

MARRIAGE
DEMOCRACY
RELATIONSHIP
CAREER
SCHOOL
RETIREMENT
PLEASURE
COMFORT
FAMILY

WHERE ^{IS} **YOUR**
HOPE

POWER
SOCIAL
JUSTICE
RELIGION
CONSERVATISM
LIBERALISM
STATUS SOCIAL
ACCEPTANCE
POWER SOCIAL
JUSTICE



COMPANION BIBLE STUDY ON 1 PETER

INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY GUIDE

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

John 15:7–8

Thank you for your decision to study 1 Peter. Our prayer is that it helps you to abide in Christ as his disciple. Abiding in Christ requires an understanding of, and devotion to the word of God. There is simply no substitute for a daily interaction with God through his inspired word (2 Timothy 3:16). This 16-week study is designed to help you mine the word of God to experience his presence and power in your daily life.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

To complete this study you will need:

- study guide (*this book*),
- a notebook (*highly recommended*),
- access to a Bible (*digital or hard copy*),
- something to write with, and
- access to YouTube (*optional*) – to view the 1 Peter sermons on Grace's channel after completing your study and discussion.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This study is formatted to guide you week by week through 1 Peter – we will cover the entire book in this study, not skipping any passages. The weekly studies are broken into three sections called Observe, Understand, and Apply. Each week you'll complete a study individually. Then, if you're studying 1 Peter with a group, the next week you'll participate in group discussion. When working individually on the study, you may complete each section (Observe, Understand, Apply) 3 days in a row or spread them out over the whole week.

THE PURPOSE OF EACH SECTION

Below are notes and suggestions to help you get the most out of your time using this study and God's word. We encourage you to set aside adequate time to do the study each week to avoid rushing through any section.

Before Starting

Always, before anything else, begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to use his word to grow you up in Christ.

Observe

Start by discovering what the text actually says, using these three activities:

1. Read the passage slowly and deliberately.
2. Write out the passage on paper. The practice of writing out a short passage of scripture engages your mind in a way that reading does not.
3. Write a summary of the passage in your own words. Note any observations you have or questions that come up as you read through it.

Understand

After familiarizing yourself with the text, the study will move toward understanding the meaning of what is written. These questions are designed to help you understand the historical context of the passage, the author's intent, and its connection to the rest of Scripture.

Apply

God calls us to be doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1:22-25). So it's not enough to just understand what the passage means; it must change us. Using the understanding you've gained about the meaning of the text, answer these questions designed to help you prayerfully consider how to effectively apply the passage of scripture. The questions will ask you to examine things to believe, behaviors to stop doing, or behaviors to begin doing. As you answer, consider how God desires you to walk out your faith.

Group Discussion

Discipleship is meant to be done together, in community. When Jesus saves each of us, he places us into a community with a purpose. This is why we are commanded to meet together and encourage one another in our faith (Hebrews 10:23-25). So it's not surprising that you will get the most out of this study if you are meeting regularly with other believers who know you and care for you. These group discussion questions are designed to help your group learn and apply the Bible together.

Go Deeper

As you work through the weekly studies, you'll come across sections called 'Going Deeper.' These sections will include things to give even more context to the passage you are studying. There will be suggested reading, additional questions or prompts, and other notes to deepen your understanding and application of God's word. We encourage you to dig into these areas as you have time and as the Spirit leads you.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER

week 1 | *1 Peter 1:1-2*

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

1 Peter 1:1-2

Week one will serve as an introduction to Peter's letter. Your goal is to become familiar with the author, the recipients, and the overall flow of the letter. You may use this study guide for notes, but it may also be helpful to have a notebook for this study. Each week you will write down the passage you will cover that week and use your notebook to make observations, write questions you have about the text, or prompts the Spirit may give you. Some people also like to write their prayers.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Father, thank you for sending your Son for my sins. Thank you for giving me your Holy Spirit to seal my salvation. Spirit, open my eyes to what you have for me in your word. Show me who I am in Christ. Show me who you want me to be as a new creation in Christ. Transform me into the likeness and image of Jesus. Amen.

 **OBSERVE**

Read through 1 Peter in one sitting.

(average reading time is 16 minutes)

Write out 1 Peter 1:1-2 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 1-2? (such as author, recipients, etc.)
2. In your own words, summarize verses 1-2 in a few sentences.
3. What questions come to mind as you read verses 1-2?

Going Deeper

1. How do the following passages describe Peter prior to the resurrection of Jesus? See John 1:35-42, Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 16:13-23, John 18:15-27.
2. What changes do you see in Peter after the resurrection of Jesus, according to these passages? See John 21:15-23, Acts 1:1-11, Acts 2:1-41, Acts 4:1-13.

 UNDERSTAND

1. Peter identifies the recipients of his letter as "elect exiles of the Dispersion." Look up "exile" in a dictionary or thesaurus. Other translations render the word exile as strangers (KJV), foreigners (NLT), and aliens (NASB). How do these other translations clarify the meaning of the word "exile"?
2. Read Acts 8:1-3 and Acts 11:19-26. What light do they shed on Peter's use of words like "exile" and "dispersion"?
3. In verse 2, what does Peter say these exiles are elected "according to..." (on what basis) and "for..." (for what purpose)?
4. Look at Hebrews 10:22 and 12:24. What does the sprinkling of blood refer to, and what connection does it have to sanctification and obedience?

Going Deeper

1. How is Paul's statement in Romans 8:28-29 similar to 1 Peter 1:2?
2. Both Paul and Peter are addressing Christians who are suffering at the hands of those they live amongst. How do both authors use the foreknowledge of God to comfort their readers?

♥ APPLY

1. Why is this letter relevant for our church, and yourself today?
2. Thinking about your day-to-day life, are you more like a stranger passing through this world or a resident clinging to it? Describe why you think so.
3. How long have you been a Christian? Since becoming a Christian, have you experience the gospel (the sprinkling with his blood) leading you to greater obedience to Jesus? Why or why not?

Going Deeper

1. Does an understanding of your election and the foreknowledge of God comfort you when life is hard? Why or why not?
2. How might a person or church multiply grace and peace? Is that a work of God, a work of man, or both? (2 Peter 1:2 sheds light on this.)

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What themes do you see in 1 Peter?
2. Do you relate to the “exiles of the Dispersion”? Why or why not?
3. What are the differences between a church that believes itself to be strangers passing through this world versus permanent residents? Which is a more common mentality of churches in America? Your church? Your small group? Yourself?
4. Spend some time in prayer for one another that God would multiply his grace and peace to you and to the church worldwide in the midst of a world increasingly hostile to the gospel.

OUR LIVING HOPE

week 2 | *1 Peter 1:3-12*

^aBlessed 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, ^bto an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ^cwho by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ^dso that the tested genuineness of your faith — more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ^eThough 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, ^fobtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ⁸It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

1 Peter 1:3-12

Reference verses on page 15

Everyone hopes in something or for something. Hope drives life; when hope is lost, life loses its meaning. This week, let the word reveal a hope that will never fade.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Father, thank you for causing me to be born again. Thank you for cleansing me with Jesus' blood. Spirit, my hope is in Jesus, but my heart too often finds itself hoping in things that won't deliver. Spirit, please use your word and engage my heart. Set my heart on the hope that is eternal, living, kept in heaven, that will never fade. Jesus, do this for my good and your glory. Amen.

 OBSERVE

Read 1 Peter 1:3-12 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 1:3-12 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 3-12?
2. In your own words, summarize verses 3-12 in a few sentences.
3. What questions come to mind as you read verses 3-12?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to give context to 1 Peter 1:3-12.

^aTitus 3:5 and James 1:18

^bActs 20:32

^cJohn 10:28

^dJames 1:3 and 1 Corinthians 3:13

^eJohn 20:29

^fRomans 6:22

^g1 Timothy 3:16

 UNDERSTAND

1. In verses 3-5, Peter describes a living hope. List as many details as possible about this hope from verses 3-5. According to verses 4-5, what assurances do you have about this hope?
2. Peter's confidence is based on the unfading and unfailing nature of this living hope. Who or what guards this hope, and how is it guarded (v. 5)?
3. What role does Peter say trials have in this living hope (v. 6-7)? How does it inform our perspective on suffering?
4. In verse 8, is Peter suggesting faith is blind? Why or why not? What aspects of our hope are in the future and unseen?

Going Deeper

1. Verses 3-5 give us a glimpse into the "who does what?" question of salvation. From these verses, what has God done (or does he do), and what are we called to do?
2. How does Paul's teaching in Philippians 2:12-13 and 1 Corinthians 15:10 give color to the principle that God guards our living hope?
3. What do James 1:2-4 and Romans 8:28-29 tell us

about the role of suffering in our maturity? How is their teaching similar to or different from Peter's?

4. Read Isaiah 53. How does this prophecy illustrate 1 Peter 1:10-12? How does seeing this prophecy strengthen your unseen hope?

♥ APPLY

1. What types of things do you find yourself placing your hope in apart from God? Compare and contrast your alternative hopes with the living hope Peter describes.
2. Real hope requires confidence and assurances, while wishful thinking and daydreaming do not. Is your hope characterized by confidence? What assurances do you have? What impact do assurances and confidence have on how you act and think in day-to-day life?
3. Have there been times that suffering (yours or someone else's) has shaken your confidence in this living hope? Did understanding God's purpose in suffering play a role in restoring or strengthening your hope? How so?
4. Do you find it difficult to love a savior you cannot see? Why or why not? If not, what helps to strengthen your love for Jesus?

'Going Deeper' on the next page

Going Deeper

1. Verse 4 describes our inheritance as “imperishable and undefiled.” Given your own struggles with sin, have you had any doubts about this claim? What other verses have helped you overcome your doubts?
2. What do you think the “joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory” in verse 8 looks like in your day-to-day life? Is this a joy based on emotions or something else?

 **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Peter’s confidence is based on the unfading and unchanging nature of this living hope. Who or what guards this hope and through what means is it guarded (v. 5)?
2. When in your life has suffering shaken your confidence in this living hope? Did understanding God’s purpose in suffering play a role in restoring or strengthening your hope? How so?
3. Do you see any gaps between your life and what’s described in verses 3-12? What will you do about this? How can you pray for one another this week?

OUR CALLING TO HOLINESS

week 3 | 1 Peter 1:13-16

^aTherefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ^bAs obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ^cbut as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ^dsince it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Peter 1:13-16

Reference verses on page 22

A popular saying among Christians is, “I am not perfect, just forgiven.” In a sense that is true, we are not perfect and we are forgiven, but we are far more than *just* forgiven. This week, let God’s word show you what you were saved to become.

 BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Father, my hope is in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Thank you for causing me to be born again. Now, as your child I want to be made holy. You call me to be holy, but in my flesh, I have neither the resources nor the will to grow into your likeness. As your child I want to resemble you. Spirit, work holiness into my life as I strive to take hold of what you freely give me by grace. Spirit, use your inspired word to make me more like Jesus. Amen.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 1:13-16 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 13-16?
2. In your own words, summarize verses 13-16 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 13-16?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to give context to 1 Peter 1:13-16.

^a 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8 and Luke 12:35-36

^b Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 4:18

^c 1 John 3:3

^d Leviticus 11:44

 UNDERSTAND

1. Peter exhorts the reader to be sober minded in 1 Peter 1:13, 4:7, and 5:8. What does it mean to be 'sober minded'? What is the relationship between being sober-minded and setting one's hope fully on future grace? See 1 Peter 1:13b.
2. Read Ephesians 2:1-4 and describe the passions of our former ignorance (1 Peter 1:14) before we became children of God.
3. What does it mean to be holy? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 and 2 Corinthians 7:1 for a description.
4. What reason does Peter give for being holy?

Going Deeper

1. The phrase "prepare your minds for action" is literally translated as "gird up the loins of your mind for action." Look up Exodus 12:11, Job 38:3, 1 Kings 18:46, and 2 Kings 4:29. How does this phrase help you understand how to prepare your mind for action, and why it is necessary?
2. When will we receive this grace we are to set our minds fully on? Does this mean we have not yet received grace, why or why not?

Continue on the next page

3. Peter commands us as “obedient children.” How does one become a child of God? See John 1:12 and 3:1-8. How does one become an obedient child?

✔ **APPLY**

1. Is your mind generally sober and prepared for action? Why or why not? What can you do privately and corporately to be sober minded?
2. Peter exhorts us to “set our hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” How does this focus keep a person alert? Is this state of mental and spiritual alertness your common practice? Why or why not?
3. In what ways do the passions of your former ignorance clamor for your attention? How does a proper mindset enable you to not conform to these passions?
4. Does this call to personal holiness seem reasonable, or even attainable? Why or why not?
5. How might setting one’s hope fully on the grace to be revealed in Jesus lead a person to personal holiness?

Going Deeper

1. Is holiness optional for the child of God? Why or why not? See Matthew 5:48 and Hebrews 12:14.
2. What warnings does the Bible give about not being sober-minded and ready for action? See James 2:14-26 and Matthew 25:1-13.

 **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Do you believe personal holiness is emphasized in today's church as Peter and others (Paul, Moses, Jesus) do? Why or why not?
2. Does a call to personal holiness contradict salvation by grace through faith? Why or why not? What effort or work is appropriate in this process, if any?

THE REASON FOR HOLINESS

week 4 | *1 peter 1:17-25*

^aAnd if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, ^bknowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you ^cwho through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ^dfor

“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Peter 1:17-25

Reference verses on page 29

One of the most common exhortations in the Bible is, “do not fear.” Nevertheless, each of us fears something. In the midst of so many calls not to fear, what does verse 17 want us to fear? What are we supposed to fear, and what are we supposed to be unafraid of? As you look at this week’s text, ask God to use his word to guide you toward a fear that sanctifies.

 BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Father, open up the eyes of my heart to see what you want me to see in your word. Help me see things I would miss with my natural eyes. Give me understanding so I will know your love and will. Spirit, I know this world is not my home, but I often live as if this world is all there is. Realign my heart and mind according to the truth of your word. Amen.

Going Deeper

Read through Ephesians 3:14-19 and Colossians 1:9, stopping to pray every few verses.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 1:17-25 slowly and deliberately. Pause to contemplate the meaning of each phrase.

Write out 1 Peter 1:17-25 in your notebook.

1. Make 3-5 observations about verses 17-25.
2. In your own words, try to summarize verses 17-25 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 17-25?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to give context to 1 Peter 1:17-25.

^aPsalm 89:26, Jeremiah 3:19, and Matthew 16:27

^bHebrews 9:12

^cRomans 10:9

^dIsaiah 40:6-8

 UNDERSTAND

1. What is commanded in verse 17, and why is it commanded? See verses 19-21.
2. Does the command in verse 17 contradict the gospel? Why or why not?
3. What specifically are we told to fear, and why? Hint: reread 1 Peter 1:3-9 and Hebrews 12:5-11.
4. What do verses 18-21 say we are ransomed from, and ransomed with?
5. The verb translated as 'purified' in verse 22 comes from the same Greek root, 'hagios', of which the noun is translated as "holy" in verses 15-16. What does it mean in verses 22-25 to obey the truth which purifies (makes holy) our souls? What is this truth?
6. What is the imperishable seed in verse 23? What point is Peter making by comparing the 'perishable' and 'imperishable' seed in verses 23-24?

Going Deeper

1. Since there is no condemnation for those in Christ (Romans 8:1), is there a God-honoring place for fear in the Christian life? Why or why not?

2. If there is a place for God-honoring fear, why are we often told to, “do not fear”?
3. Peter links our conduct as exiles in this world with fear due to the ongoing judgment of the Father (v. 17). The verb tense of judge is the present tense, meaning the judgment is happening now, not a future judgment. How does your understanding of Peter’s statement change depending on whether God’s judgment is happening right now or the last and final judgment?

♥ APPLY

1. How should obedience to the truth in verse 22 lead to a proper fear?
2. When and how were you born again through this imperishable seed? How has your new birth changed what you fear, and your conduct?
3. How is biblical fear different (or similar) to what the world seems to fear? How do these fears reflect a “futile way of life” in verse 18?
4. What does our church seem to fear? Does our conduct demonstrate we are obedient to the truth? Why or why not?

5. What are some things that you fear, but should not? How does your fear of them influence your thoughts and actions? How does believing the gospel set you free from those fears?

6. Are there things that you do not fear but should? What are those things and how would your thoughts and actions be different if you feared them? How does believing the gospel help cultivate those healthy fears?

Going Deeper

1. How does a person's conduct reveal what they fear and do not fear?

2. What does it look like to, "love one another earnestly from a pure heart"?

3. Verse 20 says that Christ "was foreknown before the foundation of the world." Where do you see the presence of Christ in Genesis 1? See John 1:1-4; 9-14.

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Do you often think of God as an active judge in the here and now?
2. What is comforting about an ‘impartial’ judge? What’s scary about it?
3. How does calling the judge of your life ‘Father’ (v. 17) in whom you have ‘hope and faith’ (v. 21) change things?
4. What does Christ being ‘foreknown before the foundation of the world’ confirm about Jesus? What does it say about the timing of God’s redemptive plan?
5. What are some passages addressing God-honoring fear from the Old and New Testaments?

GROWING UP INTO SALVATION

week 5 | *1 Peter 2:1-12*

^aSo put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ^bLike newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ^cyou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” ^d and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ^cOnce you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

^fBeloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ^gKeep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Peter 2:1-12

Reference verses on page 37

Who are you? How do you see yourself? Behavior always flows from belief. We will always act in accordance with who we believe ourselves to be. If we are to be holy (1 Peter 1), we must know who we are in Christ. As you study this week's text, let the Spirit anchor your identity in Jesus.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Jesus, thank you for saving me. Open my eyes to who I am in Christ. Open my eyes to allow me to see myself as you declare me to be through your word. Spirit, use your Holy Scriptures and convince me I am really who you say I am in Christ. Encourage my doubting heart. Amen.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 2:1-12 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 2:1-12 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 1-12?
2. In your own words, try to summarize verses 1-12 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 1-12?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to give context to 1 Peter 2:1-12.

^aEphesians 4:22

^bMatthew 18:3, 1 Corinthians 14:20

^cIsaiah 61:6, Revelation 1:6, Romans 12:1

^dRomans 9:22

^eHosea 2:23

^fRomans 12:1, 13:14

^gPhilippians 2:15-16

 UNDERSTAND

1. In verse 7, who builds a foundation of their life on Jesus? To whom is Jesus a rock that causes them to stumble?
2. Who are we according to verses 9-10? How are we called to live in light of this new identity?
3. We are described as (at least) five things in verse 9. How does each one add meaning to how we understand our identity?
4. In verses 11-12 we are once again exhorted to do something on the basis of who we are. Who are we (v. 11) and what are we called to do (v. 12)?

Going Deeper

1. Where else do the authors of Scripture use the metaphor of Jesus as a foundation stone or rock of offense? Look up Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16, Psalm 118:22, and Romans 9:33.
2. Verse 11 describes us as 'sojourners' and 'exiles' to this world. How do Leviticus 25:23 and Ephesians 2:19 help us understand where we find our home?

♥ APPLY

1. Why is the first word 'so' in verse 1 so important when considering all we are called to do or not do as believers?
2. How do you typically think of yourself? Does it mirror how Peter describes you in verses 1-12? What steps can you take to begin to think of yourself through the lens of the gospel?
3. How is our new identity and purpose described in verses 9-10 foundational as we learn how to walk in freedom from those desires?

Going Deeper

1. Is your identity based more upon your successes and failures as a Christian or on what Jesus has done for you?
2. What are the dangers of telling Christians what they are called to do without reminding them of who they are?

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What does the “so” in verse 1 point back to? What are we supposed to do, and refrain from doing, in light of it?
2. Peter tells us to grow up into our salvation (1 Peter 2:2). How is Christ’s saving work something that has been done (in the past), is occurring (in the present), and will be accomplished (in the future)? Which aspects of salvation are least emphasized or understood by the Christians you know? Which do you struggle with understanding or believing? Why is that?
3. Peter makes it evident that passions of the flesh do not go away when we are born again. What are the passions you struggle with most often?

WEEK OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:21-22

Our goal is to become doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1:22). Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). In weeks 1-5 in this study we have sought the Spirit's help to understand 1 Peter 1:1 - 2:12. Each week we have sought to observe what the passage says, understand what it means, and then apply what we have learned. This week we will seek the Spirit's empowerment to bring about fruit through the word God implanted into our hearts (James 1:21).

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

This week we will seek the Spirit's assistance in taking what we know to be true cognitively and through prayer asking God to bring about real change in our lives. Choose three days this week to interact with God through prayer and meditation on his word.

Day 1 - 1 Peter 1:1-12

Day 2 - 1 Peter 1:13-25

Day 3 - 1 Peter 2:1-12

DAILY EXERCISE

(adapted from Dallas Willard's book Hearing God)

Read You have studied the passage in weeks 1-5. Now reread the passage slowly, and remember you are interacting with the living word of God, his own voice. Ask God to give you an openness to hear whatever the Spirit wants you to hear from the passage. As you reread the passage, what word(s) or phrase(s) stood out to you?

Reflect Read the passage again slowly. As you do and for a few minutes afterward, reflect on the word(s) or phrase(s) that stood out to you. Why do you think those words resonated with you? Give yourself a few minutes to do this. Then ask God, How does this connect with my life today? What do I need to know or do?

Pray Read the passage one last time. As you do, think about what you want to say to God in response to what you've read. Think about the truths you believe the Spirit is prompting in you or what stuck out as you read the passage. Now, pray however you are led to pray, for as long as you feel led. Things you might pray about include thanking God for something or asking God for something. Or you could reword the passage as your prayer.

Respond Do as you are led. You may wish to wait on God – to simply be *with* God. You may wish to pay attention to God, pondering especially how this passage adds to your wonder of Christ. What about him makes you want to worship him? If the Spirit has brought to mind something he wants you to do as an act of obedience, resolve to do so at your first opportunity.

SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT

week 6 | *1 Peter 2:13-17*

^aBe subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Peter 2:13-17

Reference verses on page 46

How does an exile live a holy life in the midst of a culture that mocks holiness? Last week's text ended with an exhortation to keep our conduct among the Gentiles (unbelieving culture) honorable (1 Peter 2:12). How do we do that when the entirety of our society, from the highest echelons of government to the home, rejects Christ? Let's begin by asking the Spirit of God to use 1 Peter 2:13-17 to reveal how to live a holy life under authorities who do not share your faith.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Jesus, this world is not my home; I am a sojourner here. Show me how to live as a faithful witness in a culture that mocks you and those who call you their savior. My flesh would rather withdraw from the world or fight them. Spirit show me how to live in the world without living like the world. Jesus, change my heart so that I might honor those who dishonor you so that they might see my good deeds and come to know and praise you. Amen.

 OBSERVE

Read 1 Peter 2:13-17 slowly and deliberately, pausing to pray about each phrase.

Write out 1 Peter 2:13-17 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 13-17?
2. In your own words, try to summarize verses 13-17 in a few sentences.
3. What questions come to mind when you read verses 13-17?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to give context to 1 Peter 2:13-17.

^aLeviticus 25:39-46

Romans 13:1

Ephesians 6:5-9

Philemon

 UNDERSTAND

1. Peter writes that we should submit ourselves to “every human institution” in verse 13. What reasons does Peter give for this obedience in verses 13-15?
2. How might a Christian’s obedience to human institutions “silence” foolish people (v. 15)? What false charge(s) might people like these have brought against Christians in Peter’s day?
3. What does Peter mean by “freedom” in verse 16? What are we free from? What are we free for? What are we not free to do as Christians?
4. Who are we to honor in verse 17? How might this have been a difficult command to accept for Peter’s original audience? What would this honor look like?

Going Deeper

1. Compare 1 Peter 2:16 with Romans 6:1-4 and Galatians 5:13-14. How might Christians be tempted to abuse their freedom? What does this abuse of freedom lead to?
2. Is there ever a time to disobey the governing authorities? If so, when and in what context? See Acts 4:13-22. Can a Christian disobey the governing authorities while still honoring them? Why or why not?

♡ APPLY

1. What human institutions do people you know find difficult to honor? Which ones do you find most difficult to honor?
2. Should political affiliation influence which leaders are honored and dishonored? Why or why not? Describe a time you failed to give honor to someone in authority.
3. How well are Americans, who describe themselves as Christian, obeying 1 Peter 2:13 and 17? How do our failures encourage foolish people who reject the faith?
4. Are there any times a Christian should not obey the governing authorities? How can you disobey while still honoring institutions? If so, when and why? See Exodus 1:17; Daniel 3:13–18; 6:10–24; Acts 4:18–20; 5:27–29; and Hebrews 11:23.
5. What practical ways can Christians honor one another and those in authority?

Going Deeper

1. Who was the emperor when Peter wrote this letter? Given that this emperor was in power when both Peter and Paul were publicly executed, do you believe Peter would have altered the content of this letter had he known this emperor would have him executed? Why or why not?

2. The governing authorities would often use 1 Peter 2:13 and Romans 13:1-7 to silence potential voices of opposition from among the church. How might a Christian respond to a despotic government?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What's the difference between being subject (v. 13) and honoring (v. 17)?
2. For whose sake are Christians to be subject to human institutions?
3. Is the command to be subject to ruling authorities conditional upon their righteousness or lack thereof? Why or why not?
4. Is there ever a reason a Christian would be justified in disobeying the ruling authorities? If so, when, and how is it possible to honor the authorities while defying them?
5. How does our cultural understanding of freedom as Americans compare to Peter's description of freedom? What are the key differences in the perspective between Peter's description of freedom and our American one?
6. In your opinion, what do American Christians seem to value more: the desire to be holy or the right to personal liberty? Which do you value more and why?

SUBJECT TO MASTERS

week 7 | 1 Peter 2:18-25

^aServants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ^bFor this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ^cFor what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ^dFor to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ^eHe committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ^fWhen he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Peter 2:18-25

Reference verses on page 52

Behaving honorably in an unbelieving culture goes beyond our interaction with civil authorities (see 1 Peter 2:12-17). Holiness must permeate all of life, including where we work. In this week's text Peter addresses his readers where some of them worked—as household servants. Let the Spirit use this week's text to inform how to conduct yourself where you work.

 BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Father, I am saved because your Son submitted himself to the cross. Give me the mind of Christ whose greatness was displayed through becoming the servant of all. My flesh wants to be served, not to serve or submit to others. Spirit, use this week's text to make me like Jesus. Amen.

 OBSERVE

Read 1 Peter 2:18-25 slowly and deliberately, pausing to pray about each phrase.

Write out 1 Peter 2:18-25 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 18-25?
2. In your own words, try to summarize verses 18-25 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 18-25?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to give context to 1 Peter 2:18-25.

^aEphesians 6:5

^bRomans 13:5

^cActs 14:22

^dMatthew 11:29-30

^eIsaiah 53:9

^fHebrews 12:3

 UNDERSTAND

1. What is the command in verse 18, and to whom is it given?
2. Peter compares two types of suffering in verses 19-20. Why would suffering any form of injustice be a gracious thing in the sight of God? Does this mean God approves of injustice? Why or why not?
3. What does 1 Peter 2:21-25 give as our example and motive for suffering under injustice?

Going Deeper

1. Read Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22; 1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:9. What do these verses have in common with 1 Peter 2:8-25? How are they different?
2. Slavery under the Roman empire was oppressive, but it was not a one-to-one equivalent with the transatlantic slave trade practiced in the United States before the Civil War. Do some internet research and describe the similarities and differences.

♥ APPLY

1. 1 Peter 2:18 translates the Greek word, 'oiketes', as "servant". The word taken literally means household slave. In what ways can you apply this verse to parallel modern work scenarios? In what ways does the application stretch too far?
2. Describe a time when you had to endure unjust treatment in the workplace (not due to your sin). How did you respond? Was your response to the injustice in keeping with Peter's admonition in verses 19-23?
3. Does Peter's command to the oppressed seem to condone injustice? Why or why not?
4. Verse 24 links the gospel with Christian conduct. How does the gospel empower a Christian to stand up under injustice in a way that brings glory to God?

Going Deeper

1. Why might Peter's exhortations be directed to those without power or social capital? What reason might there be for Peter's silence towards those holding positions of power?
2. How does honoring authority in verses 13-17 relate with this section?

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How a person responds to mistreatment can be a powerful witness to the validity of the gospel. Do Christians generally seem concerned about this witness in the workplace? Why or why not? If not, what needs to change?
2. Have you experienced or witnessed workplace injustice? Was Christ honored by your response? Why or why not? What truths in verses 21-25 will guide your response next time?
3. Peter's first readers had no rights as household slaves, and Roman law allowed them to be beaten or sold at their master's will. Given that our society grants workers rights that Peter's first readers lacked, how should a Christian respond to workplace injustice today?

HOLINESS IN MARRIAGE, PART 1

week 8 | *1 Peter 3:1-6*

^aLikewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—^bbut let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. ^cFor this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ^das Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

1 Peter 3:1-6

Reference verses on page 58

Living as sojourners will mean the leaders, which rule over us, and the employers we work for will sometimes be unjust. Regardless, as Christians we are called to be holy. Governments and work spaces are not the only places impacted by the fall. Homes, too, are impacted by sin and selfishness. 1 Peter 3:1-6 addresses a woman trying to live a holy life in a difficult marriage.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Father, thank you for saving me and making me a member of your family. As your child, I serve you by serving my own family. Grant me the grace to serve them well. Spirit, use your word to change my heart and love my family members well for Jesus' glory. Amen.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 3:1-6 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 3:1-6 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 1-6?
2. Try to summarize verses 1-6 in a few sentences.
3. What questions come to mind as you read verses 1-6?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 3:1-6.

^a1 Corinthians 9:19

^bRomans 7:22

^c1 Timothy 5:5

^dGenesis 18:10-12

 UNDERSTAND

1. What does “likewise” refer to in verse 1? See 1 Peter 2:13-25.
2. What is being ‘won’ in verse 1?
3. If the husband is to be won (v. 1) and the wife is being exhorted not to be afraid of anything frightening (v. 6), what does that imply about the marriage Peter describes?
4. What is commanded in verse 1 and the reason given for the command?
5. How do verses 2 and 3 illustrate how a wife is to keep her conduct among the Gentiles honorable (1 Peter 2:12) if that Gentile happens to be her husband?
6. What did Sarah submit to during her marriage to Abraham which might have given her cause to be afraid? See Genesis 12:1-9 and 18:9-15.

Going Deeper

1. Compare and contrast 1 Peter 3:1-6 with Ephesians 5:22-24. How are they similar? How are they different?

Continue on the next page

2. Why does Peter cite 'conduct' in verses 1-2 instead of words? What implications does this have in how a husband and wife point each other toward Jesus? How is this similar to Peter's exhortation of a Christian's witness to the ruling authorities (1 Peter 2:13-17) and a slave's witness to their masters?

♥ APPLY

1. Is 1 Peter 3:1-6 a universal Christian treatise on marriage or a specific exhortation to women in a certain kind of marriage? Why do you think so? What ramifications does your view have on applying this passage today?
2. Conducting oneself honorably among unbelievers (1 Peter 2:9-12) is applied in 1 Peter 3:1-6 to a wife living with an unbelieving husband. What should that look like for a woman today who has the rights and status that Peter's original readers could not have imagined?
3. The issues women face today may differ in scope and degree, but women still face discrimination and mistreatment. What does 1 Peter 3:1-6 say to today's Christian woman?
4. Men, have you displayed attitudes or actions which intentionally or unintentionally contributed to a marriage or a culture that makes it difficult for women? If so, how, and what do you need to do to change?

Going Deeper

1. What place does adornment such as hair braiding, jewelry, and clothing have in the life of a believer?
2. The passages directed at slaves, wives, and husbands get progressively shorter. What does this suggest about how Peter is tapping into the most effective ways each can communicate to an unbelieving world the nature of this new kingdom of God?
3. What is valued in Jesus' kingdom that slaves and wives in Roman society are best positioned to communicate? This value is taught by Jesus in Matthew 11:29.

 **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. People tend to assume that a person must have power to influence another. How does 1 Peter 3:1-6 demonstrate that belief is untrue?
2. Power is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as: the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events. How does Peter's exhortation to women without power illustrate how the gospel empowers those with no power?
3. Do Peter's words promise the wife that her honorable conduct will win her husband? Why or why not, and if not, why should a woman conduct herself honorably?

HOLINESS IN MARRIAGE, PART 2

week 9 | *1 Peter 3:7*

^aLikewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:7

Reference verses on page 64

So far Peter has addressed in 1 Peter 2:13-3:6 how Christians with no power (people subject to Roman authorities, slaves subject to masters, and wives subject to unbelieving husbands) were to witness to the excellencies of Christ. See 1 Peter 2:9. Now Peter addresses the one context where the culture granted a Christian male some power as the world defines it - his marriage. Allow the Spirit to use Peter's instructions to husbands to show you the upside down nature of the kingdom, that those with the world's power are powerless to bring glory to Christ unless they serve those without power.

 BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Father, you know my heart inside and out. Grant me the grace and will to love those closest to me well. Spirit, use your word to teach me how to study, listen, and understand those you call me to serve. Jesus, make me like you. Amen.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 3:7 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 3:7 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verse 7?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 7 in a few sentences.
3. What questions come to mind as you read verse 7?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 3:7.

^aEphesians 5:25

Colossians 3:19

1 Thessalonians 4:4

 UNDERSTAND

1. What two commands are given in verse 7, and what is the reason given for the commands?
2. The Greek word translated as ‘weaker’ (asthenes) in verse 7 means to be sickly, weakened, or without strength. In what way or ways is a wife potentially “weaker” than her husband?
3. Is her weakness due to her nature as a woman, the cultural situation she finds herself in, or both? Explain your answer.
4. Why might a husband’s prayers be hindered for failing to show his wife honor? See 1 Peter 5:5.

Going Deeper

1. Compare and contrast 1 Peter 3:7 with Ephesians 5:25-31. How are they similar? How are they different?
2. A comparison of physical strength is certainly implied in verse 7. But, given the cultural context women faced in the first century, how else might they be more vulnerable (weaker) than a man. Consider a woman’s options if she fled an abusive husband in the first century: where would she live, how would she provide for herself, etc.?

 **APPLY**

1. What does it look like to attempt to understand someone (such as a husband understanding his wife)? What attitudes and actions demonstrate a person's desire to understand someone else? What attitudes and actions communicate they do not care to understand?
2. How does verse 7 apply to all Christians regardless of gender or marital status?

Going Deeper

1. How do Jesus' words in Matthew 20:25-28 give color to how a man is to honor his wife (the one without power)?

 **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Verse 7 begins with "likewise" (same as 1 Peter 3:1); what does this potentially imply about the marriage?
2. Who, or what type of people, do we typically honor in our culture? Why? What is the criteria for honoring someone in God's kingdom?
3. How are men and women heirs together? What are they heirs of and how did they become heirs? See Romans 8:16-17, Ephesians 3:6, and Hebrews 11:9.

RESPONDING TO EVIL

week 10 | *1 Peter 3:8-22*

^aFinally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For

^b“Whoever desires to love life
and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit;
let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience,

so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

1 Peter 3:8-22

Reference verses on page 71

Living in a culture that does not follow Jesus will inevitably lead to your being mocked, belittled, and mistreated. How you respond to this mistreatment will reveal where your hope truly is: in Christ or something else. If it's in Christ, our response to evil will reveal the heart of our savior. If it's in anything else, we will strike back and prove ourselves to be just like the world around us.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Father, thank you for the grace that brings forgiveness to the very people who once mocked you. Thank you for giving me grace and not what I deserve. Lord, as a sojourner in this world, I will be maligned and mistreated. My flesh would repay evil for evil, but you call me to bless. Spirit, use your word and work love into my heart that I would love my enemies well and bring Jesus glory. Amen.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 3:8-22 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 3:8-22 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 8-22?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 8-22 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 8-22?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 3:8-22.

^aRomans 12:14-21

^bPsalm 34

Matthew 26:47-54

 UNDERSTAND

1. “Finally” in verse 8 indicates Peter is wrapping up a theme he has been unpacking starting in 1 Peter 2:9 through 3:7. What is that theme? What does he command in verses 8-9 that we do and do not do in light of that theme?
2. Peter quotes Psalm 34:12-16 in verses 10-12 as the motive(s) for why we should obey the commands given in verses 8-9. List the motives for obedience found in Peter’s citation of Psalm 34.
3. Honoring God generally leads to harmony with others. When it doesn’t lead to harmony, how does God want us to respond? List the commands and how we are expected to keep them listed in 1 Peter 3:14-16.
4. What opportunities come from persecution in 1 Peter 3:15?
5. 1 Peter 3:18-22 links our potential suffering for righteousness sake with Jesus’ suffering. What did his suffering secure?

Going Deeper

1. How might Peter’s failure in Matthew 26:47-54 have influenced his exhortation to Christians in 1 Peter 3:8-17?

2. Go back through 1 Peter 2:9-3:7 and list examples of how citizens subject to governments, servants subject to masters, wives subject to husbands, or husbands married to wives may have the opportunity to put the commands of 1 Peter 3:8-16 in practice.
3. In verse 21, how is baptism an “...appeal to God for a good conscience?”

✔ **APPLY**

1. Which of the commands in verses 8-9 are you weakest? Strongest? Why are the weak areas a struggle for you?
2. When you are on the receiving end of evil are you motivated to bless instead of curse? If you lack motivation, what do you think is missing?
3. Describe a time when something you suffered through became an opportunity for you to share the hope you have in Jesus. How was the hope you shared received?

Going Deeper

1. What does it mean to “always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” in verse 15?

Continue on the next page

2. What does it look like to provide this defense with “gentleness and respect”? What happens if it’s not done with gentleness and respect?
3. What does “when you are slandered,” in verse 16 imply?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. 1 Peter 3:17 states it is better to suffer for doing good if it is God’s will than for doing evil. Does Christian behavior in the realm of interpersonal relationships, business, and politics demonstrate this to be a principle that we believe or disbelieve? Why?
2. Describe a time when you suffered but failed to give a reason for your hope? Where was the breakdown? How would a firm trust in your living hope have made a difference?
3. Read 1 Peter 1:3-5. How does a firm grasp on Christ as our living hope give us the ability to suffer under injustice in various forms in a way that honors Christ? What alternative and non-enduring hopes do we cherish that make it impossible to bless those who seek to curse? Why does embracing alternative hopes make obedience to Christ impossible?
4. How are you encouraged by your Christian community to maintain a hope that is living? How could you improve as a community in this area?

ARM YOURSELF WITH RIGHT THINKING

week 11 | *1 Peter 4:1-6*

^aSince therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

^bFor the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

1 Peter 4:1-6

Reference verses on page 78

What do you live for? The weekend, your family, your job, what? The degree to which we think as Christ thought is the degree to which we will be able to live for him and his glory. This week's text shows us that a life lived for God's glory requires a mind that thinks about God's glory.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Father, I know how you want me to live, but my mind is often set on things that ultimately don't matter. Thank you for saving me from my sins. Spirit, transform me by the renewing of my mind. Use your word to change how I think and what I think about so that my life would become an offering to you. Amen.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 4:1-6 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 4:1-6 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 1-6?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 1-6 in a few sentences.
3. What questions come to mind as you read verses 1-6?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 4:1-6.

^aEphesians 6:10-20

^bEphesians 4:17-24

Galatians 5:16-25

Philippians 2:1-11

 UNDERSTAND

1. Based on Christ's sufferings in the flesh, what are we supposed to do, and why are we supposed to do it? See verses 1 Peter 4:1-2.
2. What does "the rest of time in the flesh" refer to? See Galatians 2:20. How is this time to be characterized?
3. Read 1 Peter 4:4-5. What is it that surprises unbelievers and how do they often respond to this surprise?

Going Deeper

1. How do the teachings in Romans 6:6-11 and 1 Peter 1:1-3 reinforce each other?
2. How unbelievers treat Christians is a theme throughout 1 Peter. See 1 Peter 2:13 and 3:16.
3. Who are the "dead" in verse 6 to whom the gospel was preached? Are they people who are now dead who heard the gospel preached before they died, people who heard the gospel somehow after they died, or those who are alive physically but are yet dead in sin spiritually? What scripture can you cite to support your view?

♥ APPLY

1. How did we at one time live for human passions (1 Peter 4:2-3)? How does this new way of thinking (v. 1) lead us into a new life?
2. How does Ephesians 4:17-24 and 1 Peter 4:1-3 inform one another, and how has your new life in Christ illustrated these teachings?
3. Where have you seen the culture malign obedient Christians? Are there times the world maligns Christians for legitimate reasons? If so, when?

Going Deeper

1. In verse 4, why are non-believers “surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery”? Why is their instinct to malign you?

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What does the “same way of thinking” refer to in verse 1? How does Philippians 2:3-8 give clarity regarding how we are to think?
2. The command to arm yourselves (verse 1) suggests a conflict. Who or what are we in conflict with? How is Peter’s exhortation to arm yourselves similar to Paul’s teaching to the church in Ephesians 6:10-20?
3. How does thinking as Christ did, regarding what you may suffer, arm you against temptation and empower you to live a life that proclaims the excellence of Christ who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light? See 1 Peter 2:9.
4. In verse 6, who is preaching the gospel to the dead? Is this an event that already happened or something that should continue today? If it continues, what is our role?

SELF-CONTROL AND LOVING WELL

week 12 | *1 Peter 4:7-11*

^aThe end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ^bAs each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:7-11

Reference verses on page 84

Every Christian has been gifted by God in some capacity for the benefit and service of others. Peter encourages us to be good stewards of God's varied grace. Let this week's text provide the motive, inspiration, and the reason for living as a steward for God's glory.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Father, help me to live today in light of eternity and your imminent return. You loved me and called me to love you and others in return. Grant me the grace to love well. Spirit, show me the gifts you've given me and help me use them so that others might experience your love and Jesus would be glorified.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 4:7-11 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 7-11?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 7-11 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 7-11?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 4:7-11.

^aJames 5:8

^bRomans 12:3-13

Matthew 25:1-30

 UNDERSTAND

1. What does verse 7 command, and how should awareness of the end of all things influence a person's thinking and life?
2. "Above all" (v. 8) indicates that loving one another is of utmost importance. Why is it so important, and what does loving well look like in verses 9-11?
3. How is 1 Peter 4:10-11 similar to Romans 12:3-8? What does it mean to be a steward of God's grace?
4. What does Peter give in verse 11 as the ultimate reason for the commands in verses 7-10?

Going Deeper

1. What does Peter mean by "the end of all things" in verse 7? See 2 Peter 3:8-13 and James 5:8.
2. Describe the relationship between being self-controlled, sober-minded, and a person's prayers. See Matthew 26:36-46.
3. Read Jesus' parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. What does this parable teach you about being a steward of God's grace?

♥ APPLY

1. Do you tend to live your life in light of the imminent return of Jesus? Why or why not? If you don't, how would your life be different if you did?
2. Describe what earnest love would look like in the context of your church community. Are you striving to love earnestly? Why or why not, and if so, how?
3. Do you feel you know what gifts you have and, if so, how are you using them to serve others for God's glory?

Going Deeper

1. How have others stewarded their gifts to serve you? How has their service blessed you?

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. If Jesus returned tomorrow would he be pleased with how you have used the gifts he has given you? Why or why not?
2. How do you see the corporate command to love one another earnestly carried out within your church? Where could the church improve, and what can you do to love others more earnestly?
3. Do most people view the “church” as a place to come and be served or as a group of people who serve? Explain your answer.
4. What gifts has God given you to use for his glory as his steward? What could you do to begin using them more effectively?

SUFFERING WELL

week 13 | *1 Peter 4:12-19*

^aBeloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ^bBut rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And

"If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

1 Peter 4:12-19

Reference verses on page 90

It is common for Christians to think that striving to love God and our neighbor, will keep us out of harm's way. Then when suffering inevitably happens, they are surprised and disillusioned. Allow the Spirit to remind you why you should not be surprised and to arm you with the knowledge of what this suffering is intended to accomplish.

 **BEGIN WITH PRAYER**

Jesus, you suffered for righteousness sake for the joy set before you. Use your word to transform and renew my mind so I am never surprised by suffering. Spirit, lead me along paths of righteousness, whether those paths lead to comfort or short-term pain. Father, grant me the grace to learn how to entrust myself fully to your will regardless of my circumstances.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 4:12-19 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 12-19?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 12-19 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 12-19?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 4:12-19.

^a1 Peter 1:3-9

^bRomans 8:18-29

James 1:3-5

 UNDERSTAND

1. Contrast the various ways in which people respond to fiery trials (v. 12). What does 1 Peter say our response should be, and what are fiery trials designed to bring about (v. 13)?
2. How does being insulted for the name of Christ bring blessing? See Matthew 5:11.
3. Why might someone feel shame in the midst of a fiery trial? What does it mean to “glorify God in that name”? Does an awareness of that future glory remove the shame of public suffering?
4. Is Peter suggesting that the judgment beginning in the household of God will lead to condemnation? Why or why not? What does it mean to be scarcely saved? See 1 Corinthians 3:15.
5. What does it mean to entrust something to another? How do we entrust our souls to God, and how do we entrust ourselves to him?

Going Deeper

1. How might a person who does not have a firm grasp of the gospel of God’s undeserved grace interpret their suffering compared to someone who sees all of this life and the life to come as undeserved grace?

Continue on the next page

2. Everyone will be judged by God. How does the believer's judgment differ from the unbeliever's judgment? Take a look at 2 Thessalonians 2:11 and 1 Corinthians 3:15.

♥ APPLY

1. Describe a time when you were surprised by your suffering? How did you view your circumstances? How did you view God in the midst of your surprising trial?
2. Do you find it difficult to rejoice in suffering?
3. Have you ever shared in Christ's sufferings? If so, how? Were you able to rejoice, and if so, describe that experience.
4. How do you feel about the impending judgment to come upon the household of God? How will you fair in this judgment? What is your confidence or concern based on?

Going Deeper

1. What additional context does James 1:3-5 and 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 bring in helping you to understand how a person can rejoice in the midst of trials?

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Does our church do an adequate job preparing Christians for trials? Why or why not, and how can it improve?
2. Why is it so hard to rejoice during trials? What helps you maintain your joy in the midst of trials?
3. Does all Christian suffering bring glory to God? Why or why not?
4. In what ways has God's judgment of the 'household of God' been a visible stain on the witness of the church in recent history?
5. How can we encourage one another to learn to entrust our souls to God?

CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH HUMILITY

week 14 | *1 Peter 5:1-5a*

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ^ashepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; ^bnot for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another,

1 Peter 5:1-5a

Reference verses on page 96

Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). David refers to God as his shepherd in Psalm 23. As sojourners in a hostile world full of temptation and wolves, we all, as God's sheep, need loving shepherds to help lead us and remind us of God's purpose and presence until we are brought safely into his presence. Allow 1 Peter 5:1-5a to show you what godly leaders look like.

 BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Father, we are the sheep of your pasture. Lead us beside still waters and into green pastures. Equip the leaders of your church to lead with humility and your strength. Help them and help me to be examples to the rest of the flock. Grant us the grace and humility to lead and love one another well.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 5:1-5a slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 5:1-5a in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 1-5a?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 1-5a in a few sentences.
3. What questions come to mind as you read verses 1-5a?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 1-5a.

^aJohn 21:15-19

^a1 Timothy 3:1-13

^bEzekiel 34:1-6

Hebrews 13:7-17

 UNDERSTAND

1. Who is Peter addressing in verses 1-5a, and what is commanded?
2. List and describe three characteristics good leaders possess and contrast them with those to avoid.
3. Some believe leadership is about telling people what to do and how to do it. How do Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7 describe effective leadership?
4. Who is addressed in verse 5a and what are they commanded to do?

Going Deeper

1. Read John 21:15-19. How might Peter's encounter with Jesus influenced his teaching to fellow shepherds?
2. Peter exhorts his fellow elders to shepherd the flock. Elder, 'episkipos', is a title given to someone who oversees and is responsible for something, while shepherd, 'poimano', is the verb form of the noun, 'poimen', which means pastor or shepherd. How does connecting church leadership to the role of a shepherd describe what a leader does and how they should do it?

♥ APPLY

1. Jesus had compassion on the crowds because they were like sheep without a shepherd. See Mark 6:34. Christians have the Bible and the Holy Spirit, so why do they need qualified shepherds to help them grow in Christ?
2. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Why is good character so important for a church leader? What are the potential consequences of leaders who lack character or do not heed Peter's instruction on how to shepherd?
3. 1 Peter 5:5a tells the younger to be subject (submit) to their elders. What does Hebrews 13:7-17 give as the reason for your voluntary submission? Are you submissive? Why or why not?
4. Even if you are not a leader in any capacity, you are still called to be an example to someone as a disciple who makes disciples. What do you personally need to hear and apply most from 1 Peter 5:1-5a?

Going Deeper

1. Read the qualifications of elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3. Even if you never aspire to leadership, the characteristics of good leaders should be desired by all Christians. Which are you most lacking, and what can you do to grow in each area?

2. Is submitting to elders merely about physical age (younger people submitting to older people)?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How does the metaphor of a leader as a shepherd (pastor) capture the essence of spiritual leadership? How does this compare to the metaphor of a worldly leader being a general or CEO.
2. Where have you seen the negative traits of a leader Peter warns against, and what have been the consequences of such leadership?
3. Where have you seen the positive qualities of leadership Peter commands, and what has been the fruit of such leadership?
4. Would you characterize American churchgoers as generally submissive to their church leaders? Why or why not? What about you personally? Where do you struggle most to submit?
5. How can this passage be applied by those who are not formal church leaders nor do they aspire to become one?

RESISTING THE DEVIL

week 15 | *1 Peter 5:5b-11*

^afor “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:5b-11

Reference verses on page 102

Our living hope in Christ is secure, kept in heaven, and guarded by faith. Yet, Christ will allow us to suffer injustice inspired by the enemy of our souls. Standing firm as the enemy roars requires a humble reliance and trust in Christ, our living hope. Let the Spirit use God's word to humble your heart and strengthen your faith.

 BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Father, we live in a world marred by sin. People sin against us, and we sin against others. Spirit, search my heart and show me where my own pride leaves me vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy. Spirit, show me the humility of Jesus and work it into my own heart that I may receive your grace and be gracious to others, even my enemies.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 5:5b-11 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 5:5b-11 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 5b-11?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 5b-11 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 5b-11?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 5:5b-11.

^aJames 4:1-10

Ephesians 6:10-18

 UNDERSTAND

1. How does 1 Peter 5:5b serve as a way to wrap up his instructions through chapters 3-5 to Christians subject to governments, masters, husbands, unjust people, and church leaders?
2. What is commanded in verses 6-7, and how does “therefore” connect it to the need for humility?
3. What does Peter exhort us to do in verses 8-9 so that we will be able to resist the devil?
4. What is the promise given in verses 10-11 to those who stand firm under suffering?

Going Deeper

1. How does James 4:1-10 give color to how pride is harnessed by the devil to ruin the kingdom fruit God desires to produce within Christians?
2. How does 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 inform and reinforce the promise in 1 Peter 5:10-11?

✔ APPLY

1. How has your pride undone or hindered the work God wants to do in and through you? Describe a time when after actively humbling yourself before God, he gave you more grace. See 1 Peter 5:5b-7.
2. How does the devil capitalize on a believer's pride and ignorance of God's purpose in Christian suffering to devour believers? How does humility and an alert awareness of God's promises defang the roaring lion? See 1 Peter 5:8-9.
3. How has the reality of suffering served to confirm, strengthen, and establish you in your faith? See 1 Peter 5:10-11.

Going Deeper

1. Use a Bible concordance to reference various verses on pride. Describe the ways pride makes a person vulnerable to the enemy's schemes.
2. Read Matthew 26:30-35 and 69-75. Describe how Peter's pride made him vulnerable to the devil's temptation.

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Which has greater potential to ruin a Christian, the devil or the individual pride of the Christian? Use 1 Peter 5:5-9 and James 4:1-8 to justify your answer.
2. Is humility a general characteristic which describes the relational interactions you observe outside the church? Inside the church? If not, what would need to change?
3. How would a poor understanding of God's purpose in suffering give the devil a foothold in a believer's life?
4. Where have you seen an example of suffering endured that served to inspire and strengthen your faith? How does (or should) Jesus' suffering enable you to stand firm?

WEEK OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:21-22

Our goal is to become doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1:22). Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). In weeks 7-15 we have sought the Spirit's help to understand 1 Peter 2:13 - 5:11, seeking to observe what the passage says, understand what it means, and then apply what we have learned. This week we will seek the Spirit's empowerment to bring about fruit through the word God implanted into our hearts (James 1:21).

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

This week we will seek the Spirit's assistance in taking what we know to be true cognitively and, through prayer, asking God to bring about lasting change in our lives. Choose three days this week to interact with God through prayer and meditation on his word.

Day 1 - 1 Peter 2:13-3:7

Day 2 - 1 Peter 3:8-4:7

Day 3 - 1 Peter 4:8-5:11

DAILY EXERCISE

(adapted from Dallas Willard's book Hearing God)

Read You have studied the passage in weeks 7-15. Now reread the passages slowly, and remember you are interacting with the living word of God, his own voice. Ask God to give you an openness to hear whatever the Spirit wants you to hear from the passage. As you reread the passage, what word(s) or phrase(s) stood out to you?

Reflect Read the passage again even more slowly. As you do, and for a few minutes afterward, reflect on words or phrases which stood out to you. Give yourself a few minutes to do this. Reflect on the following questions...

- Why do you think those words resonated with you?
- Then ask God, “how does this connect with my life today?”
- What do I need to know or do?

Pray Read the passage one last time. As you do, think about what you want to say to God in response to what you've read. Think about the truths you believe the Spirit is prompting in you or what stuck out as you read the passage. Now, pray however you are led to pray, for as long as you feel led. Things you might pray about include thanking God for something or asking God for something. Or you could reword the passage as your prayer.

Respond Do as you are led. You may wish to wait on God — to simply be *with* God. You may wish to pay attention to God, pondering especially how this passage adds to your wonder of Christ. What about him makes you want to worship him? If the Spirit has brought to mind something he wants you to do as an act of obedience, resolve to do so at your first opportunity.

STANDING FIRM IN BABYLON

week 16 | *1 Peter 5:12-14*

By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

1 Peter 5:12-14

Reference verses on page 110

Standing firm is easy enough if your feet are on solid ground. Standing firm when the world is against you and nothing seems stable, requires knowing where to find firm footing. Let the Spirit use a review of 1 Peter to remind you where your living hope is found.

 BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Father, you have told us we are exiles and sojourners, but our tendency is to insist this is our home. You tell us to humble ourselves, but we still act in pride. You tell us not to be surprised by suffering, but we are shocked and doubt your goodness when the pain comes. Spirit, help anchor our faith in the living hope we have in Jesus. Spirit, strengthen our faith in Christ and help us to stand firm until you return or call us home.

 **OBSERVE**

Read 1 Peter 5:12-14 slowly and deliberately.

Write out 1 Peter 5:12-14 in your notebook.

1. What sticks out to you about verses 12-14?
2. In your own words, try to summarize 12-14 in a few sentences.
3. What questions do you have as you read verses 12-14?

Going Deeper

Read the following verses to add context to 1 Peter 5:12-14.

2 Kings 25

2 Chronicles 29

Jeremiah 29

1 Peter 1:5



UNDERSTAND

1. Peter states that he has briefly written about the true grace of God and how to stand firm in it. What makes this grace true, and what is gracious about it?
2. Identify where in 1 Peter chapters 1-5 does Peter explain this grace and summarize how it enables us to stand firm.
3. Peter refers to “she who is in Babylon.” Babylon was an ancient city found in modern-day Iraq which ceased to exist long before Peter wrote his letter. Given the city no longer existed, this is a metaphor. Who does “she” likely represent, and what is the significance of the reference to Babylon. See 1 Peter 1:1, James 1:1, and Jeremiah 29 for insight.

Going Deeper

1. Read Jeremiah 29. How would an exile living in Babylon live compared to a permanent resident?
2. Read Daniel 1 and explain how Daniel provides an example of how to stand firm in Babylon?

✔ APPLY

1. Compare and contrast a Christian who stands firm in grace who sees their identity as an exile in Babylon with the professing Christian who mistakes this world as their permanent home.
2. What teaching from 1 Peter 1-5 has been most helpful?
3. What hinders the modern Christian from truly embracing the identity of an exile, and how would embracing the true grace of God help?

Going Deeper

1. Jeremiah wrote instructions to literal exiles in Babylon. Read his letter in Jeremiah 29 and describe how Christians can interact with the society they live in for the betterment of the culture without confusing the culture as a place they belong.

 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What has been the most beneficial thing God has taught you from 1 Peter? Why?
2. What has been the hardest thing to accept, understand, or apply from 1 Peter? Why?
3. As you evaluate the landscape of the church in America, would you say most professing Christians understand their identity as exiles in Babylon? Why or why not?
4. What can you do to stand firm as you await Jesus' return?

NOTES



Grace Community Church

BRING IN | BUILD UP | BRANCH OUT