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a *Grace Notes* course

## **First Peter**

### **Lesson 4**

#### **1 Peter 2:3-15**

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# 1 Peter

## Lesson 4

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**1 Peter 2:3 to 15****1 Peter 2:3**

**if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.’**

Peter alludes to Psalm 34:8 in this verse. When David wrote Psalm 34 he was lonely and without friends. Saul hunted him down like a deer in the forest. He ran to the territory of the Philistines. There he faked madness to avoid punishment by the king. Alone in the cave of Addulam he wrote “O, taste and see that the Lord is good.”

***if indeed***

This phrase "if indeed" continues the analogy of the milk of the Word in verse two. His argument assumes that Christians have come to experience God's grace in salvation at some point in life. The "if" does not express doubt. We can translate "if" as "since." This is an argument based on our actual personal experience.

Since we have actually come into personal experience with God's goodness, we should lay aside the five sins of verse one.

***you have tasted***

The word "tasted" means to cause to taste. God is the cause of our personal experience with the Lord. We did not seek him. He sought us.

The word "taste" continues the analogy of milk and indicates personal experience of salvation. Christians have personally experienced the new birth. We can taste the goodness of Christ's salvation. We can taste the flavor of God's grace.

We experience God by the Word. This is where we find God's goodness and grace. Those who feed on this pure milk will experience God's provision.

**Principle**

Personal experience of God's grace motivates us to be free from the soul- kinks of verse one.

**Application**

We must personally experience God to know his goodness. Once we come into that experience, living in the flesh will not satisfy us (verse one). The relationship sins of verse one spoil our appetite for the Word and for fellowship with God.

We discover grace best by personal experience. When we experience God's goodness, provision and providence in our daily encounter with him, we worship Him. We cannot fellowship with the Lord afar off. We must know Him personally to know Him truly.

***that the Lord is gracious***

"Gracious" primarily signifies "fit for use, able to be used." Therefore, graciousness is good, virtuous, mild, pleasant (in contrast to what is hard, harsh, sharp, bitter). "Graciousness" is suitable and pleasant to us (Matthew 11:30). It is something easy to bear.

God's character is kind, gracious, serviceable, pleasant, good (Luke 6:35; Romans 2:4).

**Principle**

We cannot cultivate divine love for others until we first recognize God's love for us.

**Application**

Our Lord Jesus Christ is gracious to us. He is in himself infinitely good to us even though we violate him with our sin. He is the fullness of grace.

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:16).

**1 Peter 2:4**

**“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.”**

Peter now turns to how the Christian should respond to his new life in Christ. He begins with the believer's privileges in Christ. We

are in a new status quo with God. We can draw on what we already have. We do not have to earn or deserve privilege from God.

Those who have new birth are a new building (vv. 4-8) and a new people (vv.9-10).

Coming to Him as to a living stone

This coming is not our initial coming to Christ in salvation. It is the close, intimate fellowship with the Lord. There are none of us so close to the Lord that we could not be nearer. We want to close the gap between us and the Lord more every day.

"Coming" conveys the idea of coming forward toward or going near to a reference point. In some places it means to move forward toward someone and they responding reciprocally. In some places "coming" signifies a consent, implying a coming to agreement (Acts 7:31; 1 Timothy 6:3; Hebrews 4:16; 7:25; 10:22). Sometimes it conveys the idea of taking the initiative in association with someone (Acts 10:28). The focus of "coming" is upon the initiative.

Note the word "coming" in the following passages:

"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).

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22).

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

The words "to whom" and "coming" have the same word that means face to face. This is intimate fellowship with the Lord. Therefore, "coming to Him" is not coming to him in salvation. This is coming to him in worship.

The grammar indicates that as we come to Christ, we come personally and habitually. This is intimate communion between us and the Lord. We have access to him as a perennial privilege.

Christians can fellowship with the living Stone. In chapter one, verse three, Peter talks about a "living hope" and in verse 23, he refers to the living Word. We do not normally think of a stone as

living. We think of a stone as dead. We have a phrase "stone dead." This makes the paradox of the living Stone all the greater. Jesus the Stone lives because He rose from the dead. Isaiah calls the Messiah a stone (Isaiah 8:14; 28:16).

The living Stone is a contrast to the pagan temples with their ornate stones. However ornate these stones might be, they were still dead. We can have fellowship with Jesus the living Stone because He is a person and we can enter into vital fellowship with Him.

Not only does the stone live but it also gives life. We can share His resurrection life in time. A stone depicts strength and solidity.

### Principle

There are none of us so close to the Lord that we could not be closer.

### Application

Jesus has eternal life in Himself. He is the living Stone. Those who accept Him as their personal Savior begin eternal life at that time. We begin eternal life at the moment we trust in Christ.

To this Stone, God asks us to come. This is not a physical coming into His presence but a coming into fellowship with Him. We come to Him by faith.

Are you daily in fellowship with the Lord by faith?

### *rejected indeed by men*

The Greek term for "rejected" is a combination of two words. The first word means "respected on the basis of proven worth." That is, to scrutinize or put a person to the test to decide whether or not to approve of or accept that person. The second word means "from." That is, the person failed the test. "Rejected," therefore, means to reject as the result of disapproval.

This test is carried to the point where there is no need for further testing. As a result, one comes to a settled conclusion that the person tested does not meet the requirements of the test. Therefore, one disapproves of and repudiates the person. People reject Jesus after they give him a trial run based on their own standards.

Men reject Christ after a thorough examination. They disapprove of his credentials. They declare Him useless after careful scrutiny. He does not qualify as worthy in their estimation. He is unfit for their lives. They judge Him as not worthy or genuine and thus reject Him.

Most men reject Christ. They oppose fellowship with Him (Isaiah 53:3). In their judgment Jesus does not meet their test. Now the Stone remains in this condition (perfect tense), that is, in a state of being tested and rejected.

### Principle

Man uses himself as the test or standard to determine the validity of Jesus Christ.

### Application

Man sets up his little tests to prove whether Jesus meets his requirements. However, the issue should be: is the test right or not? It is deadly to use the wrong test. Israel did this. She thought that the Messiah would be born in a noble family, that he would have wealth and become world-famous. That was her test but she used the wrong method for finding truth.

Are you using your opinion to determine how a person should get to heaven? "Well, I have my opinion how about a person should become a Christian." Why should you use your opinion rather than the Word of God?

The right test for determining how a person goes to heaven is the Word of God.

### *but chosen by God*

The "but" throws a contrast between man's opinion and God's opinion about Christ. In God's eyes Jesus is both tested and approved as genuine.

"Chosen" means chosen out and selected (Matthew 22:14; Luke 23:35; Romans 16:13; Revelation 17:14; 1 Peter 2:9). God picked Him out from among everyone else (Luke 23:35). Even though men reject Him, God views Him as select. God elected Jesus to go to the cross. As a result of His work on the cross we can share His election and destiny (Isaiah 42:1). Jesus ranks with God. God put Him in a place of administrative priority.

In the final analysis it is God's approval that is necessary, not man's.

### *and precious*

"Precious" means to hold in honor, hold as very valuable or worthy. 1 Corinthians 3:12 talks about "precious stones."

God holds Jesus in high status and that demands that we both honor and respect Him. The word "precious" means honorable. He is worthy in the esteem of God. He is also worthy in the judgment of all who believe on Him.

### Principle

God holds Jesus in high estimation.

### Application

If God holds Jesus in such honor, we should highly prize Him as well.

### 1 Peter 2:5

**“you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”**

This verse begins a section dealing with the believer's status before God.

### *you also, as living stones*

The phrase "as living stones" identifies us with Christ. He is the "living Stone" and we are "living stones." We live because we share His resurrection life. Christ is the life (John 1:4; 5:25; 11:25; 14:6); we share in His life. The Christian life is not religion but a vital relationship with God. God does not build His church out of dead materials. He builds it on our position before Him in Christ.

Jesus is the Stone. Peter was a little stone (a chip) off the great rock Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18).

### *are being built up a spiritual house*

"Built up" is literally to build a house. Peter uses this term in the metaphorical sense of edification. God is in the act of building up believers in their spiritual growth (Romans 14:19; 15:2; 1 Corinthians 14:3, 5, 12, 26).

"Being" indicates that it is God that does the building (Jude 20; Ephesians 2:21-22). Nothing can hinder this building. God is in the process of laying each stone Himself.

"Spiritual house" refers to the church. God did not make this building out of literal stones. He builds this building by adding Christians to the church. Every time a person receives Christ as his Savior, God places a new stone in the building. One day this building will be finished then He will come again.

The purpose of a house is for someone to live in it. God dwells in this house. God made his residency in the temple in the Old Testament. In the New Testament he lives in Christians. He dwells in the lives of his people (I Corinthians 6:19). He is a guest in our lives.

### Principle

Spiritual growth comes with the application of positional truth to experience.

### Application

God constructs the church on the basis of positional truth. Our status before God is positional truth. Positional truth is true for both the spiritual and the carnal believer (I Corinthians 1:2,30). Positional truth protects the believer from ultimate judgment (Romans 8:1). Positional truth guarantees eternal life to those who possess it (Romans 8:28-29).

God bases spiritual growth on positional truth. Have you edified your soul by God's provision of positional truth? Have you applied your positional truth to experience? Do you realize that you have status in God's eyes?

### *a holy priesthood*

What is the point of the "spiritual house?" The Greek reads "for a holy priesthood." The reason we have a spiritual house is so that we can function as priests. The reason we are spiritual buildings is so that we might exercise the right of our priesthood privileges.

Our translation does not translate a word found in the Greek, the word "unto" – "unto a holy priesthood." It is God's purpose that each Christian becomes a priest. A priest acts on behalf of another. Since every Christian is a priest, every Christian can act on the behalf of every other Christian or even non-Christians.

The characteristics of a priest:

1. he has access to God 2. his task is to bring others to God [a prophet brings God to the people; a priest brings the people to God] 3. he brings offerings to God

The functions of the New Testament priest is to confess, 1 John 1:9 pray, Hebrews 4:16 sacrifice: the body, Romans 12:1 praise, Hebrews 13:15 money, Hebrews 13:16 obedience to leadership, Hebrews 13:17

### Principle

God expects us to exercise our privileges as a priest.

### Application

We often question our purpose for existence on planet earth. This verse says that one purpose for our existence is to function as priests.

Do you intercede for others? Do you pray for the lost? Do you represent Jesus Christ to those who do not know him? These are functions of your priesthood.

### *to offer up spiritual sacrifices*

"Offer up" means to bring up. The Old Testament priest brought his sacrifice up to the altar. God wants us to bring up our offering directly to him. The offering here is ourselves. God wants us to bring our whole person to him.

Under the Old Testament economy the priest offered an offering upon a brazen altar. In the New Testament we offer ourselves to God with our spirituality.

The Christian brings "spiritual sacrifices" not animal sacrifices. Spiritual sacrifices are activities of the believer that the Holy Spirit animates. These are the things that we do in the power of the Spirit.

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:15-16).

### Principle

We are priests that offer spiritual sacrifices to God directly without mediation.

**Application**

The Christian makes his worship an offering to God. Worship should not be a burden but a joy and privilege. We cannot force worship. We must bring to God the offering of ourselves voluntarily.

Have you made yourself an offering to God? God wants us to present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1). The characteristic sacrifice of the New Testament believer is a spiritual sacrifice.

We can offer ourselves to God at any time under any circumstance. Our sacrifice is not limited to time. Neither is it limited to content.

***acceptable to God***

"Acceptable" is a double compound word. "Acceptable" comes from three Greek words put into one word: 1) good or favorable 2) face to face [what one can accept to oneself] and 3) to receive. "Acceptable" then means what one can receive favorably to oneself, face to face. When we offer sacrifices to God He readily accepts them because of Jesus Christ. God receives our gifts to Himself with pleasure.

This term means that which is very favorably accepted. God is very pleased with offerings to Him (Romans 15:16). Offering of the whole person pleases God very much. God is pleased when He detects spirituality in the lives of those who love Him.

**Principle**

We please God by our spirituality.

**Application**

Do you want to put a smile on the face of God? We can put a smile on His face by offering spiritual sacrifices to Him. When we give everything that we are to Him, it honors Him.

***through Jesus Christ***

It is Jesus Christ who mediates our acceptance by God. We cannot mediate acceptance by God on the basis of who or what we are.

In the Old Testament access to God was the privilege of a few professional priests. Among them only the high priest could enter the holy of holies and that only once a year. In the New

Testament the privilege of access to God belongs to every believer. The Christian is at once both the temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and the priest. It is also our task to build bridges to God for other people.

Through Jesus Christ, the new and living way, every Christian has the right of access to God personally.

We can go immediately into the presence of God without a mediator. If it were not for the work of Jesus Christ on the cross we could not go directly into the presence of God. Because of him God admits us into His presence.

"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 5:2).

**Principle**

Jesus Christ earned our right to have access into the presence of God.

**Application**

Often Christians do not pray because they feel that they do not have the right to pray. They feel that they are not good enough for God to listen to them. This is to miss the whole point. To feel "good enough" implies that God accepts our prayer on the basis of who we are and what we have done. This is not the basis of God receiving our prayers.

The basis of God accepting our prayer is the work of Christ on the cross. He earned the right of our access to God. That is why we come to God "in Jesus' name." We come to God on the authority of what Jesus Christ did, not what we do.

If this is true, why not exercise your right to pray without guilt?

**1 Peter 2:6**

**Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."**

1 Peter 2:4-8 presents the Lord Jesus as three stones: a "living stone," a "precious corner stone," and a "stone of stumbling." Jesus

is a living stone to the believer because he sits in the heavens. He is a priest forever. We are in him and we are therefore priests.

Now we come to Jesus as the "chief cornerstone."

### ***Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,***

Verses six to eight are a series of citations from the Old Testament. Peter now gives three citations from Scripture to prove his point. These citations deal with Jesus as the great stone.

This is an allusion to Isaiah 28:16. This is documentation of the fact that Christ is the living stone. In chapter 28 Isaiah pronounces a woe against Ephraim. Ephraim perverted herself with drink and became known for drunkenness (vv. 28:1). They distorted the beauty of the Lord (vv. 6,8). Because of this, Isaiah predicted the Assyrian invasion. In spite of Ephraim's rejection the Lord placed in Zion a "chief cornerstone." If anyone were to believe in him, God would deliver him from the Assyrian invasion. If anyone in Ephraim were not to believe on Him, they would stumble over Him.

"Contained" indicates that this is not an exact quotation but this reference strives for the essence of the idea. The truth of who Jesus is lies within the Word. The only way we will capture the preciousness of Jesus is to study the Word.

The appeal is to what is written ("Scripture"), not what is spoken. Scriptural proof for what we believe is crucial for documentation of what we believe. The Word is the norm and standard for what we believe.

### **Principle**

We need to substantiate what we believe from Scripture.

### **Application**

Much teaching to Christians today cannot be substantiated by the Word of God. Many Christians today are loosed from the moorings of Scripture. If the Lord Jesus and the apostles quoted Scripture as authoritative, should not the modern Christian as well?

### ***Behold, I lay in Zion***

"Behold" calls attention to the importance of the statement.

"Zion" is the temple site in Jerusalem. "Zion" became a title for believers in Israel.

Jesus himself quoted from this Scripture (Matthew 21:42). Peter referred to this passage in his defense before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:11).

### ***A chief cornerstone***

A cornerstone is where the stones of a building meet and it unites the entire structure. A building rests on its cornerstone. The cornerstone is the most significant stone of the whole structure. The whole house is held together by this stone. It controls the whole structure. A believer rests on the Lord Jesus, our cornerstone. He supports the entire church.

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

### **Principle**

God's sovereign plan is built around the Son.

### **Application**

God has a sovereign plan for the Son of God. His whole plan of salvation revolves around the Lord Jesus. Jesus' death on the cross is the foundation for our salvation. We are as safe as this foundation.

### ***Elect***

Jesus is essential to the Father's eternal plan. God chose Jesus because none other could save man; no one else could do it. God chose Him and He is dear to God. God's whole plan revolves around Him. Billions of years ago the Father knew every failure or problem that every man, woman and child would ever face. He put into place a plan that



would meet every need. The starting point was to elect the Son and take Him to the cross.

"Elect" always takes us to eternity past. It always refers to God's divine design for creation. God's eternal plan always excludes human merit. God always provides in His grace. Under grace God gets the credit.

It is God's approval that is the important issue, not man's. What a contrast! Christ was not dear to Israel but He was dear to God.

### ***Precious***

Our response to the elect Lord Jesus is to hold him as precious. "Precious" means valuable. "Precious" is something that we hold in honor. Believers should hold him as highly valued or most valuable. Do we treasure Jesus in our lives?

Maudlin sentimental people ruin this word "precious" for us. "Precious" does not mean to slobber. All of us do a certain amount of this. This word means to hold in highest value.

Thirty years after the ascension Christ is more precious to Peter than ever.

### **Principle**

God wants us to occupy our minds with the person of Christ through the Word of God.

### **Application**

We are in a dangerous period of church history where Christians fail to recognize that knowledge of the value of Jesus Christ comes from the Word. Jesus does not want maudlin sentimentality; He wants true love.

### ***And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.***

"Believes on him" is more than to believe about Him. To simply believe about Him does not qualify us to be a Christian. We would be lost for eternity if that were the case. To believe "on" Him means we trust Him. Do you have confidence in the plan of God for your salvation? Belief is the point where one enters the plan of God.

There are those who put their trust in someone only to find that they must shamefully retreat from them because of some indiscretion. This will never

happen to a true Christian because of the integrity of Christ.

"By no means" is double negative in the Greek making this phrase very emphatic. The Lord Jesus assures the believer of ultimate victory.

"Put to shame" means dishonored or disgraced. This might refer to the Great White Throne judgment for unbelievers. Only unbelievers will stand at the Great White Throne judgment. This is where God will indict the unbeliever. God will indict them because they chose to stand there apart from the cross.

At the Great White Throne judgment, God will not mention sins to non-Christians. Why? Because of the principle of double jeopardy. The unbeliever attempts to stand on his own works. Those works are not sufficient to meet the righteousness of God. Man's righteousness cannot stand before the righteousness of God. Sins are not the issue at the Great White Throne because Jesus paid for our sins by his death on the cross.

What is the principle? At some point in your life you were probably ashamed of someone in your life. If we stand with our good works before God, God will be ashamed of us. The Christian will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. God will not mention our sins to us because Jesus took the judgment for them. If we stand in our own righteousness, we will be embarrassed.

"Shame" -- the more we orient to the grace of God the less we will experience shame. All of us have done a lot of things that bring us shame but God will overrule that shame with His grace.

### **Principle**

God does not want Christians to carry guilt complexes.

### **Application**

The grace of God elevates us from shame. His cross meets all the demands of God. That is why we can forget the failures of our past (Philippians 3:13). We can move on without guilt. The grace of God is our platform for victory.

The principle of double jeopardy means that God will not judge the same sin twice. God judged our sin on the cross. Therefore, he will not judge us for

sin again. Jesus paid for all sin of all time. The issue before us is to accept God's elect plan for our salvation and to live a life rejoicing in the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the believer.

### 1 Peter 2:7

**Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone"**

#### *Therefore, to you who believe*

A believer is a person who trusts Jesus Christ for salvation. This transaction does not take place when you are confirmed or are baptized or join a church. This happens in a vital confrontation with the cross of Christ.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47).

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

"So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household'" (Acts 16:31).

#### **Principle**

Belief in the cross to pay for our sin is the only basis for salvation.

#### **Application**

Either, we embrace Jesus as our Savior or we stay lost and go on our way to hell. However, the older we get the route to hell gets less merry. It can get grim when we lay at death's door and there is no hope. It becomes a fearsome, ugly thing. People who die without Christ have no hope, no future beyond the grave.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ as the only way (John 14:6; Acts 4:12) have eternal life.

#### *He is precious*

Jesus is of inestimable value to Christians because He is in the plan of God from eternity. He is worthy of all value to Christians. Jesus holds dignity and glory in His nature both to God and to Christians. He is precious because He is elect to God.

It belittles true Christianity to be indifferent to Jesus. Jesus must be more precious than our wife, husband, son or daughter. He is precious to us because God identifies us with him in his own eyes. By his work on the cross, God identifies Jesus' worth with us. That's why He is precious to us.

Those who come to the Savior experience His "graciousness" (2:3). When we come to Christ we experience His grace. Then we find that He is not only gracious but He is precious. He becomes increasingly precious the longer we know Him. Jesus gets better the older we get, if all things are equal. Everything else dims, decays and degenerates. Jesus looms larger in value to us as time goes on.

#### **Principle**

Jesus is precious to those who truly know Him.

#### **Application**

The child of God close to death realizes the preciousness of the Lord Jesus. The best is yet ahead. The worst is yet ahead for those who do not know Jesus. They do not know what we mean when we talk about the preciousness of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus is precious in the same way our faith is precious (1:7,8). What would you put as the completion to this statement: "I love the Lord because..." Everything we have in time or eternity has been given by the Lord Jesus. He becomes increasingly precious the more we come to understand this (Galatians 6:14).

How precious is the Lord Jesus to you? Jesus is more precious to some believers than others. It is obvious from how they lead their lives. We cannot love the Lord Jesus without knowing Him. Once we know Him we love him. The more we love someone the more we want to do for them (Revelation 2:4). He is worthy of our honor (Revelation 4:11).

#### *but to those who are disobedient*

The "disobedient" are non-Christians. Their unbelief is the cause of their stumbling. This is more than refusal of intellectual assent. This word means more than simple unbelief. It is a revolt of

the will against God's authority. The gospel presents its truth to the heart as well as the mind. Unbelievers disobey because they will not believe the gospel truth (John 5:1-16).

Unbelief is blind to the preciousness of Jesus Christ. Before we received Christ Jesus was nothing to us. After we believed, He was everything to us.

Peter uses the term obey in other places in his first book:

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied" (1 Peter 1:2).

"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart" (1 Peter 1:22).

"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

The stone which the builders rejected

This is a quotation from Psalm 118:22.

"Rejected" means to discard after close examination. The builders tested Jesus to the point where no further testing was necessary for them. The people of His day saw His miracles but rejected Him in the face of the clear demonstration of His credentials. They repudiated Him after a close look at Him.

People set up their little tests to prove whether they want Jesus in their life or not. The real test from God's viewpoint is the Word of God. God says in the Word that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).

Has become the chief cornerstone

Not only is Jesus the cornerstone, He is the chief cornerstone.

### Principle

Unbelief is rejection of God's authority.

### Application

Disobedience is rejection of God's authority upon one's life. Do you revolt against God's authority in your life?

God views Jesus Christ as central to his plan. He is the "chief corner stone." Have you adequately considered His credentials? Why not place your trust in Him now?

### 1 Peter 2:8

**“and ‘A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense. They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.”**

### *and A stone of stumbling*

The third quotation in this passage is from Isaiah 8:14, where Isaiah predicts the Assyrian invasion about to come upon the Northern kingdom of Israel. The northern kingdom had made a confederacy with Syria and Samaria. They terrified Judah, the southern kingdom. If the nation repents, God will become a sanctuary to them. If they refuse to repent, this rock would crush them. Peter says that Jesus was that stone; He is that sanctuary (v.12).

### *And a rock of offense*

The "rock" in Palestine was often a loose stone on a path. The picture is a person traveling a path in the dark [ignorance of the Bible]. He stumbles over these loose stones in the path.

"Offense" means to cut against. The cross of Christ offends non-Christians. It cuts against their bent. The death of Christ as a substitute for sinners offends this bias.

### Principle

Jesus is either the chief corner stone or a stone of stumbling.

### Application

To Christians Jesus Christ is the foundation stone, the chief corner stone, the head stone. To those who rebel against God's Word, he is a stone of stumbling.

"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).

Christ either saves or judges us. Have you tripped over the Savior? We can blame the church or the preacher but it is ultimately Jesus over whom we stumble. It is offensive to hear that Jesus is the only Savior and that religion cannot save a sinner. And it is offensive to hear that we are poor sinners. We do not want to hear we are sinners. We do not want to hear that we need a sinner's Savior. Yet, this is God's message to us.

### ***They stumble***

"Stumble" means a trap set to trip someone on a path. Unbelief blinds the eyes and carries a disastrous nemesis within itself. Unbelievers bang themselves up before they complete their journey of life. They set their mind so that they will not be vulnerable to persuasion from God. They willfully reject Jesus as the answer.

### ***being disobedient to the word***

"Disobedient" means not persuaded, refuse belief, unwillingness or refusal to comply with the demands of some authority. They refuse compliance with God's Word to them.

"In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

"But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek" (Romans 2:8).

"And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" (Hebrews 3:18).

"By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace" (Hebrews 11:31).

"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

### **Principle**

Negative volition is refusal to accept the authority of God's Word.

### **Application**

God's Word is the way God communicates His will to us. If we reject the Bible as ultimate authority, we reject God's voice to us.

God describes non-Christians as the "children of disobedience." Those who believe are the children of obedience. They come to accept the Bible as the Word of God. Once a person accepts the authority of the Bible and the message of the Bible, they enter into God's family.

Is the real reason to reject Jesus as your Savior rebellion against the authority of God's Word?

### ***to which they also were appointed***

God is the one who makes our appointment with the Word. God ordains that each person responds to His Word.

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (Matthew 21:42).

Peter ascribes Israel's stumbling to God (Romans 11:11). God makes an appointment for all people but many never keep the appointment because of their offense at the cross. God's appointment is not for wrath but salvation:

"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

### **Principle**

God makes an appointment with each person to face salvation through Christ.

### **Application**

Every person has a divine appointment with the Word of God. He must accept it or reject it. When we bump into a rock, it hurts. When we stumble

over the rock of Jesus Christ it will hurt. It will bruise us forever.

### 1 Peter 2:9

**“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.”**

Peter concludes this portion of I Peter with a moving exhortation to live out the Christian life based on our position before God.

Four titles express our position, setting forth our privileges before God. We cannot orient to God properly without knowing these privileges.

In these verses, Peter presents the believer's position. Then he presents the purpose for this position. The believer's position in the Christian life is fourfold.

### *But you*

"But" is a right-about-face word. "But you" stand in emphatic contrast to non-Christian attitudes toward Christ (2:8). Billions of years before anyone existed, God knew that you would exist in time. He knew you by name. He knew you would make the greatest of all decisions to receive Christ as your Savior. Because you made that decision, God made provision for you billions of years ago in the form of positional privilege before Him. This is what makes the believer stand in such contrast to those without Christ.

Unbelievers cannot have eternal meaning and purpose. No matter how successful they may be in this life, they cannot have what the most humble Christian can have. On the contrary, believers, no matter what disaster overtakes them, no matter what failure occurs in their life, hold status before God.

All four privileges are positional. These are things accomplished by God. Therefore, the privilege of our status before God has been granted by God. No matter how we fail, we still hold these prerogatives before God because of Christ.

### Principle

The Christian holds prerogative before God by Christ.

### Application

Any person who is a Christian has been born into the family of God. It begins with the second birth, spiritual birth. We enter into life by physical birth. We enter into eternal life by spiritual birth. When we accept Christ we enter into union with Christ.

God changes our status forever on our second birth. In order to orient to the plan of God, we have to know who we are. If we have personally accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior we are part of the elect race. Does this make us superior to others? No, it makes Christ superior to others. Christians are not superior in themselves, therefore, they should not act superior to others. We have no right to look down our nose at others.

### *are a chosen generation*

Now Peter talks about the first of four privileges for the believer. These four privileges orient believers to God's prerogatives for them. Each description describes positional truth.

All four privileges relate to our status with Christ. Therefore, we are left without any illusions about ourselves. These four phrases have nothing to do with how we feel; they have to do with what God did for us. Therefore, Christianity is grace-oriented. Christianity is grace. Grace always depends on who and what God is. It never depends upon us.

"Chosen generation" is the first of a fourfold description of a believer. In contrast to those destined for destruction, Christians are a chosen race or generation. God uses the phrase "chosen people" for both Israel and the church. God told Moses at Sinai to tell Israel, "You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). Here are some of the New Testament references to election.

"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14).

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever

you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16).

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19).

"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

"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).

"Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4).

"Generation" is a class of people who have a common descent and life. Christians are a spiritual race. It is not simply those living in the first century. The church is a race based on spiritual birth (regeneration). We enter this generation by spiritual birth. We enter into union with Jesus Christ forever.

Christians carry a corporate title. All true Christians are part of a chosen group diverse from those without Christ.

"Are" is in italic, making it emphatic by the absence of a verb. "You ... a chosen generation."

### **Principle**

At salvation we enter into the same position that Jesus has before God forever.

### **Application**

Christianity is a relationship not a religion. Religion is an attempt to gain the approbation of God. Christianity means that God is satisfied with us, no matter what, because of Christ. Our prerogatives are completely accomplished by God through Christ apart from human work. It is fully the work of God. It is the grace of God.

### ***a royal priesthood***

This is the second title for the believer's position in Christ. Peter calls Christians "a royal priesthood" (cf. Revelation 1:6). Christians are royal priests. In Romans 12:1, Paul challenges Christians to offer themselves as a "living sacrifice." We are the sacrifice in the function of our priesthood.

"Royal" is the Greek word for king. The priests of the Old Testament were merely priests. They were not "royal." The believer of this dispensation is a king-priest. Royal means no man stands over us as priests. We have direct access to God. Our priesthood could not be royal until our High Priest had done his work (Hebrews 4:14).

We are royal in relation to God. We are separate from sin via Christ. We offer to God our consecration and service made acceptable in Jesus Christ. We are a royal priesthood because of our relationship to Jesus Christ who is both king and priest. The church is a kingdom of priests. Priests lead people into the presence of God.

"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).

"And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10).

The Greek says "for a holy priesthood." The reason we are a spiritual building is that we might exercise our right of priesthood privilege. Every believer is a priest.

There are two great characteristics of a priest. Firstly, the priest is an individual who has access to God and whose task is to bring others to him. In the ancient world, access to God was the privilege of the few. However, through Jesus Christ, that access of God is the privilege of every Christian. It makes no difference how educated or humble a believer may be. The priest is also a person who builds a bridge for others to come to God. The Christian has the privilege and duty to bring others to the Savior.

Secondly, the priest is one who brings an offering to God. In the Old Testament believers brought animal sacrifices, but the sacrifices in the New Testament are spiritual sacrifices. Everything a

priest does is done for God. The smallest task displays God's glory. The Christian himself is an offering (Romans 12:1). He is a living sacrifice.

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15). The words "to offer up" was used for that act where the priest offered the animal sacrifice on the four-and-a-half-foot altar. Similarly, believers are then in the place where they should offer their heart to God. New Testament priests are not limited as to what they should offer God. Their whole life is a consecration to God. They have an unlimited priesthood.

We have the right to go immediately into the presence of God. How do we get this privilege? By spiritual birth.

"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). Romans 5:2 says "through whom." Through Jesus Christ we have access into the presence of God. This is the only reason God permits us into his presence. Because of the person of Christ, we not only have access to God's presence, but our fruit is acceptable to Him because of Christ. God admits us into His presence because of Christ.

### **Principle**

Christians are king-priests.

### **Application**

We need to think of ourselves as king-priests. Our character and conduct should fit our calling. We have the right to approach God directly through Christ. We have the privilege of constant, direct, immediate access to the presence of God.

Christians possess the right of aristocratic priesthood. We have a special relationship to King Jesus by spiritual birth. We are not aristocratic priests because of who we are; we are aristocratic priests because of Christ. Christ is going to rule over the world forever. He is sovereign. We are in union with Him, therefore, we will rule with Him.

Christians have the right of confessing their sin directly to God. Every sin in the history of the

world has been judged by Christ's death.

Therefore, we have the right to confess our sin and know that we are forgiven.

Our right of prayer is not based on who and what we are, but on who and what Jesus is. Christians have the right to approach God in prayer directly through Christ. Christians have the right to approach God directly. They need no in-between person to intercede for them. We can come to God with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). Jesus was a royal priest (Hebrews 4:12); His children are also royal priests.

### ***a holy nation***

Peter lifts the third title for our position in Christ from Exodus 19:6. Christians are one nation with one King. God governs us by the laws of His Kingdom. This is a prerogative not natural to us. This prerogative comes to us by spiritual birth.

The church is a nation in the midst of nations. This nationhood is based on our union with Christ, not on geography. A nation is a multiple of people of the same nature. Believers come together as a national entity to function as a kingdom of people.

The word "holy" means set apart. The church is a people set apart unto God. We are a people for God's possession. We are God's special property. We are at His complete disposal and for His personal use. Christians have different standards, different ideals, different motives. They are different from other people. That difference lies in the fact that they dedicate to God's will and service.

### **Principle**

The church is not only made up of individuals but of a collection of people.

### **Application**

The church is a collection of people. We are a new spiritual race. We come together as a collection of people for special purposes. Our national, kingdom privilege is an issue of status. We become in our experience what we are in our status, if we appropriate our privileges.

We obtain holiness by imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. God puts holiness in us by the blood of Christ.

***His own special people***

The fourth title for our position before God is that we are His "special people." The words "own special" mean to preserve. God's people are special because God preserves them for Himself. "Special" is literally protected. We are a protected people. We are a people of God's own possession. God's act of possessing His own guarantees our security.

"Own special" comes from two words: around and to make. It means to surround something with a circle indicating ownership. Christians are the unique, private, personal ownership of God. We are his unique possession. We are his special possession.

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14).

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

**Principle**

Christians are people for God's own possession.

**Application**

A boy who collects things such as stones and knives views these things as special treasures laid away. The value of those "special treasures" lies in the fact that he owes them. These everyday things attain new value.

Christians may be ordinary but they attain special value because of the One who bought them. We belong to God. Our value lies in the fact that we belong to God. We are people prized by God.

God has put a circle around us and He did all of the work. The circle is God's grace.

The purpose of our position before God is to praise God. If God does the doing, then God gets the glory.

***that you may proclaim***

"That" indicates a purpose clause.

"Proclaim" means to announce with focus upon the extent to which the announcement or proclamation extends. It comes from two words: out and proclaim. It is an intense verb meaning to proclaim throughout, to announce, to speak out about, to tell out, proclaim abroad, to publish completely, advertise. God expects a complete proclamation from us. God wants a full telling out of His praises. This is a reference to a spoken message.

God wants us to send a message to the world.

***the praises of Him***

God wants believer-priests to live out their family characteristics so that it is evident to all that their lives are different.

God's praises are a manifestation of power characterized by excellence. Praises are God's eminent qualities, His excellencies. God wants us to proclaim God's glorious attributes and noble acts. The word "praises" only occurs four times in the New Testament: Philippians 4:8; 2 Peter 1:3,5; and here. "Praises" are the noble acts of God-virtues.

**Principle**

The purpose of the believer on earth is to tell forth the praises of God.

**Application**

The more we know the Lord Jesus the more we can proclaim him.

People read the Christian far more than they read the Bible. They see us, but they only hear about the Lord Jesus. We are either Bibles or liables.

***who called you out of darkness***

God calls us out of the darkness of a life without Christ. Darkness is the sphere of those who reject Christ as their Savior. God calls us out of the condition of being an unbeliever.

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13).

***into His marvelous light***

"Into his marvelous light" is the event of becoming a Christian.



"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:19-21).

"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

"To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18).

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." (Ephesians 5:8).

### Principle

Becoming a Christian is a transition from darkness to light.

### Application

Have you passed from a state of darkness to a state of light? Have you come to trust Christ as your Savior?

### 1 Peter 2:10

**"Who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."**

### *Who once were not a people but are now the people of God*

There was a point when the Christian was not a part of God's family. It is important occasionally to look back at what we were. There was a time when we were not naturalized or, shall we say, "super-naturalized" into the people of God.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26).

The previous verse says that we are God's special people, the people of his possession. After we

became a Christian, we became someone who belongs to God. The onus is upon him to protect, care and provide for us. He will meet all of our needs and solve all of our problems.

### Principle

God wants us to compare our lost estate with our saved estate to appreciate what we have in Christ.

### Application

At one point God did not claim us as His own. We were devoid of God's presence in our lives.

Before we received Christ, we were not a people in God's eyes – we did not belong to God. We were simply creatures, created by God. All our thoughts were horizontal. We said prayers but we did not talk to God. We were religious but we had no relationship with God. We went through form and ceremony. We tried to be good but we could not even meet our own expectations. Then one day we met the Lord Jesus. We had a confrontation with the Son of God. Someone told us about the Savior. There is a difference between religion and a relationship with Jesus.

Now that we are Christians the onus is upon God to make provision for our daily needs.

The dividing line for this verse is the cross. This verse describes the Christian before he entered the plan of God and after he entered the plan of God.

### *who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy*

There was a time when we had not received mercy from God. The phrase "had not obtained mercy" indicates we existed without mercy for a long time.

Mercy is not grace. Grace emphasizes God's provision for us in salvation. Mercy emphasizes God's decision to spare punishment for our sins. He forbears punishment in the light of His grace. Because of Christ, God is free to exercise mercy toward us. "Mercy" means to receive grace. Before we became a Christian, we did not experience grace.

What is God's attitude toward the non-Christian? Since he is spiritually dead, God must deal with him on the basis of justice. The unbeliever has not received the God's justice through the cross,

therefore, he must take the punishment for sin himself. God is not free to exercise mercy on one who does not accept the provision for mercy.

God cannot tolerate any sin. God's character must remain the same whether a person is a Christian or not. If a person does not accept God's solution for sin, he must pay for sin himself. Since the Christian has accepted God's solution for sin, God is free to extend mercy to him. God must always act consistently with Himself, or else He would not be God.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Ephesians 2:4-5).

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life" (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

### Principle

God is free to exercise mercy to us because of the cross.

### Application

Do you know that God wants to extend mercy to you? He is free to do it because Christ has taken all the punishment for our sin. He paid for it all on the cross. God is now free to exercise His mercy to you, if you will receive it.

You may not feel you deserve mercy. That is not the issue with God. We can understand God's mercy but we cannot give mercy to ourselves. We violate God by injecting our own thinking about forgiveness into God's plan for salvation. God will extend His mercy to any and all who accept His son's payment for sin on the cross.

This is also the case with the Christian. Many Christians cannot forgive themselves for what they have done. God has forgiven them and does not

hold it against them anymore. God is faithful to give mercy:

Lamentations 3:22-23 "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."

### 1 Peter 2:11

**"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."**

With this verse we come to an entirely new section of 1 Peter. Up to this point Peter has set forth the believer's privileges in view of his sufferings. The believer has status; he has position.

He now asks his readers to respond to their prerogatives. Because Christians have a new identity in Christ, they should live out that identity.

Chapter 2:11-12 is an introduction to this new section.

### *Beloved*

Christians are "beloved." They have respect from God and Peter. Exhortation to live the Christian life is based on love. Peter exhorts those loved by God to live as aliens and strangers in this world. Their true home is heaven.

"Beloved" is a pet term for Christians. Christians are well loved. This term identifies a Christian. The Bible makes a clear-cut distinction between Christians and non-Christians, sheep and goats, saved and the lost.

People are not Christians because they have admirable feelings toward respectable things. That has nothing to do with becoming a Christian. Until a person comes to the cross of Christ, he is an alien from heaven. If you reject the cross, there is no place in heaven for you.

"Beloved" is also distinctive of God's love. This term occurs 62 times in the New Testament. God draws us close to His heart with a love that calls for a corresponding love. This is a term of endearment. The Asia Minor Christians will not accept the challenge unless they are sure that the one challenging them loves them.

"Beloved" is a special term for the Christian, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

### Principle

God loves us with the same infinite love he has for his Son.

### Application

There is nothing we can do to change God's love for us. God accepts us in the beloved One. God loves the Son with an infinite amount of love. We entered into union with Christ at our salvation. Therefore, God loves us with the same infinite love with which he loves Jesus Christ.

No matter how unlovely we may be, God loves us with unconditional love. We are objects of God's love. We can do nothing to change that love. His love toward us does not depend on who we are or what we do. God's love depends entirely upon His character. It depends entirely on who He is. We cannot get away from God's love. We can never say "no one loves me."

Because of God's love, you do not care whether you lose profit in stock. Because of God's love you do not worry about a business failure. It makes no difference whether your boyfriend leaves you. You stand independent in God's love. We cannot change the love of God because of our failures or because some catastrophe comes our way. God provided from billions of years ago, everything we might need. We need to relax in that love.

### *I beg you*

"Beg" means to exhort or urge. This is a plea to pilgrims to live the Christian life based on prerogatives of vv. 9-10. Peter is pleading (present tense) to the Asia Minor Christians and also to us.

Christians are citizens of heaven, therefore, they are sojourners and pilgrims (Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13). Their standards are different from this world.

"Urge" is the language of grace. "You shall..." is the language of law.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a

living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

"Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30).

"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).

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

"Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ - who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you" (2 Corinthians 10:1).

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Ephesians 4:1).

The language of grace is "I beseech, urge, plead." You do not have to do this. You can go to heaven without this. The pity is that Christians do go to heaven without doing this.

### Principle

God's appeal is for us to live the Christian life on the basis of His provision.

### Application

If we try to live the Christian life by operation bootstraps, we will fail. All of God's appeals are made on his provisions. How well do you know God's provisions for you?

If we never live the Christian life to its fullest, we may never draw on God's provisions of grace for our lives.

### *as sojourners and pilgrims*

Peter challenges Christians of Asia Minor to live the Christian life. He makes his appeal on how we view ourselves in this world. He wants us to view ourselves as "sojourners and pilgrims." This world is not our home. We are just passing through. Our home is heaven.

"Sojourners" - those who settle alongside non-Christians. This word comes from two words:

alongside and house. It means to have one's home alongside of. This is a person who lives in a foreign country where he has no citizenship rights. His home is somewhere else. He is an alien.

The word "pilgrims" comes from three words: alongside, upon and pagan. This is someone who lives alongside pagans. He stays temporarily in a place that is not home. He is different from a pagan. Christians hold different values than those around them. Christians live on earth temporarily.

Christians are not citizens of earth. We are citizens of heaven. We simply sojourn on earth. We are pilgrims passing through a foreign country.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21).

Because we are citizens of heaven, we should live like citizens of heaven. God wants us to act in this world like we would act while visiting a foreign country. Whenever I travel in foreign countries, I carry my passport. My passport gives basic information about me: "Name: Grant C. Richison. Birthplace: Detroit Michigan. Birth date: ??!" I go to foreign countries on a mission – to advance the cause of Christ. God has placed you where you are to represent your home – heaven.

Before we became Christians we were strangers to Christ (Ephesians 2:19). We were strangers to God and to heaven. We had little inclination toward God. We didn't care about God. Now that we have become Christians we are strangers down here (Psalms 119:19). We have friends and relatives over there. Each year we have more friends over there. Some of us have more friends over there than we have here.

Note the order - strangers and pilgrims. Invariably we quote these words backwards – pilgrims and strangers. However, we cannot be a pilgrim until we take our place as a stranger down here. Every day we are one day closer to home.

### Principle

Christian fit into a different scheme and hold different values than the world.

### Application

We will not be here forever. We are not earth-bound. Why hold to this life so tightly? One day we must go. We can't take it with us. We should hold things of this life loosely. Success and money will not make a big impression in heaven.

Are you homesick for heaven? Christians do not fit into the scheme of things down here. The world tries to force us into its mold. They do not like to be reminded that there are higher standards. We reject their values. We reject their philosophy of life. We march to a different drum beat than the non-Christian. We are going in a different direction. This is not our permanent residence. We are just passing through. We are heaven-born and heaven-bound.

God leaves us on earth to be light and salt. We are here to influence others for Christ. We do not want to go to heaven alone. We want to take others with us: father, mother, brother, sister, friends. The Lord might just as well take us to heaven now if we are not going to take others with us.

### *abstain from fleshly lusts*

"Abstain" means to hold yourself back from. The phrase "abstain from fleshly lusts" means to hold the self back constantly from fleshly lusts.

Anything that is incompatible with our fellowship with God is a fleshly lust: lust for power, lust for personal approbation, materialism lust or lascivious lust.

A lust is simply a craving. Some desires are legitimate. We have a God-given desire for food, drink and sex. "Fleshly lusts" are carnal appetites. This is the human nature apart from God. It is our fallen nature. This is not only gross lust but lust of any kind.

These lusts attack the soul (Galatians 5:19-21). This involves more than sexual sins but also attitude sins such as jealousy, envy, hatred, resentment. God wants us to avoid fleshly lusts (Acts 15:20,29; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:22; 1 Timothy 4:3).

Lusts originate from the Devil. They are the desires of the Devil.

"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a

murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:14).

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24).

"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others" (Ephesians 2:1).

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:1).

"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

### **Principle**

God wants us to hold ourselves back from fleshly lusts.

### **Application**

The Savior wants to manage our affairs. Yet we insist on doing it. We attempt to run our own life. "I know how to run my family. I don't need any help from God."

Fleshly lusts will consume us. We will become a slave to them because they will wage war against us.

God does not want us ruled by our lust patterns. The lust pattern is seeking to neutralize our lives. God's Word gives us an appreciation for God.

### ***which war***

The word "which" connotes quality - of the kind which; which are of such a nature as to. These lusts carry the quality of aggression. They war against the soul. They take offence in the war of our soul. Lusts are not latent but dynamically active.

### **Principle**

Lusts are aggressive and take the initiative against our soul.

### **Application**

If lust wars against our soul, our soul should war against it. Sin weakens and debilitates the soul by assaulting its faculties. Sin wages war against the Christian's true values.

Those serving in the army of the Lord Jesus must take note that the Devil places fleshly lusts in our lives to defeat us on the battlefield of daily Christian living. These lusts are part of the strategy of the military campaign of the Devil to destroy the believer. They perform the office of a soldier. They have the discipline to destroy us.

If it means a subtle withdrawal to ultimately defeat us, the Devil will strategically withdraw lust to come back at a more vulnerable time. He will withdraw lusts and we think the battle is over. "We sure got the victory there," we say. This leaves us vulnerable to greater assault and greater defeat.

We are up against a mighty strategist. The lusts of Satan are at his command. His tactics are beyond human resources to combat. We must leave the strategy to General Jesus. We are not on familiar territory. We're on the Devil's territory. The Devil knows the mountains, valleys and plains of the territory on which we are fighting. He has the advantage, only if we meet him on his own terms.

### ***which war***

The word "war" means to do military service, serve in the army, to serve in war, to undertake a

military campaign. The word "war" carries the idea of active military service.

The New Testament uses image of war for the Christian life (1 Corinthians 9:7; 2 Corinthians 10:2ff; Philippians 2:25; Philemon 2). Paul does not merely walk the Christian life but he engages in spiritual war.

The Christian life is a good war controlled by faith.

"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:18-20).

"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

James 4:1 also has the destructive aspect of war in view. This time in relation to inner disagreement that leads to wars and fights. Inner tension produces outer conflict.

"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:1-2).

### **Principle**

Christians are in a spiritual war.

### **Application**

This world is not a friend of grace to help us on to God. Most of us are totally unprepared and unequipped to operate as strong Christians in a hostile environment.

The Christian has an external, internal and an infernal foe. The external foe is the world. The internal foe is the flesh. The infernal foe is the Devil. These foes are not visible as we find in military campaigns today.

This is a battle to which there is no armistice. The only way to fight the Devil is to first submit to God and then resist him. James 4:7 says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

### ***against the soul***

Fleshly lusts will try to capture our soul; they war "against the soul." This leads to the problem of kinks in our soul. When lust patterns control our life, we have a soul-kink. We do not build up these kinks overnight. This soul-kink produces self-pity and pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, implacability, vindictiveness, hostility, fear, worry and anxiety. Spiritual hoopla will not overcome them.

We must come to the place of Paul, when he said, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). It is not through mental discipline or any other human technique. It is the power of God that overcomes soul-kinks. We can win no spiritual battle with human ability. As Paul goes on to say, "So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin." We must accept God's technique and his provisions to overcome soul-kinks.

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:12-20).

**Principle**

War against the soul is a hot war, an all out frontal attack.

**Application**

We have the idea that we can do anything we please. We are our own boss and we run our lives. If we have this attitude, we are headed for defeat in spiritual war.

God wants to equip us with armor to fight the spiritual war but we must first submit to his right to be the General in our army. That means He has the right to give me direction. He will dictate the terms under which I fight for Him in a hostile world. That means unconditional surrender to General Jesus. That means we take all our orders from Him.

We must check in with the General before we take a single maneuver. The wonderful thing about General Jesus is that he is omniscient. He can see over hills and around corners. He knows all the problems we might face. We can trust him with our future.

We see this principle in Plutarch's *Moralia*. Question 39 asks why are the soldiers simply sitting in the camp without fighting the enemy. Plutarch records the answer: "It is more important to obey a military command than it is to slay an individual soldier...he who asks leave to perform the offices of a soldier [our word for 'war'] renders himself accountable to the regulations of his general." It is more important that we follow the commands of General Jesus to execute our own strategy.

**1 Peter 2:12**

**“Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”**

Christians abstain from sinful lusts for two reasons:

1. for their own spiritual well-being
2. for an effective testimony before non-Christians.

Now we come to the second reason for abstaining from sinful lusts.

***Having your conduct***

"Conduct" focuses on our daily behavior. It means to behave or live as a manner of life (Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 1:18; 3:16).

Literally, it comes from two words: back and to turn. Therefore it conveys the idea of to turn back, return, to move about in a place. It means to move back to a point or area from which one has previously departed. God views our Christian life as a daily sojourn of behavior. We can translate it as "behave."

Of the 13 times the New Testament uses this word, 1 Peter uses it six times (cf. 1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1, 16).

**Principle**

Evangelism requires the life as well as the lip.

**Application**

This word conduct means manner of life. God is concerned about our conduct as much as our talk.

We have often heard the phrase "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." Another saying is "I'd rather see a sermon any day than hear one." These truths are specially crucial in our conduct in the home. If we live with non-Christians, it is not profitable to preach to them day in and out. We must preach to them with our life, not our mouth.

We will not have to say much about the gospel in the family until the time comes when they are open to the gospel. They will watch and observe us, sometimes for 25 years. However long it takes, Christians must watch their conduct.

The farther removed we are from people the more we have to use the lip. The closer we are to people, the more we employ, life-style evangelism.

***honorable among the Gentiles***

The word "honorable" means lovely, good to look upon. Christians must make their lives so beautiful to look upon that the slanderers of their enemies may be undeniably demonstrated as false.

"Gentiles" is a synonym for non-Christians. It is the word for heathen, nations, pagans (1 Thessalonians 2:16; 4:5).

### Principle

The best argument for Christianity is genuine Christian living.

### Application

Whether we like it or not, every Christian is an advertisement for Christianity. By our lives we either commend Christ to others or we make people censure Him or think less of Him.

Since the word "honorable" means "beautiful," we adorn our testimony by our behavior. It is the outer life that strikes the eye. Is your Christian life winsome? Is your life attractive? God wants us to live a life appropriate to our profession. Our life should match the gospel.

We often hear the phrase, "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." Another phrase is, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear a sermon any day." This is especially true in the home. Preaching to relatives day in and out will not win them. Living the life before them will make a much greater impact. They watch and study us.

The closer we live to people the less we need to say. There are certain things we avoid even though they may not be sinful. They may be coarse, off-color, shady, and beneath the dignity of the child of God.

The Christian is an ad for God. God not only wants us to live a life of integrity but He wants us to appear to live that life as well. We can repel others from Christ by indiscretion. One bad testimony can do more damage than a dozen positive ones.

### *that when they speak against you as evildoers*

"That" - in what thing. The very thing in which the world speaks evil of the Christian.

"As evildoers" - they seek to discredit the testimony of Christians. When God comes to scrutinize our conduct will give rise to the glory of God. He will make known the real truth about our lives.

"Evildoers" means to speak down. They love to run down the reputation of Christians. They are in the business of adversely criticizing Christians. The testimony of Christians makes them feel guilty. This happened in Christ's life as well.

This is unjust slander. Christians of the first century were accused of disloyalty to the government because of their loyalty to King Jesus. The Roman government viewed their testimonies with great suspicion.

### Principle

Non-Christians are inveterate enemies of Christians with a positive testimony.

### Application

Slander is an occupational hazard of the child of God. If our lives are different because we have come to Christ, we will stand out as a speckled bird.

Non-Christians love to downgrade Christians. They don't want anyone to put confidence in you. They don't want someone with a testimony to get ahead and hold credibility before others. They will say anything to slur or belittle you. They love to degrade you in the opinion of others who make take notice of your life. This is especially true in the media.

Slander will try your soul. The natural reaction is to fight back and vindicate yourself. You want to stick up for your rights. You will lose your testimony and blow your platform to speak to others if you do. Your testimony is more important than justifying yourselves. You do not have to get your own way all of the time. This may cost you something, but your testimony is worth it.

### *they may, by your good works which they observe*

A godly life will ultimately stop their slander and even cause them to glorify God.

The word "good" occurs twice in this verse. The first time it is translated by the word "honorable" and this time by the word "good." A good life produces good deeds.



**"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).**

**"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men" (Titus 3:8).**

"Observe" means to view carefully as a personal witness. Non-Christians will carefully watch your testimony.

### Principle

What the Christian does proclaims the reality of what he believes.

### Application

God does not want us to become religious recluses, or hermits. God's view is that we insulate ourselves from sin not isolate ourselves from those who sin. God does not want us to become monks and retreat into monasteries shut off from the world.

Christians should expect to be viewed as speckled birds or queer ducks by those who do not know Christ. Because we do not participate in their wild parties or enter into their life-styles, they view us as odd.

Christians should attend their testimonies with godly lives. This verse is an appeal to match our witness with our lives. We cannot evangelize others if our behavior is not consistent with our professions. God wants us to witness with our lives to win the lost.

We cannot have influence on the world by joining their values. We influence them as a pilgrim. We cannot root ourselves in their values if we are going to win them to another viewpoint. Assimilation into the world not only hurts the Christian but it minimizes our impact on the world.

On the other hand, we must not isolate ourselves from the world. Our highest calling is to win those who do not know Christ to Himself.

### *glorify God in the day of visitation*

"Visitation" is a demonstration of God's power (Genesis 50:24f; Exodus 3:16; Job 10:12; 29:4). This is the coming of divine power either to benefit or for judgment.

"Visitation" is the day of inspection, a day of reckoning for non-Christians. This is not the visit of judgment but the visit of the person of God in salvation.

Non-Christians will sit-up and take notice of your life if it is consistent. And our concern is about the inner life, it will manifest itself in our outer life.

### Principle

God visits the life of every non-Christian to bring them to Christ.

### Application

The "day of visitation" may simply be the pay off by God. It is the day that comes in the life of every person. It may be a tragedy, a frightful accident. It may be surgery, a bitter disappointment, a terrible financial loss.

God uses these experiences to bring people to Christ. Your testimony will come back to them. They will remember what the reality of your life is like. It all comes back to them on the day of visitation of God's sovereign act upon their lives.

Experiences in life can bring us up short. That is the time when our heart is tender. That is when we can see the love of God more clearly. Those who were lost may now turn to Christ. They will then see the reality of your life. Their mouths are shut in silence. All they can do is glorify God because of your testimony.

### 1 Peter 2:13

**Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme."**

### *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man*

The "ordinance of man" is human government. God wants us to obey the national entity over which He placed us (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:2; Titus 3:1-2). These are not

ordinances of God but of men. This may refer to any social institution of man.

The word "submit" means to arrange yourself under. God wants us to arrange ourselves under civil government and not be the cause of civil unrest. A citizen who submits to the government does not diminish personhood; it enhances good government.

The word "submit" is a command. It is also a military word and means to arrange yourself under higher ranking authority. The soldier is to fall in rank. God wants us to fall in rank with our government. You say, "Even if the government is godless?" Yes, Nero was the king at this time. Slavery was at its peak in Roman history.

The word "submit" does not imply that Christians are to live without backbones. God does not want Christians to operate with fragile passivity. That will undermine our spiritual foundations.

The Christian's testimony will cause him enough suffering, why should the Christian add to his suffering by disobeying the government? It is interesting that Peter uses this argument in a book that argues the reasons for Christian suffering. And cause of Christian suffering is persecution from the government.

### Principle

God placed human government as an authority in our lives.

### Application

Is anarchy ever justified? Were the Colonial forebears in the United States justified in casting off the authority of England? Was it right for the Christian to be involved in the Boston Tea Party? Does a Christian have the right not to pay taxes?

The one exception to obedience to government is when the government violates the higher authority of God (Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29). Then we should not obey the government but God. Even then we still submit to a higher law, a higher authority. It is a matter of priority of principle. Do we live under God's authority or ours? It is a matter of choice.

The phrase "for the Lord's sake" means because of the Lord's sake. The motivation to obey the government is our love for the Lord. We submit

ourselves to the social and political institutions to honor the Lord.

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake" (Matthew 5:11).

"For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16).

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

"I write to you, little children Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake" (1 John 2:12).

"Because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles" (3 John 7).

"For my name's sake, for Christ's sake, His name's sake." That is reason the Christian does what He does.

### Principle

The controlling incentive for obedience to government is to honor the Lord.

### Application

We may not agree with the present government or even the laws of our nation at a given time. But we obey the laws of the government for the Lord Jesus.

### *whether to the king as supreme*

The king was supreme in Peter's day. If he wanted to put someone to death, he could do it without recourse. He had the power over life and death. No one questioned him. No one took a vote on it.

Nero was the king at this time. He governed viciously and was autocratic. His government placed hundreds of thousands of people in slavery. It was a government of corruption, drunkenness, immorality and violence. There was no democracy, no voting.

The Bible does not espouse any special form of government. In fact, the king was the highest authority in the Roman Empire. It wasn't a democracy.

**Principle**

God wants us to recognize the importance of the social order, that is, the divine institution of government.

**Application**

God does not want us to submit to a person but to a principle the principle of the national entity (Romans 13:1-7).

Every Christian has a responsibility to his nation. It is easy for North Americans to live under their government. If your reading this in China or North Korea, it's a different story. Being a Christian in those countries costs you more.

However, bad government is better than no government. If we go without government, we have anarchy. We take the law into our own hands. God does not want lynch mobs running around. A child of God should have nothing to do with inciting riots.

Yet the Bible says that we are to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21).

The believer's relationship to government is to be the best citizen possible.

**1 Peter 2:14**

**Or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good."**

***Or to governors***

The Roman governor was subordinate to the Emperor. Caesar appointed the provincial governors who's job was to curb those who were unprincipled and lawless. The Caesar appointed the governors for the good of the province. They maintained law.

In Palestine, the governor was Pontius Pilate. He was sent from Rome to have jurisdiction over occupied Palestine. Pontius Pilate gave permission for Jesus' execution.

***as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers***

If the government does not punish evil doers, they will become more and more brazen. God has never

revoked capital punishment since it was instituted in

Genesis 9:6, "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man."

A man who deliberately murders someone else in the first degree (premeditated) comes under God's principle of capital punishment. God also invoked capital punishment for adultery, sex perversion and parental attack in the Old Testament. Under Israel's law it was a tooth for tooth, an eye for eye. This approach seems harsh in today's society. We live in a generation without adequate standards.

When government ceases to punish evildoers, the government becomes part of the problem. Poor government will result. Then, the government shirks its responsibility to punish those who break the law.

and for the praise of those who do good

Another role for government is to affirm those who do good. One who does "good" is one who benefits others.

**Principle**

A country without adequate law will become a country of anarchy.

**Application**

Any kind of government is better than anarchy. Even corrupt police forces will attempt to apprehend criminals.

**1 Peter 2:15**

**For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men --"**

***For this is the will of God***

Non-Christians slandered Christians for their lack of allegiance to the Roman government. Peter now states God's will for handling these false accusations.

The will of God is the most compelling reason for doing anything. Obedience to the government is part of the will of God for the child of God.

that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men --

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Critics seek to impugn the motives of Christians. However, outstanding behaviour shuts the mouth of the critics.

"Put to silence" means muzzle. Integrity muzzles the mouths of the critics. They love to bite with criticism but integrity will silence them every time.

"Foolish men" here are non-Christians. Their "ignorance" was verbal abuse for their faith, not torture or death. Christians still enjoyed the protection of the judicial system of Rome at this time.

**Principle**

A good testimony shuts the mouths of our critics.

**Application**

Some critics of Christians say that we are of no earthly good. They know what we are against but they do not know the things we affirm.

God wants us to live out Christian principles despite what foolish people may think. It is amazing how many Christians are intimidated by what people say about them. They are in slavery to criticism.

We cannot accept the privileges of the state without accepting the responsibilities of living in the state. Citizenship is the bond that holds people to the political order. The best answer to our accusers is an upright life as a citizen.

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