I. FIRST, THERE IS A REASON FOR HARD KNOCKS.

A. The reason is not that God has it in for us.

1. To prove this Peter reminds his readers what God thinks about them.

2. We are “dear friends” 4:12a. “Dear friends”.

3. “Dear Friends” translates a Greek word meaning “those who are greatly loved”.

4. Don’t allow your circumstances to color the way you think God feels about you.

5. Look at the cross instead of circumstances if you want a clear picture of how much God loves you.

B. Don’t be surprised, however, that despite God’s love you will still suffer.

1. Peter says this twice in verse 12 to emphasize this point.—4:12.

2. His point is that Christians should expect hardship.


C. Peter mentions one purpose for hardship in verse 12—"the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you"

1. Hardship tests the genuineness of our faith.

2. Peter has already said this in 1:7.

II. SECOND, THERE IS A REWARD FOR HARDSHIP.

A. Hard times give us reason to rejoice—4:13a.

1 Peter 4:13
But rejoice...

B. How can we rejoice when we’re suffering?

1. First, by receiving future glory with Christ—4:13b and Romans 8:18.

III. **THIRD, THERE IS A NEED FOR REFLECTION.**

A. There is a need for personal reflection.
   
   1. If your suffering is self-inflicted you have no reason to complain—4:15.
   
   2. If our suffering is related to our stand for Christ, then we should thank God for the opportunity—4:16.

B. There are consequences for not remaining faithful to God during hard times.
   
   1. First, there are consequences for Christians who do not remain faithful—4:17a.

   1 Peter 4:17a  
   For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household....

   2. Second, there are also consequences for non-Christians—4:17b and 1 Peter 4:18

IV. **FOURTH, THERE IS A NEED TO REMEMBER THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL.**

A. We must commit ourselves to God during times of hardship—4:19a.

   1 Peter 4:19a  
   So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator...

B. We must also continue to do good despite our suffering. Suffering doesn’t exempt us from doing what’s right—4:19b.

   1 Peter 4:19b  
   So then...continue to do good.

C. We do both, commit ourselves to God and continue to do what’s right because God is powerful enough to be trusted—19—“Faithful Creator”