

Women's Bible Study  
1Peter 4:15-16  
September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Sharyn Balogh

***1Peter 4:12-14 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.***

In our previous studies, we learned that we should most definitely expect challenges as followers of Christ. When we recognize what Jesus did for us, we have the opportunity through our own difficulties, because of our faith, to offer up our lives as a sacrifice to Him. This should cause us to rejoice as we are assured of our relationship with God as His child and look forward to our future in Heaven with Him. The next two verses in this section of scripture, continue building on the truths Peter has written.

***Peter 4:15-16 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.***

We are to make certain that our suffering is not because of our own wrong choices. We can bring all sorts of unhappiness and difficulty into our lives simply because we are not careful to consider our actions. The admonition Peter uses is definitive – ‘make sure’, or in the KJV, ‘but let’. This is like saying, ‘**You should in no way**’, or ‘**let none of you**’. It is an intense instruction towards Christians. Notice there is no possibility of an exception using this imperative. Our text reads, ‘**make sure that none of you**’. This is important; this is absolutely necessary and worthy of our attention.

We are prone to explain our wrong behavior with the word ‘but’ or ‘they did ...’. This puts blame for our sin on someone or something else. Although we are unable to control circumstances and others’ actions, we can in God’s strength, control our own behavior. We are to take special care that we do not cause our own problems brought on because of our own wrong choices. This means when I make a quick decision without thinking of what God would have me do and I realize later something better could have been done, I take responsibility and hopefully learn to stop and take time to pray and think the next time. I don’t ‘blame’ others because I find myself in some difficulty. ***There is never a time that someone or something else causes me to sin; it is always my own choice, and the consequences are mine to bear.*** Our society sends a different message that we cannot buy into – my reactions to problems, my unhappiness or unfulfillment, my response to rejection, etc., cannot be blamed on my childhood, my parents, or anyone or anything.

***Consider.***

***If you believe that ‘in Christ’s strength you can do all things’ (Phil 4:13), and you ‘are protected by the power of God’ (1Pe 1:5), then why do you make excuses for your behavior?***

## **How do you 'make sure' you are honoring God?**

### **What parameters do you place around yourself to keep from causing your own problems?**

Let me share an example with you. When I know I will be having a difficult conversation with someone, I think ahead of time how I can express myself in a way which is edifying to them and honoring to God. If the conversation will be on the phone, I will often write out scripture to remind myself to use careful and truthful words. This keeps me from regretful conversations.

*“But let not any one of you, who have the honour to bear the Christian name, ...”, Philip Doddridge N.T.*

The quote above causes me to remember who I am representing. Ultimately, if I call myself a Believer, my life should reflect the character of one who is following Christ. It truly is an honor to live for Him; it is a privilege to be a Christian and to uphold the laws of God.

### **Think! Are you willing to 'bite your tongue' and remain silent if that is the better choice? Can you 'offer the other cheek' (Mat 5:39) if someone offends you? Do you keep an account of wrongs suffered?**

1Peter 2:12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

**Consider.** We may not be able to avoid suffering as a Christian, however we must avoid sin which causes suffering. We must be purposed and intentioned to act according to God's ways. The emphasis is that we make a point of doing the right thing at all times. You can gather that this behavior does not always automatically happen. If we are unprepared and have our head partially in the world, then we are likely to act without thinking. If we act upon our feeling instead of God's truths, we fail. Unless we are mindful of doing what pleases God, we will naturally do what pleases our self and senses. We will answer criticism with harsh words and may even show our anger with physical gestures. Think of a child stomping their foot or someone clenching their fists.

The apostle addresses specific problems prevalent to the culture and lifestyle he saw around him. These were the obvious pitfalls at that time. This does not mean other forms of sin are excluded. In other words, we may be able to say we are not a murderer, thief, evildoer, or troublesome meddler; but this does not negate the general application of Peter's admonition. Our words and actions should glorify God's name.

We'll quickly go through each defined behavior listed so that we are complete in our study. **Murderer** is exactly what we would think – it is homicide: an unlawful killing of another human being. A **thief** is someone who steals, who rips off another person, who takes something without the owner's consent. An **evildoer** is a general term encompassing the first two descriptions of murderer and thief – basically we are to not be part of anything that will cause the hand of justice to come down upon us. This would include any criminal act, someone who is wicked or guilty of injustice and wrong. When we suffer as an evildoer, we

choose to go against public law; punishment is our own fault, and it is deserved. Recognize, there is no exception for us to go against the laws of established government – even if we disagree. Unless our leaders ask us to sin, we need to follow the rules set by those in authority.

If we repeatedly and intentionally go against God, we must take a critical look at our own heart motivation. Someone living for God will seek to glorify Him in all things. We will make mistakes and at times fail in our thoughts and actions, but this will not be our lifestyle. Instead, we will be characterized by seeking to follow God, asking forgiveness when we fail.

***Think! How are you doing? Are your words and actions – including attitude and thoughts – pleasing to God? Does your example incite others to lawlessness or obedience? Or does your example encourage others to steadfastness in Christ and the pursuit of righteousness?***

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

Mark 7:21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

The last action we are warned against in 1Peter 4:15 is being a ***'troublesome meddler'***. Basically, this is being a busybody in other people's affairs. We might easily consider ourselves having no problems with purposefully breaking the law; however, most of us have at one time or another meddled with other's concerns. Being a troublesome meddler is inspecting someone else's decisions, often at the expense of not paying attention to our own. It is often easier for us to see or point out the mistakes of others rather than look at our own failures.

***Consider your thoughts, are they filled with things that don't really concern you or that you have no control over? Do you involve yourself in the matters of others, and tell them how to handle things? Do you look down on others because they don't do what you think they should? Are you offended when people don't take your advice or respond to you according to your liking?***

Just because we may react differently or make different decisions than another, does not mean our way is the only way! Often, we are unaware of all the circumstances surrounding other's decisions, let's be careful to treat one another with grace and acceptance, always giving them the benefit of the doubt. We are not here to judge others; God does the judging. We are not here to point out all the injustices we see, especially those of unbelievers. We are not to be consumed with letting others know how they might have done better. Let's not become so busy with figuring out the intentions of others that we neglect to be mindful of our own.

1Th 4:11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,

2Th 3:11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

1Ti 5:13 At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.

Our text moves on to verse 16, explaining how we are to personally respond to suffering as a Christian.

**1Peter 4:16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.**

The words *'but if'* suggest it is *possible* that Christians will suffer. Let's look at what is meant by **suffering as a Christian**. Most of us would be able to place a definition on suffering, although how we might define suffering is probably a bit different and less intrusive than what was experienced when this epistle was written. This same word for 'suffer' used in this passage is used in Acts 1:3, and is translated "passion", relating to the suffering of Christ. Christians, at this time of Peter's writing, were persecuted directly because of their faith – this was not uncommon.

Acts 5:41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Matthew 5:12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

The Jews had been subject to the Law and had built up a hierarchy of priests and religious leaders. Anyone contradicting the long-accepted sacrifices and rituals was seen as a threat. In fact, to imply the Law was no longer needed was a direct contempt against Judaism. Yet Christ had come to abolish the Law and those who had left Judaism understood that faith alone in His death and resurrection was the only way to be saved. If you step back for a moment and place yourself in this volatile environment, you can almost feel the oppression and clashing of beliefs.

Remember Peter's denial of Christ (Mat 26:69-75); the Apostle struggled with caring more about what others thought of him than His love for his friend Jesus. Peter didn't want to be arrested for knowing Christ. Today in American society, we are not forced to follow one belief or another. We still have the freedom to choose Biblical Christianity without experiencing discrimination from our lawmakers and society in general. Yet, in small ways, consider how you may have been subject to difficulty because you are a Christian. Perhaps you have felt ostracized by friends or family because you no longer accept the same traditions you were taught as a child. So often religious tradition is attached to culture; walking away from this 'culture' can cause large rifts in relationships. It may be regarded as disrespectful to those who have raised you. When you follow the Bible as your guide for living, there are clear instructions on what is right and wrong – many of which do not fit our culture and 'modern' thinking of today.

We can inadvertently cause our own problems and label them as ‘suffering for Christ’. This is not a call to try and ‘make’ others do what we believe is right! Neither should we purposefully seek attention and cause trouble for ourselves. We do not need to be the loudest voice, the most forceful entity, or the largest presence, in order to glorify God. Jesus did not force belief upon anyone. He came to bring peace and He carried His Father’s message purposefully and in love.

One commentary reads, *“Christ suffered by the Jews because he was holy, Christians suffer because they resemble him”*, Adam Clarke’s Commentary.

Whether Christians of ancient times or in the present, we are **not to be ashamed** of who we are and Who we follow.

Mark 8:38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

**How would you describe someone who is ashamed?** Looking up the definition in our English dictionary, we read it is “someone who is embarrassed or guilty because of their actions”. If we are innocent, there is no need to hang our head low or hide. **Now consider, if we are truly convinced Jesus is our Lord and Savior and that we need His grace and mercy, and He is the only way to our redemption, then why would we be embarrassed or feel guilt or shame because we have been singled out?** ‘Ashamed’ translated from the original text, means ‘to have a feeling of fear or shame which prevents a person from doing a thing’. This definition also holds the possibility of being ashamed before the Lord Jesus at His judgment seat or being ashamed of suffering as a Christian. It is feeling shame for oneself, feeling remorse, when in fact we should be ecstatic and feel extremely blessed to be God’s child. Consider this example – if you were to receive an exceptionally high honor or you were recognized with an elite award, how would you respond? Think of those who find out they are picked to be part of a national sports league. Of course, in these scenarios, you would jump for joy, tell everyone you knew, and readily associate yourself with this new position. In Christ, you have received honor, you have been saved for eternity, you are a part of the kingdom of heaven.

If Christ calls you to suffer in some small way, there is no shame, rather there is joy that He has counted you worthy to suffer for His name,

Here is a thought to consider –

**Are you ashamed to be called a Believer?** This begs contemplation if you are truly sold out to Christ. **Where do you stand? What do you proclaim? Have you ever backed away from an opportunity to share what you believe because of fear of what someone might think of you?**

*“Ashamed of religion so as to refuse to suffer on account of it. Ashamed that he is despised and maltreated. He is to regard his religion as every way honourable, and all that fairly results from it in time and eternity as in every respect desire able. He is not to be ashamed to be called a Christian; he is not to be ashamed of the doctrines taught by his religion; he is not to be ashamed of the Saviour whom he professes to love; he is not to be*

*ashamed to perform any of the duties demanded by his religion; he is not to be ashamed to have his name cast out, and himself subjected to reproach and scorn. A man should be ashamed only of that which is wrong”, Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary.*

It is an absolute honor to be numbered as one of God’s elect. Anything negative that may come because of our association with Jesus is nothing in regards to eternity in heaven with Him. It is easy to feel pushed into thinking a certain way which is more ‘acceptable’ in society. Yet, we cannot be ashamed of what the Bible says, what is right and wrong, who our Savior is, and what we know to be true.

Read the words of the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 50:5-7 The Lord GOD has opened my ear; and I was not disobedient nor did I turn back. I gave my back to those who strike me, and my cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover my face from humiliation and spitting. For the Lord GOD helps me, therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set my face like flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.

One commentary says of this section of scripture, *“The prophets generally met with very ill treatment from the men of their own times. And though we have no particular account of Isaiah’s sufferings, yet it appears from this verse that his lot was no better than that of his brethren; ...The expressions of this verse were literally fulfilled in Christ.”*  
Patrick/Lowth/Whitby/Lowman Commentary

And the Apostle Paul’s words.

Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

2Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

And the Author of Hebrews.

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The last phrase in 1Peter 4:16 reads, ***“But is to glorify God in this name.”*** We are to glorify God in our representation of Him. This means in all things He is praised, and He is honored; His attributes, His actions and His name are lifted high. It is often easy for us to think ‘out of sight, out of mind’ when it comes to our decisions and the words we share. We sometimes place God in a pocket only to be taken out when we desire His blessings or need His intervention. It is good for us to remember there is never a moment in which we are separated from God in our relationship with Him. He is always front and center, even when

our actions don't represent Him; His Son continues to intercede for us and present us to the Father. We are not to be ashamed of God – who He is and what He has done.

We should be ashamed when our fear of man takes precedence over our representation of Jesus. We should be ashamed when we choose to follow a path of sin rather than live pleasing to our Savior. This is what the Apostle Peter was trying to get across to those who were suffering because of their faith. We cannot control the responses and actions of others, but we can trust in God's strength which allows us to represent Him well, through good times and the not-so-good times. Adversity allows us an opportunity to give glory to God's name as we stand firm in our faith and pursue righteousness. God's perfection sets a standard for us to follow.

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Revelation 15:4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

1Peter 4:11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Answer this question – **Why do you call yourself a Christian?** A Christian is a Christ-follower. Each of us is identified by the name given to us at birth. Many of us are also identified by our strengths, likes, talents, character, and position. For instance, I am a wife, mother, grandmother, friend, neighbor, teacher, author, musician, quilter, chef, organizer, gardener, house-cleaner, laundry-person, and grocery-shopper 😊. But foremost, and encompassing every position I might fill, I am God's child, His disciple and follower. For example, every action, word, and thought I might express as a friend, I express as God's witness.

**If you were to make a list of those things which would describe you, what would we read? Would Christian, Believer, God's child, etc., be at the top of your list? How would others describe you?** Being a Christian should not only be at the top of our list but should be the overriding value of everything else which describes our character. We are to live for Christ; *"Yet not I but through Christ in me"*.

Even when we find ourselves mistreated or misunderstood because of our faith, we can glorify God because we are worthy of suffering for His name. We can glorify God because we are thankful to be His child and look forward to our eternal home. We can glorify God because even in the midst of difficulty, numerous blessings abound. We can glorify God because He is our Creator and Sustainer in all things.

Isaiah 24:14-15 They raise their voices, they shout for joy; they cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD. Therefore glorify the LORD in the east, the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the coastlands of the sea.

2Corinthians 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.

### ***Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me***

*City Alight*

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer  
There is no more for heaven now to give  
He is my joy, my righteousness, and  
freedom  
My steadfast love, my deep and  
boundless peace

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
For my life is wholly bound to His  
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing,  
"All is mine"  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken  
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay  
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing  
For in my need, His power is displayed

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend  
me  
Through the deepest valley He will lead  
Oh the night has been won, and I shall  
overcome  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven  
The future sure, the price it has been  
paid  
For Jesus bled and suffered for my  
pardon  
And He was raised to overthrow the  
grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated  
Jesus now and ever is my plea  
Oh the chains are released, I can sing,  
"I am free"  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus  
For He has said that He will bring me  
home  
And day by day I know He will renew me  
Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
All the glory evermore to Him  
When the race is complete, still my lips  
shall repeat  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
All the glory evermore to Him  
When the race is complete, still my lips  
shall repeat  
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

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