

A Practical Study of 1 PETER:

Practice for Suffering Saints

“How Suffering Fits in the Father’s Plan”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Pattern Number Nine – What You Plant is What You Pick – 1 Peter 4:1-11

Key Verse 4:2

Don Gilmore wrote a little book called *The Freedom to Fail*. In the book he tells a story that kind of grabs you when you get to the end of it because it doesn’t turn out the way you think it should.

He tells the story of a social worker who one day discovered a little boy sitting on the steps of a tenement building in a depressed area of the city. He was twisted in body and pitiful to look upon. The social workers’ sympathies were aroused. She went about trying to determine how he had gotten into

this condition. Finally she discovered that he had been run over by a truck a few years previously and had received no medical attention at that time or since then. She was determined to do something to help the child. First she secured the parents' permission to take the boy to a diagnostician. After an examination the doctor suggested a series of operations which were subsequently undertaken over a period of two years. Each operation was a complete success.

One wonderful day, two and a half years later, the boy came to her office walking under his own power. This is a moment of great triumph and tremendous joy. The social worker was telling this story to a crowd of businessmen. After she had completed the biographical sketch she said to the assembled group, where do you think that boy is today? Some of the men ventured a few guesses. Is he an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer, a minister, a congressman? No, she answered, he's in the penitentiary at this moment, sentenced to death in the electric chair for first degree murder.

Choking back a sob she explained, "You see, I was so busy teaching him how to walk, I forgot to tell him where to walk." (source unknown)

Too many times we're like that in our lives. We're so consumed with telling everybody else how to walk, when it's critical that they understand where to walk.

Peter is not going to make that mistake. Much of this letter, it's the practical as we have already learned.

Now that we pick up into chapter 4, he's got more to say about WHERE to walk as well as HOW to walk.

Pick up with me at verse 1 and you will begin to grasp it.

v. 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same insight, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

That word “therefore” takes you back to chapter 3 and especially we can even go back to verse 18 which says:

“Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order that he might bring us to God.”

Now since “Christ suffered in the flesh”—is what Peter is saying—“therefore...arm yourselves with the same insight.”

In other words, since He suffered, you and I as believers can expect that we are going to suffer too.

Now that's chapter 2, verse 21—even earlier in our studies when we read this:

“for to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you a model to imitate, in order that you might follow in His footprints.”

Now what is Peter saying in this first verse? He's saying “Get

yourself ready! Because a part of Christian living is an experience in suffering.” And then he gives a REASON:

“because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

Now Paul, when he wrote to the Thessalonian Christians said:

“you are destined for this”—in chapter 3 of 1 Thessalonians—
“I told you ahead of time that you could plan on suffering.”

The big problem in much of preaching and teaching today is this part of it is left out.

So invariably when the Christian goes into the crucible, the immediate un-taught response is “now what have I done to deserve this?” And that’s not the issue at all.

It’s simply that a loving God has allowed something to pass His desk that’s going to be for your benefit and ultimately for your blessing if you’ll just trust Him and respond to it properly—and you’re going to be a better person from it. So it’s not “What have I done?” but “Lord, what am I supposed to learn from what has happened in this situation?”

Now there are THREE THINGS that you can say about suffering.

First of all, our willingness to suffer for the cause of Christ is a proof of the fact that we belong to Him. In other words, if I’m

willing to suffer for Him, it demonstrates that I belong to Him.

Secondly, God uses suffering in our lives to chasten and correct us. Now, that's Hebrews 12 starting at verse 5 and going on down to the end of the chapter. God does that. He knows that if He warms your britches, He's not going to warp your personality. And He is a disciplinarian.

Thirdly, God uses suffering in our lives to strengthen us, and to bring about growth and development.

So if you experience suffering, probe these three areas.

It's a proof that I belong to Him. Maybe I'm being corrected and chastened and that's not bad because He is working in us and sees some potential.

Or third, He sees some areas of our lives that need to be developed where there can be growth and where there can be a strengthening of a trait in our characters that will be better as a result of it. And so He then allows it.

Now what does he mean by that phrase? And I know that troubles you.

"Because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

Well, you can take that one of two ways.

In Romans 6, Paul addresses the whole problem of sin in the life of the believer and our attitude toward sin, and the way you treat it.

Listen to what he says:

Romans 6:1-14

What shall we say then, are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [It's alright, just keep on sinning and excusing the activity that goes on in our lives and blaming everybody else.] By no means, [that's *un-mé*—that's absolutely, positively, by no means do we act like that with regard to sin] how can we who died to sins still live in it. Do you know that all who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too, might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a resurrection like His, we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might no longer be a slave to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin, but if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you,

since you are not under law but under grace.

So we can take it that way. We can say that we have “ceased from sin” as a deliberate act.

I see a terrible inconsistency sometimes in people who claim to be Christians. They can claim the name of Christ but they can still go on sinning and blame everybody else. And to me, that is the most repulsive thing in the world. And it's the most selfish thing to say that you can name the name of Christ, who was nailed to Calvary for your sin, and then continue to excuse sin in your life.

There's a glaring, glaring inconsistency there. There ought to be a whole new attitude toward sin.

When sin happens in the life of the believer, it ought to be an accident not a deliberate act. And that, I think, is part of what he means here when he says “ceased from sin.”

That doesn't mean you're perfect when you become a Christian and you no longer sin. We know better than that. The old nature is still there.

Now, another possibility here could be that he's speaking of martyrdom and that they would literally cease from sin because they're living in very, very dire straits here.

Their lives are very, very tentative. As we understand, the writer was eventually crucified upside down. So that could be there.

Could it be that once I have sinned and I recognize the consequences of it. I don't want to do that anymore.

I was thinking of my little grandson Ian. One of the first words he learned was "hot." Because momma was baking cookies he really fried the back of his hand and he wore a bandage for quite a while, while that was getting better.

And anytime he was around a stove after that, I knew what he was going to say. "Hot! Hot!"

And you know something? I have never seen him touch another hot stove. Because he's aware of the consequences of touching something that's hot.

What about David and Bathsheba? I mean, it was a romantic lark. It was a fabulous affair—the king and one of the military wives hooking up together—planning the program involving adultery and murder. Did they ever do that again? No, but you see there are horrendous consequences in the rest of their lives. Although they were forgiven, you didn't see David going messing around with somebody else. He had ceased from sin in that regard. He had learned his lesson.

Do you think Peter can relate to us in that? What did he do? He denied the Lord. Do you see him doing that again? No! The

horrendous price he paid through those hours while Christ was hanging on the cross and dying, the pain and the hurt of that thing. You don't see Peter denying the Lord anymore. Instead you see him seal his commitment with blood.

I think sometimes in our lives God allows these things to demonstrate really how lousy we are. And demonstrate to us the fact the horrible consequences we learn from that and we go on.

Verse 2.

v. 2 so as to no longer live the remaining time in the flesh by the desires of men, but by the will of God.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's your KEY VERSE. You've got a choice there. And the choice is you're going to "pick what you plant."

What he's saying here: "[I am suggesting that you] no longer live the remaining time in the flesh by the desires of men, [CONTRAST] but by the will of God."

What does he mean "living by the desires of the flesh"? That's doing whatever I want to do without ever consulting His purpose and His will and His plan for my life.

How concerned are you about the will of God and are you at perfect peace that you're in the center of it?

You see that kind of tells us. Or are you just kind of floating along in the flesh? Going where the wind blows? You've got materialistic goals. You're desirous. You're in the possession syndrome. You're desiring of getting bigger and better and more things and more things. The well never seems to run dry. You get one thing and you wear that out by the fact that you got it and then you've got to have something else. And on and on and on it goes. That's living in the flesh not in the power of the Spirit.

The descriptions of the flesh we looked at the other day are in Galatians 5. We start at about verse 17 and go down to verse 21. Those are the desires of the flesh.

Dr. Ryrie has written a book called *Balancing the Christian Life*. In the book he talks about these choices that we have to make this evening when we decide what we're going to sow is what we're going to reap. He says this:

The flesh then is that old capacity which all men have to live lives which exclude God. In the Christian, the flesh is that same capacity to leave God out of his life in actions. The unsaved man has only one capacity but the Christian has two which means that the unsaved person has only one course of action, to serve sin and self or to leave God out of his life, while the believer has an option. He may serve God as long as he is in a human body, he may also choose to leave God out and live according to the old nature.

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And so the choice is there. Where am I going to live? What do I want to face when I meet Jesus Christ? Do I want to face Him as having lived in the flesh with selfish desires? Or do I want to at least demonstrate to the Father that I really cared about His will for my life and I sought it in order to fulfill it.

You see Peter is recognizing this truth and he wants to be sure that these suffering saints are living under the control of the Holy Spirit in “the will of God.” And that’s where blessing comes in the life. Are you there?

You feel in your heart, as I plead with you, that you are living in the “will of God,” in the power of the Holy Spirit to the best of your ability. And you’re a happy person.

But you know you can make some choices in your life that run contrary to that and they can slip in so quickly. And they create all the havoc.

Hal Lindsey wrote the *Late Great Planet Earth*. I have a hard time quoting things from Hal because he made a choice a few years ago. When he was disciplined and challenged, he says: “I know God’s going to judge me but I’m going to do it.” And he went ahead and did it.

And so he is suffering the consequences of reaping what he has sown.

But in that book, *Late Great Planet Earth*, it's interesting what he has to say. It almost is a foreshadowing—you almost feel a little bit nervous because of what he says:

...inside of a man [he says] there is a selfish self-centered nature. This is the source of what God calls sin. Sin is basically self-centered seeking and striving, going our own way with our backs turned on God. It is because of the selfish nature with which we were born that we cannot have consistent peace within ourselves, our family, or our neighbor, or on a broader [base] with...nations. As one man has said, what's wrong with the world, and [he] answered truthfully, "I'm wrong with the world."
(page unknown)

And here we have a picture of choices that are being made. You're making a choice every single day about HOW you're going to live. And for WHAT you're going to live and for WHOM you're going to live. And whether we're going to be under the control of the Holy Spirit or whether we're going to be sowing to the flesh.

That verse in Hosea, I can't even remember. I think it's about chapter 8, verse 7:

Hosea 8:7

They have sown to the wind and they have reaped the whirlwind.

There's the picture.

Galatians 6:7

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

You see, God is in control of the nature if we allow Him to be!
And what you plant is what you pick.

As a believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ, it will be made very obvious the decision you made today.

If you choose to continue to walk in the desires of the flesh, live for materialistic goals, let this be the dominating factor in your life and you're just sloppy and lazy in your spiritual discipline—then you can fully expect, that in view of that, there's going to be some wood, hay and stubble at the Judgment Seat of Christ and it's all going to go up in smoke.

But if you are planting in the Spirit, there are going to be gold, silver and precious stone that are there to remain as a reminder of your faithfulness in your walk with God. And that's the basis for reward.

Verse 3.

v. 3 For adequate has been the time that is now past to have accomplished what the Gentiles (pagans, unsaved) desire to do, living in sexual excesses, in desires, in drunkenness, in carousings, in drinking parties and in unlawful idolatries.

He says, “Listen! Shape up! Y’all have had plenty of time to live in the flesh.” Any time lived in the flesh is plenty of time. And it’s totally adequate if you want to interpret it further.

He says, these are the SIX THINGS that they do. And they’re outlined here in the verses. They are:

“living in sexual excesses,”

“in desires,”

“in drunkenness,”

“in carousings,” or partying

“in drinking parties”

“and in unlawful idolatries.”

There are SIX WORKS of the FLESH—manifestations of that which is not right.

F. B. Meyer says:

Any time spent in the lusts of the flesh is too long. The time past may well suffice. Oh the bitter regrets which the memory of past sins breeds in the saved soul. What would it not give to be able to obliterate the record and to look back on an unsullied page, but this may not be. Our only comfort is that he who says the time for watching is over also says that there is yet opportunity to retrieve the past and promises to restore the years which the cankerworm and the caterpillar have eaten.

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So what's he recommending? He's recommending here that we live the remaining time in the flesh by the WILL OF GOD rather than by the desires of men. That's what he wants for us.

Are you living according to the WILL OF GOD or by the DESIRES OF MEN?

Look at verse 4.

v. 4 In which they are surprised (thinking it strange) that you are not running with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you;

“In which they are surprised (thinking it strange) that you are not running with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you;”

Has anybody called you weird lately?

What is it with you? I mean, you're so different! You don't do any of the cool stuff we do! You don't go along with us anymore. You're weird.

Now that's the greatest compliment to a Christian to be called WEIRD.

Now we don't like it but, from somebody who is criticizing from the outside because we're "not running with them." We're not going along with their "same flood of dissipation," he says. They "[speak] evil" against us. Why? They can't believe the change.

Usually what do they say?

"Well it's going to last just a little while and then it's going to pass away!"

"You're just on an emotional kick! It won't be long. You'll come back down to earth."

I think probably one of the guys that got more flack than anybody else when he became a Christian was Chuck Colson. Now that he's got an international prison ministry and he's touching thousands and thousands and thousands of lives, people are beginning to realize that it is going to stick.

And it's a fabulous demonstration of a man choosing the will of God over continuing to live the way he was. And what God has done.

We have just an exciting possibility in our ministry right now to hook up with the Colson ministry.

Our next book to be released in just a couple of months is the life of Joseph called *Fruitful in Affliction*.

I had a wonderful experience with my Joseph tapes a number of years ago. There was a convict who was listening to my tapes in prison from Oklahoma who was incorrigible. And he had gotten through ten of them and it was time for him to be released and he asked the warden if he could stay to find out how the story came out.

As you know, Joseph served a prison sentence. And Colson's ministry has asked our publishing house if they can use our new manuscript on Joseph. Of course, we will get no royalties from it. And the publishing house will get no benefit from it. It's simply a part of a ministry in putting a book somewhere with the word of God being taught verse by verse to help in a ministry like this.

It's exciting to see the anticipation and the possibilities of touching lives in a different way with the printed page.

Well they think you're crazy. They think something is really happened to you because of your personal convictions. What's

happened? Your pride and your pleasure and your passion have gone. Now there's purity and piety and power in its place. And they can't relate to that! They don't fully understand it.

Verse 5.

v. 5 who shall give account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Who does the “who” refer to? See, that's the people that are not believers. They're the ones that are criticizing and he's saying “They're going to have to give account to God too!” When? At the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20—they're going to have to stand, be condemned unanimously on the basis of their works.

And James says:

James 5:9

Stop complaining brethren about one another in order that you may not be judged, because the judge is now standing before the doors.

Romans 14:12

Every one of us will give account of himself to God.

Hebrews 10:31

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Judgement will take place.

Francis Schaeffer in his book *Death in the City* puts it this way:

In Matthew 12:36 Jesus says, but I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. There is a theory that all the sounds are still present in the universe, that the wave energy has only gotten so low that no one can hear them. Most people no longer hold this concept and of course it may not be true, but for some reason we suddenly might hear our own words speaking out as the basis upon which God will judge us. The fact that in hypnosis we may recall a great deal more than we ordinarily can, suggests that perhaps deep inside ourselves we never forget anything.

God may suddenly use this so that within ourselves we hear ourselves speak the very words we spoke in our lifetime. Then God will ask, are you condemned or are you not condemned? And every man in all the world will say "It is just, it is just, I am condemned."

...Therefore whatsoever you have spoken in the darkness shall be heard in the light and that which you have spoken in the ear in a closet, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." This is not just a figure of speech. I believe that men will actually

hear their own moral judgments, their own harsh words being poured out against other men and they will have to say, “you are just and I am condemned.”

(page unknown)

What is he saying there in that verse? He says, Christian don’t worry about the flack you’re going to get from the unbeliever because he’s going to get his. You just keep going and don’t be affected by that criticism. It’s going to come!

You know, one thing I’ve discovered in the years that I’ve been a Christian, that the people that are criticizing you usually are the people who respect you the most. And they’re really jealous of what you’ve got. And if they give you time to criticize you, obviously you’re doing something that’s getting their attention. You know, if they weren’t responding at all, you’d need to be worried about another problem. The fact that they’re involved in it also makes you realize, you must be getting through somewhere.

Verse 6.

v. 6 For to this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Now some have looked at this verse and they’ve thought, “Boy! Peter slipped a cog and that is really weird. I mean really weird that he’s saying you can preach to the dead.”

All that's telling you is that there were a lot of Christians who were living and they got preached to and then they died a martyr's death. And they're dead now. And during the time they were living here in the flesh, they came to know Jesus Christ and chose to live in the Spirit. And so it's believers who've lost their physical lives, but they've gone to be with the Lord.

v. 7 But the end of all things has come near; therefore, be of sound mind (keep your head) and exercise self-restraint to help you pray.

“But the end of all things has come near; therefore, be of sound mind (keep your head) and exercise self-restraint to help you pray.”

Can you believe that Peter would say “the end of all things [is] near”? You think that was nearly 2,000 years ago? You know what, we're 2,000 years closer to the end. And I have a real strange hunch inside—maybe it's my prophetic bud coming out—but I think we're going to live to see it.

I don't know of any time that the things of prophecy are so dynamic and so real and that the things I have thought of prophetically for years and years are now being the issues.

We have thought for years that the oil in the Persian Gulf was going to ultimately be the crisis. And we are so close to that, dealing with the terrorist country like Iran. What has

happened here a couple of weeks ago in the downing of one of their commercial airlines. We are going to be victim of a horrendous, horrendous war that could happen overnight. And it's not a time to messing around with your spiritual destiny.

Knowing what I know about Bible clubs, I would not sit in this study today unprepared to go be with the Lord. I feel that every time I teach.

Peter says he is so convinced of it that the end of all things is come near. And before it's over, he's going to get to the new heavens and the new earth. That's how convinced he is of what God is going to do.

In view of that, what am I supposed to do?

I'm to "be of [a] sound mind [or] (keep your head) and exercise self-restraint to help you pray."

Ok, he's got TWO THINGS he wants to tell you. "Therefore," he says—actually there are going to be FIVE THINGS in these verses that remain so we'll just take a look at them.

The first one:

1. "therefore, be of sound mind (keep your head)"

Did he talk about that already? Remember back in chapter 1, verse 13 he said "gird up the loins of your mind." It deals with what you think about.

He says, be right in your head. Don't doubt God! Don't deviate from truth! Don't desert your commitment! Stay in there. Keep a "sound mind."

Secondly:

2. "exercise self-restraint to help you pray."

How much have you prayed since you've been up here? How many minutes have you spent since camp started praying?

Do you think that would embarrass you if we put your scores up here on the board?

"Well Anderson, you have had us so busy we haven't had time to pray."

Get off it! The text says using "self-restraint." You have got to desire to pray. And when prayer is a priority, you do it and then you have time for other things.

I remember, wasn't it Martin Luther who said: "I have so many things to do today, I've got to get up 3 hours early to get my praying in."

There's a man with priority. That is a man with self-restraint.

You know, we kind of shoot up these little darts at God—kind of a little "Lord, bless me in my house" and now it's:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
the speaker's boring and the subject's deep.
If I should die before I wake,
please poke me for heaven's sake.

I mean, that's kind of the little deal we come under.

Now I lay me down to rest,
I hope I pass tomorrow's test.
If I should die before I wake,
That's one less test I have to take.

I mean, that's the typical student shot. And we can go on and on.

When I get the urge to pray
I lay down until it goes away.

I mean, that's the kind of praying that oftentimes we carry on.

He says:

“exercise self-restraint to help you pray.”

He realizes how important it is to have a good head but he also realizes how important it is to keep communication with your Father. And in that, to “exercise self-restraint” or discipline “to help you pray.”

Verse 8.

v. 8 Above all things, keeping love constant for one another, because love is covering a multitude of sins.

Alright, what's the THIRD THING?

1. your mind,
2. your prayer life,
3. your "love."

Oh he's said a lot about that! He's talked about LOVE in:

1. chapter 3:8,
2. chapter 1:22,
3. chapter 2:17.

We've had it over and over again, he conveys that thought.

William Barclay, in speaking on this matter of "love" says:

Our love must be the love that never fails. The word here in the text means stretching out as a runner stretches out. A horse at full gallop. And it denotes the taut muscle of strenuous and sustained effort as of an athlete. Here is a fundamental Christian truth. Christian love is not an easy

sentimental reaction. It demands everything a man has got of mental and spiritual nerve and muscle, and sinew. ... IT means loving the unlovely and the unlovable. It means in spite of insult and injury. It means loving when love is not returned but is spurned. Christian love is a love which never fails and the love in which every atom of man's strength is directed.

(source unknown)

Do you love like that?

He says you've got to have a good head and you've got to pray and then you love. And love covers and is constantly desiring the best for others.

I was translating 1 Corinthians 13 the other day for my fall studies—that great chapter on love. And I came down to those 15 words that characterize love in verses 4-8 and 13, and I started slipping my name in there—just giving myself a little test. And I really came out on the short end of the stick.

And you sit down with that kind of stuff and you talk a big ballgame about love, but then you let the text just saturate your being and it demonstrates how selfish and ego-centered we oftentimes are. And how shallow and syrupy we are when it comes to this whole business of really being filled with a God-like kind of love in Jesus Christ.

Now those are three things, let's look at the other two. Verse 9.

v. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

There's your fourth one. Do you know what that word "hospitable" is? That is the Greek word *philoxenia*.

You know I use the word *phileo*. We use the word *philadelphia*—brotherly love; the love of the brother.

Phileo is "the love of the stranger."

Do you like to have people at your house? Do you volunteer to take care of folks?

It's interesting that even the requirements of the elders in both the Titus and the Timothy passages, is they must be given to hospitality—the love of strangers.

Now, do you have that ability to come to a stranger and say "I want you to stay at my house." I love the stranger.

He says, do that "without complaining."

"No man, I've got to take care of these folks. They're coming through town....ya-ya-ya-ya-ya." And you'll do it but you really don't want to do it.

You see, you've got to put Philippians 2:14 and 15 there:

Philippians 2:14, 15

Do all that you have to do without grumbling or arguing so that you may be God's children, blameless, sincere and wholesome; living in a warped and diseased world and shining like lights in a dark place, for you hold in your hands the very word of life.

Now the fifth and final one is in verse 10.

v. 10 As each has received a gift, be exercising it for one another, as good administrators of God's varied grace.

You know what that word is? That's the same word that we had earlier about multi-colored. We have "many colored trials." In the body of Christ we have many colored gifts. It's the many colored grace of God that manifests itself in spiritual gifts.

Now let me hit you just a little bit. What does it mean that you have a spiritual gift? At the moment of your new birth, you were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ and you were given a spiritual gift or gifts.

It's almost like hide-and-go-seek to discover what your gift or gifts are and to exercise them for the benefit of everybody else in the body of Christ.

And at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you're going to be held responsible for how you exercise that gift for the edification of your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

Why is Peter so concerned?

He recognizes it's possible for a lot of Christians to sit around, to "sit, soak and sour" and they never really discover their spiritual gift and they never minister in the body of Christ.

And so his command here is:

"each of you received it [PRESENT TENSE] be continually exercising for one another."

The rest of the people in the body of Christ, the "administrators of God's varied grace."

Would you notice that little phrase "for one another"? This is where I really take issue with the charismatic movement.

They believe that you can have spiritual gifts so that you're ONE UP on everybody else.

If you'll check, many times the spiritual gifts they're talking about are for their own selfish interests and they're not for the edification of the body of Christ.

Why do they speak in tongues? To edify themselves. They have some kind of a prayer language so they can get through

to God. It doesn't make any difference whether anybody else understands it. That is a total violation of the principal of spiritual gifts.

God never intended to give us a spiritual gift to make you better than some other brother and sister in Christ. And God never gave you a spiritual gift to edify yourself.

You look the word "edify" up in 1 Corinthians 12 and you'll find it over and over again, that God is sovereign. He gave the gift to edify the rest of the body.

You'll always discover a person who is using a New Testament gift properly, it's focusing OUTWARD and NEVER INWARD.

And this is a breach of it! It's a violation of it! And because it is, be careful when you're around that stuff because it is coming across now in new garb and new garment. And we're facing it all around us. And you're going to get swept away in it if you don't keep your head together and get your act together and understand what the Scriptures teach and hang in there, knowing you've got the reality of Jesus Christ living in you. And that's the most important thing in all the world.

He calls it "God's [MUCH] varied grace."

You know what happened to me this afternoon? I got so excited about this, I just almost had to say "Amen!" and nearly jumped off my chair in the room. I was glad Pearl wasn't there. She'd have thought I'd turned charismatic or

something. But I did get excited about it.

You know I looked at these five things and I went back and I wrote them all down and I realized this is a TRUE New Testament witness!

What did he say this morning? He said “set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason.”

What was his focus on? It was on what you ARE, not what you SAY!

You want to know what you’re supposed to be? What you are? FIVE THINGS, there they are. These are the FIVE THINGS that constitute a REAL NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS for Jesus Christ!

When you are these five things, people are going to want what you’ve got!

1. you have a “sound mind”—you speak with wisdom.
2. you’re prayerful—you exercise the discipline to pray for people who don’t know Christ and you’re intimately involved in their lives to bring them to Jesus.
3. you love them—and that love covers “a multitude of sins.”

4. you're "hospitable"—you invite them in. You have a love for the stranger. That's how you reach them. You bring them into your home. You eat a meal together. You don't preach at them. You share with them. You talk. You build bridges of relationship.

I was talking to several of the waitresses while you were late coming down the river. And it was really interesting. I was telling them how much my ministry is like Young Life and was born out of Young Life. That everything I do is built on relationship. I don't press for decisions and emotional manifestations of things. I'm content to teach the Word of God and then watch it change lives. And they got smiles on their faces when they realized that's the very thing they'd experienced in Young Life these last days is people loving them unconditionally where they were to bring them where they wanted them to be—to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

And then fifth:

5. the manifestation of your spiritual gift—whether it be teaching, help serving or whatever.

God will use those FIVE THINGS as the dynamic ingredients of a New Testament witness who doesn't have to do a lot of talking because he's living it!

And he's got a sound mind so he can speak it when the time comes. He's wise as a serpent. He's harmless as a dove.

Isn't that exciting? That's what it means to be a witness for Jesus Christ and to be a real evangelist.

Verse 11—our last one. It's hard to get excited this late at night isn't it? I mean, you guys are sitting there bug-eyes and bushy-tailed and "Wow." You've been on the river all day.

v. 11 If anyone is speaking, as utterances of God [let them be]; if anyone is serving, [let him serve] as out of the strength which God is supplying; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, in whom there is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

"If anyone is speaking, as utterances of God [let them be]; if anyone is serving, [let him serve] as out of the strength which God is supplying;" [WHY] "in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, in whom there is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen."

Peter got so excited he had to sing the DOXOLOGY here to end it.

But notice the TWO GIFTS he picks out. Those two gifts have to do with being a WITNESS. What are they?

1. "speaking" and
2. "serving."

You can reverse those if you're going to be an effective witness. You serve others to get a right to speak to them. And you speak the utterances of God to them.

So when I got these five things done and I got these two things done, I started singing the Doxology! Because that's scratching us where we itch. That tells us how we communicate the message.

We pray God, O God! When I get a chance to speak to them, help me not to botch it. Help me not to blow it up and miss the mark. Help me when they ask the question, to know what to say. And to say it with courage and not with fear! Help me to be able to represent You well. And Lord, teach me how to discover what their needs are and to serve them in those realms so I can make an impact on their lives!

I tell you, you take those five things and those two things and you put them together, God is going to fill your life with joy unspeakable and full of glory when you see it.

And look what happens, “out of the strength which God is supplying”—Oh boy, Paul talks a lot about that.

“I’m ready for anything through the strength of the one who indwells me” (Philippians 4:13).

That God may be glorified through Jesus Christ! That’s what he wants.

“in whom there is [the] glory and [the] power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Now, what are we talking about? What you PLANT is what you PICK.

Do we want to live in the FLESH or do we want to live in the SPIRIT?

Living in the Spirit and living with these five kind of qualities demonstrating by our service and in our speaking, we’re going to see fruit born in our lives.

I was reading of a little account in the leper colony—a story that really illustrated the body of Christ beautifully.

In this leper colony in India, there was a young man who had no arms. And there was another young man who had lost his legs. It came time for them to go out and to do field work. So the man who had no arms, carried on his back the man who had no legs. And so by the feet of one and the hands of another, the seed was sown.

That’s a picture of the BODY OF CHRIST.

Your gifts and abilities are used. My gifts and abilities are used. And God together gets the glory and the fruit that is born in people’s lives.

Now I really hope, if you’re not a Christian, before tomorrow

night you can give testimony to the fact that you came to know Jesus Christ as Lord. If that happens to just one of you before we leave, that's made this whole week worthwhile and the whole year of planning that's gone into it, to make it something memorable for you and your family.

I plead with you with an urgency, to get serious about your relationship to Jesus Christ. And if you're a believer and you're unwilling to expose your will to the will of God, you're living in the flesh. And you will continue to live in the flesh until you make that decision to decide that you want His will more than anything else in the world. You will continue to waste your life unless you come face-to-face with my desires and God's will and choose God's will deliberately—and make that a choice that you're going to follow through in it.

Now I've got 5 lessons. I'm going to give them to you before we wrap it up.

Lesson #1: Suffering 101 is part of the divine curriculum.

Suffering 101 is part of the divine curriculum for Christ-like development. And if you want to put it in parenthesis, it's a required course.

Suffering 101 is part of the divine curriculum for Christ-like development (required course).

Lesson #2: The choice before every believer is the desires of the flesh or the will of God.

The choice before every believer is the desires of the flesh or the will of God.

Lesson #3: Have you renounced the works of the flesh in your personal life?

Have you renounced the works of the flesh in your personal life?

If you have not, I would challenge you to do that.

Lesson #4: Are you ready to meet the Judge?

Are you ready to meet the Judge?

And if your answer is “No” and you want some more time, then also list: discover what we have to get ready.

And my last one.

Lesson #5: Does your speaking and serving testify of Christ?

Does your speaking and serving testify of Christ? Do you speak of Him and the way you serve and act, demonstrate that Jesus Christ truly lives in you?

Bow your heads with me, will you, for just a few minutes.

I want you to take a little time for inventory. Where has the week found you and where are you now? For some of you it's been a great year. You've been faithful to the commitments you've made here on the mountain. I was so thrilled to hear from one of you today that you've read through the One Year Bible, that you made a decision here at camp last year. That thrills me to no end.

But now it's time for us to think seriously about our own decisions. What do we need to do to really be serious with Him?

Now the question is, are you willing to do it?

If you are, tell Him...in your heart, that you're ready.

Father, we thank You for Peter's concern for us. Back of so many of these statements we see experiences in his own life where he really hurt. Father, thank You for teaching us a little about suffering this evening and teaching us a little bit about the desires of the flesh and the desires of the spirit, and then teaching us what it is to be an effective witness. Father please continue Your work in our lives. May we become sound of mind—real prayer warriors that intercede in the behalf of others and to see You answer. We become those who are filled with the love that is self-sacrificing in the interest of others. That we just normally reach out to strangers in hospitality. And Father, that with a holy, burning compassion, we delight to share the things we have learned about us. Teach us how to speak with the authority that comes from You. And how to

serve creatively, to open the door for the opportunity for Your Spirit to communicate the message. We just rejoice in the good day we've had. Please give us a good night of rest, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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PATTERN NUMBER NINE- WHAT YOU PLANT IS WHAT YOU PICK — 1 PETER 4:1-11

KEY VERSE 4:2

v. 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same insight, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

v. 2 so as to no longer live the remaining time in the flesh by the desires of men, but by the will of God.

v. 3 For adequate has been the time that is now past to have accomplished what the Gentiles (pagans, unsaved) desire to do, living in sexual excesses, in desires, in drunkenness, in carousings, in drinking parties and in unlawful idolatries.

v. 4 In which they are surprised (thinking it strange) that you are not running with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you;

v. 5 who shall give account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

v. 6 For to this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

v. 7 But the end of all things has come near; therefore, be of sound mind (keep your head) and exercise self-restraint to help you pray.

v. 8 Above all things, keeping love constant for one another, because love is covering a multitude of sins.

v. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

v.10 As each has received a gift, be exercising it for one another, as good administrators of God's varied grace.

v.11 If anyone is speaking, as utterances of God [let them be]; if anyone is serving, [let him serve] as out of the strength which God is supplying; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, in whom there is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Peter 4:1-11 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. How are we asked to live according to verse 2?

3. What is the two-fold response of the non-Christian to our purity of life in verse 4?

4. To whom do they finally give account, according to verse 5?

5. What are we asked to do in verse 7 in view of the fact that the end of all things has come near?

6. Why is love so important in verse 8?

7. What does it mean to be hospitable to one another in verse 9?

8. What are we asked to do in verse 10?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Suffering #101 is part of the divine curriculum for Christ-like development (required course).

LESSON #2: The choice before every believer is the desire of the flesh or the will of God.

LESSON #3: Have you renounced the works of the flesh in your personal life?

LESSON #4: Are you ready to meet the Judge?

LESSON #5: Does your speaking and serving testify of Christ?