

THINKING STRAIGHT IN THIS CROOKED WORLD¹

God has given us Holy Spirit inspired counsel regarding how a believer should think and live, in our current upside-down world. **It's found in the book of 1 Peter.** **There we find a "BATTLE PLAN," a ROAD MAP if you please, for living in a country & culture that hates God, His Word, & those who stand for it & live it out i.e. *Real Christians!* The following points are all found 1 Peter 1:1-2:2 & then Peter expands upon them throughout the rest of the epistle. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter shows us what Citizenship in God's Kingdom looked like *then* ... and what it *should* look like *today*.**

- 1. REMEMBER WHAT YOU ARE: A SOJOURNER, A STRANGER, A PILGRIM – 1:1,17; 2:11 Phil. 3:20-21 – “But our citizenship² is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” Cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9**
There's a reason John Bunyan titled his book *The Pilgrim's Progress*
Cf. “*The Upstream Christian in a Downstream World*” -by Charles Dunn & the life of Watchman Nee
When you live in a country that's not your own, it gives you a different perspective on things.
You look at things differently, and you are also looked at differently.
- 2. REVEL IN WHO YOU'RE FOLLOWING & WHO HE IS: THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS EVER RISEN FROM THE DEAD BY HIS OWN POWER! – 1:3, 21; 2:4; 3:21-22**
“A Buddhist in Africa who was converted to Christianity was asked why he changed religions. He replied: ‘*It's like this: If you were walking along and came to a fork in the road and two men were there and one was dead and the other was alive, which man's directions would you follow?*’”³
- 3. UNDERSTAND & ACCEPT WHAT YOU'RE CALLED TO: TRIALS & SUFFERING!**
 - Sufferings of Christ: 1:6 & 11; 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1 (7x)
 - Sufferings of believers: 2:19, 20; 3:14, 17; 4:1, 15, 16, 19; 5:9, 10 (10x)
 - “Fiery trials”-4:12; “Various trials”-1:6; “Tried by fire”-1:7 (3x) “Afflictions”
cf. 2 Tim. 3:12; Phil. 3:10; etc.
- 4. KNOW WHERE TO FIND YOUR STRENGTH & ENCOURAGEMENT: BY LOOKING AT YOUR GLORIOUS EXAMPLE, THE SON OF GOD! – 1:11 & 2:18-25** cf. Heb. 12:1-3; Phil. 3:10
- 5. DECIDE HOW YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE: PURPOSE BY GOD'S GRACE TO LIVE IN A HOLY, RIGHTEOUS WAY! - 1:14, 17, 18; 2:1-2, 8-10, 12, 11-17, 18-21; 3:1-7, 8-12, 16; 4:1-3, 7-9, 15; 5:2-3, 5** cf. 2 Pet. 2:1-2, 9-10, 18-21; 3:10-11, 14 –
- 6. BE READY FOR A SHOCKING RESPONSE FROM THE UNSAVED: ANIMOSITY! EVEN HATRED! – 1:6-7; 2:20; 3:13-20; 4:4-6, 12-16; 5:7-10**
Blatantly bogus accusations were hurled at believers in Peter's day: i.e. that they were *Arsonists, Atheists, Treasonists, Immoral & Excluvists*. Plus...their godly lives also convicted the unsaved.⁴
And today it's starting again! Believers are being called *Bigots, Misogynists, Homophobes, Racists, Islamophobes, Transphobes, Haters, etc.*, for simply standing for and teaching what the Bible says.

¹ By Mike Edwards, Greenville, SC, July 2022 (rev. Sept. 2022)

² “*Politeuma*, signifies the condition, or life, of a citizen, citizenship” -W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*

³ Nathan Busenitz, *Reasons We Believe*, (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL, 2008), p. 191

⁴ Taken from a course on Church History taught by Dr. Edward Panosian

During the first 3 centuries believers simply had to say “*Caesar Dominus*” instead of “*Christ Dominus*” to avoid hatred, persecution & death. All they had to do was get a *libelium*, a certificate, by telling a lie to a government official. All they had to do was say Jesus was “a” way instead of “the only way.”

Illustration: The Pantheon

7. **KNOW THE KEY TO LIVING COURAGEOUSLY LIKE THIS: BE TOTALLY FOCUSED ON WHAT LIES AHEAD** i. e. **YOUR FUTURE GLORY!** Salvation in heaven forever, awaits every true believer...which is why it's worth it to believe & live this way! – **1:3-5, 7, 9, 10-11; 2:5, 12; 4:13; 5:1, 4, 6, 10** cf. 2 Pet. 1:10-11 & 3:13

Peter, John, Paul etc., were TOTALLY CONVINCED they were on the right side! WHY? HOW?

Answer: They had seen Christ... **ESPECIALLY IN HIS GLORIFIED STATE!**

1 John 1:1-4; 2 Pet. 1:12-19; Acts 9:4-6; 26:19. – **Illustration:** Josef Tson of Romania

In these verses Peter reminds us that this life is just the “*warm up!*” **It's not the main event!**

Cf. Warming up before a sporting event, a musical performance, etc.

Examples from the past: The stories of John Hus, William Tyndale, Wycliffe, the Anabaptists, Bunyan, Knox, Jane Bouchier “*the maid of Kent*”⁵ etc., etc.

8. **ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU A MILITARY MINDSET:** i.e. “**I'M GONNA FIGHT! I'M GOING TO WAR! I'M GOING TO PUSH MYSELF OUT OF & BEYOND MY COMFORT ZONE!**” – **1:13, 18-19** i.e. “*Gird up the loins of your mind*” (Literally: “*Gird your minds for action*”) a WWII enlistee to a friend: “*I'll see you again, but not in this life!*” – **Cf. Navy SEALS Creed.**

Are you afraid to go to church because you might get Covid, or talk to your neighbor, co-worker or classmate about Christ? Then why do you think you'll stand when things start really getting tough?

9. **PREPARE FOR THINGS TO GET A LOT HARDER: BECAUSE THEY'RE GOING TO!** – **1:6-7; 4:4-5; 5:8-9.** **Illustration:** The meaning of “*Taitim Bun*” in Papua New Guinea. cf. **Jer. 12:5**
10. **BE COMMITTED TO STANDING WITH & SUPPORTING YOUR BRETHERN!** – **1:22; 3:8; 4:8; 5:13-14**

The early NT Christians “*got this*” ...and they lived it! – Acts 4 & 5; Phil. 1:12-18
...at least SOME of them did! Others didn't! - cf. 2 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 1:18ff; Phil. 2:16-ff, etc.

Friend, it's always been this way! – i.e. “*Many Aspire, Few Attain*”

A well-known saying: “**The strength of the pack is the wolf. The strength of the wolf is the pack.**”

Stories from India, Nigeria, China, Georgi Vins & other pastors & believers in the former USSR, etc.

11. **YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN AN INFALLIBLE COMPASS! USE IT & RELY ON IT ALWAYS, WITHOUT FAIL!** – **1:23-2:3**

Well-known advice for every pilot: “**Trust your Instruments!**”

Examples:

- What's the one main key to landing a jet on an aircraft carrier at night?
- What's the first thing a pilot should do as soon as his plane hits the deck?

⁵ See Erroll Hulse, *An Introduction to the Baptists* (Carey Publications: Sussex, England, 1976), p. 20