

Women's Bible Study  
 1Peter 4:1-2, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
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1Peter 4:1-2 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

Look back at the previous verses. Remember, Peter gave instruction in chapter three, for submission in relationships and to authority, using Jesus as the example to follow. Those who followed Christ were to live with an understanding attitude towards others, choosing to be a blessing. And even if suffering were to come because of their beliefs, they were to hang in there and continue to move forward in holiness, following the example of Jesus.

1Peter 3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, [the] just for [the] unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

Therefore, considering all things written before, understand and accept your purpose. The Apostle is now giving his audience a charge to action: *'Arm yourselves, live for the will of God'*. His audience were the Jews and Gentiles who had been called to follow Christ. They formerly followed different beliefs – the Jews were caught in a web of legalism as they held to the practice of the Law; the Gentiles were entrenched in sins of idolatry and immoral practices. But now, their lives and purpose had changed. And with that noticeable change, came ridicule, persecution from others, and a pressure to return to their previous ways.

But God had an intentional role for them. They had been freed from the bondage of sin and were now living for Christ. Although this was written thousands of years ago, the message of God's word is the same. ***As a believer, you have a purpose. You are expected to live for Christ.*** Before you were saved, you served sin; now you serve Christ, and sometimes it may mean ridicule or suffering because you act different, you don't blend in with the norm.

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! ***How shall we who died to sin still live in it?***

Romans 6:5-7 For if we have become united with [Him] in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also [in the likeness] of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with [Him,] that our body of sin might be done away with, ***that we should no longer be slaves to sin;*** for he who has died is freed from sin.

Galatians 5:24 **Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

Colossians 3:3,5 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 5 Therefore **consider the members of your earthly body as dead** to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

In other words, therefore, since you are now saved and identify with Christ, act like it! **First**, we must seriously consider if we are able to identify with and agree with the scriptures listed above. This means we have a genuine desire to have sin uprooted in our lives; we recognize our need for forgiveness, and proclaim Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Then, we are freed to live worthy in Christ, in His power and strength. This is not possible if we are not saved; on our own, our best is epic failure! We simply are unable to fight sin without salvation.

Are we relying upon God's strength to do His will?

Do we seek to live holy in spite of difficulties; are we resolved in our desire to follow Christ?

Are we willing to hold our plans, our passions, and our comfort as unimportant in the light of serving others for Jesus?

Notice the words, 'arm yourselves', in 1Peter 4:1. This means to equip ourselves; it is the idea of having weapons at the ready. We would not consider going onto an active battlefield without the weapons needed to defend ourselves. Yet, all around us is an active battlefield. Each day presents itself with opportunities for worldly thinking, enticement to sin, actions to choose right or wrong, and a myriad of ways to dishonor Christ with our lives. We need to be prepared to stand strong against evil. In your own personal struggles, think of your need to grow in self-restraint.

Genesis 4:7 "If you do well, will not [your countenance] be lifted up? And if you do not do well, **sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.**"

1Peter 5:8-9 Be of sober [spirit,] be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But **resist him, firm in [your] faith**, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

Read the promise following 1Peter 5:8-9.

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen [and] establish you, 1Peter 5:10.

How do **you** arm yourself for battle each day?

Turn to a well-known chapter in Ephesians. In Chapter Six, it speaks about obedience, attitude, doing God's will, and finding strength in Him. Verse 11 tells us how this is possible.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

2Corinthians 6:7 ***in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness*** for the right hand and the left,

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

***Think!*** Are you doing everything you can to stand firm; arming yourself with the truth of God's word ***for the purpose of doing His will?***

What other tools will help you to live in the righteousness of God?

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him ***deny himself***, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Galatians 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have ***crucified the flesh*** with its passions and desires.

***What does it mean to deny yourself?*** *Strong's Greek Dictionary* gives us this definition: to deny utterly, disown, abstain. This means to absolutely refuse, deliberately renounce, and completely refrain from your own self, your identity in the world. You now identify with Christ for His glory.

Let's also break down the meaning of the phrase we read in Galatians, ***crucifying the flesh***. This is a somber picture of being impaled on the cross. To crucify our flesh is to extinguish our selfishness, our worldly passions and desires. Jesus voluntarily obeyed His Father's will and suffered death on the cross to purchase a place in heaven for us. His life was not about Him, it was about doing His Father's will. ***Do we sincerely strive to put to death our own goals and pleasures in order to live for Him?***

Jesus' example was perfect submission to His Father's will. In Christ, we have everything needed to live pleasing and holy unto God. However, this requires a continual surrendering of our will to live for Him, and a moment-by-moment dependence on God's strength to fight sin.

*Hall's Explication of Hard Texts*, poses this question, ***"Do you labor to conform yourselves to Christ?"***

Romans 6:11-13 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin [as] instruments

of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 12:1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, [which is] your spiritual service of worship.

Let's be serious in our understanding of the need to be equipped for battle. We are weak and we will absolutely fail if we try to do this on our own.

Numbers 11:14 "I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me. These words are from Moses in dealing with the grumbings of the Israelites. In fact, in the next verse, Moses actually pleads with God to take him out of the picture so that he does not need to continue to be confronted by his own inability.

In Matthew 26:38, Jesus asked his disciples to keep watch with him. Jesus was grieved as He understood the path ahead of Him and went alone to pray to His Father. Read about the weakness of the disciples in verse 40.

Matthew 26:40 And He \*came to the disciples and \*found them sleeping, and \*said to Peter, "So, you [men] could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"

We are all familiar with Psalm 127:1, Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.

We need to arm ourselves with God's strength. We are to die to the sin which entangles us and draws us away; not relying upon our own strength for the fight, but trusting in God – in Him all things are possible. We no longer live for self; we live to glorify God in holy conformity and obedience to His will.

How would you answer someone who says it is too hard to change, or "I have tried, and I just cannot do it"?

*"The will of God, not our vile affections, must be our guide", Thomas Haweis.* In the same commentary we read, *"The conduct of a Christian appears very strange to an ungodly world, and they wonder what there is in religion which for the sake of it, can induce men to forego all that they call enjoyment".*

Our confidence is in God alone who holds all power over sin and promises eternal life and protection to those who trust in Him. Let's press forward in our purpose to be prepared at all times to live for God's glory.