God. But there, in that center of evil, God had planted His church, and it was linked with these churches in Asia in the great cause of the gospel.
- And there was **Mark**, whom Peter calls his son. He wasn't his physical son, nor is it likely that Peter was Mark's father in the faith. Rather, the younger man had become like a son to Peter as they served Christ together. Mark, afraid of persecution, had deserted Paul and Barnabas, but had grown now into a faithful man, ready to endure hardship for the gospel.
- Peter concludes by encouraging the church to give the customary kiss of love, a warm greeting which consisted of a kiss on the cheek (men with men, women with women), as is still practiced in some cultures today. We need not violate our cultural norms by adopting this literally, but we should be genuinely warm in greeting one another.
- And he extends peace ("shalom," well-being) on all who are in Christ.
- When we go through trials, we should go through them together, supporting one another as family in Christ.
- But also, we are to stand firm together in God's true grace.
- Peter is referring to all he has written in the letter.

What is the difference between "true grace" and "false grace"?:

- (1) **"True" grace suggests that there is a false grace** - Jude 4 refers to those "who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."
- (2) **False grace portrays the Christian life as a hang loose, go with the flow, don't worry about sin, be tolerant of everyone sort of thing -**
- (3) **True grace exhorts us to be holy, even as the Lord is holy -**
- (4) **False grace implies that the Christian life requires no effort on our part -**
- (5) **True grace is not passive, but active** - It teaches that we exert ourselves to stand firm in it, that we endure hardship as we live righteously in this evil world.

CONCLUSION

Elizabeth Hanson, a medical missionary in Central Africa, served the Lord faithfully for years. A rebellion broke out in the country and one night the rebels broke into her room and raped her on the dirt floor. As it was taking place, she cried out to the Lord, "Why are You allowing this to happen to me?" In an almost audible voice, the Lord replied, "When you chose to follow Me, you gave me not only your mind and heart, but your body. They aren't just doing this to you, but to Me. I'm with you."

She didn't tell this story very often, but years later, in the U.S., she was lecturing on a technical medical subject when she felt the Holy Spirit leading her to tell her story. She did and then went on with her lecture. Afterwards, everyone left except two young girls. The older girl came up and said, "That's my 13 year-old sister. Two months ago she was raped in the park and she hasn't spoken since." Elizabeth's eyes and those of the young girl met and filled with tears. They embraced, wept, and talked for two hours. Elizabeth led her to Jesus Christ. That girl is serving Christ today because Elizabeth Hanson grew solid through her suffering and let God use her painful experience to minister to others.

Suffering is never easy. But if we will humble ourselves before God by casting all our anxieties on Him, resist the devil, trust in the sovereign God of all grace, and stand firm in His grace with other saints, we can grow solid through our suffering.

Since the believers addressed were suffering escalating persecution, the purpose of this letter was to teach them how to live victoriously in the midst of that hostility:

- 1. Don't lose hope, focus on Jesus**
- 2. Don't becoming bitter, practice Christ like forgiveness and grace in suffering**
- 3. Trust in the Lord, while remembering that this is not your home.**
- 4. Resist the enemy attempts to undermine your faith in the hard times.**

Peter wished to impress on his readers that by living an obedience, victorious life under duress, a Christian can actually evangelize his hostile world.