

7 PRACTISING HOPE

4 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. 2 As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

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. 4 They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. 5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1. Let's start with the basic thrust. What do Christians need to give up? (v1-3)
What must be put in its place? (v8)
2. What can pull us away from such life-change? (v4)
Have the social restrictions altered this for you at all? How so?
3. Peter has commanded this life-change before. Now this passage starts with "therefore", recalling last week's point about Christ's own suffering bringing success despite those who opposed him. How does that point further motivate life-change? (note also v5-6)
4. Straight after Episode 4 comes Episode 5. How much of your day do you spend with awareness that "the end of all things is near" (v7)? What difference would it make if you had that awareness more?
5. What are some practical ways to show love? (v9-11)
Which of these do you think you'd be best at?
6. How could you be showing this practical love more?
 - a. Under social restrictions
 - b. After social restrictions

