

# Bible Studies for Life: July

## 5

*By Clay Anthony*

***The Joy Arising from Our Hope • 1 Peter 4:1-2, 12-19***



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This time of year normally is set aside for Vacation Bible School (VBS) in our churches. Is it possible to have a bad memory of VBS? Just say the words: butter cookies, missionary slides, Elmer's glue, and red-rover and you can be transported back to a time of pure bliss in your Christian life. There is much to enjoy in being a Christ follower. There is course the deeper Biblical truths of mercy, grace, and forgiveness in Christ, but on a day-to-day level there are moments like VBS that just provide pure joy in walking with Jesus. In today's text, Peter reminds his readers that hope does not always reveal itself in the moments of bliss and peace. Oftentimes the believer is called upon to express hope during times of trials. When those times come, what are we to do?

**Think like Jesus.** If you know the story of Jesus, you know that He suffered. Not just on the cross but also rejection. (Is. 53:3) Jesus knew to expect suffering. He had thought His path through. Peter is encouraging his reader to take the same action. Note the word mind/thinking in verse one. The original meaning of that word is not just using your brain but it is a deliberation. It is a calculation of what is going on around you and finding the summation worth the effort. Jesus knew that suffering was part of the plan to save souls. We now have to make the same thought-filled decision to face suffering knowing that joy is found on the other side. Measuring our thoughts lead us to live more Godly lives. That fact brings us hope.

**Rejoice in Jesus.** When trials come, do not be shocked that such is happening to you. Obedience to Christ will lead you away from the thinking of the surrounding culture. That will guarantee you're at odds with many around you. Yet when this happens, be happy. In fact, twice in verse 13 Peter says to "rejoice." The first use of the word is a present participle. That means you are doing it now so keep on doing it every day. Rejoice when you suffer and keep on rejoicing. Why? The second use of rejoice is future participle. Meaning that the rejoicing you doing now is mere practice for what you will be doing when Jesus reveals His glory in the future. We face trials now. We rejoice now. When He returns, we will rejoice for sure and will be well versed in just how to praise Him properly.

**Give Glory to Jesus.** Note the conditions listed in verse 15 for which one could suffer. These are actions taken against another person. Such actions deserve punishment but not so for the believer. When Christians face persecution, it is dealing with who they have chosen to obey. As we face dark days for our faith, we are not only to rejoice but also are to give God glory. Ever thought about that phrase? To give glory simply means to give credit. When you give glory to another, you are giving credit where credit is due. God is at present bringing us through this life and we are to give Him all credit. Yet He is also setting us up for the world to come. That is our hope. This is a unique message for believers. We face the same trials as anyone else yet do so while happy, knowing in full hope that the best is yet to come.

**Live It Out.** As a class, be encouraged to visit [imb.org](http://imb.org), [persecution.org](http://persecution.org), and [operationworld.org](http://operationworld.org) to find information on our brothers and sisters the world over who face trials and ways that you can pray and support them.

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