

**August 30, 2015**  
***Suffer in the Flesh***

1 Peter 4: 10 – As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

Peter encourages us to watch over each other using the gifts that we've been given. This word of encouragement comes right after his exhortation to "suffer in the flesh," which is his way of saying resist the temptations the world throws at you because the world as we know it will eventually end. Peter wants his readers to act in a way becoming of a follower of Christ, because soon everyone will have to give an account of what has transpired in their lives.

That is a scary thought, and precisely why Peter encourages us to watch out for one another, using the gifts that we've been given. Sometimes this means that we need to pick each other up when one of our brothers or sisters has fallen into sin. Then we need to surround them with love and show them Christ's forgiveness in a real and tangible way. But, at other times this means that we need to use our God-given abilities to deter one another from falling to one temptation or another.

The second meaning is one that often gets overlooked in my opinion. I think that we have been programmed to think that we need to let others experience a fall for themselves so that they will learn. In some cases this may legitimately be the only way someone will stop sinning in that particular manner and come to know Jesus' forgiveness. But, that does not, and I repeat *DOES NOT*, mean that we should in no way

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warn them or use our God-given resistances to certain sins to try, *try*, *TRY* to help a brother or sister resist a particular sin.

Okay, so what do I mean when I say all of this? Here's an example. Perhaps some of you resist the temptation to gossip more easily than others. When you hear one of our brethren begin to gossip, gently change the subject. If he or she persists, gently point out their flaw. If he or she still resists, bring someone else to the conversation. Regardless of whether they stop or not, keep warning them in increasingly obvious ways that they are beginning or continuing to sin.

This is another reason why we were put into a body of believers, so that the strengths of some could help the weaknesses of others. Not all of us are plumbers and so when a pipe breaks we call a professional or someone more experienced than us (at least I hope). Because some sins are more appealing to others, there is nothing wrong with calling someone who has more experience dealing with a particular sin than we might.

When we call on others to help in our own crises or those of a brother or sister we are graciously accepting the gifts God has given us, and more than that we are practicing what Peter is preaching about. So, go be good stewards. Ask for help when you need it. Help others when they are struggling, and so "suffer in the flesh" in order to cease from sin and live for the will of God.

Pastor *Carl P. Jh*

