
1 PETER 2 - WALKING IN HOPE

In the closing verses of chapter one, Peter's audience is left with the understanding that our hope and inheritance are made real through God's living, enduring Word. Chapter two is all about growing spiritually, and it is here that we make the discovery that the process begins and continues through the daily application of God's Word. The moment a person accepts Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, they are reborn into the family of God as a lifelong member of His master building program. As the process continues, the Holy Spirit is able to build believers into a spiritual house. Once the construction nears completion, the improvements and finishing touches become visible to others. Likewise, the believer's attitudes and actions are revealed for the better as we grow closer to completion and receiving our eternal inheritance.

DAY 1 **Read 1 Peter 2:1-25 | Walking in Hope.** The opening of chapter two immediately draws the reader's attention back to chapter one by Peter's use of the word "therefore." Right away it connects the concept of our rebirth through God's Word with the evidence of our new birth being lived out in daily life. Peter's use of the term "newborn babies" is not a reference to his readers being new Christians, but is rather an exhortation to all believers to *desire or crave long* the spiritual nourishment of God's Word in the same way a baby longs for milk in order to be satisfied and grow.

1. Peter lists five sins (verse 1) that we must be rid of before we can grow unhindered in the Christian life. List them below.

2. To *rid ourselves* can also mean to *put off* or *put away*. The same term is used in other places in the New Testament to indicate the decisive act of removing or taking off the believer's former sinful life. What do the following verses say about this *putting off*?

Romans 13:11-14

Colossians 3:6-10

3. Why is this process so important to spiritual growth? Read Ephesians 4:14-15 for help with your answer.

4. What important and familiar warning is there in James 1:21-22?

5. Using the resources you have on hand, look up each of the five sins Peter lists in verse one and explain why it will hinder *your* spiritual growth as a Christian. Be specific. (Note: The first two are general in nature; the last three flow out of the first two.)
 - a. *Malice* will hinder my spiritual growth because:

 - b. *Deceit* will hinder my spiritual growth because:

 - c. *Hypocrisy* will hinder my spiritual growth because:

 - d. *Envy* will hinder my spiritual growth because:

 - e. *Slander* will hinder my spiritual growth because:

 - f. Which, if any, of these sins is evident in your life right now? Be honest with yourself; God already knows the answer.

6. Think about it. What does your spiritual diet consist of? Are you malnourished because you are prone to skip meals in the Word? Are you perhaps picky or choosy, jumping from one section of the Bible that you like without perhaps taking in the whole counsel of God and savoring how it's nourishing you? As a child of God, it's not only a pleasure but a privilege to taste the goodness of God's Word for yourself. To taste His goodness is to want more of His goodness. It means you will no longer be satisfied with anything less than God's best! How's your spiritual diet? Please share your thoughts.

Memory Verse

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it,
you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.
1 Peter 2:2-3 NIV

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

DAY 2 **Read 1 Peter 2:4-8 | Living stones.** Christians grow up together as *living stones*, having been built upon the foundation of Christ, the cornerstone. Each time a new believer is admitted into God's family, a new living stone is added to the building. Together, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, we grow into the temple of God.

1. In order to emphasize the importance of Jesus Christ as the centerpiece of the Church and the believer's life, Peter wove together two portions of Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah and the Psalms. What do you discover about the Lord Jesus from the verses Peter quoted?

Isaiah 28:16

Isaiah 8:14 and Psalm 118:22

The structure and design of a building rest upon the foundation or cornerstone, with the capstone being the topmost piece or finishing touch. Peter's point is that from its inception to completion, the Church which consists of these *living stones* is built upon THE Living Stone. "For no one can lay any other foundation than the one we already have—Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11 NLT). He is both the cornerstone upon which it rests and the capstone—the point up to which it grows. He is the beginning and the end!

2. Not everyone chooses to accept the cornerstone God put in place. Finish the following:
 - a. Verse 6 – "Whoever believes in Him..."
 - b. Verse 7 – "To you who believe..."

3. The *builders* (in verse 7) are those who willfully choose to reject Christ.* In verses 7-8, what does Peter say about them?

Despite their rejection of God's chief cornerstone, Jesus was given the preeminent position in the Church. When you come to Christ, you become part of God's building—the Church. You also become part of a holy priesthood. As such, you have the privilege of gaining direct access to God anytime, anywhere. You also have the great honor of serving Him by bringing others to Him.

4. In this privileged position, according to verse 5 what are you called to do?
 - a. In the Old Testament, the position of *priest* meant having an attitude of repentance, remaining pure, and continually offering prayers of supplication and thanksgiving to God. The New Testament goes somewhat further in its practical application to all believers.

In Romans 12:1-2, we find the ways we can offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. What are they?

DAY 3 **Read 1 Peter 2:9-12** | Although we will never achieve perfection this side of heaven, the standard for every believer is a walk of holiness. Remember, as a *priest* you are set apart by God for His use. Your life's purpose is to proclaim His praises. Your life's goal is that when people look at you, they see and hear Jesus!

1. Peter specifically details the value that God places on you. According to verses 9-10, how does Peter describe our relationship with God? Put this in your own words.
 - a. When God called you out of darkness, from whose power were you released? For help with your answer, read Acts 26:18.
 - b. Contrast who you were *before* with who you are *now*. According to verse 10, what precious gift has God given you?

* **“Rejected** suggests that unbelievers, after examining Jesus to see if He meets their needs, declared Him to be useless or undesirable. Though He was not what they wanted, He is specifically the One whom God the Father has chosen to be the foundation of His eternal work.” From *The Nelson Study Bible*, ©1997 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.

2. Peter refers to believers as *sojourners* and *pilgrims*. As one of today's believers living in a "foreign land" (a world to which you do not belong) from what must you abstain? Why?
 - a. What kind of example are you to be? Why?

Peter is referring in these verses about the quality of life that will cause non-believers to stand up and take notice! He isn't speaking of a one-time encounter with another person, but rather the process of being watched over a period of time. He is emphasizing that we are to model the kind of behavior that is free of criticism or offense until the day of the Lord's return.

- b. Can you say that you are living up to your high calling? Why or why not?

DAY 4 **Read 1 Peter 2:13-25 | Submitting to Authority.** Relationships can be difficult and sometimes very demanding, offering us the opportunity to really appreciate the difference God's grace has made in our own lives.

The remainder of chapter two deals with how Christians are to relate to one another and how we are to respond to those that don't know Christ. In the final analysis, no matter what our circumstances may be at any given moment, we believers are God's instruments to proclaim to the world who He is and what He has done on our behalf. In other words, our lives should be a continual living testimony of His character and love.

Peter begins to illustrate the testimony of the life that is fully submitted to God. Although he wanted Christians to submit willingly, a closer look reveals that Peter's words are not presented as an option but rather a command. In every area, we are called to follow *in His steps*.

The remainder of the chapter breaks nicely into three sections, each dealing with a different aspect of how the believer should respond to authority.

1. **Submission to Government /Authorities** (verses 13-17). Who are some of those in authority over your life? Name them below.
 - a. For whose sake are you asked to submit to these authorities?
 - b. What does your submission look like in practical, everyday life? Why does God want you to submit in this way?
 - c. In verse 17, Peter says every believer is to fear God, love the brethren, and respect everyone else. In order to live up to this calling, you will need to exhibit Christ's example of humility. From Philippians 2:3-8, what do you discover about the Lord's example and how does it minister to you today?

The spiritual freedom you enjoy as a Christian includes freedom from sin's rule, freedom from guilt because you are forgiven, and freedom from thinking you have to earn God's favor. In areas where the Word of God gives no *specific* guidance, you are free to make your choices responsibly. In all things, you have the freedom to do, not what you *want*—but what you *ought*. This should be your code of conduct in everyday life.

2. **Submission as an Employee/Servant** (verse 18). Peter does not attempt to condone slavery, but to encourage those who were suffering in a society that permitted it. Believers who were servants (slaves) were not free from serving their masters, but were free from the slavery of sin. Whether their employer was a Christian or non-believer, they were to be respectful and responsible in their behavior.
 - a. What should a believer's heart attitude be? According to Colossians 3:22-24, who are they ultimately serving?
 - b. Have you ever worked for a harsh employer? How did it affect you? How did God's grace enable you?

3. **Submission to Unjust Authorities** (verses 19-25). The reality of life is, believers will suffer in this world. Sometimes we are even called to suffer at unjust hands for the greater glory of God and for our own maturity.
 - a. Peter isn't saying that it's commendable to endure punishment that is deserved. To what kind of suffering does he refer?
 - b. What does Peter point to in these verses about Christ's own suffering?
 - c. How does possessing an understanding of who and what you once were help to motivate you to adopt Christ's example?

4. Take a moment to contemplate verse 25 in light of Psalm 23. How does the assurance that Christ is *your* Shepherd—*your* Overseer—encourage you today?

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.
