



In God We Trust
1 Peter 4:17-19
Study Guide

1. As the Christian confronts the world with Christ there will be a reaction from the world. Christians should not be surprised at the reception they get from unbelief. In 1 Peter 4:12-19 there are six imperatives which serve as instruction for the church in the midst of suffering for Christ's sake. The fifth imperative is found at the end of 4:17 ("let him glorify God"). If you have notes from the sermon on 4:12-16 review those at this time. If the Christian suffers as the result of doing wrong, he should be ashamed. Why is there no shame in suffering for Christ?
2. The Christian can glorify God in suffering because ("for" v. 17) it is time for judgment to begin. When the Christian is reviled for no other reason than that he is a Christian, God is to be honored in his life. Is God being honored in your life as you go through difficult times? What are some dishonoring ways in which the Christian can respond to suffering?
3. Peter once again gives a theological time reference ("time for judgment to begin"). He has done this previously (1:5, 6-8, 11, 20; 2:7; 3:22; 4:2, 7, 13). The Greek word for judgment is "krima." In this context it is referring to the refining effect that suffering can have on the Christian. What are some ways in which the churches to whom Peter is writing were being purified and strengthened through their sufferings? Can you think of some sins that have come to your attention through a time of personal trial? To what extent have you learned to trust God more as result of pain and suffering?
4. If Christians need the experience of earthly judgments to deal with sin, grow, and mature, how much more will the unsaved deserve everlasting judgment (v. 17b)? In what sense will judgment end with unbelievers? "If God judges with a severe, fiery persecution those whom He especially loves, what then must be in store for ungodly men?" What is in store for those who die without Christ (2 Thess. 1:5-10)?
5. In what way is the righteous person (i.e. the Christian) being saved with difficulty (v. 18)? Keep in mind the context of trials as necessary in the journey to heaven (Acts 14:22). What is the answer to the rhetorical question in verse 18 (a quote from Proverbs 11:31)?
6. A sixth and final imperative in this section is found in verse 19 ("entrust"). What does Peter mean when he says "according to the will of God" (2:15; 3:17; 4:2)? How did Christ endure suffering (2:23)? Explain how the Christian can go about trusting God who judges justly? What is the significance of the fact that Peter refers to God as the "faithful Creator"?