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## Spiritual Formation Part 36

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### We Are To Have the Attitude of Christ! Part 1

#### 1 Peter 4: 1-11

Are you chasing your desires or our Lord? The answer to this question will determine what direction in life you go as well as if, when, and how sin will entice you to fall! Sin is coming; we can either draw near to God to stay clear, or draw near to sin and thus away from God and His best for us. The great news is that Christ gives us the ability to stand firm in Him. The key is, we need to want to! Peter's people were being slandered and taken advantage of, and they were becoming disillusioned. Peter's call was to stand firm in faith and not worry what others do as long as we look to Christ wholeheartedly (1 Pet. 2:12,15, 23; 3:9, 16; 4:4,14). Thus, the best defense is the offense of righteousness and demonstrating the good life in Christ!

The challenge to this call is the world's ways. Sin is so enticing we can easily slip off God's path. Thus, we need to be willing to suffer so sin does not entice us. We become more guarded against sin because a bigger picture is in our sight—Christ, His example, and our willingness and commitment to follow. When we see Him and not our personal viewpoints and desires, we will grow, mature, and be prepared for anything!

- *Therefore* is a parenthetical term that refers to a conclusion from the previous chapter, 3:18-22, and is now presenting us an application. We are in union with other Christians as we are all bonded to Christ and we may suffer unfairly when we do good. Suffering also bonds and helps form us deeper in Him. It is not to be seen as shame. Rather, it is an honor to serve our King (Rom. 6:1-14; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 3:21).
- *Christ suffered*. Our Lord withstood the full brunt of all human temptations needlessly, yet purposely (Mark 1:12-13, Heb. 2:12; 4:15). He was a man, subject to the power and enticement of sin. He did not need to do this, but for our sake He did. He was fully man and identified with us. He remained sinless and took our sins upon Himself. Now, sin has no power over Him or us other than what we allow on ourselves (Rom. 6:1-10; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 5:14; 1 Pet. 2:22)!
- *Arm yourselves* refers to as soldiers train and prepare for battle, we are to be trained and are to be prepared with Christ's attitude, outlook, knowledge, and experience. We are to prepare for injustice and suffering!
- *God's will* is the determining factor in life! It all comes down to this; *will you follow His will, or yours and the world's?* Which one do you think brings the most blessings and contentment?
- *Time in the past* refers to sin and its power to weigh us down so it defines who we are and traps us in the past. We all have past mistakes and wrong choices,

but Christ freed us so we no longer need to be weighed down by them! Peter's congregation had a pagan background that was very alluring; he is telling them (and us) not to let it draw them or become a part of their new life (Rom. 1:12-13; 6:1-14, 19; Gal. 5:19-21)!

- *Debauchery* means unrestrained indulgence, seeking sinful, physical gratification, or giving into one's desires. This leads to being merciless and unscrupulous in one's dealings with others! When we fight against one another, especially in the church, it is hurtful and even pathetic in God's eyes (Gen. 4:8; Duet. 25:17-19; Joshua 7; Matt. 21: 1-17; Luke 9:54; Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; Eph. 4:19).
- *Lust* refers to sexual immorality, meaning evil desires that trap us and bring down others who are around us—the very opposite of God's call for us.
- *Orgies* refers to great excess, such as over-eating and Bulimia, sex, and multiple partners. This was considered common practice to the Greeks. They used the rationale that they were pleasing their gods, yet it ended their civilization and led to the Dark Ages!
- *Carousing* refers to wild parties, over-drinking of alcohol, and general excess.
- *For this reason.* Peter is strengthening his position, referring to the power of the Gospel and our responsibility to heed it. These early Christians were seeing their friends, families, and neighbors in sin and were confused about their role. This is also a *heads up* for judgment that is coming! There will be no occasion for people to be saved after they die (John 5:24; Heb. 9:27).
- *Preached to those who are dead* probably refers to the people who had died since Peter's church was started and the arrival of this Epistle. This may also refer to 1 Peter 3:19-20 (see last study). The definitive reason for us to proclaim the Gospel is so that God's elect in a wicked world may see faith demonstrated and explained, to see the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, and to have eternal life.
- *Be judged* refers to that we will all die and be held accountable for what we have done with Jesus' dying for us. Also, we have to realize that the world will not understand Christ; therefore, it will not understand you (Acts 2:22-24, 36; 3:13-15; 5:30-32; 7:51-53).
- *Regard to the Spirit.* We now have spiritual renewal and assurance because Christ has obtained for us victory and triumph over death and sin (Rom. 6:5-9; 1 Cor. 15:25-26).

God does not want us to be controlled by the past or to be fearful or cowardly. Rather, we are to learn from our experiences and grow from them, but not be tied to them so they become our identity. We have been born again in Christ; our old life is old, and it is no longer who we are. Thus, we are to grow closer to Him and be an example to others who are still in the old life without being influenced and enticed by them. Our

focus needs to be what is going on now, what God is doing, and how we can contribute to it. Not just what can I get, but what can I learn and gain to be better for His glory? Take comfort; God does indeed have a plan for you even when you cannot see it. His will for your growth in Him is clear! He wants you to be faithful and good so others can see in you a demonstration model for the new life that they can have too. He gives you the ability, the power, and the strength to endure and to enjoy (Gal. 6:7)! The most important aspect is for us to keep our eyes focused on Christ, with racehorse blinders on to block off the rest.

### **Questions**

1. Are you chasing your desires or our Lord? How can the answer to this question help determine what direction you take in life?
2. What can you learn and gain to be better for His glory?
3. How has sin enticed you in the past? How has it become an “identity” for you or for others whom you have known?
4. When others come against you, how is the best defense an offense of righteousness and demonstrating the good life in Christ?
5. Knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ did not deserve to suffer, yet still did, and endured great physical, mental, and spiritual pain on our behalf help motivate you in times of hurting and confusion?
6. What does it mean to exemplify the attitude and conduct of Christ? What would that look like in your life?
7. How does the fact that the great news of Christ gives us the ability to stand firm in Him take you through your tough days?
8. How can Christ better keep you from stress and worry?
9. What has caused people you know to become disillusioned?
10. What can you do to stand firm in faith and not worry about what comes along in life?

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5 – 8)*