



1st Peter Study Guide

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Table Of Contents

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Section 1 | 3 |
| <i>Introduction</i> | |
| Section 2 | 4 |
| <i>Background</i> | |
| Section 3 | 6 |
| <i>1 Peter 1: 1-13</i> | |
| Section 4 | |
| <i>1 Peter 1: 13-21</i> | |
| Section 5 | |
| <i>1 Peter 2: 1-12</i> | |
| Section 6 | |
| <i>1 Peter 2: 11-25</i> | |
| Section 7 | |
| <i>1 Peter 3: 1-12</i> | |
| Section 8 | |
| <i>1 Peter 3: 13-22</i> | |
| Section 9 | |
| <i>1 Peter 4: 1-19</i> | |
| Section 10 | |
| <i>1 Peter 5</i> | |
| Section 11 | |
| <i>Notes</i> | |

>Intro<

Thank you for joining us for this walk through the book of 1st Peter. My hope is that you will accept this study as more of a discussion that helps us learn more about how God desires us to live in and influence the world around us.

The following pages will give you some background with history and context of the book before you actually begin reading the content. We have dived this book into 8 sections of study that seem to make the most sense as we logically think about the themes found within 1st Peter. Each section will include a page for you to take notes as you listen to the messages whether you are on-campus, or part of our Facebook campus. I would highly encourage you to read the passages on your own before answering the questions. Don't just take our words as your only instruction...read God's Word and feed yourself as well.

Remember, as you read Scripture we like to teach a 4-stage approach to Bible study:

1. What do I see in this?

(What sticks out to me, what do I notice, etc.)

2. What do I think about this?

(How does it make me feel, what do I need to learn more, etc.)

3. What do I do with this?

(How does it effect your life, how do you respond, etc.)

4. What does this tell me about God, people, myself?

(Self explanatory)

I truly hope you enjoy this study. We are looking forward to teaching through 1st Peter and learning alongside you. If you have any questions, please email them to gracecrossing.tv@gmail.com or submit them on our Facebook page. We will answer as soon as we can.

Humbly,

Jason Rains

>Background<

Author

The Apostle Peter is listed as the author of this letter in (1:1). Peter was one of Jesus' disciples and also one of His closest friends. Peter was a fisherman who chose to follow Jesus and his life was changed because of it. His Jesus story all started when Jesus asked him to borrow his boat to teach from (Luke 5:1). In their 3 years of ministry together Peter was faithful and committed to Jesus, yet still denied even knowing him after Jesus was arrested. Peter was the first of the disciples to run to an empty tomb, and the first of the disciples to jump out of a boat to swim to shore in pursuit of a resurrected Jesus. To say he had an interested relationship with Jesus is an understatement. If there is anyone who can teach us how to live, Peter fits the bill well.

Recipients

Peter refers to the recipients of his letter as "God's chosen people who are living as foreigners (or aliens) in the provinces...(1:1). This phrasing is used to describe the condition and the location of God's people in this time. Because of persecution by both the Assyrians and Babylonians, God's people had been scattered. This leads most scholars to believe that this letter was written primarily to Jewish-Christians, as was the book of James. However, there is some content that leads us to believe that some of Peter's readers were also Gentile converts who had come to believe in God through Jesus' ministry (1:21). So basically, this is a letter written to Christians who are scattered throughout the Middle East.

When & Where

It is generally accepted that Peter died during the reign of Nero. Since Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D., this letter must obviously be dated before then. A common view is that this letter was written prior to the Neronian persecution, placing the creation around 63-64 A.D., or approximately 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Peter indicates that he is in Babylon as he is writing (5:13), although many Biblical scholars have debated whether he was referring to a literal Babylon or if this was a sort of code-word for Rome or even Jerusalem. Peter is linked to all three locations, so I will let you study and decide for yourself.

Purpose

It is apparent from this letter that Christians in Asia Minor has experienced persecution (1:6), and more suffering was on the way (4:12-19). Throughout the letter Peter encourages them to remain steady and focused. He reminds them of their blessings and duties that are expected of God's people. Simply put, Peter writes for the following purposes:

1. to encourage in the face of persecution
2. to remind them of their blessing as God's people
3. to instruct them to live accordingly

Theme

This letter is filled with practical teachings concern lifestyle and personal conduct, especially as foreigners, or aliens, in a hostile land. Peter finds himself trying to teach Christians to live in a way that they can influence the world around them, without becoming a part of it. Peter tells them how to behave in the midst of people speaking evil of them, people who abuse them, people who do not believe their message...all simply because these people are not Christians. In short, he's teaching us how to live as Christians in a world that is not Christian. Seem relevant for today still? Thought so.

Personal Application

While the application seems obvious to me, I want to make sure it's crystal clear. If you are a Christian, a follower of Jesus, you will experience trials. You will experience the tension that is created when you are around non-Christians. HOWEVER, the remedy is not to isolate yourselves from non-Christians, but rather to learn how to live among them, how to influence them, how to love them and serve them, WITHOUT becoming like them. 1st Peter is a great book to learn how to do that. How do we successfully live somewhere we don't belong? How do we live somewhere that is not our eternal home? How do we live as aliens?

>Session 3<

When you choose to follow Jesus, you choose to walk a path that is markedly different. You're choosing a way of life that, when lived faithfully, will cause you to stick out from time to time because following Jesus is *supposed* to look different! We need to understand that one of the core messages of 1st Peter is that while we live IN this world, we are not OF this world.

Read 1st Peter 1:1-13

Questions

1. Maybe you've heard the phrase "1st world problems" ...What are some examples of these problems, and how do they compare to the actual "3rd world problems"?
2. Even though we may not live in a part of the world that persecutes us for being a Christian, we still can face hardships because of our faith. What are some examples that you have experienced or heard of? What is your response when these things happen?
3. We often confuse the "joy" described in Scripture with "happiness". What is the difference between the two? How do you see this reality in your own life?
4. What can you do differently to experience true "joy" in your life & how can it help you through those difficult times in life?
5. How does Jesus' resurrection change your perspective on the life we currently live here on earth?

What's Your Next Step?

>Section 4<

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Read 1st Peter 1:13-21

Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a time when you stood out? Share some examples when you just felt different & there was something so unique about you that people couldn't stop noticing.
2. Peter tells us not to conform to this world, but to be different. How can we be in this world, but at the same time be different & stand out from the rest of the world?
3. As Christians, how do we tend to mix or confuse grace/faith and works/deeds in the way we live our lives?
4. We know that Jesus is & was the only perfect person. As Christians, why is it important to live like Christ & make our lives a reflection of who HE is, even if we KNOW we won't be perfect?
5. Since we are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus, & NOT by our own works, why are the things you do for Christ (works) still an important part of a Christian's life?

What's Your Next Step?

>Section 5<

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Read 1st Peter 2:1-12

Questions

1. Describe how God sees us & explain why it is so important that we understand this to the best of our ability?
2. Name some of the things we eat that aren't good for us & also some food that is good for us. Why do we tend to crave bad things over the food that is good for us?
3. What are some bad things (wrong food) in our life that can affect our relationship with God & spiritual growth? What do you crave that is an obstacle between you & your growth?
4. Sometimes we need to detox our bodies for our physical health. What are some ways that we can detox for the sake of our spiritual health?
5. When we start actually craving "pure spiritual milk" described in (2:2), how can this change the way we live?

What's Your Next Step?

>Section 6<

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Read 1st Peter 2:11-25

Questions

1. What do you think God's plan is for our life here & how are we to interact with others, especially those who aren't believers?
2. How can "our plan" & "God's plan" conflict from time to time?
3. What does it mean to submit yourself, especially to authorities with whom we may disagree or even dislike?
4. How can I have freedom in Christ, but at the same time "submit" to someone else other than Him?
5. How can we stay aligned with God & not let our hope in Him get diverted or distracted?

What's Your Next Step?

>Section 7<

Read 1st Peter 3:1-12

Questions

1. Peter instructs wives to submit to their husbands. Why is this & why is it difficult?
2. Peter's instructions to wives is to witness to their husbands "without words". Why is this so powerful? How is this also powerful as we witness to the world?
3. In 3:6 Peter states, regarding Sarah's daughters... "You are her daughters if you do what is right & do not give way to fear." Why do you think Peter says this?
4. Peter tells husbands to be considerate of their wives. What are some ways husbands can be more considerate? What are ways husbands aren't this way?
5. Peter instructs us how to treat people in 3:8-9. Why is this principle so important? Why is it so hard?
6. As you read 3:10-12 (which is a reference to Psalm 34), how would you rate yourself? Your talking, your turning, your doing, your searching, your working...how are you doing? Scale of 1-10, with 10 being highest, rate each element.

What's Your Next Step?

>Section 8<

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Read 1st Peter 3:13-22

Questions

1. In 3:13 Peter talks about suffering for what is right. He reminds us to respect Jesus as Lord & always be prepared to give a reason for the hope we have. How is this relevant in your life? How are you prepared? What is the reason for your hope?
2. Peter talks about suffering again in 3:17. Jesus tells us that there will be suffering. Being a Christian doesn't exempt us from the suffering of this world. How does being baptized strengthen us as we go through that suffering?
3. Peter uses Noah & the ark as an analogy for salvation. How do you see the connection? What other analogies can you think of for salvation?
4. Why do you think the method of Baptism is important? We believe in immersion (fully under), but others believe in sprinkling, or pour overs?
5. In your own words, why should someone choose to be baptized? Have you taken this step? Why/Why not?

What's Your Next Step?

>Section 9<

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Read 1st Peter 4:1-19

Questions

1. In 4:1 Peter tells us that since Christ suffered in the body we should arm ourselves with the same attitude. What attitude is this? What is he talking about here & why is it important?
2. Peter tells us in 4:4 not to be surprised when people slander you for living differently & not just fitting in with the world. Can you recall a time when you have been challenged by this kind of peer pressure? How did you respond? How can you help others who are dealing with this?
3. In 4:14-16, Peter talks about suffering for Christ. He is referring to enduring persecution for taking a stand for Christ. How is this persecution different from just going through trials in life?
4. Should our reaction to self-inflicted trials or life's circumstances be any different than when we are suffering for Christ? Why/why not?
5. Has there been any trial in your life that God has used to strengthen your faith? Write it down? In what ways have you used your trials to glorify God & maybe bring others closer to Him?

What's Your Next Step?

>Section 10<

When you choose to follow Jesus, you choose to walk a path that is markedly different. You're choosing a way of life that, when lived faithfully, will cause you to stick out from time to time because following Jesus is *supposed* to look different! We need to understand that one of the core messages of 1st Peter is that while we live IN this world, we are not OF this world.

Read 1st Peter 5

Questions

1. After giving instructions in verse 5 to the elders & those who are younger, Peter gives a command to all..."clothe yourselves in humility towards one another". What do you think this means? (see also Colossians 3:12, Romans 13:14)
2. As Christians, we should have the heart of God. In verse 5, Peter says that "God opposes the proud". Why do you think God takes a strong stance against the proud? What are some ways that we can be perceived as proud?
3. God shows favor to the humble. Often we like to view ourselves through our own eyes, not necessarily how others view us. How would you score on the quiz below as YOU answer, and then have OTHERS answer?
 - a. Are you teachable?
 - b. Do you respond well to criticism?
 - c. Are you considerate toward others?
 - d. Are you serving others?
 - e. Do you celebrate victories well?
 - f. DO you need to be the center of attention or do you put others first?
4. In verses 6-7 Peter shares with us two principles. (1) When we humble ourselves God will lift us up. (2) Cast our cares on him because He cares for us. What are the challenges to obeying these two principles in our lives?
5. Peter reminds us that there is a spiritual war going on & likens Satan to a roaring lion. Why a lion? What does this mean & why is it important to be aware of?

What's Your Next Step?

