

1 Peter

Lesson 6 Chapter 4:1-11

Participant Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies
Leaderguidebiblestudies.com
David R. Steele

This lesson is a free download from Leader Guide Bible Studies and is not for resale.
Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®
Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Lesson 6

1 Peter 4:1-11

Living for God in the End Times

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death,
and you will be hated by all nations because of me.” Matthew 24:9

Prayers

Introduction

Jesus warned his followers to be aware of the signs of the end times. False prophets, war, famine, and earthquakes are the birth pains of the end times. These signs are followed by persecution, turning away from faith, betrayal, hatred, and wickedness. After the newscast one evening, I turned to my wife and said, we are truly living in the end of times. She turned and said in all seriousness, “I’m ready any time.” The only thing keeping us here is that the gospel must still reach all nations.

When Peter wrote his letter to the churches in Asia Minor, they must have felt they were also living in the end times. The persecution by Jewish leaders of newly converted Jewish Christians began immediately after Christ’s resurrection. Saul, who would later become the Apostle Paul, was one of the leaders of persecution – even murder. To escape the persecution in Jerusalem, many Jewish Christians left their homes and traveled more than 1000 miles, only to find – more persecution. After a few years of peace following Paul’s conversion, the persecution of Christians escalated under Roman emperors and governors from 50 AD to 311AD. Forms of persecution included beatings, imprisonment, confiscation of property, exile, being fed to beasts, crucifixion, burning at the stake, and even more unimaginable acts.

After two millennia, you probably do not feel like Christ’s coming is imminent, but Peter’s words encourage us to live in worthy expectation of his arrival.

Read 1 Peter 4:1-11, Living for God

^{1Pe 4:1} Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

^{1Pe 4:2} As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

^{1Pe 4:3} For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.

^{1Pe 4:4} They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.

^{1Pe 4:5} But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

^{1Pe 4:6} For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

^{1Pe 4:7} The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

^{1Pe 4:8} Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

^{1Pe 4:9} Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

^{1Pe 4:10} Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

^{1Pe 4:11} If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1. Paul and Peter both wrote about being free from sin. Compare 1 Peter 4:1-2 to Romans 6:10-13 and discuss how we are free from sin.

^{1Pe 4:1} Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

^{1Pe 4:2} As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

^{Ro 6:10} The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

^{Ro 6:11} In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

^{Ro 6:12} Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

^{Ro 6:13} Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

2. We are to live to do the will of God (verse 2). How would you state what is the will of God for your life? Also, refer to the following verses about God's will:

^{Ro 12:1} Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

^{Ro 12:2} Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

^{1Th 4:3} It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

^{1Th 4:4} that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,

^{1Th 4:5} not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; ^{1Th 4:6} and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him.

^{Jas 1:5} If any of you lacks wisdom [does not know the will of God], he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

3. Peter includes a list of sins in verse 3 that sounds like a script for a college fraternity in Animal House: debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. Not every Christian engages in these activities, but we still live with “evil desires.” What other sins, often associated with church people, would you include on the list?

4. Peter states the reality of judgment in verse 4:5. One of the curious beliefs adopted by our society and many Christians is that we will gain eternal life in heaven by being good enough. How would you challenge someone’s thinking with the truth of scripture? After giving the question some thought, refer to Acts 4:12, John 3:16, John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Titus 3:4.

5. Verse 6 is another verse with various interpretations. The dead who received the gospel may be the earliest Christians who passed away or the souls in hell Peter referred to in verse 3:19.

6. Verses 7-11 are Peter’s instructions for living in the end times. What actions did he consider most important for believers to do in the last days?
 - a. Verse 7
 - b. Verse 8
 - c. Verse 9
 - d. Verse 10
 - e. Verse 11

7. What actions from the list in verses 7-11 do you specifically do to build up the church?

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19, Suffering for being a Christian

^{1Pe 4:12} Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.

^{1Pe 4:13} But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

^{1Pe 4:14} If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

^{1Pe 4:15} If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

^{1Pe 4:16} However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

