

STRANGERS & EXILES



CHRIST'S PEOPLE IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

Post-Christian Survival Guide – 1 Peter 4:12-19

November 12, 2023

Christians in the west find themselves increasingly marginalized, with more and more similarities to the Christians in the first century. Peter writes his letter to Christians who are experiencing suffering because they follow Christ. He exhorts them to not be surprised when they encounter hostility but instead to rejoice because their suffering as believers shows that they belong to Jesus, whom the world also hated. Concerning the hardship the believers are to expect, Peter comforts them by saying that Christ is refining them as gold refined in fire. Christ uses the suffering to mould us into his image. Lastly, Peter exhorts the hearers to entrust their souls to their faithful creator – daily. He is the creator who does not leave his creation. He is faithful enough to bring this suffering to an end.

[If you're working through these in a group, jump straight to apply]

For personal reflection/community discussion

Read – Read the passage in its context several times. Read it slow enough to understand what God is saying through it.

- What ideas or words are emphasized, repeated or related in this passage?

- In your own words, what is the main idea of this passage? (Try to summarize these verses in 10 words or less)

Examine – Next, try to understand the specifics of what the passage is communicating.

- What do you notice about God? What has he done/is he doing in these verses?
- What do you learn about Jesus and his gospel from this passage?
- What does this reveal about people?
- How do you think the writer wanted his readers to respond to these words?

Apply – After seeking to understand God’s Word in this passage, consider how he intends to use it in your heart and life today.

- If you have encountered hostility because you are a Christian, was it a surprise to you? What about it shocked you?
- How can we rejoice when suffering as Christians? How does knowing that we share in Christ’s sufferings change one’s perspective?
- How are we to deal with accusations made against the church?
- What is the greater purpose of God in our suffering and how might this help us?