
1 PETER 1- LIVING IN HOPE

This epistle was written to first-century Christians dispersed throughout the northern part of what is now modern Turkey, just prior to the outbreak of persecution from the infamous and terrible Emperor Nero, around 64 A.D. It was written from Rome (called Babylon in 1 Peter 5:13) to an audience of both Jewish and Gentile believers who were undergoing a time of social, political, and personal persecution. The letter emphasizes the reality of suffering in the lives of all Christians, with the focus being on the challenge to stand firm and persevere in all circumstances of life.

Author Profile

Peter (also known as Simon) was a fisherman and follower of John the Baptist, who was led to the Lord Jesus by his brother Andrew. Known for being short-tempered and impulsive, he was singled out along with James and John for in-depth training by the Lord. Jesus changed his name to Cephas, an Aramaic word for Petros in the Greek, meaning “stone” or “rock.” Jesus called him Peter to signify the rock-like character that would distinguish his life, making him one of the founders of the early Christian church. He would emerge after Pentecost as the leading spokesperson for the disciples and was used mightily by the Lord to spread the Good News.

History records that when he was sentenced to be crucified, Peter requested that he be hung upside-down on the cross, considering himself unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord. He died in Rome around 68 A.D. during the persecution by Emperor Nero.

In a Nutshell

Have you ever been the target of someone else’s unkind remarks? Do you know firsthand what it’s like to be persecuted for your faith? If so, this letter is for you. You may not have faced an egomaniacal emperor, but you have felt the pain of ridicule, harassment, and conflict bearing down on you. Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers in whatever trials they may be facing. For Peter’s original audience as well as today’s, the recurring themes of his letter are the hope, security, peace and steadfastness that are ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

Open your Bible and lesson each day by beginning with a word of prayer.

DAY

1

Read 1 Peter 1:1-25 | Living in Hope. Peter begins his introduction with his title: “An *apostle* of Jesus Christ...” It was not possible for a man to appoint himself to be an apostle. It was a divine calling, a commission by God to represent Christ. The job responsibility for this important office was unique and limited to the few hand-selected men who were called to fill it.

1. Using the resources you have on hand, look up the word *apostle* and write a definition for it.
 - a. The New Testament has much to say about the office of an apostle. Look up the following verses and briefly note what is revealed.

Matthew 10:1-8

Matthew 28:16-20

Acts 1:22 and 10:39-43

Ephesians 3:4-5

- b. At approximately what point in His earthly ministry did Jesus give the title of *Apostle* to His disciples? (Luke 6:12-16)

The word *apostle* means *one sent out on a mission* such as an ambassador or envoy. The office carried with it the responsibility and authority to set up and supervise the church and to initiate discipline when necessary. Peter was sent out by none less than his Master and Lord, giving him the authority and power of Almighty God behind him. If you mention the apostle Peter, most of us immediately think of a strong, impetuous fisherman who had a habit of putting his foot in his mouth by saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Even those who don't know much about the man recall that Peter denied the Lord Jesus three times. His life presents a vivid illustration of how we fail as human beings, but also how we can succeed and be victorious through the new nature that is ours in Christ.

From his initial call by Jesus, to the Holy Spirit's empowering at Pentecost, Peter experienced the unusual, such as what it was like to walk on water. He was a witness at the Transfiguration, recognizing and testifying to Christ's deity. He was rebuked by his Lord and even denied Him, but he also repented and was restored, witnessing the Lord's ascension to heaven.

2. Peter's life is a lesson in contrasts and stands as an example of what the Lord can do with a person determined to become all that God wants him to be. Think about it. Would you be willing to be remembered for your failures rather than your successes if your life served as an example to others? Please explain.

3. To whom is Peter writing and how does he describe them?

These are "God's elect" but they were also strangers. In his letter, Peter refers to them as *pilgrims* and *sojourners* or tourists (1 Peter 2:11), people who were away from their homes. The terms he uses imply a temporary separation. These people were foreigners scattered abroad, but they belonged to God and would remain His while living in a world that was not their home.

4. Put yourself in the shoes of a tourist in a foreign land. What are a few of the things that you would most be concerned about?

5. Now contrast that line of thought with that of being a pilgrim believer in this world. Currently, how would you label your grip and what is your world view? Check one.
 - Tight grip—I have eagerly sought the possessions, pleasures, and position this world has to offer me and I feel very much at home in it.
 - Moderate grip—I am preoccupied with the busyness of daily life but wanting to find God's place of peace and rest.
 - Loose grip—The longer I walk with Christ, I feel more out of place; like a foreigner who is just passing through this world.
 - a. Explain your answer in your own words.

If you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are God's elect; your citizenship has been transferred from this world to heaven! You have been chosen "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood" (1 Peter 1:2 ESV). Will you take a moment now and thank Him?

Memory Verse

But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,
since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV

Which part of this verse resonates most with you today? How or in what way?

DAY 2 **Read 1 Peter 1:3-8 | Our living hope.** In these verses, Peter links salvation to what he refers to as a “living hope” for every believer. The hope that Peter has in mind is based on the confident expectation of life after death that is bestowed upon Christians.

1. Who has gifted believers with this inheritance and how? Where is it kept?

The word *kept* means *to guard or reserve in place*. The verb tense indicates that this inheritance already exists; it continues to be there. The trials we experience in this life cannot undermine or diminish the inheritance kept for us in the next one.

2. Does being kept (shielded) by God’s power mean that His children will not have to go through pain or difficulty? What does it mean?

- a. Based on this hope, what kind of response are we believers to have?

Remember, Peter wrote this letter to people who were undergoing tremendous opposition. Some of what they endured included being wrapped in freshly slaughtered animal skins and fed to wild animals. Others were dipped in hot tar or pitch and set on fire as human torches that lit up Nero’s gardens at night. As horrific as these things are, Peter states that the suffering here upon the earth lasts only “a little while” in light of our inheritance, which lasts for eternity.

3. What is one of the main reasons for trials? How is the believer’s faith tested?

The purification process for metal is always fire. When heated to a high temperature, the metal melts and impurities rise to the surface and are skimmed off, resulting in a pure reflection on the surface.

4. What is the lesson here for the believer as it pertains to the transforming process of sanctification? Whose reflection becomes more obvious over time?
 - a. Can you share a time recently when your faith was put through the fire? What did you learn about your faith and how did it grow?
 - b. What similar thread do you find in James 1:2-4 that compares to Peter's encouragement here?

DAY 3 **Read 1 Peter 1:9-12** | Peter's focus now shifts from the difficulties of this present life to the day of Christ's return. His concern is that of our testimony: the fact that our faith, having been tested and proved genuine, will mean praise, honor, and glory when Jesus Christ is revealed. Choosing to believe in Him—though we've not seen Him—results in the joy that comes, not from our circumstances but from our relationship with Him.

1. According to verse 9, what is the end of our faith?
 - a. Who is it that longed to know about God's salvation?
 - b. In their search to know more, what did they discover about Christ?
 - c. It was revealed that their service was not for themselves; who were they serving?

It's as if Peter asks, *"Do you realize how fortunate you are? Angels would have given anything to be in on this!"* You, dear believer, are a full heir to the message of hope that the prophets preached thousands of years ago. Think about it. The weakest Christian today is capable *through the Holy Spirit* of understanding more than the greatest prophets who ever lived and who predicted Christ would come!

2. In your search to know more this week, what new discovery have you made about your salvation?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-25 | A holy life. The word “therefore” is a pivotal bridge between what Peter has just stated regarding our *living hope* and a time in the not-too-distant future when Jesus Christ returns and we, as believers, enter into the reality of that hope. In the remainder of the chapter, Peter explains what is most important and what we are to be occupied with until the day of the Lord’s return.

1. Use the following exercise to help you keep the main thing the main thing, reminding you of what matters most. In a sentence or two, write an explanation as to how you are doing with each one (a brief description is given to you). Be prepared to share with your group.
 - a. **Be prepared** in your mind (gird up the loins of your mind); be alert and ready for action.
 - b. **Be self-controlled** (sober); think and act straight.
 - c. **Be hopeful** to the end (rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you); look forward to the special blessings that are yours.
 - d. **Be obedient** children (not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance); don’t let your lives be controlled by your desires.
 - e. **Be holy** in all your behavior and manner of conversation (in all your conduct).
 - f. **Be holy, for I am holy**; so motivated because He is holy.
2. Start taking your spiritual character development as seriously as God takes it! According to verse 17, what should be your motive for living a holy life as you await His return?
 - a. According to verses 18-19, what realization should affect your perspective and make you *want* to change your behavior?
 - b. Understand that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was foreordained prior to creation. For whose sake was it planned and made known? Read verse 20 for help with your answer and share your thoughts.

3. One of the best ways to demonstrate a love for God and practice a walk of holiness is to see that we *love one another fervently with a pure heart*. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being best) how are you doing with this?

4. The instrument that brought about the new birth is the Word of God. Peter would have us remember two aspects about it: first, that it is *living*; and second, that it is *enduring*.
 - a. *Living* suggests the power of the Word to do what?

 - b. *Enduring* reinforces the power of the Word to do what?

Verses 23-25 are closely linked to verses 3-4. The living, enduring Word is the agent God uses to give you a living hope and an imperishable inheritance. Cherish this gift and let it motivate you to holiness!

DAY 5 **In Touch with Jesus.** This section is intended to be a review of what you have learned and what God has spoken to you this week. Go back over your lesson with a marking pen or highlighter and mark those places and points that stand out to you. Use the margins to make personal notations. Be sure to indicate which points or questions you'd like to share with your discussion group.

1. **Listen** | In what way did the Lord meet you in His Word this week? Be specific.

2. **Learn** | How can you apply this understanding to your daily Christian walk?

3. **Live** | What step of obedience will you purpose to take in your walk of faith?

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. —Ephesians 6:18 NIV

Adoration – Giving praise and honor to God for who He is and what He does.

Confession – Honestly deal with sin; acknowledge to God the ways (and whys) you fall short.

Thanksgiving – Verbalize your gratitude; express your praise and a thankful heart.

Supplication – Pray specifically for the needs of others, ourselves, our church, our nation.



Close your discussion time by praying together. Use the A·C·T·S pattern as a group focus and keep it simple. No need to be lengthy or profound, just authentic.

Notes

HOPE IN ACTION

Previously Titled: *Faith, Hope and Love in Action*
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