

15. What is the third thing we are told to do as the end is at hand? (v10-11) How do our gifts come into this?

16. Remembering that it is talking about gifts, what does it mean to say that we should be “good stewards of God’s varied grace”? (The ESV gives a literal translation here.)

17 Are there gifts you have which you could use to serve others but you feel you are not using?

18. Finally from these verses, what overall aim should we have, as we live knowing that the end of all things is at hand?

Pray

Give thanks for the varied grace of God and the many and diverse gifts He has given us as a fellowship that we may serve one another. Pray that we and others might use our gifts to bring glory to God through Jesus.

Pray that as we learn together from the Bible in our study groups, we might be being equipped in our minds both to turn away from ungodliness and to live godly lives in fellowship.

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1 Peter

Week 8 : The Mind of Christ

1 Peter 4.1-11



Armed for the Struggle

Read 1 Peter 4.1-6

Some of these verses are tricky to understand.

1. The first half of verse 1 uses military language. How are we to arm ourselves and what does it mean? Compare this with Philippians 2.5.

2. The second half of verse 1 is difficult. Do you think it could mean that if we suffer we no longer sin? Alternatively, could it mean that when we suffer our ungodly passions (v2) recede into the background, does that fit with your experience?

Read 1 Peter 2.22-25

3. What does 2.22 say about Jesus and sin? When Jesus suffered on the cross, what happened about sin? (v24)

4. Verses **1-2 of 1 Pt 4** could therefore be saying that suffering for Christ unites us with Christ in His death, and His death takes away our sin. In response to this we should be driven by the will of God rather than our passions. How does this compare with Romans 6.8-12?

5. In what way is the struggle against sin like war as we try to leave behind sinful ways (v3)? How can arming ourselves in our thinking, and particularly reflecting on the suffering of Christ, help us when facing temptation? Do you have any particular ways you do that?

6. Are there things as a Christian you will not join in with that cause family, friends or work colleagues to be surprised (v4)? What boundaries would you draw on such issues?

(The book of Daniel shows us various examples of such things.)

7. Do you think refusing to join in helps or hinders our witness to Christ?

8. How should we respond if people “malign” if, for the sake of Christ, we don’t “join them” in such things? (See also 2.23.)

Verse 6 is another difficult verse. One possibility is that Peter’s first readers were bothered by the fact that believers had died, some under persecution. We know from 1 Thessalonians 4.13-14 that this was an issue elsewhere. Peter may therefore be saying that though they have died, and therefore been judged in the flesh (the wages of sin is death), their spirits are alive (with Christ), until the day of Jesus’ return when He will judge the living and the dead. Feel free to discuss this if you wish.

The End is Nigh

Read 1 Peter 4.7-11

In every generation some have interpreted the particular events of their day as meaning “the end” was about to happen. Here in 1 Peter the focus is not on speculation but on how we live knowing, as much as 2,000 years ago, that the end is at hand.

9. How does verse 7 show that living with the end at hand begins with the mind? How is similar to verse 1 and what does it mean in practice?

10. Why do you think Peter says that this is “for the sake of your prayers”? (We saw something a bit similar in 3.7.)

11. How should we conduct ourselves towards other believers as we live with the end at hand? (Look particularly at where it says “one another”)?

12. Hopefully you spotted three “one another”s. Why is love (agape) so important (“above all”) in Christian fellowship? What does the last part of the verse 8 mean? (See also 1 Jn 2.10, Col 3.14.)

13. What are the barriers to loving one another and are there ways to break them down?

14. Hospitality is important in the New Testament (eg. Rom 12.13 & Heb 13.2). What instances can you think of in the Gospels and Acts where Jesus and then the Apostles were shown hospitality. Why is it important and how should we do it today?