

Women's Bible Study  
1 Peter 4:6-7, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023  
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We are reading the exhortations from Peter, written to the Jewish and Gentile converts, to live according to the example of Christ in doing God's will. It is enough that they had been following sin; they were to turn from their former life even though there was pressure from others to continue in sin. Their sights were to be on God with whom they were ultimately held accountable. The apostle persists in assigning reasons to these Christians that they should live according to the will of God.

1Peter 4:6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to [the will of] God.

Recall, in 1Peter 3, we were referred back to the time of Noah and the opportunity that was given for all to believe while he was building the ark. Noah was ridiculed for his belief, and so too would these new converts be reproached for their faith. Christians may be judged unrighteous according to men but must live according to the word of God.

1Peter 3:19-20 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits [now] in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through [the] water.

It is important for us to remember that God's judgment is perfect, and all will be judged. This is motivation to live according to His will. Through faith and obedience those who lived before Christ were saved.

Looking at our own application of these verses, we are to live in sincere holiness, following God's word. We are to honor Him now and keep our focus towards our life with Him in the future – no matter the obstacles we might face in the present.

How often do we make decisions based on what others might expect or think rather than what God says? We can be more concerned about the judgement of others, when we truly ought to be considering the will of God instead.

*Spurgeon* says this in his commentary, "Our departed brethren heard the gospel to this end that, though condemned to die by their cruel

persecutors, they might win the immortal crown and glorify God as his witnesses”.

Are you living in the Spirit according to the will of God? Give an example of how this might change your thinking or actions.

Romans 8:9-10 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Ephesians 2:3-5 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

1Peter 4:7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober [spirit] for the purpose of prayer.

This letter goes on to encourage the recipients in their purpose of living for the will of God. The ‘end’ means the point aimed at, the goal, or the conclusion. A few years after Peter wrote this epistle, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. This marked *“the end of the temple, the end of the Levitical priesthood, the end of the whole Jewish economy”*, (Adam Clarke’s Commentary).

However, in a more general sense, and keeping with the Apostle’s encouragement to live in holiness, looking toward that final judgement, these words seem to point either to physical death or the prophetic end of Christ’s return. Each follower of Christ is to live having more regard for what is to happen rather than the difficulties that weigh heavy in the present – because the end is near.

Perhaps a good question to ask ourselves is, *‘what are we living towards?’*. Consider what direction you are headed. When you drive, you cannot go towards opposite directions at the same time. You must choose one or the other.

Matthew 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 24:13-14 "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

Matthew 26:41 "Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Luke 21:34-35 "Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

James 5:8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

1Peter 1:13 Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober [in spirit,] fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2Peter 3:10-11 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward [is] with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

This is our charge to live in holiness while we await the day of Jesus' return. He alone has the *"power and authority to recompense every man according to what he hath done"*, Poole. **Are you prepared?**

**Be of sound judgment and sober [spirit] for the purpose of prayer.** *"Serious; thoughtful; considerate. Let a fact of so much importance make a solemn impression on your mind, and preserve you from frivolity levity, and vanity"*, Albert Barnes' NT Commentary.

1Thessalonians 5:6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

1Thessalonians 5:8 But since we are of [the] day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

2Timothy 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

To be sober in spirit is to be of sound mind, to watch, to be aware. Our salvation is not to be taken lightly. Christ suffered and died for us; we are to live for Him.

*“How strongly are vain and sinful men attached to the amusements and interests of this mortal life, and to the gratification of their lusts! But the important end of all things is at hand, when this earthly globe, and all things which are therein, shall be burnt up, when the eternal state of all its inhabitants shall be determined, and immutable happiness or misery shall be their final portion. Be sober, therefore, and watch against all occasions of intemperance and of impurity, and endeavour to preserve your souls in so divine a posture, as that you may be habitually qualified for joining in prayer and those other exercises of devotion, which have such an influence on our whole conduct”, Philip Doddridge N.T.*

Does this mean we do not laugh or enjoy things around us? Where do your greatest affections lie? What are your goals, your motivations? One commentary reads, *“Be ye therefore sober, temperate in all things, not inordinately pursuing nor immoderately using any thing in this world knowing how short the time is”, Thomas Haweis.*

Mark 14:38 "Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Romans 12:11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

For the purpose of prayer. We are here to worship God, to give glory to Him in all things. Back up to 1Peter 4:6 and recall our purpose is to live according to the will of God.

Ephesians 6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

The KJV reads, **and watch unto prayer.** Keeping close to God keeps us covered in His protection so that we don't fall into the temptations of the world. On our own we are weak and frail in our fight against sin. We need His power and strength to live worthy.

Even with the understanding of our need and the seriousness of our calling, there is an excitement of what is to come. There is joy to be had in the knowledge of our future in heaven and Christ's return to earth. So this is not a call to walk around in sackcloth and ashes; it is a call to take your faith and your purpose seriously. God's children have been appointed to live in holiness according to His will.