

**1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> PETER**  
**STUDY GUIDE**  
**LESSON SEVEN – 1 PETER 4:1-11**

*Linda Pringle*

One way to view legalism is when we do something good to gain favor or approval from God or others. The motivation in legalism is a subtle self-centeredness. With this broad definition, I realize that I can fall into legalism daily. When I am looking for approval, I feel like I never measure up. I end up feeling unworthy before God and disappointed by the lack of affirmation from others.

While Peter doesn't address legalism directly in the passage we are about to study, he does show us a different motivation for living in the will of God. That motivation is love. Love conquers legalism. First of all, because of God's love revealed at the cross, I don't need to try to gain His approval. I'm already 100% approved. Secondly, when I respond to others out of love for them, I don't need their approval. I'm not looking for affirmation. I can serve with joy knowing that I am blessing them without looking for reward. I can genuinely care about their welfare even if they malign me. Love gives me the strength to stand up to insults and rejection. Love gives me the strength to "turn the other cheek," to "go the extra mile," and to "convince and rebuke with all gentleness" (Matthew 5:39-41 and 2 Timothy 2:4).

**Read 1 Peter 4:1-3**

- 1) Commentators view 1 Peter 3:19-22 as parenthetical since it gives added detail to the main thought. 1 Peter 4:1 begins with the word "therefore" which means that Peter is going back to the main theme of us suffering for the sake of righteousness and following Christ's example (verse 13-18). Read 1 Peter 3:18 carefully. What was the purpose that Christ died for sins?
  
- 2) 1 Peter 4:1 says that we are to arm ourselves with the same purpose. What is sometimes necessary for us to have this purpose?
  
- 3) Suffering in the flesh is probably referring to setting aside our fleshly lusts. Read Colossians 3:5-10. From verses 5 and 8, list the actions and attitudes we should consider dead. From verse 10, what is our new self (or new man NKJV) being renewed to?

Note: Various versions of the Bible word the beginning of 1 Peter 4:3 a little differently. Ezekiel 44:6-7 says, *"You shall say to the rebellious ones, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel.'"* The idea is "enough is enough!" Verse 3 describes what we call today as the party life. The party life is glorified in pop culture everywhere we look. How many Super Bowl ads focus on parties with alcohol and sexy women? Many people today don't know how to have fun without booze. Flirting with the opposite sex (or the same sex) goes along with the party atmosphere. This lifestyle only leads to confusion, pain, and habits that are difficult (but not impossible) to walk away from.

4) Think back to your answer in Question # 3 and answer one of the following questions that fits you the best:

- If you've come out of the party lifestyle, what knowledge has God given you since then?
- If you were never in the party scene, what knowledge has God given you as you set aside your former sins (remember that while some sins have greater consequences on earth, to a Holy God all sin is offensive)?
- If you are still in the party scene of alcohol, drugs, or promiscuity, God loves you too much to leave you there. He wants to fill you with His knowledge (which may be why you are reading this right now). Why do you think the party life is destructive? Do you know that Christ died to set you free? Are you willing to let God help you?

5) Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. From verse 11, name the three actions that happen to us in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. In your own words, define what those words mean. If you are not sure, ask someone or go to a dictionary.

6) We are no longer to live for the lusts of man but for the will of God. Go back to 1 Peter 2:11-12. Describe the will of God in these verses (focus more on verse 12 than 11).

Note: So far, Peter has touched on many aspects of living for righteousness in a fallen world. Beginning with 1 Peter 2:13, he discussed living under governmental laws, then moved to our behavior at our place of employment, then wrote about marriage, and now he discusses our social life. The goal of all of this is "so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 4:11c)

**Read 1 Peter 4:4-6**

- 1) From verse 4, what happens when we quit hanging out with our old party friends? Why do you think they malign or speak badly about a person who doesn't party anymore?

Note: The word "dissipation" means wasteful indulgence. The word "malign" means to speak harmful statements about someone, to criticize and slander someone.

- 2) Verses 4-6 are more easily understood in the New Living Translation. It reads, *"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 But remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead. 6 That is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead—so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit."* In verse 5, who will those who slander you have to face? Your former friends (or family) may slander you but instead of being hurt and angry, we should weep at the judgment coming to them if they are not saved. From verse 6, what should we tell people so they will hopefully live forever with God in the Spirit?
  
- 3) Read Hebrews 12:3. When we consider what Christ went through, how does that encourage us?
  
- 4) Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Paul used the illustration of an athlete's discipline in a race. He used the discipline of his body as an analogy of us being disciplined to put aside our fleshly desires. For what reason should we be disciplined (verse 27)? When others see a professing Christian with an undisciplined life, how is his or her preaching disqualified?

**Read 1 Peter 4:7-11**

Note: In saying, "The end of all things is near" Peter is encouraging believers to live expecting the Lord's return at any time. The final judgment for unbelievers will come after the Lord's return and those who die before then will wait to be judged and then sent to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11ff). An unbeliever has no chance to be saved after they die. There is no purgatory as described in the Catholic faith. There is no baptism for the dead as in the Mormon faith. Hebrews 9:27 tells us *"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."*

- 1) In light of the above note, what should our attitude and purpose be from verse 7?
  
- 2) Read Mark 14:37-38. This was the night that Jesus was arrested. What was Peter doing? What did Jesus want him to do? Why?
  
- 3) From verse 8 in 1 Peter 4, Peter gave a command that is “above all.” What is it? In your own words, why do you think this is above all?
  
- 4) The word “fervent” means “great intensity of feeling.” The word for love in this verse is agape in the Greek. Agape love is different than an emotional driven love or brotherly love. Agape love is an intentional, unconditional love driven by compassion. Again from verse 8, what does this kind of love cover?
  
- 5) The phrase “covers a multitude of sins” is used twice in the New Testament, here in 1 Peter and also in James. The context of 1 Peter is being hospitable and showing grace when covering sin. The context of James 5:19-20 (please read) is a firm correction when covering sin. Name a time when you’ve been hospitable (without complaint) and shown grace when someone was in sin. Now, name a time when you’ve had to use a firm correction to address sin.

- 6) Peter gives us four instructions in verses 9-11. List each instruction and then next to each one, write the attitude we are to have. Then give an example of how you can apply this to your life this week. I've filled out the first part as an example.

Instruction	Attitude	Practical Application
Be hospitable	Without complaint	

Note: Verse 10 says that as we receive a special gift, we need to employ it in serving others as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. "Manifold" means "many and varied." "Grace" means "undeserved blessing." To be a good steward of the manifold grace of God means that we are to use our gifts in many and various ways to serve others even when they don't deserve it!

- 7) Romans 12:6-8 lists several gifts that operate in the body of Christ. We don't each have all of the gifts but we all have some of the gifts. Notice in verse 6 that these gifts are given to us because of His grace. None of us deserve them. List the seven gifts mentioned and then circle the ones that you think God is developing in you. (Prophecy is speaking forth the truth of God's word to edify and comfort, as in 1 Corinthians 14:3. Exhort means to encourage.)
- 8) Verse 11 of 1 Peter 4 encourages us to serve with the strength which God supplies. Think back to the introductory paragraphs of this lesson. How do God's love for you and your agape love for others give you strength to serve with grace?
- 9) The end of verse 11 sums up why we do all of these things. Write this out. What belongs to Christ? Can you say "Amen"?!

