

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1 Peter 4:1-6

Live Out the Gospel in the Spirit

Background



Who, when, what, where and why.

Who was Peter? When was Peter writing this letter? Where was Peter and where are the recipients located? Why was he writing this letter to these churches?

Digging In

1. Read 1 Peter 4:1-2

- a. What does the apostle Peter mean when he says to the churches, “arm yourselves with the same kind of thinking...” (v.1)? Read ch.2:21d-24.
 - i. Is the apostle Peter pointing back to ch.2 to inform the churches that they need to follow Jesus’ example of walking through persecution?
 - ii. In verses 1b and 2 is the apostle Peter saying, “when someone suffers for Christ, that equates to a sinless life”? Read this verse in different translations (ESV, NASB, NET, LEB, NIV).
 1. The work of correlating scripture*: read what the apostle Paul says about this subject in Romans 6. How did this help clarify what the apostle Peter was communicating to these churches?
 2. Here is some help in understanding this passage:
 - a. **“hath ceased**—literally, “has been made to cease,” *has obtained* by the very fact of His having suffered once for all, *a cessation from sin*, which had heretofore lain on Him (Ro 6:6–11, especially, 1 Pe 4:7). The Christian is by faith one with Christ: as then Christ by death is judicially freed from sin; so the Christian who has in the person of Christ died, has no more to do with it judicially, and ought to have no more to do with it actually. “The flesh” is the sphere in which sin has place.”¹
 - b. **2. That he**, etc.—“That he (the believer, who has once for all obtained cessation from sin by suffering, in the person of Christ, namely, in virtue of his union with the crucified Christ) should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” as his rule. “*Rest of his time in the flesh*” (the *Greek* has the preposition “in” here, not in 1 Pe 4:1 as to Christ) proves that the reference is here not to Christ, but to the believer, whose remaining time for glorifying God is short (1 Pe 4:3). “Live” in the truest sense, for heretofore he was *dead...*”¹
- b. Examine v.2 in light of v.1. Does v.2 show how the apostle Peter is encouraging the churches, while they live temporarily on the earth, to live like Christ and not as they did in the past? Discuss how the apostle Peter communicates this throughout the book (Hint: Read chapter 1 to help the discussion move forward).
- c. Summarize vv.1-2 in your own words.

* Correlate the truths you find in these sections with other verses in 1 Peter and throughout the OT and NT.

¹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](#), vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 510.

2. Read 1 Peter 4:3-4

- a. What is the main reason for the apostle Peter to mention this list of nouns?
 - i. What is a life lived in *opposition* to the list the apostle Peter gives in v.3? Read ch.2:11-12.
 - ii. Why is it important for these churches to not participate in the Roman traditions mentioned through out 1 Peter? What was the main point? Read ch.2:12.
 - b. How important was it for these churches to know the gospel while living in their specific context?
 - i. How many times does the apostle Peter mention the gospel in 1 Peter?
 - ii. Based on how much the apostle Peter mentions the gospel in this letter, how important do you think it was for him to make sure these churches were grounded in the gospel message?
 - iii. If these churches weren't encouraged in the gospel, would they have been able to stand against these attacks from those that reviled them for living opposite of their pagan traditions?
 - c. Summarize vv.3-4 in your own words
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3. Read 1 Peter 4:5-6

- a. V.5
 - i. Who are “they” that will have to give an account, and for what will they have to give an account? The question is to understand who the apostle Peter is talking about; this will help in understanding v.6.
 - ii. Who is the judge at the end of v.5? (Hint: 1:17; 2:12).
- b. V.6
 - i. The apostle Peter was present when Jesus spoke these words in Mark 8:34-9:1. After reading this passage, how does the passage help you make sense of what the apostle Peter is communicating here in v.6?
 - ii. What does the apostle Peter mean when he says, “so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.”²
 1. Who is he talking about? (a possible hint: 1 Th 4:13–14)
 2. Why is he mentioned this? (Hint: v.2. Is it possible that the apostle Peter is encouraging them with those that have died before them under Jesus' reign, giving them hope to live for the spiritual and not the flesh?)
 - a. Here is how the “Expositor’s Bible commentary” explains this verse:
 - i. “If we interpret v. 6 as pointing forward, i.e., referring to material that follows, we find a point of contact with the reference to judgment in 4:17–18. However, what immediately

² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Pe 4:6.

follows (vv. 7–16) would then appear to be a digression in the writer’s thought—material devoted to the saints’ corporate life (vv. 7–11) and recapitulating thoughts on suffering (vv. 12–16). Contextually, the most natural link unites 4:6 with material that preceded (vv. 1–5), namely, the reality of a changed lifestyle. “For this is the reason” can be understood in the sense of “For the purpose of a transformed life.” Moreover, Peter wishes to affirm that *all* the righteous—those alive and those deceased—will be vindicated. As Achtemeier, 291, puts it, death has overtaken no one. The rhetorical and theological emphasis is this: just as there is vindication at the *spiritual* level (3:22), there is also vindication at the *human* level (4:6).”³

- c. Summarize vv.5-6 in your own words.
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4. *Getting Personal*

- a. *What is the gospel? How has the gospel directed your life? What have been the benefits of the gospel in your life? Why is it important for you to be equipped with the gospel?*
- b. *What is the “will of God”? How important is it that we are doing the will of God? What role does the Holy Spirit play in the Christian living out the will of God?*

Ways to study your Bible:

- c. Observe what he is communicating to these churches, e.g. observe the words he uses, how he says things, and the imagery he is using in this letter. Read this section two times and summarize what the apostle Peter is talking about.
- d. Interpret what he is saying to his audience and answer the why question; why is he saying what he is saying?
- e. Correlate the truths you find in these sections with other verses in 1 Peter and throughout the OT and NT. How do these truths relate to the overall message of the Bible?
- f. Apply what he is communicating for us today. How can you apply these truths today?
- g. Thank Dr. Howard Hendricks for this one 😊

³ Daryl J. Charles, “1 Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews–Revelation (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 344.