

1 PETER

How may Christians persevere in the face of being shamed, rejected or abused (facing various trials) in their world?

Peter offers 5 strategies:

- 1) He reaffirms the honour and privilege followers of Jesus enjoy before God and one another, even though their honour has been diminished significantly in the eyes of their neighbours (2:4-10)
- 2) He reinterprets their experiences of disgrace in ways that position them to persevere - for example, as a test of their virtue that will result in their greater and lasting honour (1:6-7) or as attempts made by the cosmic enemy - Satan, to disqualify them from their noble destiny toward which God has set them (5:8-9). You can do this and you are destined to succeed.
- 3) He calls the readers to consider the fundamental challenge before them to be not how they regain honour in their neighbours' sight or alleviate the social tension they experience but how they might remain steadfastly on track toward their "inheritance" (1:4), the "salvation" (1:5), and the "praise and glory and honour" (1:7) that is promised them when Christ is fully revealed to them (when he returns or after they die - whichever comes first).
- 4) He advises his hearers to take great care to eliminate any causes for suspicion and hostility that are not essential to remaining loyal toward Christ and, indeed, even to invest themselves as fully as possible in those attitudes and actions that ought to evoke appreciation (e.g. 2:12-3:6). We may not agree with the political climate, slavery or patriarchy as Christians, but we can be as respectful as possible and live as graciously as possible so as to minimize criticism.
- 5) Finally, he seeks to heighten the emotional and relational value of "belonging" within Christian community (through mutual encouragement, support, investment, and honour) while also highlighting the advantages that have been gained through separation from the way of life that Christians have left behind. What you will receive and are already beginning to experience through the love rising in your heart and with other Christians is so much richer than any glory and gain to be had by conforming to a "survival-of-the-fittest-most-conniving-and-selfish" mentality that is their world.