

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY IN THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER –

CHAPTER FOUR

Through chapter three Peter continues with his second 'therefore' of the gospel for those under pressure.(2:1) Remember his first 'therefore' has to do with our relationship with God in the light of His amazing and totally undeserved grace towards us in Christ.(1:13) One by one he considers what fervent love for one another will look like towards governments,(2:13) masters,(2:18) husbands,(3:1) wives,(3:7) and those who persecute us.(3:13)

Before going any further, review your titles for the sections of chapter three to see what new insight God has given you as you have looked more closely. Always seek to relate the different situations Peter discusses back to your overall theme for the book. Now let us divide up chapter four. My suggestions are:- verses 1-6; 7-9; 10-11; 12-19.

Section 1 - verses 1-6

Q.1 A third 'therefore' introduces this new section. With what new implication of being born again does Peter now deal? Why do people under pressure get themselves into moral problems like these?

Q.2 What according to verses 1 and 2 is the secret of handling both suffering and temptation? What is the simple choice before us in every moment of our lives as Christians? How do tough times help us to make this choice?

Q.3 What kind of sins are listed in verse three? What sort of pressure does the scene described here put upon us? Why does being drawn into this way of life do such damage to the relationships considered in chapters 2 and 3?

Q.4 Why are we so often criticised when as Christians we refuse to join in the wild parties? How should we handle the pressure to do what everyone else is doing? How does knowing the gospel help us to respond positively?

Section 2 - verses 7-9

Q.5 What do you suppose Peter meant by "the end of all things is at hand"? Did he expect the world to end at any moment?(Rom.13:11) What three areas of life does Peter suggest will be affected by a sense of urgency about Christ's return?

Q.6 What are the conditions for effective prayer according to verse 7? What is the greatest obstacle to loving one another fervently? What so often ruins our hospitality to our fellow Christians? How does our particular culture deal with such issues? How does our "Christ-culture" change this response?

Section 3 - verses 10-11

Q.7 The word 'gift' here is the same Greek word 'charisma' as is used in I Cor.12 and Rom.12. How does Peter's teaching here on spiritual gifts help us to understand those passages? What is the purpose of all spiritual gifts? What are the only two kinds of gifts?

Section 4 - verses 12-19

Q.8 What further clues does Peter give us as to how to handle persecution, in verses 12-14? What reason does he give for Christians collapsing under pressure? Does he really mean that we should smile when it hurts?

Q.9 Peter returns to an idea he first raised in chapter 3:17. For what two reasons can we suffer? Give present day examples. How might the context of the previous section, verses 10-11, point to some of the reasons why we may suffer for doing what is wrong?

Q.10 Why does Peter speak of the murderer and the troublesome meddler as if one was as bad as the other?(Rom.1:28-32)

Q.11 Is suffering God's judgment on Christians?(Jn.5:24) If not what is the meaning of the quote in verse 18 from Prov.11:31?