

## 1st Peter Chapter 5- John Karmelich

1. My title for this last chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter is, "Be an example".
  - a) Peter's letter focuses on the topic of Christian suffering. The bible teaches that all Christians go through suffering.
  - b) Part of the reason for suffering is the simple fact that the world is full of imperfect people and imperfect people hurt one another. The "sin disease" spreads and hurts people.
  - c) Another reason is that demonic forces want to harm you. The simple reason is a scared Christian is less likely to be a witness for Jesus. A dead Christian can't witness to others.
  - d) The other issue we've been dealing with in this letter is that God allows suffering in order to mature us. A doctor may say to you, "this may hurt a bit" (I tremble when they say that! ☺). The doctor doesn't want to hurt you, but he or she knows that sometimes one has to go through pain to make you healthier. When we have surgery, it is painful and the recovery hurts. In the same way, God allows suffering in our lives in order to make us better spiritually healthier.
  - e) Which leads back to the opening premise: be an example.
  - f) Through this letter, we've dealt with external forces that cause suffering as well as "internal". The internal suffering refers to those issues within the body of believers. That includes marriage and dealing with other Christians.
  - g) In Chapter 5, Peter is pretty much done talking about how to deal with suffering. The only thing left to talk about is how to be an example to others.
  - h) Chapter 5 is mostly about leadership. It is mainly addressed to church leaders. We are not to hand these verses to our church leaders and say, "deal with this"! ☺ We are to apply them to our own lives in whatever leadership capacity we have. If you are a head of a family, then you are the leader of that family. If you have employees or children under your care, you are their leaders. If you single, then you are leader of one. Further, God calls on you to be an example to those around you. That too, is a form of leadership.
  - i) As you read Chapter 5, you are going to see verses addressed to elders in the church and young people in the church. The application to you and me is not to see this so much as being written for someone else, but to apply it to your own life and how you can be an example to others.
  - j) This chapter is all about "dealing with suffering by example". It is Peter saying, "I've just spent four chapters talking about how to deal with suffering. Now I want to talk about how to lead by example as you deal with suffering".
2. Chapter 5, Verse 1: To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:
  - a) Let's start with the term "elder". It simply refers to one who is mature. It means someone who is spiritually mature more than physically mature, but it can mean the latter. For the Christian church of that time era, the term "elder" and "leader" were similar words.
  - b) When you study the Book of Acts, Paul would go to a new town, preach the gospel, get converts, start a church there, appointed leaders and then move on. For a brand new church like that, it's impossible to have someone who was spiritually mature. Therefore, the term "elder" can also be one who is physically older.
  - c) Next, notice the term "fellow elder". Peter calls himself a fellow elder.
    - i) Peter does not say, "Let me command you to do these things, because I'm Peter, Jesus right-hand guy and therefore, I outrank you!"
    - ii) Peter appeals to them as an equal, not as a superior officer.

- iii) This gets back to my opening premise of “leading by example”. Peter is trying to get the other leaders (elders) to follow his example and not hold a superior rank over the leaders of other Christian churches.
  - d) The next term Peter uses is “a witness of Christ’s sufferings”.
    - i) If you study the Gospel’s carefully, Peter was not much of a literal-witness of Christ’s sufferings. The Gospels do not mention Peter actually seeing Jesus at the cross or the scourging prior to the cross.
    - ii) He was a witness in the sense Peter was around at that time and was close by when these specific events took place.
    - iii) What’s my point? The leaders Peter was addressing in this letter did not have first hand knowledge of how Jesus suffered. They were taking the information on faith. In a sense, so was Peter and so are we. We are asked to take on faith that Jesus actually suffered and died for our sins and to be an example for us.
    - iv) Remember that this lesson is about “being an example”, especially during difficult times. Jesus was an example to Peter on how to deal with suffering.
      - a) It is now Peter’s turn to be a leader. He is not pointing to himself, but pointing to Jesus and saying that is how we are to deal with suffering.
      - b) That same lesson is to be applied from generation to generation. It is not “look at me, but look at Jesus”. The leader of a church, of a family, or of any group who happens to be a Christian must say, “I’m no better than you because of my leadership role. I look to Jesus as to how to live my life and I want to lead by example to have you do the same.”
  - e) The next question is “Why is our suffering-in-life necessary? It’s one thing to have Jesus die for our sins and accept that payment. It is another issue that we should have to suffer. The answer is so God can mature us.
    - i) That is the point of Peter’s last statement, “(I, Peter am) one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.”
    - ii) Translation: God did not create us so that we could have as much pleasure on earth as possible and then die. (See 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:32). God did create us for the purpose of living with Him forever. God created us to serve Him. In order to prepare us for that eternity, it starts with the free-will choice of loving Him. The remainder of our lives is all about maturing us for that eternity. Sometimes that maturation process requires suffering, just like when the doctor saying, “this may hurt a bit”.
    - iii) We go through suffering “for the glory to be revealed”. That is all about our next life in heaven. In that sense, our entire Christian life is like a surgery recovery program. We had the disease of sin, God “operated” on us to remove that sin, and then we have to spend the rest of our lives on earth “recovering” from that sin. That recovery process is painful, and thus there is suffering.
3. Verse 2: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;
- a) Remember that this portion of the letter is addressed to elders of the church.
  - b) What we get into here in Verse 2 is the qualifications of an elder.
    - i) Before we study them, let’s think about the purpose: You can test these to see if you are qualified for some sort of pastoral or leadership role in your church. If you are wondering about the leaders of your church, here is the test for them. Again, you can also apply these principals to any sort of leadership role, but the letter is primarily addressed to leadership in the church.

- c) The first key phrase is “not because you must, but because you are willing”.
    - i) If you can grasp that phrase listed above, the rest of the sentence (Verses 2-3) are examples and on further commentary on that phrase.
    - ii) Peter is saying in effect, “Never, ever be a church leader just because no one else will do it or because you are doing it out of guilt, or because others think you should be a leader”.
    - iii) The first and most important qualification of an elder is to be willing.
      - a) One becomes an elder because they want to do it. Now there are cases where others ask you to lead and you do so willingly. You don’t have to tell your church leadership, “God called me to be a leader, step aside”. ☺
      - b) If it is God’s desire for you to be a church leader, God will make it happen on His timing. You may go to seminary or bible college in preparation, but it is still on God’s timing.
      - c) The term “willing” also applies to our attitude. If you or I have employees or have children under our rooftop, we are leaders. The key is we serve God in a leadership capacity out of willingness as opposed to grudgingly.
  - d) The next phrase is, “not greedy for money”.
    - i) One does not go into the ministry for the financial benefits. I’ve yet to see someone become very rich by being a professional minister, although it might exist. Someone might think about the ministry, “This is an easy life. All I have to do is counsel people with my opinions, preach the bible and then I can get paid for this!” The point is money should not be the incentive for being a church leader.
    - ii) Understand I’m not against the idea of the “professional minister”. If we are in a church setting that can afford to pay full time leaders, so be it. Those people need money to live and there is nothing wrong with supporting them financially.
    - iii) Peter is trying to strike a balance between the two extremes of “laziness and greed”. One extreme is to be lazy in the ministry, which is the opposite idea of doing one’s job “willingly”. The other extreme is only to be motivated by the financial benefits.”
  - e) The last phrase is, “but eager to serve”.
    - i) Another danger of ministry is “burn out”. After one has been a leader for a while, there are times of monotony, times where one suffers great criticism and the worse danger of all, the felling of inadequacy. A danger is to think, “I need to be a good example to my flock”. Satan then comes points out your faults, and inadequacy creeps in. Folks, we’re all inadequate to serve God! We do so out of our love for God, and not based on how good we’ve been the last week, month, etc.
    - ii) A few chapters back, in discussing the issue of marriage, I stated that loving your partner is a decision (not a feeling) based on our commitment to God and not our feelings. God commands us to love our spouses even when they are not loving us. The same idea applies to the ministry. We need to be “eager to serve” not based on our feelings, not based on the circumstances, but because God commands it.
4. Verse 3: not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
- a) The sentence of Verse 2 continues in Verse 3.
  - b) Whenever the New Testament discusses leadership, there is usually a warning against “lording” over people. We might think of the term “dictator” in this regard.
    - i) For example, to “Lord over” would be to say, “You’ve heard my orders, I don’t see your feet moving, now get moving!” ☺
    - ii) Leadership in the church is mostly about leading by example. People watch your actions far more than any words you say. Does that mean we have to be perfect? No, but it does mean one has to be willing to admit wrong when it happens and not make excuses over it.

- iii) Now sometimes decisions have to be made and a congregation has to live with those decisions. Not every situation can be done by example. In that case, it is essential that the leadership also abide by those same decisions in their own lives as much as the church. That is also “leading by example”.
- 5. Verse 4: And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.
  - a) Based on “pure logic”, you would never want to be a professional minister. The pay is terrible, the hours are long, and your congregation has unrealistic expectations of you. They expect you to be a dynamic speaker every week, a great organizational leader, and be able to read everyone’s mind and instinctively know who is hurting and why. ☺
    - i) So why do it? The answer is Verse 4. There are rewards in the next life.
  - b) Remember that we don’t live for the rewards on earth, we “live” to please God. That doesn’t mean we don’t have happiness during this life. It just means our primary focus is on serving God. Our rewards for serving God come in the next life, not in this life.
    - i) Moses understood that concept: “He (Moses) regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward (in heaven).” (Hebrews 11:24 NIV)
  - c) The reward itself is a “crown of glory that will never fade away”.
    - i) Understand that these rewards are not only for pastors and for church elders. Jesus will not say to all of us in heaven, “Now all of you that were pastors and elders, step out of line and go to your left where you’ll receive your crowns of glory. As for the rest of you, we have some other nice gifts.” ☺
    - ii) When we think of crowns, we think of something you put on a king. A better illustration is the ancient Greek Olympic games, where a laurel crown was placed on the winner. The latter is the idea here. It is the idea of Jesus saying to us, “Well done good and faithful servant” (Reference: Matthew 25:21-23). This is about Jesus saying to us, “You have been a faithful servant. You’ve matured in a way that I wanted you to mature. You were loyal to me despite all the temptations and sufferings to go astray. You get your eternal rewards.”
    - iii) The idea of “never fade away” is the idea of eternal rewards. We don’t get to go to heaven for 11,231 years and “times up”. ☺ Whatever rewards and honors we have in this life are temporary. Whatever rewards one gets for God are eternal.
  - d) Let’s get back to the topic of suffering. (We haven’t suffered enough yet on this topic. ☺)
    - i) Let’s talk about Jesus parable of the “four seeds” in Matthew 13.
      - a) To paraphrase the parable, the word of God is like seed put in the ground by a farmer. Jesus said this seed will have one of four different reactions: (1) Some seeds are eaten by the birds; (2) Some seeds don’t grow well due to bad weather; (3) some seeds don’t grow well due to bad soil, and (4) some seeds sprout well and produce lots of produce.
      - b) Jesus goes on to explain that all people fall into one of those four categories. Some hear the Word of God and just plain “don’t get it”. They are like the seeds eaten by birds. It never takes root in their heart.
      - c) The second group never becomes “fruitful Christians” because they can’t handle the suffering. They are like the seed that suffers from bad (hot) weather. Just like the hot sun can scorch plants, so can suffering cause one to be “unfruitful” for God. It is someone who commits their life to Jesus, then when rough times come, they “can’t handle it” and walk away.

- d) The third “unfruitful” group is because they care more about living for this life than God. They are compared to the seed planted in “bad soil”. In this parable, soil is being compared to “grounded in God”. The question is, are you “grounded” in God, or something else? This “unfruitful” person is grounded in the wrong type of soil. It is a person who does commit their life to Jesus, but then becomes more interested in “stuff” than God.
  - e) The final group is the people that despite the suffering, despite the temptations of this life, stick close to Jesus and “bare lots of fruit”.
  - ii) Now think about this parable in comparison to Peter’s letter: Peter is talking about dealing with suffering. Why? So we don’t “walk away” when suffering comes. Like that “good soil”, we still need to focus upon God when the rough times comes. At the same time, Peter also uses examples about the “cares of this world”.
    - a) For example, Peter is saying to be careful about “power trip’s” (lording over people) and to be careful about being a leader for money as opposed to a desire to serve. These are examples similar to Jesus point about “cares of this world make one an “unfruitful” witness for God.
    - iii) Peter wants his “unfading crown of glory”. He also wants us to have that same crown. What Peter is dealing with all through this letter is avoiding the pitfalls of Christianity. Those pitfalls come in two general categories: “suffering” and “pleasures of this life”. That is Jesus’ point in the 4-soils parable. That is Peter’s purpose in writing this letter, with the heavy emphasis on the suffering aspect.
  - e) Let’s get back to “leading by example”. This verse opens with “The Chief Shepherd”.
    - i) That is a title for Jesus. It is a paraphrase of Jesus own self-description: “I am the good shepherd” (Reference: John 10:11 and 10:14).
    - ii) Remember Peter stated that he is no higher in rank than any other elder in any other church. He is “nothing special” in that regard. The only person higher in rank is Jesus himself. Peter’s point is simply that Jesus is the one we look to and not Peter himself as the authority.
6. Verse 5: Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.
- a) After spending four verses on elders, Peter spends one whole sentence on younger men.
  - b) The key phrase is “be submissive”. That simply means to put the “will” of the elder of their church above their own.
  - c) If a person is called to lead, then those under him must submit to that leadership.
    - i) The hard part for all of us is we want to do it our way. We don’t want to submit because we’re 100% convinced our way of doing things is better than theirs.
    - ii) That too is a lack of faith in God. It is like us telling God, “Lord, you know those leaders you appointed? Well, You’ve made a big mistake, let me tell you!” ☺
    - iii) If you are the member of a church congregation, you always have the right to go elsewhere. As long as you remain in that church, the command here is to be submissive to the leadership’s decisions. Do those leaders mess up? Sure, but that is God’s problem to fix them, not yours. If you do approach a leader on the topic, one must do it humbly and accept their decisions.
  - d) This leads to the question: When should one leave a church for another?
    - i) First of all, I’m making the assumption that this is an option. Some people live in locations where there is only one church within a reasonable distance.
    - ii) Sometimes we have to me. It may be a case of having to move to a different city. It may be a case where your particular gifts and talents are needed elsewhere (e.g., being a missionary).

- iii) If the church where you are attending is getting away from God’s word and the fundamental concepts of Christianity, then one should go elsewhere. That is different from “my bible interpretation is different from your bible interpretation”. I’m talking about churches that no longer take God’s word seriously.
  - iv) The wrong reason to leave is because, “I don’t like the way they do things around here. If the church won’t do things my way, I’m out of here”.
  - v) Peter is calling us to be submissive to the church leadership. It is God’s problem to hold them accountable, not ours.
  - vi) A church is place where one serves other Christians and one grows in their faith. I like the expression, “Bloom where you are planted and plant where you bloom”. Look for a church where you are spiritually “fed” and, more importantly, it is a place where you can serve others. One then has to accept that imperfect people run the church. Mistakes will be made we have to deal with them lovingly.
7. Verse 5 (cont.): All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another,
- a) Notice the words “all of you”. That means Peter is no longer addressing the young adults, but young and old alike.
  - b) Then Peter says, “clothe yourselves with humility toward one another”.
    - i) This means the elder should not say: “I’m in charge, deal with it”. ☺
    - ii) This means the younger member should not say, “You’re wrong, deal with it”. ☺
    - iii) This gets back to my opening line of “lead by example”.
    - iv) If one acts humbly as a leader, others are more likely to follow. If one acts humbly as a follower, it makes the leader a better leader and a more humble leader.
    - v) Understand what humility is: Humility is not putting yourself down and thinking lowly of yourself. Humility is “not thinking of yourself at all”. It is about putting other’s needs in front of yours. It is similar to the biblical idea of love.
  - c) Peter uses the phrase, “clothe yourself with humility”.
    - i) Clothing is not something we are born with. It has to be put on your body. I take the same view about humility. Our natural instinct is to put ourselves first. Our natural instinct is to ponder, “What’s in it for me?” Humility is the opposite of our ego’s. Humility must be put on like clothing because it is not our naturally way of behaving. The secret to humility, like every other aspect of the Christian life is all about praying and asking God to work through you. Pray to God to make us more in His image, which is to act in humility toward one another.
8. Verse 5 (cont.): because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- a) Here is your memory verse of the week. I made it easy for you and only gave you one third of Verse 5 to memorize. In fact, this is a quote of Proverbs 3:34. Therefore, you are memorizing a two-for-one bible special today. ☺
  - b) In Chapter 3, Verse 7, I discussed Peter’s statement of “our prayer life being hindered.”
    - i) That verse talks about when husbands are arguing with their wives, somehow, their prayer life becomes hindered. Questions arise as to what Peter meant by hindered and just how our prayer life is hindered. My response was “I don’t care how much my prayer life is hindered. When I’m about to be hit by a truck, I don’t want my prayer life hindered in any way, shape or fashion”. ☺
    - ii) I bring up that point here, because we have the same point in Chapter 5, Verse 5.
      - a) It starts with “God opposes the proud”. I don’t know what “opposes” exactly means, in the same way I don’t know what “hindered” exactly means. Either way, I’m not crazy about it. ☺ I don’t want God opposing me in any way shape or fashion!
      - b) Remember this verse is addressed to all Christians. Peter is addressing Verse 5 to “all of you”. That means all believers.

- c) In those moments where our ego's kick in and we are "proud", at that moment, "God opposes us". If you believe the bible is the Word of God, you have to accept that statement.
  - d) The verse says, "God opposes the proud". It does not mean God strikes us dead on the spot. ☺ I wouldn't be typing this lesson if that were true! Somehow, our relationship with God gets hindered when we are proud.
  - iii) My point to all of this, and the reason I encourage you to memorize this sentence is that this concept is a motivation tool for submission.
    - a) You want a motivation to love others? Your prayer life is hindered when it is not! You want a motivation to be humble? God "opposes the proud". Again, we can talk all day about the possibilities what that statement means. Whatever it means, it can't be very good for our lives!
  - c) The last part of that statement says, "but (God) gives grace to the humble".
    - i) The same way I don't want God opposing me or hindering my prayers, I very much want God's grace. I'm not ashamed to admit that! ☺
    - ii) Grace is God's unmerited favor. It is like getting a wonderful present for no particular reason. It is getting a special blessing for no particular reason. It is God saying He wants to bless us only because He wants to bless us. A God of love wants to express that love. Grace cannot be earned by definition.
    - iii) How do we get this grace stuff? The answer is that dreaded word, "humility". ☺
      - a) It means turning away from our old egotistical self and putting others needs in front of our own.
      - b) If we want God's grace in our lives, we have to be humble in the sense that we submit our wills to God and put other's needs in front of our own.
9. Verse 6: Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.
- a) Verse 6 expresses the same idea of "God's grace to the humble" using different words.
  - b) I say that because Verse 6 says God will "lift you up" if you are humble.
  - c) So what does "lift you up" mean? The implication is salvation as in "lift you up into heaven".
  - d) My personal view is that term has a broader meaning. Peter is writing to Christians. Peter's readers are already saved. In the last verse, Peter talks about a "crown of glory" that awaits us. Reading this verse in context, I believe it is more about "rewards".
  - e) Since Verse 5 says, "God gives grace to the humble", then the phrase "lift you up" refers to the grace God pours upon us in this life as well as the next. It refers the internal joy one can have despite whatever suffering is happening around us.
10. Verse 7: Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
- a) Here's your other memory verse of the week. This one is short too. ☺
  - b) We've been talking about suffering for five lessons now. I can just hear people thinking, "Yeah this is easy for you to say. You don't know what I've gone through. You have no idea how bad my situation is. You cannot imagine what I've been through".
    - i) My first question is, "Is God big enough that He can handle your problems?"
  - c) Once you grasp the concept that God is bigger than your problems, then and only then should you apply Verse 7. This verse is about giving your problems to God.
  - d) OK, how does one "cast our anxieties upon Him"? It's time for another prayer:
    - i) "Lord, I am so worried about what is happening right now. It is so painful that I can barely stand it. I don't know what to do. The bible says I am to cast my anxieties (worries) upon You, so I'm doing that right now." For the next one minute, I'm not going to worry about it. When that minute is up, I'll pray again until I can handle two minutes of not worrying in a row." ☺

- ii) (Prayer-cont.). “Help me to learn that You are big enough that to handle my problems. Help me to learn that You do care for me, that You are aware of what is happening and You are allowing this situation to happen in my life. Let not this lesson be wasted. Help me to have peace about it and discernment of what to do. Now give me a little peace and we’ll talk again when the worries come back. In Jesus name, amen.”
  - iii) That is a sample of “casting your cares upon Him”. You don’t have to use the exact words I stated. It is about giving God your problems.
  - iv) There is a classic joke about worrying that goes as follows: A man tells his wife, “Honey, I’m tired of worrying all the time. I’ve hired a man to do all of my worrying for me. The wife says, “What do we have to pay him?” He responds, “He charges \$10,000 per week.” The wife then says, “But we only make \$5,000 per week.” The husband then says, “Yeah, but that’s his problem to worry about”. ☺
    - a) In a sense, God is like the man charging \$10,000 per week. Our job is to give those worries to God. Let Him “figure it out” how to deal with it.
    - b) The corollary to this issue is that once we give it to God, our job is not to go live in a cave and then let God solve it. We still have to “move on” in life. The point is about trusting that God is working it out.
    - c) Remember this verse was written to people who were under death threats for their belief in God. And you thought you had worries! ☺ Peter is telling them to cast their worries unto God. If they can do it, so can we!
11. Verse 8: Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
- a) All right, once we give our cares to God, and our now spending our valuable 30 seconds not worrying about our problems before those worries come back, ☺ what next?
    - i) Peter then says, “Be self-controlled and alert”. What does that mean?
    - ii) Self-controlled is as it says: It is about controlling one’s behavior.
    - iii) “Alert” means to be aware of what is happening around you.
  - b) Reading this verse in context of the previous verses, Peter is talking about how to deal with suffering. If we have given our worries to God, the “easy thing” is to say, “Now I can go back to living how I lived before I became a Christian.” Peter is saying that we as Christians are still to behave in a way that is pleasing to God.
    - i) I’m a big believer that Christianity is all about behavior. Yes to be saved is 100% about faith. The “flip side” is that if we do believe Jesus is God and we do believe the bible is the Word of God, our behavior should change based on that belief.
    - ii) Part of that behavior change is to be “self-controlled and alert”.
    - iii) Does that mean I have to think about God 100% of the time? When do I sleep? ☺
      - a) Of course, no one can focus on one thing every moment of the day. Our brains don’t work that way. The point is, if we live a God-centered life, if we desire to please God in all our actions, if we pray daily for God’s will to be done in our life, then every moment will be pleasing to God whether your mentally thinking about God or not.
      - b) This goes back to the expression, “Love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and then do whatever you want.” Because if we love God that way, “whatever we want” will be pleasing to God.”
  - c) Now it’s time for the scary sentence. Peter then says, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”.

- i) A big motivational factor to get rid of worries is the fact that it is just plain stressful. Most people would rather have peace than worry. Peter is now saying, in effect, "If having a stress-free life is not motivation enough to get you to stop worrying, consider that the devil is prowling around like a hungry lion looking for something to eat, and you're looking like a big T-bone steak". ☺
- a) A lion doesn't look for strong prey, but weak prey. Ever notice that we sin more when we are angry, hungry, or tired? I'm not saying Satan is behind every one of those moments. We're giving him too much credit. ☺ My point is Satan and his forces take advantage of those weak moments.
- ii) Let's talk for a about the devil's "role" in life. First of all, the words Satan and the devil are similar and can be used interchangeably. One word refers to "slanderer" and one refers to "accuser". He wants to slander us to separate us from God and from one Christian to another. The accuser is like the idea of a prosecuting attorney, making accusations against us, be they false or true.
- a) From clues all over the bible, we learn that Satan was a "top angel" (see Ezekiel 28:123) who rebelled against God. He took one third of the angels with him in that rebellion (See Revelation 12:4). Satan wanted to be like God (See Isaiah 14:14). The theory is that Satan understood God's purpose for redeeming mankind and thought that man wasn't worth it. Because Satan wanted to be worshipped as God, he was jealous of God's love for mankind. Therefore, Satan tempted Adam and Eve, and it's been downhill from there. ☺
- b) The bible says Satan will be thrown in hell as part of the events of Jesus' Second Coming (See Revelation 20:10). Satan knows that prediction well. Therefore, Satan wants to stall as long as possible that from happening.
- c) The bible teaches that the world as we know it comes to an end one day. (See Revelation 21:1, Isaiah 66:2). Therefore, one has to accept the idea that there will be a finite number of people in heaven and hell as opposed to an infinite number of people. If there is a finite number, then there has to be a final person. Therefore, the "end times" come when that final number comes, or is close to coming. Satan wants to stall those "end times" as long as possible because he knows he dies as part of those events.
- d) Given all of that, how does Satan "stall"? His goal is to prevent as many people as possible from becoming Christians. Therefore, he wants to kill people to prevent them from becoming Christians. Dead Christians can't witness to other people. Satan also wants to persecute Christians so they'll be too scared to be a witness to others. He wants to tempt Christians with anything other than God to make us ineffective witnesses for God. Now do you see Satan's role "fits it" to suffering, persecution and temptation?
- e) At the same time, God allows all of this as a "motivation plan". A motivation to keep us close to God is to realize that we have an adversary (Satan) out there who wants to devour us.
- iii) Now reread Peter's sentence. Peter just wants us to understand that Satan runs around "like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour". It is a motivation for us to stick close to God.
- a) Does that mean every unpleasing thing we do is Satan inspired? I don't think so. People give the devil too much credit and not enough to our own desires to turn from God. This verse is simply about realizing that our own sinful nature is "combined" with the fact that Satan and his legion of helpers are out there.

12. Verse 9: Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
- a) Peter says, "Resist him". The "him" refers to the devil.
  - b) I once heard the devil described as "de-clawed lion". I think that is an excellent description. Remember that as a Christian, you are already saved. As long as we are trusting in Jesus for our salvation, Satan can't take that away. Satan can cause us to suffer. Satan can kill you, but he can't take away our salvation.
    - i) Now somehow, that last sentence isn't too comforting. Remember the purpose of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter is to help us understand why God allows suffering. It is to mature us and make us witnesses to other Christians as well as to test us. God never promises that this life will be all-wonderful with no problems. Christianity is all about how to have joy during the good and bad times of life.
    - ii) Jesus never preached on overthrowing the Roman government, just on how to live for God despite the circumstances. Yes, Jesus healed people, but those healed people still died. Yes, God still heals hurting people today, but those hurting people still die one day. God does care for our lives and wants to help us live for Him. God does heal us. I'm just trying to put "healing" in perspective.
  - c) So how does one resist Satan? The book of James answers that: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7 NIV). The point is we don't resist Satan based on our strength, but based on God protecting and working through us. This is an example of "God and us make a majority" over any and all adversaries, including the devil and whatever problems we have in life.
  - d) The last part of this sentence is to be aware that our "brothers" (fellow Christians) are also going through persecution.
    - i) If you have any doubts on this topic, check out a few web sites that discuss Christian persecution around the world. In Peter's day, they didn't have newscasts, web sites and television. They had to take Peter's word for it that other Christians were suffering and being persecuted. We live in an age of information at our disposal. We don't have to take Peter's word for it, we can read it ourselves.
    - ii) Yes, we are to pray for persecuted Christians. The context of this statement is to realize that "you are not alone". When we are suffering we tend to think, "nobody but me understands what I'm going through". Peter is saying, "Yes I know what you're going through because it's happening all over the place. You may think that no one is going through what you're going through, but there are many people out there who are in the same boat you are!"
13. Verse 10: And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.
- a) Here is the wrap-up verse for the whole letter of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. The remaining verses are the "ending credits" of the letter.
  - b) Verse 10 is a summary statement of the whole letter. It is a summary of the points I've been making through this five-lesson commentary.
  - c) Verse 10 starts with the "God of all grace". This is about a God that loves us unconditionally and wants to shower us with that love. It doesn't mean He makes every second of our life wonderful. If that were the case, people would come to God for the "fringe benefits" and not out of the love of God. God is not Santa Clause. God wants to mature us into a better relationship with Him. A God of grace must do all of these things, including allowing suffering in order to make us a more mature believers.

- d) The next point is how God “called us”. God is all-knowing. Therefore, He knows who will choose Him. Therefore, He “calls” us to His eternity glory. That is about our maturity here on earth and our eternity in heaven. Again, if you are not sure if God called you or not, simply accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, and you will know you are “called”.
- e) Next comes the bad part. Peter says, “After we have suffered a little while”.
- i) We immediately want to say sarcastically, “Gee thanks”. I hope that by now you can see why suffering is necessary. It is like the doctor that says, “This will hurt a bit”. The doctor wants to temporarily hurt you to make you better. Surgery requires cutting and that hurts.
  - ii) For some people, “a little while” is their whole time on earth. God does call some people to be martyrs. Personally, I think it is harder to live a long life for God than to die as a martyr. The pain lasts longer. Either way, Peter says “a little while” because the time span is short in comparison to eternity.
- f) Next Peter says, “(God) will himself restore you”
- i) How do you recover from suffering? It is about God himself helping you. For those who were killed for their belief, it is about the resurrection. For those who get relief in this lifetime, it is about God saying to us in effect, “I told you it would get better. I told you I have a purpose for this suffering. Look at how you are act, and behave now compared to before this situation.” Unfortunately, we learn our best lessons in life from pain. We grow the most from what hurts us. Therefore, God allows it to happen.
  - ii) Our problem is short memories. We forget how God has rescued us in the past and focus on our current problems. In the Old Testament, God spends a lot of time reminding the Israelites of His past miracles. It is God saying in effect, “Look folks, I was with you in the past. I will be with you in heaven. Why can’t you grasp the idea I’m with you now and I’m allowing this to happen for a reason?”
- g) Next Peter says, “(God will) make you strong, firm and steadfast”.
- i) That is the purpose of the suffering, to give us those three characteristics.
  - ii) Most of us know the expression “Whatever doesn’t kill us will make us stronger”. That is “biblical” as based on this phrase in Verse 11. It is not about doing the wrong things to make us stronger. It is about God allowing suffering for the purposes of making us stronger.
  - iii) “Firm” is the idea of being in good spiritual shape. When our bodies are in good physical shape, we live better lives. The same goes for “spiritual fitness” or “spiritual firmness”. How do we get in good spiritual shape? We “stand firm” in God despite the problems of the moment. We realize that God allows this to happen and He is doing it, somehow, for our good.
    - a) Standing firm is like a tree staying upright in a strong wind. Because it is strongly rooted, it doesn’t fall down. If we are “rooted” in God, the persecution can only do “so much” to us.
  - iv) “Steadfast” has to do with being focused. Let’s face it, there is nothing like pain to get us to pray! The idea here is that God allows suffering to get us better focused upon Him.
- h) Verse 11 then says, “To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”
- i) Peter is saying that all of this suffering is ultimately for God’s glory. We may not understand the big-picture, but God does. Once we grasp the idea that all suffering done to Christians is God-ordained, no matter how horrible it seems in our eyes, gives us hope and peace despite whatever is happening.

- ii) A big part of Christian maturity is all about giving God the glory for all situations. Remember that we are created by God for God. We are designed to “please Him.” God wants us to praise him “willingly” and not out of force. To realize that everything in life is ultimately for God’s glory helps to give us peace despite whatever trial we are through.
  - i) OK, I’ve just spent one and one-half pages on these two verses. It is because Verses 10-11 are a good summary statement of the whole letter. In a sense, we’re now done. The rest of the letter is Peter’s “ending credits”.
- 14. Verse 12: With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.
  - a) Silas helped write this letter. Most commentators speculate that Peter dictated the letter and Silas wrote it. In fact, 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter has a different writing style in the original Greek. This was probably because Silas was the editor of this letter. According to early church tradition, this same Silas was a missionary partner with Paul in the Book of Acts. (Acts 15-17).
  - b) I chuckle that Peter says, “I have written to you briefly”. If you consider a 5-chapter letter “brief”, then you won’t complain about the length of these studies. ☺ (Again, remember the chapter breaks were added centuries after the letter was written.)
  - c) Next Peter says that he wrote this letter to “encourage you”.
    - i) The purpose of this letter is not to get us paranoid about suffering. It is just the opposite. It is to make us understand why it is necessary. It is to help us understand what the grace of God is all about. It is about maturing our faith.
    - ii) When Peter says, “stand fast in it”, he’s not referring to his letter or suffering. He’s saying we are to “stand fast” in God’s grace. That is about praying to God during those times. That is about trusting that God is working it out. That is about trusting in our salvation. My opening sentence of this lesson is “be an example”. That is all about standing in God’s grace.
- 15. Verse 13: She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.
  - a) For centuries, bible scholars have wondered what Peter meant by the phrase, “she who is in Babylon...sends you her greetings”. Does that mean Peter wrote this from Babylon, or is Peter sending the regards of some woman (“she”) who is in Babylon?
    - i) Some theorize that “Babylon” is a code word for Rome. Church tradition is that Peter was arrested and killed in Rome shortly after both letters. The theory goes that Peter didn’t want the authorities to know where he was, so he threw the authorities off the trail by “coding” the word “Rome” with the word “Babylon”.
    - ii) Some theorize that the “she” is the church where Peter was writing from. It was common in that time to refer a collective church as a “she”.
  - b) Next, the verse mentions, “my son Mark”. Early church historians state that this was not his literal son, but “John Mark”, who wrote the Gospel of Mark. The same theory is that Peter was Mark’s main source when Mark wrote his gospel.
  - c) A point to mention here is that some of the historical details of these people are lost. The point is that the people Peter wrote the letter to, knew who this “she” was and we don’t. They understood what Babylon meant (literal or figurative), and we don’t.
  - d) What is to be learned from this verse is that Peter does not take all the credit for this letter. Peter understood that he was no more important than any other Christian was. He gives Silas credit as the author and mentions “she” as a fellow Christian.
- 16. Verse 14: Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.
  - a) My translation: “Don’t just sit there wallowing in self-pity about your suffering. ☺ I’ve just spent five chapters telling you about why you are suffering and what purpose it serves. Now go be an example to other Christians. Show love to one another!”

- b) This is also a cultural expression. In eastern culture, it was a common greeting to kiss one another on both cheeks. This is also common in some places in Europe as well.
  - c) Peter's final words here are to have peace. It is about having peace despite what one is going through in life. It is about giving one's worries to God. It is about giving God the glory for whatever we are going through. It is a summary statement of what happens when we live the Christian life.
17. One final footnote: I usually end my commentary with my own "ending credits" where I list my sources. I used the same sources for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter so my bibliography will be listed after I finish 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter.
  18. We're all done suffering on the topic of suffering! ☺ Peter's second letter has different topics.
  19. Let's pray: Father, we thank you for these lessons on suffering. As painful as they are, we realize that they are there for Your glory. Help us to have peace and understand that all of this happens for a purpose. Help us to be a good example to You and to others when such situations arise. May You get all the glory for whatever happens in our life. Prepare us for whatever is happening and will happen to us. Help us to mature so that we can spend eternity glorifying You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen!