

# ARM YOURSELF WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST

## 1 PETER 04:01–06

### *Introduction*

Living for Jesus Christ is not easy. When we live for Christ, really live righteous and godly lives, the unbelievers of the world reject us. They want little to do with pure righteousness and pure godliness. A godly life convicts them and demands that they live like God or else face His judgment. Therefore, the world often ridicules, mocks, abuses and sometimes kills the genuine believer. How can the believer handle and conquer such persecution when he is so unjustly treated? There is one way: he should arm himself with the attitude of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ suffered persecution and He suffered persecution to the ultimate degree. He has shown us how to handle and conquer persecution. Therefore, arm yourself with the mind of Christ.

- I. It is dying to self, denying oneself, giving up sin (v. 1).
- II. It is doing God's will for the rest of one's days (v. 2).
- III. It is being fed up with sin, knowing that one has sinned enough (v. 3).
- IV. It is bearing the strange look by the world (vv. 4-5).
- V. It is following the example of those gone before (v. 6).

### **I. 1 Peter 04:01 *Self-Denial and Suffering***

Arm yourself with the attitude of Christ. What does this mean? First, it means to die to self; to deny oneself. Jesus Christ denied Himself to the ultimate degree: He suffered for us in His body. Jesus Christ lived a pure and righteous life and men persecuted Him for it. But He bore the humiliation, ridicule, mockery, beatings and even death in order to please God and to save men. In His body He did not want to suffer. He had a body just like ours, the body of humanity; therefore, His body wanted and desired to escape the abuse of men (cp. Heb. 2:14-15). But Jesus Christ denied Himself and went ahead and did the will of God. The exhortation is strong: "Now, you do the same thing. Arm yourself with the attitude of Christ. You are in a warfare with the desires and lusts of the flesh; the acts of the sinful nature, and they are going to destroy you unless you conquer them. Therefore, you must arm yourself; you must put on the armour that will protect you." What is that armour?

⇒ The attitude of Christ. The very same attitude that delivered and saved Christ. Christ kept His attitude and thoughts upon righteousness and salvation. Therefore, Christ gave Himself up — denied Himself — and suffered for us. We must do the same: we must keep our attitudes upon righteousness and salvation. We must die to self and suffer for Christ. We must become identified with Christ in His self-denial and suffering of death. We must identify with Him by denying ourselves and suffering for His name. Jesus Christ denied the desires of the flesh in order to please God and

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to save us. We are to do the same; we are to deny the desires of the flesh in order to please God and save men. We do this by keeping our thoughts upon the suffering and self-denial of Christ. We can conquer the flesh (sinful nature) and its desires by arming ourselves with the attitude of Christ. Therefore, our attitudes and thoughts are to be armed, that is, clothed, with the very armour of Christ's attitude.

Note one other significant fact: the person who suffers in the body has "*given up sin, is done with sin once for all.*" What does this mean? When the world persecutes us, we do not want to suffer and bear the judgment of ridicule, mockery and abuse of men. Now if we give in to the fleshly desires and go along with the world, we sin and doom ourselves. But if we arm ourselves with the attitude of Christ, deny our fleshly desires and suffer for Christ and for the salvation of men, then we deny sin. We do just what Christ did: we deny sin and live righteously. Our suffering for Christ has delivered us from sin and it has caused us to give up sin, to be done with sin once for all. We have done the right thing, and in doing the right thing, we are delivered from sin. We are living righteously — all for Christ and His cause.

Another way to say the same thing is this: the person who suffers for Christ has chosen to identify himself with Christ. He has chosen to deny himself and his fleshly desires and to identify himself with Christ and His sufferings of death. Therefore, in suffering for Christ, the person is not sinning; he is living righteously. He is doing the right thing; he has done away with sin. Note this: the more a person suffers for Christ, the closer he becomes to Christ; and the closer he becomes to Christ, the more the desires and lusts of the flesh (sin) lose their appeal and power over the person.

**Rom 6:2-4** *By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

**Rom 6:6-13** *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

**Gal 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Gal 5:24** *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

**Col 3:3** *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

**1 Pet 2:24** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

## II. **1 Peter 04:02 Believer's Life: Doing God's Will**

Arm yourself with the attitude of Christ. What does this mean? Second, it means to do the will of God — do it for the rest of your days. Note that the phrase “evil human desires” is plural. It is the picture of the believer being pulled every way by different persons or groups. The believer is being pulled to live like the world lives, fulfilling the desires and lusts of the flesh. Men lust after the pleasures and possessions of the world...

- houses
- lands
- wealth
- position
- power
- recognition
- drink
- sex
- stimulation
- partying
- recreation
- excitement

Lusting after these things is not the will of God. God's will is for believers to live pure and righteous lives and to focus upon proclaiming the gospel of eternal life to a lost and dying world. Genuine believers do this. They do not make the lusts and desires of men the rule of their lives. The rule of their lives is God. And note the Scripture: they have committed the *rest of their days* to the will of God. This is what the mind of Christ means: just as Christ was totally committed to the will of God, so we are totally committed to the will of God. Just as His thoughts were consumed with God's will, so our thoughts are consumed with God's will. We arm ourselves with the very attitude of Christ: we become consumed in attitude and thought with the will of God, not with the lusts of men. We focus and concentrate upon living righteous lives and upon carrying the gospel to every person in the world (cp. v. 6).

**Mat 12:50** *“For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”*

**Rom 6:6** *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

**Rom 6:11** *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

**Rom 13:14** *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

**Rom 14:8** *If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*

**2 Cor 5:15** *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

**Heb 13:16** *And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

**Psa 40:8** *“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”*

**Psa 143:10** *Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*

### **III. 1 Peter 04:03 Away with Sin**

Arm yourself with the attitude of Christ. What does this mean? Third, it means being fed up with sin, knowing that one has sinned enough. The believer’s life is divided into two parts: *his old life and his new life*. Note the force of this verse: in his *old life*, he sinned enough. He has already followed the desires and lusts of the ungodly (Gentiles) enough. He has already worked the will of the ungodly. He has walked after them, walked just as they walk, and enough is enough. The believer is no longer to fulfil the desires of the flesh (sinful nature). Note that six sins in particular are mentioned.

1. *Debauchery* (aselgeiai): filthiness, indecency, shamelessness, license, without restraint. A chief characteristic of the behaviour is open and shameless indecency. It means unrestrained evil thoughts and behaviour. It is giving in to brutish and lustful desires, a readiness for any pleasure. It is a man who knows no restraint, a man who has sinned so much that he no longer cares what people say or think. It is something far more distasteful than just doing wrong. The man who misbehaves usually tries to hide his wrong, but a lascivious man does not care who knows about his exploits or shame. He wants; therefore he seeks to take and gratify. Decency and opinion do not matter. Initially when he began to sin, he did as all men do: he misbehaved in secret. But eventually, the sin got the best of him — to the point that he no longer cared who saw or knew. He became the subject of a master — the master of habit, of the thing itself. Men become the slaves of such things as unbridled lust, wantonness, licentiousness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence (Mk. 7:22); lewd manners, filthy words, indecent body movements, immoral handling of males and females (Rom. 13:13); public display of affection, carnality, gluttony, sexual immorality (1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:2, 18). (Cp. Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Pet. 2:7.)

**Rom 1:27** *In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

**Eph 4:19** *Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

**Jude 1:4, 7** *For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our*

*God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.*

**1 Pet 4:3** *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

2. **Lust (epithumias)**: the word means strong desire or craving and passion; it means that the pull of sin is sometimes very, very strong. All men know what it is to lust after things, after more and more, and never to be satisfied even after the things are secured. (See note, 1 Pet. 1:14; 2:11.)

**Rom 13:14** *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

**1 Pet 2:11** *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.*

**1 Pet 4:2** *As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

3. **Drunkenness (oinophlugiai)**: excess amounts of wine, drunkenness, wine-bibbing. It would include taking drink or drugs to affect one's senses for lust or pleasure; becoming tipsy or intoxicated; partaking of drugs; seeking to loosen moral restraint for bodily pleasure.

**Luke 21:34** *“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.*

**Rom 13:13** *Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.*

**1 Cor 6:10** *Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

**Eph 5:18** *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

**1 Th 5:7** *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.*

**Prov. 23:29-31** *“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless wounds? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who goes to sample bowls of mixed wine.”*

**Prov 20:1** *Wine is a mocker, and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.*

**Isa. 5:11** *“Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.”*

4. **Orgies** (komois): carousing; uncontrolled license, indulgence, and pleasure; taking part in wild parties or in drinking parties or in orgies; lying around indulging in feeding the lusts of the flesh (sinful nature).

*1 Pet 4:3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

*2 Pet 2:13-14 They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed — an accursed brood!*

*Gal 5:21 And envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*Exo 32:6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry. (cp. Judges 9:27; 1 Sam. 30:16)*

5. **Carousing** (potoi): drinking parties; partying and getting drunk.

*Rom 13:13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.*

*1 Pet 4:3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

*1 Th 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.*

6. **Detestable idolatry** (athemitois eidoloatriais): the worship of idols, whether mental or made by man's hands; the worship of some idea of what God is like, of an image of God within a person's mind; the giving of one's primary devotion (time and energy) to something other than God. (See note, *Idolatry*, 1 Cor. 6:9.)

*1 Cor 10:14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.*

*Gal 5:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*Eph 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

*Col 3:5-6 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

*Rev 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.*

**Rev 22:15** *Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

#### **IV. 1 Peter 04:04–05 Persecution and Judgment**

Arm yourself with the attitude of Christ. What does this mean? Fourth, it means to bear the strange look of the world. This fact is easily understood and it is often experienced by believers. The worldly just cannot understand...

- why a genuine believer separates himself from the world and does not participate in its pleasures and in getting all of the possessions he can.
- why a genuine believer gives all he is and has to spreading the gospel around the world and meeting the desperate needs of the world.

This is particularly true if the believer participated in the pleasures and ways of the world before his conversion. Once he has been converted and begins to separate himself from his old life, his former associates begin to look at him as a strange creature, and they often begin to slander and heap abuse upon him. They ridicule, mock and withdraw from him because he no longer shares with them in the drinking parties or in the crooked and covetous ways of the world.

Note: the worldly and ungodly shall be judged. They shall give an account to Christ for all their ridicule, abuse and persecution of believers. And Scripture is clear: Christ is *ready to judge* both the living and the dead.

**Mat 25:32** *“All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”*

**John 5:22** *“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.”*

**Acts 17:31** *“For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”*

**Rom 2:16** *This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.*

**Rom 14:10** *You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.*

**2 Tim 4:1** *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:*

**Rev 20:12** *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

**Rev 22:12** *“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.”*

*Jer 17:10* “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”

## **V. 1 Peter 04:06 Example of Those Gone Before**

Arm yourself with the attitude of Christ. What does this mean? Fifth, it means to follow the example of believers who have gone before. God is going to judge the world. This is the reason He has seen to it that the gospel be preached. And note: the gospel was preached to believers who have already died.

⇒ The gospel was preached in order to judge them while they were still men in regard to the body: preached to condemn them for living after the sinful ways of men; preached to convict them of sin and righteousness and judgment.

⇒ The gospel was preached in order to give them life, a spiritual life, a life that is just like God’s life; a life that has the power to live in the spirit forever and ever, to live just like God; a life that is eternal; a life that is eternal just like God’s life.

The point is this: believers who have gone on heard the gospel. They heard the judgment and condemnation of the gospel while they were living on earth, and they accepted the gospel. Therefore, they shall escape the judgment to come (v. 5). They now live with God, possessing the very life of God Himself which is eternal life. They shall live forever and ever with God. It is this that we are to keep our attitudes upon. We are to arm ourselves with the example of those who have gone on before. We must let the gospel judge and convict us of sin, and we must repent. We must turn away from sin and turn to God. When we so respond to the gospel, we receive the very life of God Himself. We shall live with God forever and ever just like those who have gone on and now live in His presence.

*John 5:24* “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

*Rom 6:23* For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*2 Cor 4:11* For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

*Phil 1:21* For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

*1 John 3:14* We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ■