

March 2012

The Church God Always Wanted

# 1 Peter ch 5

“Sojourning in Suffering:  
For the Joy That Is Before Us”



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March 2012 Pulpit Series

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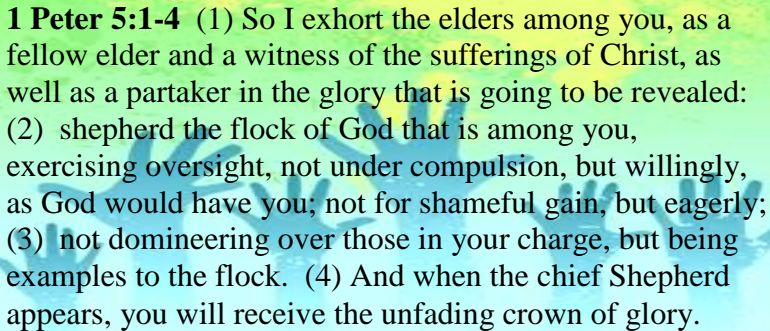
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# “Sheep & Shepherds: A Match Made In Heaven”

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March 4, 2012

1 Peter 51-4



**1 Peter 5:1-4** (1) So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: (2) shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; (3) not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

## INTRODUCTION

Whether you flip burgers in a fast food restaurant or whether you are a CEO of a large corporation, you share one thing in common – you will have a job description with responsibilities which you will be expected to fulfill.

In the marketplace, if you don't fulfill your expected responsibilities, there's a good chance you will be *let go*.

God gives the Church, leaders and He also gives us certain expectations that are placed on those leaders. If God has expectations of you being a leader in your church, it is not an option to God that you disregard those expectations.

This lesson should cause us to soberly consider what God expects of those in the church who are in the servant position of a leader.

## OVERSEERS IN GOD'S CHURCH

A Church and its leadership have a Sheep-Shepherd kind of relationship. It is not an option for a Shepherd to care for the sheep, it is simply expected. That is why they are called “shepherds”.

### Church Leadership – position and practice

Church leadership and government is to be a caring ministry of Shepherding, not Cattle driving. It is significant in v1, that Peter addresses the Elders “among you”. Not those over you, but *among* you. It reminds me of Genesis account, when God creates Adam and then Eve. Genesis 2:20 records God’s thoughts that there was no help mate for Adam. So He took a rib from the side of Adam and formed Eve.

The initial indication is that Eve was to be a helper to Adam. Adam was not to be lord over her, she was not to be a slave under him.

As Peter writes he indicates that the elders are raised up from among the people. They are sheep leading sheep or perhaps *lead* sheep. They are called by God and selected by the church to be shepherd leaders, but they are still sheep, from among the sheep.

In this section, Peter uses several of the church leadership terms we have become familiar with.

In v1) the word “elder” is the word we get the term Presbytery or Presbyterian.

In v2) the term “shepherd” is where we get our word for pastor. It is the term used to describe the act of a shepherd caring for his sheep.

A shepherd pastures his sheep. He does not refer to this with the *title* of Pastor.

In v2b) Peter describes the responsibility of the elder “exercising oversight” over the flock of God. The word for oversight is the word from which we get Episcopal. It means to be an overseer, or guardian.

It is noticeable what term Paul does *not* mention. He does not use the term Priest. There are no ruling priests in the church of God,

other than Jesus. There is no one to whom we confess our sins, but to God.

There is no one to whom we go to mediate our cause before God, other than Jesus.

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“..For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” -1Timothy 2:5

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However, in chapter 2 Peter does make reference to the “priesthood”. 1 Peter 2 he refers to the priesthood, not of any single apostolic figure, but of every true believer. Each person is a priest to our God, who can go straight to God on their own. We need no other human being for this! (see Heb. 4:16)

**1Peter 2:5 & 9** (5) you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

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(9) But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

## **Qualifications of Overseers**

Leadership in 1 Peter is to be heart felt and God called. We are serving the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. (1Peter 5:4) Leaders in the church are not to be coaxed into serving. v2c) “not compulsory”

There should be no arm twisting to fill a position of church leadership. Instead they should serve willingly or eagerly (v2) Their heart must be in it.

In addition to the qualifications given for elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, we have “*4 considerations for elders for our church*”

**1) Availability.** Will the elder be available to fulfill the expectations of Elder. Will he have time to devote to this ministry?

2) Responsibility. Will he be willing to step up to the responsibilities of elder of the church – one who is a caring shepherd, and involved in the lives of the sheep he oversees?

3) Heart. Does he have a desire to serve in the capacity of Elder? There should be some heart felt desire to carry out the function and fulfill the responsibilities (1 Tim.3:1).

4) Calling. Does the candidate feel God calling him to this place of leadership or once an Elder, will he consider this to be God's holy calling for him?

### **Shepherding, not cattle driving**

In v3) we understand there are to be no drill sergeants or cattle drivers. Church leaders are not someone to whom no questions may be addressed. They are to be approachable, caring shepherds of the sheep.

Elders are to be examples (v3) to the sheep. Examples of a caring shepherd, examples of a servant, examples of maturity in the faith, examples in the areas of ministry for others in the church to follow.

Shepherds (v2a) = Pastors

**Feeding** - A Shepherd, elder or pastor should be one who can feed the sheep (1 Tim.3:2). Shepherds must be able to feed the sheep and spiritual leaders in the church must be able to teach and apply God's word to others.

They are to encourage sound doctrine and able to address those who oppose sound doctrine.

**Protecting** – Scripture addresses false teachers (2Pet.2:1), ravenous wolves (Mat.7:15) and our enemy the “roaring lion” (1Pet.5:8).

As a Shepherd must be prepared to defend the sheep from dangerous predators, so the church leader must be willing to fight for the flock. This is the difference between a true shepherd of God and a hireling. (John 10)

**Serving** – Elders are to be examples to the flock of a servants attitude. Not above the sheep but willing to lead them and serve them as Christ served and washed His disciple’s feet (John 13).

Elders are not to bark out orders but to be involved in ministry and inviting others to come along with them and also be involved in the work of the ministry (Eph.4:10-12).

In short, a Pastor or Elder is not so much an office as it is to be an attitude and a ministry of caring and leading the flock of God.

## **OVERSEERS AND OUR CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

Different organizations have different organizational structure for their leadership. Some are more Biblically modeled than others.

### **We are “*Congregational Rule*”**

Our “headquarters” does not govern our business or dictate our activity. We are free to govern ourselves from within our own church congregation.

### **Our Leadership structure**

**EMBERS** – Elders as pastors or shepherds – focus is on the spiritual care and wellbeing of the flock of God. Our ministry leaders have the hands on ministries. Our Official Board has legal and financial responsibilities.

Elders want to hear from the church. Our **EMBERS** meetings are designed to encourage input from the congregation regarding items of business and ministry.

Biblically, the church selects its own leaders. It is to be carrying out the work of the ministry. The church is also to be the courtroom for unresolved conflict in the church (Mat.18:17).

### **We are “*Elder Led*”**

Shepherds lead – Elders lead and make recommendations, but ultimately the congregation makes the decisions. Elders give spiritual oversight and attempt to focus more on the spiritual issues of the church.

### **OT Elders of Israel were leaders much like judges**

- They acted as judges
- At times they served with priests
- They often spoke as prophets

### **NT Elders of the church**

- By age they were those of leadership and influence
- By experience they were men of maturity
- They often ministered together with the Apostles
- They eventually were chosen by the church to be leaders in the church (see Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23)

### **Grievances and accusations**

Elders can be addressed, and questioned. However there are Biblical guidelines for expression grievances of dissatisfaction with elders or pastors.

A Pastor or Elder should be approachable, but sometimes they become sounding boards for every complaint that can be imagined. Some people would attempt to cause trouble for an elder by accusation.

Therefore when these arise, it is best, in order to confirm the validity of the accusation or grievance, it should be brought to the elders by 2 or 3 people with the same complaint or accusation.

**1Tim. 5:17-20** Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. (18) For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." (19) Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. (20) As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. (Mat. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1)

Pastor and or Elders are not beyond question. But they are to be somewhat protected from the trivial complaints and murmurings among the flock. If there is genuine problems, the procedure is in place to make those concerns voiced.



## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

It is the responsibility of the Elders to be involved in ministry, but it is not the responsibility of Pastor and Elders to do most of the ministry.

**Eph. 4:11-13** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, (12) **to equip the saints for the work of ministry**, for building up the body of Christ, (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

### **Please Pray & Select Godly Leaders**

Titus 1:5 – “appoint elders”

Acts 14:23 – appointed – prayed and fasted

### **Please Submit, Support and Serve Christ Together**

Heb. 13:7 – obey

Heb. 13:17- Imitate or follow in the faith, as well as in ministry.

### **Join in the work of the ministry**

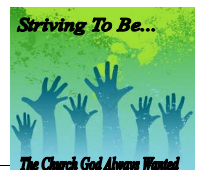
- 1) Attend **EMBERS** and give your input to your church.
- 2) Serve the Lord with a cheerful heart (Ps. 100:2)  
– put your heart in serving Christ in the church.
- 3) Be involved – there are many areas of ministry for everyone.
- 4) Do the work of the ministry. Be obedient to Your job description.

We all must... Be Willing    Be Obedient    Be Available  
Be Serving    Be Growing

### **Pray for your church and Leaders**

Wednesday is still our church’s day of prayer and fasting for our church, for God’s kingdom advancement and for our spiritual leaders.

Pray for your church, your leaders and for your own involvement, input and ministry for Christ in the church.



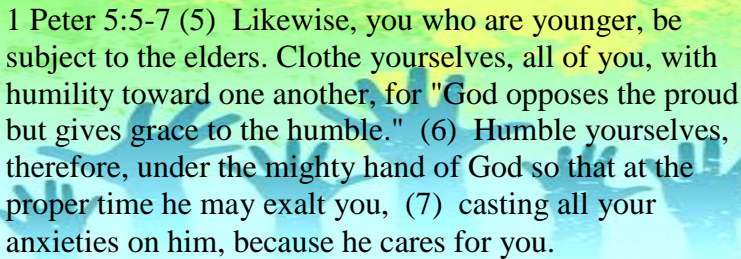
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# “Joint Laborers in Faith Formation”

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March 11, 2012

1 Peter 5:5-7



1 Peter 5:5-7 (5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (7) casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

## INTRO

## Children's Church

Last week we focused on elders and we ended with the challenge for the church to be both available and willing to do the work of the ministry in the Church.

Today Peter directs our attention to another important and often underestimated, certainly often overlooked ministry in the church. That is the intergenerational Interaction of believers.

This refers to the connection and interaction between young Christians and older Christians.

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**Ecclesiastes 12:1** Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come... "

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This is largely directed to those who are older in the faith.

- 1) *This must be an understood need.*
- 2) *The value of this must be seen and grasped.*
- 3) *There must be interest in applying this lesson.*

## **THE NEED OF THE YOUNGER FOR THE OLDER (V5A**

From the beginning, God has ordained that spiritual Truth be passed down and passed on from the older, learned and experienced to the young inexperienced and less knowledgeable.

### **(5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.**

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Submit to elder leaders and to the "Elders" of the church. Learn from them. Don't harbor the thoughts, "Man are they old!". Or "They are so square and so uncool".

Begin now while you are young and while most of God's gift of life is still ahead of you. Don't waste your life learning from your mistakes, when others, who have made mistakes and learned the lessons can pass on their wisdom and life lessons to you.

## **Input and Influence from the older to the younger**

In order to learn through the input and influence of those older and wiser than you, there has to be an intentional level of relationship.

**Deut. 6:4-9** "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. (7) You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (8) You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (9) You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Whether you apply this to family, extended family or your Jewish and/or Christian community- Truth must be taught and faith is formed through relationships and in this case, intergenerational relationships between older and younger.

## The Church God Always Wanted.....

*\* It is important to see the value in these spiritual relationships.*

**Question:** What happens when we design the “church” to attract and address mostly the younger generation?

**Answer:** We tend to loose the older generation.

If our whole church is divided into age specific Sunday School classes, kids klubs, youth groups, Adult classes, Singles groups, Young Married gatherings, Keen Agers (elderly) then we have made the church anti-Intergeneration with minimized interaction between age groups.

When we transform our church services into traditional and contemporary services, by default we eliminate the older Christians from the contemporary services and we drive off the younger ones in the Traditional services. This may not be the intent, but is most often the result.

When we do that, we remove the truth training and faith formation element that is intended to come through the older teacher and modeling for the younger, what a strong faith and stable Christian journey looks like.

### **Experience and Example from older to younger**

Training in Truth and faith formation is life, faith and wisdom shared from one with another.

**Titus 2:1-8** But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. (2) **Older men** are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. (3) **Older women** likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, (4) and so train the **young women** to love their husbands and children, (5) to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. (6) Likewise, urge the **younger men** to be self-controlled. (7) Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, (8) and sound speech that cannot be condemned,

so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

**Self control** is mentioned 3 times. That is the ability to recognize need in your life or areas that need strengthening and to be willing to pursue spiritual growth and life transformation.

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## Self-Control is a mind to discern and a will to act.

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Older women are to be teaching and influencing the younger. Teaching them to love their husbands and their children (Titus 1:4). Interesting that a woman would have to be taught to love their husband or a mother would need to be trained in how to love her children.

This is clearly not merely verbal training but modeling that kind of love. It is teaching and exemplifying what it means to put self aside and sacrifice on behalf of another family member.

Older men are to be teachers and examples of spiritual maturity. Young men are to be taught to be respectable, self controlled and solid in faith, in love and in perseverance. Oh how our young people and even older adults who are new believers, need to learn these qualities.

Self-Control involves...

- Awareness of proper behavior
- Willingness to take steps
- Resolve to change or be transformed

The need of youth to have an example of true simple faith is crucial. They not only need to hear, but to see what it looks like. This be accomplished by family, extended family, as well as your church.

\* Trust your church family to offer positive contribution to your children's training in Truth and faith formation.

## **THE NEED OF HUMILITY FOR BLESSING (V5B-6**

Pride is a blessing blocker in any person's life. Even a young Christian can be an example to an unbelieving world of what it means to really follow Christ.

### **Humility – A Valuable Virtue (v5b**

Examples of humility are often rare and always valuable. Too often, young people feel they have to be cool or appear confident or even dominant in order to stand out. They often have to make themselves appear outgoing or popular. Humility is seldom on our list of how we want to be perceived.

1 Peter 5:5-6 (5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. **Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another**, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you

- Things to remember regarding humility.
- Humility is not equal to weakness
- Openness to teaching
- Sees the need for correction and spiritual growth
- Humility admits, "I don't have all the answers"

**1Tim. 4:12** Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

### **God's Blessing or Discipline (v5c**

Our lifestyle and our attitudes can affect the way God deals with us. Humility before God is somewhat opposite to being rebellious toward God or *prideful*.

Some prideful may think, "I'm OK". Those humble may think, "I'm in need of whatever God has to offer me".

1 Peter 5:5-6 (5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. **Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one**

another, **for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."**

To the humble, God is gracious (v5b). To the proud and rebellious God opposes.

To the proud, God may withhold His grace, help and blessing. Rather than being gracious and blessing - on the contrary He disciplines.

**Heb 12:5-11** And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. (6) For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." (7) It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (8) If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (9) Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? (10) For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. (11) For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

*"Discipline is mentioned 11 times. Perhaps we need to take note!*

1) Everyone requires discipline, because everyone of us is in need of learning spiritual truth.

2) God disciplines His children (v6) He *will* get us to where He wants us.

3) Discipline is not pleasant (v11). It goes against our fallen, broken sinful human nature.

4) Not everyone responds properly to God's discipline.(v11) The Humble receive it. The proud reject it.

*\* There is need for each of us to be humble before God to receive His blessing.*

## **The Need of Surrendering and Trusting (v7**

We will not receive God's blessings, nor will we experience relief from His discipline until we surrender to Him, trusting in Him and accept His loving discipline.

1 Peter 5: (5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (7) **casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.**  
Surrendering means....

### **Trusting God's Character (v7a**

*Trusting God means...*

- *Being aware of How He works in our lives*
- *Being confident He is working in us for our own good and His own glory*

\* It is important to take note and learn from how God has proved Himself in our past, that we may have good reason to trust Him in our future.

Surrendering means....

### **Walking with Him always**

*Walking with God involves....*

- *Accepting what He has for us whether blessing or discipline.*
- *Enduring the difficulties, in order to be fully trained in righteousness to affect our holiness. (Heb.12:10)*

\* *It is crucial for any of us that we surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to the ultimate purposes of God for our lives.*

### **Additional Considerations....**

Everyone needs a teacher and an example. Godly teachers and Godly examples in addition to Godly parents can be very beneficial – that is, in *addition* to Godly parents, **NOT** *instead* of Godly



## *The Church God Always Wanted.....*

parents. It is still the responsibility of the parents to train in Truth and faith formation.

Our Children and our youth are not the church of *tomorrow*, they are part of our church family *TODAY*.. They are disciples in the making *NOW*.

I hope you see the supreme value in children's ministries in church and training within the family. I hope you understand the important, eternal spiritual contribution you can make in the life of a young person if we will follow God's directives.

*Perhaps our Senior Saints could --*

- “Adopt” a young person
- Write an unexpected note of encouragement
- Volunteer in a ministry that is for kids or youth
- Purposefully initiate contact and conversation with our youth

We have wonderful youth and exceptional children...

*Would you let them know!*



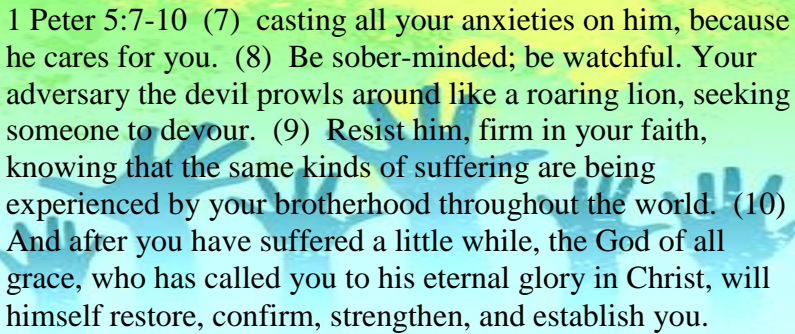
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# “The Enemy Our Soul and Salvation”

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March 18, 2012

1 Peter 5:7-10



1 Peter 5:7-10 (7) casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (8) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. (10) And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

## INTRODUCTION

Today's lessons are crucially important for us to learn for our faith. Faith requires work – lots of it! It requires diligence. It also requires clear thinking

v.7) Peter writes to encourage Sober mindedness – removing hindrances to faith and obstacles from vigilance.

What God means for good, Satan means for evil.

With that, Peter gives us 3 Wake up calls:

## **#1 OUR WAKEUP CALL TO BE ALERT AND WATCHFUL**

- 1) The fact is, the devil wants to devour and destroy us.
- 2) His greatest tactic to accomplish this is “deception”.

### **Remaining on Guard (v8)**

We are urged to Be alert. Be Watchful. And Be vigilant.

1 Peter 5: (8) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

How many times has Peter either used the term “sober-minded” or alluded to the concept of being clear thinkers? What Peter encourages us about today is being sober-minded, alert and aware, because “What God means for good, Satan means to use for evil.” It has been that way since the beginning.

In Sunday School class this morning, it was brought out that in Mat. 26:36ff, Jesus had invited Peter, James and John into the garden of Gethsemane to pray with Him. Jesus left them and went further to pray alone. Upon His return, He found the 3 sleeping. They were not alert or watchful as they had been urged.

So Peter writes this warning from his own first hand experience in being weary in prayer.

### **The enemy (8)**

Satan is our adversary and enemy. Eph. 6:12 reminds us that our enemy is not people, but evil spiritual beings and powers. Other people are not our problem, but the devil and his demons are our problems.

Peter calls the enemy our “Adversary”, in that he opposes and he is our opponent. He is the one who wants to beat you at this game. He opposes God and he opposes you. He opposes you, because He opposes God and His purpose is to take what God means for good and turn it to evil. His purpose is to cause us to question God’s goodness, by attributing his own evil work, to the good purposes of God.

## **The Deception**

“Roaring Lion” means he is intimidating and deceptive. He doesn’t present himself as a hungry devouring lion, but he disguises himself into something harmless, or attractive or safe. He is not stupid.

Satan does not present himself for who he really is. Otherwise even the blind fools would flee from him. In John 10:10, Jesus describes the purposes and intent of our enemy the devil, they are to kill, steal and destroy.

Peter warns us that Satan is like a roaring lion “Seeking to devour”, consume or destroy. “mmm – who’s on the menu for today?”

From his children’s theological book, “**Big Truth for Young Hearts**”, Bruce Ware explains the devil this way. (p132-133),

...There is a real story about a real villain and a real Superhero that would embarrass Hollywood if the true dimensions of this conflict could be known for what they are. Satan is the greatest villain, the worst enemy, the most powerful opponent who has ever existed or will ever exist. Some of the ways he is described in the New Testament boggle the mind. He is “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). He’s “the god of this world” who blinds the minds of all who are perishing (2 Corinthians 4:3–4).

He “snares” unbelievers until they are “captured by him to do his will” (2 Timothy 2:26). And to top it off, we’re told that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).

The good news, though, is that Someone greater, wiser, stronger, and better in every way has come into this world and has defeated the great Satan. Satan is living on borrowed time, we could say, since all of the statements just given about Satan’s work today describe this defeated foe. But defeated he is. Christ has accomplished what we never could do by bringing Satan down. When God is done with him, he will

throw Satan into the lake of fire to suffer forever  
(Revelation 20:10).”

Until that time, Christians must remain on high alert and be watchful.

## #2 OUR WAKE UP CALL TO BE VICTORIOUS

Not only is it important to know the enemy’s tactics, it is also important to know God’s plan for our victory.

1 Peter 5:7-10 (8) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) **Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.**

### Stand Against

Here is our command for today – ***Resist!***

**Eph 6:10-12** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. (11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to ***stand against*** the schemes of the devil. (12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

You must do what you can do in order to effectively resist the devil and God will do what He must do to bring us victory

### Don’t be caught off guard

**1Pet. 4:12** Beloved, do not be **surprised** at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something **strange** were happening to you.

“Resist” – How? Firm and steadfast in the faith. As believers we must study and obey God’s word. As Christians, we must practice fellowship and encouragement with other believers who are steadfast in the faith, perhaps more than we are.

The Body life of the church is crucial and it can't be experienced as God intended it to be by TV "church".

## Already Caught Off Guard

TV "church" is a deception from the devil. Its like kids watching Power Rangers on TV. They can dress up in the costumes, they can buy the Power Ranger gadgets and power bands. They can go through the motions, but the best they can do is *pretend*. They will never become true Power Rangers.

I know some Christians are homebound and can do nothing else than watch "church" on TV. That is not what I am referring to.

For many, TV "church" allows them to sit in the lazy boy recliners and watch "church" on TV. If they don't like what is being said, all they have to do is press the button on their TV remote and they can find someone they like better. It is the ultimate experience in a lazy man's way of church hopping.

It removes undesirable human contact and ultimately removes unappreciated Christian accountability. It can cause weak Christians to remain weak and to be caught off guard by our enemy the devil.

## Others with us

Christian suffering from Satan's attacks is not strange or unusual.

(9) Resist him, firm in your faith, *knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world*

1) Suffering is a very real part of the Christian faith. Satan's trick is to cause us to believe that Christians should not suffer, so that when we do suffer, we are defeated in our faith

TV "church" offers the ultimate experience in a lazy man's opportunity to church hop without ever having to leave your lazy boy.

## The Church God Always Wanted.....

2) Satan also tricks us into thinking “this is only happening to me”. or “If I was really a Christian I wouldn’t be suffering. That is the devil’s deception and as one preacher states it, “that is from the pit of hell and it smells like smoke.”

God gives us the wake up call to be alert and victorious.

### **#3 OUR WAKEUP CALL TO TRUST GOD’S UNFOLDING PLAN**

God reveals the truth about Christian suffering.

1 Peter 5:9-10 (9) Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. (10) And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

The truth on Suffering is this:

- 1) God has a purpose in suffering.
- 2) God Answers our questions on sufferin

#### **God’s assignment is being revealed**

God uses hardship and suffering to advance us in our Christian growth and to deepen us in our faith formation.

#### **God of all grace**

He Alone is our Source. He is our Source and the “God of All grace...”. And **all** His grace is **all** sufficient for **all** our troubles in **all** our lives.

Consider these verses:

**Eph 1:7** “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the *riches of his grace..*”

**Eph 2:7** “... so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable *riches of his grace* in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

**Jas 4:6** “But he gives *more grace. ...*”

**2Cor. 12:9** But he said to me, "My *grace is sufficient* for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

**Heb 4:15-16** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find *grace to help in time of need.*

God is the **SOURCE** of all grace, which is all sufficient, for all our needs, in all our situations in all our lives.

In 1 Peter 1, God uses “manifold trials” (1:6) and in 1Pet. 4:10, He offers “manifold grace” to meet these manifold trials.

### **Called (v10b)**

He has called or assigned us to eternal glory – God’s dwelling place. He has called you to His eternal glory in Christ. He has assigned us a room in His eternal dwelling place.

God is the  
**SOURCE** of  
all grace,  
which is all  
sufficient, for  
all our needs,  
in all our  
situations in all  
our lives.

**John 14:1-4** "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (4) And you know the way to where I am going."

God is preparing His place for **us**. He is also preparing us for His place. He is faithfully perfecting, completing, building, purifying, strengthening, solidifying, deepening, maturing our faith in Him.

### **What? Why? How? God’s reason unveiled (10b)**

Pay close attention because our questions are being answered. He has called us to His glory – that is His own home.



He is preparing a place for us. But until we arrive there, He is also working on us. He is preparing His place for us and He is preparing us for His place.

1 Peter 5: (10) And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself **restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.**

He is preparing His place for us and He is preparing us for His place.

1) Here God unveils to us **What** He is doing? He is purifying us, perfecting us, establishing us, strengthening us, settling us.

2) He is also unveiling **Why** our suffering takes place? Through Suffering He is purifying, perfecting, molding, maturing, conforming us into the image of His Son (Rom.8:29)

3) He also unveils the **How**? How does our faith grow? How does God prepare me for His place? Trials, suffering and hardships.

It is all part of God's plan to transform us, mature us in the faith and prepare us for entrance into His eternal glory – His home.

**“What** is God doing?” Peter answers that question.

**“Why** is this happening to me?” Peter answers that question.

**“How** does God cause our faith to grow and prepare us for heaven?” How does He use suffering? Peter answers all these questions. Suffering is purposed to prepare us for God's home.

*\* God is preparing His place for us. He is preparing us for His place.*

*Why?*

*What?*

*How?*

## ISNT THAT GREAT!

Go to a doctor and he wants to give you a shot. How much easier is the shot to take when He **reveals** to us His purpose and how that shot

will benefit us. Go to the dentist and he brings out the dreaded drill. How much easier it is when he simply takes the time to tell you what he intends to do and what you can expect to feel or experience.

Here God unveils the reasons for suffering, even Christian suffering. He answers some of our most gnawing questions. And yet, many of us will leave here today, and by this time next week, most will forget this all important revelation from God to us, about why He allows suffering. So much so, that some here today will soon experience some kind of suffering and will entertain the question: “**What** did I do to deserve this?”. “**Why** is God allowing this in my life?” or “**How** in the world can this possibly be a good or helpful experience in my faith journey?”

We have heard God’s explanation today, but soon, when trials hit us, it will be these very questions that we will ask God. **What? Why? How?**

### **Remember regarding our trials and our suffering:**

- 1) God is the God of ALL grace! He is our only true source for help in our difficulties. ***Trust Him fully!***
- 2) The Devil is our sworn enemy! He attempts to take what God means for good and use it for evil. ***Resist Him Completely!***
- 3) God is preparing His place for us. He is also preparing us for His place. Be sober-minded, keeping these truths in mind, to strengthen our faith against our Adversary the devil. These answers our questions to the Why? What? and How? of suffering. ***Rejoice in Him!***

### **Here is one more question we must answer?**

\* *What will we now do, with what we now know?*



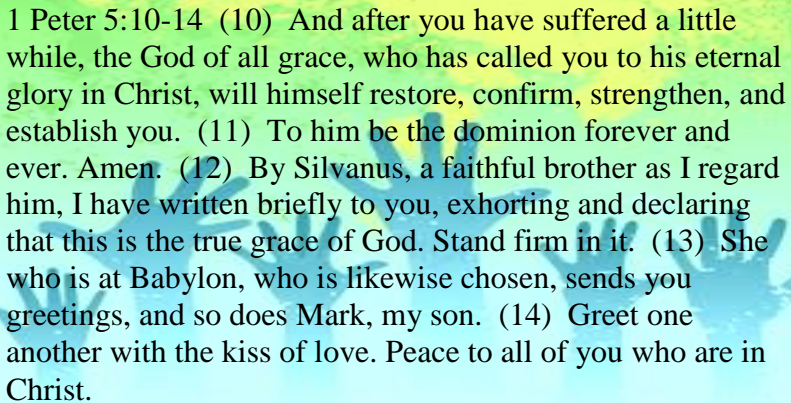
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# “The Assurance In Our Journey”

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**March 25, 2012**

**1 Peter 5:10-14**



1 Peter 5:10-14 (10) And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (11) To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (12) By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. (13) She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. (14) Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

**INTRO**

**Communion**

**Children's Church**

Today's message is the last in 1Peter's series: "Sojourning in Suffering": Becoming the Church God Always Wanted"

Throughout the book Peter references Christian persecution, suffering and trials over 20 times, God's Grace about 8 times, Christian Love about 10 times, God's Calling 7-8 times and God's will over 15 times. The things he emphasizes are things we may do well to give extra attention.

In our final section, Peter gives us 3 reminders to be diligent as true believers...

- 1) In Keeping Our Journey in Perspective
- 2) Keeping Our Destination in Perspective

### 3) Keeping Our Company in Perspective

*Peter gives us the reminder of...*

#### #1 KEEPING OUR JOURNEY IN PERSPECTIVE (V10-11)

Peter reminds us that our journey is to be joyful . Our Christian journey takes us through this earthly life, meandering onward to our heavenly home, God's eternal glory. Along the way, He has assignments for each of us.

#### God has called

1 Peter 5: (10) And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, **who has called you to** his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

God's calling is His intended plan and purpose for your life. The individual path He has for you to travel, the experiences and ministries He wants you to be involved in are all for His honor and glory.

**Rom. 11:33-36** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (34)

"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" (35) "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" (36) For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

*He who  
calls you is  
faithful; he  
will surely  
do it.  
1Thes. 5:24*

All that we are – all that we will become or accomplish is for God's glory. God's calling for us, involves His purpose to use us.

God's call compliments His purpose and both work together to bring God honor and praise and glory.

#### Assurance

We can live with confidence and purpose that we are not wasting our lives as we are following Him and obeying His word and seeking His

ways. This is important when it comes to having a proper perspective on our life journey.

## Perseverance

Every Christian must have an anchor – a stronghold of assurance. When the storms of doubt or discouragement come and we are tempted to give in or give up – we look to God’s calling and the assurance that God indeed has his hand on us and has a purpose for our lives. Without this perspective and focus, we will be easily distracted and even discouraged.

There is a group called Sidewalk Prophets” with a new song entitled, “The Words I Would Say”.

In the context of this song, the singer is aware of the deep inner suffering and turmoil being experienced in the life of a friend. He writes these words in the song, stating that if you were here with me, “these are the words I would say”.

*Be strong in the Lord, And never give up hope,  
You’re going to do great things, I already  
know, God’s got His hand on You,  
So don’t live life in fear, Forgive and forget,  
But don’t forget why you’re here, Take your time and pray,  
These are the words I would Say... from one simple life to  
another, I will say... come find peace in the Father*

Understanding God’s calling can bring assurance for our journey and that assurance can foster perseverance so we finish well. This is supreme!

## God’s grace compliments His calling

**1Pet. 5:5b** "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

*And I am  
sure of this,  
that he who  
began a  
good work  
in you will  
bring it to  
completion  
at the day of  
Jesus Christ.  
Philippians 1:6*

**1 Peter 5:10b** And ...the God of all grace, **who has called you** ..., will himself restore you...

God's grace may be viewed as His strength, or His help. It may be His provisions, His intervention, His supernatural, all sufficient enabling and inexhaustible resources for us to carry out His calling and accomplish His will for our lives.

God has promised to complete His work in us! –Amen.

### **A joyful journey**

At times the fog can get so thick, we cannot see what God intended our journey to be. Sometimes we forget it is intended to be God focused and “full of joy”.

**1Pet 1:6-8** “... **rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, (7) so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (8) Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and **rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory**,

**Nehemiah 8:10** Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

God has a calling and has given us assignments for our journey.

### **He is Lord**

He is the God of all Grace( 5:10). He is the Lord of all Power.

**1 Peter 5:11** To him be the *dominion* forever and ever. Amen.

1) the prayer of blessing – in some versions this appears as a prayer, beginning in verse 10 as, “May the God of all grace...”

## The Church God Always Wanted.....

2) The focus of scripture – is God. “to Him belongs dominion” (v11) and glory.

3) The power to accomplish His will in us, rests in Him. We are vessels – We are His tools and His servants.

**Dominion** = vigor, power, Gods ability working in us, to accomplish through us, His purpose and plan.

**1Pet 4:11** whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We sometimes adopt the wrong perspective regarding our journey. We sometimes are misled to think that *we* have the power and ability to make things work. *We* make it happen. That is **un**biblical and **a**theistic in nature.

Keeping our journey in perspective means remembering His calling for our purpose and His grace for our experiences.

His all-sufficient grace and His all-powerful calling will carry us to the end of our journey with joy.

## **#2 KEEPING OUR DESTINATION IN PERSPECTIVE (V12)**

The next reminder Peter offers is to remember that our Destination is to be Desired. Where are you going? To be with God for eternity, in his home of eternal glory. Do we desire that? *We should!*

Where is our journey taking or leading us? God is leading each of us daily and faithfully through His will for our lives. Do we desire that? *We certainly should!*

We often think of God’s will being far down the road, yet God’s will is daily or immediately **NOW**.

## **Assurance of Testimony**

Peter writes as someone who has experience and authority to share his story and offer us powerful life lessons to follow.

1 Peter 5: (12) **By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**

Peter gives us his personal testimony and his first hand experience.

He offers...

**1) Exhortation** in the faith. This means to “call near”, “to invite” or “to cause to desire”.

**2) Declaring or Testifying** to that which he is convinced is true. He declares or testifies the truth.

**3) First Hand** information or experience. To know the life of Peter is to know the story of an imperfect man, who, in the hand of God, became a trophy of His grace. Peter testifies personally to this fact.

## Assurance of Truth

Peter talks about the “True Grace” or a life long journey of faith, and life provision from God for this journey.

1 Peter 5: (12) By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is *the true grace of God.* Stand firm in it.

“True grace” would refer to the true faith or the true experience of God in the life of the true believer.(cp.1Pet.5:10, “God of all grace.”)

## Standing Firm

Peter reminds us to stand firm in the faith (v12), or to endure to the end. It’s his way of encouraging from first hand experience, to hold up under and not buckle or be cast down. He has made mistakes. He has experienced God as the God of all grace. Peter is a living trophy of God’s grace!



## The Church God Always Wanted.....

Keep your journey in perspective. Is it joyful? Keep the destination in perspective. Is it desirable to you? Our heavenly home in God's eternal glory. It will be worth it all.

Peter lets us know by example that we can indeed, persevere in the grace that God will provide. John Piper refers to this as "Future Grace".

Peter goes on to write these words concerning future grace, or the grace that God has awaiting the experience in which we will need it.

**1Pe 1:10** "Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,

(13) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be yours at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews writes this concerning future grace.

**Heb 4:16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help *in time of need*.

We don't seem to receive grace for things that God has not assigned us to experience. When God does assign us an experience that will need special or additional grace, then the God of all grace supplies all the all-sufficient grace we need for that time and for that assignment – no more and no less.

Keeping our Destination in Perspective means an assurance of where God is taking us, how He will care and provide for us along the journey and ultimately how He Himself, will be glorified in my life.

*Finally, Peter reminds us of ...*

### **#3 KEEPING OUR COMPANY IN PERSPECTIVE**

Remember our company is to be Cherished – that is the church.

**1Pet. 5:9** ...knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your *brotherhood* throughout the world.”

## **We are similar and yet unique individuals.**

**1 Peter 5: 13-14** (13) She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. (14) Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

We are with others in the same boat, - others facing the same situations, enduring the same hardship, experiencing the same heart break. (Heb.11).

Look around you today – everyone here is just like you – their lives are just like yours. Our life experiences are varied, and yet they are more similar than they are different.

Some have experienced the devastation of life threatening physical illness and thought “No one knows how difficult this has been”. Others have experienced family heart break and thought “No one has experienced hardship like this”.

We are similar, and yet we are unique individuals.

## **We are individuals and yet we are connected**

The beauty of the body is that we work together to help and support one another. The beauty of the body is that a broken arm can be easily supported by a healthy leg. That is the beauty of the body. And the body of Christ is intended to work in much the same way.

## **One church encouraging another church**

Peter brings greetings from other believers – Why? They need encouragement to stand firm in the faith. He offers a reminder that they are not alone, but are among those around the world, in different places, and suffering separately, and yet suffering together, as together they share in the afflictions of Christ. (Col.1:24)

One church strengthening another church. Each believer encouraging another. Genuine Godly love for one another

## *The Church God Always Wanted.....*

(1Pet.4:8), supporting one another. When one is weak the rest of the body strengthens and upholds the weak or injured part. *That is the beauty of the body.*

### **Each Christian suffering uniquely**

We all suffer similarly, in that all Christians experience similar struggles, defeats, as well as victories. Yet each of our circumstances are individually tailored for our own personal individual growth and development.

### **Tailor Made Trials**

Our Christian trials are like a tailor made suit. It begins on a mannequin for the general fitting formation, then after a while, it comes off the mannequin and is put on by the one who will ultimately be the wearer. Now it can be tailor fitted.

Our lives are very similar, yet as individual as God's individual will and plan for each of us. God has trials and challenges for each of us that are very similar to every other Christian's trials, struggles, hardship and heart break.

Yet God takes each trial and tailor fits it just for each of us, in order to teach us the life lesson we need to learn. This is God's school of faith. He is the Divine Tailor, we are the suit wearer.

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Immediately following the morning message in which this was preached, one man who had cancer, and a year and a half ago was given 2 months to live, passed me in the foyer – looked out the front door of the church into the sunshine, and said, *“Pastor, I’m going home in my new tailor made suit.”*

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. -Galatians 6:2*

I am praying that we are understanding the beauty of the body and the value of the church family.

**Heb 10:25** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but *encouraging one another*, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

## *The Church God Always Wanted.....*

The Church – supporting, encouraging one another, teaching and loving one another (1Pet.5:14), suffering and enduring ***together***.

We are not alone. We were not intended to travel alone. We are journeying to our eternal destination ***together***.

We are on a journey. We are suffering and sojourning. Each person's story is different and unique and yet we are so similar that one can know the sufferings of another.

What an incredible journey!

What a glorious destination!

What a cherished company!

All of us traveling together, are becoming

***THE CHURCH GOD ALWAYS WANTED!***



# ***Don't close this booklet yet...***

without considering this all important question.

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## **Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?**

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Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short  
of the glory of God; --*Romans 3:23*

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come  
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only  
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should  
not perish, but have everlasting life. --*John 3:16*

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to  
die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is  
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
-- *Romans 6:23*

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus  
Christ in our place for our sins.

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still  
sinners, Christ died for us. ---*Romans 5:8*

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord  
will be saved." -- *Rom 10:13*

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name,  
he gave the right to become children of God, - *John 1:12*

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that your  
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness  
for your sins and citizenship into God's family and His  
kingdom.

## The Church God Always Wanted.....

**A** - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

**B** - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

**C** - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*  
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

**Prayer:** Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

**Connect** with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

**Commit** yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

**Heb 10:24-25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Act 2:41-42** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

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*It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be,  
your greatest purpose, your highest calling, your  
soul's source and joy, and your all-consuming  
passion.*

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*Other Free Booklets downloadable at [www.ChristEFCA.org](http://www.ChristEFCA.org)*

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*May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.*

*--- Downloadable free resources at: [www.christefca.org](http://www.christefca.org) --*

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