



Personal Bible Study Program 2007

1 Peter

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

To help you get the most out of bible talks on Sunday we have designed a daily bible reading program that will help you to read and apply each bible passage during the week before the bible talk. This can be a supplement to your existing bible reading program if you already have one.

We hope that you will make the most of this Bible reading program by setting aside the time to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”.

How to use the readings:

- Print the studies out double-sided and staple the pages as a booklet
- Set aside time
- Pray for understanding
- Read the passage
- Answer the questions
- Meditate on what you learn
- Apply what you learn
- Pray in response

**This Bible reading guide is available for download
from the ‘Resources’ page at www.bpc.org.au**

**Please note that we are open to feedback on how to improve this resource.
Please email your comments to office@bpc.org.au**

Introduction to 1 Peter

Over the coming weeks we will be spending time in the first letter of Peter. The Apostle Peter’s writings are as timely and relevant to his original hearers as they are to Christians today.

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through the preaching of the Apostles, the first generation of Christians grew rapidly in number. Missionaries had taken the gospel all over the Roman Empire and had won many converts, and not just amongst Jews but increasingly amongst Gentiles. By the time Peter pens his letter at around 64-64 AD, it is not surprising then that his letter could be circulated to Christians scattered over such a large area (1:2) which we know as modern day Turkey. The spread of Christianity was such that there is evidence that the great city of Rome had an established church by the time Peter writes (see the reference to “Babylon” – code for Rome in 5:13).

But Christianity was not to go unchallenged. History records Nero, the Emperor between AD 54-68, as having instigated a fire that destroyed two thirds of Rome in AD64. To escape blame he made Christians the scapegoat for the fire and thus began wide spread persecution. Tacitus, a Roman historian records that the persecution was savage, involving the violent death of Christians by fire or their mauling by animals. Accompanying such heinous persecution would also come hate, hostility and insult from neighbours and local communities.

It is possible that the persecution initiated by Nero is the specific occasion of this letter but it is more likely that the trials and persecution spoken of in this letter are more general and well in place before Nero’s persecutions and due simply to bearing the name of Christ (4:14). Of course, opposition is something that Jesus told his followers to expect as normal (Jn 15:18-21).

The Apostle Peter writes to churches in the midst of suffering. In fact, *suffering* is one of the themes of this letter as the Christians endure all sorts of trials (1:6, 4:12; 2:12, 20-21; 3:14-17; 4:1, 12-19; 5:9). Peter writes as a pastor, to warmly encourage these Christians to live rightly in the face of fiery trial. He reminds them of who they are in Christ, he spurs them to live and suffer for the right reasons and he reminds them of their glorious destiny. *Hope* emerges as one of the key themes of 1 Peter (1:3; 13, 21; 3:5, 15). Hope that is founded on the resurrection of Christ and secure in its final outcome for the believer.

In some ways little has changed since Peter wrote this letter. Christians today experience opposition of all kinds. Whether it is the hate-filled words of atheists, the misunderstanding of family or the brutality of government regimes – persecution is still with us today. And that is why 1Peter is as timely and relevant as ever. For those who bear the name of Christ – how are we to conduct ourselves rightly with the living hope of Christ in a hostile world. Read on and find out!



Set aside time to read the whole section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study and completed the underlined questions.

Day 1 Chosen Strangers (read vv.1-2)

1. Verse describes Christians as “elect”, yet also “strangers in the world”. What do these two terms bring to your understanding of being a Christian?
2. Describe the process and purpose of being elected (v.2). Whose work is it?
3. As a Christian, how might you live a life that reflects being *chosen* by God yet at the same time a *stranger* in this world?

Day 2 A New Birth into a Living Hope (vv.3-6)

1. What two things does a Christian's new birth bring?
2. Even though these are things that look forward to the future why can we be confident even now of receiving these things?
3. Christians could be described as living in the “now and not yet”. How can you “rejoice” (v.6) in this stage?

Day 3 Refined by Fire (read vv.6-9)

1. What is Peter's take on the trials that they are enduring? (vv.6-7)
 - a. In terms of how these feel
 - b. In terms of length of time
 - c. In terms of benefit
2. Peter is also convinced that suffering is not only for the benefit of the Christian, who else benefits?
3. When you go through a rough time for being a Christian, how might Peter's perspective help you to suffer in a good way?

Day 4 A Great Salvation (read vv.10-12)

The great salvation that Jesus brings was longed for by OT prophets who had an idea of the suffering and glory of Christ (eg. Isa 53).

1. Who were the prophets serving? (cf. Heb 1:1-4) How does Peter speak of this privilege?
2. How did we come to know the fullness of the salvation Christ brings?
3. How does having full knowledge of our salvation help us practically during our present trials?



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Suggested launch question for group bible study:

When you think about *suffering for being a Christian*, what are your first reactions?



Set aside time to read the whole section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study and completed the underlined questions.

Day 1 Be Holy (read vv.13-16)

The “Therefore” at verse 13 relates to the great salvation Christians have received (see vv.10-12)

1. From the commands that Peter gives, what does a holy life look like?
2. Why would the great salvation in vv.10-12 be a reason for holiness?
3. Why might a holy life be necessary in a time of suffering and persecution?
4. What might it look like to put into practice a holy life at home, at work/study, at church, in your community?

Day 2 Father & Judge (read vv.17-21)

1. How does knowing God is Father & Judge help us to live holy lives?
2. Practically speaking, what does it mean to have “reverent fear” towards God?
3. Why is the price of our redemption an incentive to holiness?
4. Think about your current reasons for holiness, how do they compare to these?

Day 3 Strangers is a hostile world (vv.17; 1:1)

The word “strangers” can also be translated as “sojourners” (also see 1:1). It has the idea of being someone who does not belong but rather is just passing through a strange land on their way to a better destination. From 1 Peter 1:

1. What is the time perspective of a Christian sojourner?
2. What would a Christian sojourner expect on their destination?
3. How should a Christian sojourner deal with being too attached to their old life?
4. How should a Christian sojourner handle hostility & persecution?

Day 4 Purified to love (read vv.22-25)

In the OT, ritual purification was necessary for someone to be fit for God’s service (eg. Num 8:21)

1. How does purification come about in the NT?
2. What is the service God wants from his holy, purified children?
3. Notice the contrast between perishable *things* (v.18) and imperishable *seed* (v.23). Knowing that God’s people have been planted by this imperishable seed, what value does this give your service to God?



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Suggested launch question for group bible study:

When it comes to your time in this life, how would you describe your approach?

1. a landowner;
2. a pilgrim;
3. an explorer



Set aside time to read the whole section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study and completed the underlined questions.

Day 1 Rid yourselves (read 1:22-2:1)

The “Therefore” at verse 2:1 relates to the new birth the Christians have due to being born of imperishable seed – the word of God.

1. In context, why would the Christians need to rid themselves of these behaviours that Peter lists?
2. Under pressure and hostility why might it be easy to behave in these ways?
3. In a Christian community, why should we rid ourselves of these practices? How might we do this?

Day 2 Newborn babies (read 2:2, 1:3 and 1:23)

Peter reminds these Christians that they have been born again.

1. How did they experience this new birth? (see 1:3,23) How did you experience new birth?
2. What is to be their craving as newborns? In other words, what do you think the milk is?
3. In what ways can you say that you have “tasted that the Lord is good”? (see Ps 34:8)

Day 3 Living Stone, Stumbling Block (read vv.4-8)

Christ is presented as the living stone:

- a. Chosen (Isa 28:16)
 - b. Rejected (Ps 118:22)
 - c. Stumbling block (Isa 8:14)
1. How have we seen these scriptures fulfilled in the different responses to Jesus in the gospels?
 2. How do we still see this today in people responding to Jesus?

Day 4 Living stones, spiritual house, royal priesthood (read vv.5, 9-10)

The people of Israel in the OT were meant to fulfil the roles listed in these verses.

Now they are applied to Christians (see Exo 19:5,6)

1. Reflect on the privilege that Christians have in bearing this status, how is it that we came to bear this privilege?
2. Explain the different parts of the image in verse 5: spiritual house, priesthood, sacrifice.
3. In what ways are we like the OT priesthood, and in what ways are we different?
4. Do you consider yourself part of the “royal priesthood” of God? What should we be doing as a church in order to fulfil our God-given office?



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Suggested launch question for group bible study:

If you had to use a metaphor to describe the church, what word(s) would you use and why?



Set aside time to read the whole section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study and completed the underlined questions.

Day 1 Strangers who avoid sin (read v11)

1. Paul refers to Christians as *aliens* and *strangers* (NIV). Why does he use these words? See 1:17-19 and 2:9:10.
2. What is it that makes Christians different? Why is there a “war” going on?
3. List some of the sinful desires you struggle with and how you might be able to abstain from them.

Day 2 Living the good life (read v12)

1. Who are the “pagans” and are there still any around today?
2. Why is it important to live good lives amongst the pagans? (see Matt 5:16)
3. What is the response of the pagans? Should we be deterred by this?
4. What makes it hard to live a good life amongst the pagans? What are some things you can work on?

Day 3 Obey the authorities (read vv13-15)

1. What are the authorities that Peter wants Christians to submit to?
2. Why should we submit to these authorities? (see Romans 13:1-7)
3. It’s easy to obey major laws, like don’t murder, but what about the smaller ones? Do you struggle with keeping road rules, or downloading copyrighted material from the internet? List some things you need to sort out in your life.

Day 4 Freedom to serve (read v16)

1. How can Peter say “live as free men”? What makes Christians free? (see 2:9-10)
2. How is it possible to use your freedom to cover-up evil? (see Galatians 5:13 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-2)
3. So if Peter doesn’t want us to sin, but wants us to live as free people, then what does it mean to live as free people? (see John 8:31-36, Galatians 5:13)

Day 5 Servants of God (read v17)

The implications of verse 16 are spelled out in verse 17. Living as free servants of God requires that we treat people in a certain way.

1. Who are we to show respect to? Who do you find hard to respect?
2. We are to love the brotherhood of believers. List some practical ways you can do this. How does going to church relate to this?
3. What does it mean to fear God? Why would Peter list it here?
4. Who might be the equivalent of our king and how do we honour them?

Peter makes it clear that these teachings are not about working for salvation. Rather, it’s working because we are saved. More importantly, it is a great witness to non-Christians because it stops them slandering us and points them to Christ.



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Suggested launch questions for group bible study:

Have you ever been to a place where you didn’t feel like you belonged? What was it like?

Recently it has become common for people to accuse religious people of promoting violence and intolerance. Christians have been accused of brain washing and holding society back from progress. How does this make you feel? What are the different ways in which Christians respond?



Set aside time to read the whole section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study and completed the underlined questions.

Day 1

1. What were the circumstances of slaves, the conditions under which they lived and worked?
2. How might they have been vulnerable to 'harsh' masters?
3. Are there circumstances where you are in the power of others and vulnerable to their use of that power? How does this passage suggest you should behave in relation to them?

Day 2

1. How do you feel when you suffer, or are even accused, unjustly?
2. How do you react in those circumstances?
3. How does this passage suggest you should react? Why? [especially vv. 21-23]
4. What would you need to change to react like that?

Day 3

1. Peter quotes Isaiah 53 and applies it to the suffering and death of Jesus. Read Isaiah 53. In what ways does Peter see this passage fulfilled in the circumstances of Jesus' death? Spend some time meditating on the death of Jesus.

Day 4

1. What was the outcome of Jesus' enduring unjust suffering? How does it change our relationship to sin, to righteousness, and to God?
2. What encouragement is there for those suffering unjustly in the outcome of Jesus' suffering? How does considering his example encourage you?

Day 5

1. Jesus is presented as an example to us in His trust in His heavenly Father. Are there areas where this passage is challenging you to show that you are following the example of Jesus in your trusting our Father?
2. How does this passage dignify the slaves it addresses? How might it have changed their perceptions of their own lives and activities? How might it have challenged the assumptions of those who were not slaves in the congregations where it was read?
3. Is your sense of your own value and worth, and that of others, informed by the reality of our relationship to God in Christ? How does knowing that even in actions over which you have no choice you can follow the example of Jesus affect the way you think about what you do?

1.



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.