

Week Seven

When Suffering Comes

Studies in 1 Peter for the White Station Church of Christ

These questions are designed to help you dig deeper into 1 Peter 3:8 – 4:11

Video 1 – The Blessed Community

1. After speaking to slaves, wives, and husbands in 2:18 – 3:7, this section addresses the church as a *community* (i.e., “all of you”) at v.8. Why would the virtues named in that verse be critical to the *mutual support* required to deal with persecution?
2. The word “blessing” occurs twice in v.9. What does the word mean?
3. What negative command is given at v.9? What makes this teaching so difficult to follow?
4. Peter quotes from Psalm 34 to support what he has said. How does v.12 define the “blessing” that believers are called to “inherit” (v.9)?
5. With all the *anger* that seems to be bubbling up in our culture right now (e.g., political rhetoric, street confrontations, abuse within families), what is the appropriate role for the White Station Church in being and modeling a “blessed community”?

Video 2 – Practical Support for a Moral Argument

1. For Christians, things are right or wrong in relation to the character of God as revealed to us in Jesus of Nazareth. Does the illustration provided in the video help clarify that concept?
2. Would you expect Christianity’s ethical truth to have “practical value” for everyday living – even among people who do not believe in God or attempt to follow Scripture?
3. Some elements of a believer’s behavior simply do not make sense to unbelievers, and a Christian might be ridiculed or asked to “make your defense” (NRSV) or “give an answer” (NIV) for his or her actions (v.15). What obligations does this duty impose on us?
4. Can you think of some beliefs and behaviors that Christians are sometimes challenged to defend in our culture? How prepared are you to “make your defense”?
5. Why is a believer’s *manner of reply* (i.e., “with gentleness and reverence”) sometimes as important as a reasonable and biblical explanation of the facts?

Video 3 – Before and After the Water Experience

1. More significant than the practical argument Peter has made for Christian holiness is the link he makes to imitating Christ – both in doing right and suffering when necessary. What is the fundamental difference in Christ’s suffering and any distress his followers may face?
2. In a challenging text about Christ, Noah, and imprisoned spirits, Peter argues that righteous and faithful behavior is always vindicated by God. How does he frame his argument?
3. Noah’s delivery from a defiled world into one where he would have a fresh start “symbolizes baptism” in a Christian’s experience. What does that imagery communicate to you?
4. Peter describes the pagan lifestyle his readers had embraced in their pre-baptismal days in the early verses of chapter 4. How does this fit with what you know of Rome’s excesses and immoral manners? With things glamorized in our own time?
5. From 4:7-11, summarize the alternative (post-baptismal) attitudes and behavior Christians are called to exhibit before a culture given over to immorality.