

WEEK 3

IN THE STORM:

A STORY OF TRUSTING

FIRST BAPTIST church

Cultivating Love, Choosing Progress, Cherishing Civility

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☐	Day 1	1 Peter 1:1-2	☐	Day 21	1 Peter 4:12-15
☐	Day 2	1 Peter 1:3-8	☐	Day 22	1 Peter 4:16-19
☐	Day 3	1 Peter 1:9-12	☐	Day 23	1 Peter 5:1-4
☐	Day 4	1 Peter 1:13-16	☐	Day 24	1 Peter 5:5-11
☐	Day 5	1 Peter 1:17-21	☐	Day 25	1 Peter 5:12-14
☐	Day 6	1 Peter 1:22-25	☐	Day 26	2 Peter 1:1-2
☐	Day 7	1 Peter 2:1-3	☐	Day 27	2 Peter 1:3-8
☐	Day 8	1 Peter 2:4-7	☐	Day 28	2 Peter 1:9-11
☐	Day 9	1 Peter 2:8-12	☐	Day 29	2 Peter 1:12-16
☐	Day 10	1 Peter 2:13-17	☐	Day 30	2 Peter 1:17-21
☐	**Day 11**	**1 Peter 2:18-21**	☐	Day 31	2 Peter 2:1-4
☐	**Day 12**	**1 Peter 2:22-25**	☐	Day 32	2 Peter 2:5-8
☐	**Day 13**	**1 Peter 3:1-6**	☐	Day 33	2 Peter 2:9-12
☐	**Day 14**	**1 Peter 3:7**	☐	Day 34	2 Peter 2:13-17
☐	**Day 15**	**1 Peter 3:8-12**	☐	Day 35	2 Peter 2:18-22
☐	Day 16	1 Peter 3:13-17	☐	Day 36	2 Peter 3:1-3
☐	Day 17	1 Peter 3:18-22	☐	Day 37	2 Peter 3:4-7
☐	Day 18	1 Peter 4:1-3	☐	Day 38	2 Peter 3:8-10
☐	Day 19	1 Peter 4:4-7	☐	Day 39	2 Peter 3:11-16
☐	Day 20	1 Peter 4:8-11	☐	Day 40	2 Peter 3:17-18



Requests	Answers



NOTE: The foundation of spiritual growth is your understanding of God's Word.
Each week, bring your Bible and your study guide to the group meeting.

CONNECT ..... 15 minutes

1. Take a few moments to catch up on current events in your lives.

2. Complete any unfinished sections of your growth group calendar.

3. Share insights from the devotional section of **Follow Me: Stories from the Life of Peter**.

GROW ..... 30 minutes

Gentleness and respect form the essential manner in which believers should articulate their faith when questioned about their hope (1 Peter 3:15-16). Rather than emphasizing intellectual victory, Peter prioritizes the tone and spirit of apologetic engagement through words like "gentleness," "respect," "a clear conscience," and "good behavior" – qualities that shape how the message is delivered rather than merely what is said.

Demonstrating gentleness and respect requires dependence upon the Holy Spirit, making these virtues more than tactical communication strategies. In apologetics, showing respect for unbelievers and their beliefs can often remove barriers to sharing the gospel. Rather than dismissing opposing viewpoints, believers approach conversations with genuine consideration for the other person's perspective and background.

Maintaining a clear conscience while embodying these qualities produces a powerful witness. When people observe the quality-of-life believers live, they become ashamed of their accusations (1 Peter 3:15-16). Peter instructs the community to live with compassion, respect, and humility in ways that would positively impact hostile nonbelievers, following the pattern of the cross in how believers interact with those outside the faith.

Though 1 Peter 3:16 establishes gentleness and respect as the special character of Christian apologetics, believers have often failed to consistently demonstrate this quality, allowing apologetics to degenerate into a desire to win debates through clever reasoning. The actual goal of apologetics is not to win arguments but to lead people toward truth that liberates them. Gentleness and respect, therefore, reflect the gospel's own heart. They embody the redemptive purpose underlying all Christian witness.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- ✓ What examples would you use today to illustrate an obsession with outward appearance?
- ✓ What do you remember most vividly about your parents' relationship?
- ✓ What childhood fight do you remember most vividly?
- ✓ On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being nerves of steel), how good would you say you are at controlling your temper?

Read **1 Peter 3** and interact with the following questions:

Wives

"In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over [2] *by observing your pure and reverent lives.* [3] *Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes.* [4] *You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.* [5] *This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands.* [6] *For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do."*

Husbands

[7] *"In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered."*

All Christians

[8] *"Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.* [9] *Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.* [10] *For the Scriptures say,*

> *'If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies.* [11] *Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.* [12] *The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.'"*

Suffering for Doing Good

[13] *"Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good?* [14] *But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats.* [15] *Instead,*

you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. **16** *But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.* **17** *Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!* **18** *Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.* **19** *So he went and preached to the spirits in prison –* **20** *those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.* **21** *And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* **22** *Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority."* [1]

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY:

1. Why did Peter encourage wives to submit to their husbands? (3:1-2)

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2. What is the disadvantage of a woman's outward beauty? What is the advantage of her inward beauty? (3:3-6)

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3. Why should husbands treat their wives with respect? (3:7)

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[1] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 3:1–22.

4. What incredible challenge did Peter give his readers? (3:8-9)

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5. Why did Peter instruct his readers to live at peace with everyone? (3:9)

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6. What must a person do who wants to love life? (3:10-11)

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7. What did Peter write about suffering for what is right? (3:14)

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8. When is it all right to suffer, and when is it a waste? (3:17)

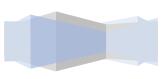
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9. How are we saved? (3:21)

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THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF CHAPTER 3:

Peter wrote to Christian communities scattered across Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), gathering in settings that ranged from cosmopolitan trade hubs to isolated villages, composed of people from diverse social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The letter addresses Christians experiencing suffering in the Roman provinces, which Peter connects to Jesus' own prediction that his followers would face hardship.

The social pressure facing these believers stemmed primarily from local hostility rather than organized state action. Christians faced hostility because they had abandoned pagan religious practices, and non-Christian neighbors blamed them for everything from natural disasters to economic problems. The troubles came from neighbors and fellow citizens rather than from government authorities; their refusal to participate in pagan revelries brought them abuse and mistreatment. Many were particularly vulnerable – often newcomers to their cities, driven by persecution or coming from Jewish backgrounds, with low social status and little government protection.

The suffering appears to have been general abuse and discrimination from society at large, as the church remained withdrawn and its members no longer participated in traditional religious and social practices, which disrupted the social fabric and provoked retaliation. Christian slaves experienced especially severe hardship, lacking protection against cruel pagan masters and forming a substantial portion of these early communities.

Peter translated Jesus' command to love enemies into practical guidance for Christian behavior in this oppressive social setting. The chapter's emphasis on submission, blessing one's persecutors, and maintaining honorable conduct reflects this strategic response to social marginalization rather than violent persecution.

THINKING THROUGH THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PASSAGE:

10. Why is it easier to be beautiful on the outside rather than on the inside?

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11. How can someone develop inner beauty as Peter described?

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12. When are you tempted to return evil with evil and insult with insult?

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13. What concrete actions can we use to promote harmony?

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HOW GOD WANTS ME TO APPLY THIS PASSAGE TO MY LIFE:

14. How will you develop your inner character and what response will you use when mistreated or insulted?

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SHARE ..... 10 minutes

Seek to invest in others who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and invite them to FBC.

SERVE ..... 5 minutes

Record progress on your service project …

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WORSHIP ..... 15 minutes

Pray that God will keep you rooted in His word and that you will not neglect His truth.

Devotional Day 11:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 2:18-21 and The Devotional Thought

18 *"You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you – not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel.* **19** *For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment.* **20** *Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.* **21** *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps."* [2]

Devotional Thought

Peter is speaking to those believers who are slaves or servants in a household. He says to submit to those in authority over you with respect. Do the right thing even if they are not the best of leaders. There are occasions when we *"patiently endure unjust treatment."* When we mess up, there is a reason for our suffering. If you suffer for doing good and endure it, God is pleased with your patience. Remember, God called us to do the right thing, even if we suffer for it.

Peter addresses the domestic household issue by calling attention to an abusive master and cautiously suggests that suffering could become a reality for some of his readers because of their faith in Jesus. He stresses good behavior as the rule. In verse 19, he speaks in more general terms. It seems to be more applicable to believers in general. The suffering he alludes to is that which is directed at the individual because of their relationship with Christ. The point of the passage is on the proper response to persecution by those in power. Peter appeals to Christ as the example for those mistreated. Suffering unjustly was a real possibility for any of these believers.

Coping with trials as a Christian begins with reframing how you understand suffering itself. Rather than demanding happiness during difficulty, you can choose to regard trials differently by recognizing the maturity that develops through responding rightly to them. Suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope, and God's love sustains you through this process.

Center faith in God's character, not circumstances. Attempting to face life's difficulties alone through self-reliance leads to despair or self-pity, whereas faith centered on God recognizes his comfort during stress, trial, and pain. God's response to suffering isn't removal of the problem but provision of grace and strength, along with deliverance through Christ.

Anchor yourself to eternal hope. Christian hope looks beyond earthly circumstances to a permanent home with God. This hope saves, distinguishes believers from the world, motivates, and sustains during trials.

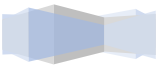
Receive God's comfort to strengthen others. God's comfort in your trials equips you to encourage others, enabling you to offer them the same support you've received. God remains sovereign over trials and promises his presence. You won't be overwhelmed because the Lord walks through them with you. Father, Your comfort is refreshing; Your power is appreciated; Your grace is sufficient; Your presence is reassuring; Your love is everlasting. Thank You for precious gifts that empower us.

[2] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 2:18–21.

Reflect: Focus your thoughts on what God has revealed to you through your reading.

Record: Your thoughts, impressions, things to remember, & an application statement.

Request: Based on what you have learned today, write out a prayer to God.



Devotional Day 12:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 2:22-25 and The Devotional Thought

22 *"He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone.* **23** *He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.* **24** *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.* **25** *Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls."* [3]

Devotional Thought

Peter begins to offer detail on Jesus' suffering. In doing so, he leans on Isaiah 53 to spell out the extent of the suffering servant. By this time in early church tradition, the Isaiah passage is recognized as pointing clearly to the suffering and subsequent exaltation of Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus … never sinned; never deceived anyone; did not retaliate when insulted; did not seek revenge; trusted God, the righteous judge; carried our sins on the cross; and His wounds heal us. Peter describes the purpose of Jesus' suffering on the cross … *"so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right."* We wandered away, but we now return to Him because of His suffering.

Jesus' suffering transforms God from one who sympathizes from a distance into one who enters directly into human pain through the cross. This helps us understand our own struggles. Because Jesus became fully human, he gained the experience that provided the basis for genuine compassion. Because he was tested through suffering, he can help those facing their own trials. He knows the sting of constant misunderstanding, even from loved ones, and the exhaustion of giving your best when it never seems enough. Jesus has lived experience.

God's suffering in Christ reveals divine identification with the hurting and dying. It shows that humans are not abandoned and Jesus' empathy is genuine and experience-based. He drank the full cup of human experience. Early Christian thinkers understood Christ's suffering as a way of sharing the human condition with His people. Jesus reframed suffering. It is no longer evidence of God's distance but rather, proof of his presence.

This suffering shapes how we respond to our own pain. We are called to do good even when suffering, following Christ's example. Those who grasp Jesus' suffering tend toward compassion for others who suffer. Rather than isolation, our struggles connect us to Christ's reality and to one another. Because Jesus faced the same testings we do, we can approach God's throne boldly, finding mercy and grace in our moment of need. God comforts us in our troubles so we can comfort others with the same comfort we received, transforming our suffering into a channel of compassion for others.

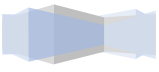
Jesus is our example for handling suffering. When suffering … Do not sin; Do not deceive others; Do not retaliate when insulted; Do not seek revenge; Trust God; Recognize Christ's sacrifice to rescue us; Let Jesus heal your wounds; Be dead to sin and do what is right. Father, as we follow Jesus' example, help us influence others as they see You magnified in the way we handle our own suffering. Help us die to sin and always do what is right.

[3] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 2:22–25.

Reflect: Focus your thoughts on what God has revealed to you through your reading.

Record: Your thoughts, impressions, things to remember, & an application statement.

Request: Based on what you have learned today, write out a prayer to God.



Devotional Day 13:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 3:1-6 and The Devotional Thought

"In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will **2** *be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives.* **3** *Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes.* **4** *You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.* **5** *This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands.* **6** *For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do."* [4]

Devotional Thought

The Bible contains explicit commands regarding wives' submission to husbands, though the meaning and application of these instructions have been interpreted in different ways. Multiple New Testament passages instruct wives to submit to their husbands. These instructions appear within what scholars call household codes – ancient frameworks governing relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves that reflect an idealized notion of the structure of the Roman household.

Some scholars argue that the household codes represent an attempt to show that Christianity was not opposed to the Roman societal order and caution against accepting the Roman social order of patriarchy as a divinely ordained order. Others note in Ephesians 5:21 that submission is based on mutual submission. It defines submission in terms of respect rather than obedience. The Bible teaches about authority that balances submission with a higher allegiance to God. Everyone must submit to governing authorities, since all authority comes from God and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. However, this instruction carries a crucial limitation. Paul does not urge obedience to authorities but submission to them. The Greek verb used signifies being subject to an authority. Christians pledge allegiance and obedience to only one authority – their Lord. This distinction is critical when authorities demand actions contrary to God's will. When a civil authority is no longer a servant for God's good will – when it engages in evil – disapproval will be, and disobedience may be, necessary. Even when compliance is not possible, in situations when obedience to God requires disobedience to a government mandate, believers are still commanded to exhibit an attitude of respectfulness and grace toward those in authority. Also, disobedience to authorities means accepting the consequences of your decisions.

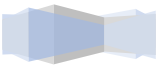
Beauty is found in trusting God and accepting the authority over you. The purpose is to bring glory to God. This duty is true for men, women, children, employees, or citizens. Believers are to live godly lives regardless of the circumstances and follow God's leading. Persecution may come because of our choice to follow God. So, honor God with your actions. Father, open our eyes to Your truth and help us to see when we are legalistic or too emotional. Lead us to the place of obedience to You and not the whims of religious or political leaders.

[4] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 3:1–6.

Reflect: Focus your thoughts on what God has revealed to you through your reading.

Record: Your thoughts, impressions, things to remember, & an application statement.

Request: Based on what you have learned today, write out a prayer to God.



Devotional Day 14:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 3:7 and The Devotional Thought

7 *"In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered."* [5]

Devotional Thought

Peter continues to address and tie together the previous allusions to the Roman household code. A loose translation could be, *"You husbands in turn must know how to live with a woman."* Peter is not telling husbands merely to maintain a sexual relationship with their wives, but to do so with knowledge or understanding. He implies that living with a woman is not a simple physical function but something a man must know how to do.

A woman's "weakness" is reason to know how to live with her and respect her. Peter is not referring to women as the weaker sex in a generalized sense, but rather it is reference to the female human body as weaker physically than a male human body. Peter also is not using the term to demean women but to raise respect, which is the essential part of his advice to Christian husbands.

A husband's disrespectful treatment of his wife directly obstructs his prayers. This connection between marital conduct and prayer effectiveness operates on the fundamental principle that a person's relationship with God is affected by his or her relationship with others.

The specific requirements are clear. There must be an effort to understand her needs, special care for her weaknesses, and recognition that she is a fellow heir of grace deserving honor rather than belittling. No husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lives with his wife, who is an equal partner with an equal standing before God, in an understanding way, showing honor to her, and maintaining a good marriage.

This dynamic, reveals something profound about God's design. Peter's references to prayer teach us not that praying helps us live right, but that living right helps us pray. A husband cannot compartmentalize his spiritual life. His treatment of his wife and his effectiveness in prayer are inseparably linked. Neglecting or dishonoring one's wife creates a barrier to God's responsiveness that no amount of prayer can overcome until the relational breach is addressed.

Husbands honor your wives. Treat them with understanding. Treat her as an equal partner. Avoid your prayers being hindered by doing the above.

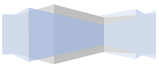
Father, you have given men the honor of having wives. May we treat them with respect, cherishing the union that is only possible through Your grace. Thank you for Christian husbands. Thank you for Christian wives. Increase our knowledge of their needs, desires, gifts, and abilities.

[5] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 3:7.

Reflect: Focus your thoughts on what God has revealed to you through your reading.

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Devotional Day 15:

Relax: Focus on God speaking to you through His Word today. ☐ **Prayer**

Read: 1 Peter 3:8-12 and The Devotional Thought

8 *"Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.* **9** *Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.* **10** *For the Scriptures say, 'If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies.* **11** *Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.* **12** *The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.'"*[6]

Devotional Thought

Believers are to display unity that exhibits sympathy, love, compassion, and humility. God calls us to not take revenge; not to do something evil because evil has been done to you; and not to insult others because they insulted you. He calls us to retaliate with a blessing. Psalm 34 drives home his point. Enjoying life and happy days entails avoiding the trap of speaking evil and lying. Peace is achieved through building good relationships, knowing that peace is a result of commitment to a united end. Making peace is difficult. Search for it and work to maintain it. This passage establishes ethical principles for those navigating a hostile world. These guidelines balance internal Christian community life with external witness to outsiders. Peter's moral vision centers on four interconnected dimensions.

Internal Community Virtue. The passage opens by calling Christians toward unified thinking; mutual sympathy; familial love; and tender-hearted humility. Humility is distinctly Christian. Unbelievers viewed humility as shame. For Christians it is a virtue reflecting dependence on God. Love develops first within the family context before extending outward, enabling believers to express care toward both Christians and non-Christians.

Response to Opposition. Rather than returning harm with harm or insult with insult, Christians are instructed to respond with blessing. This nonretaliation principle (*that retaliation is natural but not Christian*), calls believers to bless those who curse them, inheriting blessing in return.

Moral Discipline. The passage emphasizes guarding one's speech from evil and lies while actively pursuing good and peace. Peter grounds motivation in God's omniscience and omnipresence.

Divine Accountability. God's eyes watch the righteous while his face turns against the wicked. This hope becomes the foundation motivating compassionate ethical conduct. Christian ethics are relational: believers practice virtue within community while maintaining countercultural witness through nonretaliation and blessing, sustained by confidence in God's ultimate justice.

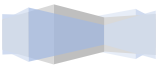
While continuing to develop good relationships within the body of Christ which cultivate the qualities of sympathy, love, compassion, and humility; we seek to cultivate civil relationships with those who oppose, harm, or insult. We pursue peace knowing that God has His eye on those who seek righteousness. Father, we pray for unity that nurtures a climate ripe for revival and renewal.

[6] Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 1 Pe 3:8–12.

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FBC Growth Group Covenant

Congratulations on your desire to grow deeper in your relationship with God through this weekly study and the relationships that will begin as a result of your participation.

As a member of this group, you will be asked to enter into a covenant with the other group members. You are requested to make this Growth Group a priority; by making the following commitments:

- ☐ I will make this group a priority by attending each week (call if I'm going to be absent or late), keeping up with my assignments and participating openly in group discussion.
- ☐ I will regularly attend church services and contribute to the ministry of the church through my attendance, giving, service and inviting of others.
- ☐ I will strive to build authentic relationships with those in this group by showing care, providing encouragement and praying for their needs.
- ☐ I will avoid gossip (including, what happens in the group stays in the group) and immediately resolve any concerns by following the "conflict resolution" principles of Matthew 18:15-17.
- ☐ I will limit my freedom by not serving or consuming alcohol during growth group meetings or events so as to avoid causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble. (1 Cor. 8:1-13; Romans 14:19-21)
- ☐ I will serve with my group once a month during the semester and will participate in a mission project and play together with my group once.
- ☐ I will honestly explore my next steps for spiritual growth and give permission for other group members to speak God's truth into my life.

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NAME (Signature) DATE



IN THE STORM: A STORY OF TRUSTING

Memory Verse: *"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine."*
– **1 Peter 1:6-7a (NLT)**

"Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home." – **Matthew 14:22 (NLT)**

How to Trust Jesus in My Storms

5 Lessons from Matthew 14:22-33

➢ EXPECT THAT MY LIFE WILL BE FULL OF STORMS.

"After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves." – **Matthew 14:23-24 (NLT)**

(Jesus) *"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."* – **John 16:33b (NLT)**

➢ LOOK FOR JESUS TO MEET ME IN MY STORM.

"About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, 'It's a ghost!'" – **Matthew 14:25-26 (NLT)**

"Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me." – **Psalm 23:4 (NLT)**



➢ ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS IS GREATER THAN MY STORM.

"But Jesus spoke to them at once. 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'Take courage. I am here!'"
– Matthew 14:27 (NLT)

➢ ASK JESUS TO EXPAND MY FAITH THROUGH MY STORM.

"Then Peter called to him, 'Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.' 'Yes, come,' Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. 'Save me, Lord!' he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. 'You have so little faith,' Jesus said. 'Why did you doubt me?'" – **Matthew 14:28-31 (NLT)**

This Week's Follow Me Principle:

IF YOU WANT TO WALK ON WATER, YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THE BOAT.

➢ BELIEVE JESUS WILL CALM MY STORM.

"When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then the disciples worshiped him. 'You really are the Son of God!' they exclaimed." – **Matthew 14:32-33 (NLT)**

"When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the LORD, your God." – **Isaiah 43:2-3a (NLT)**

FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

(Levels of learning for assessing spiritual maturity)

- **Knowledge** – *"what to do"* – building a spiritual foundation by determining a person's level of biblical understanding; what does s/he already know and what does s/he still need to learn. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Evaluative Question: Are people learning the content and meaning of the Bible?

- **Perspective** – *"why to do it"* – seeing life from God's point of view by understanding His nature and ways. Perspective enables us to answer the "why" questions of life by seeing life from God's eternal frame of reference. **Ephesians 4:13-14**

Evaluative Question: Are people seeing themselves, life, and other people more clearly from God's perspective?

- **Conviction** – *"motivation to do it"* – biblical conviction that empowers us to counter secular values in the process of becoming more like Christ. **Romans 12:2**

Evaluative Question: Are people's values becoming more aligned with God's values?

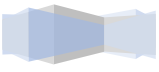
- **Skills** – *"how to do it"* – skills developed by practice and experience that equip us to grow spiritually. **James 1:22**

Evaluative Question: Are people becoming more skilled in serving God?

- **Character** – *"what it does to you"* – responding in God-honoring ways in character-building situations. When we make the right choices in life, we are spiritually transformed. **Colossians 1:28**

Evaluative Question: Are people becoming more like Christ?

(Source: The Purpose Driven Church, pages 361-362)





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Cultivating Love, Choosing Progress, Cherishing Civility