

*Study Guide*



***ADULT BIBLE STUDY  
IN BASIC ENGLISH***

**1, 2, 3 JOHN  
1 PETER**

***INCLUDES BONUS CHRISTMAS LESSON***

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Dallas, Texas

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN BASIC ENGLISH**  
**STUDY GUIDE**  
**First, Second, and Third John, and First Peter**

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# The Letters of John and Peter

**J**ohn and Peter were the first followers of Jesus. They were with Jesus from the time He began teaching. Both men were getting old when they wrote their letters. They had seen many things happen since Jesus returned to God in heaven. They had seen many people believe in Jesus. They had been part of the growth of the early church. And they had seen the increase of opposition to the Good News. Christians had moved to many different parts of the world. False teachers were teaching things that were not true about Jesus. Christians often faced pressures and suffering from governments because of their belief and faith in Jesus.

John and Peter wrote letters to the Christians to encourage them to remain true to the teachings of Jesus. They urged them to be strong as they faced the pressure and suffering from outside the church.

As you study these letters, remember they have a message for Christians today, too. We must give attention to the instructions so we can live according to Jesus' teachings and please Him. As we face difficulties and pressures because we follow Jesus, these letters will help us know how to face life's problems and have victory over them.

## **Unit 1—Understanding True Christianity**

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## **Bonus Lesson**

<u>Christmas Lesson:</u>	Good News!	Luke 2:8-20
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# Word List for 1, 2, 3 John; 1 Peter; Christmas Lesson

## Lesson 1

**relationship:** to be part of the same family. Or to share an important friendship by knowing someone well and being close to them.

**holy:** pure, clean; completely dedicated to God

**deceiving:** making someone believe what is false or not true

## Lesson 2

**mature:** something fully developed or complete

**assurance:** to be certain something is true; freedom from doubt

**outcast:** a person who has been rejected by other people

## Lesson 3

**distinguish:** to tell the difference of one from another

**lavish:** to give generously

**tempt:** to try to make someone do something wrong

## Lesson 4

**motivate:** to be moved to action; to be inspired to do something

**practical:** useful and beneficial

**demonstrate:** to show clearly

## Lesson 5

**overcome:** to defeat or conquer

**challenges:** trials or problems that take strength to face

**confidently, confidence :** living with bold assurance

**witness:** someone who gives true information about a person or event

## Lesson 6

**posed:** acted like

**option:** a choice

**consequences:** results or effects of actions or events

**generation:** people born during a particular time

## Lesson 7

**slandered:** to lie about a person to make him/her look bad

**forsake:** to leave completely with no desire to return

**inheritance:** something passed down from one person to another

**genuine:** real, true, not fake

## Lesson 8

**revenge:** repaying evil to someone for evil done to you

**discipline:** training that results in controlled behavior

**compare:** to show the difference between two things

**leisure:** free time to relax for pleasure

## Lesson 9

**admire:** to like very much because of good qualities

**threatened:** to be told of danger or harm from others

**constructing:** to put pieces together, to build

**disregarded:** thought of as having no worth

## Lesson 10

**amusing:** funny, playful, or entertaining

**authority:** a person with power who rules over another

**honor:** to give respect to someone

**mates:** husbands and wives

## Lesson 11

**cell:** a small room in a prison where prisoners are kept

**disturbed:** to be troubled or be upset by someone

**ridiculed:** to be laughed at or made fun of; to be treated as if stupid

**signifies:** to show the meaning of a something

## Lesson 12

**accused:** to say someone has done wrong

**cannibals:** people who kill and eat other humans

**glory:** great beauty and splendor

**severe:** something that is very bad or harsh

## Lesson 13

**equal:** to have the same value

**authority:** a person with power who rules over another

**flock:** a group of animals that live and travel together; also, a group of people under its leaders

**humble:** to not feel proud of self but to put others first

## Christmas Lesson

**beforehand:** before something happens; in advance; previous to

**humbled:** to not feel proud of self but to put others first

**privilege:** favor

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# ◊ First, Second, & Third John ◊

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*Adult Bible Study in Basic English*

## **UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING TRUE CHRISTIANITY**

**Lesson 1**  
**Jesus and Us**  
**1 John 1:1 to 2:2**

**Lesson 2**  
**Tests for Knowing God**  
**1 John 2:3-11,18-27**

**Lesson 3**  
**Being God's Children**  
**1 John 2:28-3:10**

**Lesson 4**  
**Showing Love  
in Daily Living**  
**1 John 3:11-18, 23-24;  
4:7-21**

**Lesson 5**  
**Faith is the Way  
to Victory**  
**1 John 5:1-21**

**Lesson 6**  
**Be Wise, Be Generous**  
**2 John 1-11; 3 John 1-8**

## **UNIT 1**

### **Understanding True Christianity**

**J**ohn was a personal friend and follower of Jesus. He was with Jesus for three years listening and learning about God and how He wanted His children to live. When John wrote these letters, he was very old. Many years had passed since Jesus had been on earth. Some people were teaching false things about Jesus. They said He was not really a human. They said Jesus was not the Son of God.

Since John was with Jesus and learned from Him, John could correct false teachers. He wrote to help Christians understand true Christianity.

Christians must understand what is true and live according to the truth. It is important what Christians believe about Jesus. It is important for Christians to love others. And it is important for Christians to obey God's commands. John gave clear instructions about each of these important truths.

When we study John's letters, we understand better the truths of Christianity and how we can live for God. We learn that Jesus was God Who became a human like us. We read about the things that show a person is a real believer in God. We learn the importance of obedience for a child of God. We understand we must love other people. We must be wise and generous. Faith is necessary for a victorious life.

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#### ***About the writer***

*A native Texan, Jim Gayle and his wife, Margaret, served as missionaries in Vietnam and Indonesia for more than 24 years. He is retired after serving with the Baptist General Convention of Texas as coordinator of International Friendship Corps for five years. He has pastored several churches and worked as minister of missions on a church staff. Jim and Margaret live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. They have three adult sons and ten grandchildren.*



*Adult Bible Study in  
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### Bible Text

1 John 1:1 to 2:2

### Memory Verse

“If we live in the light as He (God) is in the light, we share what we have in God with each other. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, makes our lives clean from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

### Word List

**relationship:** to be part of the same family. Or to share an important friendship by knowing someone well and being close to them.

**holy:** pure, clean; completely dedicated to God

**deceiving:** making someone believe what is false or not true

# Jesus and Us

My small granddaughter was confused when I tried to explain how a member of our family was related to her. It was too hard for her to understand. Family **relationships** are important. But it is even more important to understand Who Jesus is and how people can be related to Him. Today we will study our **relationship** to Jesus and how that **relationship** can make a difference in our lives.

### **Jesus Is God Who Became Man Like Us (1 John 1:1-4)**

John wanted his friends to know who Christ Jesus was. John says several things about Jesus that are very important if we really know Him. First, Christ was alive from the beginning before anything else was made. Second, He is the Word of Life. He is God the Father’s Son Who came to earth. John had seen, heard, and touched Christ. Jesus told His friends that He came from God the Father. Jesus said He came to earth as a man. He was a man but He was also God.

Some people believe Jesus was a great human teacher but they do not believe He is God Who came to earth as a man. Other people say Jesus was not really a human. They say He only appeared to be a man. It is important to understand Jesus is both God and man. If a person does not believe Jesus is both man and God, he cannot really know Jesus. If Jesus is only a man like all other men, He would be sinful like all others and could not take our sins away by His death. The Bible tells us He died and came back to life again. He was raised from the dead three days after He died. He is alive today and we can know Him.

### **Jesus Shows Us What God is Like (1 John 1:5-9)**

People who do not know God will often ask, “What is God like?” One reason Jesus became a man was to help us know what

**Things To  
Think About**

1. Why was John able to tell about Jesus?
2. How is Jesus the man different from all other men?
3. Describe what the Bible means by “God is light.”
4. What must we do to live a life pleasing to God?

God is like. John tells us what he learned about God from Jesus. John was personally acquainted with Jesus. He tells what he saw, heard, and touched while he was with Jesus.

The first thing John says is God is light. John means God is more than physical light. John writes, “There is no darkness in Him” (v. 5). This means God is pure and **holy**. No sin or impurity is in God. God is truth. Not only does God speak truth, but He is true in all His ways. All truth comes from God.

John also says God forgives us of our sins. By His forgiveness, we become clean from all sin. God puts His word in our hearts and minds so we will want to be like Jesus. We can have a **relationship** with God just as John did. God has a **relationship** with every person who believes in Jesus.

**Jesus Helps Us Please God (1 John 1:7 to 2:2)**

Can a person really live in a way that pleases God? We naturally want to please ourselves. Jesus became a man so we could know God personally and know how to please God. The Bible says we are made clean by Jesus’ blood. He paid the penalty for our sins by giving His life on the cross. God forgives us when we tell Him we have sinned and we believe Jesus died to make us clean from sin. Our **holy** God sees us as clean and pure, no longer guilty of sin.

Jesus gives the desire and the ability to live in a way that pleases God. However, there are things the Bible says we must do as we live each day. We must not live in darkness. This means we must not do wrong things, sinful things. We must tell the truth. If we say we know God but do not live according to God’s light (truth), then we are **deceiving** ourselves and are lying.

If we refuse to say we have sinned, we make God a liar because He says we all are sinful. God’s Word is not in our

hearts. When we live as God tells us to, we will share what we have in God with others. We will no longer think only about what we want. We will think about what God wants from us.

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### **1 John 1:1 to 2:2**

1 Christ is the Word of Life. He was from the beginning. We have heard Him and have seen Him with our own eyes. We have looked at Him and put our hands on Him.

2 Christ, Who is Life was shown to us. We saw Him. We tell you and preach about the Life that lasts forever. He was with the Father and He has come down to us.

3 We are preaching what we have heard and seen. We want you to share together with us what we have with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

4 We are writing this to you so our joy may be full.

5 This is what we heard Him tell us. We are passing it on to you. God is light. There is no darkness in Him.

6 If we say we are joined together with Him but live in darkness, we are telling a lie. We are not living the truth.

7 If we live in the light as He is in the

light; we share what we have in God with each other. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, makes our lives clean from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we lie to ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we tell Him our sins, He is faithful and we can depend on Him to forgive us of our sins. He will make our lives clean from all sin.

10 If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar. And His Word is not in our hearts.

2:1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, there is One Who will go between him and the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the One Who is right with God.

2 He paid for our sins with His own blood. He did not pay for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English*

### **Bible Text**

1 John 2:3-11, 18-27

### **Memory Verse**

“The Holy Spirit has been given to you and you all know the truth.” (1 John 2:20)

### **Word List**

**mature:** something fully developed or complete

**assurance:** to be certain something is true; freedom from doubt

**outcast:** a person who has been rejected by other people

# Tests for Knowing God

I have these words above my desk: “We practice daily what we believe; all the rest is just religious talk.” It reminds me that each day my life must reflect what I say I believe, or I am not true to my beliefs. Our actions tell what we truly believe.

If a person really knows God, his life will show it each day. Knowing God is more than saying that we know Him. The Bible tells of things that show whether we really know God. A person’s relationship with God can be tested. From these tests we can know if a person really knows God. It is a serious sin to say we know God and belong to Him when we do not. In this study we will look at things that show a person knows God and belongs to Him.

## **The Test of Obedience**

When a child respects and loves his parents, he will gladly be obedient. He wants to please his parents. A person will do what God says if he really knows God and wants to honor Him as Lord. Jesus told His followers, “The one who loves Me is the one who has My teaching and obeys it. My Father will love whoever loves Me” (John 14:21).

You cannot love a person without knowing him. If we know God, we will love Him. If we love Him, we will obey His teaching. That is why John wrote these words, “We can be sure that we know Him if we obey His teaching” (v. 3). One sure test to show we know God is to be concerned about what He says and to do it.

Some Christians say they know God but do not obey His teachings. Their lives show they are not telling the truth. John says this is the test of whether they know God. “Anyone who says, ‘I know Him,’ but does not obey His teaching is a liar. There is no truth in him” (v. 4).

### Things To Think About

1. Why is it so hard to be obedient to God or others?
2. How has someone shown you they love you? How did it make you feel?
3. What should you do when you know someone is teaching a lie?

Obedying God shows we know Him. Obeying Him also allows Him to **mature** us. Knowing God and loving Him brings great peace to our hearts. Some call this **assurance**. For example, a worker knows his boss and they have a good friendship. The worker has **assurance** that if he does what the boss says, he has no need to fear. The boss will protect him and reward him. The worker has **assurance**.

### **The Test of Loving Others**

God wants His love to be known by everyone. This is why God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. The Bible says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son” (John 3:16).

Today people can know about God’s love when they experience that love from His followers. We are to show the love of God to the world. This is following Jesus’ example.

Loving others was not a new law from God when John wrote to his friends. When someone questioned Jesus about what was the greatest law, He told about the old law that was given by God before Jesus came. “ ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest of the Laws. The second is like it, ‘You must love your neighbor as you love yourself’ ” (Matthew 22:37-39).

Most people think this commandment to love our neighbors means we should love those we feel are worthy of our love. But Jesus gave new meaning to this old law by the way He loved others. He loved the people who were **outcasts**. No one else would love them, but Jesus did. Jesus gave light to this old commandment. If we are people of Light, we will love others. Hating others shows we do not know God but are still in the darkness that sin causes.

### **The Test of Holding to Truth**

People who know God will continue to hold to the truth. We cannot believe anything or make up what we think is right and true. God has given us the truth in Jesus and the Bible. We must know God, know His truth, and hold to the truth.

False teachers take the Bible and use it for their own benefit. They twist the truth and make some people believe lies. A false teaching is a lie and must be rejected and not followed.

False teachers sometimes teach that Jesus is not the Son of God. They leave the church and start their own church. They leave because their teachings are false and they do not really know God. John wrote, "They left us. But they never belonged to us. If they had been a part of us, they would have stayed with us" (v. 19).

God has given us the Holy Spirit so we might know His truth. He will always show us the truth and not a lie.

We must test what we hear others say or teach to see what really is truth. The promise is the Holy Spirit will help us. We must hold to what is truth from God. At the end of the world, God will expose all false teachers and will reject them. If we know God, we will know and hold to His truth, too.

John writes about three tests that show we know God:

- (1) The test of obedience;
- (2) The test of loving others; and
- (3) The test of holding to truth.

By passing these tests we have assurance that we know God. We will be glad when Jesus comes back to earth again. We will not be ashamed or fearful to see Jesus suddenly coming in the clouds. We will meet Him with joy because we are His children.

**1 John 2:3-11, 18-27**

3 We can be sure that we know Him if we obey His teaching.

4 Anyone who says, "I know Him," but does not obey His teaching is a liar. There is no truth in him.

5 But whoever obeys His Word has the love of God made perfect in him. This is the way to know if you belong to Christ.

6 The one who says he belongs to Christ should live the same kind of life Christ lived.

7 Dear friends, I am not writing a new Law for you to obey. It is an old Law you have had from the beginning. The old Law is the Word that you have heard.

8 And yet it is a new Law that I am writing to you. It is truth. It was seen in Christ and it is seen in you also. The darkness is passing away and the true Light shines instead.

9 Whoever says he is in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness.

10 But whoever loves his brother is in the light. And there will be no reason to sin because of him.

11 Whoever hates his brother is not in the light but lives in darkness. He does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

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18 My children, we are near the end of the world. You have heard that the false-christ is coming. Many false-christs have already come. This is how we know the end of the

world is near.

19 These left us. But they never belonged to us. If they had been a part of us, they would have stayed with us. Because they left, it is known they did not belong to us.

20 The Holy Spirit has been given to you and you all know the truth.

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth. I have written because you do know the truth and you know that no lies comes from the truth.

22 Who is a liar? He is a person who says that Jesus is not the Christ. The false-christ will have nothing to do with the Father and the Son and he will turn away from Them.

23 A person who will have nothing to do with the Son and turns against Him does not have the Father. The one who says he knows the Son has the Father also.

24 Keep in your heart what you have heard from the beginning. Then you will belong to the Son and to the Father if what you have heard from the beginning is in you.

25 And He has promised us life that lasts forever!

26 I have written to you about those who are trying to lead you in the wrong way.

27 Christ gave you the Holy Spirit and He lives in you. You do not need anyone to teach you. The Holy Spirit is able to teach you all things. What He teaches you is truth and not a lie. Live by the help of Christ as the Holy Spirit has taught you.



Lesson  
3  
Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 John 2:28-3:10

### Memory Verse

“See what great love the Father has for us that He would call us His children. And that is what we are.” (1 John 3:1)

### Word List

**distinguish:** to tell the difference of one from another

**lavish:** to give generously

**tempt:** to try to make someone do something wrong

# Being God's Children

DNA is a wonderful scientific discovery. DNA can identify the children of parents. When DNA matches, it accurately shows a child belongs to a certain parent. DNA can **distinguish** children of one parent from all other children in the world. It shows that parent and child belong to each other because the DNA codes match.

Being a child of God is special. Physical birth does not make anyone a child of God. The Bible says there must be a spiritual birth. We become God's children by believing Jesus is God's Son and inviting Him to come into our heart and mind. Changes take place within us when we become a child of God. These changes identify us as a child of God, a kind of spiritual DNA.

This lesson looks at the changes which **distinguish** a child of God from those who are not children of God.

## God Knows His Children

God not only knows us, but He calls us His children. He is happy we belong to Him. God wants a family, a spiritual family that will work together with Him in this world.

John says His love is **lavished** upon us. God gives privileges and responsibilities to all His children. One privilege is having the Holy Spirit help us live and do right. John says we should live by His help so as His children we can be right with God (vv. 28-29). Another privilege is that God works in all His children to make us like Jesus.

His plan is that we become more than what we are now. This process continues throughout our lives. When this life ends, we will see Jesus face-to-face. We will be like Him. We are in God's family forever because He accepts us as His children and works in us now.

### Things To Think About

1. Which do you think is greater for a child of God—privileges or responsibilities? Why?
2. Explain how a person becomes a child of God.
3. How can a person keep from continually living in sin?
4. What distinguishes a child of God and a child of the devil?

As God's children, we have responsibilities, too. We must show His love to others so they can know Him. We must keep ourselves pure from sin, just as Jesus is pure. We must obey His instructions for holy living. The Holy Spirit helps God's children want to live in this way. These things **distinguish** God's children from those who are not His children.

### Sin and God's Children

Children of God live in a world filled with sin and wrong. We are still human and are often **tempted** to continue in the old, sinful way of life. When people do not obey God's law but continually break God's law, they are living in sin. John says people who live like that do not know God.

God's children must not continue to live in sin because Jesus lives in them. Jesus came to take away our sins. Jesus Christ has no sin in Him. He has defeated Satan (the devil), who **tempts** people to sin. Christ helps us not to keep sinning.

Those who are God's children love to obey God's law. They do not want to continue sinning. This does not mean they will never sin or never do something wrong. But when God's children do sin, they ask God to forgive them and make them clean again (1 John 1:9).

A child of God has two goals in life: Not living in sin, and doing what is right. Doing what is right is also a sign a person is a Child of God. In society, children represent their parents and family by bearing the family name. When children are honest, upright citizens, the family is honored. When they are bad, the family is shamed. It is not always easy to be good. But children should have a goal to make their parents proud of how they live and what they do. In the same way, every child of God should do everything he can to do right and please His Lord.

### People Who Continually Sin

John makes very strong statements about those who keep on sinning and refuse to obey God's law. "The person who keeps on sinning has not seen Him or has not known Him....The person who keeps on sinning belongs to the devil" (1 John 3:6b, 8a). A person who lives continually in sin is not a child of God. He does not know God. He does not have Jesus living in him. He does not care to please God but only thinks about what he wants. That person's life is ruled by the devil.

A person's actions **distinguishes** a child of God from one who is not. If a person believes in Jesus, God's love is in his heart. He wants to please God because he is God's child. The person who rejects Jesus and lives for himself does not know God. The Bible says he is a child of the devil.

John's words cause us to look closely at our actions. As children of God, we must be a faithful member of God's family.

**1 John 2:28-3:10**

28 And now, my children, live by the help of Him. Then when He comes again, we will be glad to see Him and not be ashamed.

29 You know that Christ is right with God. Then you should know that everyone who is right with God is a child of His.

**1 John 3:1** See what great love the Father has for us that He would call us His children. And that is what we are. For this reason the people of the world do not know who we are because they did not know Him.

2 Dear friends, we are God's children now. But it has not yet been shown to us what we are going to be. We know that when He comes again, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is.

3 The person who is looking for this to happen will keep himself pure because Christ is pure.

4 The person who keeps on sinning is guilty of not obeying the Law of God. For sin is breaking the Law of God.

5 You know that Christ came to take away our sins. There is no sin in Him.

6 The person who lives by the help of Christ does not keep on sinning. The person who keeps on sinning has not seen Him or has not known Him.

7 My children, let no one lead you in the wrong way. The man who does what is right, is right with God in the same way as

Christ is right with God.

8 The person who keeps on sinning belongs to the devil. The devil has sinned from the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No person who has become .a child of God keeps on sinning. This is because the Holy Spirit is in him. He cannot keep on sinning because God is his Father.

10 This is the way you can know who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil. The person who does not keep on doing what is right and does not love his brother does not belong to God.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 John 3:11-18, 23-24;  
4:7-21

### Memory Verse

“Let us not love with words or in talk only. Let us love by what we do and in truth.”  
(1 John 3:18)

### Word List

**motivate:** to be moved to action; to be inspired to do something

**practical:** useful and beneficial

**demonstrate:** to show clearly

# Showing Love in Daily Living

When I was in college I needed to pay for my college expenses. A Christian man gave me a job I did not really know how to do. But I learned. I worked for him in that job for five years. After I had worked a few months, I learned that the man gave me the job because of Christian love. He really did not know if I could do what needed to be done but he was willing to let me try.

God commands Christians to love others. This is not something we can choose to do or choose not to do. It is what we must do if we obey God. Our love for others should be **motivated** by the love God has for us. “God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). If God loved us that much, we should love others and show that love in **practical** ways each day. Let’s consider what it means to show love in daily living.

### **God’s Love for All Mankind**

John tells a very interesting thing about God: He is love (1 John 4:8,16). John does not say God *has* love, but that He *is* love. Love flows from God. We can best understand true love when we know God. God did not just speak about love. He **demonstrated** His love for everyone through Jesus. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ gave His life for us (3:16a).

When we read this lesson’s Scripture carefully, we understand all the ways God’s love benefits us. Because of God’s love, we have life filled with meaning now and the promise of life with Him forever when we die. John says that because of God’s love, the penalty for my sins and yours was paid completely by Jesus’ death. We need not worry about punishment for our sins. His love drives fear from our hearts and minds. It is by His love that God lives in the heart of everyone

### Things To Think About

1. What have you done lately to show love to someone?
2. Do you think God loves those who do not love Him?
3. Can you demonstrate love to someone who hates you? How?

who believes Jesus is Lord.

There is nothing we can tell about that is more wonderful than the love of God for us. We do nothing to receive it. God just gives it to us because He is love. A popular Christian song says, "The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell." How are we to respond to such love?

### Our Response to God's Love

It would be very bad to receive all the benefits of God's great love and not show that we are thankful for His love.

When I was given the job I referred to earlier, my response was to work as hard as I could to show the man I was thankful for his kindness and Christian love. In the same way, we must respond to God's love with thankfulness. The Bible says, "Let us not love with words or in talk only. Let us love by what we do and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Another part of experiencing God's love is when we show it through action to someone.

Here are some things John says we should do in response to God's clear **demonstration** of love. Five times in this lesson's Scripture passages, John says Christians should love each other (3:11,23, 4:7,11,21). Love is not a suggestion; it is a command. It is sad to see people who say they know God, but they do not speak to each other or they say bad things about one another. Where is God's love in them?

We should be willing to die for those we love. God's love in us helps us to do that. How often do you show love to poor people? If we see someone in need of food or other things, we should do all we can to help them, even if it means we must do without. That should be our response to God's love for us. We are to let the Holy Spirit live in us so we will

obey God's commands.

When we love as God commands, we show that we know Him and that He lives in us. As God lives in us, His love matures us. His love makes us complete.

In the future, when God judges all people, we will not be afraid. His love is in our hearts, and we know Him. His love drives out the fear of judgment.

### **People Who Do Not Have God's Love**

People who do not know God's love cannot truly love others, because they do not know God. "Those who do not love do not know God because God is love" (4:8).

John tells about a man named Cain who hated his brother and killed him. People who do not have God's love are like Cain and are spiritually dead (3:12-15).

Anyone who hates and murders other people does not have eternal life in them. Their life is full of fear—fear that someone will get what they have, fear that someone will make them look bad, or fear that they will someday be judged for their evil deeds. The Bible says that love drives out fear. But when a person refuses to accept God's love in Jesus, fear and shame are in their heart.

God's children are to show love to all people, even to those who hate us. If

we say we love God and hate others, we are lying. If we cannot love people we see and know, then we cannot love God whom we have not seen. It is impossible to love God and hate others.

Just as God **demonstrated** His love to us before we knew Him, we are to **demonstrate** His love to everyone.

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### **1 John 3:11-18, 23-24; 4:7-21**

11 This is what you have heard from the beginning, that we should love each other.

12 Do not be like Cain. He was a child of the devil and killed his brother. Why did he kill him? It was because he did what was sinful and his brother did what was right.

13 Do not be surprised if the world hates you, Christian brothers.

14 We know we have passed from death into life. We know this because we love the Christians. The person who does not love has not passed from death into life.

15 A man who hates his brother is a killer in his heart. You know that life which lasts forever is not in one who kills.

16 We know what love is because Christ gave His life for us. We should give our lives for our brothers.

17 What if a person has enough money to

live on and sees his brother in need of food and clothing? If he does not help him, how can the love of God be in him?

18 My children, let us not love with words or in talk only. Let us love by what we do and in truth.

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23 This is what He said we must do: Put your trust in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love each other. Christ told us to do this.

24 The person who obeys Christ lives by the help of God and God lives in him. We know He lives in us by the Holy Spirit He has given us.

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**1 John 4:7** Dear friends let us love each other, because love comes from God. Those who love are God's children and they know God.

8 Those who do not love do not know God because God is love.

9 God has shown His love to us by sending His only Son into the world. God did this so we might have life through Christ.

10 This is love! It is not that we loved God but that He loved us. For God sent His Son to pay for our sins with His own blood.

11 Dear friends, if God loved us that much, then we should love each other.

12 No person has ever seen God at any time. If we love each other, God lives in us. His love is made perfect in us.

13 He has given us His Spirit. This is how

we live by His help and He lives in us.

14 We have seen and are able to say that the Father sent His Son to save the world from the punishment of sin.

15 The person who tells of Him in front of men and says that Jesus is the Son of God, God is living in that one and that one is living by the help of God.

16 We have come to know and believe the love God has for us. God is love. If you live in love, you live by the help of God and God lives in you.

17 Love is made perfect in us when we are not ashamed as we stand before Him on the day He judges. For we know that our life in this world is His life lived in us.

18 There is no fear in love. Perfect love puts fear out of our hearts. People have fear when they are afraid of being punished. The man who is afraid does not have perfect love.

19 We love Him because He loved us first.

20 If a person says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar. If a person does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God Whom he has not seen?

21 We have these words from Him. If you love God, love your brother also.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 John 5:1-21

### Memory Verse

“Every child of God has power over the sins of the world. The way we have power over the sins of the world is by our faith.” (1 John 5:4)

### Word List

**overcome:** to defeat or conquer

**challenges:** trials or problems that take strength to face

**confidently,**

**confidence :** living with bold assurance

**witness:** someone who gives true information about a person or event

# Faith Is the Way to Victory

When we lived in Asia, we met people who feared spirits. They were afraid they would have many problems if they did not worship and offer food to the spirits of their ancestors. When we talked to them about their feelings, they had no power to **overcome** their fear. They were like slaves to unseen spirits.

Everyone has problems and difficulties to face and **overcome**. Faith is necessary to **overcome** problems. Faith is believing and trusting an object or person. We practice faith every day in different ways. Children have faith that parents will give them food when they are hungry. They do not worry; they believe and trust their parents. We place our faith in a chair when we decide to sit on it. Faith is a part of our daily lives.

Faith in God is essential for a Christian. The Bible says without faith it is impossible to please God. What is faith in God? It is believing what God says is true and trusting Him to do all He says He will do. Faith is believing and trusting completely in God.

Christians can face and **overcome** life’s **challenges** by faith in Jesus Christ. He promised to love us and help us. Faith in Jesus lets us experience victory over problems and live **confidently** each day. This lesson studies Christians’ faith in God and how that faith makes a difference in life.

### **Living Daily by Faith**

John begins this Scripture passage by saying the person who believes Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. *Christ* is a title meaning one who saves or savior. The entire book of First John emphasizes we must believe Jesus and obey Him. If we do, Jesus will save us from the penalty and punishment of our sins. He sets us free from sin’s power that causes us to do wrong. Faith is our response to God’s love for us shown in Jesus. It is by faith in

### Things To Think About

1. How strong is your faith?
2. What do you need to do to have victory when you face **challenges**?
3. Think about the ways overcoming each trial or problem can build your **confidence** in God.

Jesus that we have power over the sin in the world.

Faith in God and His love gives Christians the ability to love others. Faith gives us power to **overcome** hate and anger toward other people. Loving others is a proof that a person knows God and obeys His teachings. As we trust Jesus, we discover His commands are not hard to keep. Faith gives power to live daily for God and **overcome** the world.

### Faith in God Gives Confidence

Christians have a reason for faith. John says there is a heavenly **witness** about Jesus. God the Father, Jesus His Word, and the Holy Spirit all say the same thing about Who Jesus is. All agree that He came to earth, and that by faith in Him, we have power to **overcome** the world. There is also an earthly **witness**. This is the water (Jesus' baptism, His identification with us), the blood (His death for us), and the Holy Spirit (Who lives in believers' hearts). Because of this **witness**, our faith in Jesus gives us **confidence**.

Notice how often in today's Scripture the words "we know" or "we can be sure" are written (vv.2,9,13,14,15, 18,19,20). Faith gives us **confidence** in what we know. We know the love of God. We know Jesus is God's Son. We know believers have life that lasts forever. We know God hears our prayers. He will give us what we ask for. We know the devil cannot get near us because we belong to God. We know Who the true God is. This **confidence** is because of our faith that Jesus, the Son of God, will do what He promised. **Confidence** like this makes faith strong and **overcomes** difficulties in life.

### Faith Makes Prayer Powerful

People of faith should be people of powerful prayer. We can ask God for things according to His will and He will

hear us and act upon that request. The greatest prayer a person of faith can pray is: “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth....” Faith joins God in what He is doing today in our lives.

Faith moves us to pray for Christians who are sinning. We ask God to help them understand their sin. We pray they will stop sinning and ask God to forgive them and make them right. If someone constantly turns away from God and will not believe Jesus is Savior, that person’s sin will lead to death. He will be separated from God forever. Even our faith and prayers cannot help him.

When a person first believes in Jesus, he is spiritually born into God’s family. Faith is fully grown, but God will help faith to mature. Each time a new Christian faces a trial or difficulty, his faith will grow as he **overcomes** the trial. Faith is the way to victory.

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### 1 John 5:1-21

1 The person who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. The person who loves the Father loves His children also.

2 This is the way we know we love God's children. It is when we love God and obey His Word.

3 Loving God means to obey His Word, and His Word is not hard to obey.

4 Every child of God has power over the sins of the world. The way we have power over the sins of the world is by our faith.

5 Who could have power over the world except by believing that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 Jesus Christ came by water and blood. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. The Holy Spirit speaks about this and He is truth.

7 There are three Who speak of this in heaven: the Father and the Word and the Holy Spirit. These three are one.

8 There are three who speak of this on the earth: the Holy Spirit and the water and the blood. These three speak the same thing.

9 If we believe what men say, we can be sure what God says is more important. God has spoken as He has told us about His Son.

10 The person who puts his trust in God’s Son knows in his own heart that Jesus is the Son of God. The person who does not have his trust in God’s Son makes God a liar. It is because he has not believed the word God spoke about His Son.

11 This is the word He spoke: God gave us life that lasts forever, and this life is in His Son.

12. He that has the Son has life. He that

does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God. Now you can know you have life that lasts forever.

14 We are sure that if we ask anything that He wants us to have, He will hear us.

15 If we are sure He hears us when we ask, we can be sure He will give us what we ask for.

16 You may see a Christian brother sinning in a way that does not lead to death. You should pray for him. God will give him life unless he has done that sin that leads to death. There is a sin that leads to death. There is no reason to pray for him if he has done that sin.

17 Every kind of wrong-doing is sin. But there is a sin that does not lead to death.

18 We know that no child of God keeps on sinning. The Son of God watches over him and the devil cannot get near him.

19 We know that we belong to God, but the whole world is under the power of the devil.

20 We know God's Son has come. He has given us the understanding to know Him Who is the true God. We are joined together with the true God through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and the life that lasts forever.

21 My children, keep yourselves from false gods.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

2 John 1-11;

3 John 1-8

### Memory Verse

“I can have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.” (3 John 4)

### Word List

**posed:** acted like

**option:** a choice

**consequences:** results or effects of actions or events

**generation:** people born during a particular time

# Be Wise, Be Generous

The national news reported about a man who **posed** as a doctor and got a job working in a public hospital. He worked there many years before someone checked his background. They learned he had never gone to medical school. Some of the people in the hospital said he was a good doctor. But when people learned he was not a real doctor, the hospital knew they could not trust him anymore. They fired him, and the police arrested him.

Sometimes in church work, we find people who are not true Christians. The Bible calls these people false teachers. In his second and third letters, John describes what true believers are like. He encourages the church to be generous in supporting true believers and to be wise in rejecting false teachers.

### **Truth, Love and Obedience (2 John 1-6)**

John wrote to “the chosen lady and to her children.” We do not know if the “chosen lady” was a real person since no name is given. Perhaps it was a church and its people. John may have used code language for the sake of safety in case the letter was read by Roman authorities who opposed the church.

This church believed the truth. They believed in Jesus Who is the Truth. John wanted his readers to know truth comes from God. People cannot make up their own ideas of God. They must accept the truth Jesus reveals about God. When the truth of Jesus is in people’s heart, they will love one another.

This church made John very happy. He praises them because they were “living in the truth as the Father has said we should” (v.4) John then asks them to love even deeper by reminding them of an old law. That law said we should love one another. By repeating this commandment John stresses loving each other in the church is never an **option**. It is necessary. It is a command.

### Things To Think About

1. How does knowing the truth about Jesus help me love others?
2. How does knowing the truth about Jesus make me wise?
3. In what ways do I need to become more generous in supporting God's servants?

John explains to his readers what true love is. It is more than just emotion. He says, "Love means that we should live by obeying His Word" (v.6). A true Christian is someone who knows the truth, obeys God's Word, and loves fellow Christians.

### **WARNING! Imposters! (2 John 7-11)**

False teachers were present in Bible times just as they are today. They did not believe Jesus Christ was truly human. Some false teachers traveled from city to city and visited the churches. John warns his readers to watch out for them. Bad **consequences** will result for believers who follow the false teachers instead of the teachings of Jesus. They will lose what they have worked for. It will be like turning their backs and rejecting both the Father and the Son.

John wants his readers to be wise, so he instructs them. If a false teacher shows up at their church, do not to welcome him into their homes. He explains the reason why. If true believers are hospitable and generous to false teachers, they will be partners with the false teachers.

This is a warning Christians need to pay attention to today, too. Believers should not support preachers, TV evangelists, or missionaries who deny that Jesus was fully human, was God's Son, and that His death paid the full price for our sins.

### **Example of Gaius (3 John 1-8)**

John wrote his third letter to a specific person, Gaius. Throughout the letter we can see John's love for Gaius. He calls him his "dear friend." He prays for his spiritual and physical health. He expresses joy in receiving news that "my children are following the truth." This is a family image.

We also see another family image. John, probably very

## 2 John 1-11

1 The church leader writes to the chosen lady and to her children. I love you because of the truth. I am not the only one who loves you. All who know the truth love you.

2 It is because the truth is in us and will be with us forever.

3 Loving-favor and loving-kindness and peace are ours as we live in truth and love. These come from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Son of the Father.

4 I am happy to find some of your children living in the truth as the Father has said we should.

5 And now I ask you, lady, that we have love one for the other. I am not writing to you about a new Law but an old one we have had from the beginning.

6 Love means that we should live by obeying His Word. From the beginning He has said in His Word that our hearts should be full of love.

7 There are many false teachers in the world. They do not say that Jesus Christ came in a human body. Such a person does not tell the truth. He is the false-christ.

8 Watch yourselves! You do not want to lose what we have worked for. You want to get what has been promised to you.

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not live by the teachings of Christ does not have God. If you live by what Christ taught, you

have both the Father and the Son.

10 If a person comes to you with some other kind of teaching, do not take him into your home. Do not even say hello to him.

11 The person who does has a part in his sins.

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## 3 John 1-8

1 The church leader writes to the much-loved Gaius. I love you because of the truth.

2 Dear friend, I pray that you are doing well in every way. I pray that your body is strong and well even as your soul is.

3 I was very happy when some Christians came and told me about how you are following the truth.

4 I can have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.

5 Dear friend, you are doing a good work by being kind to the Christians, and for sure, to the strangers.

6 They have told the church about your love. It will be good for you to help them on their way as God would have you.

7 These people are working for the Lord. They are taking nothing from the people who do not know God.

8 So we should help such people. That way we will be working with them as they teach the truth.

old when he wrote this letter, shows he is pleased with the younger believer. Older **generations** of believers always delight in watching young believers grow in their Christian life.

Gaius provides an example of how the gospel should be lived in every day life. He practiced generous hospitality. In the first century, inns were not safe. Providing a safe place to rest and refreshment for the physical body was a way of showing love. Gaius was kind and helped people in this way.

Today, Christians have opportunity to be generous and show hospitality, too. Hosting missionaries who visit your church is a way to participate in missions. Providing a home-cooked meal and/or overnight stay for international students while they study in the U.S. is a way to help “strangers” feel at home. Gaius gave us a good example to follow.

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# ◆ First Peter ◆

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*Adult Bible Study in Basic English*

## **UNIT 2: FOR CHRISTIANS UNDER PRESSURE**

**Lesson 7**  
**The Cost  
of Being a Christian**  
**1 Peter 1:1-12**

**Lesson 8**  
**Focus Your Life on Christ**  
**1 Peter 1:13 to 2:3**

**Lesson 9**  
**Being Part of God's Work**  
**1 Peter 2:4-10**

**Lesson 10**  
**Instructions on  
How to Live**  
**1 Peter 2:11 to 3:8**

**Lesson 11**  
**Trusting God in Suffering**  
**1 Peter 3:13 to 4:2**

**Lesson 12**  
**Why Christians Suffer**  
**1 Peter 4:12-19**

**Lesson 13**  
**Instructions to the Church  
and Its Leaders**  
**1 Peter 5:1-11**

## **UNIT 2**

### **For Christians Under Pressure**

**P**eter was a well-known follower of Jesus. He was one of the twelve apostles—those followers who spent much time with Jesus, listening and learning from Him. Peter writes this letter to Christians who were refugees living in what is currently Northern Turkey. They lived in a part of the world ruled by Rome. Peter writes to remind them of how God has saved them and given them a purpose for living. He also encourages them in the difficulties they faced. Peter knew these difficulties might end in physical suffering or even death because of their faith in Jesus.

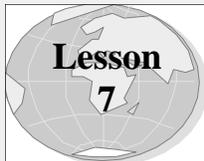
How many people do you know today who face possible suffering because of their faith? Today, people in the Western world might suffer criticism or feel shamed by others who oppose their faith. Not many will suffer physically or face death because they follow Jesus. In other parts of the world, however, Christians suffer discrimination, have their possessions taken, are imprisoned, and sometimes are killed because they believe in Jesus.

As you study these lessons, you might ask yourself, “Is my faith in Jesus strong enough so I would be willing to suffer as a Christian?” We cannot know what we might face in the future. First Peter can help us think about all Jesus means to us and give us a desire to be faithful to Him, even though we may never suffer physically for Him.

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#### ***About the writer***

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Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 Peter 1:1-12

### Memory Verse

“These tests have come to prove your faith and to show that it is good. Gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire. Your faith is worth much more than gold and it must be tested also.” (1 Peter 1:7)

### Word List

**slandered:** to lie about a person to make him/her look bad

**forsake:** to leave completely with no desire to return

**inheritance:** something passed down from one person to another

**genuine:** real, true, not fake

# The Cost of Being a Christian

Bantu had been a Christian for only a few months. One day, he said to me, “Being a Christian costs more than I knew it would.” His friends did not include him in their parties as before. His family did not like it when he would not lie to make a profit on things he sold. Other people in his village stopped talking to him. Bantu began to realize that being a Christian had a cost.

Peter was an experienced Christian. He had followed Jesus from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. He had been with Jesus just before He was put to death. Peter, along with the other disciples, was with Jesus after He rose from the dead. Peter knew what it cost to be a Christian.

Peter writes a letter to other Christians who were refugees. They had fled to five different provinces of the Roman Empire. This area is Northern Turkey today. We are unsure why these Christians fled to this area, but it probably was because they were followers of Jesus. Perhaps they were **slandered** or threatened. Peter writes them to help them understand how their problems can benefit God’s work and strengthen their faith.

### **Chosen by God (1 Peter 1:2)**

Have you ever been chosen by someone to be part of a team? It makes you feel good when someone thinks you can help and chooses you.

These Christians were “under pressure.” They were enduring trials. Peter tells them they had been chosen by God to be part of His spiritual family. God knew He could depend on them to live holy lives. He made them clean by the blood of Jesus. They were born again spiritually to a new kind of life. Peter reminded them of this truth.

To be chosen by God for a new life means we can have a part in all that God is doing in our world. Peter tells about the

**Things To  
Think About**

1. Why was Peter able to write about the suffering and trials of the Christian?
2. Do you know someone who is suffering as a Christian?
3. What value do trials and tests have for the Christian?
4. Have you ever suffered because of Jesus? How did you respond?

great benefits Christians enjoy. However, being part of God's work will cost when we serve on His team.

**Receiving God's Blessings (1 Peter 1:2b-5)**

When a person becomes a child of God by spiritual birth, that person changes his way of thinking. He **forsakes** the old way of life for a new life to follow God's holy ways. God gives wonderful blessings to all His children. He gives loving-favor and peace that fills our lives. We receive "hope that never dies" (v.3). The original words have also been translated as *living hope*, or *hope that is alive*. It is not a "maybe-so hope," but a positive, certain hope about new life as Christians. It is a sure hope because Jesus rose from the dead and lives forever.

The Christian has an **inheritance** that God promises He will give to us. I have a gold watch I **inherited** from my father after he died. It is of great value to me. I keep it in a box at the bank. If I am not careful, I could lose this precious watch. I will not have it always but will pass it on to one of my sons when I die.

The **inheritance** God promises us is very different from an earthly **inheritance**. It is pure, will not pass away, is safe forever, and will never be lost. It is kept in heaven by God waiting for us to arrive. Since God has promised us an **inheritance**, we can be sure we will receive it. This is a great blessing we look forward to. This should motivate every Christian to be courageous, even when we face suffering.

**Christian's Trials and Tests (1 Peter 1:6-12)**

Being a part of God's family and working with God means we will face some difficulties and sorrows, trials and tests. Peter says we can even be happy during these difficult times in life. These difficulties and sorrows, trials and tests

make our faith **genuine** and pure. Gold is a precious, valuable metal which must be purified by melting it to remove dirt and impurities. Difficulties are like fire that purifies gold. They make our faith pure. We trust God more completely when we face trials.

Trials and tests will last only a short time compared to the forever time we will be with Jesus in heaven. If we are faithful in trials now, we will have great joy when we see Him. Our love for Jesus gives us strength to undergo trials. In the end, we will enjoy complete victory over every difficulty. Complete salvation is the result of our faith in Him.

God told some of His early preachers about future trials and tests. The Holy Spirit told them that Jesus, God's Son, must suffer and die so He might take away our sin and give us new, spiritual life. Our salvation came at great cost. It was God's plan and is His way to give life that lasts forever to all who believe. Therefore, Jesus' suffering brings great blessing and joy to everyone who believes in Him.

We cannot deny our faith has a high cost. Few people in the U.S. suffer because they are Christians. But many people in the world today face difficulties simply because they believe and follow Jesus. Some are even put to death.

Because God has chosen us, we must work together in His work to help each other and tell people everywhere of God's love in Jesus.

**1 Peter 1:1-12**

1 This letter is from Peter, a missionary of Jesus Christ. I am writing to those who were taken away from their homeland and are living in the countries of Pontus and Galatia and Cappadocia and Asia and Bithynia.

2 You were chosen by God the Father long ago. He knew you were to become His children. You were set apart for holy living by the Holy Spirit. May you obey Jesus Christ and be made clean by His blood. May you be full of His loving-favor and peace.

3 Let us thank the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was through His loving kindness that we were born again to a new life and have hope that never dies. This hope is ours because Jesus was raised from the dead.

4 We will receive the great things that we have been promised. They are being kept safe in heaven for us. They are pure and will not pass away. They will never be lost.

5 You are being kept by the power of God because you put your trust in Him and you will be saved from the punishment of sin at the end of the world.

6 With this hope you can be happy even if you need to have sorrow and all kinds of tests for awhile.

7 These tests have come to prove your

faith and to show that it is good. Gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire. Your faith is worth much more than gold and it must be tested also. Then your faith will bring thanks and shining-greatness and honor to Jesus Christ when He comes again.

8 You have never seen Him but you love Him. You cannot see Him now but you are putting your trust in Him. And you have joy so great that words cannot tell about it.

9 You will get what your faith is looking for, which is to be saved from the punishment of sin.

10 The early preachers tried to find out how to be saved. They told of the loving-favor that would come to you.

11 The early preachers wondered at what time or to what person this would happen. The Spirit of Christ in them was talking to them and told them to write about how Christ would suffer and about His shining-greatness later on.

12 They knew these things would not happen during the time they lived but while you are living many years later. These are the very things that were told to you by those who preached the Good News. The Holy Spirit Who was sent from heaven gave them power and they told of things that even the angels would like to know about.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 Peter 1:13 to 2:3

### Memory Verse

“As new babies want milk, you should want to drink the pure milk which is God's Word so you will grow up and be saved from the punishment of sin.” (1 Peter 2:2)

### Word List

**revenge:** repaying evil to someone for evil done to you

**discipline:** training that results in controlled behavior

**compare:** to show the difference between two things

**leisure:** free time to relax for pleasure

# Focus Your Life on Christ

A microscope is a wonderful tool to make very small things look bigger. However, if the microscope is not in focus, nothing will be seen. The microscope cannot focus itself. The person using the microscope must focus it. It is important for Christians to focus their lives on Jesus, so life can have clear meaning. Peter tells Christians who were living under pressure not to lose sight of who they are and how they are to live.

When we face difficulty and become confused or afraid, we are focusing on the difficulty. If someone does something bad to us, we may want to do something bad back to him or her. We want **revenge**. Jesus said we must not repay evil for evil. We often forget that, if we ask, Jesus will help us through our problems. We must do what is needed to focus on Jesus.

When we focus on Jesus and let the Holy Spirit help us, we live in a way different from people who do not know Jesus. This lesson studies what Peter says we must do to focus our lives on Jesus.

### **Control Your Behavior (1 Peter 1:13-17)**

The U.S. Army has a saying: “Be all that you can be.” This means what you become depends on your actions. As a Christian, you must control your behavior. That is called self-**discipline**. Peter says, “Use your mind, think! Keep awake so you will not be surprised by those who would do you harm.” The Christian’s hope is not in this world, but in being with Jesus forever. We need to focus our minds there.

Self-**discipline** will help us be holy. Holiness is not living with a long face, with no laughter or happiness. When we are holy, we have much joy and happiness because we are living according to God’s commands. We are pleasing Him. Holiness means to be set apart, to be different. If we do not **discipline**

### Things To Think About

1. What do you need to do to focus your life on Jesus?
2. What are some things you do to discipline yourself?
3. Are you a different Christian than you were last year? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What place does God's Word have in your life? Do you desire to know it more?

ourselves, we will live as we did before Jesus changed us. We will be like people who are not Christians.

Since we are God's children, we must live like Him. Our holiness is to be like Jesus' holiness in every part of our lives. Remember, God will judge the way we live. We should be different from non-Christians in our job, with our family, and in our **leisure**. When we live holy lives, we will make a difference in the world. Our lives will be a witness of the love and honor we have for God.

#### **Remember the Price of Your Freedom (1 Peter 1:18-22)**

Freedom is a very precious right. It is usually very costly. Recently the news reported that people in many countries are slaves. Most of these present-day slaves are women, young girls, and children. They are treated badly, without any rights or freedom.

All of us were once slaves to sin and our desires. But we have been freed, not by religion or the traditions of ancestors. Jesus freed us.

Jesus bought our freedom from the power and penalty of sin, not by money, but by giving His life. The blood of Christ saved you (v. 19). His blood made us clean. All the gold and silver in the world cannot **compare** to Jesus' precious blood. When we focus on Christ, we will always be thankful for the gift of freedom He has given us. We will obey His truth. We will love every Christian who has also been freed.

#### **Hold God's Word as Precious (1 Peter 1:23 to 2:2)**

We cannot really focus on Jesus if we do not hold His Word as valuable. God's Word is His truth made known to us. It is said that Jesus is the living Word, and the Bible is the written Word. God's Word is living. It is more precious than

all the beautiful, living things that we enjoy, such as flowers. Everything else in the world will die and fade away but the Word of God will last forever. It has power to help us grow and change.

God's Word tells what we should do and how we should live. "Put out of your life hate and lying. Do not pretend to be someone you are not. Do not always want something someone else has. Do not say bad things about other people" (2:1).

A baby drinks milk to grow and become strong. Peter says God's Word is like spiritual milk for Christians. We should deeply desire to read and study God's Word so we can grow strong and become mature Christians. We can become what God wants us to be when we focus our lives on Jesus.

**1 Peter 1:13 to 2:3**

13 Get your minds ready for good use.

Keep awake. Set your hope now and forever on the loving-favor to be given you when Jesus Christ comes again.

14 Be like children who obey. Do not desire to sin like you used to when you did not know any better.

15 Be holy in every part of your life. Be like the Holy One Who chose you.

16 The Holy Writings say, "You must be holy, for I am holy." (*Leviticus 11:44-45*)

17 The Father is the One Who judges you by what you do. He does not respect one person more than another. If you call Him Father, be sure you honor Him with love and fear all the days of your life here on earth.

18 You know you were not bought and made free from sin by paying gold or silver which comes to an end. And you know you were not saved from the punishment of sin by the way of life that you were given from your early fathers. That way of life was worth nothing.

19 The blood of Christ saved you. This blood is of great worth and no amount of money can buy it. Christ was given as a lamb without sin and without spot.

20 Long before the world was made, God chose Christ to be given to you in these last days.

21 Because of Christ, you have put your

trust in God. He raised Christ from the dead and gave Him great honor. So now your faith and hope are in God.

22 You have made your souls pure by obeying the truth through the Holy Spirit. This has given you a true love for the Christians. Let it be a true love from the heart.

23 You have been given a new birth. It was from a seed that cannot die. This new life is from the Word of God which lives forever.

24 All people are like grass. Their greatness is like the flowers. The grass dries up and the flowers fall off.

25 But the Word of the Lord will last forever. That Word is the Good News which was preached to you.

**1 Peter 2:1** Put out of your life hate and lying. Do not pretend to be someone you are not. Do not always want something someone else has. Do not say bad things about other people.

2 As new babies want milk, you should want to drink the pure milk which is God's Word so you will grow up and be saved from the punishment of sin.

3 If you have tasted of the Lord, you know how good He is.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 Peter 2:4-10

### Memory Verse

“You are to be as living stones in the building God is making also. You are His religious leaders giving yourselves to God through Jesus Christ. This kind of gift pleases God.” (1 Peter 2:5)

### Word List

**admire:** to like very much because of good qualities

**threatened:** to be told of danger or harm from others

**constructing:** to put pieces together, to build

**disregarded:** thought of as having no worth

# Being a Part of God's Work

My friend Bill is a very skilled builder. He can build houses as well as beautiful furniture. He plans carefully and takes time to do things right. The things he builds are useful. People **admire** the things he builds because they are made so well.

God is the Master Builder. He is always building. The things God builds will last forever. He is building the lives of His children. God takes individual lives and builds His church. He takes churches and builds His holy nation.

Remember, Peter was writing to Christians who were refugees. They probably left the city of Rome because they believed in Jesus, and their lives were **threatened**. Now they had no worth as citizens. They may have felt they were nobodies. Peter tells them they are an important part of what God is building.

In this lesson, Peter describes the things God is **constructing** from the lives of His children. We will discover what part we have in God's building.

### **The Building God is Making (1 Peter 2:4-6)**

Christians who are treated as worthless in the world are invited to come to Jesus, the “living stone.” He too was **disregarded** by people, but He is of great worth to God. Christians are also living stones in the building God is making. God's building is not a physical building that will decay and fall down. It is a spiritual building made of living stones.

Stones are important to a builder. This was especially true in Peter's time. Builders chose their stones carefully. The stone set as the cornerstone is one that must be straight and strong. Jesus is the cornerstone in God's spiritual house. We, as living stones built on Jesus, will never need to be fearful or ashamed. He will make God's spiritual building stand forever.

### Things To Think About

1. Why did God choose you to be a part of His work?
2. How important is your position in the world compared to your position with God?
3. Why do people disregard Jesus today?
4. Think of someone you can tell about what God has done for you.

### The Stone Men Threw Away (1 Peter 2:7-8)

The religious leaders of Jesus' time thought He was not important. To them, He was just another person without any position. They **disregarded** Him, but God valued Jesus. He became the most important stone in God's building. People who do not know God do not understand how precious Jesus is in God's plan for mankind.

Peter says the religious leaders tripped over Jesus and fell because they did not recognize Him. They did not understand God's building. It is not like buildings in the world. These people were spiritually blind. One day they will be ashamed because they did not trust Jesus. People who **disregard** Jesus are like the men of His time. They throw away what God values and uses. They will be ashamed when Jesus comes again.

### A Chosen People and A Holy Nation (1 Peter 2:9-10)

God is not only building a spiritual building of living stones. He is also building a holy nation. This nation is called the Kingdom of God. God has chosen Christians who trust in Jesus and follow Him to become spiritual leaders in His kingdom. Since we belong to God, He wants to use us to tell others what He has done for us.

As spiritual leaders, we are to tell people how much God loves them. He wants them to know the truth that can set them free from the slavery of sin. They are in darkness like believers once were. God wants them to know how to come into His Light and live without fear.

You may feel like the refugees Peter wrote to—not very important. But to God, you have great value. You belong to Him, and He wants to give you a part in His work while you live on earth. He has chosen you to work with Him as He builds your life. You are not just a member of His holy

nation. You are a spiritual leader. You have experienced God's loving-kindness. He wants you to give it to others.

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### 1 Peter 2:4-10

4 Come to Christ as to a living stone. Men have put Him aside, but He was chosen by God and is of great worth in the sight of God.

5 You are to be as living stones in the building God is making also. You are His religious leaders giving yourselves to God through Jesus Christ. This kind of gift pleases God.

6 The Holy Writings say, "See, I lay down in Jerusalem a Stone of great worth, worth far more than any amount of money. Anyone who puts his trust in Him will not be ashamed." (*Isaiah 28:16*)

7 This Stone is of great worth to you who have your trust in Him. But to those who have not put their trust in Him, the Holy Writings say, "The Stone which the workmen put aside has become the most important part of the building." (*Psalms 118:22*)

8 The Holy Writings say, also, "Christ is the Stone that some men will trip over and the Rock over which they will fall."

When they do not obey the Word of God, they trip over it. This is what happens to such men.

9 But you are a chosen group of people. You are the King's religious leaders. You are a holy nation. You belong to God. He has done this for you so you can tell others how God has called you out of darkness into His great light.

10 At one time you were a people of no use. Now you are the people of God. At one time you did not have loving-kindness. Now you have God's loving-kindness.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 Peter 2:11 to 3:8

### Memory Verse

“Show respect to all men. Love the Christians. Honor God with love and fear. Respect the head leader of the country.”  
(1 Peter 2:17)

### Word List

**amusing:** funny, playful, or entertaining

**authority:** a person with power who rules over another

**honor:** to give respect to someone

**mates:** husbands and wives

# Instructions on How to Live

A big sign was pasted on the door of a new washing machine: “When everything fails, read the instructions.” This was an **amusing** way of saying, “Please read the instructions before using this machine.” Instructions help us understand how to use what we buy. Not reading the instructions can cause problems and may cost us money when we fix what we broke.

Sometimes people believe in Jesus, but never think about how they should live. But when we become God’s children, our lives should be different. We do this to please God and to witness to others. Peter writes instructions to Christian friends about how they are to live. We must follow God’s instruction book, the Bible. It tells us clearly how we are to live.

As you study this week, you will see how Peter gave instructions for Christians to live upright in society. Christians are under the **authority** of the government, of employers, and even family members in the home. We are responsible to other people over us. If we are mistreated and suffer for doing right, God will judge those who treat us unfairly. We must know and follow God’s instructions to live peacefully in the world.

### **Honor Those in Government (1 Peter 2:11-17)**

Christians live in two nations, under two governments: Our earthly nation and government, and God’s holy nation and His government. Some Christians feel that since they are under God’s **authority**, they can disobey their earthly **authority** or government. Even though our final home is not this world, we must still live right before those who are over us now. Peter reminded Christians that God made them free. This freedom was a reason to obey. We must think of ourselves as God’s slaves and do what He wants us to do. God wants the earthly leaders to see His children are good so they will not say Christians live like evil

### Things To Think About

1. Can non-Christians see a difference in the way Christians live today? If so, how? If not, why?
2. Why should Christians not pay back evil when they are mistreated?
3. What will your good work mean to unfair bosses?
4. How can wives honor their husbands? How can husbands honor their wives?

people.

The Christians of Peter's time were not treated very well by the government. Peter sincerely asked them not to give in to the desires of the flesh. Often we think of the desires of the flesh as stealing, improper sexual acts, or lying about another person. Not wanting to obey earthly **authority** is another dangerous, fleshly desire. It says we do not need anyone over us; we are wise enough to know what is best for us and others. Those thoughts fight against our soul and cause us to disobey.

God has let earthly leaders have **authority** so society will be peaceful. They punish wrongdoers and respect those who do right. God wants us as Christians to obey the leaders who have **authority** over us. Christians must show respect to all men, love other Christians, **honor** God with love and fear, and respect the head leaders of the country. This pleases Him.

#### **Honor Those You Work For (1 Peter 2:18-25)**

Be good workers. This is important for Christians. Peter talked to Christians who were slaves of wealthy men. Slavery was common during that time. People who study history think there were as many as 60 million slaves then. Some of the slaves were Christians. Peter did not think slavery was right, but he wanted the slaves to show their owners how Christians live for God. Sometimes owners would treat Christian slaves well, but sometimes they treated them badly. Peter told the Christian slaves to work hard no matter how they were treated. This would show that God lived in them. It would be a witness to their owners of their love for God.

Today, slavery is not accepted as right in most of the world. But Christian workers are still responsible to give their best in their work. We have no excuse for being lazy or

dishonest. Christians are to be faithful and respect those for whom they work. Even when we are treated wrongly, we must do good work.

When He was treated wrong, Jesus became our example of doing good. He was often mistreated but He never tried to pay back evil to those who hurt Him. Jesus knew God will judge the evil of all people some day. He died for our sins so we might have God's Spirit living in us to do right even when others wrong us. We must follow Jesus' example.

### **Honor Each Other in Marriage (1 Peter 3:1-7)**

Christians are to be kind to their **mates** in marriage. Marriage in Peter's time was very different from today. Women were often treated as property of their husbands and had little freedom. Peter was not trying to change the way people thought of marriage. He wanted husbands and wives to **honor** each other as Christians, so non-Christians would know they were different.

Wives were to be under the **authority** of their husbands and be an example for other women. They were to have love for God and pure lives. Their beauty was not to come from beautiful clothes and jewelry. It was to come from the inside, women who were gentle and

kind, not arguing with their husbands.

Husbands were to be kind and respectful to their wives. They were not to think of them as property, but were to understand the wife's needs and show her he loved her. Both husband and wife shared the new life God had given them.

Today, husbands and wives need to honor each other in marriage. Our lives as **mates** should be an example for non-Christians. If we do not honor each other, we will find it hard to pray.

Peter's instructions guided the believers who lived almost two thousand years ago. His lessons offer us truths that hold up in our society, too.

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### **1 Peter 2:11 to 3:8**

11 Dear friends, your real home is not here on earth. You are strangers here. I ask you to keep away from all the sinful desires of the flesh. These things fight to get hold of your soul.

12 When you are around people who do not know God, be careful how you act. Even if they talk against you as wrong-doers, in the end they will give thanks to God for your good works when Christ comes again.

13 Obey the head leader of the country and all other leaders over you. This pleases the Lord.

14 Obey the men who work for them. God sends them to punish those who do wrong and to show respect to those who do right.

15 This is what God wants. When you do right, you stop foolish men from saying bad things.

16 Obey as men who are free but do not use this to cover up sin. Live as servants owned by God at all times.

17 Show respect to all men. Love the Christians. Honor God with love and fear. Respect the head leader of the country.

18 Servants, you are to respect your owners and do what they say. Do this if you have a good and kind owner. You must do it even if your owner is hard to work for.

19 This shows you have received loving-favor when you are even punished for doing what is right because of your trust in God.

20 What good is it if, when you are beaten for doing something wrong, you do not try to get out of it? But if you are beaten when you have done what is right, and do not try to get out of it, God is pleased.

21 These things are all a part of the Christian life to which you have been called. Christ suffered for us. This shows us we are to follow in His steps.

22 He never sinned. No lie or bad talk ever came from His lips.

23 When people spoke against Him, He never spoke back. When He suffered from what people did to Him, He did not try to pay them back. He left it in the hands of the One Who is always right in judging.

24 He carried our sins in His own body when He died on a cross. In doing this, we may be dead to sin and alive to all that is right and good. His wounds have healed you!

25 You were like lost sheep. But now you have

come back to Him Who is your Shepherd and the One Who cares for your soul.

**1 Peter 3:1** Wives, obey your own husbands. Some of your husbands may not obey the Word of God. By obeying your husbands, they may become Christians by the life you live without you saying anything.

2 They will see how you love God and how your lives are pure.

3 Do not let your beauty come from the outside. It should not be the way you comb your hair or the wearing of gold or the wearing of fine clothes.

4 Your beauty should come from the inside. It should come from the heart. This is the kind that lasts. Your beauty should be a gentle and quiet spirit. In God's sight this is of great worth and no amount of money can buy it.

5 This was the kind of beauty seen in the holy women who lived many years ago. They put their hope in God. They also obeyed their husbands.

6 Sarah obeyed her husband Abraham. She respected him as the head of the house. You are her children if you do what is right and do not have fear.

7 In the same way, husbands should understand and respect their wives, because women are weaker than men. Remember, both husband and wife are to share together the gift of life that lasts forever. If this is not done, you will find it hard to pray.

8 Last of all, you must share the same thoughts and the same feelings. Love each other with a kind heart and with a mind that has no pride.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 Peter 3:13 to 4:2

### Memory Verse

“Christ suffered and died for sins once for all. He never sinned and yet He died for us who have sinned. He died so He might bring us to God.”  
(1 Peter 3:18a)

### Word List

**cell:** a small room in a prison where prisoners are kept

**disturbed:** to be troubled or be upset by someone

**ridiculed:** to be laughed at or made fun of; to be treated as if stupid

**signifies:** to show the meaning of a something

# Trusting God in Suffering

No one wants to suffer, either physically, mentally or emotionally. From early childhood we try to avoid all trials, pain and suffering. When we face uncertainties, we want to know: Will it hurt? Will it cause pain?

Suffering is a part of life. No one ever lives without experiencing pain. Some people suffer much more than others, but everyone experiences it.

Many early Christians experienced suffering. They were thought of as being bad people because they followed Jesus. They had to leave their homes and go to another country to avoid more suffering. Even in new countries, they faced the same kind of treatment. Peter wrote to them to tell them how to face trials and suffering. He pointed to Jesus, the example for all Christians as we face trials and suffering.

Christians are to look at trials and suffering in a different way than non-Christians. The Bible says, “Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow” (James 1:2-3, *The Living Bible*).

This lesson looks at how we can face suffering and use it to grow as believers in Jesus. Suffering can even be a way to witness to others and show how much God loves us.

### **Christians Facing Suffering (1 Peter 3:13-17)**

When a person lives right, does good to others, and obeys the law, he/she does not worry about being punished or hurt. Sometimes people who have evil hearts do hurt people who live right. I had a friend, Binh Minh, who was put in prison for six weeks because he told people about God’s love and way of salvation. He was kept in a small **cell** without any windows. He was given food only twice a day. After he was released, he

### Things To Think About

1. Have you ever suffered for doing good? If so, tell about the experience.
2. What should our attitude be when we tell others about our faith?
3. Why did God save Noah from the flood? Why did everyone else die?
4. In what ways can suffering help a Christian?

visited me and told me about his experience. I was very sad my friend had been put in prison, but he said, “Don’t be sad, because during that time, God blessed me. I read my Bible and prayed, and no one **disturbed** me. I was able to tell the officers about Jesus without fear.” Binh Minh thought of suffering as a Christian should.

If you suffer as a Christian because people hate you, you should remember you belong to God. Let Jesus be first in your thoughts and mind. Be sure you have done nothing wrong. God will judge and punish evil people. Your suffering may give you a chance to tell your enemy about why you are a Christian. Peter says this must be done gently and with respect. Even in suffering, you can be kind to others.

### Jesus’ Suffering (1 Peter 3:18-22)

People who are not Christians do not understand why Jesus died. They think if Jesus never sinned and was the Son of God, why should He die? He gave His sinless life for our sinful lives. Peter says Jesus did this “once for all.” He died only one time. His sacrifice and suffering are enough for all people everywhere for all time. He died so He could bring all who trust and obey Him to God.

Peter says that Jesus’ death was a witness to the spirits of people who rebelled against God long before Jesus came to earth. He tells about a man named Noah from Genesis 6-9. The Christians knew the story of Noah, a man who lived right and obeyed God. All the other people of his time refused to follow or obey God. God told Noah He was going to send a flood of water to cover the entire earth. He told Noah to build a big boat and get ready for the flood.

Noah and his sons began building the boat. The people **ridiculed** Noah and said he was crazy. Noah suffered because of their unkindness, but he obeyed God and built the boat. It

must have taken several years to build the boat. When it was finished, God told Noah and his family, eight people in all, along with all different kinds of animals to go in the boat.

Then God sent rain for 40 days. The earth was covered with water. All the people who did not obey God's warning died in the flood. God wanted to save them from the flood but they would not obey Him. Only Noah and his family and the animals in the boat were saved.

Peter said baptism for the Christian is a sign of obedience to Jesus. In the same way, Noah's sign of obedience to God meant Noah trusted God enough to follow God's instructions for surviving the flood. The boat was God's way of physical salvation for Noah. Christ is our way to have spiritual, eternal salvation.

Baptism does not wash us clean from sin. Jesus washes our sins away by His blood. Baptism only **signifies** that we trust Jesus. We identify with Him in His death and resurrection. We die spiritually to an old way of life. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, so we rise from baptism to a new kind of spiritual life. Because Jesus suffered and died, we have life that lasts forever with God in heaven.

### **Being Like Jesus in Suffering (1 Peter 4:1-2)**

Since Jesus suffered to save us from the power and punishment of sin, we should be willing to suffer for Him. If others **ridicule** our faith in Jesus, we should be willing to take the **ridicule**. We must not deny our faith in Jesus because we suffer in this life. In the old life, we wanted to fight back and get even with anyone who caused us hurt. The new life in Jesus forgets self and looks for ways to show the power of Jesus in our lives.

Peter says, "Suffering puts an end to sin" (4:1). He did not mean Christians will live a perfect, sinless life. He meant if we trust Jesus' suffering to cleanse us from sin, then sin's power cannot control us. We need to trust God in suffering and learn to use suffering to help us grow as Christians. This will show the world God's power in our lives.

**1 Peter 3:13 to 4:2**

13 Who will hurt you if you do what is right?

14 But even if you suffer for doing what is right, you will be happy. Do not be afraid or troubled by what they may do to make it hard for you.

15 Your heart should be holy and set apart for the Lord God. Always be ready to tell everyone who asks you why you believe as you do. Be gentle as you speak and show respect.

16 Keep your heart telling you that you have done what is right. If men speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see the good way you have lived as a Christian.

17 If God wants you to suffer, it is better to suffer for doing what is right than for doing what is wrong.

18 Christ suffered and died for sins once for all. He never sinned and yet He died for us who have sinned. He died so He might bring us to God. His body died but His spirit was made alive.

19 Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison.

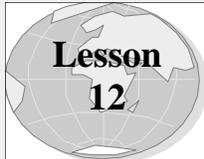
20 Those were the spirits of the people who would not obey in the days of Noah. God waited a long time for them while Noah was building the big boat. But only eight people were saved from dying when the earth was covered with water.

21 This is like baptism to us. Baptism does not mean we wash our bodies clean. It means we are saved from the punishment of sin and go to God in prayer with a heart that says we are right. This can be done because Christ was raised from the dead.

22 Christ has gone to heaven and is on the right side of God. Angels and powers of heaven are obeying Him.

**1 Peter 4:1** Since Christ has suffered in His body, we must be ready to suffer also. Suffering puts an end to sin.

2 You should no longer spend the rest of your life giving in to the sinful desires of the flesh. But do what God wants as long as you live in this world.



Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English

### Bible Text

1 Peter 4:12-19

### Memory Verse

“So if God wants you to suffer, give yourself to Him. He will do what is right for you. He made you and He is faithful.” (1 Peter 4:19)

### Word List

**accused:** to say someone has done wrong

**cannibals:** people who kill and eat other humans

**glory:** great beauty and splendor

**severe:** something that is very bad or harsh

# Why Christians Suffer

Reverend Hue was a pastor in Vietnam. One Easter Sunday, he preached a sermon about Jesus. He began by saying, “If you go to Russia, you can see Lenin lying in his tomb. If you go to Hanoi, you can see Ho Chi Minh in his tomb. But if you go to Jerusalem to Jesus’ tomb, He is not there. He is alive; He has risen.” The next week, the police came to Reverend Hue’s home and took him to prison. They **accused** him of not respecting the government.

Reverend Hue suffered in prison for seven years. His wife and three small children suffered, too. No one likes to suffer. Why should we suffer? Where is the benefit for us if we suffer? When I talked to Reverend Hue, he told me many good things he learned during his years of suffering. It was very hard, but his Christian faith grew stronger because he suffered for Jesus.

### **Prepare for Suffering (1 Peter 4:12-13)**

In Peter’s time, Christians were suffering because of their faith. A few of them had already been put to death for following Jesus. Peter knew their suffering would get worse. He wanted to warn them of this. Some people hated Christians and **accused** them of doing wrong things.

Christians were **accused** of being **cannibals**—eating human flesh and drinking blood. They were called evil because they would not worship man-made gods. They were **accused** of not being loyal citizens because they would not say the head leader of Rome was lord. The earthly authorities were ready to punish anyone who did such things.

Peter wanted to prepare Christians to face suffering for their faith. He said, “Do not be surprised at this” (v.12). Jesus had suffered for them. They would identify with Him when they suffered. In suffering God would bless them, be present with

### Things To Think About

1. What kind of suffering have you experienced in your life?
2. Has suffering made you better, or has it made you bitter and angry?
3. Why did the Christians of Peter's time suffer?
4. Do you ever think about standing before God and being judged? How do you feel?

them, and give them joy. Suffering should not make them angry or sad. They were to let the **glory** of God shine in their lives. If any of us should suffer for our faith, we should also show God's love and **glory** to those who cause us to suffer.

#### The Reasons for Suffering (1 Peter 4:14-16)

Evil is present everywhere in our world. Even within our hearts, we struggle to overcome evil thoughts that will cause us to disobey God. Because evil is all around us, and even in us, we will suffer. Suffering is a part of this present life. Evil people cause good people to suffer.

Peter did not say a Christian should want to suffer. He told them suffering was part of following Christ. Jesus could not have shown God's great power over death without suffering and dying on the cross. We could not be clean before God without Jesus' death paying our sin's penalty. From the book of Hebrews we read, "The Law says that almost everything is made clean by blood. Sins are not forgiven unless blood is given" (Heb. 9:22).

When early Christians were falsely accused of bad things, they could not turn to the authorities for help. The authorities did not believe Christians. We may think this kind of suffering is unfair. God allows it to happen so we will go to Him for help. When we suffer, we pray for God's help. This may not be the reason we suffer, but it should be our response in suffering.

Christians should never suffer for doing wrong. "None of you should suffer as one who kills another person or as one who steals or as one who makes trouble or as one who tries to be the boss of other peoples' lives" (v. 15). Suffering for doing evil is suffering that should be punished. Christians should never suffer for doing wrong. This dishonors God.

If a person suffers because he follows Jesus, he need

not be ashamed. We are ashamed and bring shame on other Christians if we dishonor Jesus by suffering as one who does wrong. We can give a strong witness to others if we suffer for Jesus without anger or sadness.

### **Suffering and Judgment**

#### **(1 Peter 4:17-19)**

One day in the future, God will judge everyone. Peter said He will judge the Christian and the non-Christian. When Christians stand before God at the time of judgment, He will ask what we have done with our lives. What good have we done in Jesus' name?

Judgment will show what our hearts are like. Did we use the suffering we faced to grow as a Christian? Did we trust God in it, or did we become angry and say bad things about those who were bad to us? Were we like Jesus or were we like the world? Judgment will be serious.

God will judge the non-Christians for all the evil they have done. They turned away from God's gift of life in Jesus. They did not ask Him to forgive them of sins. They did what they wanted to do and not what God says we must do. Non-Christians refused to say Jesus is God's Son. They rejected the Good News of Jesus Christ. Their judgment will not only be serious but very **severe**.

### **1 Peter 4:12-19**

12 Dear friends, your faith is going to be tested as if it were going through fire. Do not be surprised at this.

13 Be happy that you are able to share some of the suffering of Christ. When His shining-greatness is shown, you will be filled with much joy.

14 If men speak bad of you because you are a Christian, you will be happy because the Spirit of shining-greatness and of God is in you.

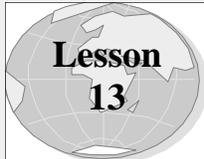
15 None of you should suffer as one who kills another person or as one who steals or as one who makes trouble or as one who tries to be the boss of other peoples' lives.

16 But if a man suffers as a Christian, he should not be ashamed. He should thank God that he is a Christian.

17 The time has come for Christians to stand before God and He will judge. If this happens to us, what will happen to those who do not obey the Good News of God?

18 If it is hard for a man who is right with God to be saved, what will happen to the sinner?

19 So if God wants you to suffer, give yourself to Him. He will do what is right for you. He made you and He is faithful.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English*

### **Bible Text**

1 Peter 5:1-11

### **Memory Verse**

“Keep awake! Watch at all times. The devil is working against you. He is walking around like a hungry lion with his mouth open. He is looking for someone to eat.”  
(1 Peter 5:8)

### **Word List**

**equal:** to have the same value  
**authority:** a person with power who rules over another  
**flock:** a group of animals that live and travel together; also, a group of people under its leaders  
**humble:** to not feel proud of self but to put others first

# Instructions to the Church and Its Leaders

I love the church. It has helped me throughout my life. In the church I learned of Jesus’ love for me. The church helped me when I faced problems. As a child, I needed a place to live and someone to care for me. The church provided that. When I felt God wanted me to serve Him, the church gave me a place to serve. The church has made my life joyful.

When I talk about the church, I am not talking about an organization or a building. The church may meet in a building. It may have an organization to help it do its work. The church is more than a building or an organization. People are the church. The church is a spiritual family of faith.

Jesus started the church. The Bible says He gave Himself for the church. The Bible calls the church His body. He is the head of the church, and it belongs to Him. All who are a part of the church are part of His body. We are to work together to do Jesus’ work on earth. The greatest hope for good in the world is the church—God’s people working together. Nothing on earth can **equal** the church.

While Jesus was still with Peter, He said to him, “On this rock I will build My church. The powers of hell will not be able to have power over My church” (Matt. 16:18). Peter knew how important the church was to Jesus. He ends his letter to the suffering Christians by giving instructions to the church and its leaders.

### **Instructions to Church Leaders (1 Peter 5:1-4)**

Every family needs strong leaders to help the family work together well. Strong leaders were needed in the early church, too. The Christians helped each other in difficult times. Peter tells the church leaders that he is a church leader, too. He is not

### Things To Think About

1. How would you describe the church? What is it?
2. What examples have you seen in church leaders?
3. How are church members to relate to each other?
4. What do the names of the devil tell you about him?

talking to them as if he is over them, but as one who is their **equal**. He gives them instructions because he had been with Jesus.

Peter said, “Be good shepherds of the **flock** God has put in your care” (v. 2). This is picture language that helped the leaders understand their job as leaders. The church leaders are like shepherds. A shepherd cares for sheep. He makes sure they have a place to eat and rest. He keeps wild animals from harming them. He leads them to a safe place to sleep at night. Church leaders are to be good shepherds. They must be very careful how the sheep are cared for. God has given to shepherds the responsibility to care for His **flock**.

Church leaders are to care for the people willingly, not because they are forced to. Their reason to lead should not be to get money. However, the people of the church should pay the leaders enough so they can live and not be poor. Church leaders must live in a way that they want the people to live. They must be an example of what a Christian should be. All their work will be rewarded. When Jesus, the Head Shepherd, comes again, church leaders will get full payment that will never fade away.

#### Instructions to Church Members (1 Peter 5:5-7)

The church leaders cannot make the church what God wants it to be unless the members work together with them. The family of believers is both leaders and members. Peter tells the members to obey or willingly be under the care of the leaders.

Some members may feel they know better what to do than the leaders. They may think they are better than other members. God is against these kinds of thoughts. He gives His loving-favor to those who do not try to honor themselves. God wants leaders and members to be **humble** and kind to

one another. Each person in the church is important.

All of God's children are under His powerful hand. He will choose when and where to honor each member of His church. We should seek honor for others and not for self. We should not worry about our place in the church. We must give our worries to God who loves us and cares about us. God's loving-favor is better than the praise of other people.

### **Instructions about the Devil (1 Peter 5:8-11)**

Some people are enemies of the church. They cause God's people suffering and hurt whenever they can. However, there is a spiritual enemy of the church we cannot see. He is the devil. In the Bible, he is called other names: Accuser, deceiver, evil one, liar, father of lies, god of this world, serpent, ruler of this world, Satan, and tempter. He is working against us all the time.

Peter says we are to keep awake and watch out always. The devil is like a lion that catches animals not watching for him. He searches for every way to defeat us. If we trust in God and watch for the devil, he cannot defeat us. We must be strong in our faith and stand against him. He cannot win the battle against God's church.

At times we may feel we are suffering alone under the devil's attack. Peter reminds us that other Christians all around the world are facing the same kind of trials. At the right time, Jesus will come back to earth and cast the devil down. All the suffering and trials of the church will end. The devil and evil people will no longer trouble God's church. Until that time, we must be strong in faith and help each other. God will guide us through all trials.

**1 Peter 5:1-11**

1 I want to speak to the church leaders among you. I am a church leader also. I saw Christ suffer and die on a cross. I will also share His shining-greatness when He comes again.

2 Be good shepherds of the flock God has put in your care. Do not care for the flock as if you were made to. Do not care for the flock for money, but do it because you want to.

3 Do not be bosses over the people you lead. Live as you would like to have them live.

4 When the Head Shepherd comes again, you will get the prize of shining-greatness that will not come to an end.

5 In the same way, you younger men must obey the church leaders. Be gentle as you care for each other. God works against those who have pride. He gives His loving-favor to those who do not try to honor themselves.

6 So put away all pride from yourselves. You are standing under the powerful hand of God. At the right time He will lift you up.

7 Give all your worries to Him because He cares for you.

8 Keep awake! Watch at all times. The devil is working against you. He is walking around like a hungry lion with his mouth open. He is looking for someone to eat.

9 Stand against him and be strong in your faith. Remember, other Christians over all the world are suffering the same as you are.

10 After you have suffered for awhile, God Himself will make you perfect. He will keep you in the right way. He will give you strength. He is the God of all loving-favor and has called you through Christ Jesus to share His shining-greatness forever.

11 God has power over all things forever. Let it be so.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Basic English*

### **Bible Text**

Luke 2:8-20

### **Memory Verse**

“Today, One Who saves from the punishment of sin has been born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

### **Word List**

**beforehand:** before something happens; in advance; previous to

**humbled:** made not proud

**privilege:** favor

# Good News!

All children love the activities of Christmas. They seem to have endless energy. They love the decorations, the parties, the good-tasting sweets, the Christmas lights, and the T.V. shows. The gifts under the tree hold a special excitement for them. They can hardly wait for the big day to arrive.

Adults, however, often become tired because of the activities of the Christmas season. They must decorate the house, go to parties, shop for gifts, and spend lots of time in the kitchen making special dishes the family enjoys.

For adults, Christmas is often about giving. For children, Christmas is about receiving. This Bible study reminds us God is the One giving at Christmas, and we all, adult and children alike, are the ones who receive the world’s greatest gift.

### **The Setting for the Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-4)**

The birth of Jesus took place when Caesar Augustus was the ruler of the Roman world. The authorities required the Jews to go to the city where they were born so each family member could be counted. Joseph went to the town of Bethlehem. Joseph was from the family of David, and Bethlehem was called the city of David.

### **The Story of the Couple (Luke 2:5-7)**

Joseph took Mary, his promised wife, with him to Bethlehem. “While they were there in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth to her baby” (v. 6). A year before, Joseph and Mary had no idea of God’s plan for their lives. The Holy Spirit put something very special in their lives that neither of them had planned. They could hardly believe what God had told them, but they had His promise that He would be with them.

Sometimes God comes into our lives in ways we would

### Things To Think About

1. If you were Mary, how would you have felt giving birth in a place with animals?
2. If you were a shepherd, what would you have thought when the angel spoke?
3. What moves your heart most about the birth story of Jesus? Why?

have never planned. He does not always let us know **beforehand** how things will turn out. But He does promise to be with us. In fact, His promise to be with us is connected to the coming of Jesus. His name “Immanuel” means “God with us” (Matt. 1:23).

The little town of Bethlehem was full of people when Joseph and Marry arrived. All the inns were full. They found a place to stay where animals were kept. In many countries in the world, families still share the place where they live with their animals. Luke wrote, “Her first son was born. She put cloth around Him and laid Him in a place where cattle are fed” (v. 7).

Jesus was born a poor person. The cloth He wore was very different from what mothers wrap their babies in when they go home from the hospital. Jesus was the King of Kings, the Son of God, yet He **humbled** himself and became a human being. He did all this so we might know the love of our Heavenly Father.

### The Shepherds Hear the Song (Luke 2:8-14)

The first to hear of the birth of Jesus were shepherds in the fields. They were surprised by the angel of the Lord who came to them. They were afraid. The angel’s first words to them were, “Do not be afraid. See! I bring you good news of great joy which is for all people. Today, One Who saves from the punishment of sin has been born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord” (vv. 10-11).

After this message from one angel, many angels from heaven began praising God (v. 13). They gave honor to God in heaven and talked of peace on earth among men. Jesus, the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), would rule in the hearts of men so we could have inner peace. He would forgive our sins so that we could be at peace with God.

## **The Shepherds See the Savior** **(Luke 2:15-20)**

The shepherds raced to Bethlehem to find the One the angel had told them about. We can only imagine the shepherds' excitement when they first saw Jesus. He was lying in a place where animals were fed, just like the angel had said. Then they told everyone about the angel's message. All who heard it were surprised. Mary thought much about the shepherds' story and their visit. She began to fill her heart with memories of her special Son, like mothers who put pictures in a picture album (v. 19). The shepherds returned to their work with joy and thanksgiving because they had had a part in the greatest event in history.

### **Message for Us**

Who were these shepherds that God should give them the **privilege** of announcing the birth of His son to the world? Why were they given such a special **privilege**? God chose them. God chooses to give us the **privilege** of sharing His gift of salvation in Jesus Christ with others, too. Each of us has a choice: To celebrate Christmas as a time for personal enjoyment only, or to act as the shepherds did and spread the Good News to everyone.

**Luke 2:8-20**

8 In the same country there were shepherds in the fields. They were watching their flocks of sheep at night.

9 The angel of the Lord came to them. The shining-greatness of the Lord shone around them. They were very much afraid.

10 The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. See! I bring you good news of great joy which is for all people.

11 Today, One Who saves from the punishment of sin has been born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord.

12 There will be something special for you to see. This is the way you will know Him. You will find the Baby with cloth around Him, lying in a place where cattle are fed."

13 At once many angels from heaven were seen, along with the angel, giving thanks to God. They were saying,

14 "Greatness and honor to our God in the highest heaven and peace on earth among men who please Him."

15 The angels went from the shepherds back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see what has happened. The Lord has told us about this."

16 They went fast and found Mary and Joseph. They found the Baby lying in a place where cattle are fed.

17 When they saw the Child, they told what the angel said about Him.

18 All who heard it were surprised at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary hid all these words in her heart. She thought about them much.

20 The shepherds went back full of joy. They thanked God for all they had heard and seen. It happened as the angel had told them.