



*Who is your  
raison d'être?*

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## LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

LEARNING FROM PETER & JUDE — FINDING POWER THROUGH PURITY & SUFFERING  
 (1 Peter 4) Lord's Day, October 16 & 23, 2016

### OVERVIEW

"Sessions 7 & 8" for the *Explore the Bible Series*



Peter has stepped on my toes. Again. He just irritates the fire out of me. Of course, he was talking primarily to former pagans in what we call chapter 4 of 1 Peter. But, Holy Spirit made it quite clear, irritatingly clear, crystal clear—why and how the values, attitudes, and behaviors of MY paganism interfere with fulfilling a purpose worth fulfilling.

A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:  
 WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE TROUBLE FINDING A MEANINGFUL PURPOSE FOR THEIR LIFE (BEYOND PROTECTING THEIR BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL/CULTURAL GENE POOL)?

How do I know? Take a good long look, not at the paganism in others, but in yourself. What forms of debauchery consume you? What causes you to lust? And, yes, there are other types of orgies besides sexual—binge eating, binge watching, "sacred" TV time?

To what idols do you subscribe? A political philosophy which allows you to overlook immorality? A political party that preaches higher morality, but whose actions ignore morality? A theology which says freedom from paganism equals righteousness? Oh my, we're dense. And, Peter's words color that density a very dull, very solid, and very serious gray.

Of all the idols the believer has to guard against, the idol of self righteousness poisons us the most. Since we don't engage in orgies, we think ourselves superior. Since we don't get drunk, often, we adopt a "I'm sober—what's his/her problem?" mentality. Since we don't bow down to a wooden, carved, and artfully constructed object, we pat ourselves on the spiritual back. Remember, our idol is gray, very dull, very solid, and very lethal.



Bottom-line? It is not about us. Our paganism is about us. Paganism derails us from the purpose worthy of fulfilling. And our absence of paganism can cause us to be pagan. It is the Lord God who is to be served, praised, and adored. Anything less is paganism. Period. End of sentence. End of essay. End of chapter. End of book.

TEXTUAL ISSUES 1 PETER 4

1 Peter 4:1-6. *Learn from the Christ; He's been there.* Since the Christ Himself suffered in His body, you can empower yourself with the same mind-driven purpose & design [ἐννοίαν, en-noi-an, intentional design, 1771]. When you have suffered in this manner, the body is no longer in control—the body is done with sin.

So what? You no longer live your life on earth for evil, but for the purposes of the Lord God. You have spent enough time messing around as unbelievers do—depravity, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and sheer, detestable idolatry. Enough is enough.

Now other folk will think it strange that you've stopped all this dissipation—they want you to dive in, just like them. They're not stupid—they too have been created in the image of the Lord God and know, down deep, this depravity is just that, depravity. Since you're not diving in, they'll heap abuse on you.

They will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge not only the living, but the dead as well at judgment day. After all, it was for this reason the gospel was proclaimed even to those who are now dead—so they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God the Spirit.

- Q What is “this attitude,” this mind-driven purpose of Christ which can empower us during suffering?
- Q When do you know you've spent enough time as a pagan? Why is it useful to behave as a pagan?
- Q How does living without this list of pagan attributes assist us? Just what is the purpose of avoiding depravity, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and sheer, detestable idolatry?
- Q Why do people criticize others who avoid depravity, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and idolatry? Why do we criticize those who “harp on” these pagan-like behaviors?
- Q Why will the uninformed pagan have to answer for their depravity, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and sheer, detestable idolatry? Why will the believer have to answer?
- Q Just why was the gospel proclaimed (root is “evangelize”) to people then, and now?

**1 PETER 4:1-6**

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. <sup>2</sup>As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. <sup>3</sup>For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. <sup>4</sup>They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. <sup>5</sup>But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

1 Peter 4:7-11. *Time is short, and hell is hot*. The end of your life, the end of other's lives, and yes the end of all things is about to happen. So? Get your act together—

- Be clear minded—fuzziness doesn't cut it.
- Control your self—you can't pray if you're steeped in paganism.
- Most importantly—love. Love deeply, for love not only continues to forgive, it hides a multitude of sins.
- Be hospitable to one another—grumbling is not part of either loving nor serving. Get over it.
- Regardless of what you have been given, give and serve faithfully—show and do God's mercy in all its manifold ways.
- When you speak, do it as if you were speaking the logos of God Himself.
- When you serve, do it as with the strength the Lord God provides.

### 1 PETER 4:7-11

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. <sup>8</sup>Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus [the] Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

### WHY?

So that in ALL things God may be praised through Jesus the Christ. It is to Him that all glory and power be given—now, tomorrow, and ever and ever.

So be it, truly, let it be, make it so.

- Q Why is the end of all things near? So what?
- Q Why are we to be clear minded, and self-controlled? So? What's this got to do with the end of time?
- Q Why is "love above all" and loving deeply so critical to Peter's urgings to avoid paganism?
- Q What causes us [you] to grumble, especially when being hospitable to others?
- Q What are we to do with our gifts? And how does this "administer God's grace?"
- Q When we speak, we are to speak as if our words were the logos of God Himself. Yikes. What does this mean? How would it be manifested?
- Q How are we to serve others? [verse 11] Why?
- Q Why don't we declare ourselves to the one who made us, gave us purpose, and adoption papers?

**4:1** *Therefore.* Since 3:19-22 is probably parenthetical, 4:1 could be viewed as tying back to 3:18. The aspect of Christ's suffering that these passages stress is suffering unjustly because one has done good. Furthermore, it is physical suffering—"in his body."

- *arm yourselves also with the same attitude.* Believers are to be prepared also to suffer unjustly, and to face such abuse with Christ's attitude—with his willingness to suffer for doing good. (For a similar principal principle in Paul's writings see Philippians 2:5-11.)
- *because . . . is done with sin.* Such suffering enables one to straighten out his priorities. Sinful desires and practices that once seemed important now seem insignificant when one's life is in jeopardy. Serious suffering for Christ advances the progress of *sanctification*. (Consider Ro 6:1-14 as a parallel idea, but Peter is not referring to being dead to sin in Paul's sense.)

**4:2** *for evil human desires . . . for the will of God.* Now that Christ's attitude prevails, God's will becomes the determining factor in life; i.e., one's *raison d'être*.

**4:3** *pagans.* Lit. "the Gentiles." Along with the term "idolatry," this suggests that at least some of the readers were Gentiles who had repented from a pagan life-style.

**4:4** *They think it strange . . . and they heap abuse on you.* One of the reasons for the suffering the readers were undergoing.

**4:5** *have to give account.* See Ac 17:31; Ro 2:5,16.

- *him who is ready to judge.* In the NT both the Father and the Son are said to be judge on the great, final judgment day. The Father is the ultimate source of judgment, but He delegates judgment to the Son (cf. Jn 5:27; Ac 17:31).
- *the living and the dead.* Those alive and those dead when the final judgment day dawns.

**4:6** *For this is the reason.* The reason referred to is expressed in the latter part of the verse (in the "so that" clause), not in the preceding verse.

- *was preached even to those who are now dead.* This preaching was a past event. The word "now" does not occur in the Greek, but it is necessary to make it clear that the preaching was done not after these people had died, but while they were still alive. (There will be no opportunity for people to be saved after death; see Hebrews 9:27.)
- *that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body.* The first reason that the gospel was preached to those now dead. Some say that this judgment is that to which all people must submit, either in this life (see Jn 5:24) or in the life to come (see v. 5). The gospel is preached to people in this life so that in Christ's death they may receive judgment now and avoid judgment to come. Others hold that these people are judged according to human standards by the pagan world, which does not understand why God's people no longer follow its sinful way of life (see vv. 2-4). So also the world misunderstood the Christ (see Acts 2:22-24,36; 3:13-15; 5:30-32; 7:51-53).
- *but live according to God in regard to the spirit.* The second reason that the gospel was preached to those now dead. Some believe this means that all gospel preaching has as its goal that the hearers may live as God lives—eternally—and that this life is given by the Holy Spirit. Others maintain that it means that the ultimate reason for the preaching of the gospel is that God's people, even though the wicked world may abuse them and put them to death, will have eternal life, which Holy Spirit imparts.

**4:7** *Therefore.* Anticipating the end times, particularly Christ's return, should influence believers' attitudes, actions and relationships (see 2Pe 3:11-14).

- *clear minded.* Christians are to be characterized by reason; are to make wise, mature decisions; and are to have a clearly defined, decisive purpose in life.
- *self-controlled.* See Gal 5:23.

- *pray*. Cf. 3:7; Lk 18:1; 1Co 7:5; Eph 6:18; 1Th 5:17; 1Jn 5:14-15.

**4:8** *love each other deeply*. See 1Th 4:9-10; 2Pe 1:7; 1Jn 4:7-11.

- *love covers over . . . sins*. Some argue this means love forgives again and again (see Mt 18:21-22; 1Co 13:5; Eph 4:32). Others take the passage literally; i.e., loving others [ἀγάπη καλύπτει, 2572; hides, conceals, veils] hides our sins.

**4:9** *Offer hospitality*. See Ro 12:13; 1Ti 3:2; 5:10; Tit 1:8; 3Jn 5-8.

**4:10** *use whatever gift he has received*. See Ro 12:4-8; 1Co 12:7-11.

**4:11** *very words*. The Greek for this phrase is used to refer to the Scriptures or to words [a la λογία, logos] God has spoken (see Ac 7:38; Ro 3:2). *To him be the glory*. See 1Co 1:26-31; Jude 24-25.

**4:12** *Dear friends*. Or "Beloved..." (see 2:11). *do not be surprised at the painful trial*. See 1:6-7; 2:20-21.

**4:13** *rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ*. Remember, Peter once rebelled against the idea that Christ would suffer (see Matthew 16:21-23), and he received the ultimate put down from Jesus the Christ.

**4:14** *insulted because of the name of Christ*. See Mt 5:11-12; Jn 15:18-20; Ac 5:41; 14:22; Ro 8:17; 2Co 1:5; Php 3:10; 2Ti 3:12.

**4:17** *judgment to begin with the family of God*. The persecutions that believers were undergoing were divinely sent judgment intended to purify God's people.

- *the outcome . . . for those who do not obey the gospel*. If God brings judgment on his own people, how much more serious will the judgment be that he will bring on unbelievers!