

Let's face it – it's not fun to go through trials.

It may feel like your trials and struggles are trying to destroy you.

And while the enemy would like nothing more than for that to happen ...rest assured that is not God's plan for your life.

He wants to refine you and make you even stronger in your faith and transform your character for His purposes.

The Apostle Peter's first letter was addressed to "the elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia".

(See map)



Detailed Explanation:

- **Target Audience:**
Peter's first letter, known as 1 Peter, was written to Christian communities located in the five Roman provinces of Asia Minor, which is modern-day Turkey.
- **Specific Regions:**
These provinces were Bithynia, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Asia.
- **Context:**
The letter was written to encourage these Christians to remain faithful to their beliefs and conduct, even in the face of persecution.
- **"Elect Exiles":**
Peter refers to his audience as "the elect exiles of the Dispersion," suggesting they were Christians who had been scattered or dispersed from their original homes, possibly due to persecution.
- **Purpose:**
The letter aims to offer hope and guidance to these persecuted Christians, encouraging them to persevere in their faith and live according to Christian principles.

Christ's Example to Be Followed

1 Peter 4:

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

2 You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.

3 You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.

4 Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you.

5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Serving for God's Glory

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

Explanation: Love covering a multitude of sins means that a "fervent" love and forgiveness for others leads to a more peaceful and harmonious environment and community where minor offenses and mistakes are overlooked and dealt with kindly, rather than with judgment or anger.

In its context, Peter is encouraging Christians to live in love and forgiveness, even when facing hardship and suffering.

Meaning and Explanation:

Overlooking offenses: Love inclines people to “be slow to anger” (James 1:19) and to overlook minor offenses and mistakes, rather than dwelling on them or seeking revenge.

Pursue Peace and Harmony: When people love each other genuinely, and try to operate from the position of putting love first, they are more likely to maintain peace and harmony within their communities, (friends, neighbors, acquaintances, etc.) as they are less inclined to take offense or seek conflict.

Forgiveness: Love is a powerful force for forgiveness, both in our relationships with others and in our own hearts. (So powerful that God sent His Son Jesus!)

But, let’s be clear and agree on this: Love is not, cannot be, nor will ever be a license for sin: While love covers a multitude of sins, it doesn’t mean that we should condone or ignore wrongdoing. Instead, we should address sin with love and compassion, seeking to restore and heal, rather than to punish or condemn. (especially when there is a truthful and complete awareness and acknowledgement as to one’s accountability and responsibility for the wrongdoing.)

9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.

Suffering for God’s Glory

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Spiritual Elders: *Shepherd the Flock*

To be a spiritual elder means to hold a place of hope and perspective. It means to be able to remind people that there is something larger and deeper than the various identities we’ve had throughout life.

1 Peter 5:

2 Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.

3 Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.

4 And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

Submit to God, Resist the Devil

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

(This relates a simple, but powerful idea: God opposes the proud. Our refusal to trust God to provide what we need, what He wants for us, and our insistence on getting what we want for ourselves is an act of pride. We are attempting to be the God of our own lives. God will lovingly, jealously oppose us when we do so—but He will not reject us in Christ.)

6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time He will lift you up in honor.

James 4:7 (NLT) So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

The Roaring Lion as a Threat:

The roaring of a lion is a warning, a sign of danger and a potential attack.

The Devil’s Role as an Adversary:

The devil is an enemy of God and humanity, actively seeking to undermine God’s plan and cause harm.

The phrase “Seeking Whom He May Devour” emphasizes the devil’s destructive intent, suggesting he is actively looking for opportunities to harm and destroy people.

1 Peter 5:9 Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are.

10 In His kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, He will restore, support, and strengthen you, and He will place you on a firm foundation.

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