

## Living Right In A World Gone Wrong

### 1 Peter 4:1–11

In 1 Peter 4:1-11 Peter has two main points:

- In the first 7 verses: “Stop sinning.”
- In the last 4 verses, “Start serving God.”

#### 1. Remember We’re Not Who We Used To Be.

*"Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body."* 1 Peter 4:1

Because of what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary, He radically changed every person who received Jesus Christ as Savior and changed their relationship to sin. Because He died for our sins on the cross, we don't have to live the way we used to live.

When Jesus died on the cross, in His flesh, He died for our sins. He suffered for us. Peter is picking up on what he said in 1 Peter 3:18, *"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit."*

When Jesus died on the cross, He became our substitute. He suffered in the flesh for us. He died on the cross for our sins. When Jesus died on the cross, He was not dying in sin. He was not dying with sin. He was not dying under sin, but the Bible says that He was dying on that cross for our sins. He was our substitute.

We have to die to sin as well:

Romans 6:7 says, *"Anyone who has died has been set free from sin."*

Romans 6:10 says, *"The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."*

Romans 6:11 says, *"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."*

Romans 6:14 says, *"For sin shall no longer have dominion over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace."*

- We no longer have to be dominated by sin.

*"Sin doesn't have dominion over you"* This phrase doesn't mean that you don't ever sin anymore, but what it does mean is that you no longer have to be dominated by sin. You can choose not to sin.

The person who is not in a relationship with Jesus has no choice but to sin, but when you received Jesus as your Savior, the relationship has been broken with your sins so that, not that you will never sin again, but that you do not have to sin.

Paul says, *"We are dead to sin"* Romans 6:2. A dead person is totally unresponsive to something.

If you are a born again believer, you don't have to be dominated by sin. You don't have to live that way anymore.

Peter says, *"Arm yourselves with the same way of thinking that He had."* We are in a war with our flesh and sin. It's a war you can't win on your own. We need divine help. Resurrection power is a weapon you wield in battle. You are in the midst of suffering, and you say, "Christ suffered. He faced what looked like defeat, what looked like God had forsaken Him. But look what happened. God resurrected Him."

Peter lists six descriptions of the lifestyle of the world dominated by sin.

*“As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 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.”* 1 Peter 4:2-3

The world has a different set of values. They don't have a hope that goes beyond this world, so naturally, they try to get the most out of this world. Feel good. Chase your dreams. Make the most of what you have. Do what you want. Spend all your money on yourself and your children. Make a bucket list. What else is there but earthly happiness?

1 Peter 4 gives us a description of what goes on in the lives of many precious people who do not know that Jesus has paid the price for their sins on the cross of Calvary. It is the picture of waking up the next morning with a horrible hangover and terrible regrets. The guilt and shame and remorse that comes over your heart. All of that is packed into these verses of scriptures.

These verses are also filled with the good news that you don't have to live that way. That doesn't have to be your lifestyle. *“They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.”* 1 Peter 4:4

“Reckless wild living” is the same word that was used of the prodigal son who, when he went to the far country, the Bible says that he wasted his money with riotous living. As a believer, you have a brand new regulating factor. You have a brand new purpose. You have a brand new guideline in your life. You can now live your life to the will of God. That's the way Jesus lived His life. Jesus did the will of God. He said, *“I do always those things that please my Father.”* John 8:29

God has a wonderful plan and a purpose for your life. The greatest life you could ever possibly live is to live the will of God for your life.

When you make that kind of change, when you move over from the pagan life to the life of a born again child of God, when there is a difference in your life. He says, *“They are surprised.”* When a person has a lifestyle change, and when they change from the person they used to be to the person that God wants them to be, people think that's strange. They think it's weird.

They don't think it's strange if you wreck your life. They don't think it's strange if you put your family through turmoil and misery. They don't think it's strange if you wreck your health. They don't think it's strange if you get strung out on drugs.

If you get saved and begin to live a clean, decent life, they say, *“That guy's really weird. What has happened to her? He doesn't come to happy hour anymore. She's got a smile on her face. Boy, he has really gotten weird these days.”*

- We no longer have to be devastated by sin.

*“But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”* 1 Peter 4:5

He's talking about the judgment. After that, the devastating final impact of sin is that there is an eternity in a terrible place called hell. In hell will be the devastating results of sin.

They may malign you, but they don't have the last word. God does. Keep your eyes on that. You're about to go into eternity which lasts forever! Which, if you don't know how long forever is, it's much longer than now. The Apostle James says that this life is like the mist on a mirror caused by your breath. Just there for a moment.

*"But live according to God in the spirit."* 1 Peter 4:6

I've got good news for you. You don't have to live that way anymore. If you invite Jesus Christ into your heart and into your life, what He did at the cross of Calvary can close yesterday's door for you.

## **2. Remember Eternity Is Close.**

*"The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray."* 1 Peter 4:8

The word here *"be sober"* means to be of sound mind. It means to stay cool, don't panic. What he's saying is, "Get yourself in a right relationship to God. Don't allow these last days to shake you and to put your life into a frenzy."

We are living in an age when people seem to have gone crazy, and God's people need to be sober and sane in these days. The only way to be that way is to stay in a right relationship with your Heavenly Father.

Maybe he thought about the night in Gethsemane when Jesus said, *"Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation."* Matthew 26:41

Peter recognizes that the only way you can really live the way you should live and stay close to Jesus and be ready for the return of the Lord is to be watching and praying on a daily basis. Are you looking for the Lord to come?

The end of all things is referring to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people say, "Simon Peter was mistaken. It's been 2000 years now since Simon Peter said, "The end of all things is at hand, and Jesus is coming." But Jesus Christ still hasn't come." No, Simon Peter was not mistaken. Simon Peter understood history. He knew how to read history. Simon Peter is taking the same position that all Bible writers took.

Simon Peter, in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, said in Acts 2:17, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh."* In 1 Corinthians 10:11, it says, *"Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."* Hebrews 1:2 says, *"He has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."*

Paul in Philippians 4:5, says, *"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."* James, in James 5:8 says, *"Be also patient, establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draws near."* 1 John 2:18, says, *"Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, by which we know that it is the last hour."*

The New Testament writers took the same position about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ that we should take. They believed that the return of the Lord was imminent, though not necessarily immediate. That means it could happen at any moment, though not necessarily immediately. That means that He might not come today. He might come today, but He might not come today, but each day moves us closer to His return.

That's the way you and I should live our lives. We should live in the awareness of the imminence of the coming of the Lord. He could come at any moment. He may not come immediately, but we should be living as if Jesus Christ would come this very day. Are you living as if Jesus Christ could come at any moment?

In 2 Peter 3: 3-4 Peter says, *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."*

People in these last days will say, "We've been hearing that Jesus is coming any day now and He hasn't come. Jesus hasn't come; therefore, He is not going to come."

We are closer today to His coming than we have ever been before.

It's kind of the like the old farmer. His grandfather clock went haywire one night and it struck 20 times. He said, "Wake up, Nelly. It's later than it's ever been before."

We are living on the edge of eternity. We are living in the days of the wrap up of all things.

One of Martin Luther's favorite texts was Psalm 90:12 *"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to learn wisdom!"*

It is estimated that a total of 117 billion people have been born on earth. 7.5 billion are alive right now, which means that 95.5% of all the people who have ever been born now are dead, and they are living in eternity.

All of their earthly accomplishments mean nothing, only the Kingdom of God and what they did for it matters now. Fast forward your life 100 years...and live from that vantage point. What will you wish you had done with your life in 100 years? Live for that now! The glory of God. The mission of Jesus. The souls of people.

### **3. Remember To Use Your Life To Serve God.**

As God's people, you have a crucial role on the earth. We have a vital role. You are the conduit of God's power. John Wesley said, "God does nothing on earth except in answer to prayer." All God's power on earth is bound up in you. You have a vital role, something only you can do.

You belong to a family. You are a member of a family. You are in a church. Our church is a great family. We have a lot of activities going on.

*"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."* 1 Peter 4:8

One translation says, *"Make it your priority to love one another."* The church should be a laboratory of love. If you can't love your brothers and sisters in Christ, then how are you going to love lost people?

- Love Costs.

*"Deeply"* means to "stretch out." It is the picture of an athlete who was in a race, stretching just a little harder, stretching a little more forward to make it to the finish line. They are reaching deep down to finish strong. Sometimes you have to reach deep inside and stretch a little more to love the saints of God.

In Ephesians 1:5, the apostle Paul says, *"I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people."*

Someone has said, "To dwell above with saints we love, that will indeed be glory. To live below with saints we know, well that's another story." Love stretches. Love reaches out to those who are hard to love. Love goes the extra mile. Love costs.

- Love Covers.

*"Love shall covers a multitude of sins."* 1 Peter 4:8

That doesn't mean that we condone the sins of people. It means that you love them in spite of their sin.

- Love Cares.

*"Offer hospitality one to another without grudging."* 1 Peter 4:9

Kindness and love for others is the single greatest force for helping people to stop sin when they see:

How you forgive,

How generous you are,

How we treat our spouses and children,

When we are empathetic with one another's pain and excited in one another's joys,

When we care for one another's needs.

This is the great "*secret*" of the church. Our love for each other is the power of God that wakes people up from sin. Romans 2:4 says that "*God's kindness leads us to repentance.*" The same is true with us: our kindness to each other leads lost people to repentance.

*"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."* 1 Peter 4:9

The book of Acts says that in the first church, "*There were no poor among them*" Acts 4:34.

When that happened, it says, "*God added to their number daily*" Acts 2:47

If there were no poor among us, if we were meeting one another's needs, that would be the greatest and most evangelistically effective testimony in our world. The generosity and love of the Gospel on display is the greatest sermon in our world.

You each have a gift to serve the body and the church. "Each has received" means you all have one. You have to take that seriously!

- Love Contributes.

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."* 1 Peter 4:10

Every believer has one or more spiritual gifts. The Bible says that we are to use these gifts to be a blessing to other people. Spiritual gifts are the tools to build with and the instruments to bless with.

Everyone in our congregation has some spiritual gift they can use for the good of others and for the glory of God.

*"That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."* 1 Peter 4:11

We should live and labor and love so that others are helped and God is glorified.

*"If anyone serves, they should do so 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 Peter 4:11

It's all about Him! In all we do... in pain... with our prosperity... with our gifts. We direct people to the glory of Jesus.