

1. Our LifeLines verse for June 3 will be Genesis 1:1!
2. LifeLines will NOT meet Memorial Day. We WILL meet June 3-24.

LifeLines May 20, 2024

Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

The people Peter wrote were believers who regarded Jesus as Lord. At this writing, they were *oppressed*. Peter called them to submission in the midst of their suffering. He wanted them to focus intently on trusting Christ as their Master & living as an example so others could see their faith in action. Peter told the believers *always* do what's right; don't fear the evil people in their midst nor be intimidated by them; & don't seek revenge for their evil ways. He wanted them to stand up for their faith with gentleness & love & a clear conscience. He reminded them that suffering was often necessary for God to demonstrate His power. He wanted the believers to be good examples in order to convict/convince others to repent & believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, too.

Peter encouraged the persecuted Christians to live in such a way that their *hope* would make nonbelievers curious enough to question them about the hope they had & about their faith. He wanted the way believers lived & faced suffering to point others to Christ.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV or to versions shown below.)

AMP

But in your hearts set Christ apart [as holy - acknowledging Him, giving Him first place in your lives] as Lord. Always be ready to give a [logical] defense to anyone who asks you to account for the hope & confident assurance [elicited by faith] that is within you, yet [do it] with gentleness & respect.

CEB

Instead, regard Christ the Lord as holy in your hearts. Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it.

EASY

Instead, always remember that Christ is your Lord. Let Him rule how you live. People may ask you, 'Why do you trust God to help you?' You must always be ready to answer them about that.

GNT

But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, & honor Him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you.

GW

But dedicate your lives to Christ as Lord. Always be ready to defend your confidence in God when anyone asks you to explain it. However, make your defense with gentleness & respect.

MSG

Through thick & thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up & tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are.

NLT

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks you about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.

TLB

Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord, & if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell him, & do it in a gentle & respectful way.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord...To sanctify Christ means to set Him apart. Peter wanted the believers to sanctify & honor Christ *in their hearts* as *holy*. Our hearts are the place where we should fully honor Christ as Lord. *This is to sanctify*. What we hold as holy in our hearts makes all the difference!

We also honor Christ by making Him the focus of our thoughts, devotion & time; by internalizing God's Word; & by making choices that please Him. Setting Christ apart, sanctifying Him, honoring Him as our Lord changes us. Those who know us & observe us should notice a difference in the way we live our lives. In us, they should see *hope*! They should see evidence of our *faith*! Even in the midst of our suffering, believers should exhibit hope & faith. Both should be apparent!

Always be ready to make your defense...When we grow to the place that we exhibit this kind of hope, we should know why we do! People watch us deal with life. They may become curious. Normal human reaction to suffering, disappointment, & tragedy is *not* hopefulness, patience, joy, optimism or any kind of peace, yet these are characteristics believers should exhibit. Peter instructed people to be ready to give answers to questions nonbelievers might ask. People *are* curious when they see someone boldly & faithfully stand up to face the dark, sad things that come upon them.

Our lives should inspire others because of the hope we have. If someone were to ask, "How can you be so hopeful in such difficult circumstances?" how would you answer them? Do we have that kind of hope? Why or why not? Where can we get that kind of hope? *What will we say when they ask?*

to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you...Peter wanted them to be *prepared* to defend their hope & faith. We also must be prepared to make the case for Christ. We should openly share the good news of the gospel message. We can tell others we have faith in Jesus, the Son of God, who willingly came to earth, lived a life pleasing to God & was willing to be crucified & die for our sins. We can say He conquered death & the grave by His resurrection & did this for *all* believers, for *all* who accept Him as Lord!

We can say we have hope because He's with us when we rejoice, when we mourn & when things are uncertain. We can say we have hope because we don't go through anything in life alone. We can say we have hope because His Spirit lives in us, helping us meet the demands of each day & each challenge. We can

say we have hope because of His resurrection. We can say we have hope because we have a direct line of communication with the Almighty God! Because He lives, *we will live also*. We will live with Him throughout eternity. All this is possible because “we know whom we’ve believed”! We can say all these things, *and* we must live what we profess!

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (Ask yourself why these are related verses!)

Leviticus 11:45c, “You shall be holy, for I am Holy.”

Proverbs 22:20-21, Have I not written for you 30 sayings of admonition & knowledge, to show you what is right & true, so that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?

Matthew 4:4, But He answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Matthew 10:19, “When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time.”

Luke 9:26, “Those who are ashamed of Me & of My words, of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory & the glory of the Father & of the holy angels.”

Luke 12:11b-12. “Do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.”

Luke 21:14-15, “So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you the words & a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.”

John 16:33, “I have said this to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”

Romans 5:1b-2, We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; & we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

Ephesians 4:15, But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.

Philippians 2:14-15, Do all things without murmuring & arguing, so that you may be blameless & innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked & perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world.

Colossians 1:4-6a, For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus & of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the Word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you.

Colossians 1:23, Provided that you continue securely established & steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

Colossians 4:6, Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

2 Timothy 2:24-25, And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent & come to know the truth.

2 Timothy 4:1d-2, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke & encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.

Hebrews 3:6, Christ, however, was faithful over God's house as a son, & we are His house if we hold firm the confidence & the pride that belong to hope.

Hebrews 6:19-20, We have this hope, a sure & steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

1 Peter 1:3, Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:15-16, Instead, as He who has called you is Holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am Holy."

1 Peter 2:12, Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds & glorify God when He comes to judge.

1 Peter 3:18, For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but alive in the Spirit.

SUMMARY

All Christians need to be prepared to give an answer or defense when someone asks us the reason for our hope. The Greek word for "make a defense" or "give an answer" is *apologian* not to be confused with apology (as in remorse). Apologian means to justify, explain, answer back or give a reason. It's the source of the term "apologetics" which means *a rational defense of the Christian faith*. We aren't called to condemn those who are curious or don't understand our hopefulness or don't believe as we do. Arguing won't convince anyone of our faith. Ours has to be a "show & tell" explanation.

We've all been through tough times. Maybe we've handled them well as mature Christians. Maybe we haven't. If we look back & identify times when we didn't exercise our faith as the Godhead would have wanted, this is a good time to repent & ask forgiveness for not living out our faith as we should.

Christians must ponder this seriously. Are we full of hope? Do we have a response? Are we afraid we won't have all the right answers? If we're too concerned about what *we* are going to say, we're concentrating on the wrong thing – ourselves. We are to invite the Holy Spirit to give us the words the other person needs to hear.

CONCLUSION

What is *the reason* for our hope? How prepared are we to tell others about our hope? Are we prepared to make a defense for our faith or put forth a case in favor of our hope? Are we bold enough to reject the cultural pressure these days & speak up for the Godhead - or will we keep our beliefs to ourselves? (See Luke 9:26 again.)

In the Great Commission, Jesus charged us to *go, make disciples* of all nations, *baptize, teach & remember* He's with us always. We don't accomplish any of these tasks on our own. The Holy Spirit is with us, giving us words to say. We are to share the good news openly.

When believers display the sure hope they have in Jesus in spite of what's going on in the world or in their personal lives... *others will notice!*

SCRIPTURE IS OUR – *LifeLine!*

Let this verse be a *LifeLine* for you:

But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.
1 Peter 3:15

Take a few minutes to think about this LifeLine & our discussion.

1. Write something you want to remember about this LifeLine:

2. Write one thing you feel compelled to share with someone? Whom will it be?

3. How & when will you share with that person?
