**Being Prepared for *Tests, Trials,* and *Persecutions***

Introductory text: 1Pet.1:1-10. From the very outset, and continuing through the rest of the epistle, 1Peter is ***preparatory***in its nature and content:

* 1:6-7; for *distressing trials* and *tests by fire*
* 2:11-12; to live *as aliens and strangers*
* 2:18-21; for *unreasonable treatment* and *unjust suffering*
* 3:14,17; for *suffering for the sake of righteousness*
* 4:1-2,13,15-16,19; for *suffering in the flesh, like Christ,* and *as a Christian*
* 4:12; for *fiery ordeals* and *testing*
* 5:10; for *suffering for a little* while
* That *“when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory,”* 5:4.

Given the *preparatory nature* of the letter, there are admonitions scattered throughout to help the *chosen race,* the *royal priesthood,* the *people for God’s own possession* (2:9-10) to be ready for *“The end of all things,”* 4:7.

So, in keeping with these things, and since we seem to be facing *similar* (but admittedly to a lesser degree) *circumstances,* let’s specifically notice **4:7-19** for some simple **keys to not only *being prepared,* but also *doing what is right:***

1. **Use *sound judgment* with a *sober spirit* for the *purpose of prayer,* v.7a.** Prayer without *sound judgment* and a *sober spirit* becomes self-serving (about *My will* instead of *Thy will*) and imprecatory (*vindictive* in nature) instead being *properly purposed* (for God’s *strength* to overcome with *grace*).
2. ***Fervently love* and *be hospitable to one another without complaint,* vv.8-9.** In times of *testing* and *trial,* when can easily become *self-centered,* and therefore *self-serving, complainers.* Concentrating on *fervently loving* and *serving* others is the best prescription.
3. **Use *your gift/talent(s)* to *serve one another* as *good stewards* of the *manifold grace of God,* v.10.** Whatever *your talent* may be (cf. Rom.12:6-8 for a partial listing), utilize it/them to *serve one another* with the *manifold* (*multiple, various*) *grace* (*unmerited favor*) of God which has been *entrusted* to us as *stewards.*
4. ***Speak* the *utterances of God* and *serve* by the *strength God supplies,* v.11.**  Now more than ever, in our lives at least, it is important to *speak what/how God speaks* (lean on and use *His* word(s) as much as possible) and *serve by* and *through His strength.* Use *His words* rather than your own, and *His strength* rather than yours!
5. ***Don’t be surprised* at the *fiery ordeal* and *being reviled,* but *keep on rejoicing,* vv.12-14.** That for which we are unaware and unprepared *surprises* us*.* This text and recent efforts of your Elders and myself have diligently endeavored to make you *aware* and *prepared,* so that when the flames of our *fiery ordeal* rise, you do not panic and become (spiritually) paralyzed, but instead *keep on rejoicing* because *“the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you,”* v.14b!
6. **When *suffering as a Christian* (because you are one), continue to *glorify God* and *entrust your soul* to Him by *doing what is right,* vv.15-19.**  If and when we are called upon to *suffer as Christian* (rather than for sins, cf. v.15 and Gal.6:7-8), the most important thing is to *entrust our souls* to our *faithful God* by *“doing what is right”* as He determines and reveals!

**We, and YOU, *can* do this with God’s *word, strength,* and *grace!***