
Spiritual Formation Part 37

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We Are To Have the Attitude of Christ! Part 2

1 Peter 4: 1-11

This passage gives us comfort in suffering because Christ Himself suffered. He, who is God incarnate, who totally did not deserve to suffer, suffered on our behalf. He endured great physical, mental, and spiritual pain on our behalf, and exemplified the attitude and conduct we are to have when we go through the tough stuff of life. The call for us is to be prepared and equip ourselves for what lies ahead in life. We must have our expectations based on reality and in faith, so when something comes our way—whether it is a blessing or a problem—we can take it, handle it with excellence, learn, and grow from it. Then, in turn, we can be a blessing to others because of it. However, we cannot do that if we are not following Christ and taking heed to His example, His grace, and His love so we want to respond. Otherwise, our desires will fill that gap and will get the best of us. The sins of others and the sins of our heart will break us down and take us over unless we focus on Christ, His ways, and His path.

The end of the world is coming! Life and our opportunities are limited; thus, we are to make every effort to represent Christ and make the most of what we are given for His glory. We are stewards of all that we have, whether small or great. The better we use our gifts, the more generous He is with us with more gifts, abilities, and opportunities. We are called not to waste our opportunities, but to be diligent and faithful with our call, abilities, and prayer with love and hospitality. Do what God has called you to do and do it with passion, truth, and in love!

- *Is near* refers to the period from the Resurrection of our Lord to His Second coming; this is called the *Last Days*. This is not a time reference, meaning either limited or unlimited time, although it does mean that the longer we go, the less time we have. We can have a week left or another two thousand years. The point here is the *End of Days* is a period of time and covenant with Christ, and it will be marked by great sufferings. No one will be immune; we will all have to give account for our life. Looking forward to the End of Days and Christ's return is also meant to encourage and influence the attitudes and actions of suffering Christians (John 5:27; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5, 16), therefore be in serious prayer (Dan. 12:1-2; Acts 2:17; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 1:20).
- *Pray* is meant to line us up in His will and with His empowerment (Luke 18:1; 1 Cor. 7:5; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 5:14-15).
- *Love covers* means that real love continually forgives (Matt. 18:21-22; 1 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 4:32; 1 Thess. 4:9-10; 2 Pet. 1:7; 1 John 4:7-11). This means we are to overlook the faults and transgressions of others against us within reason and with love. We are also not to gossip or slander one another (Prov. 10:12; James 5:20)!

- *Hospitality* specifically refers here to taking in travelers with generosity—not grudgingly or with complaining. In general, since we have Christ's love flowing in us, it should flow to others around us. This means we are to be willing to give preference to others, to look out for and look after one another, and to share, with discernment, what God has given us, including our family, home, finances, and food. We are to have an attitude of stewardship where we do not own anything because we are merely the caretakers for the real owner, God. He desires us to share His stuff, and we comply out of reverence and gratitude to Him. Thus, as we come along side others, we are to welcome them and act out our faith in real, helpful kindness, generosity, and deeds. This includes providing help and lodging to fellow Christians, helping those who are being persecuted, and helping out in our community (Matt. 25:34-43; Luke 10:30-37; Rom. 12: 3-8, 13: 16:33; 1 Cor. 12:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:10; Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:2; 3 John 1:5-8).
- *Use whatever gift* means to practice your spiritual gifts, and realize that the diversity we have is beneficial for one another. It also means being charitable or generous to others with what Christ has given you, and to serve Him without being held back by fear, time, or lack of talent. As Christians, we are to typify faith and reason together so we can exhibit the maturity needed to make wise decisions and have a purpose in life. This also means directly caring for those in need, such as the sick, infirmed, and poor. However, some Christians will have a specific call and empowerment to do this. People in the world may be more concerned for their own needs and agendas than they are for God's clear doctrine and purpose, but as Christians, we are called to go beyond ourselves to serve others well (Titus 2). Kindness is the proof of authenticity (Rom. 2:1-4; 12:4-21; 16:1; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:16-23)!
- *Very words of God* refers to Scripture, the words that God has spoken to us. This means to be careful how you speak and minister as we sometimes speak for God as He uses us!
- *God may be praised*. Here, this means for us to be good stewards, as we are called to live, serve, and do all that we do in life for the honor and glory of our Lord and Savior (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Jude 24-25)!

Does Love cover you? Do you use it to cover others? We are to be fueled and empowered by love in all situations. Christian love is the turning of our backs on our self-concerns and facing our neighbors. It is the surrender of our will to His. If love does not take us beyond our self-interests, then we have only lust and pride, not real love! God's love must be our model for life. It must flow into us from Christ, and in return, flow out from us to those around us. God's love is the ultimate power for the Christian. Love is more than a feeling; it has segments and characters to it. Love is also a choice, a decision that must be perused and worked on (John 13:1; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 13:3; 1 John)!

Questions

1. How would you describe your personality—a person who likes to just do it, or one who would rather watch others carefully and then do it, or one who just likes to think about it and never gets around to do it?
2. Does Love cover you? Do you use it to cover others?
3. How and why do you need to be reminded of what you have and who you are in Christ?
4. When something comes your way, whether it is a blessing or a problem, how can you take it, handle it with excellence, and learn and grow from it?
5. How would your walk with Christ grow and in turn be a blessing to others if you have the attitude of Christ?
6. What does it mean to wholeheartedly look to Christ? How can you better implement this in your life? What would your life look like with this mindset at full blast?
7. What do you need to do to make every effort to represent Christ and make the most of what you are given for His glory?
8. Why does God not want us to be controlled by the past or to be fearful or cowardly? How can you have a better mindset to learn and grow from your experiences?
9. What do you need to do to make your surrender of your will to Christ a reality? What would your life, church, relationships and feelings be like in so doing?
10. What can you do to be on guard against the sins and enticements of others? If you are not, how do you suppose the sins of your heart would break you down and take you over? What can you do about it?