



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N18 May 5, 2024

HIGHER UP "Fed Up With Sin" 1 Peter 4:1-6

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Love

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us."

1 John 4:10-12



What is your "Vanity Fair"?

One of the most beloved books in all of English literature is titled *The Pilgrim's Progress*. John Bunyan wrote the allegory while in an English jail for preaching without a license from the state church. *The Pilgrim's Progress* was first published in 1678, after twelve years of jail time for Bunyan. Many scholars claim that Bunyan's *Progress* was the first English novel.

"Leland Ryken, now professor emeritus of English at Wheaton College, calls it 'a Christian classic whose importance is impossible to overstate.' According to Ryken, 'For more than two centuries after its first publication, *The Pilgrim's Progress* ranked just behind the King James Bible as the most important book in evangelical Protestant households.' ... J.I. Packer states that 'next to the Bible, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is the best-selling Christian book of all time" (J. Edward Glancy, "An Encouragement To Read John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Knowing And Doing*, Spring Edition, 2018.)

The tale recounts a dream had by Bunyan about a young man named "Christian." This young man of faith leaves "The City of Destruction" and makes his way to the "Celestial City." On his journey he encounters many trials.

One of the most famous creations in *Pilgrim's Progress* is "Vanity Fair." Bunyan writes: "The way to the Celestial City lies directly through this town where this lusty fair is kept. He who will go to the Celestial City – and yet not go through this town, must need to go out of the world. The King of kings Himself, when here, went through this town to His own country – and that upon a fair day as well! Yes, and it was Beelzebub, the chief lord of this fair, who invited Him to buy of his vanities. Yes, he would have made Him lord of the fair – would He have but bowed down" (John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Global Grey Edition, 62).

According to Bunyan's creation, "Vanity Fair" was a city that had everything for sale. "At this fair are all such merchandise sold, as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferences, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, ... lives, blood,

bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not. And, moreover, at this fair there is at all times, to be seen juggling, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves" (Bunyan, 61).

Christian made his way through Vanity Fair without buying merchandise there. "They cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,' and look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic was in Heaven. One chanced mockingly, beholding the carriage of the men, to say unto them, 'What will ye buy?' But they, looking gravely upon him, answered, 'We buy the truth.' At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more: some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them" (Bunyan, 62).

Bunyan's fictional city was full of emptiness. Rather than bemoaning such a place, many modern authors have celebrated lifestyles of greed, and arrogance using the name "Vanity Fair" as their moniker. Today the popular magazine *Vanity Fair* describes itself as "the premier publication for Hollywood obsessives, ... *VF* explores the intersection of power and personality, profiling the outsize characters who shape our culture." John Bunyan would be scandalized to see what modern publishers have done with his original concept.

Bunyan alluded much to Scripture. His description of Christian in *Vanity Fair* sounds much like the description of suffering found in 1 Peter: "The Pilgrims, being patient, and not answering insult for insult – but rather a blessing; and returning good words for reproaches, and kindness for injuries done – some men in the fair who were more discerning, and less prejudiced than the rest – began to restrain and blame the examiners for their continual abuses to the Pilgrims" (Bunyan, 63).

Vanity Fair as an analogy for temptation seeks to entice and eviscerate all at the same time. Like Christian, we would do well if instead, we were only in the market for truth!

Read 1 Peter 4:1-6

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. 2 As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 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. 4 They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. 5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 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 human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. [NIV]

Read in another translation

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin 2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will. 3 For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living – and they slander you. 5 They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the spirit according to God's standards. [CSB]

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Write "1 Peter 3:18" over "therefore" in v. 1.
- Draw a line connecting the words "body" in v. 1.
- Write "1 Peter 2:21-25" over the words "same attitude" in v. 1.
- Circle the word "they" in v. 2 and draw an arrow connecting it to "yourselves" in v. 1.
- Underline the contrast in v. 2.
- Circle the words "they" in vv. 4-5 and draw arrows connecting them to who they refer to in v. 3.
- Double underline the word "now" in v. 6.
- Place a box around the phrase "for this reason" in v. 6 and draw an arrow to what it refers to in vs. 5.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. To what attitude is Peter calling believers to arm themselves in v. 1? (Consider 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:14-18.)
 2. How does suffering impact a believer's relationship to sin (vv. 1-2)?
 3. What does Peter's list of vices share in common (v. 3)?
 4. What would be some modern equivalents of Peter's vice list for believers today?
 5. Why would anyone be surprised at or antagonistic to those choosing not to participate in "reckless, wild living"?
 6. Who are the "the living and the dead" in v. 5?
 7. Who are "the dead" in v. 6?
 8. To what is "live according to God in regard to the spirit" referring? Consider 1 Peter 3:18, 21.)
 9. Much of 1 Peter 4:1-6 is prohibitive. What positive challenges in 1 Peter 4:1-6 help us war against sin in our lives?
 10. How would you recommend responding to someone who ridicules or berates Christians for being "so heavenly minded they are no earthly good"?
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Commentary On The Text

After colorful and climatic description of the ramifications of Jesus Christ's redemptive suffering (1 Pet. 3:18-22), Peter turns his attention upon the "here and now" as he challenges followers of Jesus to suffer the indignity of identifying with the One who suffered for our sins (1 Pet. 4:1-6). As enigmatic and complicated as Peter's allusions to the implications of Christ's sufferings were in 1 Pet. 3, the practicality and directness of Peter's addressing of our participation in sin serve as a very clear call to righteousness. While we might not fully understand the mysteries of Jesus being "made alive in the Spirit and proclaiming to the dead" (1 Pet. 3:18-20), we can clearly understand the "evil human desires" we should not engage (1 Pet. 4:1-6). Peter identifies a long list of vices that were popular in the culture of the first century.

"The pleasures from which Christians of the first century typically abstained were the popular forms of Roman entertainment: the theater with its risqué performances, the chariot races, and the gladiatorial fights with their blood and gore. Christian lifestyle also condemned the 'pleasures' of an indulgent temper, sex outside marriage, drinking, slander, lying, covetousness, and theft. These attitudes toward contemporary Roman customs and morals, combined with the Christians' refusal to burn incense to the emperor—a gesture of civic gratitude intended to assure the well-being of the empire—earned Christians the reputation of being haters of humanity and traitors to the Roman way of life" (Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 262).

The vices Peter lists are similar to other vice lists in the New Testament (Mk 7:22; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19, Rom 13:13). These sins are pleasure-saturated and extreme in their pursuit. They seem to be corporate in nature, suggesting partnership and allegiance. The list ends with a prohibition of idolatry. Any pleasure or desire that is put above God or in the place of God is a violation of the first and second commandments of the Ten Commandments. Pleasure can easily transform into the worship of gods other than the One True God. Peter summarizes what followers of Jesus should avoid by labeling such sins as "reckless and wild living." Recklessness is "the idea of no saving or redeeming value; the antithesis of salvation, total consumption." Wild living is the idea of "pouring out in excess" or "spilling, never to regain." Activities, pursuits or passions that consume and destroy are not sustainable. Peter states "we have spent enough time" pursuing such vanities (1 Pet. 4:3).

Peter's vice list reads like an extrovert's dream. Each seems to be loud and very public. Much of sin is based in the excitement of joint peer pressure and peer reward. All of Peter's warnings are against activities that require "joining in." Unfortunately, in our world today, we can "join in reckless and wild living" all in the perceived private safety and anonymity of our own homes with our own smartphones. We may think no one knows our sins, but Peter reminds us that God will judge all (1 Pet.

4:5-6). Christians today need to avoid the public halls as well as the private platforms of selfish pleasure.

Participation in or pursuit of illicit activity is a double-edged sword. If you participate, you are soon dissipated and dejected (Luke 15:14-17). If you decline participation you are often condemned as simple, stupid, self-righteous or judgmental. Peter states that when believers refuse to join in "wild living" they are often "blasphemed" or "heaped upon with abuse." One of the sufferings that we may need to "arm" ourselves for is the ridicule and rejection of those who chase the pleasures that we are choosing to avoid.

We can take comfort in the fact that God is the ultimate judge and he will bring his wisdom and justice to bear on all "the living and the dead" (1 Pet. 4:5). "The merism in 1 Pet. 4:5, 'the living and the dead,' indicates the universal scope of God's purview. The claim, so popular in today's intellectual milieu, that truth is socially constructed opposes ideas of universal truth. When applied to religious thought, it implies that a given religion is true only for those who believe it. But 1 Peter teaches here that the gospel of God's forgiveness and judgment in Christ is true not only for believing Christians but for all people as well. The universal claim to truth was as offensive to first-century Greco-Roman thought as it has become in today's pluralistic culture. The apostle teaches here that no one escapes God's judgment, which will either acquit or condemn based on response to Christ, the Living Stone or the stumbling stone (2:7-8)" (Jobe, 270).

While the phrase "the living and the dead" in 1 Pet. 4:5 seems to be speaking of all people (living are saved; dead are unsaved) who will experience God's righteous judgment. 1 Pet. 4:6 mentions "the dead" but ascribes to them, after God's judgment, an existence where they "live according to God in regard to the spirit." This "living in the spirit" is very similar to phrases Peter uses about the vindication and resurrection of Jesus after his suffering (1 Pet. 3:18, 21). Some have seen verse 6 as a "bookend" conclusion to the subject of Christ's suffering that began in 1 Peter 3:18. This "living by the spirit" language alludes to the resurrection. "Peter considered the case of believers who had died physically [v. 6]. These people heard and believed the gospel when they were alive but had subsequently died. Unbelievers viewed the death of believers as proof that there is no advantage in becoming a believer, for all without exception die. Peter indicated, however, that unbelievers do not understand the whole picture. Even though from a human perspective believers seem to gain no benefits from their faith since they die, from God's perspective (which is normative), they live according to the Spirit.... Death is not the last word for believers. They will be raised from the dead. The contrast between the 'flesh' and 'spirit' here is parallel to 1 Pet 3:18, for Christ also died in terms of his flesh, but he was raised to life by the Holy Spirit. A similar destiny awaits believers. They die physically but will be raised to life" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, *The New American Commentary*, 208).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *arm* “The phrase *arm yourselves* is a military metaphor. With what were they to arm themselves? The same intention, the same courageous attitude and mind-set that Christ had toward suffering. This does not mean that believers should actively seek martyrdom – the next verse describes how the believers are to live the rest of their earthly lives. Nonetheless, they should arm themselves for death if necessary. If believers suffer, it ought to be for living the Christian faith; they ought to suffer courageously, knowing that God will ultimately be victorious” (Bruce B. Barton, *1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude*, Life Application Bible Commentary, 109).

v. 1 *done with sin* “By his death, Jesus is done with sin. The meaning, of course, is not that Jesus now stopped sinning – Peter has already reminded his readers of Christ’s sinlessness (2:22) – but that he dealt once and for all with the world’s sin when he took it upon himself on the cross (2:24). The problem of dealing with sin is now over and done with. Peter’s readers are to adopt the same attitude. Believers are to recognize that in view of their new birth spiritually (1:3), by which they now partake in the risen life of Christ, they are to reckon themselves dead to the blandishments of sin, presented to them by their ‘evil human desires,’ but alive to the creative and positive urgings of God. It is the same thought that Paul puts forward: ‘Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires’ (Rom. 6:11–12). That is the ‘will of God’ for all believers” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, Understanding the Bible Commentary, 120).

v. 1 *whoever suffers* “The clause is best understood in light of the discussion of the emulation of the suffering Christ in 2:21–24. Because Christ suffered (2:21ab; 4:1a), the Christians are similarly to be prepared to undergo suffering (2:21b; 4:2), a suffering that demonstrates that the one who so suffers no longer acts in a way contrary to God’s will, that is, by sinning (2:22–23; 4:1c). That Christ in his death bore the Christians’ sins is clear in 2:24, but that is not the point in this context. Rather, the point here is that the suffering Christians undergo at the hands of their ungodly opponents demonstrates that such sufferers no longer live in ways opposed to God’s will. Thus one who suffers in that way has found rest from, or ceased from (ἠέπαινται), sin. Thus the situation the readers face provides ample evidence that, precisely because they suffer as did Christ for following God’s will and not the (sinful) activities of their unbelieving contemporaries, they have in fact ceased from sin, that is, activities counter to God’s will” (Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia – a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, 280).

v. 2 *desires* “Verse 2 helps us to understand that being done with sin is more about renunciation than about a state of sinless perfection. The result of being done with sin is that one will desire to follow God’s will rather than human lusts” (Dennis R. Edwards, *1 Peter*, The Story of God Bible Commentary, 170).

v. 3 *doing what the pagans choose* “This verse is one of the clearest indications that many of these Christians were Gentiles. The word here translated ‘pagans’ is often translated ‘Gentiles’ (as in the NRSV translation of this verse). However, in this case it is fittingly translated ‘pagans’ since it clearly refers to immoral and idolatrous Gentiles, not simply to the ethnic category” (Allen Black and Mark C. Black, *1 & 2 Peter*, The College Press NIV Commentary, 1 Pe 4:3).

v. 4 *surprised* “Christians’ former colleagues are confused by the new lifestyle they are manifesting. It is as if the Christian has become a stranger to them: ‘they were unable to understand why anyone would exchange a hedonistic lifestyle for the moral restrictions of some religious sect. What could be gained from it? Not only were they surprised, but they turned hostile as well’ (Mounce 2005, 64)” (Paul A. Himes, *1 Peter*, Lexham Research Commentaries, 4:4).

v. 4 *join* “While the verb translated ‘participate’ means literally ‘run with’ (συντρέχω), it is less likely to be meant literally than figuratively, that is, they no longer accompany their contemporaries in general participation in cultural events. It was this refusal that got Christians into trouble, and made it possible for the accusation to be leveled against them that their aloofness demonstrated their hate for all other human beings” (Achtemeier, 283).

v. 4 *reckless* “The same wild profligacy is literally ‘the same rapid pouring out of unrestrained indulgence’ or ‘the same torrent of debauchery’ (NIV: ‘that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation’). The word translated profligacy (*asōtia*) refers to uncontrolled indulgence in the seeking of pleasure (the same word is used in Eph. 5:18, and the related adverb is used of the ‘loose living’ of the prodigal son in Luke 15:13 – it suggests wastefulness, perhaps both of money and of life” (Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 177).

v. 5 *living* “No one in any age can escape the inevitability of God’s judgment which comes with Christ’s appearing. Being ready to judge indicates that this may happen at any time (see v. 7). Yet what a difference there is in that day for those who have faith in Christ and live for him! For them, this is the day for which they have been shielded and protected (1:5) and the day on which finally they see the glory of their Saviour” (Paul Gardner, *1 and 2 Peter and Jude*, Focus on the Bible Commentary, 129).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Like Christ, do the will of God by avoiding reckless human pleasures, anticipating the rewards of eternal life in the Spirit.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

We think reading the Bible together as a family is all rainbows and sunshine. Then, we get to sections of the Bible that challenge and maybe even surprise us. We're having a nice family time reading through 1 Peter 4 when our child asks, "What's debauchery/lust/orgies?" Yikes. We've got some options here. We might answer with very broad brushstrokes, "It's when you're not living for God," and that would be okay and even appropriate for our youngest kids. You might also consider this an opportunity in which God has made a way for us to talk about the more challenging subjects in life. The door is barely cracked open to share with your kids what God says about Biblical intimacy. Parents, open this door wide and begin the conversation in an age-appropriate way as early as possible. Don't wait to begin the conversation about purity, Biblical intimacy and living wholly (and holy) for God until they've already "learned it" on the playground. You don't have to give all the details, but this is a perfect opportunity to begin setting a foundation of truth that you and your kids can build on for years to come. Remember that this is God's truth and our job as parent is to present it as honestly as possible. Before you come to church, before your kids step into the classroom, before the question comes up to your teacher, read the scripture and do The Scrolls together. You have the responsibility and authority to be the first teacher of truth. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Peter 4:1-6

1. What attitude does Peter tell readers to arm themselves with?
2. What is the result of arming oneself with Christ's attitude?
3. In verse 4, who is "they" referring to? Who is "you" referring to?

What Do You Think?

How can you take on the attitude of Christ? What would that look like in your daily life?

What Do You Do?

Your thoughts and actions are a reflection of your attitude. Each day this week, pray and ask God to give you the same attitude as Christ - selflessness, humility and service (Phil 2:3-4).

CORE COMPETENCY: Love

I love and forgive others no matter what.

MEMORY VERSE: Ephesians 3:20-21

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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