

## The Sin of Shame (1 Peter 4:16)

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### Introduction

The whole of 1 Peter is designed to admonish and encourage believers with regard to their suffering, particularly in their being rejected and ostracized as *Christians* in the world.

We are living in very troubling and uncertain times, and it is probable that we will be called on to suffer serious persecution because we are followers of Christ. This should not surprise us (John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12, 13; Revelation 2:10).

Jesus clearly defined what it is for believers to be persecuted in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:10–12).

The term translated *persecute* means to pursue someone in order to harass and trouble them. They will do it because of righteousness (John 7:7). They want to reject and isolate you because you walk in the light, and they hate the light because it exposes their sins.

The text before us describes what it is to suffer as a Christian and warns us not to be ashamed when we endure it, and we will because *“all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”*

### I. A Survey of I Peter

1. Chapter 1 establishes the glorious truth of our salvation (1:3–5).

However, Peter then informs the reader that before we experience the glories of salvation, it will not be an easy road, as Jesus plainly stated (Matthew 7:13, 14). Thus, Peter says: *“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials”* (1:6, 7).

2. Chapter 2 reveals that the “cancel-culture” of Peter’s day took aim at Christianity because Christ-followers, having *“tasted that the Lord was good”* (v. 3) and having been *“called out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (v. 9), have lived so honorably among the Gentiles that when spoken against as *evildoers*, their good deeds were seen by all so that God would be glorified on the day of visitation (v. 12).

The shame that was intended for the Christians would eventually come to their rejectors who *“stumble because they disobey the word, as they destined to do”* (v. 8). On the other hand, the Lord’s saving work stands as testified in Scripture (Isaiah 28:16).

Jesus was in all points tempted as we are. He went to the cross for His own, and to do so, He *“endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:2).

3. Chapter 3 presses this theme (vv. 13–18). Christians are just experiencing something of what their Savior endured.
4. Chapter 4 begins with encouragement that their Savior suffered in the flesh to save them and that their suffering produces sanctification to enable them to live to the will of God (4:1, 2). No believer should ever be ashamed of identifying with his Savior because in the will of God, he will be free forever the shame of sin.

5. Finally, chapter 5 reveals the true source of Christian opposition, which should not surprise us (Revelation 12:17). Thus, Peter warns his readers: *“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”* (vv. 8–11).

## II. Suffering as a *Christian*

1. Thus, verse 12 of our text, Peter informs believers that they should not be surprised when they are *tested* with fiery trials. Fiery trials are designed to test the faith of God’s people to reveal whether their profession of faith is genuine (Luke 8:14, 15).
2. Without a question, the singular evidence of true conversion is *endurance* (Matthew 24:9–13). Thus, in the face of tribulation, it is he who endures to the end that shall be saved or delivered. Be careful here—it is *not* endurance that saves, but it is only the saved will endure.
3. Peter explicitly argues that some suffering is because one’s being a Christian. The Greek of verse 16 literally reads: *“But if,”* following up on verse 15 that warns Christ-follower that they should not suffer as evildoers. On the other hand, if anyone suffers *“as a Christian, he must not be ashamed [to shrink back and pull away] but must glorify God in that name* (v. 16).

What is it to suffer? Verse 14 says, *“If you are insulted,”* you suffer insult—to be reviled or reproached. Jesus clearly warned His followers that as they cancelled Him, they will cancel you, His followers (Luke 6:22).

The problem is the reaction of the believer to being reviled and insulted. We naturally react to criticism and tempted to be ashamed.

## Application

Verses 17–19 sum up the passage. The Lord is testing all who profess salvation and preparing His bride for the coming of the Bridegroom. Thus, we must—

1. Beware of the pressure to compromise—CRT—pressure to cave to mandates with proper informed consent. Don’t do anything until you fully square it with Scripture and the will of God. It is only those who do the will of God that abide forever (1 John 2:17).
2. Remember the warnings of Scripture to be faithful in the test.
3. Remember the admonition of Jesus that it is only those who endure to the end that will be saved. The end is glorious and worth all the suffering that one must endure: *“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*
4. Hear the gospel and believe it. There may be some here who only think that they are saved.