

(1) Since, therefore, Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking. For whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

(3) *For the time that is past* suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do --- living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. --- With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery --- and they malign you! But they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

(6) For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

(7) The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded --- for the sake of your prayers! Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins!

Think on these things:

- 1) Recall that 1 Peter was written when Christians were being persecuted because --- they were Christians! Here in verse 1, Peter reminds them how to approach this difficulty in life. What is the key to facing these trials successfully? Can you recall, and share, a time when you felt you were the object of derision or rejection because you were recognized by your faith in God?

We are to remember that Jesus suffered for His faith during His ministry years, culminating in His crucifixion. We need to prepare ourselves and our hearts and minds for that eventuality, too. Living by faith and against sin will lead to personal suffering and attacks.

- 2) What does v. 2 say should be the outcome for anyone who actually suffers physically because of his/her faith?

Let personal suffering for faith be seen as living in God's Will for believers.

- 3) Do you have a past, that is, something you're not sure you want your Christian friends or family to know about? (You don't have to answer this.) Peter says Gentiles (non-believers), live today like many of us believers use to live before being saved. What explicit, self-serving activities does Peter identify as common among non-believers due to their sensuality and passions?

Living immorally and consumed by inner lusts, getting drunk, going to sex parties, carousing in groups at night (bar hopping), and practicing detestable idolatry.

- 4) What does v. 4 say is their reaction when we "stop" joining them in these activities? This initial reaction then morphs into a changed way they treat and speak with and about us. What can we expect from people with whom we used to do these things?

When we refuse to join them, they slander and verbally abuse us. --- If we used to do any of these things with our (former) unsaved friends, we usually lose these friendships. They often feel like we are judging them and their standards by the new behavior standards we embrace.

- 5) According to v. 5, do these former friends and others like them get “the last word?” What is the accountability demanded of them?

The “last word” belongs to God at the final Judgment, who will judge the living and the dead. Each individual must give an account of himself/herself to The Judge.

- 6) V. 6 could be confusing and misinterpreted. In context with 1 Peter, the “dead” would be those persecuted for their faith and died from the persecution. It is not about sharing the Gospel with dead people in general, or trying to save our dead, lost family members. The Salvation message is only for the living! Now that those of faith were “judged” in the flesh as people do, how do they live “after death?”

They become heirs of God’s life, living in the Spirit. These dead Christians were judged by the world (Roman culture), persecuted and killed. Though dead, they shall live forever with God.

- 7) According to v. 7, what should be a sobering thought to all of us that leads to self-controlled living these days? How does this affect you? See also 2 Peter 3:8-11.

The “end” of all things is near; that is, this earth and heaven will be destroyed and replaced by a new heaven and earth. Mankind will face God’s judgment. Self-controlled living and alert minds have an impact on our personal prayers. 2 Peter adds that God’s Judgment Day will come upon us like a thief, with us unprepared, unaware the end was near. What we interpret as a delay is actually God’s enduring patience for mankind to come to salvation.

- 8) If we show “self-restraint” in how we live now, what benefit do we receive as believers (v. 7)?

Our prayers will be effective and powerful.

- 9) There is a singularly GREAT truth in v. 8! It will impact your life tremendously if you embrace it. Whether family or “church” family, what is the “power” of genuine love? How do you understand “love covers a multitude of sins?”

Love covers a multitude of sins. Recalling 1 Corinthians 13, love keeps no record of wrongs, while believing and hoping in all things. It is essential in relationships as we work through the wrongs we do to one another, accidentally or purposefully. The command here is to love one another earnestly (genuinely). Ephesians 4:2-3 points to love as the key to working with the differences we have as individuals and developing unity in the Holy Spirit, producing peace.

The second part of the question should lead into concepts of not giving up on people with great differences or grievances. Love allows us to keep believing and hoping, as well as extending forgiveness. Ephesians points to love as essential to “bearing with” one another.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: