

Introduction to the book of 1 Peter

* **Scenario** - Imagine that a great wave of persecution broke out against Christians in ten years, perhaps because of opposition to ungodly social practices or refusal to teach evolution or other errors that are pushed by modern man. The government prohibits churches from owning buildings or “proselytizing” (trying to teach others to convert them) if they don’t sign a letter of “tolerance” in which they agree to accept unbiblical practices. The police put Roger and Caleb in jail. All the newspapers and television shows are filled with ridicule of careful Christians for their “intolerance.”

Thought questions:

1. What would be some special temptations for Christians in such a wave of unpopularity?
 2. What would be some points from God’s word that would need to receive special emphasis?
- * This was the type of scenario that prompted the writing of 1st Peter. Many believe it was written just after the emperor Nero started a wave of persecution against Christians. We see in it exactly the type of teaching that God wants us to have, when facing unpopularity or ridicule.

Lesson 1 – Blessings bring on responsibility!

A. Introductory points

1. Sometimes a rich person will leave an inheritance worth hundreds of thousands of dollars for a teenager. Usually they don’t give the money directly to the teenager, but rather to an adult to manage. Why? What would teenagers like to do with several hundred thousand dollars? Do you think you would be responsible if someone gave you that kind of money?
2. God has given us blessings worth much more than millions of dollars. But with those blessings come responsibilities. How responsible are we after receiving so many blessings?
3. What words in 1:13, 1:17 and 2:1 indicate that Peter is going to talk about responsibilities after taking about blessings? _____
- a. You find this type of terminology all through the epistles (letters in the New Testament). Since God has blessed us in so many ways, we have many responsibilities.
4. Read 1:1,2 - To whom is Peter writing? _____

How has God blessed us?

I. A rich inheritance! (Read verses 3-5)

A. Questions to help analyze the text

1. According to the first part of verse 3, all of God’s blessings are based on one great characteristic he has. What characteristic? His _____
2. What word does Peter use to describe our hope? _____
3. Through what great event can God offer that hope? (Also 3:21) Through the _____ of Jesus
 - a. Thought question - When Peter talked about the resurrection, was he talking about something that was just theory or “theology”? Or, was it much more personal to him? Why? How can we make it more personal for us?
4. Where is our inheritance reserved or kept? _____

* Some believe our inheritance is on this earth. This verse is difficult for them.
5. How does God shield us? _____

B Thought questions:

- * Which package do you think would be more attractive to most people: (1) Live eternally with God in heaven, or (2) Win \$500,000,000 in the Powerball Lottery. What will people do to win the Powerball lottery? What will they do to live eternally? Why the difference?
- * Have you ever thought of what your parents might leave you when they die? Most of our parents aren’t rich, so we shouldn’t expect a lot materially. How much do you think about the inheritance God has promised to you if you are a Christian or expect to become one?

II. The Love of Jesus, salvation (read verses 8,9)

A. Thought questions

- * Do you have someone you love or admire even though you haven’t seen them? How?
- * What are some things that can help us love Jesus even though we can’t see him?

III. Knowledge of the Mystery of God’s Plan (verses 10-12)

A. Preliminary thought question

- * Which of the following secrets or mysteries would you like to know the most? (a) Who is going to win the World Series this year? (b) Who is going to be the next President? (c) Who you are going to eventually marry if you do?

B. Analyze the text Read verses 10-12

1. Who was especially interested in how God was going to develop his plan? (vs. 10) _____
2. For whose benefit was the service of those ancient prophets? _____

Thought question for older students: Do you think we sometimes take marvelous discoveries for granted years later? What are some examples of some marvelous discoveries we take for granted? Why do we take them for granted? Why is it especially dangerous if we begin to take the story of the death and resurrection of Christ for granted since we hear it so often?

IV. Redemption! (read verses 18-21)

A. Mixture of thought questions and questions with short answers to analyze text

1. Have you ever read of those who have been taken captive by terrorists or unfriendly countries and held as political hostages or for money? How would it be to have the inability to go out to the country, to shop, to visit others or do anything for yourself? I've read stories of some who talk about sitting for days in small rooms, trying to do math problems in their heads or do other mental exercises to keep from going crazy.
 - a. What will happen to such people if they aren't freed?
 - b. What would such people do gain their freedom?
 - c. How would they feel towards any who rescued them or paid for their release?
2. When we are in our sins and do not know Christ, what are some good things that we are kept from enjoying or experiencing? What hope do we have if we are not liberated?
3. With what were we **not** redeemed or liberated? _____
4. What was the cost of our redemption, our liberation? _____
5. What other great blessing do we receive from him according to verse 21? _____
 - * What kind of monetary value can you place on faith and hope?
 - * For how much money would you give up your faith and hope? (\$100,000? \$5,000,000?)
 - * It's easy to say that we would never sell our faith and hope for money. But then, so many people leave the Lord, stop attending services and serving him. What are some things they would most willing sell their souls for? (Money? Sexual pleasure? Popularity? Just like to run around with the wrong crowd? "I'm just mixed up." Etc.)

V. The new birth! Our spiritual "makeover" (1:22-25)

A. Preliminary thought question -

* Have you ever had a "beauty makeover" or seen someone who seemed to almost completely change after a "beauty makeover." Why are "beauty makeovers" popular? Do you know of someone who could use a "personality makeover?" (No names please!)

B. Analyzing the text (read 22-25)

1. How have we purified ourselves? _____ Is this a popular teaching today?
1. Of what have we **not** been born again? _____
2. What is the incorruptible seed that has been planted to give us the rebirth? _____
3. What happens to all flesh? _____
4. In contrast, what about the word of God? _____

C. Final thought question - Have you seen any beauty makeovers that didn't result in long-term change? How can we make sure that our spiritual "makeover" isn't a short-term occurrence?

VI. A place of honor in God's Spiritual house - (2:4-10)

A. Preliminary thought question - What is a team you would be very proud to be a part of: (a) Super bowl winning Denver Broncos, (b) Real Madrid, (c) F.C. Barcelona (d) The President's inner circle of advisors, (e) A famous news network (NBC, Fox, CNN, Univisión, etc.)

B. Analyzing the text (read 2:4-10)

1. What does verse 4 call Jesus? _____
2. What kind of symbolic "house" does Jesus build us into as symbolic "stones"? _____
3. Besides "stones" what does Jesus say we are in verse 5? _____
 - * Are Christian women priestesses?



* Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14 are quoted often in the New Testament. God made Jesus the main stone in his house, but he was rejected by the builders, Jewish leaders, and causes many to stumble.

4. In contrast to those who disobey, what are we according to verse 9? _____
5. What is our role? What are we to according to the last part of verse nine? _____

C. Final thought question - Why is it more of honor to be a part of God's team, a part of his spiritual house, than any other "team" we can think of in this world?

Conclusion - Tomorrow through Friday we will study responsibilities that come from these blessings!

Lesson 2 – Since We Are Blessed, Let's Be Holy!

Intro.

- A. What are false images that come to your mind when you think of the words “holy” or “saint”?
1. A nun or a monk with a halo around their head?
 2. Monks singing Gregorian chants in a monastery?
 3. Something only for nerdish people.
 4. Something that is unattainable except for “super” Christians?
- B. Definition - “Separation to God” – Vine
1. The opposite of being holy is to be “common” or “profane”
 - a. To profane is to disrespect things that deserve awe and reverence.
 - b. Thought question - How can people profane (disrespect) this country? Why does that reflect badly on those that do it? How do people profane the things of God? Why is that an even greater reflection on those that do it?
 - c. How is being holy the opposite of being “profane” (disrespectful of what has great value).
 2. This separation to God implies separation from sin, which goes against God’s character.



I. The first call to holiness (Chapter 1 verses 13-17)

- A. Questions to help analyze the text
1. What three things did Peter tell Christians to do to prepare them for holiness? (Vs. 13)

 2. What should they not conform to as they did when they were ignorant? _____
* Thought – Why does it show ignorance to just give yourself over to passions? Who are some types of people who give themselves over to passions with no effort to control them? Do you want to be that way?
* There are all kinds of children – rebellious, testers, charmers, etc. What kind of children does God want? Are you a tester with God? Do you have a touch of rebellion?
 3. Who should we imitate in being holy? _____
 4. How does verse 17 describe our stay on this earth? (Different versions will provide different ways of looking at the concept.) _____
- B. Thought questions –
- * Why does the thought of “being holy” sound so hard and unattainable to us?
 - * What are some things that people do to avoid contamination with deadly viruses like ebola or the AIDS virus? Why shouldn’t se be just as diligent to avoid the rotten sin that would take us away from God and kill us?
 - * Have you or your parents ever lived temporarily in another country? What are some things they do to avoid confusion as to their true citizenship? If we are citizens of heaven, though living on the earth, what are some things we can do to avoid confusion as to our true citizenship?

II. Get rid of this... Crave this (2:1,2)

- A. To analyze the text
1. What five things should we put away? _____
 2. What should we “crave” (NIV) and why? _____
- B. Thought question – What are some practical things we can do to increase our appetite for the word? To “crave” it?

III. Learning to be disgusted by unholy behavior (4:1-5)

- A. To analyze the text
1. What attitude does the Christian who has suffered generally have towards sin? _____
* If anyone has an NIV, read it on verse one. How does it describe the attitude towards sin?
 2. What does he **not** live for? _____
 3. What are six things the pagans did? (Vs. 3)

 - * Look some of these words up if you have a dictionary at hand.
 4. What did the pagans think of Christians who did not want to do these things? _____
 5. What did they do to them? _____

6. But, to whom will they have to give an account? _____

B. Thought questions

- * Why does suffering help give a good perspective about the emptiness of sin and therefore help us be holy?
- * Can you think of any examples of people who woke up to the emptiness of sin after suffering?
- * Have you had to suffer much in life? If not, how can you gain the mature perspective towards sin that comes through suffering? Who are some people who suffer that you can help and encourage?
- * What most helps us to be disgusted by things that our shallow flesh might initially be attracted to, things such as those listed in verse 3?
 - a. Focus on friends who have ruined their lives with such things.
 - b. Share in the sufferings of others
 - c. Focus on the blessings of true love as revealed in the life of Christ and his teachings.

IV. Be on the alert? (5:8,9) These verses could be applied both to holiness and strength in trials

A. To analyze the text

1. What two words describe what should be our attitude in verse 8? _____
2. Look at different versions or at a dictionary to make a definition of those two words and some synonyms for them.
 - a. Sober _____
 - b. Alert _____
3. What danger makes it very important that those two words characterize our lives?

4. What should be our attitude towards Satan and evil? _____
5. What other factor in the last part of verse 9 should encourage us? _____

B. Thought questions

1. What factors might tend to keep you from being sober and watchful?
2. Does the difficulty in understanding **how** Satan attacks us keep you from being concerned about the fact that he does?
 - a. What are some ways he succeeds in devouring us?
3. What do you think is Satan's strongest weapon against you in trying to keep you from being holy?
4. What do you think is the best defensive weapon that God gives you in that battle?
5. How does the fact that we are not the only ones battling temptation and persecution encourage us?

Conclusion

A. Thought questions

1. Do you think it is possible to be set apart for God?
2. Which of the following concrete things do you think would most help you to do to reach that goal? Pick two or three.
 - a. Spend more time with godly Christians
 - b. Give less importance to trying to impress shallow worldly people in my life.
 - c. Trying to help shallow worldly people in my life to see that there is a better way.
 - d. Pray more by myself
 - e. Pray more with others.
 - f. Study the Bible more by myself
 - g. Study the Bible more with others.
 - h. Other _____

- B. Next lesson – Since we are so blessed, we must be humble and submissive.



Lesson 3: Since we are so blessed, we should be humble and submissive!

(This lesson is longer than the others. You can carry parts over till the next lesson if teachers want)

Intro. Thought Questions

- A. Think of someone you know who is obviously humble and submissive. Why do you think they are able to be this way? Why are they respected?

I. Subjection to governmental authorities (Read 2:13-17)

A. Questions to help analyze the text

1. For whose sake should we submit to governmental authorities? _____
2. Why are governors (and their agents) sent out by higher authorities? (2 things)

3. How should we **not** use our freedom? _____
4. What two ways should we live according to the first and last part of verse 16?

4. Summary, verse 17. What four commands sum up the teaching here.?

B. Thought questions

- * Do government agents do a perfect job of punishing the evil and praising those who do well? If you want, tell of an unpleasant experience you may have had with a policeman? (Perhaps to balance this, we need to tell of some good experiences with them at the end.)
 - When you felt the policeman or governmental authority was treating you wrong, were you tempted to “talk back” to him or her?
 - What are some things we can do to help us be respectful, even if we may feel that we are being treated unfairly by law enforcement or other governmental authorities?
- * Is the President always going to make the right decision? What does this text teach about our attitudes towards the President even when we think he is wrong? How can we honor the President even when we think he is wrong? Would this apply to senators, members of congress, governors?
- * How might application of this passage affect some angry political Facebook posts? Why can such do harm?

II. Subjection to unfair slave masters – (Read 2:18-20)

(We’ll make application to teachers and bosses!)

A. Questions to help analyze the text

1. To whom should slaves be in subjection? _____
2. Would this apply only to the kind and good ones? _____
3. What consciousness (or mindfulness) makes suffering unjustly a commendable (NIV) or gracious (ESV) thing? Consciousness or mindfulness of _____.



B. Thought questions

1. Slavery is evil! Why didn’t God teach through Peter that there should be a slave rebellion but rather that Christian slaves should submit? (This is a deep question!)
2. Do you have any unfair teachers? (Don’t answer, homeschoolers!) Which way are you most tempted to deal improperly with them? (a) pout, (b) talk back to them in class (c) put them down with sarcastic humor to classmates. Why are these tactics counterproductive? What would be some better ways to deal with unfair teachers?
3. When you start working, you **will** have unfair bosses sooner or later.
 - * What will be the main difference between what you can do as an employee with an unfair boss and what slaves could do with unfair masters?
 - * Even if you choose to leave an unfair work situation, there are two ways you can do it: (1) The “classy” way that God would want you to leave and (2) The classless, angry way. What actions would characterize leaving the job the first way? What actions would characterize leaving it the second way?

C. The best example (Read 2:21-24) (We will save this portion for deeper study when talking of dealing with persecution but read it briefly now since it deals specifically with persecution by unfair masters.)

1. Who is our best example for dealing with unfairness? _____ (If you answer this wrong, you get kicked out of camp!)

III. Subjection in the home (Read chapter 3 verses 1-6)

A. Questions to help analyze the text

1. What word describes the position a woman should take towards her husband? _____
2. How can she win a husband who is not a Christian?
- Not with _____ but with _____
3. What should not be her emphasis in beauty?...
Not _____
But _____
4. What Old Testament example does Peter give of a woman who demonstrated this Spirit? _____

B. Thought questions

1. Are these concepts popular in the 21st Century? How is rejection of these concepts working for marriage? For children? For women in general?
2. "Without a word." Why is an example more powerful than words in converting a stubborn husband to Christ? Why is it difficult for Christian women to put this into practice?
3. Does subjection = inferiority? Give examples to explain your answer.

C. Read chapter 3. verse 7

1. How does this verse describe the attitude of a husband towards his wife? _____
2. How should they treat their wives? _____
3. If husbands do not treat their wives well, what happens to their prayers? _____

D. Thought questions on verse 7

1. Why is it essential that verse 7 go with verses 1-6?
2. If you are real careful, you can calmly discuss ways in which the wife might be considered a "weaker vessel."
3. Why do you think God would not want to hear the prayers of a harsh, selfish husband?

IV. Subjection as young people (Read 5:5-7) This section follows and exhortation to elders.

A. To analyze the text

1. To whom should younger men (and women) be in subjection? _____
2. What should we all clothe ourselves with? _____
 - * How does the way you dress affect the way you feel?
 - * Do you know someone who seems to be "dressed in pride and arrogance?" (No names!)
 - * What are some concrete things you can do to dress yourself in humility?
3. What is the attitude of God towards the proud? _____
4. What does God promise to do if we humble ourselves? _____
5. What should we do with our anxiety? _____

B. Thought questions

1. Why might it be hard to subject yourself to older people? What can you do to work on that?
2. Which of the following might most tempt you to be proud?
 - * Good looking (That's one I've had to work on. Just kidding!)
 - * Athletically talented
 - * Intelligent
 - * Good public speaker
 - * Popular with others
 - * Proud of your humility (Think about that a minute!)
 - * Other
3. What can you do to effectively combat that?



IV. Subjection to all brethren (Read 3:8-12)

A. To analyze the text –

1. What four things should we do towards our brethren?

2. According to verse 9, how should we **not** respond to evil and insults?
But, how should we respond?
3. According to the lengthy quote from Psalm 34:12-16, why should we practice good (vs. 12)

B. Thought question – Why will God not listen to those who don't treat others well?

V. Subjection in service

A. Christ - Read 3:18-22 and answer questions

1. What four things does verse 18 say about Christ's death? a. For sins _____ b. _____ for all
c. the _____ for the _____ d. to _____
* Verse 18 carries the idea of humble sacrifice. Peter makes an analogy about baptism in verses 19-21 that we also need to analyze.
2. To whom did Jesus preach according to verse 19? _____
* There are a number of ideas about this, but I think the following questions will help.
 - a. Read 1:11 – Whose spirit was in the early prophets? _____
 - b. Was Christ's spirit in Noah when he preached? _____ Could we say that Christ's spirit preached through his "mouthpiece" Noah? _____
 - c. Does the verse say that the spirits were imprisoned when Christ preached to them through Noah? Or, that their spirits are **now** imprisoned? (See word in italics in NAS, which I think helps give the meaning.)
3. What element separated Noah and his family from the evil world? (Saved through what?) _____
5. Through what does it save us according to the last part of verse 21?

* This is clear passage to refute the idea that baptism does **not** save. It says plain that it does save.

B. Loving deeds (Read 4:7-11)

1. According to verse 7, what two things are necessary for prayer _____
2. According to verse 8, what does love do? _____
3. How should our hospitality be given? Without _____
* Have you ever grumbled about having to help someone? Be honest! Does God grumble about providing for us?
* Thought question – Does everyone have the same "service gifts" according to verses 10,11? What do you think is a special "service gift" that you might have?
* Thought – What does it mean to speak "as the oracles of God," as his "utterances?" How can this principle be ignored? How can we do it more effectively?
* According to the last part of verse 11, what is the purpose of speaking as the oracles of God and serving according to his ability? How might that **not** happen, if we don't speak or serve accordingly?

C. Servant leadership (Read 5:1-4)

1. Who does Peter address these exhortations to? _____
2. What does he say about himself in that context? _____
3. What was the elders responsibility towards the flock of God among them (the congregation)? _____
* Thought – Should elders try to take on the responsibility to shepherd other flocks (congregations) other than the one they know? (This happens in a number of congregations. A group of elders will take on projects for a number of others.)
4. What things should elders avoid in shepherding the flock?
* Not _____ but _____
* Not _____ but _____
* Not _____ but _____
5. What will good elders receive when Christ appears?
* Thought question – Should these principles apply to any type of leadership?
* Why do some, even in the church, believe in "sergeant type leadership" and not humble leadership? What problems are caused when such is the case?

Study of 1st Peter, Lesson 4 – Strength in trials – Part 1

Introduction –

- A. Have someone tell of a time when they were ridiculed for their faith.
 - 1. What are some feelings we have when such occurs?
 - 2. What are some temptations?
 - 3. When you might you most be tempted to say nothing, when you ought to say something, but you fear ridicule?
- B. Perhaps the main purpose of 1 Peter is to prepare Christians for ridicule and persecution.

I. We should expect ridicule and persecution – (Read 1:5-7; 4:12, 13)

- A. Questions to help analyze the text
 - 1. According to verse 6 how long will Christians have to suffer trials? _____
 - 2. Why does God allow these trials according to verse 7? To prove our faith to be _____
 - 3. What does that genuineness result in why Christ is revealed? _____
 - 4. How should we not feel when having to go through painful trials according to 4:12? _____
 - 5. Rather, what attitude should we have when we encounter them? _____
- B. Read as a supplementary text, Matthew 10:17-25. –Then answer thought questions.
 - 1. Did Jesus expect an easy life for the apostles?
 - 2. Should we really seek an easy life? Why might we be tempted to do that?
 - 3. Matthew 10:21 anticipates family conflicts. Tell discretely of any family conflicts you have had because of your faith, or family conflicts you have heard about. Should we be surprised by them?
 - 4. According to Matthew 10:24,25, why should we expect opposition?
- C. More thought questions
 - 1. Christians sometimes have to suffer ridicule for years. How can Peter say, “for a short time?”
 - * For advanced students – What number does John use in Revelation to indicate what might seem to indicate a long time of persecution, but in reality, a rather short one in the context of eternity?
 - 2. What are some types of ridicule that Christians have to suffer today? Have you ever had someone look down upon you or criticize you because you were a Christian.
 - 3. What type of ridicule and persecution do you think strong Christians might increasingly see in the next 10-25 years?
 - a. Churches lose their tax exemption if they don’t support women preachers or gay marriage.
 - b. Universities refuse to allow people to graduate if they don’t support such practices.
 - c. Companies demand that people sign a statement accepting such practices before hiring them.
 - d. What are some other issues that you think might bring on ridicule and persecution?

II. How should we suffer? As Jesus did! (Read 2:21-25)

- A. Questions to help analyze the text
 - 1. Why did Christ suffer for us according to verse 21? _____
 - 2. What did Jesus not do when under severe mistreatment and pain? (vs. 22, Is. 53:9) _____
 - 3. Instead of retaliating against his tormentors, what did Jesus do? (vs. 23) _____
 - 4. What blessings did Jesus bring us through his death? _____
 - 5. Through what have we been healed? _____
 - * Does this reference to Isaiah 53:5 have to do with spiritual or physical healing?
 - 6. What were we like before Christ’s sacrifice? _____
- B. Thought questions
 - 1. We say often that Christ came to die on the cross for our sins. True, but what is another reason given here for his coming? For what kind of situation is Peter appealing to Christ’s example here?
 - 2. The flesh has an instinct for retaliation. Here we see where it must be controlled. Which situations in your life tempt you to retaliate the most?
 - a. Someone at school or work (or camp!) makes a snarky statement about you.
 - b. Someone looks at you with arrogance.
 - c. Drivers – Some selfish taker cuts you off while driving. (I confess this is one I have to work on.)
 - d. Someone on the athletic field gets too competitive and elbows you. (I know some super nice people that get transformed into angry monsters when they’re in athletic competition.)
 - * Do some coaches promote this? How should Christians respond?

e. Your parents are unfair to you, for example, telling you to do something that they won't do themselves.

f. Other _____

3. What are some concrete things you can do to control yourself in such situations.
4. Do you think anyone in this life is ever going to be as unfair to you as they were to Jesus?
5. Do we really have any excuse for seeking retaliation when unfairly treated?

III. How should we suffer? Without fear! (Read 3:14)

A. Thinking of the text

1. What are we if we suffer for doing right? _____
2. What two attitudes should we avoid when being threatened? _____

B. Thought questions

1. If you stood before someone who had the power to put you to death, would it be easy to not be afraid? What things would give you strength? (I think it would not be a sin to have some fear before torture or death. Jesus dreaded his death. However, God gives us strength to deal with it.)
2. Whose ridicule might you be tempted most to fear?
 - a. College Professor
 - b. Popular kids at school.
 - c. Your parents or other family members
 - D. Members of the church
3. Justin Martyr, an early Christian, wrote this before his death by beheading in 167 A.D., "Since our thoughts are not fixed on the present, we are not concerned when men put us to death."
* What was key in his mind for facing death without fear?
4. The Old Testament passage referenced about not being afraid is Isaiah 8:12. The context was an invasion of Judah by Syria and forces from Northern Israel. Evidently many Jews were becoming panicky. Read God's exhortation to the prophet in 8:11-14. How did God feel about preoccupation with conspiracy theories and panic about the situation? Should Christians be filled with fear today about political currents, foreigners who some think threaten American culture, etc.?

IV. How should we suffer? With gentleness and respect (Read 3:15, 16)

A. Analyzing the text

1. Instead of fear (vs. 14), what two things does this verse say we should do?

2. What two qualities are essential as we do the latter? _____ and _____
3. Why is it always important to face persecution or ridicule with a clear conscience?

B. Thought questions

1. What do you think the phrase, "sanctify the Lord in your hearts" (NAS) or "in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy" means? How can we do that?
2. Why is it important to be able to give a defense of our faith? If someone asked you to give a one-minute summary of why you believed, how would you do? (Let someone try if they like.) What are some things that should and should not be given in a short summary of our faith?
3. Why is it so important to do this with gentleness and respect? When might we be tempted to do otherwise? Have you ever been tempted to give a sarcastic response to an unbeliever? When? Why wouldn't this be helpful? Do unbelievers sometimes become believers? Will this happen more easily or less easily if we are sarcastic with them when they don't believe?
4. Why do unbelievers rejoice so much when finding hypocrisy among believers? Why is it so important to avoid giving them such ammunition?

Conclusion – Tomorrow, more ways to face ridicule and persecution and blessings that come from it.

Study of 1st Peter, Lesson 5 – Strength in trials – part 2

Intro. What are some ways discussed yesterday that Christians should face ridicule and persecution?

IV. How should we suffer? With rejoicing and praise (Read 4:12-16)

A. Analyzing the text

- 1, According to verse 13, why should we rejoice when we share in Christ's suffering?

2. According to verse 14, why are we blessed when insulted? _____
3. According to verse 16, What is it good to suffer for being? _____
4. If we suffer as a Christian what should we not be? _____ But rather what should we do?

B. Thought questions and scenarios

1. Think of some people in the last 100 years that you admire you have suffered because of what they believed (maybe someone like MLK, Gandhi, Anne Frank). Would you feel privileged to spend some time in jail or in hiding with them if you could? Why? How much more should we feel a kinship with Christ in his sufferings if we have to suffer some ridicule or have people make fun of us.
2. The high school of a young Christian girl gave all female students short shorts as a uniform to wear for PE. She said that she couldn't do it and wore pants below her knees to PE. She was ridiculed, not only by fellow students, but by some of the teachers. Her mother was outraged and depressed. "How sad that they're making fun of my daughter."
 - * Was the mother following the teaching of this passage in her anger and depression?
 - * What would be some things you could tell her to help her to have better perspective?
3. Have you ever had anyone make fun of you for something you believed as a Christian? How did you take it? How should you have taken it?
4. Can you think of Bible examples where people glorified God when being persecuted? How can we do that when people make fun of us?

V. How should we suffer? By entrusting ourselves to God (Read 4:17-19)

A. To analyze the text

1. Where was the judgment to begin? _____
 - * The word "judgment" here doesn't refer to the final judgment of God, but rather to the severe trials that the Christians were facing.
 - * The idea seems to be that if God allows Christians to suffer such painful trials, what will he do to the wicked who refuse to obey Him? A rhetorical question implying strong punishment for them.
2. To whom should the righteous entrust their souls when doing good? _____

B. Thought questions

1. The words of verse 18 don't mean that the righteous will "barely" be saved, but rather, "with difficulty" (NAS) they will be saved. In what sense are the righteous saved "with difficulty?" What sacrifices did it take on God's part to save us? Were they easy?
2. Why might it be difficult to "entrust our souls" to God when suffering ridicule and persecution?
3. Why is trust in God so important in every difficult situation?
4. Is it always easy for children to trust their parents? Why not? Why does it usually make sense to trust good parents? Why does it always make good sense to trust God?

V. Results of suffering for Christ

A. We prove our faith – Read 1:6 and 7 again. (Already read the verses in lesson 4)

1. If some have the English Standard or New International Versions, what word is used in the first part of verse 7 to describe how our faith is after having come through trials? _____
2. Thought questions
 - * How does a teacher know if you have learned the material that he or she is teaching you? How does it become obvious that you know it? God already knows if your faith is genuine, but tests let other people know it is genuine. Why is that important?

B. Rejoicing!

- * Thought question – How do you feel after "acing" a tough but very important test? How do you celebrate? Why should we rejoice even more when passing a spiritual test after someone ridicules us? We often pray with others for strength in trials. Why would it be good to pray to rejoice with others after victory? Can you think of Bible examples? (Hint – Acts)

- * We've already read 1:5 which talks about rejoicing. Read 2:12 and answer the following questions
1. (2:12) How should we conduct ourselves among the gentiles (unbelievers)? _____
 2. If we conduct ourselves that way, what will they do on the day of visitation? _____
 * The term "day of visitation" is also found in Luke 19:44 and is a bit tough to interpret. Perhaps it has to do with the day of judgment, but with an emphasis on blessings that will come that day rather than judgment. (See also 1:7; 4:13 "When Christ is revealed")
 3. Thought – Does the good behavior of Christians sometimes bring on the admiration of those who aren't Christians? Can you give some examples? Might the good behavior of Christians even cause some non Christians to seek God? (See 3:2)

C. Strength (Read 5:10, 11)

1. After what would all the blessings of the last part of verse 10 take place? _____
 * Where have you seen that term "little while" before?

2. Thought questions

- * Do you think the last part of verse 10 has to do with what will happen in heaven, or what will happen here after we suffer?
- * Who is the strongest person physically that you know? How did he or she get strong physically? Is it possible to get strong without exercising the muscles in one way or the other? Do you get strong lying on the sofa watching Judge Judy?
- * After someone has an operation, why do doctors want them to get up as soon as much.



3. Famous dog illustration – Don't groan if you've already heard it.

Think of two dogs:

- a. A petted pampered Maltese owned by a rich lady, who feeds him the best dog food (alpo?), puts sweaters on him and pampers him?
- b. A stray hound on the street that has learned to survive by turning over garbage cans, chasing down (and eating) assorted critters. He has many scars from fights with other dogs.



- * If you put the two dogs outside on a cold night, which will survive?
- * Why will the street dog have a better chance than the Maltese?

4. Think of two Christians

- a. One who has been raised by Christian parents who overprotect him. Has an easy life, has to do no chores and is allowed to play video games six hours a day. He decides he should probably become a Christian, and is baptized, but really has very few spiritual challenges.
- b. Another Christian has been converted out of the world. Her family makes fun of her calling her a fanatic, but she stands firm. Her boyfriend dumps her when she tries to study the Bible with him to teach him about her new found faith, but she determines to carry on. She stops wearing shorts, low cut tank tops and tight pants. All of her old friends say she looks like she's becoming a fanatic, but she is determined to carry on and grow in Christ.
- c. If, all of a sudden, you whisked these two Christians away to Las Vegas and put them with a bunch of shallow "celebrities" hunting for "fun," which would be more likely to give into the temptation to sin? (a or b?) Which would be more likely to stand firm, and even try to get the celebrities to read the Bible? (a or b?) Why the difference?

5. Do we need trials to develop spiritual muscles? We don't necessarily want unpleasant trials, but we need them. If we are pure and holy before God, will we suffer trials?

Conclusion – Read 5:12,13

- A. The day may come when persecution and ridicule reaches the level we've been talking about—Christians losing jobs on a mass scale, being denied entrance into universities, etc.
 1. How do you think you'll do when people make fun of you? When you lose your job?
 2. In what ways do you think 1 Peter can help?
- B. Prayer for strength to be strong in an increasingly evil world.