

MOMENTS TO PONDER

1 PETER



Episode 61: A Choice 1 Peter 4:1-9

Thank you for joining me for a few moments to ponder 1 Peter. I'm Betsy Marvin and this is episode 61.

So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. ²You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. ³You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.

⁴Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you. ⁵But remember that they will have to face God, who stands ready to judge everyone, both the living and the dead. ⁶That is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead—so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit.

⁷The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. ⁸Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.

1 Peter 4:1-9 (NLT)

Peter is continuing his letter with a reality that many face today – when you decide to follow Christ it will change some of your habits and this might be an issue with your friends.

If you have ever lived into a new choice because of your faith, then you have finished with sin – as Peter says here in verse 1. Not that you have achieved perfection, but you are finished with the hold that sin had over you in that choice.

Basically, you've had enough to the godless life and you won't spend the rest of your life chasing your own desires but anxious to do the will of God.

Throughout Paul's writing and now with Peter, we see this the same message. When we choose Christ, the old is gone, the new has come. This should affect how we live. Romans 12:1-2 say it like this:

I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Paul says, in 1 Corinthians, you have been given the mind of Christ.

I can remember a moment, an aha, when this concept really hit me, and it might seem minor to you, for me it was a true choice toward freedom.

If you know me, you know I love to read. I could read 24/7...and like many women, I love a good romance story, especially if it's in a historical setting. I have read a wide variety of authors, but I can remember when I was struck by the conviction of the kind of novels I was reading. I realized that many could be considered soft porn, and although we could say they're just romance books, I was allowing the words and concepts into my mind. As I thought about it, I could see that these concepts had begun to affect my marriage, how I saw sex, and had begun to desensitize me to the blatant views of the authors. And, although I know many people really enjoy those books, I knew that for me, I had to make a clean break and go after protecting my mind in Christ.

I have found Peter's words to be true: *For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.*

OK, I didn't suffer physically, but I could see it coming...
Why share that? Because, in simple way, I chose to be careful of what goes into my mind. I decided that day, over 15 years ago, to not read any more books of

that sort – ever. I also chose to stop seeing movies that fit this description, and sadly, so many TV shows have added in sex as well. I want to sensitive to this area, I don't want the world to desensitize me to its value-system, I want to live into Christ's value system.

When I share this with someone, like I am right now with you, it brings some interesting responses. For instance, what are you thinking of me right now?

Wow, that is so old fashioned – what's the big deal?

Or, ooooo, miss goody two shoes

Or, get a life, who cares if there's a little scene, the show is so good!

But, I didn't make this choice to say – look how good I am – I made it so that I can be free of the sin connected to it in my life. You might be able to handle it, I have found that I don't want to.

Am I missing out? Nope. I have found so many incredible, fun, clean books to read and enjoy.

Peter says it like this: You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy— It's time to live like a Christian. To live like Jesus. And for me, that choice has brought freedom.

Peter makes a shift in vs 7 after talking about how God will be the judge of all so we don't need to be. He says, The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers.

The church of the 1st century didn't realize how many years would really pass until Jesus returns, we are still waiting. But, Peter knew, that he could come anytime and the followers of Jesus needed to be ready. Pray with purpose, love deeply, and share your home.

When we know someone is coming over, we get the house ready. We just celebrated Thanksgiving at my house, so I cleaned, cooked, and prepared for those I love to come I didn't wait until they were almost there, or I could see them in the driveway, I had to discipline myself to get prepared early so I would

be ready. Then, I watched with anticipation for my family to arrive with all their chaos, laughter, and food instead of scurrying around while they arrive, trying to hide little messes in cupboards and drawers frustrated that someone would dare to come early. When we are prepared, we can sit and enjoy the moment because we've done the work.

Can you see the spiritual lesson here? We cannot wait until we think it's time, we need to live like Christians now. We need to be finished with sin now, living into freedom now, and preparing to enjoy him when he comes or we go to him.

I am in no way saying that dealing with addictions or habits of sin is easy, I am not making light of the work it takes to find freedom. What I am saying, is that it's worth it.

He who the Son sets free, is free indeed.

Is there an area in your life that you know you need to be finished with?

Jesus is there to help you, he's already suffered so that you can be free.

Just ask.

Amen.