

WEEK 4

SHE WAS SICK:

A STORY OF COMPASSION

FIRST BAPTIST church

Cultivating Love, Choosing Progress, Cherishing Civility

First Baptist Church of Rancho Cucamonga
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☐	Day 1	1 Peter 1:1-2	☐	Day 21	1 Peter 4:12-15
☐	Day 2	1 Peter 1:3-8	☐	Day 22	1 Peter 4:16-19
☐	Day 3	1 Peter 1:9-12	☐	Day 23	1 Peter 5:1-4
☐	Day 4	1 Peter 1:13-16	☐	Day 24	1 Peter 5:5-11
☐	Day 5	1 Peter 1:17-21	☐	Day 25	1 Peter 5:12-14
☐	Day 6	1 Peter 1:22-25	☐	Day 26	2 Peter 1:1-2
☐	Day 7	1 Peter 2:1-3	☐	Day 27	2 Peter 1:3-8
☐	Day 8	1 Peter 2:4-7	☐	Day 28	2 Peter 1:9-11
☐	Day 9	1 Peter 2:8-12	☐	Day 29	2 Peter 1:12-16
☐	Day 10	1 Peter 2:13-17	☐	Day 30	2 Peter 1:17-21
☐	Day 11	1 Peter 2:18-21	☐	Day 31	2 Peter 2:1-4
☐	Day 12	1 Peter 2:22-25	☐	Day 32	2 Peter 2:5-8
☐	Day 13	1 Peter 3:1-6	☐	Day 33	2 Peter 2:9-12
☐	Day 14	1 Peter 3:7	☐	Day 34	2 Peter 2:13-17
☐	Day 15	1 Peter 3:8-12	☐	Day 35	2 Peter 2:18-22
☐	**Day 16**	**1 Peter 3:13-17**	☐	Day 36	2 Peter 3:1-3
☐	**Day 17**	**1 Peter 3:18-22**	☐	Day 37	2 Peter 3:4-7
☐	**Day 18**	**1 Peter 4:1-3**	☐	Day 38	2 Peter 3:8-10
☐	**Day 19**	**1 Peter 4:4-7**	☐	Day 39	2 Peter 3:11-16
☐	**Day 20**	**1 Peter 4:8-11**	☐	Day 40	2 Peter 3:17-18



Requests	Answers



NOTE: The foundation of spiritual growth is your understanding of God's Word.
Each week, bring your Bible and your study guide to the group meeting.

CONNECT ..... 15 minutes

1. Take a few moments to catch up on current events in your lives.

2. Share insights from the devotional section of **Follow Me: Stories from the Life of Peter**.

GROW ..... 30 minutes

First Peter 4 begins by normalizing persecution rather than treating it as an anomaly. This normalization provides a crucial reframing for embattled believers. Rather than viewing hostility as strange or unexpected, Christians should recognize it as a natural consequence of living distinctly for Christ. This perspective removes the shock that can destabilize faith during trials.

The passage offers deeper encouragement by connecting suffering to Christ's own experience. Since Christ endured physical suffering, believers should prepare themselves mentally to face similar hardship (1 Peter 4:1–2). More than mere preparation, these trials actually forge a partnership with Christ in his suffering, positioning believers to experience joy when his glory becomes visible (1 Peter 4:12–16). This transforms persecution from meaningless pain into participation in something redemptive.

Insults directed at believers because they bear Christ's name bring blessing, with God's glorious Spirit resting upon them (1 Peter 4:12–16). Critically, Peter distinguishes between suffering for genuine wrongdoing versus suffering for Christian identity itself – the latter carrying no shame. This distinction protects believers from false guilt while validating their experience of opposition.

Suffering should result from righteous action, not misconduct, with assurance that God's glory will ultimately be revealed. When persecution arises from living out gospel values, believers can trust their lives to God, who will never abandon them, while continuing to do what is right. This combination – maintaining integrity while entrusting outcomes to God – provides both moral clarity and spiritual stability during crisis.

The passage emphasizes maintaining deep love within the Christian community and practicing hospitality, while also encouraging earnest prayer as persecution approaches. These practices strengthen believers' resilience through mutual support rather than isolation.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- ✓ In your opinion, what best distinguishes Christians from non-Christians?

- ✓ What is something for which you were wrongly punished when you were growing up?

Read **1 Peter 4** and interact with the following questions:

Living for God

"So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. **2** *You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.* **3** *You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy – their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.* **4** *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 stands ready to 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.* **7** *The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers.* **8** *Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.* **9** *Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.* **10** *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.* **11** *Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen."*

Suffering for Being a Christian

12 *"Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.* **13** *Instead, be very glad – for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.* **14** *If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.* **15** *If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs.* **16** *But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name!* **17** *For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News?* **18** *And also, 'If the righteous are barely saved, what will happen to godless sinners?'* **19** *So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you."* [1]

[1] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 4:1–19.

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY:

1. What did Peter's readers do in the past? What did their 'former friends" think was strange? (4:3-4)

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2. What did Peter instruct his readers to do since the end of all things was near? (4:7)

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3. What did Peter encourage his readers to do above all? (4:8)

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4. What goal did Peter want his audience to reach with all they did? (4:11)

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5. In what did Peter tell his readers to rejoice? (4:13)

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6. How did Peter say these believers should not suffer? (4:15)

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7. What did Peter urge believers to do if they suffered as Christians? (4:16)

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8. What should those who suffer according to God's will do? (4:19)

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THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF CHAPTER 4:

First Peter addresses Christians positioned as outsiders within the Roman Empire, scattered as exiles throughout Roman provinces. Peter's audience faced sharp tensions between their Christian values and surrounding pagan culture, creating both offensive and defensive challenges.

The immediate social pressure stemmed from practical conflicts. Christians gathered for weekly meetings against Roman law, refused participation in common cultic ceremonies, and followed a leader executed by crucifixion – all offensive to Roman and Jewish sensibilities. First Peter specifically addresses how Christians were "reviled" or "blasphemed" for withdrawing from immoral activities they once shared with non-Christians. Beyond these real differences, Christians also endured rumors spawned by opponents' hatred and fear, including false accusations of cannibalism, atheism, and sexual immorality.

Culturally, a fundamental disagreement about honor and shame shaped the conflict. While both Romans and Christians valued honor and avoided shame, they radically disagreed about what constituted each. Romans defined honor through public praise and community recognition of

deeds benefiting households or the state. By contrast, 1 Peter relocates honor and shame entirely to God's judgment rather than public opinion, with Christians exchanging loyalty to God and endurance through trials for future "praise, glory and honor."

Scholars have identified a deliberate tension in 1 Peter between "acculturation" – conforming where possible to dominant values – and "boundary maintenance," preserving Christian distinctives within a hostile society. The letter reinforces Christian identity amid persecution by encouraging joy in God despite suffering and hopeful fear in God's vindication at final judgment.

THINKING THROUGH THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PASSAGE:

9. What does it mean to be done with sin?

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10. What about your lifestyle do unbelievers find strange?

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11. How can participating in Christ's suffering prepare us for His Second Coming?

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12. Why might it be part of God's plan for someone to suffer?

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HOW GOD WANTS ME TO APPLY THIS PASSAGE TO MY LIFE:

13. In what simple way can you let unbelievers see that you live by a different set of priorities?

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14. In what difficult circumstance do you need to praise God this week?

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SHARE ..... 10 minutes

Seek to invest in others who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and invite them to FBC.

SERVE ..... 5 minutes

Record progress on your service project ...

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WORSHIP ..... 15 minutes

Pray that God will keep you rooted in His word and that you will not neglect His truth.

Devotional Day 16:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 3:13-17 and The Devotional Thought

13 "Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. 15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. 17 Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!" [2]

Devotional Thought

If doing right causes you to suffer, God will reward you. Don't worry or be afraid. Focus on loving Jesus as your Lord. Because of your good behavior, some may ask you about the hope you have as a believer. Be ready to talk about it in a kind, respectful manner. Living above criticism will protect your good name when others speak against you.

When you do what is right, when you love Christ and worship Him as Lord, people will notice that you are different. Others will question why you have such hope. That inquiry is your opportunity to explain its origin. In keeping with the way you handle suffering, respond kindly and respectfully as they seek your answer. Even our suffering can be used to draw others to Jesus Christ.

Hope in suffering, theologically, represents far more than optimism about better circumstances. Hope is not simply wanting things to be better or different, nor is it a form of denial about how bad things might be. It functions as a gift from God and a Christian virtue that enables trust in God's ability to bring meaning and life, even in dire circumstances. Hope reorients how believers experience pain.

Our readiness to explain our hope establishes a direct evangelistic mandate fixed within Peter's instructions on suffering. Peter introduces the importance of the believer's words for the first time in his letter, moving beyond his earlier emphasis on evangelistic action to combine actions with words as a means of confronting opponents. The passage knits together an understanding of why Christians suffer, their attitude and behavior in the midst of possible suffering, and the method of evangelism that stems from such behavior.

When believers maintain clear consciences through righteous living, people who speak against them, will be ashamed when they see the good life lived because of Christ. The passage introduces the need for Christians to give a public defense of their faith with the apparent intention that persecutors would become aware of Christian beliefs and potentially recognize the positive social force of the Christian community.

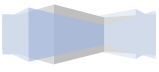
The passage reframes persecution from a threat to evangelism into an occasion for it. With the right perspective, believers can transform times of persecution into opportunities for evangelism. Suffering creates a platform for witness when believers respond with courage grounded in Christ's lordship and articulate their faith with both gentleness and conviction.

[2] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 3:13–17.

Reflect: Focus your thoughts on what God has revealed to you through your reading.

Record: Your thoughts, impressions, things to remember, & an application statement.

Request: Based on what you have learned today, write out a prayer to God.



Devotional Day 17:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 3:18-22 and The Devotional Thought

18 *"Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.* **19** *So he went and preached to the spirits in prison;* **20** *those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.* **21** *And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* **22** *Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority."* [3]

Devotional Thought

Peter returns to the thrust of the Gospel in verse 18. Jesus suffered for our sins. His suffering is now over, having accomplished its purpose. Death is conquered and reversed. Christ was set free to complete His mission … our redemption. While the meaning of verses 19 and 20 is not certain, the *"spirits in prison"* could be reference to the evil seed of the union of fallen angels and women of the generation before the flood. J. Ramsey Michaels states, "The point is simply that Christ went and announced his sovereignty to these spirits *wherever they might be*, in every place where they thought they were secure against their ancient divine Enemy. The location of their strongholds, and hence the geography of Christ's mission to them, is not Peter's main concern."[4]

In verse 21, baptism is compared to the water from which Noah and his family were saved from drowning. Peter is not saying that baptism is the agent of salvation. Rather he is saying that baptism is a consecration of the body and a pledge to God out of a clear conscience.

Baptism represents identification with Christ's death and resurrection. The immersion in water symbolizes death, while emergence represents participation in resurrection power. Baptism illustrates being cleansed from sin, functioning as a sign of inner renewal. This cleansing dimension connects to the work of the Spirit, which produces an inner transformation distinct from mere external washing. Baptism symbolizes victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God's grace, the entirety of Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts. These are blessings that extend throughout the Christian life. Rather than being a one-time transaction, baptism serves as an inexhaustible theological resource. Believers continually return to its meaning throughout their spiritual journey, discovering fresh dimensions of what salvation entails and how it reshapes our Christian existence.

Christ's obedience operates on multiple levels in shaping how believers live. We must adopt the same mindset that Christ Jesus had. One that is fundamentally oriented toward doing God's will rather than pursuing personal advantage. Christ came to accomplish the will of God who sent him, not his own will. His nourishment came from fulfilling God's will and completing His work. He fulfilled what the Father required to demonstrate his love for the Father.

[3] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 3:18–22.

[4] J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, vol. 49, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), 210.

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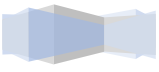

Devotional Day 18:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 4:1-3 and The Devotional Thought

"So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. **2** *You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.* **3** *You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy – their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols."* [5]

Devotional Thought

Just as Jesus Christ suffered, you must be prepared to suffer as well. Having *"suffered physically for Christ,"* you have a new perspective on sin. You are free from sin's control. Sin no longer holds power over you. Instead, your desire to *"do the will of God"* will increase. You have victory over your past because of Jesus. Peter reminds his readers of past indulgences – immorality; lust; feasting; drunkenness; wild parties; and worship of idols – but are now free from their power.

Suffering in the flesh ends sin through a break with one's former way of life. Not through physical pain itself, but through the spiritual reorientation that suffering produces. Believers' identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection provides the foundation for this transformation, as God considers believers dead with Christ through faith.

The old sinful self is crucified with Christ so that sin loses its power in one's life. This is a legal status before God that believers receive through union with Christ. This termination from sin reshapes one's priorities, redirecting energy away from personal desires toward God's will.

This termination from sin doesn't mean total sinlessness. Rather, believers are urged to adopt a determination to live a life no longer dominated by sin. Because Christ has deprived hostile forces of their essential power, Christians can identify and align themselves with the result of Christ's victory over sin and death. Although suffering has no saving value in itself, Christ's death aimed to bring us to God so we might live not for ourselves but for Him.

Believers are to arm themselves with the realization that as Christ suffered and *"died to sin,"* leaving the effects of sin behind forever, so they should die to sin as a way of life, leaving the past behind. Suffering permits believers to recognize their spiritual death to sin's power.

Suffering views pain not as meaningless tragedy but as participation in a redemptive transformation. Believers experience trials as something repurposed by God for spiritual benefit. As Paul teaches, trials develop endurance, which builds character, which strengthens confident hope. Peter agrees, believing trials authenticate faith, testing it *"as fire purifies gold."* Therefore, cooperate with God as He reshapes us toward spiritual maturity; reduces our self-reliance; and deepens our dependence on Him. Father, suffering plays a significant role in sanctification when properly understood. It advances through suffering, making us more like Jesus. All suffering, including physical, psychological, and social distress, serve a purpose. Help us to bear the burden with joy found only in the promise of heaven.

[5] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 4:1–3.

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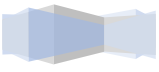

Devotional Day 19:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 4:4-7 and The Devotional Thought

4 *"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 stands ready to 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.* **7** *The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers."* [6]

Devotional Thought

While your *"former friends"* may be surprised at your new lack of enthusiasm for wild living, don't be surprised that they will also turn against you. That is human nature. The Good News is for turning people away from their old life in order that they might *"live forever with God."* This passage establishes an "end times" urgency that shapes the entire passage. Suffering and the second coming of Christ form a central concern throughout 1 Peter. Because the end is near, believers are called to maintain mental clarity and discipline. Peter links "end times" expectation to concrete spiritual disciplines. The nearness of Christ's return is motivation for how to live.

Knowing that "the end" is near provides assurance that God will break into believer's suffering. This turns Peter's instruction from mere urgency into pastoral comfort. Throughout 1 Peter, believers are encouraged to rejoice in their expectation of future realities, which, if embraced, makes their present sufferings more bearable and instills joy in spite of their temporary afflictions. "End times" conviction produces spiritual seriousness and intercession, transforming how persecuted Christians navigate their hostile circumstances.

Scripture offers several principles that move beyond defensiveness. First, reframe mockery as spiritual opportunity. Mockery directed at your faith because you follow Christ brings blessing. You should respond with joy. Persecution makes you a participant in Christ's suffering, connecting you to his ultimate vindication. Rejoice that God counts you worthy to suffer disgrace for Jesus' name. Second, choose your battles carefully. Not every taunt deserves engagement. Rebuking mockers typically produces insults in return, so correcting them is often futile. Avoid foolish arguments that only generate conflict. Remain kind to everyone while gently instructing those who oppose truth. Third, respond through character, not confrontation. When asked about your faith, always be ready to explain it in a gentle and respectful way. When people speak against you, they become ashamed when they witness the quality of life you live. Follow Christ's example. He didn't retaliate when insulted or threaten revenge when suffering, but entrusted His case to God's fair judgment. Fourth, transform hostility through blessing. Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. Never repay evil with evil. Live honorably so everyone sees your integrity. Conquer evil by doing good. This approach disarms opposition in ways argument cannot. Jesus was mocked. His example inspired early Christians to endure.

Father, turning away from our former way of life is Your desire. When we face various trials, we do not despair. Rather, we hold fast to Your word. Help us to respond with character and blessing.

[6] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 4:4–7.

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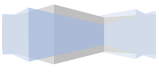

Devotional Day 20:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 4:8-11 and The Devotional Thought

8 *"Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.* **9** *Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.* **10** *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.* **11** *Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen."* [7]

Devotional Thought

"Love covers a multitude of sins." Covering sin means forgiving it. Forgiveness flows from love. This isn't passive indifference to wrongdoing; rather, it represents a self-control that prevents wrongs within Christian community from reaching their most divisive expression. When believers genuinely love one another, they become willing to forgive. Love covers sin through this willingness. When we love one another, we overlook a multitude of sins. That means we choose not to take offense at everything. Some wrongs aren't worth confronting. Personal slights and minor annoyances can be easily forgiven for love's sake. Love keeps no record of being wronged, which changes how we respond to others' failures.

Love covers sin by refusing to gossip about it. We exercise discretion rather than sharing others' offenses with anyone willing to listen. This doesn't mean sweeping serious sin under the carpet. Love doesn't cover sin by ignoring matters; true love protects by helping both victim and offender while preventing further harm. Jesus' sacrificial death exemplifies love covering sin. His bearing of our iniquities was an undeniable act of love. When we love others, God overlooks a multitude of sins in us. The phrase ultimately calls believers to make allowance for each other's faults and forgive those who offend, remembering that the Lord forgave them.

Love resolves conflict by shifting how we relate to those who hurt us. Rather than seeking temporary victory through force, genuine peace emerges from love for other people. It is a reorientation that transforms the conflict itself. When we recognize that all life is interconnected and understand that harming another person ultimately harms ourselves, we stop treating conflict as a battle to win. Instead, compassionate action becomes the method for transforming adversaries rather than defeating them. The goal shifts from humiliation toward friendship and understanding. Compassion and love serve as the antidotes to fear, anger and hate.

The foundation for this approach is a love that chooses to initiate relationship and show kindness regardless of whether the other person is worthy or likable. Loving someone amid conflict requires deep spiritual practice and a vigilant awareness to return to love during moments of anger or pain. When pursued consistently, the outcome is redemption and reconciliation.

[7] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 4:8–11.

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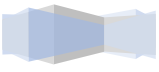



FBC Growth Group Covenant

Congratulations on your desire to grow deeper in your relationship with God through this weekly study and the relationships that will begin as a result of your participation.

As a member of this group, you will be asked to enter into a covenant with the other group members. You are requested to make this Growth Group a priority; by making the following commitments:

- ☐ I will make this group a priority by attending each week (call if I'm going to be absent or late), keeping up with my assignments and participating openly in group discussion.
- ☐ I will regularly attend church services and contribute to the ministry of the church through my attendance, giving, service and inviting of others.
- ☐ I will strive to build authentic relationships with those in this group by showing care, providing encouragement and praying for their needs.
- ☐ I will avoid gossip (including, what happens in the group stays in the group) and immediately resolve any concerns by following the "conflict resolution" principles of Matthew 18:15-17.
- ☐ I will limit my freedom by not serving or consuming alcohol during growth group meetings or events so as to avoid causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble. (1 Cor. 8:1-13; Romans 14:19-21)
- ☐ I will serve with my group once a month during the semester and will participate in a mission project and play together with my group once.
- ☐ I will honestly explore my next steps for spiritual growth and give permission for other group members to speak God's truth into my life.

_____ _____

NAME (Signature) DATE



SHE WAS SICK: A STORY OF COMPASSION

"After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. 'Please heal her,' everyone begged. Standing at her bedside, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. And she got up at once and prepared a meal for them."
– **Luke 4:38-39 (NLT)**

7 *"Even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.* **8** *Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.* **9** *Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.* **10** *That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*
– **2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NLT)**

"For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better."
– **Philippians 1:21 (NLT)**

Memory Verse: *"Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."*
– **1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)**

This Week's Follow Me Principle:

GIVE MY CARES TO JESUS BECAUSE HE CARES FOR ME.

FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

(Levels of learning for assessing spiritual maturity)

- **Knowledge** – *"what to do"* – building a spiritual foundation by determining a person's level of biblical understanding; what does s/he already know and what does s/he still need to learn. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Evaluative Question: Are people learning the content and meaning of the Bible?

- **Perspective** – *"why to do it"* – seeing life from God's point of view by understanding His nature and ways. Perspective enables us to answer the "why" questions of life by seeing life from God's eternal frame of reference. **Ephesians 4:13-14**

Evaluative Question: Are people seeing themselves, life, and other people more clearly from God's perspective?

- **Conviction** – *"motivation to do it"* – biblical conviction that empowers us to counter secular values in the process of becoming more like Christ. **Romans 12:2**

Evaluative Question: Are people's values becoming more aligned with God's values?

- **Skills** – *"how to do it"* – skills developed by practice and experience that equip us to grow spiritually. **James 1:22**

Evaluative Question: Are people becoming more skilled in serving God?

- **Character** – *"what it does to you"* – responding in God-honoring ways in character-building situations. When we make the right choices in life, we are spiritually transformed. **Colossians 1:28**

Evaluative Question: Are people becoming more like Christ?

(Source: The Purpose Driven Church, pages 361-362)

QUESTIONS FOR APPLYING GOD'S WORD

(S.P.E.A.K. T.O. M.E. QUESTIONS)

Is there …

Sin to Confess?

Promise to Claim?

Example to Follow?

Attitude to Change?

Knowledge to Embrace?

Thanks to Give?

Occasion to Pray?

Mandate to Obey?

Error to Avoid?



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