

# Leaving and Cleaving

## 1 Peter 4:1-6

### Intro

#### Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- [expand — context is the marriage of Adam and Eve / model for all future human marriages...]

It is from this verse — **Genesis 2:24** — that we get the idea of *leaving* and *cleaving*...

- Of *leaving* the family that you were born into and *cleaving* (joining) with your spouse...

*Now let's think about this idea of leaving and cleaving from a slightly different direction...*

- Instead of looking at in the context of *marriage*, let's look at it from the context of our *will* — of what we *choose*...

The hard truth is that we are born into this life as *self-willed sinners*...

- We come into this life *wanting to do what we want to do*...

But when the Lord draws us to Himself, we are empowered to *leave* that old will behind and *cleave* to the will of God...

*And this is what Peter will exhort us to live out today in...*

**1 Peter 4:1-6 (NKJV) [please follow along as I read]**

**1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

**2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**

**3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.**

**4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.**

**5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

**6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**

*I have divided this passage into two sections...*

***1) Cleaving to the Will of God (vs 1-2)***

***2) Leaving the Will of the Gentiles (vs 3-6)***

*Let's move into our first section...*

## 1) Cleaving to the Will of God (vs 1-2)

*Let's put our **text** back into its **context** by reading the verses that we worked through last week...*

### **1 Peter 3:18-22 (NKJV)**

**18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,**

**19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,**

**20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.**

**21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,**

**22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.**

- [expand — Peter was teaching ***things hard to understand*** — I would encourage you to listen or watch online if you missed it...]

*As we move into 1 Peter 4, Peter is highlighting Christ's suffering once again...*

And it is important to realize that *Christ's suffering* was not just something that *happened to Him as a **result** of His ministry...*

Instead, Christ's suffering was **central** to His ministry...

*Christ suffering for our sins was the **primary reason** that He came into this world...*

**John 12:27 (NKJV) [referring to His death on the Cross...]**

**"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.**

**John 12:31-33 (NKJV)**

**31 "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.**

**32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."**

**33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die.**

This illustrates a vitally important point that we must remind ourselves of continually...

- That suffering is not **foreign** to our calling as believers...

Instead, it is **central** to our calling...

Suffering is something that God the Father used to bring about His purposes in the life of the Lord Jesus and suffering is something that He uses to bring about His purposes in our lives...

*The life of the Apostle Paul demonstrates this reality...*

**Acts 9:15-16 (NKJV) [The Lord Jesus speaking of Paul...]**

**15 “...he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**

**16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.”**

*And then the Apostle Paul makes it clear that all believers are called to suffering in...*

**Romans 8:16-17 (NKJV)**

**16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,**

**17 and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**

- [expand — God will reward us for our faithful suffering — for the believer ***no pain is permanent...***]

Now, it is understandable if you are struggling with your suffering...

- And if you are struggling, I would suggest reading (or rereading) *Suffering is Never for Nothing* by Elisabeth Elliot...[expand]

With that said, when we are suffering we usually ask a capital “W” question — We ask “**WHY?**”...

- **Why** is this happening to me? **Why** is life the way that it is? **Why** can't things be different?...

But I would suggest that we ask a different capital “**W**” question — Instead of asking “*WHY?*” let’s ask “**WHAT?**”...

- **What** does God want me to do in this situation? **What** is He changing in me and in those around me? **What** can I learn from this situation?

[expand — Christian mental toughness coach — **WIN** — “*What’s Important Now?*”...]

*This brings us — at long last — to 1 Peter 4:1... 😊*

### **1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh,**

The word **Therefore** connects what Peter is teaching *here* with what has come *before*...

- In other words, we are to respond to Christ’s suffering **for us in the flesh** — the reality of His suffering is to impact our behavior...

Christ’s suffering is not merely an intellectual fact that is to be stored away...

- A fact like who won the Super Bowl last year — *unfortunately it was the Chiefs — again...*

So, unlike facts that we simply *store away*, Christ suffering and dying for us is a fact that *motivates us to action*...

[ex. You get a text that your childhood best friend — who you haven't seen in years — is in town and would love to catch up — that should motivate you to action...]

*Continuing on in vs 1...*

**Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind,**

**arm yourselves** — *equip yourselves with weapons...*

- [ex. action movie montages where the heroes are getting all their weapons together...]

*But why do the heroes in action movies need to arm themselves?*

Because there is going to be a fight — and heroes are unwilling to run away from a fight...

- Now, if we are to be heroes for Christ — heroes of the faith — we too must arm ourselves for the fight...

But we are to arm ourselves with what Peter calls **the same mind** — *the mind of Christ...*

**mind** — *idea, intention, purpose, insight...*

**1 Corinthians 2:16 (NKJV)**  
**...we have the mind of Christ.**

## **Philippians 2:5 (NKJV)**

**Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...**

As believers **we have the mind of Christ** — we have access to Christ's *thoughts and intentions...*

- But we must make the choices to allow His mind to influence us — we must arm ourselves with His mind — we must think His thoughts after Him...

[expand — reread the gospels to rediscover the mind of Christ...]

***KEY — Living a life that pleases God is relatively simple — find out what the mind of Christ is and then do that...[expand]***

Now, if you are struggling in this area, then find a mentor in this fellowship — someone who can help you arm yourselves with the mind of Christ and equip you to fight the good fight of faith...

*Continuing on in 1 Peter 4:1...*

**arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

At first glance, this seems like another of Peter's *hard to understand* sayings...

- That is until we realize that Peter is making reference to the spiritual truth that *as believers we died with Christ on the cross...*



As a result, we should now consider ourselves dead to sin and no longer under sin's dominion...

*And because this is such an important topic let's look at what Paul has to say on the subject in Romans 6...*

## **Romans 6 (NKJV)**

**1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?**

**2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

**3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?**

**4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

**5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,**

**6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

**7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.**

**8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,**

**9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.**

**10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.**

**11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.**

**13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

**14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

**15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!**

**16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?**

**17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.**

**18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**

**19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**

**20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.**

**21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.**

**22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.**

**23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

*What incredible truths!...*

- [expand on the role of the Holy Spirit in living out this reality— the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit...]

*Please turn back now to 1 Peter 4...*

**for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,  
2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the  
flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**

Here we see the big idea of ***cleaving to the will of God***...[expand]

- The first part of vs 2 focuses on ***leaving the will of the Gentiles*** — *living for the lusts of men* — which we will develop in our second section...

If you would, please focus in on the phrase **the rest of his time in the flesh...**

*This is Peter's way of saying that our days on earth are limited...*

**Psalm 90:12 (NKJV)**

**So teach us to number our days,  
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

### **Psalm 139:16 (NKJV)**

**Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.  
And in Your book they all were written,  
The days fashioned for me,  
When as yet there were none of them.**

### **James 4:14 (NKJV)**

**...For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.**

For the *believer* this is not a reason to despair — instead, it is a reminder that ***no pain is permanent...***

- It reminds us that we have a *limited amount of time* to serve the Lord on this planet and that *what we do matters to God...*

*Like Esther, God has placed us here in human history for such a time as this...*

### **Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV)**

**15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,**

**16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

We are to *cleave to the will of God* for however many days that we have left...

- And though there are various facets to *the will of God* for the individual believer, *in general* the will of God is incredibly simple to understand...

***Simply love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself...***

With this in mind, may we cleave to the will of God as we arm ourselves with the mind of Christ and we will walk well in this world...

*Let's move now to our second section...*

## **2) Leaving the Will of the Gentiles (vs 3-6)**

**3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—**

Peter is telling us that we should *cleave to the will of God* because we have spent enough of our lives *living out the will of the Gentiles* — we have spent enough time walking in disobedience...

- When we were unbelievers, we lived in bondage to our sinful flesh — we pursued evil — we loved to sin...

***Why live like that anymore?...***

*As the Apostle Paul wrote in...*

**Romans 6:21 (NKJV)**

**What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.**

*Continuing on in 1 Peter 4:3, Peter lists some aspects of the will of the Gentiles — these are some of the things that we are to leave behind...*

**when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.**

**lewdness** — *absence of restraint, insatiable desire for pleasure...*

**lusts** — *strong desire for something that is forbidden...*

**drunkenness** — *lit. “to overflow with wine”; indulging in alcohol to excess with the consequences that follow...*

**revelries** — *pagan feasting and drunkenness with impurity and obscenity of the grossest kind...*

**drinking parties** — *drinking competitions...*

**abominable idolatries** — *worship of false gods through idolatry...*

**4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.**

When you and I leave our old life of sin, the people who witness our departure from that life think that it is a strange thing...

- They find it surprising that you and I no longer run with them in the same flood of dissipation...

**run** — *syntrechō* — *to run together...*

- [ex. Group of runners that I see at Far West in the mornings...]

Now, notice that Peter uses the phrase **flood of dissipation...**

- This is especially interesting considering that Peter has just written about Noah...

**flood** — *an overflowing, a pouring out...*

**dissipation** — *reckless abandon, prodigality, lawless insolence and unmanageable caprice...*

- When we were unbelievers, living out the will of the Gentiles, this is what we did — we ran together in a flood of dissipation...

*But the Lord rescued us from that life of destruction and He gave us a new race to run...*

### **Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)**

**1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,**

**2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

*Let's read 1 Peter 4:4 again with a focus on the last part of the vs...*

In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

**speaking evil** — *to speak in a disrespectful way that demeans, denigrates, maligns; same word translated blasphemy...*

*If we **leave the will of the Gentiles** and **cleave to the will of God**, we should expect that those who continue doing the will of the Gentiles will speak evil against us...*

**John 15:19 (NKJV)** [*Jesus warned...*]

**“If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”**

Now, one of the reasons why those who do the will of the Gentiles hate those who do the will of God because it makes them feel bad to see people doing what God wants them to do...

- It reminds them that ***they are doing the wrong thing*** and that ***it is possible to do the right thing...***

This is the motivation behind *so-called tolerance* — unbelievers know that they are wrong and instead of repenting, they want to force everyone to say that what is wrong is actually right...

*But even if everyone told them that they were right that wouldn't matter...*



Because people don't get to decide what is wrong or right — people are not the judge — **God is...**

**5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

Those who *never leave the will of the Gentiles and cleave to the will of God* will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead (all unbelievers)...

- Those who continue in their unrepentant sin will have to answer for how they lived the lives that God gave them...

*And I believe that the Lord Jesus will be that judge...*

**John 5:22 (NKJV)**

**“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son...”**

**Acts 17:31 (NKJV)**

**[God] has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."**

*For more on this final judgment, please turn to...*

**Revelation 20:11-15 (NKJV)**

**11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.**

**12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God [NU, M - the throne], and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.**

- [expand — judged by *your works* or by *Christ's works*...]

**13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.**

**14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.**

**15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

*Back now to 1 Peter 4 as we address our last verse...*

**6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**

*This is a challenging verse at first glance but I believe we can understand it if we break it down...*

**For this reason** — refers to the fact that judgment is coming...

**the gospel was preached** — the gospel is the good news that the Lord Jesus suffered once for sin that all who believe might be freed from the judgment to come...

**the gospel was preached also to those who are dead** — this refers to believers who were dead at the time that Peter wrote this letter but who had received the gospel when they were alive...

**that they might be judged according to men in the flesh** — in other words, they endured physical death as we all do...

**but live according to God in the spirit** — though they died physically, their spirit lives on in God's presence...

*Paul writes some encouraging words on this subject in...*

## **2 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NKJV)**

**6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.**

**7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.**

**8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**

## **Conclusion**

This brings us to the end of our study — and before we move into our time of communion, I would encourage you one more time to leave the will of the Gentiles and cleave to the will of God...

***[expand — we don't have to live a life of sin — we have been given all that we need to walk in obedience — a day at a time...]***