

Canceled
A Roadmap for Living In Exile
Thriving in Exile
1 Peter 1:6-9

Introduction: Values determine success. That is, if you achieve what you value then you feel successful no matter what else you gained, and likewise, if you don't achieve what you value then you feel unsuccessful no matter what else you gained.

For instance, I value winning. No matter what it is, I want to win because I like winning! I value winning above almost anything. I'm not saying that's a good thing, I'm just saying that's how I'm wired. But, because I'm wired that way, I feel successful for winning a cheesy, totally unimportant game with no tangible prize whatsoever as a reward, because, to me, winning is of itself a tangible prize! I'm not saying I don't appreciate whatever the thing is you might get for winning, I'm just saying the thing I appreciate the most and value the most is winning!

In the same way, what you and I value has a huge impact on how we experience faith in Christ in a society that is becoming increasingly hostile towards faith in Christ. That is, our values are going to determine our sense of success or failure, and as such, our experience of thriving, simply surviving, or totally dying in defeat!

In 1 Peter 1:6-9, Peter highlights two of the values that are clearly essential for thriving as an exile. That is, for those living in a world that cancels us for our faith in Christ, there are two essential values we have to truly cling to in order to feel successful in the midst of persecution.

Proposition: 1 Peter 1:6-9 highlights two essential values that Christians have to cling to in order to thrive in exile.

The first essential value is seen in 1 Peter 1:6-8. Let me walk you through these verses.

- A. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,**
 - 1. "6 In this you rejoice"**
 - a. Takes us back to what we read last week:
 - b. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

- c. So they are rejoicing in this even,
2. **“though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,”**
- a. **“though now for a little while, if necessary”** – In the previous verses Peter has pointed us to the fact that we have eternal life, therefore, no matter what trial we are in while living in exile in this world, it is temporary.
- b. But nonetheless, Peter is aware that the believers living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia are going through **“various trials.”** We can’t say for certain what these trials are, other than Peter acknowledges they are going through them and that they are of all different types (various).
- c. However, it is very likely that among these trials were various types and degrees of persecution. In Rome, Jews were given a pass to not have to participate in the official state religion. The Christian church attempted to say Christianity was the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy, something we will get into next week, and thus was under the legal protection afforded to those in the Jewish faith. However, Jewish authorities rejected the claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, and thus vehemently argued with Rome that Christianity should not be afforded the legal protection given to the Jews. When the legal system turned against Christians, Christians had to endure persecution from the Jews who despised their confession that that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, as well as the Romans who persecuted them for not participating in the various forms of the official Roman cult (which essentially meant worship of the state).
- d. However, the point is that although these trials are temporary, and of all kinds of variety, the degree is the same; that is, the effect is the same – **GRIEF!**
- e. The Theological Dictionary of the Bible defines the Greek word translated here as “grieved” - *“lýpē* means “pain,” “sorrow,” *lypeín* is “to cause pain,” and *lypeísthai* “to experience sorrow.” Both physical pain and mental anguish are covered by the words. Physically the pain is especially that caused by hunger, thirst, heat, cold, or sickness, while mentally it is especially the anguish of misfortune, death, annoyance, insult, or outrage.”¹

¹ Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*](#) (p. 540). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

- f. In other words, this is not a word referencing a mild or moderate emotional impact, but rather a severe one. The results from the various trials are pain, anguish, and deep sorrow that can't simply be ignored!
- g. Whatever the various trials are, they have left them in the same emotional state you are in when the reality of the death of a loved one becomes the climate of your life. I'm not talking about the initial hit that is then quickly followed by a whirlwind of emotions fueled by the busyness of the visits from family and friends, of the busyness of planning a funeral and trying to get everything in order, but rather the dark heaviness that invades your reality two weeks later! Peter acknowledges that this is the reality of their life, yet they are still sincerely clinging to the Gospel and REJOICING in all we learn from it.
- h. But why? Why not abandon their faith in Christ? Isn't Christ failing them? If you are being persecuted for your faith in Christ, then Christ is necessarily the cause! If you simply forsake your faith in Christ, then the persecution and associated grief will end. But these people are not only refusing to abandon their faith in Christ; they are also REJOICING in it!
- i. Again, why? Well, verse seven gives us some insight into how and why. Peter writes,

B. 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--

1. Now first of all, let me be real clear what Peter is referring to with the word "faith." In our society faith in general is what is applauded. It can be faith in a rock, tree, political candidate, dog, imaginary friend, or aliens from outer space; no matter what your faith is in, our society says having faith is what matters. The concept that "faith" of itself is what is "more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire," is totally foreign to both the Old and the New Testament.
2. Peter is not speaking of faith in general but rather, he is specifically commenting on their faith ("your faith"), that is, the specific faith of the dispersed exiles Peter identified in the first verse of this letter.
3. Peter is necessarily referencing their decision to repent, believe and follow the Jesus revealed by the Gospel he specifically acknowledges and expounds on in this letter! It is the same Gospel that Paul spoke of in his first letter to the Church in Corinth. Paul wrote,
4. **1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being**

saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:1-6)

5. This faith the people Peter is writing to are standing firm in, is that Christ is the eternal son of God, that Christ became a man, was born of virgin, lived the perfect life we are incapable of living, and such, died on a cross as the just sacrifice for our sin. They were standing firm and rejoicing that Christ suffered the eternal wrath of God on sin, was buried, rose on the third day as the one who overcame the curse of sin (death) for us, and as such, believed that all who repent, believe and follow Him are baptized into His death and raised to life in His resurrection. They were rejoicing that they had a restored and eternal relationship with God! They were rejoicing because they believed Christ is going to return one day to renew and restore all things and as such even our dead bodies will be resurrected just as He is!
6. There is so much we could say about this faith, but what is important to understand here is that it is the faith based on what is taught in the 66 books of the Bible. It is not simply faith in God, but the specific faith in God based on the Gospel! It is this faith alone that is worth more than gold! There's not a single solitary decision, nor possession, that is more important or valuable, than the decision to repent, believe and follow Jesus based on the Gospel! Eternity is real; God's judgement is real; Heaven and Hell are real; therefore, the faith that is being guarded "by God's power ... for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1:5) is more precious than anything else in the Universe! There is nothing of equivalent value!
7. BUT, Peter takes this to another level when he writes,

C. 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith ... may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1. That is, in the midst of pain and grief, especially the kind caused by the reaction of others to our faith in Christ; when we choose to continue believing in the truth of the Gospel; when we choose to continue obeying Jesus; when we choose to continue praising Him and loving Him, we are proving the GENUINNESS of our faith.
2. A test is meant to prove GENUINNESS. I'll never forget my first test in college. It was in Chemistry, which for science majors at Virginia Tech was a required class that was not allowed to be graded on a curve. Back when I went there

most of us took our first semester of chemistry in the 560-seat lecture hall in the McBryde Building. The first test was at the end of the second week of class. It essentially covered everything we had learned in High School, plus additional material the professor told us to read. I remember scanning over the numerous chapters they told us to study for the test as if I was looking over the menu at McDonald's. I SINCERELY felt I GENUINELY knew and understood everything that was going to be on the test. I sincerely felt I thoroughly knew everything I was scanning over in the book! I had no concept that it was possible for me to lose (not get an A on this test!). As a matter of fact, I would have taken issue with anybody that so much as suggested I didn't know and understand everything in those chapters, that is, until they handed out the test! I distinctly remember, at the risk of being accused of cheating, that after looking over the test I reached into my book bag and pulled out my class schedule just to make sure I was in the right class! I thought half the test was written in a foreign language! I didn't even understand what most of the questions were asking nor many of the multiple-choice answers they provided. As a person who hardly ever got anything less than an "A" or "B," a person who had never flunked anything in his entire life; I ended up only getting 42% of the answers correct! When we got to class on Monday morning, we all rushed over to see our grades posted on the wall. Back then they listed your grade by your social security number. I knew I hadn't done well but I was stunned when I had to face the facts that I had just got a big fat "F"! It didn't matter how I felt about the material prior to the test, the TEST proved I had no idea what I was doing and that I better get help fast! I left class that day, went straight to the Academic Affairs office for student athletes and signed up for a tutor – for every class I had in college! The tested genuineness of my claim of knowledge proved that it wasn't very genuine!

3. OK, so follow me on this. Peter just said, you guys continue to rejoice, that is love and follow Christ, even though you are deeply grieved by the trials you are going through. You believe if you continue loving and following Christ when the world says you have every reason to quit on God, you will be rewarded by Christ! You believe God sees your faith and is going to grade it, and as such, the fact that you continued in your faith in Christ through the horrific pain, sorrow, and frustration of persecution, He will judge you with, "praise, and glory, and honor" when He returns!
4. When Peter wrote this, he had to remember Jesus teaching them the parable of the talents. In that parable the ones who were faithful with what they had been given were praised, glorified and honored by the Master when he returned. Jesus said,
5. **"21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'" (Matthew 25:21)**

- D. But listen, none of that praise, glory and honor matters if you don't care who it comes from. I mean, if we are honest, at some level we appreciate the praise, glory and honor given to us by anybody that gives it to us sincerely, but, the fact of the matter is the more we value a person the more we value the praise, glory and honor they give. Therefore, it's a HUGE deal that Peter says this in verse 8,
1. **8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, (1 Peter 1:8)**
 2. It is absolutely clear to Peter that despite all the massive pain and suffering they are going through, despite the fact that they are deeply grieving; they nonetheless sincerely LOVE Jesus even though they have never physically seen Jesus as Peter had done! Despite never having the personal experiences with Jesus that Peter had, but rather based on nothing but what the Apostles had preached as true, they loved Jesus with all their hearts (agape). They loved Jesus so much they rejoiced in the midst of their trials and grief with a joy Peter felt words could not sufficiently describe! All he could say was that it was a joy filled with glory pointed straight at the PERSON of Jesus!

And this is what I want you see, the first essential value for THRIVING in exiles is that,

(1) You have to value Christ's affirmation above all others. (1:6-8)

- A. It's not just affirmation, but Christ's affirmation, because you value not only what's given but more importantly WHO gives it!
- B. When you are being persecuted you are literally not getting the affirmation of those persecuting you. As much as we want to stand up sometimes and say we don't need anybody's praise and affirmation, the fact is we all need it and work for it. At some level we all strive to get the affirmation of certain people; whether it's your parents, siblings, friends, peers at work, teammates, people on social media, your boss, or society as a whole; we are all striving to get affirmation.
- C. What Peter is saying about the believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia is that they value the affirmation Christ is going to give them at His coming, because they value Christ's applause and reward over any applause or reward from anybody else!
- D. To the followers of Christ that Peter is writing to there is nothing more valuable to them than the approval and affirmation of Jesus, and as such they can press on towards the upward call in Christ Jesus no matter what trial they face because the trials do nothing but provide them with a greater opportunity to experience what they value – the affirmation and approval of Christ!

- E. This takes us to the second essential value for thriving in exile.

The 2nd essential value for thriving in exile is in verse 9. Peter writes,

- A. 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**
- B. As a point of clarity, the word for soul here is a Greek word that is also translated “life” in the New Testament (i.e., Revelation 12:11). So don’t envision salvation being for some ghostly part of you, but rather all of you! Everything that you are is what Christ gave His life to save.
- C. In addition, obviously the word salvation means to be rescued. But I want to take a minute and make sure you understand and value what Peter is saying the exiles in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia are valuing.
- D. In the summer of 1998 myself and the band that used to travel with me did a crusade in Niteroi, Brazil. Throughout the day we would be in schools and at night we were at events put on by local churches. It was a basic set up, the band would perform, and then I would preach. Each day we were in numerous places minus the one day we built in a break to go to the beach! When we arrived I noticed people cliff diving. Just down from where we were was a huge semi-circle shaped cove with a rock wall of more than 20 feet tall all the way around it. The jumpers were diving in on the side nearest the beach, so I went and watched them for a few minutes. The more I watched, the more I couldn’t resist doing it myself. As the large waves entered the cove it filled the somewhat shallow cove deep enough to safely dive in. They had a group all hanging out doing it, so I politely waited for all of them to finish, then I walked up to the edge of the cliff, and just like I watched them do, I waited for the waves to roll in and flood the cove, then I jumped off! It was awesome! As I surfaced, I felt the water dropping back down in the cove like an elevator lowering me back down. So, I started swimming back over towards the side wall of the of the cliff to do what I saw them do to get out. When the waves came into the cove, they would eventually crash into the wall of the cliff that faced the ocean, however, on the side of the cove it functioned more like an elevator! I had watched the divers ride the swells high up the side cliff, then hang on as the water cascaded off the cliff and back into the Ocean. It elevated them far enough up the cliff to then safely climb out as soon as the water finished cascading. So, just like I had saw them do before, the next big wave that came rolling in, I rode it right up the side of the cliff. As I felt my momentum coming to a stop, I swam over just far enough to grab hold of some small rock edges protruding out of the cliff. But, the moment I did, I felt the sharp edges of barnacles sink into my hands and feet. I then felt the slippery slime of the algae that had grown all over the wet rock surfaces and before I had time to come up with a solution the water changed direction and began to cascade back down the side of the cliff, and as such, my hands and feet started sliding down the wall of the cliff! It only took a second to realize I couldn’t hold

on. Worse, I was not only sliding down the wall, but I was being cut by the sharp barnacles as I did! So, I shoved off the wall and fell back into the now receding cove. Now, smart people may have realized they were in trouble, but clearly, I was too cocky to realize that yet! The salt water was stinging the cuts in my hands and feet, none of which were deep enough to consider getting stitches, but deep enough that they started to bleed, which wasn't the best scenario given I was floating in an ocean cove (FYI – sharks live in the ocean!!). So I immediately rode the next wave that came into the cove right up the wall to try again, but it had the same results. Feet first back into the ocean I went, this time noticing the stinging in my hands in feet was noticeably worse. The wall had cut me again. This time I treaded water for a while and watched a couple waves wash up the side of the cliff. I couldn't figure out how the people I watched didn't get instantly washed off the cliff like me. How were they able to hold on to the wall with all that water washing back down the side of the cliff? Did they have super tuff skin that didn't get cut by the barnacles? Did I miss if they had on shoes and gloves or not? Unable to come to any conclusions other than try again, I rode another wave up the side of the wall and, to no surprise, it ended the same way. There I went sliding back down the cliff, except this time really selling out grabbing the rock covered barnacles with my hands as hard as I could and trying to stick my feet on anything possible to not slide down the rock cliff, but to no avail. I soon realized I had to jump back in the water again or risk sliding all the way down the rock cliff filled with barnacles. This time, when I hit the water, I realized I was in serious trouble. I still didn't have any cuts that needed stitches, but I was clearly cut up and bleeding. It was a large cove, but I figured at this point I've either got to soon figure out how to scale that wall or I need to start the long hard swim out of the cove, around a large rock point and back to the beach; but swimming out at this point would be like trolling for sharks with me as the bait! Moments later as the cove began to swell up again, a Brazilian man dove in and swam over to me. In somewhat broken English he asked me if I was ok, and of course my cocky self said, "sure, I'm totally fine." He then said in very good English, "your and idiot!" His English went broken again as he said, "We trained for a long time to do this, but you just came over and jumped in!" It turns out they were a regional team of police being trained on how to rescue idiots like me in this very scenario! Seriously, how ironic and lucky was I that when I had my redneck "watch this" moment I just so happened to do it right in front of a group of professionals practicing cliff diving and rescue! He then told me to watch him get out and to pay particular attention to where he rode the wave up the wall. He told me I had to land not on a spot to hold on with my hands, but rather I had to find a large enough flat surface for both of my feet to be able to firmly stand against the wall as the water cascaded back over my head. He told me it was impossible to hold on to the wall with all that water (something I had now realized) so I had to find a place I could have both feet solidly on a flat surface, rather than just a little toe hold on a small rock! I watched him ride the next wave up, stand solidly on a little rock shelf that they had identified BEFORE they dove in the cove, then he easily climbed up and off the cliff. Once he got to the top I did exactly what he did and turns out, it took hardly any effort all to keep

from sliding down the wall when the water cascaded off! I then climbed up and out of the cliff the same way I watched him do it. Once I got to the top, I got a pretty good constructive chewing out by the police. It was mostly in broken English, so I just shook my head in agreement, kept saying “sim” (Portuguese for yes) and hugged everybody! I wanted to high five them, but my hands were bleeding!

- E.** Now here’s the deal, if that guy would have jumped in at the same time I jumped in and started fussing at me, I would have paid no attention to him. Because at that point I didn’t think I needed any help, but by the time he jumped in and swam to me I knew I needed to be rescued, and therefore I was totally open minded to whatever he had to say! Furthermore, there wasn’t a single solitary thing I wanted to ask him or hear from him other than how to get out of that cove! I needed to be saved and I knew it. By the third time I slid off that wall, I knew I was in a life-or-death situation so I wasn’t thinking about anything else other than what I needed to do to get out of that cove! I wasn’t thinking about what sermon I was going to preach that night, what girl I wanted to date (I was single at the time), how much money I wanted to make some day, or what my next step was going to be in ministry; my singular focus was to get out the cove so I didn’t get ate by a shark or drown!

What am I getting at? Well, the 2nd essential value for thriving in exile is that,

(2) You have to value Christ’s salvation above all others. (1:9)

- A.** He wrote, “**9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**”
- B.** The word salvation also means rescue. But, the only way you can truly appreciate being rescued is if you find yourself in a situation where you believe you need it, and then somebody provides it!
- C.** In life you can find yourself in all kinds of situations that you are looking for somebody to rescue you, somebody to save you. You may find yourself needing rescue from:
- 1.** A bad relationship or marriage.
 - 2.** A miserable job or career.
 - 3.** A financial quagmire.
 - 4.** The lostness of not knowing what you want to do with your life.
 - 5.** The emotional pain of wounds caused by others.

- D. Needing rescue in all those situations is real, and therefore it truly matters when somebody saves you! Furthermore, the joy of in a healthy relationship with Christ DOES provide you with an experience of feeling saved in all those situations. That's exactly what Peter is saying about these believers in Asia Minor. Peter tells us they are going through all kinds of stuff that has left them suffering with deep sorrow and pain, yet they are still experiencing a joy that is so rich and so glorious that it can't be properly described by words. It is inexpressible!!! That sounds like salvation to me!
- E. But, that's not the salvation Peter is talking about in 1:9. The salvation driving these exiles was the their salvation from the curse of sin! They were fully aware of the truth Isaiah had written 800 years prior,
- F. **"6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." (Isaiah 64:6)**
- G. They knew they needed to be saved from the curse of sin. They knew they were incapable of living in fellowship with God. They knew of themselves they would always turn away from Him. They knew they deserved the wrath of God rather than the blessing of God!
- H. There were in 100% agreement with what Paul once wrote to a man named Titus,
- I. **"3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:3-7)**
- J. So, tying this all back in to my little illustration of my arrogant, foolish ignorance in Brazil; our SOULS were saved not by the measure of our faith, but by the measure of HIS LOVE that responded to our weak and insufficient faith, that couldn't hold on to the wall even if somebody showed us; but He nonetheless carried us into His presence! He didn't dive in the water to simply show us the way to follow Him up the rock cliff, but rather He is the way up the wall! All we do is agree (AKA Faith). He then grabs ahold of us, and He carries us up the wall and out curse of sin that left us helplessly and hopelessly separated from God and LIFE!

- K. These believers in Asia Minor knew that and as such they LOVED Jesus with all their hearts. Jesus, to His praise and glory had rescued them from the wrath of God and into the eternal blessing of being God's favored children forever! They knew there was nothing more valuable than the gift of Christ's salvation!

Challenge: "Actions speak louder than words, but reactions speak louder than actions." (Andy Stanley) What are your reactions to the trials in your life saying about you and what you value most?

Your response to trials says everything about what you value. When life hits you in the face you will instantly run to what you value the most.

So, what kind of reactions are the trials of life producing in you? Are they driving you deeper in your dependence on God's love; are they making you value His love for you more; are they making you long for the life that only He supplies, or are they driving you to desperately protect your reputation and earthly achievements? Are you clinging to the hope of all we have in Him, or clinging to hope of what moth and rust destroy? Are you responding by filling your life with the pleasures of the flesh to cover up the pain or are you responding with worship and praise to seek God's joy and bask in His salvation that doesn't simply cover up the pain but supplants it; that overcomes it; that carries us up the cliff!

Your trials will destroy you if what you value most is defeating those who are coming against you. Your trials will destroy you if what you value most is looking in the mirror and knowing you defeated whatever obstacle was in your way. If that's what you value most, you will live your life frustrated, anxious, bitter and paranoid. But if you value Christ and His Love and His Kingdom above everything else, you will be able to engage every trial with a confidence, wisdom and steadiness that ironically leads to the greatest opportunity of you winning!