

## Lesson 24 – Fundamental Attitudes of a Christian Mind

1 Peter 5:5-14, **“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.”**

If you’re here this morning, it’s possible that you’re visiting and joining us for the first time in Sunday School, but it’s more likely that you’ve been with us since lesson 1, and so I congratulate you on making it all the way to this final lesson in 1 Peter! Today marks the start of our 24<sup>th</sup> lesson, and our 183<sup>rd</sup> page of notes so far. I can’t believe how much instruction and encouragement that the study of this book has given me personally, and I only hope and pray that the Lord has used me well to communicate those things to you. I’m particularly excited about the text of this lesson. I have been anticipating finally arriving here so I could intentionally dig into this text once and for all. In my dream last night, I had finished this lesson, only to discover that I had relatively nothing written down for verses 8-9 of our text in this lesson, two verses that stand out to me personally as my favorite in this letter. This revelation that I dream about writing Sunday School ought to add another layer of reasons why you question how many times my mother dropped me as a baby! In all seriousness, I sit here very early this morning excited about digging into the final lesson, and I’m also thankful to the Lord for this wonderful privilege to have gone through it with you. Teaching Sunday School is not a right or a privilege, it’s a temporary stewardship that the Lord gives, and will one day take away. One day it will be my last day, but until that day I want to express gratitude to you all to do what I do.

In this final lesson we will once again look into the Christian mind, and how we ought to be renewed in it as we walk in this dark and difficult world. We live in a world that is both anti-truth, and at the same time they push everything (even things that contradict themselves) as equal truths. The world around us pushes the empty philosophy to believe in nothing supernatural, and to believe in everything earthly. As believers in Christ, we recognize that we don’t assess what is truth because we aren’t the standard of righteousness. If we’re to make right and consistent judgments about that is good and evil across the landscape of our society, we need a standard that comes from the eternal and all-wise Judge. Thankfully that Judge is also merciful and gracious, and we hold in our hands as a result His inspired Word that instructs and lights our path so that we might walk in obedience to Him. So as we consider this last time in this letter how to think rightly, let’s begin by remembering that our thoughts come from the Lord. God told David in Psalm 32:8-9, **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.”** Aren’t you thankful that we have God’s Word to teach us how to think through this life?

God has always been concerned that we use our minds to apply His Word to our life. To give us just one example of many in scripture, consider Hebrews 5:12-14, **“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”** Jesus is the bread of life, and we’re to be consuming Him for everlasting nourishment and sustenance both now and forevermore. The author of Hebrews understood that our spiritual life mirrors the reality of our physical lives, there should be a pattern of growth and maturity. As disastrous as it would be to see someone remain infantile in their middle ages, so is it equally a shame (to put it lightly) to have a believer think like a new Christian when they are an old one. We’re to be growing therefore every day as we consume God’s truth every day of our lives. Every day we should think better, which will cause us to speak and act better, and we should give God all the glory for our growth. Paul told the Philippians in 1:9-11, **“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”** And Peter will soon write in his second letter in 1:5-7, **“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”** I love the domino effect of the intake of God’s Word that Peter gives us.

Not only is the Lord concerned with the renewal of our minds, but He is also concerned with the mind of the unregenerate. We see this in multiple passages, beginning with Romans 1:28, **“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.”** Also 2 Corinthians 4:4, **“In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”** Paul encouraged a thinking in the believer that stands opposed to the thinking of world, Ephesians 4:17, **“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.”** In Colossians 1:21, Paul again reminds the believers of how they formerly walked with the world, **“And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind.”** Perhaps the best passage in the Bible that speaks to the stark contrast in thinking between a believer and an unbeliever is Romans 8:5-8, **“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”**

The scriptures are quite clear that a believer is to be re-trained, washed, renewed in their thinking, according to the revealed will of God. It should be a contrast of light and dark, of dirty and clean. And yet, there is still a muddy blur sometimes between the two camps. What I mean is that there are people who are placed in one camp, and yet whose lives make you wonder if they’re intruding. Sometimes we see evil people putting on a charade of holiness with the attempt at tricking people into a false worship to God. And other times we see believers in God who live lives that seem to be quite worldly and not full of the Spirit. There is always a danger for a person to accumulate bad doctrine and be misled, there is an even greater danger that a person be fed proper doctrine, and yet superficially store it up in their brain

without allowing it to penetrate to their heart. Right doctrine must be followed by right thinking, and that right thinking is Peter's aim to close this letter. In this final section, he will address the godly attitudes that are necessary to produce a spiritual mind. He will address key components of Christian thinking such as: submission, humility, trust, self-control, vigilance, fortitude, hope, worship, faithfulness, and love. Let us ask God to impress these truths on our hearts as we think through these closing verses together.

The first that Peter mentions is submission, verse 5, **"Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders."** The first word that is very important to not skip over is that first word "likewise". We don't have to be a seminary graduate to understand the meaning of the word, but it might be helpful to simply be reminded that Peter has just finished instructing the elders in the previous four verses, and now he turns his attention to the congregation, and the first instruction that he gives them is to think likewise. The like-mannered thinking highlights the submissive lifestyle of their shepherd to the Chief Shepherd.

We are all to live in submission to our church leaders, but here Peter specifically addresses those who are younger. Depending on your translation, your Bible may say "younger men". Why doesn't Peter just address everyone? We're not told in this letter why he singled out young people, but we can speculate. Younger people tend to be very energetic, they tend to think that their brains are born chock-full of knowledge, they tend to act first and think later. It reminds me of Peter actually, so maybe he's trying to help from his experience of being a youth. Peter reminds the young ones to be subject to the elders. It's a military term that Peter uses, as if to line up behind your commanding officer and march where he leads you. Let's be clearer and note that the command is for younger men to be subject to the Elders, not the elderly in the church. Should the elderly be treated with proper dignity and care? Of course they should, but the elderly are not officially shepherding the flock because of their age. The instruction is for the younger people (most likely those headstrong men who are leading their young families) to submit to their Pastors. Paul is consistent with the saints in this instruction, 1 Corinthians 16:15-16, **"Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints—be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer."** Also consider 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, **"We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves."**

Whether it's your employer, or your governing authorities, or even your spouse, God has put people in certain positions in life to keep order and to fulfill His purpose for all of our lives. Each and every one of us submits to someone at some time. No one is exempt from this, chaos follows a life that is unwilling to submit. Why should we expect anything different in the construct of the church? We are all to line up behind and Pastors and follow their direction. Once again I remind you of Hebrews 13:17, **"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."**

The second fundamental attitude of a Christian mind that Peter gives us is one of humility. We see this in verses 5 and 6, **"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you."** It's kind of difficult, some would say impossible, for a person

to submit to someone else while they are too proud to humble themselves in service. Once again, this attitude is one that is shared likewise with the shepherds that are in charge of us.

The first command from Peter in verse five is for all of us to 'clothe' ourselves. The command is actually quite easy to understand. If you've ever taken part in (even if you've seen this you'll get it) cooking, gardening, working on the car? In every instance, people will put on an apron, or some sort of clothing that will protect the clothes they have on underneath. Putting on this clothing because we're about to get into some work is the exact the heart of this command. Humility is the clothing that we're to put on. The significance of the particular Greek word for humility in this instance speaks of considering ourselves as a lowly servant, one who not only does lowly tasks but does them willingly. This is the heart of Christ also that we see in Philippians 2:5-8, **"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."** I find the reaction people have to humility to be lost in sin. I believe that all people admire humility (at least in their heart) when they see it in a person. I also think that people are repulsed at pride when they see it in a person. Ask yourself, when was the last time you ever heard anyone compliment someone else because of their pride and arrogance? I think I see both sides of that coin clearly, where sin muddies up the water is how everything gets inverted once we add in our cultural influence. Our culture teaches us the pride is a virtue in a person, and humility is a vice. Humility in our world today is looked upon as weakness and cowardice. Pride is thought of as strong and energetic and powerful.

Our Lord Jesus was certainly the strongest, and most powerful person in the history of HIStory, and yet He was also the most humble. Not only can you be both strong and humble, and don't know if you can be one without the other. It takes far more effort to be humble and willing to serve than it does to serve your selfish desires. Consider Christ, as Peter likely was, who clothed Himself with that towel and washed the disciples feet. [John 13:3-17](#)

Peter ends verse 5, **"for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** Do we honestly need any more reason to adopt a spirit of humility? As I go through my life, I want to ensure that I am on the side of God's grace, and not be opposed to Him. This theme of God's opposition to pride and grace towards the humble is found all across scripture. Isaiah 57:15 is one such example, **"For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit."** The apostle Paul knew from first hand experience that grace comes to the humble, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, **"So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."**

Next, Peter repeats the command to be humble, a good indication that we really need to pay attention to a command that we're likely not following. Verse 6 is one of those 'therefore' verses. Peter says in verse 5 for us to clothe ourselves for humble service to one another, keeping in mind that God opposes

proud behavior but gives grace to humble behavior. And with that in mind, he says again to put on humility, submitting ourselves **“under the mighty hand of God.”** Serve the Lord humbly, knowing that you are serving under the mighty, omnipotent, all-wise, completely sovereign hand of God. He is controlling every atom of the universe. Nothing is out of place, nothing is thwarting His plans. He knows who your parents are. He knows who your boss is. He knows what your spouse is like. He knows who your Prime Minister is. He knows who your Pastor is. No one is therefore apart from His divine appointment. Therefore, submit to serve them all under His mighty hand. Do you need to be delivered from bondage? God is still with you as He was with those under Egyptian bondage. Do you need comfort from the persecution and suffering that you are going through because of your faith in Christ? God is still there with you, His hand is still mighty, continue to submit to His hand in humility. This humility is waiting for the time when **“at the proper time he may exult you”**. There is always a plan of God, there is always an appointed time. Nothing that comes into our life is random and purposeless. God is never reacting to our circumstances, figuring out how He can turn these events into something for our good and His glory, He’s the one bringing everything into our lives. There is a time for humble service, and there is a time for exultation. Some have concluded that this exultation refers to the future time of glorification for the saint, but the Greek word has nothing to do with eschatological events. The meaning of the word has to do with present trials and difficulties. Pastor Scott has been by my side through many of the worst moments of my life, and part of his counsel to me that has served me well is to remember that even the worst of moments in my life are just that, moments. The Lord allows difficult moments into our lives, and after He’s accomplished His purpose for the trial, He will lift us back up.

The first fundamental attitude of a Christian mind is submission, building on that, we must be humble in order to submit. If we’re complaining all the way down the road trip of life, then we’re essentially that kid in the backseat squawking at our Dad that he’s missed the exit and has no idea where he’s at, or where he’s going. Let’s be careful to never attempt to stand tall and tell God that we know better than He does. God opposes such a prideful heart, and such pride will forfeit the grace of His exultation of us. Luke 14:11, **“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

The third fundamental attitude of a Christian mind is one of trust in the Lord’s plan, an attitude that we just hinted at in our road trip analogy. God knows where He’s going. Verse 7, **“Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.”** David trusted God, consider Psalm 55:22, **“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”** Can you tell where Peter received this instruction? Peter is using David as an illustration to all who suffer in this life, to trust in the Lord just as David did. Both David and Peter command us to ‘cast’ all of our anxieties on the Lord. If we understand fishing, then we’d understand that casting is when we throw the hook into the water, targeting a distance that is far away from where we are. It has the heart of taking something and removing it far from yourself. Whatever it is that we’re feeling, whether it be discontentment, discouragement, despair, questioning, pain, suffering, or any other stressful emotion you can name, we’re to cast it onto the Lord. He is the sovereign one who is in control of all things. In Him, we can trust in His love, faithfulness, power, and wisdom.

The fourth fundamental attitude of a Christian mind is one of self-control. We see that is the first few words of verse 8, **“Be sober-minded.”** We’ve already spoken at length regarding the topic of sober-minded thinking. As a matter of fact, we did it two weeks ago at the date of this writing. I would encourage you back to the class notes from 4:7 if you want to dig into the thought at a deeper level. At a

surface level, we would be correct to conclude that we are to remain sober in regards to the thinking of our daily lives. This world around us is cursed with sin, and sin always distorts and warps the truth. We therefore need to be submersed in the truth's found only in God's Word to renew our minds and carefully walk down the path that is lit up only from scripture.

And now, as I have anticipated since the outset of taking on the task to teach this book, I arrive at my favorite two verses, and also our fifth attitude: vigilance. Verse 5:8b, **"Be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."** Consider the military for a moment. Think of those soldier for example who were drafted to go to war, there first taste of the military was to go through a training camp. They take a man and they cut his hair, then they give him a uniform, and they tell him what he'll eat and when he'll eat it. His shoes need to remain polished and his cot needs to be made perfectly. He must go through a grueling fitness regiment. He will be taught to march in unison, and stand perfectly at attention. Why all of this? Is it cruelty? Slavery? Abuse? Quite the opposite, the military is aware that there is a war happening that they are sending these men into, and they need to be prepared to survive. A great starting point in ensuring that they will be trained to follow the proper commands is to teach them submission to leadership, and that submission is engrained in every detail of their life. They are taught humility. They are taught to trust their superior, as they must react to their commanders in the moment without hesitation or they may pay the ultimate price. And they are taught self-control in the military. They are disciples.

Now consider yourself, Christian. You are in a war, and it's all around you. To deny the spiritual war around you, or to pretend like you're just not interested in fighting in it, will have as disastrous of an effect on your life as it would that soldier. Every fundamental attitude that Peter has been addressing today has to do with preparing our hearts to survive in the combat that we've already been placed in. This is where vigilance comes into the picture as our next attitude. To be vigilant is to keep a careful watch for a possible danger, much like the soldiers who are posted in the watch towers that surround a military camp. Peter likewise says that we're to **"be watchful,"** which has a similar meaning to his last command to **"be sober-minded."** Certainly, we cannot successfully be watching out for danger, if our mind is clouded with sin. Our Lord Jesus spoke of such vigilance in Matthew 26:41, **"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

What in particular is Peter asking us to be on the lookout for? **"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."** Let's not skip over that first word and diminish the significance of the command. The devil is much more than 'an' adversary, he is 'your' adversary. We want to be careful here not ascribe an attribute to Satan that he doesn't possess, he is not omniscient. He has most likely never heard of you, but we do know from scripture that there are an army of fallen angels who operate in this world, and you can be certain that you're on the radar somewhere. We also know from scripture that Satan is vicious, and relentless, and he is in the business of attempting to slander believers before the throne of God. Remember Job 1:6-11? **"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out**

**your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.**” That’s one example of Satan purposely and particularly focusing his effort on being an adversary to one particular individual is living for the Lord. When we consider this scene from Job, it also helps us to create a well-rounded picture on our minds of exactly what an adversary is. Does this not remind you of a lawyer from the opposing side, who has studied your life and is attempting to destroy your credibility before the Judge? Friends, there is an adversary, and he is adverse to you, so be sober-minded and watchful. Next, Peter calls him the devil, which builds upon his title of adversary and bumps it up to level ten. The devil is not just a pesky little pain in the neck for our God, he is a formidable foe, and he is not to be tangled with. We won’t close this lesson without receiving proper instruction in how to deal with him, but before then, it’s important that we consider exactly who we’re dealing with. Consider three times that Jesus Himself spoke of the devil: John 12:31, **“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.”** John 14:30, **“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me.”** John 16:11, **“Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”** Three times in the span of five chapters, Jesus titles Satan the ruler of this world. We’re talking about an individual who is commanding forces according to his will, all across the globe. Be watchful for this adversary!

This fallen world may seem chaotic and random, but that would be an insult to the mind of Satan. This fallen world is orchestrated by his command. He has a plan of action, and he works tirelessly (because he is not a human and therefore does not need to sleep) alongside those angels under his command, to carry out this plan. Peter likens Satan to a lion, he isn’t anything like the Lion from the tribe of Judah, but interesting how Peter likens him to Scar. (If you don’t get that reference, I can’t help you.) Peter says that **“the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”** If you’re a cat lover like I am, big-to-small, I love them all, then you’ll appreciate the imagery of a lion on the prowl. To watch a lion move in stealth while on the hunt is a terrifyingly awesome thing to see. The lion is the king, when it moves, everyone pays attention. I remember being at a zoo just a few years ago, and we had just finished gazing at the lions as they lay in the sun, basically doing nothing. As we were almost near the next site, one lion let out a small roar, and every living being for likely a quarter-mile stopped dead in their tracks. It was the most magnificent and commanding sound I’ve ever heard, and believe me, that lion let out just a little one. The most dangerous thing that we could have done with full knowledge that we were in the presence of lion, is to pretend like he’s not there. The devil is not stupid, you may not be thinking about him, but he (or his fallen angel) is thinking about you. And they aren’t just aware of your presence, they’re actively hunting you, they want to devour you.

Revelation 12:3-4 helps us to understand just what we’re in the middle of, **“And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.”** The dragon in Satan, the woman is Israel, and the child is Christ. It’s a dramatic picture of the Messiah who is about to come out of Israel, and Satan is attempting to devour Him. As we think through the life of Christ, we can see Satan attempt to devour Christ through his plan to slaughter all of the male children age two and under. He tried to ruin Christ by promising Him the world’s kingdoms in His temptation. He worked through Judas to have Christ put on trial although innocent and executed. And he has set his attention at snuffing out any who claim the name of Christ ever since. All that is one Satan’s agenda is ultimately to oppose Christ at every point. He is not alone in this, there were some fallen angels who were bound up for the last times to be released into the world in judgment, all the rest

of those fallen angels are those who make up the diabolical system that we're entangled in. This is, as Paul warns us, who we're wrestling with in Ephesians 6:11-13, **"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."**

Satan and his demons hide in a realm that cannot physically see, but that doesn't mean that we cannot see their work all around us. Let's take the time to read 2 Peter 2 as an example of what is happening all around us. Satan wants to devour Christ, and because Christ is in us, he wants to devour us too. What does that mean for us practically? How ought we to be on the lookout? There are a few ways that I think we can all think of rather quickly, the first being that the Satanic opposition will directly attack us. We know that our God allows persecution to enter our lives, to conclude otherwise would be to deny scripture, or deny His sovereignty over all things. Satan was permitted by God to afflict Job, but only to a defined extreme and no further. The apostles are recorded in scripture as enduring much direct opposition. Satan asked to afflict Peter, and the Lord granted it in Luke 22:31-34, **"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."** Peter said to him, **"Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."** Jesus said, **"I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."** The Lord allowed the affliction, and Peter failed in the moment, something Jesus knew would happen, but because of that affliction the Lord made Peter's faith even stronger. Peter ended well as the Lord strengthened his faith, and we're studying through his letter because of it. We can think of the life of Stephen, and Paul, and we can think of endless accounts of Christian testimonies through two millennia that attest that the Lord allows direct attack on His people in order to accomplish His good purpose. Before we move along from the point that the demonic systems targets people directly, let's think about a much more subtle attack, the kind that isn't attacking moving in on someone, but drawing them into the trap. 1 John 2:15-17, **"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."**

Let's widen our scope and think of a more broad way that the Satan system attempts to devour us. The marriage bond, and by extension the family unit, is under constant attack. Consider 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, **"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."** Sex is a topic that avoided far too much these days, and you can bet the farm that is another win for Satanic opposition. The world sells sex around every corner. It is incredible how many products apparently cannot be sold effectively without appealing to the sensuality of people to hold their attention. TV and film makers apparently cannot make a decent show unless there is a lust-interest in the storyline. The satanic opposition has put the green light on sex (or the highlighter is you prefer that analogy) on magazine covers, internet websites, shopping malls, sidewalks. You'd think that people would want to enjoy the gift that God



intended to have with the spouse that the Lord provided for them, but far too many times, we hear of infidelity and perversion run rampant leading to broken marriages and divorce. Sex before marriage is a sin that Satanic opposition has used to destroy lives, and as soon as people get married, the opposition reverses its focus, and the destructive aim is to remove it from the relationship. What was once something that was chased after is now a bother, maybe even a weapon.

Another way that the adversary prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour, is by attacking everyone in the church, including the Pastor. Because this attack comes against even the leadership of the church, we are commanded in scripture to use discretion when selecting our leaders, to see if they meet the biblical requirements. 1 Timothy 3:1-7, **“The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”** We must ensure that our leaders are matured in the faith, well-equipped with the Word of God in order to properly resist the attack of the devil, which we will discuss momentarily. The attempt upon the church will spring up, and we therefore must be careful to work towards unity in the church. Paul appealed in 1 Corinthians 1:10, **“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”**

Because there is a roaring lion who is after our world, attacking us directly, attacking the family unit, and attacking the church (to name a few), we must be sober-minded and watchful Peter commands. Paul warned of the danger of an unprepared mind being led astray by the devil in 2 Corinthians 11:3, **“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”** The attacks of the Satanic system are all around us, they are relentless, we sleep, and he is scheming how to attack us. We entertain ourselves, and he schemes how to attack us. So how are we to handle this demonic system that is so obviously leagues beyond us in intellect and power? Let’s take a moment to mention what the Bible never tells us to do. The Bible never tells us to fight Satan, or to fight a demon. By fight, I don’t mean with brute strength, but there are some who believe that they have the ability to speak to demons and order them around. We cannot command demons, we cannot order them around, we have no authority over them, and they are certainly not intimidated by us anymore then I’m intimidated by a ten-week old puppy attacking my ankle. Christians have pointed to the apostles ability to cast out demons as a proof-text that we are to aim towards the same ourselves. The problem with that conclusion is that we’re not apostles. The apostolic age ended when the apostles did. We need to be careful that we aren’t reading into how we are to handle Satanic opposition, instead of reading into what we think we should be doing, there are commands that are clearly given to us.

Verse 9, **“Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”** This brings us to our next fundamental attitude of the Christian mind, and that being fortitude. To have fortitude is to have courage in the face of adversity. When this adversity comes at us again (as it incessantly does), we must resist him with fortitude. Peter

tells us to resist him by being firm in our faith. James tells us in James 4:7, **“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”** We are to resist the devil, to resist is to take a stand against the devil. How we are to resist him is by being firm in our faith. The idea of being firm is to stand planted in the ground, the Greek word used for firm is quite interesting, it’s the word *stereos*, from which we get the English word ‘stereo’. (Quite a stretch, I know!) There was a time when TV shows were broadcast “In Stereo” which was an exciting way to tell us that the sound that we were hearing was no longer being sent to us via one channel, but two! Now we could hear sound coming to us in a more immersive way, balanced from the left and right. This is the idea of that we get here in our text. We are to have both legs firmly planted, so that we’re balanced and therefore not easily tipped over when attacked. Our strength to stand, the balance that we achieve, is not of ourselves, but is in our faith in Christ. At the outset, therefore, a person can stand firmly against the devil when they learn, and apply the truths of scripture appropriately. Because this attack will come upon all believers universally and without exception, it is critical that every believer undertake the task of becoming a theologian in their own right. Every believer needs to be able to distinguish between truth and error, and every believer needs to be able to articulate biblical truth and denounce error.

Because Satan is relentlessly attacking believers both individually and corporately as a church, believers must resist him by growing in their knowledge of sound doctrine, and growing in their obedience to Christ. Taking our gaze off of Christ, and the pursuit of holiness will surely leave us wide open to the deceitful schemes of the devil. Paul encourages us to discipline ourselves so that even our every thought is held captive to obey Christ through this spiritual war that we’re in. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, **“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”**

Paul talks about destroying arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God. This is one attack of the devil, to create new philosophies (and sometimes blow the dust off of old ones) that stand at odds with Word of God. We are in the midst of a truth war. Christ is the source of truth in all of its meaning, and Satan is busy perverting the truth at every point. We need to lovingly and courageously stand against those lies and speak against them. That ability to stand effectively can only be accomplished when we first know the truth in our hearts from His Word.

Peter finishes verse 9 by encouraging the believers that they’re not alone in this fight, this type of suffering that they’re going through is commonplace amongst believers throughout the world! Verse 9b, **“knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”** All believers, from all walks of life, and from all centuries and parts of the world are being, or will be persecuted for their faith in Christ. This suffering is both known by God, and permitted by His will to accomplish His perfect work in the lives of His own. This should be such an encourage to us the next time we’re suffering in this way. Jesus tells us at the outset of His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:10-12, **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

The next fundamental attitude of the Christian mind is found in verse 10, which is the attitude of hope. **“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory**

**in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.**" Our hope is not in the here and now, but in what is to come to us eternally. We hear the word 'hope' all the time, but the culture that we live in has a different definition of the word. Our culture uses the word 'hope' when they desire something good to happen and would love to see that expectation met. "I hope I run into that person at the convention." "I hope they win the Stanley Cup this year." "I hope your kids turn out to be just like you." (That last one is open to interpretation) Biblical hope is nothing like that, as it's hope in a certainty. When the Bible commands for us to "Hope in God", it's not telling us to cross our fingers and see if God responds positively to us. "Hope in God" is a command for us to expect that the Lord will do exactly as He has said in His Word that He will do.

Verse 10 is a hope-filled verse. Suffering has been upon these believers, and the settling confidence that Peter is giving these believers is that the Lord has prescribed an end to their suffering, and that He will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish them in time. This suffering is to be expected, and believers are to remember that our suffering is not a punishment, nor a pointless endeavour, but it is a time where we are shaped into the image of Christ. Our Lord is with us every step of the way, and we are never in danger in the eternal sense, because our souls are safe in the hands of the God who holds us. (See [Romans 8:31-39](#)) The "God of all grace" as Peter calls Him is the One who is given us grace in the moment of our suffering.

After we have suffered for a little while, according to the God's perfect will, the God of all grace, who "calls" us Peter says "to his eternal glory in Christ". God will call us to His eternal glory, what a tremendous hope! Paul had a fixed hope on this future glory, it's hope we pushed through the many trials and sufferings of his life. Philippians 3:12-15a, **"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way."**

What will this hope of future glory look like? It will look like us being made just like Jesus. We won't be like Jesus in the sense that we will share divine characteristics, but we will be sinless as He is. The God of all grace will finish what He has started in us, but until then, He is still the God of all grace as we suffer today. Peter's hope to those sufferers is that God will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish them. The first word on Peter's list "restore" is simply to perfect. Paul wrote in Philippians 1:6, **"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."** What hope it should be for those suffering in Christ that regardless of how much pain there is, the story ends in glory. God is still in perfect control even in those most difficult times. The second word on Peter's list is "confirm", which means that our Lord has justified us. Paul again can give a word of encouragement on the topic in 1 Corinthians 1:7b-9a, **"As you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful."** What hope ought that give a believer that regardless of the rejection from the world around us, we are always accepted by God the Father as we are justified in Christ. Third on Peter's list is the word "strengthen", which means "strengthen". To strengthen something is to make it more sturdy than it was before, to anchor it into the ground better, to fortify it. Notice how Paul speaks on this strengthening (establishing) twice in just a few verses in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:3, **"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. Finally, brothers, pray for us,**

**that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.”** Paul is talking about a mindset of balance and immovability. Like it or not Christian, those forces of evil are going to come crashing against you like waves of the ocean, will you stand strong and immovable in Christ? Listen to how Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:17-19, **“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”**

Our final three fundamental attitudes of a Christian mind are going to come to us in rapid fire, as we’re running out of letter from Peter to go through. The next attitude is one of worship, and we see that in verse 11, **“To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”** Just before his final greetings were penned, Peter sums up his letter to these believers with this short doxology. This God that is with us as we suffer, who is busy at work in the lives of His saints to make them more like Jesus day by day, He is the one who works all things according to His will. This God is the only God. He is more powerful than all. He is more intelligent than all. He is more wise than all. And He is more of those things than all the rest of creation would be if you put them all together! He has dominion! And He has dominion forever! Peter is exploding in emotion over how majestic and worthy of our worship that our God is. If God is all those things, than we can trust Him with the details of our life. Because this is true, we can pour out our hearts before Him, and know that He is not only willing, but able to guard and protect us from anything that would eternally harm us. Because this is true, we should listen carefully when our Lord commands us to think a certain way, because He knows the perfect way to think always. So let us practice self-control, and stand strong in Christ against the devil and the demons who fell with him.

The final greeting that Peter writes is only three verses, and we will break that up into two parts to handle our final two fundamental attitudes. The first, final attitude is one of faithfulness, as we see in verse 12, **“By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.”** The first thing that you may have noticed is that we’re pulling an attitude out of a verse without a command. We understand the importance of faithfulness as we consider Peter’s heart regarding Silvanus (another name for Silas) who traveled with Him and sometimes appears in Paul’s letters. Silas is mentioned in numerous passages throughout the New Testament, which is how we know that he frequently traveled with Paul. We know from Acts 15:32 that Silas was a prophet. And we know from our current verse in 1 Peter that Silas was the one who wrote down these words as Peter spoke. Silas was a faithful brother, one who was very dear to Peter’s heart.

What Peter says next is very important, as he declares that what he has written is the true grace of God, and for them to stand firm in it. This is nothing short of another declaration that all scripture is inspired by God. Peter knew that he was writing scripture. In his second epistle, he’ll write this in 2 Peter 1:20-21, **“Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”**

This final attitude that we will discuss as we close both this lesson, and this letter, is one of love, and we see that from Peter’s final words in this letter, verses 13 and 14, **“She who is at Babylon, who is likewise**

**chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**" Peter exemplifies for us this attitude of love at the close of this letter. "She who is at Babylon" is an indirect way of speaking about the church at Rome. It would only make sense that there would be a need to use code language when referencing this church at Rome, and it would also make sense that the readers would have perfectly understood Peter's meaning. There are some who think that Peter chose "Babylon" specifically to highlight the false religion that was rampant around Rome, entangling itself into the lives of those who were following Christ. That may be so, but I believe that Peter's intent is to protect the identity of those saints from the hands of the wrong person who would read this letter in Rome even before it made its way to them.

Those Roman Christians sent their love and affection to Peter's readers by sending their greetings, and Peter specifically mentions Mark, his son in the faith. Mark was to Peter as Timothy was to Paul. We can follow Mark's ministry as he is mentioned in several places throughout the book of Acts, traveling with Paul. This is also, of course, the same Mark whose gospel we read.

Peter tells his readers to **"Greet one another with the kiss of love."** This fundamental attitude ought to be ours too. We are to move beyond co-existing, or co-attending, and move to having affection for one another. In that culture, greeting with a holy kiss was widely accepted. In our culture, I've never seen two men kiss on the cheek at a greeting. (I'm not saying that certain cultures today don't do it. I'm also not saying that it would be wrong to do it today. I'm saying that I've never seen it, probable because I'm not Italian.) Nevertheless, we should be greeting each other with a greeting of love. Whether it's a hug, or a heartfelt handshake, or one of those loud popping sounds when two guys dap each other up, we're to express love and warmth to our brother and sisters. Express to one another that your souls are knit together in Christ.

Lastly, Peter says, **"Peace to all of you who are in Christ."** There is no shortcut to a Christian mind possessing the godly attitudes that we've looked at in this lesson. All of these attitudes will take much focus and attention to cultivate them into maturity. Only by regularly planning your life to be under the teaching and preaching of the Word. Only by planning time in your day to be pouring over the scriptures daily. Only by planning time in your day to pray in private to our God. Only by planning time in your day to fellowship with one another. Only by doing these things day in and day out will we give the Spirit opportunity to grow us into the image of Christ. May we all work together, in a spirit of peace and unity, to sharpen each other as iron sharpens iron, to stir one another up to love and good works.