

First Peter

Living as Strangers and Pilgrims

Few concepts strike fear and dread in our mind as much as that of suffering. Much time, effort and planning is spent on the avoidance of discomfort or suffering on any level. A life spent free from trouble and challenges of persecution, cruelty, seeming misfortune and overall meanness from others is often viewed as idealistic and successful. The insights throughout this letter indicate otherwise. Our lives are not to be characterized by the avoidance of trouble and troubling circumstances, but by the pursuit of the peace of God that comes in harmony with obedience to God and faith in His controlling plan and will. Once we gain a life perspective of God's controlling hand overall, and a better acquaintance with who He is, we welcome His plan and our fortunate participation in it in any way!

Peter wrote this to churches/believers in the midst of persecutions and those soon to face it on a wide and terrifying scale. They were about to face widespread killing, torture and griefs. But there is more than persecution that a person in Christ is apt to face. As citizens of Heaven we soon come to realize how very little we fit in this world and society. This letter was written to prepare the churches for living as strangers and pilgrims while we walk this short journey in this world.

I. Our Hope - An Imperishable Inheritance - 1:1-5

A. Those involved - the Apostle Peter and "aliens"

1. Peter a "sent out one" of Christ

- One taught by Christ and commissioned for this service
- Peter was the one addressed three times as to his love of the Lord - Peter was asked if he selflessly loved the Lord ($\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\alpha\omega$) and Peter's answer was that he did love ($\phi\iota\lambda\epsilon\omega$) the Lord. The Lord did not seem to draw attention to Peter's choice of words for love but simply instructed him to shepherd/tend His sheep (feed, protect and guide them for the true Shepherd)

John 21:15-17

We serve "the sheep" out of love of the Shepherd not primarily love of the "sheep"

- When called upon to minister to those "in Christ" we serve the Lord and His sheep and are not to view it as being at our own "pleasure"
- "God creates out of nothing and until a man is nothing God can make nothing out of him" - Martin Luther (our selfless love is of God first as self dwindles and He increases in us as does His work and cause)

2. Those scattered throughout living as "aliens" (strangers)

- There were several groups addressed over a large area (far apart, far away)
- They were strangers because of their being "chosen by God"
- This would appear to be the best handling of this word in light of a similar term in I Pet. 2:11 - "aliens and strangers"

3. These were chosen of God in accordance with His "knowing them beforehand" for this

- This is the core reason/means we become who we are
- God knew ahead of time He would choose us for His purpose(s)
- There is no higher calling that could be sought or attained! - there will be challenges/consequences that come as a result of this privileged position while we live as pilgrims on this earth, but our life outlook is always ultimately bright in light of this inheritance - even death which finalizes the wearisome journey

The core of all unstoppable comfort is found in God's control and purposes - Rom. 8:28

4. We were foreordained to be sanctified by/through the Spirit
 - a. As in Rom. 8:29 - "... **conformed** to the image of His son"
 - b. We see our "set-apartness" being worked out in our obedience
 - c. "God the Father gives us salvation by gratuitous election; the Son earns it by His blood-shedding; the Holy Spirit applies the merit of the Son to the soul by the Gospel word." Calvin
 - d. We were chosen by God to be made holy in obedience to Him not because we were, are or **would** be obedient in and of ourselves to Him
 - e. We obey because we are being made holy by the work of the spirit not to make us holy by our obedience! Many live a life backwards striving for holiness by their obedience failing to see the work of God's spirit in them setting them apart to **make** them obedient
 - f. The order of this is crucial to help us see and understand the work of God in all aspects of our lives using all sorts of instruments to set us apart for His work
 - g. Much of what is stated in this letter pivots on knowing, understanding and believing this truth - e.g. the purpose for **suffering**
 5. We are in a constant state of being under the sprinkling of the blood of Christ
 - a. As in the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the sprinkling of blood upon the people for an atonement for sin
 - b. The focus is not upon the pursuit of salvation from sin but now it is upon salvation to obedience (ability/grace to be pleasing to God)
 - c. This cleansing frees us to work **from** salvation instead of for salvation
 6. This is who we are in Christ - an understanding of our position clarifies our purpose
- B. The goal of the truth to be shared - that "grace and peace multiplied"
1. This statement is passive and optative - that it is a desire (wish) for them (optative) and that it be done **to** them (passive)
 2. That God's enabling work and the peace that comes from knowing Him and who he is be multiplied (made more and more abundant) over time
 - a. God's enablement to obey is the source of our inner peace which is strengthened in and through obedience
 - b. As we grow in peace we obey more (absence of fear/intimidation that used to come when we faced certain trials which now seem diminished in their strength)
 - c. God wastes nothing! All will be used (grace) to increase this calm confidence
 - d. "Ye have now peace and grace, but still not in perfection; therefore, ye must go on increasing until the old Adam be dead." - Luther
- C. God is to be strived to and sought to be "adored" on our part/purpose - vs. 3
1. He is the "father of our Lord Jesus Christ" as Father of all - God almighty has done this!
 2. It is He Who caused us to be "begotten (born) again"
 - a. As He was the chief agent (cause) of our physical birth, so He is our spiritual
 - b. Our spiritual existence (**awareness**) is from Him
 3. We are born again (made alive) to a "lively hope"
 - a. We are given a **realistic** hope in contrast to the baseless hope of the world
 - b. It is a hope that "maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" - Rom. 5:5 - it is proven to never let us down and proves that it never will let us down - no cause to have to explain away its failure
 - c. It is an active, growing hope - not dead and lifeless
 - d. "It has life in itself, gives life, and looks for life as its object" - De Wette

He chose us to make this happen not BECAUSE it would happen - He is the cause of our holiness and its outworking to holiness

Our goals and objectives are in acting in harmony (perfecting/performing) holiness out of reverence for God - II Cor. 7:1

No longer working towards citizenship but from citizenship

4. As in Romans 6, the proof and means of this “living hope” is the resurrection of Christ
 - a. It proved the conquering of the most powerful effect of sin; death
 - b. It proved the conquering of the penalty of breaking the Law of God
 5. God is to be praised (adored) as this is His doing
- D. Our inheritance - an eternal motivation for temporary struggles - vs. 4
1. We have been “born anew” to this inheritance (as if born into the family inheritance)
 - a. Without this, our inheritance would be temporal (of this world) with no lasting hope to see us through the trials
 - b. Our earthly position is now overshadowed by our heavenly position!
 2. It is an inheritance - won by someone else and transferred to us simply by relationship
 3. It is an imperishable inheritance - it is “undecaying”
 - a. It does not lessen in any fashion
 - b. It cannot fade in quality and is not subject to time limits
 - c. Would we not gladly “trade off” what is short-lived in its quality for what does not lose its uniqueness, enjoyment and flawless quality
 4. It is undefiled - there is not (will be no) impurity whatsoever
 - a. It is perfection in reality (not just perception)
 - b. Scrutiny will only reveal more perfection in quality and purpose
 - c. There will be no possible threat of its being spoiled in the least - no sin
 5. It does not “fade away” - it does not lose its splendor
 - a. It cannot fade in “glory” and wonderment (always enjoyed to the fullest)
 - b. An environment where everything seem to “catch the eye”
 6. It is “reserved in Heaven” for us (for you)
 - a. As protected from being taken away - it is set
 - b. “Greek perfect, expressing a fixed and abiding state, “which has been and is reserved.” The inheritance is in security, beyond risk, out of the reach of Satan, though we for whom it is reserved are still in the midst of dangers. Still, if we believers, we too, as well as the inheritance, are “kept” (the same Greek, John 17:12) by Jesus safely.” JFB
 - c. It is “narrowed down” to each of us as individuals to clarify that each of us is meant and that it is not just an “opening” for whoever but for “me” specifically
 - d. So, this is mine and cannot be taken away (so what occurs on earth is no threat to our inheritance) - is was given to us not earned so no power on earth can take it away and seeing it is God that gives it, He will not change either - it is secure!
- E. Guarded through faith - vs. 5
1. What is the “choice means” that God keeps us guarded? - Faith
 - a. He uses faith to “keep” us (guard us) to the end result of salvation
 - b. “Present (continuous process) passive articular (tous) participle of phroureô, to garrison, old verb (from phrouros sentinel), a military term” RWP
 - c. It is passive so it happens to us by God’s action
 - d. His tool of guarding us is faith in Him overcoming the intimidating waves of doubt and seeming outward contradictions sure to come
 2. Salvation from this world and the presence of sin (and its detrimental affects) is already ready and will be revealed (seen with our eyes) in the last days
 - a. The world (society) at large will be in opposition to us as we are in Christ
 - b. It will be more than worth the wait and “challenges” in the mean time!
 - c. The world dreads the “last days” (judgement) while we welcome them

No boredom - we will never tire of any aspect of our inheritance - it will always be as thrilling as when we first see it

“In him, I say, for by our union with him we became God’s Heritage, having from the first been destined for this in the intention of him who, in all that happens, is carrying out his own fixed purpose;” Eph. 1:11 (TCNT)

“Our” faith is His work!

3. All this is done by the “power of God”

As in Php. 4:7 when the peace that is given by God will “keep/guard” our hearts and minds and it surpasses (goes beyond) our ability to comprehend how it works

We then revere and love God not dread Him or His current or potential actions

- a. He “graces” (enables) us, in the midst of life, to believe
- b. He is the assured sustainer - sustainment through trails not away from them
- c. God’s power is most clearly seen at work in us in the middle of a “fire” by ourselves and by those looking on - see Dan. 3:19-26 as an example
- d. We are then not overcome with the fear of losing this inheritance because of ourselves, but are instead motivated in our service (no matter the coming conflicts) that our inheritance is set will be maintained (as we) through the power of God at work, working in us faith

II. The Proving of This Faith - 1:6-9

A. With the assurance of God’s working and a reserved inheritance we rejoice! - vs. 6

1. At this thought we are to be full of “exultation” (it’s more than just motivational)

This rejoicing is not in the imperative but middle indicating our opportunity to participate while not being mandatory

- a. It is based upon these assurances not on present or upcoming circumstances
- b. So much of our emotional state is built upon perception - one can see the “bright side” and keep stable while another can see the negative and sure “doom”
- c. If we walk (live) by sight (our limited perceptions) we will be apt to be in a continual battle with despair focusing on the temporal struggles instead of the eternal inheritance which cannot be taken away

while being persecuted d. Mt. 5:12 - “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in Heaven..”

2. Though, for a little while we are in “distress”

“It would be in fact only for a brief period, even if it should continue through the whole of life.” - Barnes

- a. One of the key words in this phrase is “little” - the underlying word carries with it the idea of “puny” - as puny amount of time in the whole scheme of things!
- b. These trials are not always assured (as if they must be happening at all times) but as “necessary” as deemed (ultimately) by God
- c. Even as Paul phrased it, “..our light affliction.. but for a moment” - II Cor. 4:17
 - The focus is upon what it truly yields in eternity not the “now”
- d. This is one of the core problems with us; time seems so long until we’ve passed through it (when suddenly it seems so short) - if there is one thing that the passage of time should be teaching us it is that the passage of time is fast and short

So often we regret a pessimistic outlook at the end of a trial because we failed to anticipate the 100% success rate of God

3. This rejoicing is in light of the often dreaded “even though”

- a. So, in spite of the distressing trials we stay steady
- b. We will most assuredly be “distressed” - grieving as a result of adversity
 - Much of the pain we feel in adversity is the loss of pride and the needed process of dying to self - As Paul was placed in such a position - I Cor. 15:31
- c. This sadness will come from a varying type and degree of trials - it is these unpredictable trails that we must look at what lies ahead not what currently surrounds us - when we look at the immediate or even just the near future we find our selves quickly fatigued and discouraged not desiring to look through the “eyes of faith”

B. We rejoice because we now know (or are to know) the value of our faith being “tried” - vs. 7

1. This is the core of the word πειρασμος indicating a “putting to the test”

δοκιμιον - the testing of something to prove its trustworthiness and genuineness

- a. It is in the ultimate sense a trying of God’s power not our personal resolve
- b. As faith is what “sees us through” and He is the giver of faith

2. This trying (literally proving) of faith is of more value than gold (which will perish)

- a. Many seek gold first so as to avoid faith altogether!
- b. And yet, on the whole scheme of things our living by faith, and it being found (proven) true, is of the highest value

3. This is a part of the “proving” the reality of what God’s will is (in quality) - Rom. 12:2
 - a. The renewing of our minds (thinking/perspectives) as we live by faith and it is tried (challenged) we learn that God’s will is good, acceptable and perfect
 - b. This is one of the reasons it is more valuable than “gold” - it more defines what we really need in life. We need to see more the power of living by faith than what can be discovered or even anticipated in the power of money (“mammon”)
 - c. “gold” perishes while faith grows in value throughout life never to be exhausted! - money and earthly resources are incapable of buying faith - they actually hinder it
4. The “testing” is by “fire” - as in purifying (separating the dross/alloy)

Life is the ongoing discovery of what we really have in the “power” of faith

I Cor. 3:13 - “..the day will declare it.. what sort of work it is..”

What to rely on on what not to

- a. This use of fire was to prove it was genuine (versus man’s counterfeits)
- b. This use of fire was to purify (leaving only the real/genuine) - what we perceive to be the objects of our faith and the results of our faith are distinguished from the real “object” of our faith and true living by faith (versus a life of “seen security”)
- c. Proving also to use what is true faith and what is not (what belongs and what goes)

5. The purpose statement: that it might be found to be..
 - a. Praiseworthy before God - God delights in His work in us - thus, faith
 - b. Glorifying to God as the giver of this protective and productive faith
 - c. Honoring of God - “That honour might be done to it before assembled worlds.”
 - d. All coming “full circle” at the revelation of Christ - God’s work comes back to Him in full praise, glory and honor fully seen by all looking on!

Barnes

C. God’s outworking of faith in us directed at Christ - vs. 8-9

1. Though we have not seen Him, we love Him - this stands in direct opposition to those stressing the need to see God/Christ or angelic beings as a point of their growth

We are not to be those needing visual proof to love God - this requires ongoing “proofs” to sustain this type of love

- a. This is a large part of the power of God working in us through faith
 - b. We hear the message of the Gospel and love Him for it - many cannot get passed their undue skepticism founded in a “mind over faith” approach to life
2. Though we are not “seeing” him we believe in Him

Man cannot reach truth on his own.. we need the revealed truth of God and the acceptance of it in faith

- a. This is where faith defies common logic - we still believe without seeing
- b. Those needing proof do not have/exercise faith - this does not mean there is not “proof” just that the proof is not found in simple human observation or the intellectuals musings but in the revealed truth clearing confusion and obscurity from our perception revealing reality as it really is not as man would come to a consensus

3. This dictates our overall “spirit” (outlook) of life
 - a. We are literally “glad” with a joy that cannot be expressed (with words/utterance)
 - b. Inexpressible because it defies logic and surpasses our understanding!
 - c. It is a joy we glory in (it is “full of glory”) as we grow to see its vital need through life
4. Why this joy? - the out come of it (where it looks) is the saving of our souls
 - a. Not that the joy saves us, for salvation is the outcome of our faith generated and produced by the power of God to protect us through this journey
 - b. Salvation from God is our life’s greatest treasure - this is the ultimate culmination of the work of faith in us (this is where we are being led)
 - c. Notice it is the saving of our souls (present) not our bodies (present) - we must not be too attached to our bodies this side of eternity (especially in light of coming trials)
 - d. Our present joy (inner state of gladness) is not dependent on present circumstances but on our assured and coming salvation
5. This outworking of our salvation was something those before longed to see

III. A Salvation Greatly Anticipated - vs. 10-12

A. Take account of what we have by the excitement of those before us

1. Many times, we value things more knowing others have longing to have them
2. Prophets wished to see this salvation process worked out
 - “The magnitude of this “salvation” is proved by the earnestness with which “prophets” and even “angels” searched into it.” JFB
3. It is important that we realize what we have is/was enviable, so when we face trials, we already find comfort in having seen the saving work of God in Christ worked out
 - They longed to see “the grace that should come to you” - it was this astonishing outworking of grace they longed to “see in action”
4. “The idea is, that they perceived that in their communications there were some great and glorious truths which they did not fully comprehend, and that they diligently employed their natural faculties to understand that which they were appointed to impart to succeeding generations. They thus became students and interpreters for themselves of their own predictions. They were not only prophets, but men.” Barnes

A good example of how looking back best prepares me to face what I see ahead

The deep discussions should have as their result the building of faith and hope with much anticipation of seeing them “in action”

- a. We can also identify with this; knowing truths in faith that our minds desire to explore “the intricacies” and depths
- b. Much of our hope finds its “motivation” in the discussions of the truths of God
5. Much of their inquiry would have been into the “sufferings” of Christ to come
 - a. It is not in “normal human thinking” to equate suffering with glory
 - b. Yet, suffering would be pivotal in God’s plan with us through Christ
 - c. Suffering will still be key in God’s working with and through us

B. What the prophets were informed of would be for us and not themselves

1. They were “curious” the “manner of time” this would take place
 - a. Not just when it would occur, but what the time would be like
 - b. What would the conditions be and the age of the world be like?
2. They were informed but were not to fully know or see - as they, we also must not expect full “informed- consent” to know how things will be
 - a. Fear of the unknown is one of the greatest fears we will face
 - b. Many seek ways to know the particulars to come to bypass this fear
 - c. Yet, if we know what was coming, and all entailed, we would be apt to run in fear of what must come, failing to focus on the “glory” beyond the suffering
3. These prophets were they who communicated the good news that they would not see themselves this side of eternity
 - a. We also, are not to require (as we might entertain that we can) to experience all the “good things” that may be a part of the promises of God
 - b. Any part we have in the ministry of God is our highest privilege!

C. This message is from Heaven - the “control center” of the universe

1. It is the Truth as it was revealed by God - as reiterated in II Pet. 1:21 - it is not known without His action and illumination
2. The Gospel message preached (“good-newsing”) is from God’s Spirit Who was sent down from heaven (again, God’s action)
3. The giver of this good news is the One who knows and controls all things and can be trusted with my life and all I hold precious
4. This message and action of God is so profound, it has captured the unique interest of God’s angels (messengers) also
 - As if to stoop down to see something interesting yet obscure (hard to see)

The object of our faith and glorying must not be in man but in God - it is His message given as He determined and accomplished flawlessly as He determined

5. So all involved (prophets and angels) were used of God to propagate His message and His plan not their own - each ministering, not fully understanding (nor requiring it) the full scope of what they did or the message they were given
 - a. It is not in our hands to dictate how and to what extent we will be “used of God”
 - b. We must, in faith, accept that the success of our being used rests with God
 - c. God used people and angels, neither deserving worship!
 - d. It is through and by the Holy Spirit - whenever the message we “preach” is not of the Spirit, it will be in error - we are always dependent on Him!

IV. Live a Holy Life - vs. 13-25

A. Ready your thinking - in light of the greatness of what we have been given...

Taking forethought for thoughts (thinking)

1. “Gird your minds” (for action) - focus the thoughts (patterns of thinking)
 - a. As in the days when they wore long robes that needed to be “girded up” with a belt and organized so as to not hinder movement and needed action
 - b. Organize the thoughts (not thinking haphazardly or impulsively/reactionary)
 - c. Take into account what we have and what is coming and let this assessment be the controlling factor of how we think about (view) all things
 - d. This is needed when we realize that distracting elements (such as trials) are coming and will redirect our thinking wrongly if our thoughts are not established
 - e. Other distractions such as former sinful practices (some even seem comforting) will tempt us again to backtrack - self-serving pursuits

Life distractions consume valuable resources (especially time) wasting them on matters or energies better used elsewhere

2. Keep sober - stay focused
 - a. sober - refraining from that which clouds the senses (like wine)
 - b. Beware the many topics that distract our focus - self-fulfillment, business (worldly affairs usurping eternal), bitterness, greed, pride..
 - c. Be on-guard (actively) to stop or avoid what will distract

3. Fix your hope completely on the “grace to come”

- a. It is a settled decision (commitment) - to fix the hope permanently
- b. We must not let the focus of our expectation (hope) shift to other things

4. I John 3:1-3 - A fixed hope, keeping purity

- a. Great love of God directed at us to become His children
- b. We do not know the full extent of what it will be like in eternity (what we will be like)
- c. This hope is “fixed on Him” - He is the object not anything about ourselves or about others
- d. He being the object of our hope prompts us to purity - removal of distracting “sins” not for salvation but for clarity of walk throughout this life

Thus the importance of where we direct our hope - we conform to the object of our hope - if money, then greed, if man then pride, if self then insecurity

5. “When we see Christ” - either in death or at His coming

- a. We will see the “salvation ready to be revealed”
- b. This hope is where our thoughts are to be fixed

B. Living as the “children of the Father” we truly are - vs. 14-19

1. “.children to whom obedience is their characteristic and ruling nature, as a child is of the same nature as the mother and father.” JFB

2. Not to be conformed to “former lusts” - what characterizes those not the “children of God”

- a. Not to follow the “schematic” of the former self
- b. A schematic is a diagram that sets how something is to be built and identifies what something is “made of”
- c. Be careful to avoid trying to follow the schema of “society” versus God

3. Don't use the old "model" - middle voice
 - a. This is an instruction to not participate in the process
 - b. The new "model" (schema) is our Holy Father not our "former selves"
4. It is this "schema" that we are to focus our thoughts upon (in hope)
 - a. Without forethought to our thinking (pre-planning) we will think and ultimately behave wrongly
 - b. It is a life-long process of learning how God sees life from His perfect perspective and daily seeking to correct our course to match (course correction)
5. We now know better (not as in the days of our "ignorance")
 - a. Part of the "girding up" process is the changing of thoughts to the point where we could never think the same way again
 - b. The positive results of learning Truth are the "stakes in the ground" placed in our thinking (lines never to be crossed and paths to serve as our maps/focus)
 - c. Not our former "lusts" - living by responsibility over self-serving inclinations
6. "But (rather) after the pattern of Him who hath called you (whose characteristic is that He is) holy, be (Greek, 'become') ye yourselves also holy." God is our grand model."
 - a. He is the One who "called" us - we are not called to be saved but are called to be conformed (to the image of His son - Rom. 8:29)
 - b. The form of this call is passive - we are to "be becoming" holy as containing the idea of letting it happen to us not in the active form of making it happen
 - c. We are to be holy in all matter of how we "busy ourselves" - conduct
 - d. Part of this "holing" process will come in the form of various trials
7. Why have it this way (to be holy)? - "because" - vs. 16
 - a. Because He who called us is holy - it is written, it is known
 - b. There should be no other answer - not that we be holy to be saved or in better standing with God but simply because He who chose us is this way
 - c. "He shows that sanctification does necessarily follow adoption." GBN
 - d. "It is I with whom ye have to do. Ye are mine. Therefore abstain from Gentile pollutions. We are too prone to have respect unto men." Calvin
8. II Cor. 6:14-7:1 - precious promises leading to action
 - a. The real reality should make it impossible for us to partner with "darkness"
 - b. It does not (no longer) fit who we really are as God's children
 - c. He will be a Father to us and we His children - this is the precious promise
 - d. Therefore, let us cleanse ourselves..
 - (1). From all filthiness of the flesh - as if to "prune" our lives of it/them
 - (2). With purpose to present ourselves - as "cleaning up" when coming into a formal setting or before one deeply respected
 - (3). From all filthiness of the spirit also - such as "idolatry" - replacements for God either practically (dependence) or theoretically (perspective)
 - (4). "...in deepest reverence for God, aim at perfect holiness." TCNT
9. Since we call Him Father - vs. 17
 - a. He is the true impartial judge - He is unaffected by pretense in His judgment
 - b. He knows the true character - God is not mocked... what is sown is reaped
 - c. Part of being holy is being genuine (lacking hypocrisy) - no masks!
 - d. Live out this short stay (on earth) in fear (motivating reverence and respect)
 - e. Realizing what went into our redemption, we become reverent of what we have been given and how we "use" it

So much of society plays "pretend" in their sin desperately seeking ways to disguise what really happens and the damage really done by sin - a "grown-up" does not play pretend

JFB

Do not offer resistance to the being set apart process - harmonize with it

It is a great truth, that men everywhere will imitate the God whom they worship. They will form their character in accordance with his. They will regard what he does as right. They will attempt to rise no higher in virtue than the God whom they adore, and they will practise freely what he is supposed to do or approve. Hence, by knowing what are the characteristics of the gods which are worshipped by any people, we may form a correct estimate of the character of the people themselves; and hence, as the God who is the object of the Christian's worship is perfectly holy, the character of his worshippers should also be holy. Barnes

10. It is important to note that it is being holy in what we do, not being holy by what we do not do (it is seen in our activity in being like the Father) - pursuits not avoidances
11. To call upon also means to “invoke” the name of - it is a form of identity (since we call His name and stand with Him, we must be like Him)

- a. To invoke a name is also to call for aid/help
- b. We must not contradict the one from which we seek help

12. He is an impartial judge not swayed by outward appearance (face)

God is always dealing with us in the “positive” in what we are to be doing not in the negative (what we should not be doing) - God initiates not responds in this area

- a. We are “judged” (distinguished) by what we really do not by how we appear or what we appear to be doing
- b. We are “judged” in accordance by what we are to be doing (being separated to His use (holy)) not by what we should not be doing
- c. We may appear to others to be performing holy works, but if they are not truly holy we are dealt with in such a manner as to produce true holiness
- d. It is in accordance with our “work” (singular) not works - who/what we are

our character - what truly identifies the real us (characteristics)

- (1). We are not truly defined by our individual works (each at a time)
- (2). We are better defined by our work (accumulation of works over time)

13. “Pass the time” of your living as foreigners in fear/reverence of God as your father

- a. Live your life this way - it is what you’re busy with - “conduct yourself” (NASB)
- b. As “sojourning” (KJV) - as foreigners (outside the house) - outsiders
- c. Our focus is not upon those inside the “house” longing to be a part of them, but upon the Lord as our Father to be with Him and like Him

14. Realize/remember the ransom price - what it cost to bring us to where we now are - vs. 18

- a. We were not “ransomed” by means of “silver and gold” - by what is temporary and of highest value to this world and also perishes
- b. Not of the futile life’s productions - the ineffective life handed down from your fathers
- c. It would have seemed true to some that they could have paid their own way to please God through their hard work and sacrificial giving
- d. Anything purchased with silver and gold or earned through physical struggle will ultimately lose its value to us over time (even a so-called salvation)

“Human piety is a vain blasphemy, and the greatest sin that a man can commit”
- Luther

15. The ransom price was the “precious blood of Christ” - vs. 19

- a. “The universe had nothing more valuable to offer, of which we can conceive, than the blood of the Son of God.” Barnes
- b. Even little material items carry lasting value to us because of the sacrifice they represent (the sacrifice that went into obtaining it)
- c. We are more apt to live our new life in a holy manner out of reverence and love, remembering the price that was paid for our redemption
- d. It is of highest value (precious - τιμιος) - it merits highest attention/admiration
- e. As a lamb (sacrificial for sins) unblemished (untouched with corruption) and spotless (without flaw) - what one would normally keep and cherish

- C. All is an outworking of God’s master plan - vs. 20-21

1. Our Father planned it all!

- a. Christ, as our redeemer, was “foreknown” before the foundation of the world
- b. God’s redemptive plan was set before creation - He knew the fall of man and His own plan to redeem us
- c. In His infinite plan (perfect in all ways as it is now) Christ came as planned, in the perfect time planned, to fulfill the perfect plan, “for the sake of you”
- d. The infinite, eternal plan now narrows its focus on little me !

This truth should instill in us a reverence for God’s separating of us for His purposes!

2. As God designed, we believe in Him through the work of Christ
 - a. Not just by His message, but through His life (what He did and what was done)
 - b. He was raised from the dead - God proving His redemptive work
3. Our purpose in life is to be in awe of God's working, not our seeking God or others to be in awe of our working

This was the purpose and the actual outworking of God's plan proving a definitive place for our faith and hope

- a. Christ was given glory by the Father - for a purpose - as our Lord so often stated that His was to do the will of the Father (e.g. John 5:30)
 - b. God is not seeking to fulfill us and our agendas - our fulfillment may come (to some degree) but is not a requirement this side of eternity
 - c. The glory given to Christ was used (as intended) to establish our faith (dependence) and hope (expectation) would be in God (alone)
4. This awareness is essential when in hardship - if focus is placed on circumstances and trials our faith and hope will be misdirected... but if placed in the God Who foreknows we can be assured that all is seen and God still in control

D. A holy life (identified in obedience) leads to obligated, sincere love - vs. 22

1. In this world, as strangers, we will need to act as encouragers to each other
 - a. Most often, those that do not "fit in" find each other and find an initial bond in their being mutually rejected by their present company
 - b. Most of our trials will be made more bearable by faithful, true friends!
2. The direction of this statement is "see that you love one another" - "fervently"

Fellow-suffering is a strong foundation to fellowship

The Truth of Who God is and our responsibility of obedience to Him because He is our Father and the cost of our redemption would demand our acting as those purchased by a price

- a. This selfless love comes because (since)...
- b. "you have purified your souls..." - sought and been accomplishing to cleanse the "inner-self" (thoughts, ambitions, inclinations) with the Truth
- c. The truth of who we are, what has been done and our real purpose on this earth
- d. "...not brotherly love but brother love. Not 'love men as though they were your brothers,' but 'love men because they are your brothers.'" Howard Masterman

3. Brother love and selfless love are hindered (smothered) with impurity
 - a. Impurity, at its core, will always be filled with "self" - "the essence of sin is self"
 - b. Disobedience to responsibility and authority carries with it guilt and fear and confusion (stemming from a contradictory purpose)

Love "grows cold" when iniquity increases and the heart of iniquity is self-will

4. As framed in this verse, this "purifying of our souls" is our acting/doing
 - a. Thus the need for our constantly exposing ourselves to the Truth - as clarified in the next verse this is the "Word of God"
 - b. Purification is the removal of what does not belong (what hinders/infects)
 - (1). The Truth identifies what these are (removing obstructions) - X-ray
 - (2). The Truth identifies the cure (replacements)

5. This "brother love" is to be sincere
 - a. Facades seem fine till true hardship arrives demanding genuine sacrifice
 - b. Many facades are being revealed in churches as fellowship is so easily broken by even minor differences or challenges
 - c. With "brother love" the relationship usurps present/coming circumstances
 - d. This focus is a must because of the trials which are to come - I will not suffer with or for someone I do not see as a "brother" or dear friend
 - e. "It is a love of rational goodwill that desires the highest good for the one loved, even at the expense of self" - Hiebert
 - f. This love is often most identified by our viewing other's trials as more important than our own - as a parent would rather suffer than their child suffering
 - g. I would rather be the one "offended" than the one offending - focus is outward

Constant and thorough exposure to the Truth of God's Word makes this apparent and a must

Often, the lack of a common cause causes us to make each other "targets of battle" rather than the true enemy

E. We are who we are because of the Word of God - vs. 23-25

Reality pivots, not on our preception, but on His "speaking"

As our earthly relationships and bodies begin to yield to corruption/decay, our rebirth becomes more apparent

Not driven by longing looks backward focused on the past more than the future

"It no sooner is than it is gone" JFB

1. As in Deut. 8:3 - life does not consist or sustain through "bread" only
 - a. All finds its source by every word that "proceeds from the mouth of God"
 - b. We seek His direction and control above all else trusting in Him when we seem not to have what we need to sustain, or question our purpose
2. We are "born again" (made altogether new again) by His Word
 - a. This is tied to the previous instruction to love fervently - we are not only outsiders in this world, but fellow heirs of an incorruptible inheritance (1:4)
 - b. We are not "born again" of "corruptible seed" - seed as grows vegetation
 - c. We are not to see ourselves as those given to decay but as eternal beings with eternal relationships (usurping our earthly (corruptible) relationships)
 - d. This perspective is to define us more than our earthly birth - thus the instruction of Christ in Luke 14:26 - Love Him more than the most cherished earthly relationships
 - e. All of the "corruptible seed" fades way with time, proving its temporality - In Christ all is ahead and nothing behind! - Php. 3:13
3. The means to our being made is the "Word of God"
 - a. It is incorruptible (not given or susceptible to decay of any kind)
 - b. This is the Word of God in any form - the Scripture and His will as spoken, declared, written and made known in any form - the expression of His will
 - c. We are here/exist because God spoke it to be so - it is done because He spoke it and willed it - the emphasis is not on the things made not what was spoken but the one Who spoke it!
 - d. God is living and abiding forever thus His word lives and abides forever
4. This is in direct contrast to "flesh" - vs. 24
 - a. As the grass, it withers away over a short amount of time
 - b. As the flowers in the grass so the glory of what the flesh produces falls away
 - c. That which is of the flesh does not merit the bulk of our attention as it is fleeting
 - d. The way it is presented in this verse is to emphasize the shortness of the time
5. Yet, what God speaks (ρημα) is forever and it is what reveals the "Good News" - vs. 25
 - a. The purpose is to direct and sustain our focus upon His word and will
 - b. Seek what endures not what produces, at best, fading glory
 - c. Focus cannot be on "man" and his will/aspirations but on the good news of God
 - d. Focus, life purpose is in the Word of God (every word that proceeds from Him)

V. Longing for the "Milk of the Word" - 2:1-3

A. Lay aside self-focused vices that hinder and obstruct the Word's work in us and our hunger for it

1. Lay aside as filthy garment "malice" - ill-will, lacking in graciousness
 - a. This stems from self-focus resulting in "meanness" to others
 - b. If I cannot be gracious to my "brethren" how can I be with my Father?
2. Lay aside all "guile" - deceit, cunning
 - a. This stems with a desire to use others for my gain, not me used for theirs
 - b. It is setting up "lures" to ensnare others in the "cause of me"
3. Lay aside hypocrisies - facades, play acting rather than being real
 - a. This stems from a dishonest "front" of ourselves for the eyes of others
 - b. It is seeking to ascribe virtues we do not possess - a false virtue may come to deceive ourselves in believing we are strong where we are weak, thus hindering true growth - why grow where I estimate I am already grown?

A focus on self brings a blindness to the needs of others and to the need we will have for one another in tribulation

4. Jealousy/envy - self before all others
 - a. If self is the main focus, the Truth of the Word will not be appealing
 - b. Scripture promotes and produces a desire for God's will over all and most often in direct contradiction to our initial will
5. Slander - Defaming others either out of resentment or self-promotion
 - a. This and all the others are opposed to the love of the brethren
 - b. When one reaches "slander" (defaming gossip) the love loss becomes aggressive
 - c. We are to be a support in tribulation not the tribulation itself!
6. So focus must be upon the Word of Truth to keep us "in line" and so as to grow in spiritual and mental maturity to be readied for the trials to come

B. The word is compared to the milk a child needs for growth - vs. 2

1. Not that this is a level of eating and seeking higher levels later
2. This is compared to THE food we eat and are to crave as a baby does milk
 - a. We need it for growth (in our salvation)
 - b. We need it as it is the only pure source of spiritual/mental nourishment - all else is adulterated with humanistic ideas or "honest mistakes"
3. We are commanded to long for it (imperative)
4. Our motive and purpose for craving it, is growth
 - a. Growth is to be an ongoing act and requires ongoing "feeding"
 - b. It is the assured mode for growth as it is the "sincere/genuine" milk of the Word - as milk from a mother is assuredly the best for her child - there is no doubt of its benefits as there is no doubt of its source - we want no artificial ingredients
 - c. This statement has an imperative and a passive - "long for" is commanded and "grow" is passive; thus when we don't "eat" we don't grow
 - d. Beware false "proofs" of growth - true growth is seen in growing faith - as seen in childlike faith - Mk. 10:15

C. Having "tasted" that He is gracious, our appetite is triggered - vs. 3

1. Sadly, many develop tastes for alternatives to the "Word" and do not grow - there is a feeling of fullness but malnutrition is seen when they are called upon to use strength in challenges and none is to be found
2. The idea of this verse is "since you have experienced His 'usefulness'"
 - a. We have seen He is the source of "hope that does not shame"
 - b. He is the source of what provides strength/stamina when pressed
3. We are ultimately driven by desire - Mt. 6:19-24
 - a. The key is not to fight desire as much as it is to change desire
 - b. I will yield at any given time to what I truly want most - this is why a hypocritical spirituality is so detrimental to growth - acting like I want the right while wanting something else
 - c. A disciplined, consistent delving into the Word will build this "taste" - it is this change of heart (changing of heart) we are always seeking
4. The origin of this thought is Psa. 34:8 - "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good: Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him." (ASV)

Study (feeding) on the Word is more than reading - it is learning and applying (using) - knowing is useless until it leads to action of some sort - use it

Submission and obedience are crucial in discovering the truth first-hand - impatience often causes us to run a faulty test of Truth causing us to discredit it in our thinking

- a. It is the same concept of Rom. 12:1-2 - we offer ourselves a living sacrifice to His work/leading proving (seeing for ourselves) that His will is good, acceptable and perfect in every way, stirring in us a hunger for more
- b. But if the Word is merely a reading book or a "devotional" we are apt to grow bored with it - it is meant to be a life- controller (dictator)

VI. Christ, rejected of man, yet the foundation of God's "religious system" - vs. 4-10

A. This gracious Lord is the one we are always coming to - as our foundation

All are religious in one way or another - either God's way or a way that agrees with them

1. As Paul clarified in I Cor. 3:11 - He is the only foundation on which to "build"
 - a. Building on anything else will not last the scrutiny of God
 - b. There are many counterfeit foundations offered by man - "wood, hay, stubble"
 - c. To "build on" Christ is to make Him and His purposes our focus in what we do
 - d. To build on "another" is to place self's or another's purposes foremost
2. He, Christ, is as a "living stone" (in contrast to the stones of the Temple and any other religious or spiritual place or shrine)
 - a. Much of the trials they would face would come from the "religious"
 - b. So it will be with us; it stems from Christ being rejected - He does not fit man's ideal religions which places self at the forefront of effort and glory

B. He is described as "disallowed" or "rejected" (disapproved) of men

1. He literally does not pass the scrutiny of man (dominant or popular opinion)
 - a. The idea is of builders looking for stones to use and this one not fitting their plan
 - b. It is a mistake for believers to seek to find ways to make Christ popular
2. We then, bearing His name can expect the same - popularity is not our goal
 - a. When we seek what He seeks/sought
 - b. When we are truly driven to do the "will of the Father" (as Christ)
 - c. Pragmatists redefine success (forms of popularity) thus redefining tasks/objectives

C. In contrast, He (Christ) is choice and precious to God

1. It comes down to who we are truly seeking to serve and live for (define our lives by)
 - a. Who/what dictates our opinions in life? - likes/dislikes?
 - b. Man disapproves and God chooses and cherishes - who/what do we side with
2. Christ fits perfectly the plan and design of God - this is why he is precious

D. In like manner (on a smaller supportive scale) we also are being built up as stones - vs. 5

- you also* —
1. Not that we are being made as stones, but as smaller building blocks of God's plan
 2. We are being "built-up" - one upon another, each in a planned "place" ("spiritual house")
 - a. God's plan is not built on physical buildings
 - b. *This contrasts the plans of so many ministries focusing on facilities*
 - c. We are the "temple of the Holy Spirit" - I Cor. 6:19-20
 3. We are being built-up as a "holy priesthood" - no longer requiring a man-mediator with God, but having access to the Father through Christ
 4. Called to offer "spiritual sacrifices" to God - again in contrast to earthly, physical gifts
 - a. "The spiritual sacrifices of the New Testament priests are: (1) the living sacrifice of his body offered to God for service (Rom. 12:1-2), (2) his praise (Heb. 13:15), (3) his voluntary acts of self-dedication (Phil. 2:17; Eph. 5:1-2), (4) his good deeds (Heb. 13:16), and (5) his material possessions used for God's service and transmuted by the Spirit into worthy sacrifices (Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:16)"
 - b. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit..." - Psa. 51:17 - more than mere regret, but a broken, willfully-yielded to God and His purposes
 - c. Sacrifices of worship as seen in a holy life - not for forgiveness of sins
 5. These sacrifices to God are not open to man's interpretation/dictates
 - a. They must fall under the category of "acceptable to God" - as in Rom. 12:1
 - b. We seek sacrificial service in what God determines/clarifies is well-pleasing to Himself, not what I or others dictate is well-pleasing to God
 - c. Often traditions (or what we're used to) become our "sacrifices" rather than what God dictates

Hiebert —

E. This is the example of Scripture - vs. 6

1. This was God’s plan - He is at work, and at work this way - no advice from man !
2. God placed Him in Zion (Jerusalem) - Isa. 28:16

We are not going to suffer for (be contradicted) what we are not confident in. As believers we are called upon to place our confidence in what God says and what He has done more than what we see or perceive

• “According to tradition, during the erection of the temple an unusually shaped stone was sent up from the quarry and rejected by the builders as useless; only later did they discover that it was the very stone the needed to complete the building” Hiebert

3. As in Isaiah, anyone who trusts (believes) in Him will not be “disappointed”
 - a. In Isaiah, the concept was that one would not be in “haste” (hurry)
 - b. They would not find themselves scrambling for safety or security when trouble comes as so many do who place their confidence in other things
4. To “believe in Him” is to believe in God’s way/plan - our confidence is the wisdom and perspective of God since He deemed Christ (the cornerstone) as precious

F. Differing perspectives and their results - vs. 7-8

As the “rocks” used in conjunction with the “Stone” to build God’s “structure”

1. Those whose confidence is in Christ have this “preciousness also”
 - a. That we see what Christ has done on our behalf as precious - it is endearing in light of our natural state before God
 - b. That we, in Christ, will also now be considered precious, “choice” before God
2. To those who disbelieve (reject), He is a point of stumbling and “offense”
 - a. They reject Him, His purpose, yet He remains (in their way)
 - b. While they go about their work, He is in the way of their plans (He doesn’t make it easy) and becomes a point of stumbling (as if a trap/conspiracy)
3. This will explain why so many react to the Word of God
 - a. Those fighting conscience will become quite irritable, angry and bitter
 - b. Even we as believers, when we try to contradict/stand opposed to the Lord on any point we find ourselves tripped-up (though this is not the topic here)
 - c. True contentment (lasting) is found when acting in harmony with God’s working
 - d. These “stumble” because they are disobedient to the Word
4. It is so key, obedience to the Word, that those disobedient were destined to this fate
 - a. This “predestination” is unavoidable; no one will be the “exception”
 - b. From God’s frame of reference, He set this fate from eternity in His Plan
 - c. From man’s frame of reference, his disobedience will not lead to success

We, as associated with this “Stone” will also be sources of irritation to the worldly-minded

This is just a statement, in accordance with what everywhere occurs in the Bible, that all things enter into the eternal plans of God; that nothing happens by chance; that there is nothing that was not foreseen; and that the plan is such as, on the whole, God saw to be best and wise, and therefore adopted it. If there is nothing unjust and wrong in the actual development of the plan, there was nothing in forming it. At the same time, no man who disbelieves and rejects the gospel should take refuge in this as an excuse. He was “appointed” to it no otherwise than as it actually occurs; and as they know that they are voluntary in rejecting him, they cannot lay the blame of this on the purposes of God. They are not forced or compelled to do it; but it was seen that this consequence would follow, and the plan was laid to send the Saviour notwithstanding. Barnes

G. Our privileged position in Christ - vs. 9

1. We are a “chosen race” - an “elect kin”
 - a. This is as Israel was in the Old Testament only now for a heavenly kingdom
 - b. We were/are chosen to be God’s people used for His purposes
 - c. This “you” at the beginning of the verse emphasizes a strong contrast with the group just mentioned - we are in a “great” position!
 - d. God is “for us” because God is for Himself and we are a part of His plan
2. We are a “royal priesthood” - called to lead/rule with Him and serve Him
 - a. As Christ was/is a Priest-King
 - b. We are in a privileged position which cannot be taken away

So why would we be allured into the enticements of the world being willfully distracted from our purpose?

We learn of His greatness, see it first hand in life and declare (publish) it to others

- c. People privileged to serve the King directly - in His presence
- d. What we do we do for His eyes (purposes)
- 3. A “holy nation” - as a group set aside for a distinct purpose
 - a. A reminder that our earthly nationality is secondary to our heavenly nationality
 - b. Our obligations are to God first - “fear” God more than man
- 4. A “peculiar people” - as ones specially acquired by God
 - a. “..a special people, the very meaning of whose existence lies in its being possessed by God” - Cranfield
 - b. Our meaning in life, then, is found in what purpose God acquired us for
 - c. In this sense, we will not expect to “fit in” with the nations of this world
- 5. With a purpose to demonstrate the “excellencies” of Him Who called us
 - a. Living to demonstrate the awe of God and not of ourselves
 - b. Not just the excellence of what He does but of Who He is
 - c. This is how we are to view ourselves and our purpose on earth - if we are used (even by being humbled, hurt or hated) to bring glory to God’s virtues and works then we are fulfilling our highest purposes
- 6. Praising the One Who “called” us out of darkness in to His light
 - a. We, on our own, were in the darkness of sin and blindness to the truth
 - b. The light is the new calling we have and the illumination of the Truth
 - c. We could have been left to a life of sin, uselessness and futile pursuits of self- righteousness
 - d. But by His work and His plan we have a bright future and distinct/clear purpose
- H. Realizing, from what we’ve been taught, where we’ve come from and are going to - vs. 10
 - 1. We, not being a chosen people, but a mass of mixed ethnicities now are made distinct
 - a. We, not being a “people” (as a nation but just one of many nations)
 - b. But now we, undeserving as we are, are called the “people of God”
 - 2. We were of those “having not obtained mercy” and thus without hope
 - a. We now live by the mercy of God - without which we have no real life
 - b. God has not and will not deal with us in accordance with our sin - this is the true sense of mercy when we realize it - Psa. 103:10
 - 3. We now have a priceless purpose with a distinct and perfect standing from which to live
- I. So, even though the world and its religious systems and pursuits reject our Lord, we are unaffected by their opinions as they are not the givers of grace, mercy and purpose

VII. In Faith, Live Submissively and Graciously with Those God has Placed in Our Lives - 2:11-20

- A. Avoid and neglect the self-serving cravings of the “flesh” - vs. 11
 - 1. It begins with a gracious address followed by an urging
 - a. “Dearly beloved” - a distinctly Christian term (dearest friends)
 - b. “I urge you” - this is of significance (don’t belittle what is about to be said)
 - 2. Remember your standing/position while on this earth
 - a. Strangers/aliens/foreigners - those who live under a different nationality and are not to be indoctrinated by the environment they currently live in
 - b. Pilgrims - those passing through headed to their true homeland
 - 3. Because this is who we are, we are to “abstain” from “fleshly lusts”
 - a. We are not our bodies thus our bodies must not be allowed to dictate who we are (in our perspectives) or what we see ourselves becoming
 - b. The idea is to “hold oneself off from” - it will be a continual practice!

The “standards of our homeland” outrank those of this world

c. This is not the ability to act as though they do not exist or to hide them - these ongoing challenges must be admitted and faced - denial of their

existence is not the answer

4. These “lusts” make “war against our souls”

And it's not so much as to avoid sin as it is to avoid distractions from purpose and calling

a. The idea is that of a “strategic offensive” - well planned and plotted
b. Yielding to these immoral cravings (of any sort - not just sensual but of anger, covetousness, pride, etc.) is an attack to our inner most self

Best versus acceptable/bad
Beneficial versus harmful

c. These “soul attackers” alter our thinking, perspectives, goals, ambitions, manners and our proper awareness of what is truly right and what is truly wrong

Pr. 4:23— d. This is the reason for the command to “guard our heart with all diligence”

e. These will be ongoing wages of war against us - offenses and counter offenses will become the norm in our expectations of daily life

B. We are to keep our behavior “above reproach” with all others of this earth - vs. 12

1. Maintain how you act on a level of excellence (above normal)

We are not to be driven or motivated by the “everyone else does it this way” thinking

a. “Gentiles” has the idea of all ethnicities and races - all people of this earth
b. We, as mentioned before, are to view ourselves as citizens of Heaven
c. Don't just live to “fit in” but strive to be one who lives above expectation

2. Expect to be attacked/slandered for being who/what you are

Rumors of Christians being anti-government, anti-social, perverted had already begun in Peter and Paul's time

a. Avoiding “fleshly lusts” and striving to live by a higher (heavenly) standard will draw the negative attention of many

b. Again, Christ told the disciples they would be hated because of Him - Jn. 15:18

c. Actually, the world cannot really hate us - it is Christ that is hated because He reveals the “works” as ultimately evil/base/lacking/temporal - John 7:7

d. History proves this out - back in the time of Nero it was believable that the Christians were burning Rome (as he accused) because of the slander and rumors that were being fostered by Roman society at large- perception becomes reality by many

e. It would discourage us if we expect a Christian life free from criticism

f. So it states, “..that in the thing in which they slander you..” - it will happen

3. Use the very point of accusation as an opportunity of proving the opposite

Many believers entertain the thought of being loved and appreciated by the world at large setting themselves up for disillusionment

a. We are not instructed to counter them with our words/arguments but with our actions/behavior that “*they may, by your good works, which on a closer inspection they shall behold, glorify God.*” *The very works “which on more careful consideration, must move the heathen to praise God, are at first the object of hatred and raillery”* - JFB

b. We will be closely watched for inconsistencies - the defense of “that's not fair! everyone makes mistakes” will not work with them; we will be held to a higher standard and will become ammunition for the enemy when we become lax in our personal disciplines, standards and overall behavior

c. Our motive is one of selfless glorying of God - we hope that on close scrutiny they will see the rightness of character and glorify the source - God

d. “In the day of visitation” carries with it the idea of when God deals with them or humanity at large - if dealing with them personally/individually then our submissive faith to do what is right, even when being slandered, will have been used of God to bring them to Him - the potential of this usage of us should be motive enough to endure!

e. A unique form of evangelism is found in our response to attacks

C. Honor the earthly relationships (civil) as being submissive to God - vs. 13-17

Place yourself in an orderly fashion underneath these structural authorities

1. We are instructed to “submit ourselves” under earthly institutions
 - a. Obeying the laws and guidelines that make society function - this was written when Nero was emperor (so it does not require a morally good government)
 - b. Follow and support structure (governmental) - these are not immoral laws but structural laws that keep the order and provide protection
2. To the “king” (supreme leader) or their subordinates (doing their bidding)
 - a. In our case it would be the president, congress and on down to local authorities
 - b. We cannot be so taken with governmental corruption that we excuse civil disobedience and become disruptive under the guise of doing right
3. Two general responsibilities of government are listed
 - a. The punishment of evil doers - wrong-doers are supposed to fear
 - b. Praise those that do right - showcasing good examples
 - c. These may be neglected or even distorted by a government but this passage does not allow for disobedience
4. This is God’s will for a specific purpose - vs. 15
 - a. God set these positions in their places and times - we must first trust His sovereignty and seek to act in harmony with His working
 - b. God setup civil government and when we act outside of it (the one we are under) we are fighting His institution (structure) - some zealots left Christ when they learned He was not here to overthrow Rome - see Rom. 13
 - c. If we do right, then those who seek to accuse us of wrong-doing will be put to shame (silence ignorant men) - this is part of how God will do it but it will be done by our doing right and letting God do the rest
 - d. The opposite is true also: if we do wrong we will be ammunition for the enemy to accuse ourselves, the church and God - many Christians have fallen prey to this and have been ready tools for the enemy to accuse our Faith - “let not your good be evil spoken of” - Rom. 14:16 (*truly*)
5. Act as the free people you are (in Christ) not using it as “license” - vs. 16
 - a. As our Lord clarified it will be the Truth that will set us free - John 8:32
 - b. Knowing the truth, we know Who truly reigns over all and are not thrown into despair or terror because of government and men
 - c. We are to see ourselves as the “bondslaves” of God in all matters
 - d. When we think we may counter government we must make sure we are doing the bidding of our master
 - e. We obey the rules and guidelines of society as the temporary “guests” we are
 - f. We are free in Christ from the bonds of sin, but as clarified also in Romans 6 we are the slaves to righteousness in God - obligated to do the right thing
6. The summation of the point - vs. 17
 - a. Honor all men - there is no “ranking” that should be taking place in Christianity
 - (1). There are forms of elitism rising in the church that must not be allowed to continue unchallenged and certainly not supported!
 - (2). This is a part of “esteeming others better than ourselves” - calculating their worth (even potential worth) as more than we calculate our own
 - b. Above that, love the “brotherhood” - fellow believers
 - (1). Love places the need of the other above itself
 - (2). Love seeks not to offend and not to allow itself to be offended

This was dealt with, by our founding fathers, by first establishing a new government which was then used to protect its people

This is true in many cases where evil doers will set up circumstances for Christians to react and do wrong - these are traps and must be seen as such

We obey government because we are obeying God and do not want to serve as “ammunition” against His Truth

Being overly enamored by the greatness of man will ultimately distract from the greatest greatness of God - this will lead to a misdirected focus and our faith and our speech and actions will elevate man more than God - even "good" people do not truly merit the adulation they often receive

- c. Fear God - be in awe of and timid to "cross" Him in any way
 - (1). To fear is to dread contradicting Him in any way - thus, striving to constantly compare your self with the Word cautiously handling it to reach correct conclusions
 - (2). To fear Him is to be aweestruck by His greatness over all others
 - (3). To truly fear God is to seek to please Him above all else
 - d. Honor the king - do so out of fear of God
 - (1). As a child obeys the parents of a friend they visit because their parents would expect it of them
 - (2). To honor is to place a high value upon - as clarified in Romans 13, we honor the position more than the man as the position is of God
 - e. "The judgment of the world in regard to us is made up from their observation of the manner in which we perform them. If religion fails there, they judge that it fails altogether; and however devout we may be in private, if it is not seen by the world that our religion leads to the faithful performance of the duties which we owe in the various relations of life, it will be regarded as of little value." Barnes
- D. Be submissive (before God) with others even when it is difficult - vs. 18-20
- 1. Servants - as in household (domestic) servants
 - a. Keep yourself in an orderly (cooperative) fashion under
 - b. Fulfill your responsibilities as in doing it for God first - Col. 3:23
 - c. Do this with "all fear" - not of the "masters", fearing consequences, but doing it out of "fear" of God - for His observation - in all areas
 - 2. Not just in cooperation with the "good and gentle" - there are and will be those who make gracious "bosses" and supervisors - but our obedience (disciplined work) must not be because of their niceness but for our obligation to God and His name
 - 3. Even if under the "harsh" (difficult and mean) we still obey
 - a. This ultimately stems from our realization of God's hand in all things
 - b. If God sees fit to place us under harsh leaders, He has plans to use it as is
 - c. The word for harsh/froward means "crooked" - they have wrong motives
 - d. Clearly this does not mean we obey to do evil, but obey them within their (God-given) authority/position over us in our earthly business
 - 4. Again, we cannot (must not) allow ourselves to justify wrong-doing based upon the wrong-doing of another - these are not "excuses"
 - Our standard is to return good for evil - Rom. 12:21 - we are not to be "overcome" by evil but to overcome evil with good
 - 5. God will allow us to be under "crooked" people - but our service is for Him!
 - a. But it is "thankworthy" if we remain in a position of suffering because we are resolved to do good for the eyes of God
 - b. This is "favorable" with God (good before Him) that we respond this way under these types of circumstances
 - c. This is, as it were, ideal from God's perspective - His greatness (working in us) is more obvious and evident when this is the case (it's not normal!)
 - d. All difficult people and situations are ultimately of God for the best - if our focus for service is comfort and convenience, we will miss the opportunity and will allow self-interests to dictate action rather than demonstrating God's working and ways before these froward people

There is the potential to suffer for/with an unformed conscience being too restrictive or not as restrictive as it should be

6. Being conscious of God's presence controls our perspective of suffering - vs. 19
 - a. We are to be aware of God's controlling hand either to initiate something happening or to stop something happening (or from happening)
 - b. "...conscience toward God..." - They act in line with their responsibility to their primary master and receive ill treatment from their earthly master
 - c. It needs to be noted, though, that this is suffering for acting in accordance with what God WOULD have them do or not do, not just their perception of what God would have them do
 - d. The suffering is the pain experienced in being truly wrongfully treated
 - e. The answer, though, is not a "jump" to your defense!
7. To "endure grief" carries with it the staying under a great weight - we take it though, as thankworthy before God, not to see this as any means to self-glory
8. It could be that this inflicting suffering comes from a master whose own conscience is pricked by the well-doing of their servant
 - a. It is known that some will "test" the convictions of those they see to see if they are real (either to consider it for themselves or to disprove it for their own comfort)
 - b. Those with a convicted conscience can become very mean/rude people!
9. Remember, there is no personal "glory" (good reputation) when suffering for wrongs that are truly wrong
 - a. If suffering rightfully for wrong-doing, who looks on that as "meritorious"?
 - b. Even if taken "patiently" it is expected - not beyond what should be
 - c. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;" - Php. 1:29
10. But to suffer for doing right, and to stay under it patiently, this is "acceptable" before God
 - The following verses explain why

VIII. We are "Called" to Follow in the Example of Christ - 2:21-25

- A. It was to this type of suffering we have been called
 1. "Such a spirit is required by the very nature of your Christian vocation; you were called into the church in order that you might evince it." Barnes
 2. Php. 1:29 - "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;" - we do not "shrink from our opponents"
 3. We are following in the example of Christ - "...because Christ also suffered..."
 - a. It is a part of what we do and who we are - it defines us
 - b. Most live their lives in the pursuit of the avoidance of suffering which is misdirected
 - c. It is odd to most and invokes attention when one is willing to suffer for a cause
 - d. But full impact is seen when it is discovered that one is suffering wrongfully (they did right but are being treated as an evil doer)
 - e. And this does not require the perception of people as we only seek to do this before the eyes of God and His good pleasure
 4. "Let my name be forgotten, let me be trodden under the feet of all men, if Jesus may thereby be glorified. Let my name die everywhere, let even my friend forget me, if by that means the cause of the blessed Jesus may be promoted." George Whitefield
 5. The highest goal is to be used for the cause of God in Christ for His purpose - if it means suffering when doing what is right, so be it!
 - a. True occurrences of suffering reveal our true goals and objectives
 - b. The apostles were good examples of this perspective - Acts 5:41; 16:22-25
 6. Christ was the "example" - literally an "underwriting" - as in tracing over His example to follow it precisely or being given a picture to reproduce in every detail

7. Remember Who is doing the calling to follow this example
 - a. Since it is God Who calls us to this then it is a perfect path
 - b. We trust His direction as part of our “strength” to continue
- B. Following in the example of Christ (precisely following His path) - vs. 21-23
1. Christ suffered for us and in it left the example
 - a. He was selfless - for us for God’s plan
 - b. His suffering had a powerful purpose - as will ours when suffering for right
 2. The “example - “υπογραμμος” - an underwriting - our “sheet” is to mimic His by either copying it or tracing over it - not to be an expression of our creativity or our individuality - we are here to study and follow His example
 3. We should follow in His steps - following His path/direction - if it is scary and another way looks “safer,” we still proceed remembering Who’s path we follow
 - a. To follow His path to hardships will involve faith
 - b. We seek steady “perspective fixers” by saturating our thinking with the Truth
 4. He did no sin and yet suffered - so not all suffering is related to sin
 - a. As the context communicates, much of our suffering comes from our doing right
 - b. His sinlessness qualified Him for the perfect sacrifice - the highest example of God’s redemption - this world will ultimately react harshly to righteousness
 5. There was no “guile” in His mouth - no deceitful speech
 - a. He did not speak to deceive (trick or mislead from the truth)
 - b. There are those who will seek to deceive and believe it is for a righteous cause - “Don’t always speak the truth, but when you speak, always speak the truth”
 - c. There will be times when we suffer for speaking the truth
 6. When abused (reviled) He did not answer with abuse (reviling) - vs. 23
 - a. A controlled response is always better than a passionate reaction
 - b. “He used no harsh language, He showed no anger. He called for no revenge. He prayed that they might be forgiven, He calmly stood and bore it all, for he came to endure all kinds of suffering in order that he might set us an example, and make an atonement for our sins.” Barnes
 7. When he suffered He did not threaten - even with their eternal destiny
 - a. Many of us, even at our “best” may try to indicate that “God will get you”
 - b. Christ’s perspective was perfect trust in the Father and His control/perspective
- C. The ultimate “refuge” in our thinking when we face suffering - vs. 23
1. He “committed himself” to Him Who “judges righteously”
 - a. The idea is to hand one’s self over to another
 - b. Though, in this case, it was God and not the crucifiers - evil was done to Him but the One Who judges righteously made of it a righteous end
 - c. Focus on God’s purpose in the trial, not in those inflicting the trial
 2. We may find ourselves in situations with no ability (righteous) to defend or answer harsh treatment or criticisms and it is then that we look to God’s omnipotent hand in the matter
 - Whoever places their confidence in Him will not be “confounded” - I Pet. 2:6
 3. Beware who’s face you see in any matter - the gloating face of an accuser or the flawless, all-seeing face of God
 - a. Too often we are guilty of giving too much power to an unrighteous opponent taking on their methods of “interaction”
 - b. Even Satan is given too much credit in making things happen
 - c. Psalm 17:8-15 - Looking to His “face” develops His likeness in us

A proper response to suffering for right can be one of our most powerful testimonies

Watch your words especially when angered; often, the best response is to say nothing at all

4. “ Jesus thus handed himself and his cause over to the Father who judges righteously” RWP

He (God) determines the rightness of a cause not us or our sincerity

a. Not just ourselves but even our “ cause ”

b. Many see God as suffering (from evil-doers) discounting His power

c. We then must see the suffering being inflicted/allowed as being under the jurisdiction of God’s control

(1). This requires confidence in His control to make of it something fit for His righteous purpose

(2). Too many trust their perspectives more than God’s sovereignty

D. The suffering of Christ was our redemption (saving) - vs. 24-25

1. Christ, submitting to God’s plan, bore our sins in His body

The physical finds its eternal (spiritual) use in its submission and sacrifice for/in God’s agenda

a. This suffering was far more than physical

b. He bore (of Himself - willingly, cooperatively) our sins following the infinite perspective of the Father ultimately to our good

c. He alone knows the “ends” of the “currents” and must always be seen, in our eyes, as perfect in what He does, instigates and allows

d. He represents the epitome of selflessness - all for a purpose

2. He bore our sins on the “wood” (the cross) - a place of condemnation

a. It was painful, degrading and a horrific sight

b. He was the “scapegoat” on which our the filth of our sins were placed - this is not what any of us would have “aspired” to, yet it is what we look to with love, respect and awe

3. The purpose statement - “that we might die to sin and live to righteousness”

a. “...that we should be as entirely delivered from them, as a slave that is dead is delivered from service to his master. This is our spiritual standing through faith by virtue of Christ’s death: our actual mortification of particular sins is in proportion to the degree of our effectually being made conformable to His death. “That we should die to the sins whose collected guilt Christ carried away in His death, and so LIVE TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS” JFB

b. “In order that we, having ceased to exist for sins, may live for the (true) righteousness” Lenski

c. As we, being the slaves to sin were freed by Christ’s sacrifice, so the “servants” can trust God to use their suffering for the right

d. As in Romans 6, we are to account (reckon) ourselves dead to sin and alive (living for the purpose of) righteousness - righteousness is now what we do and who we really are!

It’s not the removal of pain or humbling that we seek but the fulfillment of God’s agenda through it - even to the end of life

4. For “by His ‘stripes’ we are healed” - through the wounds of Christ we find our healing

a. This was how God chose to work and we can assume it is the best

b. If it is best, and it accomplished our redemption, why would we calculate any other path of life to expect than that of our “example”?

5. His sacrifice has lead us back as if we were sheep which wandered off - vs. 25

a. To go astray is to wonder off following only one’s “instinct” (which, without being in Christ, is fully blinded with sin (the pursuit of self interests)

b. We often resist God’s call to suffering because we often see our goals residing in comfort and protection more than growth and effectiveness in the glorying of God and His rightness and greatness in all things

c. He is the shepherd and overseer of our souls - being such a protector, He would never lead us into suffering that will destroy us

6. He directs us as a shepherd and oversees our inner self (soul)

To fear those who can only destroy the body is a misguiding and perspective altering fear - it will unrighteously control

- a. The “real us” is always under His watchful eye and protective hand
- b. The body may suffer, but our souls are His!
- c. This is our perspective as we suffer while submitting to His overseeing

IX. Obedience to God in Husband and Wife Relationships - 3:1-7

A. We must not look at life just from the earthly perspective

- 1. A wife should see first her responsible submission to God (Christ as Overseer)
- 2. A husband should see his responsibility to God first which affects how he deals with his wife, family, friends and “bosses”
- 3. These also illustrate the need to look at life from God’s frame of reference
 - There is no other earthly power or spiritual power that sets “destiny” - where we look for “destiny determination” will set our life focus (if on man then people will obtain our reverence; if self then self obtains the reverence)

B. Wives, submit to your own husbands - for God’s purposes /objectives - vs. 1

- 1. The first statement can stand alone - wives, submit to your own husbands
 - a. This is God’s initial structure, not of superiority but of organization
- 2. As the command to servants, so to the wives, they submit even when difficult
 - a. Not just for the “nobility” before God but for His purposes
 - b. Perhaps they “may” see their wife’s truly good character and be swayed
 - c. Often, an initial exposure to God’s Truth is in its exercise in a life more than in the actual reading of the Scripture - see II Cor. 3:2
 - d. Do not look for a self-gratifying or uplifting purpose to be required before acting
 - e. The goal is affecting God’s changes His way and in His timing - even if the disobedient spouse does not change, the wife most certainly will

RWP — 3. “Won by pious living, not by nagging. Many a wife has had this blessed victory of grace.”

- a. Often, God places under/with difficult people, not to change them with our thinking (arguments) but with the proof of Truth acted out in our character
- b. The primary goal is submission to God in all things leaving results to Him!
- c. It is not guaranteed that the husband will change, but usurping authority, fighting him and pointing out his inconsistencies will not succeed
 - A man desires respect/honor from his wife even more than love - Eph. 5:33

This “pious” living is not a flaunted living either!

C. The “evidence” of what is seen (over time) is key - vs. 2

The seeming monotonous days with our families are proving grounds for each other of the stability and trustworthiness of the truths we learn in Scripture

- 1. They may “behold” - they can observe, not in just “scripted” incidents, but over time, facing discouragements and encouragements
 - a. Families, especially husbands and wives, see one another as they really are
 - b. Proof to a family member is truly one of the highest “proofs” attainable!
 - c. Hard times are provided by God for these times of “evidence gathering”
- 2. “chaste” behavior - pure, modest, careful and considerate
 - a. This is first out of respect for God, others and then self
 - b. It is not the pride of self-righteousness forcefully displayed to make a point, to win the point or seek to force an outcome
 - c. It is a sincere pursuit of the right in any given situation (opportunity)
- 3. It is joined with (motivated by) fear - fear of God
 - a. It is a recognition of responsibility to Him foremost
 - b. This is a key motivator in all purity - Pr. 15:33

4. It is not so much the fear of the husband as it is of God and responsibility to Him
- She submits (places self in an orderly fashion under) her husband out of reverence for God and responsible obedience to Him foremost - Eph. 5:22

D. The real pursuit of “attractiveness” - vs. 3-4

1. “adorning” - κοσμος - “decorations” (orderly arrangement) - here, the sense of beauty
- a. What one would look to, to appear attractive
 - b. Not that “outward adornment” is being condemned, but that it is not to be considered the main source of beauty/attractiveness to be sought
 - c. If attractiveness is found in outward appearance, it will fade

2. Don't let it be in (found/sought in...)

- a. The “outward” - just what can be seen by the eyes of others
 - (1). This can be deceitful (covered)
 - (2). This is vain as it does not reveal the real person
- b. The elaborate braiding of the hair - working a long time on getting their hair into impressive styles (this even leads to a competitive spirit)
- c. The wearing of gold (jewelry) - signs of wealth are often sought to act as ornaments of beauty
- d. The wearing of beautiful dresses/clothing
 - (1). This even has the idea of having many dresses to change into
 - (2). Clothes do not “make” the person - it may help in appropriateness
- e. There is a pursuit of outward attractiveness in making best use of what we have been given by our creator, but it must never be allowed to dictate one's true beauty and attractiveness

These are not being forbidden, but are not to be how a woman defines her beauty

Accomplishments should also not be how one defines their worth - seek what is “attractive” to God

3. Let beauty be found in...

κρυπτος της καρδιας ανθρωπος - “hidden of the heart man”

- a. “inner ‘man’ of the heart” - the “real” you - let the real you be truly attractive, pursuing what is attractive to God (before anyone else)
 - This is the core of your thoughts, desires, aspirations, loves, character
- b. That which does not decay (over time) - physical beauty, hair, jewelry and clothing all fade over time and lose their luster
- c. The “imperishable beauty of the adorning of a meek and quiet spirit”
 - (1). “spirit” - the true essence of who/what someone is - one's disposition and overall temper in life and how they conduct themselves
 - (2). A meek spirit is one of selflessness - “others before me” attitude
 - (3). A quiet spirit is controlled response - not boisterous, loudly forcing themselves on/over others to “win the moment”
 - (4). This “disposition” is only discovered and fostered in an entrusting of one's self to the sovereign hand of God in all matters - how else will they calmly take provoking circumstances

“That is, a mind that will not give provocation to others, nor receive irritation by the provocation of others. Meekness will prevent the first; quietness will guard against the last.”
Adam Clarke

Faith fosters fortitude! —

- d. What God sees as very valuable - “of great price”
 - (1). This is precious in the “sight of God” from His flawless perspective
 - (2). This is what He loves (selflessness) and how He (His will) acts - self-will (in pride) opposes meekness and “overtalking” others opposes the “esteeming others better than yourself”
- e. So, what we are really after (inner self) should be what God wills and how He has set that it be sought (fully trusting Him)
 - (1). A wife will often struggle with her trust in God when having to submit to a difficult husband - especially when she sees a way to “force” or manipulate a change in him

Think how much the ugliness of bitter anger, selfishness and pride result from our initial lack of faith!

(2). The meek and quiet spirit is a calm resolve in God

f. A good question to ask one's self is "How attractive are my actions, attitudes, thoughts, determinations and wishes, if seen?"

(1). Faith is clearly "attractive" to the eyes of God - Heb. 11:6

(2). Can we conclude that a lack of faith is "unattractive"? - faith is certainly more than skin deep, and truly improves the real appearance

E. The examples set by holy women - vs. 5-6

1. This adornment of a meek and quiet spirit characterized the holy women

a. "holy" in that they were of "God's people" and set apart for His purposes

b. It was "in this way" (this spirit) they "adorned" themselves

2. This was done because their hope was in God more than their husbands

3. They rested their hope(s) on God - literally placed their "expectation" on Him

[a. Expectations in the sense of their confidence - security

[b. Expectations in the sense of their anticipation - desires/plans

4. In Psa. 62:5, while facing troubles and enemies David wrote, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

5. This confidence/hope in God evidenced itself in their subordinating themselves to their own husbands

6. As seen in the key example of Sarah - vs. 6

a. She obeyed - lit. to "hear under" - followed his lead of the household - clearly, this had to involve faith as God led them all into a new land where they would live as strangers

b. Calling her husband "lord" - as "master" of the home - this was also illustrating her placing her hope in God (trusting the human leadership over her)

c. This was taken from Gen. 18:12 when they were told of the coming of Isaac

7. Whose example follow being, as it were, her daughters (in faith)

a. Seeing that they "do well" - as in I Pet. 2:15 where others, seeing good behavior under difficult situations would be put to silence in their false accusations

b. To maintain this constancy, they must not be given to fear- Pr. 3:25

c. Not overcome in fear because it was unexpected (sudden fear)

d. Not controlled by the dread of contradiction (this is not of faith)

e. Not dominated by habitual pessimism - seeing the potential "bad" in most things

F. The instructions to husbands - vs. 7

1. "likewise" or "in the same manner" - just as the wives were called to their "faith responsibilities" so also the husband is called to live

a. Men should focus on their responsibilities and women on their's - far too often both focus on the need for the other's responsibilities while neglecting their own

b. Do not expect to base personal faithfulness on the faithfulness of the spouse

2. "live with them according to knowledge" - learn and know them

a. Study them as if a science - a course of learning

b. Make the time to get to really know them - this will involve listening !

3. Giving her honor - literally placing a high value on her - "precious in your site"

a. This is part of the "cherishing" a husband should exhibit to this wife

b. Part of the honor is to her as a "weaker vessel" - weaker does not mean in strength, resolve or emotional stability - she is "weaker" in the sense of her position under the man and, a man, in his honor" would never seek to exploit this position - she is under his protection and he is not to lose sight of this

This was in her thoughts, demonstrating it was a part of her true thinking - many women may outwardly submit while inwardly despising

Col. 3:19 - husbands are to love their wives and to not be embittered (to treat harshly) against them

To sin against your wife is to sin against God also - how can we say we love God when we do not love our wives - love is selfless as God demonstrated His love for us

- c. Honor is also a term used for value/money - she is treasured and protected as such
- d. To show honor is to invest in her - the opposite is an attitude of exploitation (getting out without “paying” into)
- c. She is not with her husband to be his “slave” but as a co-laborer in life as they are “co-heirs” in the “grace of life” - the grace given by God in life

4. And, together, they work as one using the grace God has given

- a. To fight and demean her is to hinder the core of our earthly work - prayer
- b. Prayer is our conversing with God (the One we serve) - when a husband is willfully ignorant of his wife, their prayer life and service for God altogether are hindered (frustrated, cut off, to be disconnected from a source)

X. “Common” Christian Conduct - vs. 8-12

A. “Finally” - an overall conclusion to how Christians should act

1. Be “like-minded” - think alike on the essentials

As a husband and wife should see themselves as a team, so we as believers see ourselves as a team striving for the same goal (God’s glory and His rightness) - two are better than one - one will aid while the other is down - Ecc. 4:9-10

- a. It is not just the striving for unity for unity’s sake, it is thinking the same around an agreed standard - in this case, the Scripture
- b. We are unified and act as supports in what is right - we are after the same things, loving the same things and fighting the same things
- c. It also has the idea of seeking the best for one another - self-focus is one of the greatest instigators of “unlike-mindedness” - we do not want to be caught in the pursuit of seeking everyone to be interested in “me”

2. Have compassion for each other - lit. sharing “fellow-feelings”

Again, it is not me realizing how someone else is not “feeling with” me but a selfless focus to strive to always “feeling along with” others

- a. We rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep - Rom. 12:15
- b. Like-mindedness makes for this type of compassion - the same things affect us
- c. It is a placing of another’s feeling (at the very least) equal with ours

3. “Love as family” (as brothers)

- a. It is natural to prefer family above others, and in the case of the church, we are to be characterized as preferring our family in Christ above others
- b. Family expects to be leaned upon when facing hard times; family can speak about sensitive things and trust one another with them; family wants the best for each other and when one is lifted up, the whole family is encouraged

4. Be “tender hearted” - have sensitive feelings for and with others

We are sensitive to the emotional needs of others and allow ourselves to get emotionally involved (to feel along with them) - though, not out of control

- a. The literal idea is to feel in the inner parts
- b. Be open to (allow yourself) to be deeply moved for one another
- c. This means we need to be open to sharing in the stresses of each other
- d. Sometimes it is good to know that “misery loves company” not in the sense of group misery, but standing with someone in their sadness and grief

5. Humble-minded or be courteous

It is slightly different from “humble,” in that it marks a conscious effort to be truly humble.” JFB

- a. The King James has “courteous” but this lacks older manuscript support
- b. The most plausible word is (ταπεινοφρονης) to think humbly - it is a conscious effort to be humble and to think humble (not just act it)
- c. Clearly, one who is humble in their own self-estimation will be courteous
- d. It carries with it the idea of “esteeming/ranking” other better than ourselves

6. Not returning evil for evil - vs. 9

- a. The response is to give back good for the evil given to you
- b. It would be good to look on the word good as “best” - return the best response for the evil given or directed at you - this involves confidence in God as seeing all

Not characterized as those who fuel “fires” but those who put them out with a right response in attitude and in content (truth)

- c. Do not give a wrong response for a wrong to you (or for wrong in general)
- d. God defines what wrong and right are - we cannot allow ourselves to become the standard - we are too apt to fluctuate with the moments (feelings not trusted)
- e. Anger is at the core of the problem - considering self and only how I am affected or hurt not taking time to consider the “offender” - not excusing their wrong but trying to effectively counter it with what will win out (the good)
- f. Not giving “back talk” for “back talk” - evil speech/cursing - this leads to a competition of who can be the most degrading (“railing” - angry and even lying speech)
 - Pr. 15:1 - a “soft” answer can stop anger - a calm controlled response versus a passionate (uncontrolled/unguarded) reaction

7. On the contrary, return a “blessing” - vs. 9

- a. This will take pre-planning - admitting our instinct is not so inclined
- b. Seek always to respond for the other’s best - too often we “attack” the person and never seek to deal with the real problem
- c. The “blessing” may be despised but this does not justify “open season” on them

8. Our motive is given to us - vs. 9

- a. We are controlled in our responses because we remember what was done for us
- b. We also remember what is coming - that cannot be taken from us by “mean people”
- c. We are “called” to a blessing ourselves (the ultimate of blessing) - we remember how this was achieved - God demonstrating His unconditional love for us when we were hostile (enemies) of Him
- d. We then must not see ourselves at liberty to return evil for evil, but to demonstrate the same “blessing” that was demonstrated to us
- e. Also, we stand, as inheritors, in great “wealth” and should never look down on others who are not as fortunate as we are - we seek to give others “room”

We want to be used to effect change in the others - adding to a problem never solves it

B. The guide to a good life - vs.10-12

1. He who desires to love life...

- a. Actually loves being alive (even when things are hard)
- b. This begins with a realization (consciously) what life is about and what is really happening around us of the seeming good and bad

2. And truly see “good” days - days without regret not without pain (regret may be more painful than all other pains)

- a. Good in the sense they are useful (something has come of our days)
- b. Good in the sense that they are agreeable to us when our days are over
- c. Immaturity often robs us of the perception that good is happening (because we do not see it directly with our eyes or feel it in our emotions)

3. Control your tongue (speech) from speaking evil things

- a. The idea is of wanting to speak evil and having the control to stop it
- b. This is where “think before you speak” is crucial - weigh the consequences of what will or may happen if you “let loose” an angry, uncontrolled tongue
- c. Use God’s watchful eyes as the standard for the decision and not feelings!

3. Do not allow deceitful speaking - deception is often treated as an “art” in a society that is or has pushed off God’s truth as the standard

- a. “guile” is speaking to mislead - words may be true but framed incorrectly
- b. Guile can be found in speech where facts are left out
- c. Today, it is often called “spin” - mastering the ability to mislead even with facts present - as a magician makes something appear to happen that does not

Love living with effective days...

Reign in the tongue with a mind disciplined with the insight of Scripture

4. Shun what is base (baseness) and accomplish “good” - vs. 11

So busy with the good evil and worthless “deeds” get neglected - not time for base things

- a. “Let him incline away from baseness and do good” - Lenski
- b. Have (develop) a distaste for what is wrong (worthless)
 - (1). See it for what it is (its effects) - learn to dislike it
 - (2). Develop desires for what is good (useful) - see it for what it is/does
- c. Both are active pursuits - bending away from evil and actively pursuing doing what is useful/good at all times - this involves ongoing evaluations of what you are doing

5. Look for peace and then pursue it (go after it like a fleeing objective)

Far too often we receive a little resistance or contradiction and give up on the pursuit of peace with others

- a. Look to have the inner peace of assurance in God (seek its source in the knowing of God and who He is in His revealed Word)
- b. Seek appropriate ways to peace with others and pursue them
- c. Peace with others may prove not currently “doable” but it is to be our initial pursuit
- d. Never consider an offense a “fatal” offense - considered never to be resolved

6. The righteous have the favorable “observation” of God - vs. 12

Even in the midst of trouble from others on this earth, there is nothing like being in the “peace of God” ruling your heart - Col. 3:15 - Php. 4:7

- a. The eyes of the Lord are “upon” them - over them for their good
- b. God is “for” the equitable (those being honest and right in their dealings)
- c. His ears are over their “begging” (prayers) - their intense pleadings/petitions
- d. So, if God is for “the cause”, “look out!” those opposing it

7. But His face is against (over) them that are evil doers

- a. With the idea of God turning, in anger, to look directly at them in their wrong
- b. This is the type of attention we never would want to have from God! - nothing escapes His attention - we need not fear neglect on God’s part

8. Seeking the “whole duty of man” ultimately leads to a fulfilled life - Ec. 12:13

XI. A Christian’s Perspective of Suffering for the Right! - 3:13-17

A. Consider who harms when doing what is right - vs. 13

- 1. From a “normal” perspective, who will hurt us for doing what is good?
 - a. Typically this leads to a peaceful life
 - b. Gracious responses to others and motivating others to what is best usually leads to a fulfilled life and one with true friends
- 2. But what about those who harm us (or seek to) when we are pursuing what is best?
 - a. Consider the options - if we yield to their desires we would be doing wrong
 - b. Compromise is often a “buzz word” for diplomacy and may be, but often it is a means to steer many in the wrong direction
 - c. Conflict is often needed to keep our directions/courses correct!
 - d. In our living for God we will most definitely offend others - The unrighteous “does not hate benevolence in itself, but if it is coupled with the name of Christ it arouses his murderous anger. He applauds good conduct, but bitterly hates good conduct ‘in Christ’” - George Williams
 - e. So there should be times we expect to face trouble (depending on who there is to react) - II Tim. 3:12; Php. 1:29 - we are “appointed to this”
 - f. We can often better determine the rightness of a position by who opposes it

A humanist wants good deeds to be “of man” alone with no credit to God

3. These are those that “prove yourselves to be eager for what is good?” (TCNT)

- a. The idea is that of those seeking to be “imitators” of the good
- b. Those casually seeking the good (in their own comfort zone) are not likely to draw the attention of these “persecutors” - these seek their rightness in being agreeable with all - the imitators of good follow the “model” not the possible reactions they may receive

These are ambassadors more than diplomats

- c. Some appear to be seeking good but are motivated by selfishness - they are often identified by their compromise to avoid conflict (needed conflict)

B. If you suffer for and while doing what is righteous... - vs. 14

1. It is the possibility, not the guarantee of suffering for the right - just because there is no persecution does not mean it is not “righteousness” that we are doing
2. It is also true, that because we suffer in what we do, that it is not wrong (that we do)
 - a. With the rise of the “prosperity gospel” many equate suffering with wrong doing
 - b. Instead, the person who suffers for doing right is called “blessed”
 - c. This word (blessed) carries with it the idea of possessing all that’s needed for contentment and satisfaction - it is a true honor!
3. “.not the suffering, but the cause for which one suffers, makes the martyr” - Augustine
4. And do not fear “the fear of them”

Fear often controls focus - I must not be driven by the fear of losing anything on this earth - what is on this earth will be lost anyway in time

- a. The first idea is to not be afraid of the persecutors - if someone can make us fear them they can control us - it may be that there is some fear of them but that our “fear” of God outweighs our fear of man
- b. The second idea is to not be afraid of what they are afraid of (their fear) - the fear of losing fame, reputation, comfort, pride or even life - they are guided and controlled by their fear (of loss)
- c. Our “God-concept” must remain high (in proper perspective) to keep mean and other “dreadful” things on earth as small as they really are in comparison to Him
 - See Isa. 40:12-26 - limitless, perfect greatness!

What has our eye (focus) at any given time?

5. Do not be “shaken” and “agitated” by them or the circumstances they seem to induce
 - a. Life must not be allowed to be thrown into disarray by trouble
 - Be like solid ground not wavy, unstable water
 - b. Circumstances must not be allowed to dictate our outlook/perspective

C. In your hearts, set Christ as Lord - “enshrine” Him in your heart - vs. 15

1. What you love, adore, live for... let it be Christ (His purposes, His will)
 - His will was to do the will of the Father - Heb. 10:7; Mt. 7:21
2. This is an “active act” we continually seek to “do” and maintain - it is what we need to keep “in- check”

I live for Him and His objectives - my goals and objectives should be lessening over time in light of His

- a. He is to be set aside as Lord - supreme commander over our hearts
 - b. We even check what we love by Him!
 - c. We are consciously seeking to do this - we’re working on it daily
3. It is wise to regularly stop and take inventory of our lives - what are we doing and why?
 - a. He looked continually for the will of the Father to be done - do we?
 - b. He placed the needs of others above His own - do we?
 - c. Need usurped comfort - is this true with us?
 - d. Sacrifice and opposition was expected

As with heroes, we seek to emulate what they do, what they like, what they admire and think is most important

4. And, with Him as Lord in our hearts, we are poised to offer defense of our “expectation”
 - a. When challenged and ridiculed for our hope in Him we are ready and willing to give back a defense of why we are this way
 - b. We know what we believe and why - Who God is and what He is like
 - c. “an apologetic answer defending your faith” - JFB
 - d. We will be thought strange and unreasonable for our hope - we must not be shamed by their questions, opinions and mockery, but confident of our Lord and the rightness and power of His truths and ways
 - e. Our theology dictates this hope - if we are unsure of our faith, our hope will be weak

We do not fear or dread the challenge of our faith, instead we welcome it, loving to see it pulverize its’ opponents and skeptics

5. With Him as Lord in your heart all else is subservient
 - a. He is priority - Lu. 14:26 - all else is compromised before His standing in our hearts
 - b. Others, who may think they should be revered in your hearts may challenge you
 - c. Many will want their ideas, their heroes, their hopes to be ours and will resent and think us deranged for not following what they do
6. This firm response, though, is to be in meekness and fear
 - a. Our speech is “mild” and cautious (controlled and careful)
 - b. We are to be passionate about the Lord and our faith (the faith) but it is to be defended in a controlled manner (not in unchecked anger or insults)
 - c. Col. 4:6 - our speech is to be always with “grace” (without reference to the recipient deserving it) as you would salt your food (throughout and generous striving to make it as palatable to the hearer as you are able) prepared ahead of time so that you know how to appropriately answer everyone
 - d. Again, we do not return “railing for railing” (insult for insult) - truth for error!

We seek to be good ambassadors of the hope (message) we carry not wanting to lessen its image because of our uncontrolled defense - we still must defend, though, not using our seeming inability to handle the defense of the Truth

D. Having a good conscience - vs. 16

1. “That it be properly enlightened to know what is right and wrong, or that it be not under the dominion of ignorance, superstition, or fanaticism, prompting us to do what would be a violation of the Divine law... Without the first of these--clear views of that which is right and wrong--conscience becomes an unsafe guide; for it merely prompts us to do what we esteem to be right, and if our views of what is right and wrong are erroneous, we may be prompted to do what may be a direct violation of the law of God...Conscience is not revelation, nor does it answer the purpose of a revelation. It communicates no new truth to the soul, and is a safe guide only so far as the mind has been properly enlightened to see what is truth and duty. Its office is to prompt us to the performance of duty, not to determine what is right.” Barnes
2. It is knowing and being confident that what you are doing and “hoping in” are right
 - a. What is it that we look to for “justifying” our actions and attitudes?
 - b. Using the Truth of Scripture as our standard, supplies a firm foundation
3. We are not to be driven (controlled) by others thinking evil of us
 - a. If we are rightfully accused of wrong, deal with it appropriately (fess-up)
 - b. If we are falsely accused or we have no way to righteously defend ourselves, we are not to be swayed (into changing) or overcome with bitterness that we cannot sway them (to think better of us)
 - c. It is not a Christian goal to be liked by all men - Lu. 6:26
4. We live and continue knowing that if the truth be known (found out), the false accusers would be put to shame for accusing your good deeds as wrong
 - a. This may or may not happen, but it still should drive us
 - b. It is always to be for the eyes of God that we do what we do
5. Our hope is that their accusations of evil doing will be false
 - a. This should partly motivate us to stay on the “straight and narrow”
 - b. Our wrong deeds will be ammunition against our message (of hope)

It's not just a conscience, its a rightfully informed and functioning conscience

Far to many allow the opinions of others to be the ultimate of dictators to their behavior

E. The focus is always to be the “will of God” - vs. 17

1. It is best knowing that God’s will is being done - even if it involves our suffering
 - a. The will of man (including our own) will fluctuate with the times and how we perceive current circumstances
 - b. If it is allowed (suffering even when we did right) we can truly be rest assured that it is in accordance with His will and is perfect

We are not to be continually driven by the “why” as much as we are to be driven by the “what” - too much questioning slows or stifles doing!

2. It is better that “the will of God be so”
 - a. Whose will are we seeking to be accomplished?
 - b. It will be a lifelong fact that we will battle our own will in most matters and that our will will rarely be in perfect harmony with God’s
 - c. Our contentment is to be sought and found in the will of God at work
 - d. It is better - “κρειττον” - of more strength, power and influence - effectiveness
 - (1). It is what we would choose if we knew all the facts and wanted the best
 - (2). If it is allowed to happen, it will (somehow) fit the plan of God
 - e. *“Duties are ours, events are the Lord’s. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold court (if I may so speak) upon God’s providence, and beginneth to say, “How wilt thou do this or that?” we lose ground. We have nothing to do there. It is our part to let the Almighty exercise His own office, and steer His own helm. There is nothing left to us but to see how we may be approved of Him, and how we may roll the weight of our weak souls in well-doing upon Him who is God Omnipotent.”* Samuel Rutherford
3. Suffering for the right will always fit with God’s will - if trouble comes, we take it up with resolve and if it does not come we do not seek it out
 - The Geneva Bible was a result of many who were fleeing for their lives (because of their well-doing) and ended up in the same place - they used their time and opportunity to translate the entire Scripture into English which became the Bible of the Puritans (published in 1560)
4. It is not “better” (as powerful) to suffer for wrong-doing - this is to be part of our motivation for striving to do right - not just to avoid the pain of being humbled or inconvenienced for doing wrong, but in the waste of time and resources lost (opportunity lost) when wrong consumes our time and focus

XII. The Exemplary Example of the Suffering of Christ and the Results - 3:18-22

A. Christ suffered for our sins, not for His (having none) - vs. 18

1. This suffering for sins (on His part) was once for all
 - a. Its effectiveness (this suffering) is everlasting
 - b. It was used of God for our eternal salvation (redemption and reconciliation)
2. This suffering (His death) was for our sins - He was guiltless and yet this was God’s choice means of paying the debt for our salvation
 - a. If this was true with our Lord, why would we expect (or even hope) different?
 - b. Much of our life effectiveness will be found when we are called to suffer
3. It was the “just” for the “unjust” - the guiltless for the guilty
 - a. At first glance it would not look “fair” or even right
 - b. The power of God was seen in taking on Him our iniquity and not making each of us rightfully bear our own iniquity to certain and deserved judgement
 - c. In our typical estimation, the wrong should suffer for the wrong - but God, in demonstrating His power used the right to suffer in the stead of the wrong!
 - In doing this, we learn of Grace, a concept, that without it, all of the structure of salvation will crumble (none of it would occur without God showing favor to those who did not deserve it)
4. This is what God did for us - suffering wrongfully (our not “deserving” it) should be seen as a probable part of our life’s calling

The undeserving did not just die for the undeserving; He died for the repulsive, disgusting and criminal (which we all are in our own “righteousness”)

5. To bring us to God - this was the purpose statement - this is why it was done
 - a. As we face suffering, our first thoughts should head towards “ purpose ”
 - b. Seek out God’s thoughts first before we delve too deeply into our own!
6. Being “put to death in the flesh” (on the one hand) while being quickened in the spirit (living “real” life simultaneously) - at the same instance (on the other hand)

This earth does not and never will represent life at its fullest

- a. It was at the death of His body that the life (quickening) happened
- b. This truest of life is in the spirit - not of this material world (where suffering takes place and often in the form of the loss of the material)

B. It was in “the spirit” that victory was seen and proclaimed - vs. 19-20

1. There is much controversy over these verses - for centuries there have been great efforts to determine, conclusively and without doubt, the illustration that Peter uses

Some try to take this to mean that Christ went into Hell to preach to some there to give them a second chance at salvation - there is no supporting “evidence” or support for this

- a. Who were these prisoners? When did Christ speak to them? What had they done to be in “prison”? Where is this prison? What does “spirits” refer to?
- b. Some believe these spirits are angels that performed particularly bad acts of disobedience and placed in a special prison for their wrongs

It is coupled with II Pet. 2:4 by those that believe this

- They believe that this group of angels were beings in Gen. 6 who co-mingled with people and produced a deviant “race” (needing to be destroyed in the flood)

This view seems most likely since it would have been Christ’s “spirit” that made proclamation to these “spirits”

- c. Some believe the “spirits” are the people who lived in the time of Noah and are now spoken of as “spirits” since that is their present state - then Christ (and His message) was preached to these “antediluvians” who mocked Noah (and his message for repentance) for 120 years and are now here the proclamation of Christ’s victory - the message was true throughout!

2. Either way, the message of these verses are clear

- a. There is more “power” in “the spirit” - success is not defined in this life, in the material world and its strengths and sufferings
- b. One way of the other, it was by means of “the spirit” that Christ went and proclaimed His victory - “preached” is not the word for proclaiming the gospel but of heralding out the news of victory
- c. Defeat and loss looked apparent in the “physical realm” and those focused solely on it did not see the victory won (until they also were “spirits”)

3. These spirits are now in “prison” - confinement without hope of release

- a. They are there for their disobedience - they disobeyed “long ago” in the face of God’s patience with them (120 years) - many will ultimately determine God’s patience to be tolerance or a yielding to the stubbornness and determination of their wills
- b. “The way of the most is neither the best, the wisest, nor the safest way to follow: better to follow the eight in the ark than the eight millions drowned by the flood and damned to hell.” Matthew Henry
- c. They defied God and mocked His message (and messenger) while seeing the “salvation” constructed before their eyes - the salvation and it’s “construction” were they very center of their mocking and ridicule - it was absurd, in their eyes, that they would need “saving” from what they had not seen
- d. God is “framed” as longsuffering and presenting openly His salvation while man is pictured as incredulous and obstinate in the face of saving - the exception was Noah who was described as having “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” - Gen. 6:8

4. So these were in “prison” for things God considered grievous
 - a. They disbelieved - thus they would not obey (submit/yield) - stubborn
 - b. They disbelieved 120 years in the face of God’s longsuffering
 - c. The sin of presumption is two-fold - it follows self-will over God’s and it counts on more time to “think it over” - see Pr. 27:1

The “I might get around to it sometime” syndrome

5. Victory was proclaimed, though, through the suffering of Christ - these disbelieving “spirits” in the time of Noah were informed of this victory - vs. 19-20
6. Only eight persons were saved from the flood (through the water - judgement)
 - a. Rightness (clearly from this example) is not measured by numbers
 - b. Rightness is measured only in as much as there is obedience to God’s Word

C. The mocking and disobedient in the time of Noah perished in the water, while Noah was saved through the waters (by being held up by them) - vs. 21

1. Again, there has been controversy about the phrasing used in this verse
 - a. It’s purpose is not to say that baptism saves anyone
 - b. The use of the term “αντιτυπον” clarifies it as symbolic (the water in baptism)
2. Not the “removal of dirt from the body” - it’s not the water of baptism that is significant

So there was suffering for the right in Noah’s time, but the end result powerfully speaks to this day of faith in God and not confidence in public opinion and popularity

- a. Peter, using the time of Noah as an example, uses the parallel of water used in judgement and salvation to draw the attention back to the work of Christ
 - b. It is in conjunction with the “pledge of a good conscience towards God”
 - c. It is describing the profession made openly and identification with Christ and His work that is at the heart of the baptism practice
 - d. It is a powerful ordinance which we practice our of obedience, example, and ultimately openly confessing our reliance upon the work of Christ
3. We are not saved by the process of water baptism, but baptism does demonstrate the reality of what has taken place in us - this obedience, as in Noah’s example, and faith (reliance upon) in the work of Christ is what saves us through the “waters”

D. Baptism represents our identity with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection - vs. 21-22

1. It “saves you” (in its symbolism) by the resurrection of Christ
 - a. His victory over death is our only way to victory over death in all forms
 - b. Spiritual deadness and eternal death in God’s judgement were conquered
 - c. This is what we all are drawn to remembered at baptisms
2. He has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand
 - a. This is our hope in suffering (it is not in what is here or what may be “here” but what will be “there” in God’s realm)
 - b. It is also to keep our focus on whose perspective matters most - is it the dominant personalities around us or the One who has perfect perception of all things, Who died on our behalf, Who sits at God’s right hand?

E. Our Lord, the One we identify with and Who intercedes for us, is over all! - vs. 22

1. “Having gone into Heaven” - He was welcomed and honored with the highest honor
 - a. Often (if not most often) this will be the case - despised and ridiculed (and rejected) on earth, persecuted, hated and hurt and yet honored in Heaven
 - b. It is crucial that we assess what we are living for each day - is it for “that day before God” or “this day” before man? - which is most important?
2. We now live, understanding Who is “in charge” (over all)
 - a. Mt. 28:18 - “Given to me was all authority in heaven and on earth;” - YLT
 - b. All is answerable to our conquering King who also suffered for the right

- Hiebert — 3. “He is there in glory, associated with the Almighty in the government of the universe. He is present there as our incarnate Lord, exalted and ever able to aid His suffering saints.”
- a. This is our “ connection ” in times of suffering
 - b. We are to always see Him where He is so as to not lose hope or perspective
4. All authorities, earthy, angelic and spiritual are under His jurisdiction - we ought not fear or revere any more than Him!

XIII. Live as Strangers, Staying Focused on Purpose - 4:1-11

A. Keep focus on the example of Christ

1. Just as Christ suffered while in the flesh (likewise, see that He did and learn from it)
 - a. We must not consider ourselves above suffering (wrongfully for the right)
 - b. “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” John 15:20
2. We are to equip/arm ourselves with His perspective
 - a. We are to use it, as it were, a defensive and offensive weapon, His “mind”
 - b. Just as He looked upon it, so are we - He looked upon it as doing the will of God as clarified in I Pet. 3:17-18 and our Lord in Gethemene
 - c. It is the same idea as in Philippians 2 - “Let this mind be in you...”
 - (1). Emptied Himself of Himself - He was not here to do his own will
 - (2). Took on the “form of a servant” - living to meet the needs of others, not seeking others to live to meet His needs
 - (3). Made in the likeness of man - made lower to fulfill God’s will
 - (4). Humbled Himself - He was not here to make Himself the focus
 - (5). He was obedient unto death - nothing in life usurped His purpose
 - d. This “arming” is needed because we will be attacked also - the goal of the enemy is to grab our focus, have us question purpose and to alter our perspective to live for this life and consider the loss of comfort or many things in this world too costly
 - e. The goal of the “enemy” is to get us to subscribe to other “minds”

This is the mind we are to arm ourselves with - it will defend us against attacks to sway us from purpose and will aid in our “attacks” against humanistic philosophies seeking to dominate society, its purposes and priorities

Temporal values versus eternal values

B. “He who has suffered in the flesh is done with sin”

1. When we suffer, sin lessens - we are no longer enamored with it
 - a. This is one of the side benefits of suffering - what used to be important to us no longer is - our priorities change sometimes making us feel shame remembering how we used to look at life
 - b. Contradicting our natural, self-serving tendencies has a way of maturing us
2. When we suffer, it identifies we are “done with sin”
 - a. Sin is ultimately the pleasing of ourselves - fearing self contradiction
 - b. Suffering for the right identifies we are serving someone other than ourselves
3. Our suffering/death with Christ (Rom. 6) results in the death to self

Living life based on realities not perceptions, pretenses or the pursuits of fun

C. The rest of our life outlook has changed - vs. 2

1. The use of our time, from our vantage point, is to be taken up with righteous pursuits
 - a. That we should no longer live out our lives serving our “flesh”
 - b. Self-gratification/pleasure is not to be our focus
 - c. When not suffering, we need checkpoints to ensure our life focus - suffering can be an effective “focuser”
2. What we are not to be living for
 - a. “the lusts of men” - the popular/normal life pursuits of people
 - b. The typical priorities of our age/society

The idea is of the time in our lives that is “left-over” or remaining - we cannot go back and reclaim time but we can for time yet to come

We, as the children of God, should expect to live above this and look as God's will as our highest and grandest pursuit

- c. These "lusts" are plural and varied - there's many and they are ever fluctuating
- d. This is in contrast to the singular will of God which is firm and steady (reliable)
- e. These are the "lusts of men" in contrast to the "higher calling" of the redeemed
- f. So, we are not to be taken with what general humanity are taken with

- 3. Our remaining time is to be taken with the will of God - seeking out what it is first and then the active (conscious) living for it and in accordance with it
 - a. Sometimes, inactivity and not pursuing (learning and following) something is just as harmful as contradicting it
 - b. Wanting to "get to know God" will be a natural by-product of wanting to live by His will (and the confident discovery of it)

- 4. The life we now live is one of a different kind - Gal. 2:20, II Cor. 5:15-17, John 1:13
 - a. We must not allow ourselves to look upon our lives as truly ours
 - b. If/since we are "wrought" by the will of God, we are for the will of God

D. Any time spent in our sinful pasts is more than enough time - vs. 3

- 1. The past time, spent carrying out the desires/priorities of the "Gentiles" (pagans/godless) was "sufficient" (enough)

- a. Literally, for the time that has come and gone, it was plenty
- b. Too many get caught into the lie that there is more that a sinful life can offer and somehow bring a contentment and satisfaction that cannot be found in pursuing God's will - if sinful pursuits are let go, we will miss nothing (vanity) !!
- c. Better to have gone through life not having known or experienced certain things
- d. Part of the appealing message of sin is that it has something satisfying to offer
- e. There is no wisdom in counselling someone to "sow their wild oats"

- Pr. 23:17 — f. It is distracting to live a life believing you have missed out when it comes to a sinful life

- 2. Much of wisdom comes when we finally see our time on earth as limited - Psa. 90:12
 - This was in context of revering God and not wanting to be against Him

see also Psa. 39:4

- 3. Peter then lists shameful sins and practices that once characterized their lives
 - a. Part of maturing in Christ should involve an abhorrence to looking back when we lived according to our natural inclinations and self-will
 - b. The practice or even desires of these should no longer characterize us
 - c. These are "life-drainers" that never offer satisfaction robbing us of valuable time and resources while living for them - Pr. 27:20
 - d. Pr. 2:20-22 demonstrates the protection of loving wisdom

These do not characterize "living"; instead they drain the real life from us

E. Our difference in practice and priority will bring criticism - vs. 4

- 1. They will be surprised that you do not "run with them"
 - a. The idea is that we do not join them in the group/popular pursuits
 - b. It will be as if we are strangers to them (especially if they knew us before) - the word picture is one entertaining a stranger
 - c. They wonder what happened and what went wrong - and will no doubt do all they can to get us back in with them
- 2. They are surprised, not that we do not just run with them, but that we are not after the pursuit of excess with them
 - a. "Why don't you want to enjoy life to its fullest?" they will ask
 - b. It may not even be in relation to our refusal to sin - it may be that we are not as driven as they are to "live it up" as much as possible
 - c. This will bring criticism upon us - they will speak evil - not just of us, but also of God and His truths (which so affect our thinking)

This surprise will be genuine on their part and it will perplex them - even to anger and frustration

It is the ongoing removal of restraints and finding their "thrills" in this process

- d. It will be strange to them because we are not truly one of them - sin is not who and what we really are - it will be unnatural to us
- e. Their excess in "unsavedness" - living out more fully their depravity
- f. They are bound by their desires - they will ultimately live for what they want, and what they want will be their doom

F. There will be an "account" given before God - vs. 5

- 1. These will have to answer for themselves - the idea is to give a "word"
 - a. Any that are not "in Christ" will have to speak for themselves and "stand" for themselves before God (while still in their sins) - see Php. 3:9
 - b. They live as though they are unaccountable - this thinking emboldens them
 - c. This is why the group in Rom. 1 do not like to think of God or be reminded of Him - Rom. 1:28
- 2. The Judge is already ready - He is literally "in readiness"
 - a. Those living when this accounting takes place will be judged
 - b. Those who have died will not escape it either

G. Being doomed (by our own way) to judgement, the Gospel was brought to us - vs. 6

- 1. "For this cause" - seeing that there is an inevitable accounting coming
 - a. The Gospel was preached to those they knew, that had died
 - b. These that he refers to must have received the Gospel
- 2. They would first be "judged" as men must be judged in dying
 - a. This could be just that all are appointed to die because of sin
 - b. It could also be those "judged by men" to die for the beliefs
 - c. Natural death is not the greatest judgement - this is why the Good News prepares us for after death and does not deliver us from physical death
- 3. Those having heeded the Gospel would then live "according to God in the spirit"
 - a. This will be true life (truly living) - the height of "living it up" on this earth will not even be measurable to living with God!
 - b. It is this type of thinking that is to consume our life perspectives and why we will not be shaken with ridicule - why would we be swayed when we know what is coming?

We strive to live for "that day" not today

H. As the end of all these things nears, our activities should be focused - vs. 7-11

- 1. The end of all things (as they are) nears (perfect tense - has neared, is nearing and will continue to get near) - so prepare for the end approaching
 - a. Clearly it carries with it the end of what each age lives for and seeks to continue
 - b. People are most sinful when they see things as never ending (false security)
 - c. There will be and have been those who mock this in light of the passage of time - Peter addresses this in II Pet. 3:4-7 and compared them to the disbelief of those who perished in the flood
- 2. Seeing then the futility of living for any "age" we are to first...
 - a. Be sober-minded - clear headed - don't be caught or consumed with a distorted view of reality (as though life is about only what we see around us and what we feel at any given time)
 - b. Be moderate and controlled in your thinking - guard your "heart" with all diligence because this dictates what makes up our living (issues of life) - Pr. 4:23
 - c. Avoid that which "clouds the senses" so as to be focused in your conversing with God (prayers) - that which makes us forget/neglect to pray is what we must not allow to consume how we look at life

We are, as it were, living in parallel to the “end” when this age will be finished - live accordingly!

It is a selfless attitude and approach to one another - we do this before the eyes of God as a child would before the eyes of their parents

Murmuring is typically a quiet/concealed complaining

We are to be as “good” stewards - honest, just and diligent in careful use of what we have been entrusted

3. Again, the motive is the “end of all things” being near - *“Up to Christ’s coming in the flesh, the course of things ran straight towards that end nearing it by every step; but now, under the Gospel, that course has (if I may so speak) altered its direction, as regards His second coming, and runs, not towards the end, but along it, and on the brink of it; and is, at all times near that great event, which, did run towards it, it would at once run into. Christ, then, is ever at our door.”* Nathaniel M. Williams
 - a. Thus the need for clear-headedness - as if driving along side a cliff
 - b. Do not allow “communications” with God to be hindered or distracted
4. So, above all other things (on this earth), have (hold) fervent love - vs. 8
 - a. Realizing we live on the brink of the end, focus on your love of each other
 - b. This is literally the “into yourselves love” - we are partial to one another and it is expressed - the opposite being a fighting and confrontational attitude with each other
 - c. As parents long that their children will love each other above others
 - d. Fervent has the idea of “extending” - it is earnest, or as a flexing muscle; it is working with great effort
5. For (purpose statement) love covers lots of sins - see also Pr. 10:12
 - a. This does not mean it condones evil, but that it seeks to overlook the faults or offences of others to ourselves - it looks to forgive
 - b. It is like the phrase, “Love is blind” as a young couple “in love” never seem to see the faults in each other - in a similar way, this is our love with each other
 - c. Clearly, one of the greatest hindrances to our demonstration of selfless love to each other is our constant noticing of each others faults
6. Demonstrate hospitality with each other - vs. 9
 - a. Hospitality is a word used to communicate a “love of strangers” - but these were not total strangers, but other believers they may have not met
 - b. It also carries the idea of loving to have guests
 - c. This would, at times, be taxing on feelings, sleep and resources so they should be careful not to allow a complaining response (murmuring)
 - d. Strive to be sociable - not just to be nice, but to “rub shoulders” with each other, impacting, affecting, encouraging and challenging each other
7. As you have received of God’s gift, use it for/on one another - vs. 10
 - a. The idea is that each has received at least one gift of some sort - not necessarily just spiritual gifts, but any gift or resource (and we acknowledge it as from God)
 - b. God gives the gifts (resources/graces) to be used as He knows best, and we are to see them as needing to be disposed for His purposes
 - c. Act as a minister (servant) dispensing what God has given - this is how we are to view our gifts - we are mere stewards of God’s resources
 - d. There is no “ranking” of gifts - if we use what we have been give, though low in the eyes of some, it is the highest work we can do for God - this is why we do not envy the gifts of others - in a sense, it would be critical of God
 - e. We are entrusted with the “manifold” grace(s) of God - there are lots and they are varied - so we will, no doubt, be entrusted with many gifts over the course of our lives and should be flexible to seek to “spend” these resources in the variety of ways that God will bring
8. So, if you speak, remember Who you represent - vs. 11
 - a. “Let him speak as (becomes one speaking) oracles OF GOD.” - JFB
 - b. Especially those speaking the Word of God - treat it with great respect!

Speaks knowing that God is always present

c. All of us should consider ourselves as ambassadors for God especially when speaking - take the position seriously so as not to be ammunition for the enemy

d. Be very cautious when using phrases such as, “ God wants you to...”

9. When you serve, remember Who gives the ability and strength - vs. 11

a. Use the abilities and strength also as good stewards for His purposes

b. If there is praise in the service, acknowledge (especially to self) the source

10. The purpose - that in ALL THINGS, God would be glorified - vs. 11

a. This is to be the underlying purpose in all our serving and loving one another

b. Remember, we love each other, not out of deserving it, but out of our love for God and our responsibility to Him - love what He loves, do what He says

c. This glorifying of God will only happen “through Christ” - if it is not “in His name” (worthy of His name) it will most assuredly not be glorifying to God

d. For His is the glory for eternity (anyway)! - it is rightfully due Him

e. So our main focus/purpose in life is to be seeking all opportunities (that are God-given) to point all who see to the glory of God - we are mere conduits of this glory, not the points of glory themselves!

d. This is the purpose we are to seek to be focused on at all times

All other glory-taking is an imposter imposing!

IX. Entrusting Our Souls to the Faithful Creator - 4:12-19

A. Do not allow yourself to be taken with “ amazement ” in suffering - vs. 12

1. Don't “think it a strange thing” - this is a passive imperative - don't allow it to happen

a. Do not be startled as if suffering is foreign to your life as a believer

b. Too much of our time may be taken with the “why” rather than the “what”

2. We are not to be “taken in amazement” in a fiery trial which “is to try us”

a. This amazement may be our “suffering” at the suffering of another - hurt for them

b. Do not look on any suffering as though it is an unexpected stranger

c. Too often we are not ready because we do not expect to have to be

3. It is used to “try you” - to make “proof” of you - not in the sense of proving who/what you are to God, but in pulling out the “real you” and in separating fine metals from the dross

a. It is for our good and lends to glorifying God

b. This is where we trust His sovereignty especially in our hurting - if it happens, it must need to happen - what is lost (burned-off) was not needed anyway and we soon come to see more of who we are in Christ (by His hand)

c. The pain of suffering and of loss, is the pain of purifying and growth

B. In our suffering (for right), we get to be more like Christ than we were - vs. 13

1. We are to rejoice, not in our pain, but in as much as we are able to suffer for and with Christ - This was Paul's goal in Php. 3:10 - this is the “real knowing”

a. We are servants of God, existing to do His bidding and submitting under His mighty hand - therefore, when called upon to suffer as our Lord did, this is a more fulfilling purpose

b. It is a high calling to suffer for Christ in any capacity - but God brings us into it (we do not seek to stir it up ourselves!)

2. Our suffering is used to ever prove the rightness of the truth for which we live

a. Suffering lends observable credence to the “cause”

b. Suffering bonds our heart to the Lord more thoroughly

c. Suffering bonds our hearts closer to those we suffer with

3. This suffering is “to the degree” that we suffer with Christ - it will be varying

It is to be what we would welcome as a “privileged identity” with our Lord

- a. It will come at differing times and in differing degrees
- b. Whether less or more, we are to continue to rejoice - as we get to face what He faced, and that, for His cause - as a soldier would think it his highest honor to be in battle with his king - he would rather be no other place!

4. So that you can be “overjoyed” when His glory is revealed

- a. We make it through the suffering by focusing on the victory coming
- b. When His glory is revealed (at His coming or even while we still live on this earth) we can and will be thrilled beyond our expectation - this will also be that non stopping “excited joy” that we will have in eternity - eternal contentment!

C. We are blessed when reviled for Christ’s sake - vs. 14

1. When “reviled” (reproached) it involves verbal abuse - mockery, defaming
 - It’s the same idea as in Mt. 5:11-12 - “blessed”; happy are you when...
2. Often, this can be as bad as or worse than physical suffering - this is why the answer to this situation addresses our “state” or condition with God’s spirit
3. We, in this condition, are identified as having the Spirit of glory and of God upon us

Dan. 3:25 — • As those in the fiery furnace had more a “visible” presence of God with them

Times of ease and luxury do not reveal God’s glory - He is most evident when His grace is at work when we are under pressure

4. Remember Who resides within you at these times and that it is in times, like these, that He is most honored and His glory most evident in us
 - We find our commitment to “the cause” more a “conviction” when we suffer for it and we find (most often) our commitment seeming to waver when we avoid suffering for and with the name of Christ (in anything)

5. From their perspective, Christ is mocked, while we see (clearly) He is glorified

Their perspective must not drive us!

- *This phrase is not in many manuscripts, but the concept is true*

D. So, if there is to be suffering, seek to suffer for the right - vs. 15-16

The goal is to not have any of these things be associated with the name of Christ

1. Notice, the conclusion is not to seek to avoid suffering!
2. Don’t suffer for wrong doing such as murderer (hatred), thief (covetous), a criminal (lawless or a scorner), a meddler (lack of tact or courtesy) - these are not to characterize us as believers - these sufferings are of little value (only lessons learned)
3. Instead, seek that your suffering be in the “bearing of the name” of Christ - His cause!
 - The others are fightings for our name, while this is for His name
4. This is one of the rare instances of the term/name “Christian” - with this term applied to us and it cost us something, it should not stir in us shame

Others will use suffering/persecution to seek to cause us to question the rightness of God, scripture or our perspective in both

5. Again, shame is a result of a focus upon ourselves (our name): instead we are to be focused upon living under the term “Christian” in a God-honoring way
 - a. It is to be who we are and what we do - it is why we are here; it defines us!
 - b. Do not let suffering make you question the rightness of being Christian
 - Shame should only come from genuine wrong-doing

E. The “revealing judgement” of God will start with His own “house” - vs. 17

1. “It is time” - it is proper and appropriate - His timing is perfect and fitting
 - a. Suffering and contradiction to ourselves will never seem timely (thus it is suffering) but we can be assured, God’s timing is precise
 - b. God, Who chooses the timing of His “revealing /discerning” of us is right in doing so
2. It is judgement - “It refers such calamities as would settle the question whether there was any religion, or would test the value of that which was professed.” Barnes
 - a. The word κριμα is in reference to a decision/verdict based upon revealed evidence - it’s root meaning “to distinguish” (the wrong from the right)

- b. It is a “distinguishing” to separate out the “ **approved** ” - I Cor. 11:18-19
 - The “sects” were needed and served to demonstrate who the “genuine” believers are and to point out frauds/pretenders
- c. The “judgement” of the Lord serves to show us what are eternal values
- 3. And if God is so hard/firm with His own “house”, what will be the end of the unbelievers?
 - a. God’s dealings with His own children is often quite harsh, and that in His love
 - b. What will the dreadful dealing be like, then, with those not of His house?
 - c. Descriptions of their end - Rev. 20:10-15; Mt. 25:41-46; 8:12; 13:42; Lu. 16:23; II Thes. 1:7-10; Jude 7, 13
 - d. Hell / Lake of Fire will be a place of eternal pain, separation and destruction
 - e. So, clearly, anything above Hell (this eternal judgment) is more than we deserve - so we should not be so apt to balk or complain against God’s harsh dealings with us
 - f. So is the natural end of those that will not relent to submit (in faith) to the Gospel
 - This “not relenting” is willful disobedience often taking the form of a forgery of God’s Gospel with one of their own making

Though our suffering become great it will never compare to what awaits the ungodly. Peter was not looking to describe the end of the godless, but to encourage the believers

- F. Keep our eternal hope in focus so as not to **temporarily** lose hope in a trial - vs. 18
 - 1. It is the expected life of a believer to suffer for the right - John 15:18-25
 - Our “ **namesake** ” was hated by the world, why should we expect different?
 - 2. “If is so difficult for the righteous to be saved...”
 - a. It was quite a process to save us in Christ - there is much forethought, planning, sacrifice and explanations in the saving of our souls
 - b. And, if we who have had so much “put into us” by God Himself will suffer such till our glorification with Him in eternity, what is to become of the godless and sinners?
 - 3. When being confronted with the presence of our ultimate of enemies (Satan) we can recount with Martin Luther, “...for lo his **doom** is sure...”
- G. Keep our souls entrusted to our “faithful Creator” - vs. 19
 - 1. “...seeing the godly are not afflicted by chance, but by the will of God, they ought not to despair, but go forward nonetheless in the way of holiness and well doing, commending themselves to God their faithful creator, that is to say, their Father.” GBN
 - 2. So those that are suffering (and that by God’s will) remember His continuous oversight
 - 3. He is described as a “faithful creator” - He made all things and has dominion over all things and all things will be used to precisely fulfill His work
 - a. He made our bodies with nerves to feel pain and allows this pain for His reasons
 - b. He made us with emotions and will “hurt our feelings” for the good (not just our good in this life, but for the good of His **cause**)
 - c. He constructed physics and thinking, all of which may be used to my “hurt” but never out from under His sovereign jurisdiction
 - 4. His all-powerful control and His faithfulness to us through all things have more than earned our entrusting our souls into His hands
 - a. Not just our living, but the **state** of our souls (e.g. emotions, perspectives)
 - b. Also, we are to so trust His loving hand of control, that our lives are always seen in His hands and at (always available) to be disposed of as He knows best
 - c. This is a mental and willful entrusting/committing our souls/lives
 - 5. And in this committing, while we still live day by day, we seek to do so in “well-doing”
 - a. Each day, and moment of life is to be seen as opportunities to do His bidding and to “live and think right” with what he has entrusted to us
 - b. As in I Pet. 2:23 Christ entrusted Himself to Him Who “judgeth righteously” - we do not seek to find **fault** with His dealings with us

X. Instruction to Church (Spiritual) Leaders - 5:1-4

A. "The elders" among you - vs. 1

1. This was a term in reference to age as well as responsibility (office) in the church
 - a. Those that were experienced and well-taught - as in Titus 1
 - b. They are in contrast to "novices" - who may be sincere, but inexperienced or untaught and not ready to be recognized as a "leader"

Rom. 8:18 - "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"

2. These Peter seeks to "exhort" - call along side to challenge
 - a. Peter could also speak as one experienced, acting as a leader of God's people
 - b. Peter was a "witness" of the sufferings of Christ - he could speak first-hand (this was partly of his apostolic authority, though he does not claim/use it here)
 - c. And, as he has been teaching all along, he will be a "partaker" of the glory that is to come with Christ (Christ's victory over all) - suffering with Him also includes the "glory with him" - Rom. 8:17
 - d. It is this "soon to be uncovered" glory that motivates us in our daily responsibilities

B. The core responsibility of spiritual leaders - feed/tend the flock - vs. 2

1. "shepherd" the flock that are "around you"

Fathers should see themselves as elders in their homes taking on these responsibilities

- a. The picture is acting as, in this case, an under shepherd
- b. This involves feeding the "flock" - leading them to the "green pastures" of the Truth of the Word of God - I Pet. 2:2

(1). All else is either non-nutritious weakening the "sheep" or poisonous, hindering the growth of the flock overall

(2). This will require eating/feeding one's self also (growth/strength)

John 10:11-12 —

- c. This involves type of protecting - as the Good shepherd, we seek to give our lives for His sheep - not as hirelings running from danger

All of us are examples - just not all good examples!

- d. This involves leading/directing - expecting to step ahead on the journey of life realizing others will follow - do we look at our lives as worthy directions and examples for others to follow the Lord?

Shepherds do not seek to "minister" to the sheep in direct correlation to how the sheep treat them - they are motivated by responsibility and the needs of the sheep

- e. This involves loving - not because the sheep are ours but because they are the Lord's sheep and He gave Himself for them - we must see ourselves as answering to Him in our daily responsibilities of His sheep!

- f. This involves a focus on those "around/among" us - God places us, daily, where we need to be in His service - our focus should not be on "other flocks"

2. Exercising oversight - take on this as responsibility/obligation

- a. But not under "compulsion" - being forced into it - do it voluntarily
- b. If the heart is not in it, neglect or misuse is sure to come!
- c. Look on the oversight as an accountable position before the Chief Shepherd - it is not a "position" of opportunity or "glamorous" in any way - it is a serious responsibility before God taken on by one enthusiastic to be a part of the progressing of God's purposes

3. According to God - as God would want or will to be so

- As would befit serving almighty God

4. Not for unrighteous profit -(sordid/ill-gotten gain)

- a. One cannot be in God's service "for the money" - not to be covetous

It must not be looked upon as a vocation

- b. It becomes "filthy lucre" when one focuses on the monetary gain or luxury
- c. It can also fit the idea of serving for... recognition, praise, fame, admiration, acknowledged success, power, control, etc.

5. But out of cheerfulness - from the heart; gladness focused on Who is being served!

Would do it for “free” because it is a part of who we are - recognition is also not required to true “ministers”

- a. It involves a willingness - a desire (predisposition)
- b. Ministry is not what someone chooses when all else fails, but is what we feel we must do it, regardless of outward success or compensation of any type
- c. Service is not for prestige, praise or payment, but of desire! - more scrutiny should go into what we really “want” - there may be those in ministries who should be there but their desires and focuses are misdirected, while there may be some who should not be in “ministries” at all

C. What “Christian service” is not but should be - vs. 3 (they are not positions, but privileges)

1. Not as “lording” it over His flock (His heritage)
2. Albert Barnes clarifying the use of the term “lords” stated, *“This is an exercise of authority, as contradistinguished from the influence of reason, persuasion, and example. The latter pertains to the ministers of religion; the former is forbidden to them. Their dominion is not to be that of temporal lordship; it is to be that of love and truth. This command would prohibit all assumption of temporal power by the ministers of religion, and all conferring of titles of nobility on those who are preachers of the gospel. It needs scarcely to be said that it has been very little regarded in the church.”*

These are not positions of authority but of examples and “leadership” (being first to step out and lead)

3. So, “elders” are not authorities over their “allotments”
 - a. The term is in reference to what has been designated as , in their times, land would be allotted by civil governments for certain uses
 - b. Responsibility is give but with accountability to the giver/owner of the allotments to be used as He determines
 - c. Far too often we take the work God provides and seek to keep it within the realms of our “jurisdictions” and opinions - God’s “instructions of use” for what He gives us will most often be difficult because they will involve the use of faith, without which, He is not pleased - Heb. 11:6
4. Opportunities of services are just that... they are opportunities with His resources, His people, His talents, in His time for His glory
 - a. This is why whatever we do, ministry and non-ministry, we do it “heartily, as to the Lord” - for His eyes and approval - Col. 3:23
 - b. Even when we have disagreements with each other, opportunities of “dialogue” should be open - see 3 John 9-10 for a negative example - not that there needs to be compromise, but that we should never “fear” or overrule communication with the “brethren”

God provides us all our “allotments” of service... our focus is on the giver of these tasks (and His greatness) and not on the greatness of the responsibilities (as we see them) we have been given

5. But seeking to act as “patterns” and “models” to be followed
 - a. It is interesting to note that instruction is given to act as “examples” demonstrating the “lead” to others without also instructing that we wait to see if others are following - success is not defined by the numbers following, just in setting the example (regardless of the people noticing and following us)
 - b. The aim is to lead by example, not to “boss” by position - position can be an ominous challenge in that when we have it, we become lazy, calculating the work to be done by others while we are able to criticize the flaws and administrate the tasks
 - c. To lead, one must first live the life and truth first before looking to instruct others to do so - as is so often stated, actions speak louder than words!
 - d. We are to demonstrate the Truth in our lives (Truth is “living and breathing” not in that it grows and changes itself, but in that it grows and changes us !

“A monstrosity it is to see the highest rank joined with the meanest mind, the first seat with the lowest life, a grandiloquent tongue with a lazy life, much talking with no fruit” Bernard as quoted in JFB

D. The motive of Christian leadership/service - vs. 4

1. We do what we do for the purposes of the “Chief Shepherd”
 - a. There will be an accountability for how we deal with His sheep
 - b. He is the one we serve, not the sheep - the sheep are served only in as much as we are serving the Chief Shepherd
2. When He comes, He gives the “crown of glory” - it’s not the glory of people and from people, but of His glory, purchased for us by His righteousness
 - a. Crowns are signs of victory (this word) not of royalty or power
 - b. These crowns (wreaths of victory) will not “fade” - the glory and luster of His “reward” will stand in direct contrast to any of the fading honors we receive here
 - c. We must not allow ourselves to be guilty of serving and striving for temporal crowns
 - d. Our motive is the incorruptible crown of I Cor. 9:25 - this is why we serve/strive being disciplined in what we do (avoiding earthly (temporal) distractions)
3. So, church leadership is setting the example by following Christ’s example and not taking positional authority of the church - an “office” is a place of service and the service is for the Chief Shepherd and His authority as explained and described in the Scripture

We should be careful also in how we view the use of these “crowns” in Heaven - they will not be for our glory... at all!

XI. Our “Attitudes” Toward Each Other - 5:5-7

A. Those that are younger

1. “Likewise” - in the same manner that the elders serve the Chief Shepherd in humility, the younger (both sexes) of the church subordinate themselves to the older
 - a. Submit to “authorities” - have a patient, humble spirit with those that are older, and those that God has set as examples (leaders)
 - b. Beware the “I know more than you so I do not need to respect you” attitude that so often comes with youth
2. It may also be in relation to those young in the faith

B. All of us (the attitude has not age limit or social conditions)

1. Be submissive (subordinate) to each other - see ourselves as obligated to serve each other as servants of the Chief Shepherd
 - The goal is one of respect and deference to each other - none of us is to have a “lording” attitude with each other - there is no social or elite ranking in the church!
2. The key is to be “clothed in humility” - as if we see ourselves wearing the attire (always) of a servant - we are here to serve the servants of the Lord
3. “They were not to assume a style and dignity of state and authority, as if they would lord it over others, or as if they were better than others; but they were to be willing to occupy any station, however humble, by which they might honour God.” Barnes
 - The opposite would be to view others as here to serve me!
4. As with the concept of true love in I Cor. 13, we are here to be “used”, mainly for God’s purposes, but often in the form of those around us, and often in a way that humbles or neglects us - but this is not to be our focus

C. Remember, God “arrays” Himself against the proud

1. Pride cannot always be seen and may take the form of humility or outward righteousness
2. God will never be a part of my pride - if I am lifted up in pride, God will be against me!
3. Pride can only be avoided in as much as we fail to consider ourselves in the “matters” that God places us - when our focus drifts from responsibility to our Master and on to our name, comfort or aspirations, pride becomes involved and self-focus enters the room! This leads to unnecessary conflicts as we battle over temporal matters

4. God's grace (ability from His favor) is only on the humble (of low degree)

He gives ability to those that are humble - the proud are met with resistance/ disappointment

- a. Those who see themselves as utterly dependent
- b. They realize what happens or is happening must be for God's glory and purposes and not theirs
- c. They know that what success may come will be of God's "gracing" and not of their talents and efforts (or deservedness)

B. Be humbled under God's sovereign hand realizing His care- vs. 6-7

1. It is an imperative and a passive - a command to allow it to happen

- a. Do not resist the mighty hand of God as He humbles you because it is the same hand that "exalts" when the time is proper
- b. We must not fight God as He brings humbling circumstances to us

2. It is seen as being under God's "mighty hand"

- a. Resistance to His will is useless - we can and will seek to do it but it does not and will not alter things - worry is always unprofitable - Rom. 9:19
- b. It is understanding His limitless frame of reference and trusting Him
 - We resist when we don't see Him as doing what is best

3. But this submission (ultimate subservience) is seen as being in our best interest

- a. The purpose statement is that he may "exalt" in the right time
- b. He will know best when we need to be "lifted up" - but it will never be for our "gloating" or pride
- c. Many believe this is in reference to His return
- d. If we are lifted up while on this earth, it will be for His purposes and not ours
- e. When He promotes, it is perfect and proper while man's promotions are flawed and usually misused

4. This is all accomplished as we "cast all our anxieties" on Him

- a. The core of our anxieties (worries) is usually the possible outcomes
- b. This command deals with our placing the outcomes on Him (with and without my errors, disobedience and lacks of discernment)
- c. Anxiety is usually associated with our weakness in the shadow of something that looks more powerful - so casting care on Him involves the confidence (our focus upon) His strength versus the looming circumstance or challenge
- d. Worry comes from a smaller picture of God or from a mistrust of His goodness and omniscience (even, sometimes our mistrust of His rightness)

5. In contrast to the "God's of the nations" we know "He cares for us"

- a. This is not something we look to earn - Romans 8 clearly demonstrates God's loving adoption of us as His children
- b. Though we suffer greatly under His mighty hand, we know what He has already done for us and are to never doubt His goodness and rightness in a situation - He deals with us as "sons" - Php. 2:15; Heb. 12
- c. "To be overwhelmed with anxiety is to be concerned with self rather than with Him" Beare

6. So, overall, we do not (must not) fear being humbled because it communicates a mistrust in the goodness of God toward us

- a. Too often we communicate (demonstrate) a mistrust of God's goodness to each other (causing others to question His goodness in trials)
- b. "The faith" will be vital in living this way!

We are to demonstrate moderation (calmness) because we know the Lord is "at hand" - Php. 4:5

We must be cautious as to whose "promotions" we are seeking... man's or God's

This will involve ongoing (daily and sometimes moment by moment) assessments of life in comparison to God's mighty hand

- c. This “faith” will continue to increase our concept of God - His perfection and power make it more habitual to roll our worries on Him - humility is realizing the greatness of God and the smallness of ourselves - Pr. 15:33
- d. Always consider the hand of God (foremost) in the humbling process and not the “ tools ” He chooses to use in the process!
- e. Humility is the constant awareness of dependence on God

XII. Alertness with Awareness of the Enemy - 5:8-9

A. Be sober! - don't be given to life's “intoxications”

1. The intoxications of “cares” (worries and anxieties) - distracted with the “affairs” of this life - our time and focus is taken with the temporal
2. The intoxications of pride - a life-focus seeking all that leads to self-esteem
3. The intoxications of self-gratification - pursuit of that which comforts us and the avoidance of that which challenges (grows) us
4. Avoid what “clouds” the spiritual senses - be careful what you “consume” in your thinking - there are many philosophies and advisors that will deaden the conscience and reorient life priorities - we must surround ourselves with that which prompts to living by faith and not be feeling - I Thes. 5:8

I Pet. 1:13 - sobriety is maintained with proper hope - focus upon the “end” not the present

B. Be watchful! - stay alert and awake

1. “God provides, therefore do not be anxious. The devil seeks, therefore watch” JFB
2. Beware the elements of this life that lull into a false sense of security
 - a. A letting down of our “guard” - seeing no apparent danger
 - b. We are to be “on the alert” throughout life - we are in a war zone until we are in eternity with our Lord

C. Because we have a “hungry” enemy who thirsts for our death

1. We have a lifelong adversary

- As in Gen. 3* -
- a. Satan is an “opponent” - he is always against us but will want to seem to be for us at times (usually by siding with us against God)
 - b. This is a term used of someone against another in court - as in Rev. 12, he is called the “accuser of the brethren”
 - c. He will also seek to side with us against ourselves

2. He is “the devil” - the accuser and slanderer

- a. He is the father of lies and uses them as his key weaponry - John 8:44
- b. He is a deceiver crossing into the “realms of truth” - as he is depicted as an “angel of light” with the appearance of truth and rightness - II Cor. 11:14-15
- c. His power is in his lies - with believers, his power can only be found in the believing of his lies - this is why he opposes all venues of the Truth

3. He is as a “roaring lion”

- a. A lion that roars to strike fear in all around - there are some that believe this is in reference to older lions who roar to scare the prey into the direction of the younger lions waiting to devour it
- b. Clearly it is in reference to however he causes fear (especially with the persecution and the accounts of it to the early church)
 - Many early Christians were devoured by lions in public arenas in Rome
- c. He will seek to use fear and intimidation to control or direct us - this he is actively doing - this is what he does therefore we always watch for it
- d. He has no power over us but what we give him - he is to be resisted!

4. He “walks about” - he roams (he is not omnipresent)
 - a. As in Job 1:7, 2:2 - He roams throughout the earth
 - b. He seeks to devour (gulp/drink down) - there may be a picture of his seeking to drink their blood (their death or suffering)
 - c. He seeks to consume them - their most valuable resource; faith - it is our “life-blood” the source of our strength and purpose
 - d. He does this with fear, intimidation and overall disorientation - as with Peter in Luke 22:31-32 - Satan desired to “sift him as wheat” - “that he JFB — would find chaff enough in his religion, if indeed there was any wheat at all.”
5. He seeks those whom he may devour - consume
 - a. To “shipwreck” our lives - I Tim. 1:19 (full of confusion and uncertainty)
 - b. To use us as an example (bad) and lure (bait) to others - Pr. 6:5 - as though our fear or bad examples will discredit God and the faith
 - c. It is our failure and yielding to fear and doubt that he craves/hungers for
 - d. He will promote self-reliance and self-sufficiency luring us to place our faith in that which is fleeting, popular or that fits neatly into our natural thinking - all of these seek to skirt the reliance of faith

Satan will use the devouring of one to stir fear in those that see and hear of it using it to weaken their faith in the faith

D. He is to be resisted - do not flee from him - vs. 9

1. We can be devoured, in this case, just by running from him - doubt drives us, always, in the wrong directions of futility and failure
2. He is resisted, not with our faith, but with the faith (even when personal faith is weak)
 - a. “Victory is not assured by the personal tenacity with which we cling to our personal beliefs. Victory lies in adhering to the work of Christ on the cross, where he defeated the devil” Hiebert (see John 12:31-33)
 - b. Again, it is not the amount of our faith so much as it is the object of our faith!
3. This resistance is (as with an army holding its ground) is solid, unyielding with its confidence in “the Faith” - the absolutes of Scripture
 - a. Since the devil’s power lies in his lies, our ability to counter them with assured truth of God’s word will cause him to flee - James 4:7 - this resisting, though, follows submitting to God
 - b. Satan’s frustration with Job was from Job’s confidence in God’s sovereignty
 - c. The true fear of being wrong should not lie in our pride but in our confidence in life overall, knowing what we live for and where things are headed (end)
4. This is all strengthened when we look at the examples that preceded us
 - a. The Scripture as well as history are full of examples of those who faced suffering and death rather than forsaking the faith
 - b. This is a good point to remember when we face hardships - we can be sued by God to build the faith of those that see, or by the Devil to hinder the faith of those looking on - how do we desire to be used and by whom?
5. Realize, also, that in our suffering and facing fears, we are not the exception
 - a. It is preferable to us to face a challenge (fear) with others like-minded
 - b. This goes back to the “strange thing” idea of I Pet. 4:12 - we really are to think it strange when not being challenged or contradicted
 - c. Learn of, remember and be encouraged by the examples of those who faced fear and suffering and did not lose faith
 - d. Be inspired and encouraged by such examples and while striving to be such an example ourselves

XIII. Concluding Comments - 5:10-14

A. The work of “the God of all grace”

1. He is the source of all grace (true grace)

This type of saving, enabling grace should not be sought from any other source

- a. He is the giver of divine favor of which is wholly undeserved
- b. He is the giver of divine ability (empowerment) - to do/act as we ought
- c. He is the giver of all types of graces - anything that is truly good and that is given to us who are undeserving, is totally from God - James 1:17

2. He has called us to His eternal glory (in Christ) - our destiny is set

Doubt ultimately stems from a focus and reliance on self or others

- a. He has established our futures, which cannot be altered
- b. This calling is “in Christ” - by His merit, righteousness and work alone!
- c. Our future is assured because it is established in the complete work of Christ - as it is complete so is our salvation from judgement to glory!
- d. The glory is eternal, not to be compared to the fading glories of this earth

So why would we flirt with the idea of trading the eternal for the temporal?

— e. “It involves conceptions of the imperishable, the untainted, the altogether satisfying, the Divine” F.B. Meyer

- f. Our confidence is sure because our calling is sure and our calling is sure because the work our Christ is sure! - The calling and the Glory are His

3. After a little suffering... (in time and in degree)

- a. Even life-long suffering is temporal and short in comparison to eternity
- b. The suffering is also seen as limited in comparison to the promised grace
- c. Suffering must always pale in comparison to the grace God provides (our assured anticipation (hope) of it) - Rom. 5:5

4. He, Himself will “perfect” us (complete, finish His work in us) - Php. 1:6

- a. He, Himself will “complete us thoroughly” - He is thorough and wastes nothing - He will, with the use of this suffering, bring us to where we need to be and use us as we are to be used
- b. “...though you are called on to watch and resist the foe, God Himself must really do all in and through you. The same God who begins must Himself complete the work.” JFB

5. He, Himself will “confirm” (focus/direct) us

Those who avoid and run from conflict are usually unsettled

- a. To turn (set) resolutely in a particular direction
- b. Having gone through opposition, our convictions are established

6. He, Himself will strengthen us

- a. He gives us the inner strength to withstand opposition along with the drive to be on the offensive with His Truth and Grace
- b. This is seen in the stamina to press on even with “dark paths” ahead when we would normally be fatigued with the challenges of life

7. He, Himself will establish (lay the foundation for) us

- a. He will sure-up our footing (firm foundation) - the opposite being set in “slippery places” - Psalm 73:18
- b. He will prove Himself to us - this is why trials are needed - His grace and power are most evident

B. So, by this suffering He completes us (the “pressure” of His working), maturing us in our life-direction (thinking and perspectives (priorities) being corrected), building endurance and stamina to face greater challenges, laying for us an unshakable footing

1. As in building a structure - workmanship - Eph. 2:8-10

2. As in developing a soldier - II Tim. 2:4; Eph. 6:10-18

- C. So, in light of all that has been said, to Him belongs all “dominion” and glory - 5:11
1. All might is in His hands and should be recognized as such - Jer. 10:6-7
 - a. We must not be awed or intimidated at the lesser “mights” of this world
 - b. We are not to look to the earthly authorities as “chief”
 2. These earthly powers will seek to express their will over God’s in their self honor and in their persecutions and threats to the Godly - Psalm 9:20
 - a. These that promote their dominion do not have to be necessarily recognized as powerful - some will have small influence but inflated egos
 - b. These must be outranked in our perspectives by God and His might
 - c. Seeing that all power belongs to God, we must not be guilty of fearing or respecting any earthly power or influence above His
 3. All that takes place is under His jurisdiction and accountable to Him and cannot thwart or alter God’s plan - this thought must be our constant companion in dealing with the fears and intimidations we will face in life - Prov. 29:25
 4. This dominion is forever - now and forever - it is what we live for and towards!
 - a. His dominion is not future it is now and forever - it supersedes time in that He made time - so we do not live for time (this time/age)
 - b. He was before the world began - see II Tim. 1:8-10 and Titus 1:1-2
 - c. Since God has all dominion over power and time He is never hurried or worried
 5. “Amen” - for sure this is truth! Let it be so!

Much of what we do and don’t do is dictated by what we fear and what we respect the most

- D. We should mimic the same purpose of Peter - 5:12
1. He sent the epistle by the faithful messenger - “Silvanus” or Silas
 - a. Silas was the fellow minister of Paul - Acts 16:25
 - b. He was apparently assisting Peter since Paul’s imprisonment at Jerusalem
 2. He wrote to exhorting (encouraging) and testifying (affirming)
 - a. Encouraging each other that this is the true grace of God - the Gospel, the work of God overall and the work of God on our behalf
 - b. Challenging each other to rely on this grace and see it as our “might”
 - c. Affirming to each other the need for reliance upon it - we “push” grace over all other “powers” and authorities that others may look to for grace
 3. Encouraging and affirming the need to “stand” in it
 - a. Rely totally upon it and identify with it (the goal)
 - b. “In which (grace) take your stand” (ingressive aorist active imperative of histēmi).” - RWP
 - c. It is vital to determine and scrutinize where we look and direct others to place their confidence and hope - where to place their faith
 - d. Our faith is to be founded (standing upon) the grace of God - this will be vital to remember as we and others face seemingly insurmountable obstacles that look as though they will overwhelm and topple us
 - e. This is what we are to be doing with each other - the opposite would involve directing others to rely upon (primarily) and stand upon earthly institutions, people, money, talent, determination, medical fields, philosophies and so on - see also I Cor. 16:13

E. Greetings - 5:13-14

1. The church “elect together with you” - “she” - reference to the church
 - We are a mixture of combined groups of fortunate people!
2. Greet each other with a “heartly handshake” (as would be in our society)