

# A Practical Study of 1 PETER:

## Practice for Suffering Saints

### “How Suffering Fits in the Father’s Plan”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

*“But the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”*

### **Pattern Number Eight – The Right Game Plan – 1 Peter 3:13-22**

#### **Key Verses 3:15, 16**

The preacher in the book of Ecclesiastes in Ecclesiastes 11:9 said:

#### **Ecclesiastes 11:9**

Rejoice O young man in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

And then in chapter 12:14 we read:

Ecclesiastes 12:14

For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

And Proverbs 14:12 we read these words:

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seems right unto a man but the end thereof are ways of death.

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount made it quite clear that there are two very real possibilities in the way we live life. And each of us in this room are living it in one of the two ways. He says:

Matthew 7:13-14

Enter in at the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there be who go in that way, because narrow is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it.

You know, it's getting close to football season. And one of the things that we enjoy is what we call our quarterback club.

At Hide-A-Way we have about six or seven couples that have become Cowboy fanatics. And after church they have a nice lunch and we watch the ballgame together and have fellowship.

We have some avid fans in that group that are quite up in years. In fact, when the Cowboys get behind, they go in the bathroom and wait until it's over and want us to come and tell them what happened. They can't take the stress.

Now what do you suppose Tom Landry is doing right now? Well you say, well they're getting all in shape at Thousand Oaks. No. You see, Landry already knows every team he's going to play this year. And as he begins to play with personnel, he's forming what is known as a game plan. Because he's going to go into the battle, into the conflict.

And so for each specific game, he's going to have a plan. He's going to have a defensive plan and he's going to have an offensive plan in view of all of the films that he's studied in the ways that these teams have performed in years past.

That's what's called, as we think of it, as preparation for the game.

When I began to read this section of 1 Peter, I began to realize the body of Christ has been playing by the wrong game plan for a long time.

We really have failed miserably in effectively relating to the world around us as believers, because we've distorted the plan.

I think part of it has to do with the fact that the church, the body of Christ, has been saturated with legalists.

It's similar to the Pharisee who says "I thank God I'm not like everybody else. I'm a cut above. I'm a guy who wears a white hat. I'm one of the good guys."

I believe that's part of it. The other part of it is, we have had preached at us this liberal nonsense that you love your neighbor as yourself and you live by the ten commandments and the golden rule and you've got a sure trip in.

When your mind and your orientation is filled with performance garbage like this, no wonder we're getting a distorted lifestyle coming out of it, because we're living by the wrong game plan. You say, give me an illustration.

Oh I've just been laboring at the two churches through 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 in the realm of Christian stewardship.

And you know, you don't survive for 13 years in two churches where you've got 18 different denominations and you've got most of the people over 55 whose minds are already made up. And you don't confuse them with the facts and survive for that many years, unless the only thing you do is teach the Word of God. I've learned that.

And teaching the Word of God in those situations, though, I've had more people thank me for at least getting the whole business of Christian stewardship straight. You say, what do you mean? Well, we have had preached at us as believers that we're under the tithe. That we live under the law. That 10% of your income comes to God or you're going to be cursed. And if you don't bring all your tithes into the storehouse you're disobedient. You're not living by the Word of God and you're wrong.

Now that is NOT New Testament giving. And then you've got people coming around and just pull their self-righteous robes around them and say: "I have tithed all my life." Like, boy I am really cool.

You see, that's a total distortion. When all else fails, read the instructions.

## 2 Corinthians 9:7

Let every individual purpose in his heart what he's going to do.

That tells me, I purpose what I'm going to live with—what kind of a harvest do I want. Do I want to sow sparingly or do I want to sow bountifully? And then I purpose in my heart. That's my business, that's not yours, not anybody else's and you don't have a right to put me on a guilt trip and I don't have a right to put you on a guilt trip. Then you decide in your

heart what kind of harvest you want, then you decide on that. That is purposing in your heart PRIVATELY what you're going to do. And then you give not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a hilarious giver.

That's biblical stewardship! And you see what we've done? We've just distorted that.

Alright, now let's bring it down to where we are today.

How many of you have been put on guilt trip after guilt trip about the fact that you haven't witnessed to somebody for Jesus Christ?

I mean, it's an incredible thing. We feel like we're losing ground so we hammer everybody with a scalp-a-day on the belt!

I mean, if you didn't turn one conversation into a witnessing opportunity and hammer him home with the gospel to see if he is going to be saved, you have failed for the day and you're a miserable failure.

Now I don't see that kind of game plan anywhere in the scripture.

And we're talking primarily of the evangelism and communicating of truth when we talk about the game plan.

Peter comes across with some real powerful stuff. He's been building up to this.

He told us last time that our marriage is the witness. The wife, by what she is, is the witness to the husband—not what she says. Because it's even without a word from the Word that the man is won to Christ! So Peter's telling you, it's on the focus of your life—not on the words you say with your lips.

The second thing we've noticed was that there were eleven ingredients to the beautiful life and they were all different than what we are by nature.

Why build all that up? So that as my marriage is right and life becomes beautiful, then I become productive in touching significantly the lives of people around me. That's my game plan.

Now what happens to Landry when he gets in his first ball game and he's behind 34 to nothing at half-time? He decides, "I used the wrong game plan. We need to change just a little."

And so in the locker room he does a lot of manipulations of the personnel, changing of plays and saying "Hey! I blew it! Let's get on the right plan."

You know what? I think everyone of us needs, sitting here this morning, to say we're behind 34 to nothing and it's half-time for some of us and we better get our act together and play by the right game plan so we aren't ashamed and embarrassed

when we stand in the presence of God. Because we don't have forever.

Jesus Christ is coming back again and people are dying without Christ. And it's not for the want of somebody to come knocking on their door and sharing the four spiritual laws or some other little booklet that you got to hammer them over the head with the Gospel without developing a relationship.

You see, we're really missing it friends. We're behind 34 to nothing. The score in the world so far is on Satan's side right now. And it's because we've got a lot of guilt-ridden Christians sitting in the church who personality-wise are not bold enough to go out and hammer somebody over the head with four spiritual laws because you know they're going to think you're a nerd when you got through. And that is NOT the way God designed biblical witnessing! His plan is to focus on the individual and that lifestyle. And that lifestyle will be the witness that will carry the message that will provide you with the opportunity.

Don't allow the world around you to squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within. That's the eleven ingredients. And as He remolds your mind from within, you then are going to begin to be the kind of Christian witness that you should be.

How do you get fruit? You've got something that is properly relating to its environment and fruit is the result.

God put nature all around you. And in John 15, in His last message to the disciples, as He was walking down to the Gethsemane, He said what? “I am the vine. You are the branches. He that is abiding in me and I in him, [WHAT?] the same shall bring forth much fruit.”

Does the vine have to get all excited and all concerned about bearing fruit? Can you just see the vine say “It’s time to bear fruit!” MMMMM—Pop! There’s fruit! “Oh boy, I’ve got fruit!” All the vine does is relate to its environment and there is fruit.

I’ve been flying back and forth to La Mirada on a real regular basis doing my doctrinal studies recently. And in June, I was taking a course on the psychology of counseling. And I had finished the course and I was exhausted. It’s 40 hours of study from 8 in the morning until 5 in the evening. For 5 days they cram your whole coursework into one week and you have 3,000 pages of extra reading to do plus a project for each of the six courses you do before you write your dissertation.

My sixth course is the month of August and then I’ve got dissertation ahead of me this year.

And while I was, when I got through with this course, naturally I was just drained with 40 hours. And I had a book still to read for the next course. I got on the plane and I said “Lord, it would be wonderful if I could just sit somewhere where I could just have some time alone going home for these couple of hours to read.”

And the Lord has got a great sense of humor. I'm sitting there kind of praying this because I'm hoping I can have this time. And then all of a sudden, here comes this young lady. She says "Um, I've got that seat right there."

I said "Are you sure? I'm a gold card member and usually there's a seat there."

She said "I got that seat right there."

I said "Can I see your boarding pass?"

She sat down and her purse fell open and out drops three books on prayer and another book from way out in left field.

And I said "It's interesting to see what you're reading."

She said "I am really having a hard time." She said "I divorced my husband, moved out here to California to try to start life over again. I met a guy who chewed me to pieces and spit me out and I'm on my way back to see the graduation of my daughter. And frankly I've been contemplating suicide."

"Well Lord, I want to spend my time reading my book!"

I got the neatest letter from her last week. She said "Please send the tapes. I can't get enough of the Word of God." And God's working in all of that.

You know, that's the way it is.

Now I didn't have to say "Well now by God's sovereign intervention sat you next to me so just listen up babe! We've got two and a half hours here. I'm going to really bless you because I'm a preacher and I've got to get my witnessing in for today!"

No it's the secret of 15 years of ministry. Pearl and I are just utterly amazed at how many people's lives we've been able to move in and out of over 15 years. Over 8,000 pieces of mail go out tomorrow now. The newsletter travels. It's just people in classes. And it's been so special.

We are taking a rich treasure of memories of lives that have been touched by the Word of God through these years.

And that's what Peter is saying. Don't distort it. Don't make it a performance! Don't make it something legalistic! Don't make it something like you've got to come on stage, blast them and then go be real again!

You can pray for one dream I still have. I don't have much time left, I know. But my one dream is to have my camp. I still don't have that. We have had 10 to 12 opportunities to have facilities if we go into debt. But we ain't going into debt. We're just going to trust God when it's right, to be made available.

It would be a little bit of heaven if I could do this every week all summer. And have ski winter retreats all winter because most of Texas comes up here anyway. And just touch people's

lives with the rest of my life.

I have a basic philosophy that will run totally counter to most of what you would probably believe in the old Bible conference-type of individual situation. I believe what Peter said. I believe as you come to a camp that is integrated in every way, you're just as spiritual riding down that river this afternoon as you are sitting right here. Because it's whatever you do, you do to the glory of God.

Whether you're pushing a ping-pong ball with your nose across the floor with them—little kids watching you, you're riding down the river, or you're sitting here in the study—that is done to the glory of God.

When you teach young people that, and you integrate their lives totally so that they know they're spiritual sitting in a desk with their teacher there and they're glorifying God in that, you touch lives that change lives. And that philosophy is not being—to my understanding—fully saturated you. And I want to do it. I feel like God really wants us to. So if you want to pray for something big, you pray for us in that regard. That God will miraculously in these days provide us with a facility to expand and to have a place where we can do this all the time instead of just having to lease facilities from someone else.

I don't know how I got way over there. Let's get on with it. Verse 13.

**v. 13 And who is he that will do you harm if you become zealous of the good?**

What's Peter telling you? He says when those eleven things you looked at last time start being part of your life, who's going to hurt you when you're being zealous for good.

In other words, it's pretty difficult to want to hurt somebody like this—who's living this kind of a life.

Verse 14.

**v. 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you will be blessed; have no fear of them, nor be troubled,**

“But even if you should suffer”—let's say it happens—“for the sake of righteousness, you will be blessed; have no fear of them, nor be troubled,”

In Matthew 5:10 in the Sermon on the Mount he says:

**Matthew 5:10**

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Have no fear of them, neither be troubled.”

Just trust God while you're suffering for the sake of righteousness.

Reese in his commentary reminds us of Henry Spafford. Do you remember the story of the man? He's a very prominent lawyer in Chicago. His son was killed in a tragic accident. And most of his holdings and things were wiped out during the time of the Chicago fire. He was planning a trip to Europe for his wife and his four daughters and then business things kept him from going with them on the ship. And he sent them on ahead. And on the way, on that trip, that sailing vessel was rammed. And instantaneously those 4 young ladies all slipped into the presence of God. And miraculously that dear wife survived on a floating piece of wreckage from the ship.

When she finally landed, she cabled home to her husband to say "saved alone."

Deeply grieved and hurt over business reverses and over the loss of his son and now over the loss of four daughters, as he (it is said) was shown by the captain of the ship that he was sailing on, the place where it all happened, he wrote: "It is Well with My Soul."

You know, those are the kind of things, when you believe what I'm saying, by your greatest witness. It is when people see that in you that they want to know Jesus.

When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll,  
[Whatever my lot]  
Thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

You see, that's the kind of quality that opens the door for fabulous opportunities of ministry.

Some of you may have been deeply hurt. And I know you have. Have you ever stopped to think that hurt provides you an opportunity for ministry that you could never, ever have had in any other way?

Yes, we're going to suffer. Damage—No! Because it is well, it is well with my soul.

Now with those thoughts, see our key verse there—verse 15—is the right kind of game plan when it comes to evangelism.

**v. 15 but set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you, but doing this with gentleness and reverence;**

He says “Don't have any fear. Don't be troubled. But always be ready.” That's the way the message is going to be communicated.

You see, you don't see anything here about controlling the environment. You don't see anything here about setting the stage for the big opportunity of invasion into somebody else's life. Instead you see the focus on us.

Peter says:

“set apart Christ as Lord...always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you.”

Alright, was Peter always successful of this? Do you think that this verse was easy for him to write under divine inspiration?

I think, knowing that man like I do, that his contacts blurred when he started to write “set apart Christ as Lord and be ready always to give an answer” because he heard the call of a little girl say “You are a follower of him.”

“I am not!”

And then a little later says “You are a follower of him.”

“I am not!”

And those pagans around the fire said “Hey! You're a follower of him! I can tell by your Texas accent. Gosh!”

Peter turned the blue in profanity to deny he knew Christ.

You see, he was entrusted with a serious, serious breach—a serious failure—so that when the time comes to see the right game plan, he recognizes it and realizes that you can have all the theology and all the verses and all approaches and all the witnessing things put together, and you can have all the right questions and you can make all the right entrances and all the right exits and it's going to be a bunch of sound of fury signifying nothing—if in fact you've not developed a relationship significant with that person so they can see the quality of your life, under stress, that you are indeed a child of the living God.

But Peter is writing out of the crucible. What's he telling you? What's the game plan? Make Him Lord of your life and then live like it! And let the opportunities take care of themselves when He is really Lord.

Romans 10:9, 10 says:

Romans 10:9, 10

If you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your own heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God, and with his mouth he tells others of his faith confirming his salvation.

You only CONFIRM what has already happened in your own life.

We learn one thing here, you've got to always be prepared.

That's a good Boy Scout model and it's also a good model for Christians. Even when you're tired on an airplane and you'd rather just spend a little time reading a book and God dumps somebody in your lap, you better be ready and have everything you need so you can share at that point.

Reese says:

It is noteworthy that the sanctuary in which Christ is to be acknowledged as holy and worshipped is in the heart. Such phraseology may have in mind circumstances due to persecution, in which joining in corporate worship in the common meeting place might have been impossible. Christians are thus exhorted, whatever their circumstances, to enjoy living communion with Christ by realizing his indwelling presence and by maintaining inner heart reverence toward him.

(source unknown)

That is setting “apart Christ as Lord” in our lives. Now would you notice **TWO KEY WORDS**—what is it?

1. “gentleness” and
2. “reverence.”

Much of our witness is this bold kind of brash invasion into

the life of a person and we are told:

1. to be gentle and
2. have a great deal of respect and “reverence.”

Because we’re dealing with eternal souls and our witnessing is to be characterized in these two ways.

Now tell me, where in these verses have you found anything that tells you, you have got to speak a witness to a lost and dying world to be spiritual?

Can I take you back over four things? The fourth one’s going to be right here.

In a witness:

1. Chapter 3—how was the wife to witness to the husband? “Without a word”—ok, there’s your first one.
2. Secondly, what have we learned here? It’s “gentleness.”
3. Thirdly, what have we learned here? It’s “reverence.”
4. And then fourth—verse 16—with “a clear conscience.”

**v. 16 keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ.**

“keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) [WHAT? The words you spoke and the message and the theology you gave? WHAT?] your good behavior in Christ.”

So if I’m a witness for Christ to other people, I can do it without a word. I do it with gentleness. I do it with reverence. And I do it with a clear conscience.

Why do you need a clear conscience? Because if you don’t have a clear conscience, you’re not in fellowship and there ain’t going to be no fruit.

You see, a clear conscience means I’m right with God, I’m in fellowship with Him and so He can use me. And so I’m sensitive.

You see, I was already sensitive to the fact that the Lord was walking with me when I got on that plane. I was just wanting to check out for a little rest but He had another assignment.

And you see, with a conscience like that, you can be available and ready. And if you don’t have a clear conscience you’re talking about something you aren’t experiencing right then so

you can't be a witness.

Paul felt that was so important that in Acts 24:16 he says:

Acts 24:16

Herein do I exercise myself [that's on a regular basis] to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward my fellow man.

And flowing out of that you know it. So he says "keep a clear conscience" because it's not the words that you mouth but it's the life you live that is the basis for your witness.

Verse 17.

**v. 17 For it is better to be suffering when doing good, if it should be the will of God, than when doing wrong.**

What does that tell you? You are going to suffer in the will of God. It is part and parcel of the plan of God.

And he says it sure is a whole lot "better to be suffering for doing good" in the will of God, than to be suffering when you're "doing wrong."

Verse 18.

**v. 18 Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;**

“Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, [PURPOSE] in order that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;”

This is probably one of the shortest and the clearest explanations of the gospel. This is the message that you’re trying to communicate to the person who doesn’t know Jesus Christ.

This is the whole meaning of the Cross of Christ. Here he puts the whole thought together.

The Lord stands with them. He suffered too. And He died in their behalf.

Now these next two or three verses probably have had more theological press on them than any others and I’m going to hit them lightly and tell you that you can get the rest of the answers when you get to the Bible class in the sky!

I just don’t feel that I have to be so much of a dogmatic theologian that I’ve got all the answers because I don’t. The Bible tells me I only know in part and I’m going to know in part until I get there. And then I’m going to fully know. And I

also know that I can see through a glass darkly but then face to face.

**v. 19 in which also having proceeded He preached to the spirits in prison,**

“in which also having proceeded He preached to the spirits in prison,”

Now the word “in which” refers to Christ while He was in the Spirit, after His death upon Calvary’s cross and before the Resurrection.

Who did he preach to?

**v. 20 who formerly did not obey, when God’s patience was waiting in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water.**

“[Those] who formerly did not obey, when God’s patience was waiting in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water.”

Now what does he mean by that? Jesus, during those days when He died in Spirit obviously preached a message to those who had already lost it in the days of Noah.

Why is he using this illustration? Because he wants you to know that you can be content without a great many results.

You see, the reason so many Christians really get fouled up in their witness is they get fouled up in the results that they're attaining rather than the life they're living.

I mean, isn't it cool to minister in the flesh and talk about all the people you led to Christ today. When you're around people like that, you know they're blowing smoke. It kind of grabs you just a little bit you see. They tell you how the techniques they use to turn it around, to share their witness with the guy who was pumping their gas at the service station.

You see, why he's using this is Noah preached his heart out for 120 years and all he got was his own family in the boat! Shem, Hamm and Japheth and their wives and Mrs. Noah got onboard with him and God shut the door! But he preached while he built an ark in his driveway! And all you got onboard that ship was his own family. Plus a bunch of stinking elephants and a few other things.

Don't get discouraged. You bump into green fruit, go on and look for some more.

Pray for them but don't waste your time spending all your emotional energy on that kind of situation. God's got plenty for you to do.

Obviously, Christ had a confrontation with these who were spirits imprisoned. They lost their lives because they didn't respond to the plan of God. They died in the flood. And only 8 people came out of that. They got in the ark of safety and they were carried through safely.

Now, verse 21 says:

**v. 21 Baptism, which also corresponds to this, is now saving you—not a removing of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,**

Now there are those who would like to put WATER BAPTISM right here. Because after all, it's the "safely through water" and it also says here that "baptism" is the way.

Now, I don't want to hassle any feathers here in the audience. I will tell you this, that I do not have a plan of salvation that has anything that man does to have a part of it. I believe that God's work is done by God alone.

Now, if I'm wrong and you're right, if you hold to that position, you just be patient with me and love me and I'll love you. And when we go up there to glory, you can tell me that you were right and I'm wrong.

If you've got any other spirit than that, with a difference in feeling, you're living in the flesh and not in the Spirit. There's got to be an openness at that part.

I believe that we would be far safer in the Bible that when we see the word “baptism” we would think in terms of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, placing us into the body of Christ.

Because at the moment of salvation we are taught, in the Word of God, that the Spirit of God baptizes us into Jesus Christ. He takes us out of Adam and he places us into Christ. At the very moment I receive Him, I am baptized into the body of Christ.

Now I separate with my charismatic friends with this point who say that this is a separate experience. I’m sorry, it is not an experience. It’s a non-experiential act of God in placing you in the body of Christ. When the charismatic takes the baptism of the Holy Spirit and he makes it a separate work of God’s grace then you’ve got the “haves” and the “have nots” and you’re dividing the body of Christ and that’s wrong.

I’m going to address that major issue because we’ve had a rise of the signs and wonders in my teaching in 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14. This coming year it’s time again to address these issues and reexamine the scripture.

Now when you put the baptism of the Holy Spirit in here then you realize that this is all God’s work. There’s nothing that man can do. Now, I will say this, water baptism is an ordinance of the church and it is a beautiful experience. And we are going to celebrate that, if there are any of you who would like to be baptized in water tomorrow night. It’s a

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wonderful demonstration of your witness for Christ but it is nothing more than an ordinance.

In the same way we celebrate the Lord's table and it will be done in remembrance of Him. There is not merit or salvation in an ordinance. Salvation comes through receiving Jesus Christ by faith. That is a work of God when I am baptized into the body of Christ.

Well enough said on it.

There are a few statements here that make you understand that. It says that it is "not a removing of dirt from the body," if it were water he was talking about. Of course, that's what you use but it's "an appeal to God for a clear conscience." When I receive Him, the inner endorsement of the Holy Spirit is telling me I am now in Jesus Christ and I have been placed in Him.

Verse 22.

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

We are ending in the game plan with Jesus Christ back at the right hand of God the Father, the victorious Son of God who has provided a plan of salvation. That plan of salvation should change our lives. Then our lives, having been changed, we then are witnesses by the lives that we live more than by the

words we say. That's the right game plan.

Now you know you have a choice along this line. You can make all kinds of decisions.

I was flying with David the other night and when we got up over these mountains right out here he says "We're clear of the highest stuff." And I said that's great. Then about 15 minutes later he says "You know right down there is Alamosa, Colorado." And for some strange reason, at that point, I lost total orientation.

If I had taken the controls of that plane at that point, I would guarantee you I would have probably crashed-landed somewhere in Canada.

Have you ever done that? Where you lose all orientation?

It was dark. I could see thunder clouds in the distance and the lightning flashing. And here's Alamosa down here and for some reason when we got to Alamosa, I'm firmly convinced that he turned and angled that plane to the north. And I knew we were going to Dallas, Texas. And I told him, I said "You know, you've not made a believer out of me until I could see the lights of Love Field."

Alright, now I'm telling you something. Every one of us, because of the fall of man and because of sin, have lost our orientation.

Maybe you don't agree with me. And maybe I don't agree with you. But one thing we could admit is that we've lost our orientation. And since we have, we need each other. And God gave us only one thing, to give us a safe landing in Glory.

The lights of the runway are going to only be for those who receive Jesus Christ by faith. And I guarantee you, that's your orientation.

David said what Ron Deyer had said to me many years ago. "Don," he says "when all else fails, believe your instruments." He says "this was on automatic pilot and this plane was programmed to fly to Dallas, Texas. And so all I had to do was trust the instruments that said that's where we're going."

A number of years ago there was a tragic light plane crash in Dallas. Two men, flying I think from St. Louis, crash landed short of the runway. And all that was said in the press was those men were told what to do but they chose to bring it in on their own.

And that's exactly the tragic plight of the world. We've got to communicate to them by our lifestyle. That Jesus Christ is alive and He's changing men's lives. And as they see it in us, they're going to want it.

John the Baptist, that great witness, said it right: "He, Christ, must continually be increasing and I must be decreasing."

I've got to get out of the way so people can see Jesus in me.

Father, we thank You for the feeling of closeness and empathy that we have together this morning. Lord, we get frustrated sometimes by our own ineffectiveness. And we pray that Your Holy Spirit would just move from chair to chair right now and bring the reality of the living Christ into focus in each heart. And as we are asked the question, what are we doing for Jesus? May it be first of all, what are we doing with Him? Is He living in our lives, changing us, molding us, making us like the Savior? And if the answer is yes, then we can be free to expect that an impact by our lives is going to be made on others and You'll sensitize us to opportunities of witness. Thank You that Peter wrote these words, probably in tears and out of the frustration of failure, and that his life was so drastically turned around as a result of that. And that on the day of Pentecost this courageous individual can stand and see thousands of people come to Jesus from his witness. Thank You too that as he walks through the first twelve chapters of the book of Acts, he's a mighty dynamo, finally coming to the day when he seals his own commitment by being crucified upside down. Lord, help us to follow in steps like this and let You be magnified in our lives and in our bodies. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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## **PATTERN NUMBER EIGHT – THE RIGHT GAME PLAN – 1**

### **PETER 3:13-22**

#### **KEY VERSES 3:15, 16**

v.13 And who is he that will do you harm if you become zealous of the good?

v.14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you will be blessed; have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

v.15 but set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you, but doing this with gentleness and reverence;

v.16 keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ.

v.17 For it is better to be suffering when doing good, if it should be the will of God, than when doing wrong.

v.18 Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

v.19 in which also having proceeded He preached to the spirits in prison,

v.20 who formerly did not obey, when God's patience was waiting in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water.

v.21 Baptism, which also corresponds to this, is now saving you—not a removing of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

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

#### **NOTES**

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Read 1 Peter 3:13-22 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. What promise are we given in verse 14?

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3. What are we asked to do in verse 15?

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4. How are we to do this, according to verse 15?

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5. What are we asked to do in verse 16?

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6. State the principle Peter gives in verse 17.

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7. Why did Christ die for us, according to verse 18?

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8. Where is Jesus now, according to verse 22, and what three groups are subject to Him?

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9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

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10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

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## LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Are you comfortable with where you are and what you are doing for the Lord? (see Isaiah 32:17).

LESSON #2: Is the fruitage of the Spirit showing up in your life? (see Galatians 5:22-23).

LESSON #3: Verse 14 is a re-statement of the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:10: “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

LESSON #4: Don't be intimidated by opposition or worried about the outcome.

LESSON #5: Have you set apart Christ as Lord in your heart?

LESSON #6: Are you prepared to be a witness for Jesus when you get an opportunity?

LESSON #7: Does gentleness and reverence characterize your witness for Christ?

LESSON #8: I cannot have a ministry in someone else's life if my own conscience is not clear.

LESSON #9: It is better to be suffering for doing good, if it should be the will of God, then when doing wrong.

LESSON #10: Because He is a living Christ, He is in a position to intercede in our behalf continually.