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a *Grace Notes* course

## **First Peter**

### **Lesson 10**

#### **1 Peter 5:8-14**

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# 1 Peter

## Lesson 10

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**1 Peter 5:8-14****1 Peter 5:8**

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

**walks about**

"Walks about" means goes about as a course of life. The Devil's course of life is to destroy the dynamics of every Christian life. He ranges far and wide in search of prey.

The Devil stalked Job,

"And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' So Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it'" (Job 1:7).

"And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' So Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it'" (Job 2:2).

**Principle**

The Devil's range can reach into our lives.

**Application**

The Devil uses stealth. He stalks every Christian. He is now on the loose. He is on the prowl looking to trap you in his devices.

The Devil always seeks opportunities to undermine our Christian walk. He is constantly on the prowl. He is not omnipresent for he can only be in one place at a time. However, he has a massive infrastructure of emissaries (demons) who do his bidding. They seek to seduce every one of us.

The Devil says, "I am looking for the spiritually naive. I'm patrolling the earth for simple souls who think that I am not real." The idea that the Devil walks about in a red union suit, having a forked tail and cloven hoofs and carries a pitch fork is a religious fairy tale. He camouflages himself with this idea.

**like a roaring lion**

The word "like" introduces an analogy. Peter draws an analogy between the Devil and a lion. The Devil is like a lion that stalks his prey. The Christian life is like a jungle war.

Peter presents the Devil as a roaring lion. This lion produces a howling or roaring sound. The lion uses his roar to frighten his game. By his roar, he immobilizes his victims. His roar is a weapon. What the Devil cannot accomplish through allurements he tries to achieve through dread.

Lions usually range near six hundred pounds, standing four feet high. They run at twenty feet per bound and at about a hundred yards in five seconds. They are totally unpredictable. They will attack for no apparent reason. They have extremely powerful voices.

**Principle**

Fear will blunt an aggressive Christian life.

**Application**

A roaring lion intimidates by his roar. The Devil intimidates by fear. He casts fear into weak Christians because that will intimidate them from a life of faith. As a lion in the wild chases a herd of gazelles and runs down the weak of the herd, so the Devil usually catches weak Christians first because he freezes them in fear. Fear incapacitates us from moving ahead with our Christian walk,

"He who observes the wind will not sow, And he who regards the clouds will not reap" (Ecclesiastes 11:4).

But why should the Devil intimidate Christians when he has already been defeated?

"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God

day and night, has been cast down" (Revelation 12:9-10).

### seeking whom he may devour

The Devil "seeks." That is what the Lord Jesus came to do,

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

"Devour" comes from two words to drink and down coming to mean to gulp or swallow down. "Devour" means to cause something to pass through the mouth and into the stomach--to gulp down.

The Devil not only wants to nibble on Christians, he seeks to devour them completely. He wants to consume them completely. He wants to devour Christians by destroying their faith so completely that they wholly cease from walking dynamically with God. He wants to ruin their testimony. The Bible presents the Devil as a ferocious beast of prey.

### Principle

The Devil seeks to destroy our testimony totally.

### Application

The Devil wants to swallow Christians whole. He is interested in their total destruction.

"Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Jesus came seeking sinners; now the Devil seeks saints. He looks for Christians with their guard down. He could not keep Christians from becoming Christians, now he wants to make them ineffective Christians. He will do everything in his diabolical power to render them ineffective. He wants an impotent Christian and an impotent church. He will slander, hinder and handicap you. He will do everything in his power to keep you from sharing Christ with a non-Christian. He lost you but now he seeks to make sure that no one around you will come to Christ.

The Devil is not interested in nibbling on us, he seeks to gulp us down. He looks for those who play into his clutches. He lurks in the spiritual bushes waiting for the Christian to come along. Do you have a spiritual mine detector? If we do not

stay on the path, he will have a booby trap waiting to deform us for life.

"And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

The Devil seeks to destroy the testimony of the Christian and to delude the non-Christian (Colossians 2:8). He wants to blind them to the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

"But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age [the Devil] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

### 1 Peter 5:9

"Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

### Resist him

The "him" here is the Devil (v.8).

"Resist" means withstand (James 4:7). This word comes from two Greek words: against and to stand. The Christian is to stand against the assault of the Devil. This is a term of defense, not offense. The Christian must build fortifications against the Devil. The Christian is at war. We should establish bulwarks of faith against our enemy.

We resist by obeying the commands of verse eight. We would do well to remember that we cannot fight the Devil in ourselves.

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

People who believe that the Devil is red believe a religious fairy tale. James chapter 4 makes it plain that the Devil is yellow!! The Devil is not afraid of us but of our faith. By depending on the Lord the weakest Christian can not only check the Devil but he can vanquish him.

**Principle**

The Christian must set for himself a fortress of his faith against the Devil.

**Application**

It is amazing that God gave Christians the power to resist the greatest creature ever made. Satan was the most powerful and wise creature God ever created.

The Devil is not omnipresent. His well-trained troops (demons) disperse throughout the world seeking to sway people for his cause. His power is through the dispersion of these troops throughout the world. Therefore, his power is very extensive but not endless. The Devil is mighty but not invincible. Some people act as if the Devil is almighty. This is a sad mistake because it defers to him too much.

The Christian cannot take the offence against the Devil but he can stand his ground in the faith. In the face of Satanic attack, he can appropriate God's Word to the situation.

Why does the Devil have us on the run? We should have him on the run by our faith. He says "Boo" to some people and they collapse right on the spot.

**steadfast**

"Steadfast" means to make firm and solid. It is a military term meaning hold your order or keep a solid front. Secular Greek used "steadfast" for a close phalanx. The Greek phalanx was a body of heavily-armed infantry soldiers who formed ranks and files close and deep. The word carries the idea of solidity in mass and body. Soldiers had to maintain their ranks and formation or the enemy would attack them from the side or from behind.

The Greek infantry divided into two main branches: the hoplitai and psiloi. The hoplitai were heavily armed troops arranged in phalanx. They were a body of 4,000 men drawn up in lines from eight to twenty-five deep. The psiloi were lightly armed troops, who carried out the skirmishing duties of the army, harassed the enemy, and hung around the flanks and rear of the phalanx with the cavalry in time of battle.

**Principle**

The Christian should not break and run but hold his ground in the faith as a mighty phalanx of faith.

**Application**

Steadfast comes to mean unbending. Christians should not bend their faith. They should deepen and strengthen their faith. Christians are to maintain their ranks in their faith. If they keep formation even though they undergo attack, together they will do something that they could not do alone.

Christians should not break and run. They should hold their ground. Their solid front and phalanx is the Word of God applied to their experiences.

**in the faith**

Satan aimed at the faith of the Asia Minor believers. He sought to destroy their faith by making them disillusioned by suffering. Peter now says that their faith will sustain them against the assault of disillusionment.

Making a phalanx of our faith means that we make the whole body of truth found in the Word of God be our phalanx to orient to suffering. We stand, but we stand in the faith.

"For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (Colossians 2:5).

The word "faith" here means the whole realm of truth as taught in Scriptures. The basis of the believer's resistance to the Devil is the Word of God. Application of the principles of the Word to experience is the foundation for dealing with the Devil.

We resist the Devil in the faith, not in the flesh.

"If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister" (Colossians 1:23).

"For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As you have therefore received Christ

Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:5-7).

### Principle

We fight disillusionment by the whole body of truth found in the Word of God.

### Application

The purpose of trial is not to weaken our faith but to strengthen it. One of two things will happen in suffering: we will either collapse or develop character.

God has a prescribed means for defeating the Devil - the Word of God. Three times the Lord defeated the Devil on the mount of temptation by saying "It is written." The Savior quoted three verses to the Devil and that sent him scurrying.

Be resolute in your faith for Satan wants to destroy your faith. He wants to draw us into apostasy. He does this by making us disillusioned by suffering. Be grounded in your faith. The way to win the war with Satan is with our faith in the principles of God's Word (Ephesians 6:16).

The Christian must maintain his ranks with his faith or he will be vulnerable to attack from the Devil. He needs to be solid as granite in his faith. He should stand in formation even though he is under attack by his enemy, the Devil. He continues to function even under fire because he has, in the Word of God, the resources to fight.

### knowing

The word "knowing" is a key word in many passages of Scripture.

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance" (Romans 5:3).

"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:6).

"So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6).

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be

justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20).

The tense in the word "knowing" carries the idea of truth settled in the soul that can be called into use when necessary. "Knowing" gives us something to use under pressure.

"I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14).

Before we can apply truth, we must know truth. Again, before we can apply truth we must form truth into a principle for life. We must know something about how God wants us to deal with the problems of life.

Christians need to know something before they can use what they know. If we do not know the Word before suffering comes, we will not be able to use it in the time of duress. We cannot say if a wild rhinoceros is charging down on us, "Just a minute, Mr. Rhinoceros, I do not have my gun loaded. Wait while I load it."

### Principle

Christians must study the Word and extract its principles for living before suffering comes his way.

### Application

A Christian must get the principles of the Word in their mind in so that they can apply it to whatever they may face. The only effectual gun is a loaded gun. Keep the gun of your mind loaded with the principles of the Word. How would you like to go to war in the Gulf with no ammunition in your gun?

We load our gun in prosperity, not in adversity.

### that the same sufferings

No Christian suffers alone. Suffering is the universal mark of all true Christians.

**are experienced**

"Experienced" means to endure. No matter how long suffering may last, the believer is to endure through it all.

The real test in golf is not in keeping out of the rough but in getting out of the rough after we get in.

**by your brotherhood in the world**

Fellow Christians in other places in the world go through the same things we do.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Misery likes company. When we realize that the Devil puts all of God's people through similar circumstances, we gain courage.

**Principle**

God does not ask us to suffer any more than He asks of other believers anywhere else in the world.

**Application**

Realizing that other Christians suffer in other places of the world, encourages us to move on in the faith. This also unites us in the same experiences.

We can handle anything that life may bring us if we know the principles of the Word.

A gem develops into a gem under great pressure and friction.

A smooth sea never made a skilful sailor. A believer stagnates in still waters.

**1 Peter 5:10**

"But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ

Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you."

We now come to the conclusion of 1 Peter (vv.10-14). This is one of the great benedictions of the Bible. Note other great benedictions:

Numbers 6:24-26; Romans 15:5,6, 13; 16:25,27; Ephesians 3:20,21; 1 Thessalonians 3:12,13; 2

Thessalonians 2:16,17; 3:12,13; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 24,25; Revelation 1:5,6.

**But may the God of all grace**

Peter concludes his epistle with a prayer. This is a prayer in honor of God's grace.

We now come to one of God's great names -- "the God of all grace." In 2 Corinthians 1:3 God is called "the God of all comfort." "All" carries the idea of comprehensiveness and universality. God's grace is comprehensive and universal for any need of any believer at any time. This means that God has a plan for every situation that you face in life. Every problem you encounter God has a solution for it. He has an asset that you need.

God has cornered the market on grace. God has all kinds of grace for any situation we may face. God has cornered the market on grace and comfort. God is the God of all grace both as far as the quality of it and as far as the quantity of it.

"The God of" means God is the source of all grace.

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble'" (James 4:6).

In 1 Peter, God's grace is God's provision for suffering. God provides for any contingency we may face.

**Principle**

God's grace is comprehensive and universal for any need of any believer at any time.

**Application**

Should a catastrophe come upon you, what resource would you draw upon? Would you draw upon yourself?

We are often not aware of our needs. We think we need one thing whereas we need something else. Sometimes we think God must heal us when what we really need is the grace of God to sustain us without being healed (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Healing is not always our highest good. Sometimes the highest good is God's glory that sustains us in our suffering. We glorify God by making known to others how He sustained us in our predicament.

God is all-sufficient for any contingency that may come our way. God has grace sufficient for any occasion or need (2 Corinthians 1:3; 12:9).

Do you view yourself as respectable? Sooner or later, we all have to come to the place where we recognize that we all fail the Lord. Think of all the sins you have committed just over the last few months. Do you think you have earned or deserved the right of deliverance? Yet, God is the God of all grace. He knows every sin we have committed or ever will commit.

Christians can go right into Heavenly Headquarters for their grace. They go to the manufacturer. They need no middleperson. There is no black market on grace. We have the right to go right to the producer of grace. God's grace is adequate for us no matter what our dilemma or pain. The manufacturer will give us grace if we ask Him (Hebrews 4:16).

God provides grace for the non-Christian. God offers people salvation through Christ with no strings attached.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8).

Will you accept God's offer of grace today? Will you believe Jesus paid on the cross all of the suffering you need to pay for your sins?

#### **who called us**

"Called" is more than an invitation. "Called" carries the idea of an effectual call. This is a divine call that the one called hears and obeys. God summons us to himself. In the process, he will not abandon us. He calls us to praise Him.

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Suffering is in God's eternal plan. Suffering is no cosmic accident. In eternity past, God planned a certain amount of suffering for your life.

"For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:20-21).

#### **Principle**

It is part of God's eternal plan for us that we should suffer for His glory.

#### **Application**

God calls us for His purpose. What did He have in mind? He could have done better but He selected you and me to be conformed into the image of His Son. As far as God is concerned, it is as good as done already. Nothing can thwart that purpose of God. The purpose of God's call is to make us just like His Son,

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:28-29).

From eternity, God called us to salvation:

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9).

"But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Corinthians 1:23-25).

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1).

"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into



the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10).

"These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

Suffering is part of God's plan to witness to His glory,

"Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day" (2 Timothy 1:9-12).

### to His eternal glory

"To" means with a view to--God has a purpose in His call. God's purpose is that we will be with Him eternally. He desires our fellowship. Suffering is temporary (v. 9) because God has an eternal plan.

"That you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

"Glory" is another name for heaven. Christians are headed for Glory.

"To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

"Eternal" means endless, endless time. There will be no cessation or end to our share in the glory of God.

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels' ... 'And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life'" (Matthew 25:41).

Eternal punishment lasts as long as eternal life.

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Some people try to air condition hell. We cannot reduce the duration of time in hell that God establishes for the lost without diminishing God's Word.

"Eternal glory" brings out the full-range and objective of our suffering. This puts suffering in perspective. The world is full of suffering and the world is also full of triumph over suffering.

### Principle

God calls believers to a life that transcends suffering.

### Application

This prayer first reminds believers God calls them into a life that transcends the suffering of this life. It acknowledges suffering is real but puts it in eternal perspective.

When you face disaster, put it in the context of God's eternal call for your life. We handle disaster by understanding God's plan. To fear, fret or fall apart will do no good.

### by Christ Jesus

Our destiny is completely associated with Christ. God always links our destiny to Jesus Christ. It is always "by" him. God does everything for the believer "in Christ Jesus" (Romans 5:1,2,9,11).

"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9).

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were

reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5:9-11).

"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25)

### Principle

Jesus is the only way to heaven.

### Application

We cannot get to heaven by believing in God. Everything God does is by Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). He is the most divisive person who ever lived, as He should be, if He claims to be who He is.

The one thing that religionists and secularists hate to hear is that Jesus Christ is the only way, mutually exclusively the only way. They claim that is narrow and bigoted. We say this is Bible truth. They say this is intolerance; we say it is the gospel. God does nothing any other way other than by Jesus Christ.

If you have not received Jesus Christ as your Savior, there is no hope for you. You must come face-to-face with God's Son and fall at the foot of the cross for forgiveness for your sins. You will never face your sins again in either time or eternity, if you do this. Jesus bought and paid for your sins. He eliminated, obliterated and put them away forever. Will you come to trust the death of Christ to forgive your sins today?

This is not nice religious sticky stuff. Many of us think if we gain enough brownie points with God, then He will place us in heaven. No, this passage contradicts that. Junk all your religion. Come to the cross.

### after you have suffered

God does not exempt Christians from suffering. We expect this in God's economy. God designs all suffering to bless the believer.

Peter asks Asian Minor Christians to consider their suffering before it comes. View suffering from principle first. Then view it from experience

secondly. The Boy Scout motto is "Be prepared." God wants us to prepare ourselves for disaster. Face your suffering before it comes.

Christians who understand God's plan in suffering orient to a perspective that transcends the immediate suffering they face.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes" (Psalm 119:71).

"If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10).

The same furnace that liquefies gold hardens clay.

### a while

Note the contrast with God's "eternal glory." Our suffering is only for a little "while," but our life with God is eternal. The principle is to keep the eternal perspective in view when you enter suffering.

Suffering is only for a "while." It is not interminable. Eternal perspective is important when we enter trial. Sometimes it feels like our trials continue without cessation. However, God measures our suffering with eternal precision. He places boundaries and limits to the suffering we must face. In His sovereignty, He understands what each of us needs to grow spiritually.

### Principle

Keep the eternal perspective in view when you enter deep suffering.

### Application

God designs periods of prosperity and periods of suffering. Therefore, God's design for suffering in our lives is not forever. God puts a limit to our suffering.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Suffering sometimes seems like it goes on for eternity but God places a limit to it.

No Christian is exempt from suffering. No Christian is immune to disease. The Christian grows by suffering. God brings suffering into our lives to draw us closer to Himself. When we keep this in view, we orient to God's eternal perspective on suffering.

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

There is a great deal of suffering that God's people go through that no one knows anything about. There are mental anguishes, domestic problems and parenting problems they just cannot share with just anyone.

Few people may know the burden someone near you may carry. That is where you come in. You can assume someone is having trouble. You can then give him or her an encouraging word. The African-American spiritual goes like this, "No one knows the trouble I've seen," that is, no one but Jesus. It is wonderful to know He knows our problems. However, it is also nice to know a Christian cares as well.

### **perfect**

Note the sequence of thought here: "But may the God of all grace...make you perfect." God's grace makes us perfect.

Now we come to a series of four architectural metaphors. These metaphors suggest our survival kit for suffering.

The word "perfect" means to render fit, complete. "Perfect" comes from two words to fit and down. It carries the meanings of mend, repair, complete, equip, prepare and put in order. The idea is that God will restore us to our former condition.

Secular Greek used "perfect" for setting a fractured bone. The Bible uses it for mending a net (Mark 1:19). The predominant idea in the word "perfect" is adjustment. God will put the broken parts into right relationship. He will put us into right relation with Himself. God will mend people who come to Him as the God of grace. He will take the broken pieces of your life and mend them for His eternal glory.

"Perfect" always carries the idea of supplying that which is missing. God will mend that which is broken. God will mend lives broken in sin. God will put us in joint, adjust us to His plan for suffering.

Galatians 6:1 translates this word as "restore." God will put us in right order. He will arrange our lives so that they are put in their proper place in His economy.

"Night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?" (1 Thessalonians 3:10). God will complete what is lacking in your faith through other believers.

God will outfit or equip us for any situation. The hothouse produces puny plants that fade in a day. The mountains produce trees that withstand violent winds. God puts adversity in our lives to develop godly character that will be able to endure anything that may come our way.

### **Principle**

God can, and will, perfect you if you let Him unscramble your life.

### **Application**

When God perfects us, He orients us to suffering. He mends our lives. He puts them back together again.

You have spiritual scars and bruises, and you need someone to stitch you up! God can do that. He will take your problem and your burden. When He mends your life, you will not find any scars.

Who can unscramble a scrambled egg? The God of "all" grace can. He will take all the broken pieces of your life and put them back together again. God is in the business of putting Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Right at this time, you may be going through deep waters. It may feel like you are about to drown. Some people say, "I can't take it any more. It is too great for me to bear." Only God knows how much hurt there is in some families. There is misunderstanding, bitterness, hostility and resentment. Such an atmosphere deforms the viewpoint of children. When they sense this hatred, they develop disillusionment toward God.

Is your family broken into pieces? God will put you back together again. God will do this even for Christians who have radically stepped out of fellowship with Him. God can restore harmony between husbands and wives. God is able to join them perfectly together again.

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

There is an onus upon God to restore us,

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

There is an onus upon us to make ourselves complete,

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11).

### establish

"Establish" means to fix, make fast, to set (from a prop). "Establish" then means to cause someone to become stronger in the sense of being more firm and unchanging in attitude or belief (Acts 14:22; 15:32, 41). The New Testament uses "establish" of stabilizing (i.e., the confirmation) persons. God will prop up the believer's convictions. He will make firm the faith of the tottering believer.

"But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:32).

In the previous verse (5:9), Peter uses the word "steadfast" for dealing with the Devil with a strong faith system. Paul desired to visit Rome that the saints might be "established" in their faith,

"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established" (Romans 1:11).

"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith--to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (Romans 16:25-27).

Paul commanded the Corinthians to stand strong in their faith,

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13).

Timothy sought to strengthen the faith of the believers at Thessalonica,

"Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this" (1 Thessalonians 3:1-3).

One of the works of God is to confirm the hearts of the saints,

"Night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thessalonians 3:10-13).

"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work" (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

"For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12).

James exhorts Christians to "establish" their hearts in the light of the coming of Christ,

"You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:8).

The character of this confirmation may be learned from its use in

"Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).

### Principle

There is an onus both upon God and upon us to strengthen our faith.

### Application

God will not allow us to waver in our faith if we develop our faith. He will fix us firm and make us stable in what we believe. God will Himself make us steady if we have positive volition toward His work on our faith system.

God will put the Christian upon a solid foundation of faith. Christian faith is not transitory or temporary but solid as granite when we allow God to develop it. Athletes who discipline themselves with rigorous training develop toughness of fiber and staying power. Believers who seriously expand their faith will develop a tough certitude that is full of confidence and stability.

### strengthen

"Strengthen" means to cause someone to be or to become more able or capable with the implication of a contrast with weakness. Literally, "strengthen" means filled with strength. God will impart spiritual might and thus make us stable during trial.

God will make us more able to do something and strengthen us for the task. The future tense constitutes a divine promise. The previous term "establish" and this term "strengthen" are similar in meaning and serve to intensify the idea that God makes us able to face the trials of life.

### Principle

In disaster, God wants us to have a firm, unwavering defense against suffering.

### Application

The same wind will strengthen a strong flame but blow out a weak flame. The wind will fan a strong flame into a great blaze.

Know how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be strong, "(Longfellow)" see also Ephesians 6:10.

No one truly knows how strong their faith is until it has been put to trial. The furnace of adversity will reveal the strength of our faith.

"If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10).

We need God-given strength. God is able to provide that strength.

"He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:29-31).

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

God will give us spiritual stamina. He will strengthen us in times of temptation. In no area do we go down to defeat as we do in our home life. Most of our failures are right at home. It is such a humiliating thing to be defeated right in the place where we live the longest.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).

"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy" (Colossians 1:11).

"But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" (2 Timothy 4:17-18).

Sometimes these defeats take place at work but we are most frequently off-guard at home. The way we treat our loved ones at home is more of a true indication of our spirituality than the way we treat fellow Christians at church. Our family knows

whether we are a phony or not. They know whether we fake it or not.

The story is told of a man who prayed, "Lord, fill me, fill me." He prayed the same prayer almost every week and the congregation got tired of it. One night he prayed this same prayer and his wife burst right into his prayer and said, "Lord, don't pay any attention to him. He leaks!" The place to practice Christianity is at home.

Are you icily polite with your loved ones? You are nice with each other for appearances' sake. You appear to be devoted to your mate but you rankle each other endlessly. Within your person, there is a hostility that borders on hatred.

### and settle you

"Settle" means to lay a foundation (Luke 21:14).

"And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (Matthew 7:25).

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17).

"If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister" (Colossians 1:23).

God will settle you down as on a foundation. He will fasten you to the ground and fix you as a substructure. He will settle your heart. He is the underpinning to your heart.

### Principle

God is in the business of settling our hearts down.

### Application

God will fasten us in the ground or fix us as on a spiritual foundation. We ground or establish our faith in the bedrock of trust in God during affliction. It is there we discover the great truth of God's grace in our greatest trials.

God can settle you and put you into the realm of stability. God can make you reliable and consistent even under great duress. Having done this, you will not go off on one extreme or another. You

will last. You may not be sensational. Some of us are like jackrabbits. We bound ahead but then we go asleep along the road like the rabbit in the fable. Others of us are like the turtle that keeps plodding along. We never know where the spiritual jackrabbit is going. True, sometimes they make great leaps and break all records but they fall asleep holding their record book.

The Lord Jesus will calm your spirit. Do you have a bad temper? He will cool it down. He will quiet your spirit.

### 1 Peter 5:11

"To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

### To Him be the glory

The first epistle of Peter ends in a doxology. Since God is the God of all grace, He deserves glory. Since God sustains us during trial, we should laud His glory for His intervention into our lives.

"To Him" indicates that Christianity is personal.

"To" makes it plain Peter ascribes special praise to a person he holds in deference. His praise is clearly directed to God, the One who turns suffering into blessing.

### and the dominion

The word "dominion" is a special term for power. It conveys the idea of force, strength, might, and especially manifested power. "Dominion" is a deed manifesting great power, implying some supernatural force.

"He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts" (Luke 1:51).

This power is the power to rule or control. This is a term of sovereignty. God also rules the circumstances and situations of your life (cf. Romans 11:36). He possesses ruling power in your life. The root of this word derives from "creator."

"Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:16).

God has sovereignty over death.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in

the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

God has dominion over our ministries.

"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11).

God has sovereignty over our salvation.

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25)

Jude also praises God's majesty and power.

The sovereign King makes believers kings.

"And has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:6).

In eternity, there will be praise to God's power.

"And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

'Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!'" (Revelation 5:13).

Peter praises the Lord for His ruling power. He had just finished talking about what the power of God could do in individual lives (v.10). God has the power to strengthen Christians in suffering by His sovereign actions.

### **forever and ever.**

Christians will spend eternity celebrating the glory and power of God.

### **Amen**

The word "amen" means so be it. Peter concludes his epistle with an affirmation of his belief in the glory and sovereignty of God for all situations. Peter says in effect, "I believe in the glory and ruling power of God for any situation in life."

### **1 Peter 5:12**

"By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand."

### **By Silvanus**

"Silvanus" was also called Silas. Silvanus was probably a Latin name for Silas. Luke in Acts prefers the name Silas.

Silvanus was a prophet from the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22, 32). That church dispatched him along with Paul and Barnabas to take the decree from the Jerusalem conference to the church in Antioch. Silvanus' background as a servant was similar to Barnabas and John Mark.

At Antioch, Paul and Barnabas quarreled over Mark (Acts 15:36-41), a relative of Barnabas. They divided over him. Paul refused to take Mark on his next mission because of Mark's earlier desertion. Paul chose Silvanus to accompany him on his missionary expedition to Asia Minor and ultimately to Macedonia and Achaia. Barnabas chose Mark to go with him (Acts 15:41-18:5). An opportunity of a lifetime came to Silvanus because he was available for God to use him.

Setting out from Antioch, Paul made his way through Syria and Cilicia to the towns of southern Galatia (Derbe and Lystra) where he took Timothy as a companion (Acts 16:1-3). From there he passed through Phrygia to northern Galatia (Pessinus, Ancyra, and Tavium) and founded new churches.

Prevented from proceeding to Bithynia, he moved on from Galatia into Mysia and Troy. Here Luke joined (Acts 16:10-17) the team. Silas accompanied Paul through Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Thessalonica.

When Paul left for Athens, Silas stayed at Berea and then joined Paul at Corinth (Acts 16-18). Silas was an important figure in the churches in Macedonia. Acts 18:18 suggests that he may have remained in Macedonia when Paul left. His early connections with the church in Jerusalem were helpful in giving added theological legitimacy to the Paul's missionary enterprises. Silas was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37-38) and a Jew. This was a help to Paul as well.

Paul mentions Silas in his introductions to some of his epistles (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:19). Except in 2 Corinthians 1:19, Paul mentions him in reference to the writing of these epistles. He was a secretary to Paul and both secretary and courier for Peter. He is not named again until the reference to him here in 1 Peter.

The fact that Silvanus worked closely with both Paul and Peter shows the theological closeness of Paul and Peter. Although their theology is close, the way of expressing that theology is very different. There are some people today who try to make us believe that Paul and Peter were at odds. This gives a lie to that assertion. There was no schism in the early church between Paul and Peter. There was a clear cordial alliance between them.

Silvanus probably penned the epistle of 1 Peter. Peter may have penned the conclusion by his own hand. It was a general practice of writers of Scripture to use amanuenses (secretaries) to write their epistles (Galatians 6:11-18; 1 Corinthians 16:21-23; Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17-18). Silvanus was also the person who carried this epistle to the countries listed in 1:1.

Silvanus now stands in similar relationship to Peter that he did to Paul. After ministering with Paul as a secretary, he now joins Peter. Paul was probably in prison by now. He was conversant with and known to the churches to whom this epistle is addressed (1:1). They knew what kind of man he was. They knew his character.

The Scripture records no syllable that Silas ever said. This affirms the importance of subordinate work. One little chip in a computer can cause the computer to stop operating. There is an importance to little things. Little things are indispensable. More glory shows up on the monitor. No doubt, some people will receive more glory in Christian work than others will. Glory, however, is not how God measures things. God places value on faithfulness to the role He gives us.

### Principle

God uses unknown, unsung believers for His glory.

### Application

Who has thought much of this man Silvanus? The two greatest missionaries of the first century were Paul and Peter. Both of these mighty missionaries depended on Silvanus. Neither Paul nor Peter could have done what they did without Silvanus. He was their right-hand man.

Silvanus was available for God's use. It did not matter whether he played the second man. He played second fiddle to both Paul and Peter. He did not seek glory for himself but only for his Lord. That is why he could serve the way he did.

Paul and Peter were the "stars" of the first century community. God left to the lot of Silvanus to be a satellite to move around the greater orbs. If God calls you to this lot, will you be willing to accept it?

May God give us many more servants like Silvanus.

"Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us--by me, Silvanus, and Timothy--was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:17-20).

A principle in the nation Israel was that some were to "stand by the stuff." "As his part is that goes down into battle, so shall his part be that carries by the stuff; they shall part alike." Stand by the stuff in your service for the Lord!!

### our faithful brother

There is a definite article in the Greek before the word "faithful" making it obvious that Silvanus was well known for faithfulness. People knew him for his fidelity. Silvanus was trustworthy and dependable. He is a person who inspires trust and faith. We will grow faster in our faith if we trust our leaders.

Peter did not say that Silvanus was a genius, a wise philosopher or an eloquent preacher. He said simply that he was faithful. He may have been ordinary but he was faithful. Everything else is of



little consequence to Peter. Silvanus' faithfulness was a manifestation of his faith. No one pushed him to serve. His faith inflamed him to serve.

Timothy was also a faithful person.

"For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Corinthians 4:17).

Tychicus was a faithful minister.

"But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you" (Ephesians 6:21).

Onesimus was a faithful minister.

"With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here" (Colossians 4:9).

Epaphras was a faithful minister.

"As you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit" (Colossians 1:7-8).

Paul was faithful in his ministry.

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12).

### Principle

Faithfulness is a primary quality for ministry.

### Application

No ministry can go very far without dependable people. Can your leaders count upon you to be faithful to your service? Can they depend on you?

"And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities'" (Luke 19:17).

God wants us to remain faithful even during suffering to the point of death.

"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Paul said that when it comes to women, he is "trustworthy." This is his claim for people listening to what he says.

"Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 7:25).

The Lord gave Paul grace to be "trustworthy" in his dealing with women. He was careful about how he related to women. He was faithful and so had the right to be heard with respect. His right to continue in ministry was, in part, therefore due to his trustworthiness with women. God commissioned Paul because he was worthy of confidence in him about this matter.

Those in Christian ministry need to be faithful in delivering their ministry and they need to be faithful to the integrity of their ministry. Can people place full confidence in both what you do and what you are?

Do you persistently do your task even though no one notices? Do you sit with hands in your pockets because no one pays attention to you? Faithfulness does not depend on someone noticing us. "Well, I taught Sunday School but no one took any notice of it so I quit." Faithfulness transcends recognition.

All the work that we do will ultimately become unnoticed in any case. Our glory will not last. Nobody will know us thirty years after we are dead. What does human recognition amount to then? It will matter little then whether someone gave us a pat on the back. Surely, our reason for service rises above recognition if we live to the glory of God! You do no work that Jesus does not see.

### as I consider him

Peter gave extensive thought to the kind of man Silvanus was. He was someone Peter could trust. No doubt Silvanus was better educated than Peter. Peter was a fisherman but Silvanus was a scholar. Silvanus wrote polished Greek. Yet, he willingly submitted himself to Peter's leadership and faithfully served under him.

This man was a close associate of both Peter and Paul. They were the two greatest missionaries of the first century. Silvanus was, therefore, a

common factor in the most impacting missionary enterprises of the world! The two mighty apostles found a man upon whom they could depend.

### Principle

God divinely designs a second-place role for some people.

### Application

The church can never do without the kind of people like Silvanus. He was content to take second place. He willingly served in the background so long as the work of Christ advanced. Both Paul and Peter overshadowed him. He accepted the role of a penman of these two great apostles. He was faithful in that role. Every era of Christianity needs this kind of person.

Are you someone others can count on?

"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

You do not have to be brilliant to be faithful. God does not say, "Well done, you famous servant." Silvanus did not say, "Peter, you ask me to be a mailman? No way. That is beneath my dignity. Don't you realize who I am? I am a polished Greek scholar." No, Silvanus carried the mail because he was faithful.

What is beneath your dignity? Show me someone who is willing to do anything for the Lord. I will show you someone God will use.

### I have written to you briefly,

Peter wrote First Peter by using an amanuensis (a secretary who penned the epistle -- Silvanus).

Verses 12-14 are the postscript to the epistle, the PS. He probably wrote the PS in his own hand.

### exhorting and testifying

Peter shows why he wrote to the Asia Minor Christians (Turkey today). He wanted to do two things: 1) exhort and 2) testify.

"Exhorting" means to encourage or appeal. Peter exhorted the believers throughout this epistle to live under "the true grace of God."

"Testifying" means to bear witness. To give a testimony is to give the strongest assurance that

the purpose of this letter was to reveal the true grace of God.

All of Peter's exhorting and testifying in First Peter revolved around "the true grace of God." Every command and every testimony must center on grace.

### that this is the true grace of God

The "true grace of God" is the operating principle of the entire epistle of First Peter. The child of God can withstand persecution if he or she stands in the grace of God (1:13; 4:10; 5:10).

"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

1 Co 15: 10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

"For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you" (2 Corinthians 1:12).

"Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality" (2 Corinthians 8:1).

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

There must be a false grace if there is a true grace. The Devil imitates everything God does. Sometimes imitation grace looks as good as the real thing. This is how the Devil deceives people. He sells them a bill of goods.

Some people turn the grace of God into lewdness. They give a spin to the idea of grace that is contrary to God's view of grace. Grace is evidently vulnerable to some using it as an excuse for sin (Jude 4).

**Principle**

Grace is the operating principle for all suffering and Christian living.

**Application**

Are we conscious that it is Jesus who bestows upon us the power to live the Christian life? We have a right to live in God's power not because of who and what we are but because of who and what Jesus is and did.

God delivers us by his sovereign unadulterated grace. He asks no work, no merit or effort on our part. He does not save us or empower us by Christ plus anything but by Christ plus nothing. It is not Christ plus our religion or Christ plus anything. It is Christ plus nothing that equals salvation.

"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5).

Jesus does it all. He suffered all that needs to be suffered for our sins. No effort of our own can save or sustain us. Whether it is becoming a Christian or growing as a Christian, it is by grace (2 Peter 3:18).

**in which you stand**

If the Christian is to be strong, he needs to stand in grace. Grace is both a gift and a responsibility. Grace is the provision God gives for the Christian life.

It is not enough to have the grace of God, we must stand in the grace of God (5:9). We need to dig our heels into grace. If we operate under the illusion that we have something to offer God in ourselves, we lose our orientation to grace. The tendency to fall back upon our own merit and worth is a persistent evil. The Devil constantly tries to persuade us to take pride in ourselves and our accomplishments.

"Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43).

"But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I

received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

"We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Corinthians 6:1).

"Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (Hebrews 12:15).

**Principle**

The operating principle for the Christian life is grace.

**Application**

We not only need grace to live the Christian life, but we need to stand on grace to be an effective Christian. It is one thing to accept God's grace occasionally. It is another thing to make grace the central operating principle for our lives.

The Christian stands eternally in grace. This grace is unalterable because of Christ.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

When the child of God is disciplined by Him, it is an issue of grace, not punishment. Discipline is remedial, not punitive. It is God's process of educating believers. As a faithful Father, He refuses to let us get away with sin. He will not let us get away with something that will hurt us. When a believer recognizes this, he moves toward stable Christian living based on grace.

**1 Peter 5:13**

"She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son."

She who is in Babylon

"She" may refer to a congregation with whom Peter is staying.

"Babylon" the city was almost non-existent in the time of Peter. It was located in what is now Iraq today, in the Mesopotamian valley. There is no evidence that Peter ever went to Babylon. He was, however, in Rome in the final years of his life.

Silvanus and Mark were both colleagues whose ministry was nearer to the city of Rome.

"Babylon" may be a code name for the city of Rome. If Babylon does refer to Rome, Peter might have used this code name to protect the Asia Minor Christians from persecution. Rome became a catalyst for persecution of Christians throughout the world.

John Mark also sent his greetings to the churches in Asia Minor. Paul located John Mark in Rome in an earlier concern (Colossians 4:10). This also gives evidence that Babylon is Rome.

### **elect together with you**

"Elect" is a double compound word made up of three words: with, out of and elect. "Elect" is a compound word meaning to being selected together with. "Elect" means called out together with others. An elect person is a person chosen together with someone else. God is the one who does the choosing.

This is a corporate word. We are part of one big family of God and our home is not of this world. Our home is heaven. God elected people from various parts of the Roman Empire to be His church (1:2). They would possess salvation and a relationship to God.

### **greet you**

Churches should care for one another. They should love and pray for one another. Does your church have fellowship with other churches? Do you do things together?

### **Principle**

Christians everywhere are joined by the bond of Christ.

### **Application**

Wherever Christians may live, they have a bond in Christ. Churches which are great distances apart should have affinity for one another. Although distance separates them, they are one in Christ. We need to look over the fences of our narrow viewpoints and embrace other believers for the cause of Christ.

We are united by God's common election. Continents may be separated by oceans, but they

are parts of the same globe. In fact, under the ocean, continents blend into one.

### **and so does Mark**

Now for a study of the life of Mark.

The "Mark" of this verse is the Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark. The New Testament mentions Mark in five books. We meet him first in Acts 12,

"So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12).

The church at Antioch (300 miles north of Jerusalem) sent relief by Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts 11) because of a wide spread famine in Judea. In Acts 12, the gospel team was in Jerusalem. Terrible events transpired while they were there. Herod executed James the apostle with a sword.

When Herod saw that this pleased his constituency (this is all that a politician needs), he threw Peter in jail. Herod wanted to execute Peter after Passover. The night before Herod was to execute Peter, the church was in an all night prayer meeting praying for Peter. When Peter knocked at the door, the people praying did not believe that God answered their prayers!

### **Principle**

God answers even faithless prayer.

### **Application**

We often enter prayer not believing that God will answer our prayer. God answers even faithless prayer.

We need to develop a mechanism that will help us recognize when God does answer prayer. My method for doing this is to write down my prayers. When God answers the prayer, I write "answered" beside the request.

Whatever method you chose, you need to strengthen your faith by seeing how God answers prayer in your life.

When Paul and Barnabas finished their relief ministry to the saints, they returned to Antioch (another 300-mile trip to the north).

"And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark" (Acts 12:25).

We learn from Colossians that John Mark's mother was the sister of Barnabas. Thus, John Mark was the nephew of Barnabas. Barnabas invited John Mark to go with them on a missionary enterprise for they could use him in the ministry at Antioch. Mark then accompanied his Uncle Barnabas and also Paul to Antioch.

The Holy Spirit then called Barnabas and Paul to a missionary expedition further into the Roman Empire. The local church at Antioch sent them out on this mission (Acts 13:1-4). They took John Mark with them.

"And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John [Mark] as their assistant" (Acts 13:5).

John Mark was their "assistant." In today's terms, you might say that he did the odd chores. He set up the P.A. system, drove the car and organized their meetings. He did the legwork.

### Principle

The work of God needs people to do the legwork.

### Application

Every ministry needs this kind of person. Thank God for each of them. These are the people who do much for the kingdom of God. However, we hear very little about them. They work behind the scenes. If it were not for them, much kingdom work would not get done. Things went along quite well but before long, John Mark deserted the team.

"Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem" (Acts 13:13).

John Mark went home. Some would say that he was a mama's boy--that he found the work of God getting difficult and quit when the ministry got tough.

The Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:2). He said nothing about Mark. Who invited Mark? His uncle. Many people go into ministry because some person asked them to do it. "My

mother always wanted me in ministry, they say." Yet these people often do not last in Christian work because they have not sought the will of God.

So, John Mark went home. The gospel team continued their ministry without John. Again, in today's terms, they drove their own car and did their own organizing.

### Principle

God must lead us into ministry, not people.

### Application

If God does not lead you into ministry, you will become cynical, critical, negative and bitter. By the same token, if God does lead you into ministry, you will have a great love for people, including your detractors. And you will understand that your critics keep you from pride.

If we allow people to put pressure on us to go into the ministry, we make a big mistake. We must make sure that it is God who leads us, not other people.

Six years elapse between Mark's desertion and Acts 15:36,

"Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing'" (Acts 15:36).

The gospel team decided to do some follow up work on those who received Christ on the previous mission. Barnabas wanted to take his nephew with them even though he was a failure the first time.

"Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark" (Acts 15:37).

Mark lives down in Jerusalem with his mother.

"But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work" (Acts 15:38).

Paul reasoned that if Mark quit once, he would quit twice. But Barnabas felt differently about that. He wanted to give Mark another chance. "After all, he is young. He failed the first time out, but we need to give him grace. Maybe he will make good this time," Barnabas might have reasoned. But

Paul resisted, "He is not going with me. You can't depend on him."

"Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches" (Acts 15:39-41).

The gospel team broke up over a personnel dispute. Each went his own way. They were never to minister together again.

Years slipped by and Paul was imprisoned in Rome. From his cell, he wrote Colossians. In the last chapter, Paul acknowledges that Mark made good.

"Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him)" (Colossians 4:10).

### Principle

We want to finish well.

### Application

When it comes to Christian work, it does not matter as much how poorly you begin, what really counts is how well you finish. The score at half time is not nearly important as the score at the end of the game.

Paul wrote Philemon at the same time and place as Colossians (when he referred to Mark 4:10). At the end of Philemon Paul says,

"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers" (Philemon 1:23-24).

Here Paul calls Mark his "fellow laborer." Mark was in prison with Paul in Rome. Paul was not ashamed to identify with Mark at this point. In fact, Paul views Mark as someone who works shoulder to shoulder with him under the duress of imprisonment.

We find the final verse about Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11,

"Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11).

"Useful" means profitable. Mark is profitable to Paul for the work of ministry! What a change in Paul's thinking! Mark came through with flying colors towards the end of his ministry. Barnabas' confidence in Mark paid off. I wonder if Paul ever had misgivings about not giving Mark another chance for ministry.

It says something of both Paul and Mark that they could reconcile their differences. They were men of character who would not let differences of the past hinder future ministry together.

### Principle

God is the God of second chances.

### Application

How many people go into the ministry and do not make it the first time? They are of sensitive spirit and people easily hurt them. Criticism rains down on them and they become so discouraged that they soon leave the ministry. Then God gives them a second chance. In their second chance at ministry, God uses them together in a marvelous way. Jonah was a failure the first time out but God gave him a second chance. God is the God of second chances.

Can you resist holding a grudge against someone who hurt you in the past? Can you let past injuries be forgotten?

### my son

John Mark was the cousin of Barnabas but he was of no relation to Peter.

Mark was Peter's disciple. He was his son in the faith. Peter may have led Mark to Christ. Paul led Timothy to Christ and referred to him as "my dearly beloved son" and "my son in the faith." Both of these great missionaries placed a priority on discipling others.

### Principle

All of us should have someone whom we are in the process of discipling.

### Application

Is there someone in your life that you disciple?

### 1 Peter 5:14

"Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen."

**Greet one another**

"Greet" carries the idea of to welcome, or salute. When we greet others, we extend to them courtesy. In the first century, greetings of courtesy were important to honor other Christians. When we greet one another, we draw them to ourselves. We welcome others into our lives. Romans 16 uses this term 21 times.

Five epistles close with "greet one another with a kiss of love [Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians and 1 Peter]." Giving deference to other Christian was obviously a great value in to the early church.

**Principle**

Peter commands Christians to make a point of expressing love to each other to give them respect.

**Application**

Do you make a point to express love to other Christians? Respect is foundational to love. Love is foundational to respect.

each other in our culture. I, for one, am glad the custom has changed!

**Peace to you all**

Peter pronounces a blessing upon believers in Asia Minor. "Peace" generally carries the idea of prosperity of soul.

This epistle began with an affirmation of peace (1:2) and now it closes with an affirmation of peace. We never get away from our need of grace and peace.

**who are in Christ Jesus**

"In Christ Jesus" narrows the crowd down. There is a special peace given to those who hold the same status that Jesus holds before God. This is also the audience to whom Paul wrote,

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**Amen**

"Amen" means so be it, or, I believe this. Peter believes in His message. The grace of God will carry them through any suffering they might face (5:10).

I hope that God blessed your hearts in the study of 1 Peter.