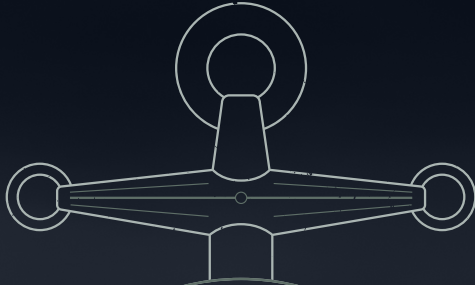


 **MOUNT CARMEL**  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



# ANCHORED



PREPARING FOR THE STORM



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# INTRODUCTION

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As Christians, we are so important to God that he sent Christ to save us and make each of us his chosen loved one. We've received every spiritual blessing in Christ.

But Peter, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, wrote to believers who were experiencing persecution and suffering for their faith. Their circumstances put pressure on them to fall back to their old way of life. Throughout this letter, Peter reminds them of who they are in Christ and why that is worth so much more than anything the world has to offer.

Let us consider Peter's teachings and how they are relevant to us today.

## HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

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Whether you're going through this study individually or in a group, we have provided resources to help you understand and live out the material presented in the book of 1 Peter. Here is a detailed look at what each section entails.

### **THE BIBLICAL TEXT**

We begin each guide with text from Scripture. We believe all discussions about the truth God has revealed to us should begin with his inspired word. So,

we encourage you to read the text carefully even if the verses are ones you are already familiar with.

## **LEARN**

The questions presented in the Learn section of each guide are designed to help you read the biblical text carefully. By doing so, you can figure out the meaning of the passage. Some questions might lead to obvious answers, but others may not. What is important is that you slow down and consider the text beyond just a quick and cursory reading. The questions also provide the basis for an informed discussion on biblically rooted ways to apply the text, as the next section covers. Note that, at the end of each guide, we have included thoughts about the Learn questions. These thoughts do not cover every possible answer, nor do they claim to be the best possible answers. However, they can help guide you if you feel puzzled by a certain Bible passage.

## **LIVE**

Live questions aim to move you from understanding the text toward applying it to your life. These questions will usually ask you to reflect on your life as it was, as it is, and as it could be in relationship to what the Bible passage teaches. By prompting you to think about your life in light of what Scripture says, you can be encouraged to live by God's transforming work in you.

## **LAUNCH**

In the Launch section, we ask you to consider specific ways that you can apply the truth of Scripture to your life that week. This involves prayer to God and seeking

his guidance. In many cases, we then ask you to reflect on how it went when you sought to live out what God was calling you to do.

### **SOMETHING TO CONSIDER**

Finally, the Something to Consider section provides you with a devotional reading from one of the writers behind this study. The devotionals aim to present you with both thoughtful and personal insights on the topic. Our reflections may help you to live out the Scripture passages as well.

## **TIPS FOR LEADING A SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY**

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If you will be guiding a group through this study, then please read these tips that can help everyone get the most out of this material and the times of fellowship.

**Roll out the welcome mat.** Make the meeting place welcoming and comfortable. Be sure that everyone is greeted and engaged when they arrive.

**Dish out some food.** The refreshments don't need to be fancy, nor do they need to be a full meal. Just know that heart work is hard work, so it helps when everyone has some nourishment. Encourage group members to contribute food if they feel led to do so.

**Pray.** Start and end each meeting with prayer. What's more, pray for your group members throughout the week and encourage them to pray for one another. Consider keeping in touch with a quick text, email, or phone call. People love to know that they're being prayed for!

**Build relationships.** Bible study is central, but building relationships is also important. At the first meeting, make sure everyone gets to introduce themselves and briefly tell their faith story. Allow time for interaction between group members at every gathering. Make the group a place of acceptance. Also, make sure you have a way to communicate with everyone outside the meetings.

**Be the guide.** The discussion leader is not the authority or the teacher, but the guide. Help people stay on track. Each meeting should be a refreshing opportunity to learn, not one digression after another. Show respect for people's time.

**Encourage reflection.** The Bible often talks about the difference between Christian living and worldly living. When this topic comes up, don't focus on complaining about society. Instead, encourage everyone to reflect on themselves and how they can live out godly values. (See Matthew 7:1-5)

**WEEK 1**

September 1, 2024

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# YOU ARE SET APART

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**1 PETER 1**



# 1 PETER 1

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<sup>1</sup>Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup>who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

## **Praise to God for a Living Hope**

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you

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believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, <sup>11</sup>trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

### **Be Holy**

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup>But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

<sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were

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redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

<sup>22</sup>Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. <sup>23</sup>For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup>For,

“All people are like grass,  
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;  
the grass withers and the flowers fall,  
<sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

## LEARN

Read 1 Peter 1:1-12. Although the recipients of this letter were facing persecution, the Apostle Peter asserted that they could have hope and even rejoice. According to him, why could they have such hope?

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Read 1 Peter 1:13-25. Why and how should Christians be different from people who have not accepted Jesus?

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## LIVE

In verse 7, Peter declares that Christians can have hope in the midst of trials, which can show just how genuine a person's faith is. Can you think of a time in your own life when a trial (big or small) refined your faith? If so, how did God sustain you through the challenge and ultimately draw you closer to him?

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Peter asserts that we shouldn't conform to evil desires or live for perishable things. These are empty ways of living. Consider your day-to-day priorities. In what ways are they based on empty, temporary things? In what ways are they based on the eternal hope and truth of Christ?

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### **LAUNCH**

Peter told the church to live as “foreigners” in this world. One way we are different from non-Christians is that we prioritize God over worldly things. This week, take time to reflect on how you answered the previous question about your priorities. How can you align them more closely with the holiness that Peter discussed in this chapter? Use the space below to write down your prayers to God. Ask for the wisdom to discern his will on this matter and live it out.

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## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

By Rick Lowry

*This passage brought me back to a time when our family's Christian lifestyle spoke to a non-Christian.*

*At our children's public elementary school, there was a computer teacher named Sue that, frankly, I did not like. She looked, talked, and acted in a worldly manner, and I wasn't pleased with how she might be influencing our kids.*

*Our daughter Amanda joined a fifth grade basketball team that winter. I took her over to the gym for the first practice night. There, I discovered that the coach of my daughter's team was going to be—guess who?—Sue, that same teacher!*

*I left Amanda with the team, went home, and complained to my wife, Becky, about this assignment. I thought Becky would reinforce my displeasure. Instead, she responded, "Do you think Sue might like some help with that team?" I ate some humble pie and considered this possibility.*

*When I went to pick up our daughter, I asked Sue if she needed help with the team, but only because I was sure she would say no. Instead, she said, "Oh, I would love that. I could really use the help!" And*

*so I reluctantly became assistant coach for this lady I didn't care for.*

*As the season progressed, through the practices and while sitting on bench together, Sue and I got to know each other. We actually formed a bit of a friendship.*

*But I was surprised when one day, out of the blue, Sue asked me, "Hey, you're a minister, right? Do you think my daughter and I could come to your church?" I was flabbergasted. She had never shown any interest in spiritual things before! Of course, I said yes.*

*And they showed up that next Sunday. And the next and the next. After about four months, Sue took me aside and said, "My daughter and I need what your family has. Will you baptize me?"*

*And I did baptize her that next week. Then, she and her daughter became active members of our church. We had a long friendship with them until we moved away from that city.*

*Every time I fondly recall that story, I'm so pleased that the life Peter calls us to embrace really can make a difference in the lives of the everyday people in the world around us. Don't underestimate what your life can do when you put Christ first!*

## POSSIBLE LEARN ANSWERS

**Read 1 Peter 1:1-12. Although the recipients of this letter were facing persecution, the Apostle Peter asserted that they could have hope and even rejoice. According to him, why could they have such hope?**

Peter explained that they had the Holy Spirit helping them to obey Jesus. God was showing them mercy, and they could have hope in Jesus' resurrection. For this, the people could rejoice. After all, the fact that they were persevering in the midst of trial was showing that they had genuine faith in God. And, with faith, they could have hope in their salvation.

**Read 1 Peter 1:13-25. Why and how should Christians be different from people who have not accepted Jesus?** Peter asserted that believers are to focus on Jesus, not on evil desires or empty things. In this way, Christians are different from other people, who may live for things that ultimately pale in comparison to the Lord. We can live out this hope by purifying ourselves, obeying Jesus, and loving others.

## NOTES

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**WEEK 2**

September 8, 2024

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# YOU ARE DIFFERENT

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**1 PETER 2:1-3:7**

# 1 PETER 2:1-3:7

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<sup>1</sup>Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. <sup>2</sup>Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup>now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

## **The Living Stone and a Chosen People**

<sup>4</sup>As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup>you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
a chosen and precious cornerstone,  
and the one who trusts in him  
will never be put to shame.”

<sup>7</sup>Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”

<sup>8</sup>and,  
“A stone that causes people to stumble  
and a rock that makes them fall.”

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They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

### **Living Godly Lives in a Pagan Society**

<sup>11</sup>Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup>Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

<sup>13</sup>Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, <sup>14</sup>or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. <sup>15</sup>For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. <sup>16</sup>Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. <sup>17</sup>Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

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<sup>18</sup>Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup>For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. <sup>20</sup>But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup>To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

<sup>22</sup>“He committed no sin,  
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

<sup>23</sup>When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup>“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” <sup>25</sup>For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

### **Chapter 3**

<sup>1</sup>Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see the purity and

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reverence of your lives. <sup>3</sup>Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. <sup>4</sup>Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. <sup>5</sup>For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup>like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

<sup>7</sup>Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

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## LEARN

Read 1 Peter 2:1-12. How does the apostle describe our relationship with God, and what are some ways we can live according to our status as believers?

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Read 1 Peter 2:13-17. How are Christians to live in relationship with government authorities?

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Read 1 Peter 2:18-3:7. In what ways did Jesus demonstrate humble submission? How can servants, wives, and husbands show a similar humility?

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## LIVE

In this section, Peter describes Jesus as the cornerstone, the first and most important stone of a building. He then goes on to describe believers as the stones connected to this foundational stone. Together, they all form a “spiritual house,” a temple, where pleasing gifts can be

lifted up to God. What does this image imply about the significance of your relationships with Jesus and other people as you serve the Lord?

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Peter goes on to describe how living in a manner pleasing to God requires you to, like Jesus, love and respect all people regardless of their status—and even regardless of how well the people treat you. Are there any types of people you find difficult to love in this way? How can you take steps to better demonstrate Christlike love to them?

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## LAUNCH

Throughout the Scripture portion we read, Peter offered many instructions on how our behavior should reflect our status as God’s people. The fact that we are different from others, that we are living to serve Jesus rather than ourselves, should be apparent to everyone around us—Christian and non-Christian alike.

This week, pray that the Lord would show you a specific way that you can more clearly demonstrate your love



to others. Perhaps the way you treat a friend, neighbor, coworker, or family member can distinctly reflect the love and kindness that Jesus is calling you to.

Use this space to journal about your prayers and how you plan to live out your ideas. Then, come back and write about how carrying out your acts of love went.

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## **SOMETHING TO CONSIDER**

By Bobby Miller

*As a report writer for Wycliffe Bible Translators, I get the opportunity to hear and share countless stories about how people are touched by God's word when they experience it in their own language. It's incredible to learn how, in many cases, even just a few verses can transform a person's perspective.*

*One example that stands out to me is the story of Dina, a woman in Burkina Faso who speaks the Southern Nuni language. The New Testament's instructions on marriage transformed her life. Some of us get antsy when the Bible starts talking about the relationship between husbands and wives because it often mentions obedience and*

*submission, concepts that aren't popular in our culture. Many of us think that to obey and submit means losing—losing our pride, dignity, or even our rights.*

*But that sure wasn't the case with Dina. Biblical passages on marriage carried her through a spiritual journey spanning nearly 50 years.*

*Her parents had raised her to love Jesus, and she carried her faith into adulthood. But, in their culture, Dina's uncle had the right to choose her husband—and he chose a Muslim man.*

*Dina's tears couldn't prevent the marriage, but God's word guided her through it. Her father explained that the Bible urges believers to be good role models of faith for their spouses.*

*For instance, in our reading, Peter declared, "Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives" (1 Pet. 3:1-2, NIV). Likewise, Paul once asked, "How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?" (1 Cor. 7:16, NIV).*

*Dina didn't try to squirm out of the implications of such words. Instead, she took Scripture to heart. Although she obviously didn't approve of her husband's Islamic beliefs, she treated him with the utmost respect. Dina prayed for him every single day. Their children followed her faithful example as she followed Jesus. In fact, one of the kids grew up to be a pastor!*

*In 2020, after 45 years of marriage, her husband fell gravely ill. During this painful time, the support he needed came from his wife and children, along with members of Dina's church. Seeing the power of God's love at work even in his darkest hours, he finally committed himself to Jesus.*

*Although he passed away in 2022, he did so with the hope of Christ in his heart. And Dina still declares, "The ways of the Lord are unfathomable but wonderful." God had transformed her husband through her faithfulness!*

*Whew. I don't know Dina personally, but I can tell you this much: She doesn't sound like a pushover to me. Remaining dedicated to her marriage and faithful to the Lord, even when she had to wait decades for her prayers and obedience to transform her husband, had to take incredible strength. Her resolve serves as an inspiring example to me when I need to wait for God's timing.*

*But, of course, she didn't do this by her power alone. All that time, Dina stayed connected to the Lord through prayer. She followed in the footsteps of Jesus, who provided the ultimate model of obedience and submission. After all, he allowed himself to be crucified by sinful authorities to pay the price for our sins. Jesus' death sure wasn't weakness: It was God exercising his dominion in an amazing display of love.*

*Christ's redemptive act is at the heart of Peter's perspective on every relationship, whether it's between citizen and government, between husband and wife, or between master and servant. And I think the message is clear: On both sides, there is power in gentleness, in love, and in faith.*

## **POSSIBLE LEARN ANSWERS**

**Read 1 Peter 2:1-12. How does the apostle describe our relationship with God, and what are some ways we can live according to our status as believers?**

Peter describes Christians as living stones built into God's temple. He also describes believers as part of the holy priesthood! He provides several specific commands for how to live accordingly. We must cast away sins such as lying and envy, which sever our relationships with other people and with God. We can do this by growing in knowledge of the Lord. By abstaining from sinful desires, we may show non-Christians what living for God looks like. This can be difficult, but Peter reminds

us that we have Jesus as the cornerstone on which we can build our lives.

**Read 1 Peter 2:13-17. How are Christians to live in relationship with government authorities?** Although we as Christians are called to live differently than nonbelievers do, God doesn't give us permission to disobey human authorities. We are to respect and pray for all levels of the government so that we can be model citizens. Indeed, all our relationships should be characterized by love and respect. (That said, passages like Acts 4 show that, if a specific command from human authorities contradicts Christ's commands, then we are to disobey the corrupt mandate.)

**Read 1 Peter 2:18-3:7. In what ways did Jesus demonstrate humble submission? How can servants, wives, and husbands show a similar humility?** Jesus, God in the flesh, had the power to stop his crucifixion, but he didn't abuse his power because he trusted the Father. In fact, he never so much as insulted the corrupt human authorities carrying out his sham trials. Likewise, servants are to be respectful and kind to their masters – good ones and bad ones.

Wives, meanwhile, should lovingly support their husbands, remembering that beauty doesn't come primarily from outward appearances but rather faithful purity. By doing what is right in God's eyes, a loving wife may convince her husband to follow Jesus as well.





**WEEK 3**

September 15, 2024

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# YOU WILL SUFFER

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**1 PETER 3:8-22**



# 1 PETER 3:8-22

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## **Suffering for Doing Good**

<sup>8</sup>Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. <sup>9</sup>Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup>For,

“Whoever would love life  
and see good days  
must keep their tongue from evil  
and their lips from deceitful speech.

<sup>11</sup>They must turn from evil and do good;  
they must seek peace and pursue it.

<sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous  
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,  
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

<sup>13</sup>Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” <sup>15</sup>But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup>keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. <sup>17</sup>For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for

doing good than for doing evil. <sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. <sup>19</sup>After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— <sup>20</sup>to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, <sup>21</sup>and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

## MATTHEW 26:57-65

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### **Jesus Before the Sanhedrin**

<sup>57</sup>Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. <sup>58</sup>But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

<sup>59</sup>The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they

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could put him to death. <sup>60</sup>But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward <sup>61</sup>and declared, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

<sup>62</sup>Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” <sup>63</sup>But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

<sup>64</sup>“You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

<sup>65</sup>Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.”

## LEARN

Read 1 Peter 3:8-22. How does Peter say followers of Christ should interact with others? Particularly, how should we approach conflict and suffering?

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Read Matthew 26:57-65. What happened in this slanderous trial against Jesus, and how did he respond?

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What similarities do you see between Jesus' response to the threats in his trial and Peter's instructions on how to approach conflict and suffering?

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## LIVE

In our readings, we received reminders that we, like Jesus, will suffer for doing good. Although it probably won't be as extreme as facing death, we will experience hardship as well. Have you ever been treated unfairly due to your faith? If so, how did you handle the

situation? How did your response compare to what we just read in Scripture?

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Based on what Peter wrote in his letter and what Jesus demonstrated for us at his trial, how can you use Scripture's teachings to better respond to conflict or suffering?

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### **LAUNCH**

This week, at the start of each day, take time to pray for the people you'll be interacting with. If you know conflict could be coming up, then pray all the more! Ask God to show you ways to emulate his love in every interaction. Use this space to write about your prayers and these interactions.

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## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

By Amanda Scherer

*Shortly before writing this, I came across a Facebook post that shattered my heart. It was from a young adult addressing the church of his youth. The writer asked his church, “What did you expect me to do?”*

*The author repeats classic Sunday school teachings, such as love your neighbor, love your enemy as yourself, give to the poor and needy, and stand up for the bullied. Then the author shifts, saying that the same church now calls him derogatory names for loving everyone regardless of their beliefs and lifestyles.*

*We have to be better. This type of name-calling and degrading does not represent our namesake. Our faith, the hope we cling to, is not just lip service. We must steep ourselves in God’s word and pursue authentic Christlike living in every encounter, in every word, and with every person. The way we interact with others matters!*

*Paul writes in Galatians 5: “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (v. 15, NIV). It’s easy to fall into the same battle tactics as the world when we are deeply convicted about a particular topic. It’s a tough pill to swallow to hear Peter say “we are to*

*repay evil with blessing” when we are inundated with political attacks on every side.*

*Much context has been lost in our modern culture. We need to be better about teaching the next generation.*

*During the time Jesus walked on this earth, Roman religion and politics were closely intertwined. To be emperor was to be god. It was believed that the gods would show their favor to humans by way of wealth, health and position. It is no stretch to imagine that Israel would have been heavily influenced by Rome. We can see this in the status of the Pharisees who would go to great lengths to display their righteousness for public respect.*

*Jesus’ message proclaimed that the average person could thrive in the love of God regardless of their particular circumstances. The idea that a slave, widow, or sick person could be valued by any deity was unheard of.*

*Jesus loved people but was never afraid to boldly speak out against sin. We shouldn’t be afraid either; however, we must never speak out in a manner that misrepresents or pushes people away from a restoring relationship with Jesus.*

*Being made in God’s image means that we have an inherent need for both mercy and justice. We*

*naturally like to issue justice and receive mercy. But rarely will we accept the reverse as Jesus did on his journey to the cross.*

*It is evident daily that human nature hasn't changed much since Jesus's day. Especially during election season. Regardless of what side of the aisle you vote, my guess is you have seen or felt some kind of injustice, either because of political legislation or personally, because of your political allegiance. Jesus certainly did during his slanderous trial.*

*He could have squared his shoulders, looked at the leaders, and called down fire. He could have taken back the throne for the Jewish people. Or he could have at least pleaded his innocence. Yet, he didn't. Jesus, filled with compassion for the world, chose to be silent in order to extend mercy to the governor he stood before, the Jewish leaders he stood against, and the Roman soldiers who would beat and mock him. He was silent for the poor and oppressed, the slave and the widow, the sick and the feeble, the young and the old.*

*As we approach conflict, especially the conflict of an election season, let us hold to the hope we have in Jesus. Boldly stand in the image of Christ without fear. Trust the Holy Spirit's leading. Sometimes, we will be called to speak out. Other*



*times, the wise choice is to remain silent. The latter tends to be counter to American culture.*

*Let me finish by reminding you of Paul's commands in Philippians 1:27-29: "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him" (NIV).*

## **POSSIBLE LEARN ANSWERS**

**Read 1 Peter 3:8-22. How does Peter say followers of Christ should interact with others? Particularly, how should we approach conflict and suffering?**

Peter asserts that we must keep a clear conscience and revere the Lord. Even in the midst of conflict, we must be sympathetic and compassionate. Rather than repay evil with evil, we should repay evil with blessing! And although we may suffer, we should not fear, remembering that we serve Jesus, who modeled this behavior for us and dwells in us.

**Read Matthew 26:57-65. What happened in this slanderous trial against Jesus, and how did he respond?** The religious leaders of the time facilitated a sham trial against Jesus, all while Peter watched from a distance. One major charge involved misconstruing Jesus' words about destroying God's temple and then rebuilding it in three days—the accusers failed to recognize that it was a metaphor for Christ's body. Jesus did not lash out at his opponents, however. In a sense, all he did was share the Good News that he is the Son of God.

**What similarities do you see between Jesus' response to the threats in his trial and Peter's instructions on how to approach conflict and suffering?** Jesus did not lash out at the people hostile toward him. Rather, he simply identified himself as the Son of God. Likewise, as Peter explains, you are to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” And one of those core reasons is that Jesus is the Son of God! We are to share this hope, even if we may suffer for it, rather than insult those who insult us.

## NOTES

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**WEEK 4**

September 22, 2024

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# YOU LIVE FOR GOD

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**1 PETER 4**

# 1 PETER 4

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## **Living for God**

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. <sup>2</sup>As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. <sup>3</sup>For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. <sup>4</sup>They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. <sup>5</sup>But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. <sup>8</sup>Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength

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God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Suffering for Being a Christian**

<sup>12</sup>Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup>If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup>If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. <sup>16</sup>However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. <sup>17</sup>For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>And,

“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,  
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

<sup>19</sup>So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

## HEBREWS 12:1-3

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<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

## JOHN 15:18-21

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### **The World Hates the Disciples**

<sup>18</sup>“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup>If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. <sup>20</sup>Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. <sup>21</sup>They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.

## LEARN

Read 1 Peter 4:1-2 as well as Hebrews 12:1-3. According to these passages, how can we as Christians persevere in following Jesus?

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Read 1 Peter 4:3-11. What are various things Christians should expect to happen when they begin to live differently than non-Christians do? How should Christians live?

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Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 as well as John 15:18-21. According to Peter and Jesus, what should a Christian's view on suffering be?

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## LIVE

1 Peter 4:16 says, "However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name." It's an incredible honor it is to bear the name



“Christian.” Why can you be grateful to bear the name, and how can you show your gratitude?

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Sometimes, we all need a good reminder! Life is busy—and sometimes even chaotic. Distractions can bombard us as well. It can be easy to forget what we do, why we do it, and even who we do it for. 1 Peter 4:19 says, “So, then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful creator and continue to do good” (NIV). How can you take encouragement in the reminder that our God is the faithful creator? What is one specific way this can guide you in deciding what you do, why you do it, and who you do it for?

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## LAUNCH

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11 again. We’re encouraged to do everything for the glory of God and to live for him! That might entail serving, hosting, gathering, teaching, and so much more. In what ways are you currently using your gifts to bring glory to God? Is there anything you’d like to begin doing in service to his kingdom? This week, use the space below to write prayers to the Lord, asking

him to reveal answers to these questions. Write down any additional thoughts he gives you throughout the week.

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## **SOMETHING TO CONSIDER**

By Aaron Adams

*Have you ever forgotten who you are? No, I don't actually mean your name—hopefully, that's easy enough to remember! But as I was working through this lesson, verse 16 stood out to me. It says, "However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (NIV).*

*I read that verse and it stuck with me. So, I read it again and again. To be honest, it's a verse that has continued to stick with me even after finishing up my section of this study.*

*Suffering is difficult. Most of the time, it's not enjoyable and it can bring about a lot of questions, fear, and doubt. I don't think Peter was trying to minimize suffering and say that you just have to "tough it out."*

*But Peter offers the reminder that, sometimes, suffering does plague us because we're followers of Christ. When we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, it will often put us at odds with the world around us. That's specifically the situation with Peter's audience.*

*When you follow Jesus, you will make decisions that the world will disagree with. When you follow Jesus, it will bring about suffering, persecution, and difficulty. It's in those moments we must remember who we are. We're Christians. What a tremendous honor it is to be associated with Christ!*

## **POSSIBLE LEARN ANSWERS**

**Read 1 Peter 4:1-2 as well as Hebrews 12:1-3. According to these passages, how can we as Christians persevere in following Jesus?** Both passages show that we as Christians are to keep Jesus' suffering in mind whenever we face hardships. He didn't live for evil desires, but rather to follow the Father's will. By keeping this in mind, by fixing our eyes on him, we can have hope that it's worth pressing on.

**Read 1 Peter 4:3-11. What are various things Christians should expect to happen when they begin to live differently than non-Christians do? How should Christians live?** In following Jesus, Christians cast aside sinful behavior. Peter emphasizes that some

sinful practices, such as lust or drunkenness, may seem like no big deal to non-Christians. Consequently, nonbelievers may deride or even persecute believers. But Peter tells the recipients of this letter to keep on praying, loving, and serving.

**Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 as well as John 15:18-21. According to Peter and Jesus, what should a Christian's perspective on suffering be?** Peter is writing to an audience who is familiar with suffering. They knew pain and persecution, and yet he reminds them that this shouldn't be a surprise to them—after all, Jesus said his followers would be persecuted. They should stay committed to their loving creator. In fact, Christians should view suffering for Jesus' name as a blessing because it's an opportunity to proclaim the faith. The Holy Spirit is sustaining you as you share and obey the gospel.

## NOTES

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**WEEK 5**

September 29, 2024

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# YOU NEED EACH OTHER

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**1 PETER 5**

# 1 PETER 5

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## **To the Elders and the Flock**

<sup>1</sup>To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup>Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup>not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

<sup>5</sup>In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud  
but shows favor to the humble.”

<sup>6</sup>Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup>Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

<sup>8</sup>Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

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<sup>10</sup>And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup>To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Final Greetings**

<sup>12</sup>With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

<sup>13</sup>She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

<sup>14</sup>Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

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## LEARN

Read 1 Peter 5:1-7. Here, we receive valuable words to help us learn more about ourselves and the ways we can live and serve together. What instructions does Peter give to the elders and to the young people of the church?

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Read 1 Peter 5:8-11. Why does Peter warn everyone in the church to be watchful and control themselves?

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Read 1 Peter 5:12-14. The apostle addresses many different people in this closing. How do you think this might show the type of unity believers are supposed to share?

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## LIVE

In this section, Peter emphasizes that a person must be humble in order to cultivate healthy relationships with God and others. It is therefore important to root out pride. On a personal level, have you ever struggled with pride? If so, how did it impact your relationships with other people and with God?

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Read 1 Peter 5:6-7 again. The apostle suggests that being humble and being free from worry are connected, although he doesn't spell out the reason why. How do you think being humble could help you turn your worries over to Jesus?

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What could it look like for you personally to put humility in action?

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## LAUNCH

Truly being humble is no easy feat. We must be intentional in seeking help from the Holy Spirit and fellow believers.

As this study comes to a close, we invite you to open yourself to growing in our Lord. Focus on one area we discussed from this chapter. Keep these important points in mind:

- Ask God to search you and to show you what might be standing between you and him.
- Be honest with yourself.
- Ask him to forgive you if needed.
- Ask for his help to change you—and believe he will do it!
- Ask for your group to keep praying for you. Honor one another in serving through prayer.

Not one of us is perfect, but we can humbly approach Jesus who died and rose again so we can live in peace. We don't need to do this on our own.

Use the space below to write your prayers. These prayers can be about your own relationship with the Lord and about the needs of your group members.

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## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

By Darletta Martinez

*Recently, our family traveled together on a vacation and had an amazing time. We laughed, we played games, we ate at the same table, and we enjoyed each other's company. It was truly a blessed and memorable experience.*

*But lest you believe it was perfect, it was also hard to get along for a whole week. We were tired, we were hot, and we lived in the same house with a variety of personalities, varying age groups, and different ways of doing things. It was a test of our family unity and our willingness to put each other before ourselves.*

*It served as a reminder I think we should all reflect on. Any experience where you might "do life" with other people can be a test of your character. It reveals your true self more quickly than anything else. You might be moving to a dorm for the first time, you might be attending a small group, you might be starting a task with other people at work, you might be spending time with family. Whatever the case, most of us are doing things with other people, and it's not always easy.*

*Our Lord lived with other people too. I sense in Scripture at times that, like me, Jesus was tired, hot, and frustrated with those around him on*

*some days. But what I also see is God's beautiful character. It is impactful to me when I read that Jesus could live with imperfect people and demonstrate such grace and servanthood. It is inspiring and convicting. What I also remember is that while I'm to have these characteristics, there is no way I could attain them by myself. In fact, it is impossible.*

*In this chapter, Peter wrote some very straightforward instructions to the elders of the church. You might think they would have had it all together by the time they became elders. But clearly, they, like you and I, had to keep close watch over their own behavior.*

*This section of Scripture teaches us that we are loved and special. We are able to live in a better way with Jesus. We might have to struggle, but we can persist and overcome with our Lord. Finally, it shows us that by serving each other in love and without pride, we are pleasing to God, who honors humility.*

*As I continue to reflect on our family vacation, I remember the generosity and grace that we gave each other. I remember the love that was most evident when we prayed together, a love made possible by Jesus. You might not have the same experiences I have, your season of life may be much different from mine, but you can be*

*confident that we have the same loving Father who gave his only Son for all of us.*

*I challenge us to serve one another as he taught us to do. Let us love with a heart that is focused on him first, and then we will find the right way to do that for others. May God richly bless us as we learn more about him together and as we learn to love each other every day. Let's be patient and kind. Let's be examples to those who are watching us.*

## **POSSIBLE LEARN ANSWERS**

**Read 1 Peter 5:1-7. Here, we receive valuable words to help us learn more about ourselves and the ways we can live and serve together. What instructions does Peter give to the elders and to the young people of the church?** Peter tells elders to lead their church as shepherds lead their flocks. In these times, the relationship between a shepherd and his flock would have been familiar and easy to understand. This is exactly the relationship Jesus told Peter to follow (John 21: 15-17). They were to be honest and humble, viewing themselves as servants. They were to be examples that young people could follow.

Peter emphasizes humility. In verses 6 and 7, he suggests that being humble is connected to being free of anxiety. He doesn't outline the reason, but perhaps

it's because we can't be humble and maintain control at the same time. If we are too proud to ask for help, then we will continue to struggle on our own. Pride not only harms our relationships with people but also with God. Self-sufficiency keeps us from trusting God. It clouds our vision and causes us to make decisions or behave in ways that ultimately harms us and keeps us from God.

**Read 1 Peter 5:8-11. Why does Peter warn everyone in the church to be watchful and control themselves?**

If we are not aware of the devil and the other forces that surround us, we are more likely to just react in our own understanding and strength instead of responding in the power of the Holy Spirit. We become weak in our own strength, but strong in the power of Jesus and our community, the church.

**Read 1 Peter 5:12-14. The apostle addresses many different people in this closing. How do you think this might show the type of unity believers are supposed to share?**

By calling out people in different places and different roles, Peter shows us that we are connected in our faith. He creates a message of unity. In this case, he mentions that his letter is even an example of a collaborative effort—Silas helped write it! Persecuted churches in other regions offered their greetings as well, showing connections around the world. And, of course, Peter notes that the church community he's writing to should be internally unified.













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