



1 & 2 Peter

Student Devotional



East 91ST Street
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Week 1: 1 Peter 1–2:3

1 This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. 2 God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

May God give you more and more grace and peace.

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, 4 and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. 5 And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

6 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

8 You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 9 The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

10 This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. 11 They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward.

12 They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.

13 So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. 14 So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.



16 For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents." 18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. 19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. 20 God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.

21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.

22 You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.

23 For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. 24 As the Scriptures say,

"People are like grass;
their beauty is like a flower in the field.
The grass withers and the flower fades.
25 But the word of the Lord remains forever."

1 And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.

2 So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. 2 Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, 3 now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

Day 1

1 Peter 1:1-2

Devotion written by Lake Webb

When starting any book of the Bible, we need to remember that it was not written to us. Yes, all Scripture is written *for* us, but Scripture was originally written by specific people, to a specific audience, for specific purposes. 1 Peter is no different, and maybe you can argue it is more important to recognize this since it is a letter. Rather than beginning with a history lesson, let's take a little trip back to 62 AD Cappadocia:

You just finished dinner with your family. For dessert, you are enjoying the first fig of the season from your tree out back. It tastes better than you remember, maybe because it's a good year for figs, or maybe because you have eaten the same meal every single day for the last two months and the little bit of variety feels luxurious. You think back to the times when you would enjoy roasted goat that your father would bring home from Pan's temple each week, but ever since your family received the good news of Jesus Christ about 4 months ago, he hasn't been back to the temple. But when he stopped going to the temple, the friends who traded with his olive oil business slowly cut off contact with him. They're all afraid that the gods will be angry with them if they were to buy from and trade with a man who does not worship them. It was a treat when one of the Christians in town brought back some fish for the whole church after his fishing season on the coast ended, but that ran out pretty quickly. So for the last 4 months, you've only eaten lentils...gross.

The food is just a small way of showing how your life has changed since coming to know Jesus. Families you grew up with treat you like you don't belong anymore. Your shoes are wearing out and your family doesn't have enough money to buy new ones. Even though you feel like an outsider in the home that you have always lived in, for some reason, your family has gotten closer since following Jesus. You have grown close with members of the church that you never knew before, and somehow through your shared struggle and shared love of Christ, they feel like family now. And even though there is a lot of unexplainable comfort, life is still really hard.

One night, there is a frantic knock on your door. It is your friend from church telling you that your family needs to come quickly to your weekly meeting place. Everyone rushes over, half asleep and slightly terrified that something awful had happened. Had the city leaders finally decided to act against the Christians? That fear feels confirmed when you walk in and see your pastor, scroll in hand and tears in his eyes. You expect the worst.

When the whole church has gathered, he opens the scroll. You quickly realize that they are not tears of sorrow, but tears of joy. Your church had not received a letter of warning – you had received a letter of joy. *“This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.”* The best friend of Jesus when He was on earth. You’ve heard of him, but now you are hearing *from* him. He knows you feel like an exile – but somehow, it means more that Jesus chose you. You begin to experience the grace and peace he had prayed for. You listen intently to every word.

May we do the same.

- Underline “God the Father knew you and chose you long ago” in verse 2.
- When have you experienced a feeling a feeling of being left out because you follow Jesus?
- Why is it important that Peter reminds suffering believers that they were chosen by God?

Prayer: God, would you remind me of my identity in you when I feel like the world is against me?

Day 2

1 Peter 1:3–9

Devotion written by Lake Webb

As of writing this, the price per ounce of gold is \$4,541.20. For one ounce! Gold has always been the standard for value across the world. Golden jewelry has been a status symbol for roughly 6,000 years in nearly every major culture, and gold has been used as a form of currency for nearly 3,000 years. Because gold has always been valuable, the price of gold has been a direct reflection of confidence in the economy. Needless to say, no matter the audience, people understand that gold stands for far more than just a metal on the periodic table.

Peter begins the body of his letter by reminding the recipients of the great mercy that the Lord showed them through Jesus, and it is because of this mercy that they now have a great expectation of a “priceless inheritance” (*Underline “priceless inheritance” in verse 4*). This inheritance, or the eternal glory we receive with Christ, cannot be tarnished or diminished by the world, as it is kept for us in heaven.

Peter then likens this inheritance to gold. For gold to attain its maximum value, it undergoes the process of testing and purification. Some people would attempt to inflate the value of their gold by mixing it with other metals, therefore it was important that gold be tested by fire, since gold has a relatively high melting point, to prove that it was truly gold. Likewise, gold can appear dirty or impure, but fire burns away these impurities in a process called refining. After it is removed from the fire, gold is in its purest form and in its most usable, valuable state.

Peter explains that our faith is refined through trials as we journey toward the inheritance that God has already secured for us. However, our refining does not come by literal fire, but through trials. Peter’s encouragement to the recipients is to assure them that their trials were not evidence that God had abandoned them. Instead, those trials revealed and strengthened genuine faith as they awaited the inheritance God had promised. Through these trials, their faith will be even more pure than it was before, so they must continue to endure in faith.

As Christians, we are promised that life is going to be hard. (Jn. 16:33; 2 Cor. 4:8–9). In the difficulties of life, we are left with a choice: Do we sulk and believe God does not care for us, or do we see them as opportunities for *pure* joy (James 1:2–4)? If gold needs to be tested, how much more important is the testing of an invaluable treasure?

- What do you think it looks like for faith to be more pure? What defines a purer faith?

- Where have you experienced the testing of your faith and how have those experiences grown you?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, would you give me the help I need when my faith is being tried?

Day 3

1 Peter 1:10-12

Devotion written by Lake Webb

You may have heard something like this before: “All of the Bible points to Jesus.” If you go back and read books like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and especially Leviticus and Deuteronomy, it can be really difficult to understand what that saying means. When you’re knee deep in Joel’s description of an army of locusts, it can feel impossible to see Jesus. However, Peter makes the argument that this is absolutely the case. Not only did Peter argue this, but Jesus Himself when He was on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).

It may seem unclear or idealistic to say that all of Scripture points to Jesus, but perhaps we just need to reframe that statement: All of Scripture testifies to Christ. Initially, this may seem like the same thing, but saying it this way casts a little bit wider of a net. It means that the prophets testified to the abject brokenness of humanity. They preached the necessity of a Messiah. They spoke of the divine identity this savior would possess. They called for God’s people to hope in the Lord alone rather than the world or in themselves. It also means that they testified to the salvation (inheritance) those who hope in the Lord would receive as a result of Christ.

Peter is giving a wonderful encouragement to the recipients, saying, “The prophets, who you revere, were serving *you* directly. Their primary concern was to communicate the grace that was only found in God, and would later be demonstrated and offered through Christ.”

Think of it this way: All of Biblical history testifies to something that you currently possess. What is this other than a call to treasure so deeply this grace that has been offered to us. How are we supposed to treasure this inheritance practically? Great question. Let’s save that for tomorrow. But for today, just thank Him for it.

- How does the knowledge of God’s grace lead you to gratitude?
- How should understanding that the prophets ultimately pointed to Christ change the way you read the Old Testament?

Prayer: Father, thank you for aligning things so perfectly, that I would be able to know Jesus and His gospel.

Day 4

1 Peter 1:13–20

Devotion written by Lake Webb

Yesterday, we ended with a time of gratitude. Before any sense of duty, we have to remember that salvation is a free gift of God – there is rest found in that truth. In other words, our first response to the gift of His grace is not “What do I need to do to earn this.” That said, there is a really important word we see often in Scripture: *διό* (pronounced “dio”). We translate this into English as “therefore” or “so.” The word is important because it is used to connect a truth that exists in light of another truth. In this case, in light of having received salvation from God through Christ, which was foretold by the prophets before you, here is how you should act.” This framework is important because this section on holiness is not about salvation being earned, but about how one should live because of what Christ has done for them. Essentially, how are we to treasure the inheritance Christ has provided for us practically?

We are to be holy as God is holy. (*Underline “be holy” in verse 15 & 16*)

What an unattainable call! How could we be held to the standard of God?! Our cultural view of holiness is centered in the idea of perfection. The biblical understanding of this word is less about perfection, but consecration – the act of being set apart. We understand that the way of the world is in conflict with the way of the Lord (1 John 2:15; Rom. 12:2), so holiness is the separation of oneself from the patterns of the world for the sake of being ruled by the patterns of God. It just so happens that the ways of the Lord come in the form of commandments we are called to follow. Why? God has written aspects of His moral law on every human heart, yet because of sin our desires naturally oppose Him. So we show that we treasure our inheritance by following the commands of God, turning from our sin nature!

Here’s the catch: If we are set apart *to* follow God, it now means that we are set apart *from* the world. That’s why we so desperately need the reminder of how secure we are in Christ when the world around us feels against us. It’s not as if the inheritance you have loses value or has a diminishing return or is no longer worth the sacrifice you have made because of it. Instead, it was paid for with the most valuable currency our world has ever known: the blood of our creator (1 Cor 6:20; Col 1:16).

- What is the difference between obeying God to “satisfy” Him and obeying God because he deserves it?

- How can you practice living out holiness this week?

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for living a perfect life on my behalf. Would you help me to live a holy life out of love for you?

Day 5

1 Peter 1:21–2:3

Devotion written by Lake Webb

As we end our first week, we should look back at the themes we have been resting in: Gratitude, inheritance, and holiness. It is fitting that the first chapter comes to a close repeating these same themes once more. We see what God has done for us through Christ. We receive the great inheritance that is stored up for us in heaven through the forgiveness of our sins. We understand that we are called to be holy, set apart for the purposes of God.

The last theme we see in this chapter is eternity. Have you ever tried to conceptualize eternity? We can imagine what eternity means and try to imagine ourselves existing without time, but the truth is, it is impossible to truly understand. We are finite. We have a beginning and an end. This is one of the fundamental characteristics (among many others) that separates us from God. There was a time where we did not exist, and there will be a time where our earthly bodies will no longer be here.

When Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6–8, he is reminding the recipients of this truth. Solomon refers to our lives as vapor in Ecclesiastes (Ecc. 3:1–8). James refers to life as a mist in his letter (James 4:14). At its core, this is a seemingly terrifying reality. One day, we are here. The next day we are gone, like a cloud that is dried up.

The same cannot be said for our creator. He has always existed and will continue to always exist (Rom. 1:20; Rev 1:8–11). With knowledge of this truth, Peter gives a promise, inspired by God, to those who have received a new life in Christ. Of course, they will die, but, like God, they will share eternal life with Christ. How? Because of the word of the Lord in them which remains forever. That word? The gospel that lives in the hearts of those who believe. The instruction? Live a holy life – like there is another life, a greater life, waiting for you beyond this one....because there is.

- How does the promise of eternity encourage you?
- How should the promise of eternal life shape the way you live today?

Prayer: When I get discouraged about this world or find myself in fear of what is to come, Lord, would you remind me of the eternal life promised to me in Christ?



Week 2: 1 Peter 2:4–25

4 You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. 5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

6 As the Scriptures say, "I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."

7 Yes, you who trust him recognize the honor God has given him. But for those who reject him,

"The stone that the builders rejected
has now become the cornerstone."

8 And,

"He is the stone that makes people stumble,
the rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they do not obey God's word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them.

9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. 10 "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy."

11 Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. 12 Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.

13 For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, 14 or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right.

15 It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. 16 For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. 17 Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.

18 You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel. 19 For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment. 20 Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.



21 For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

22 He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. 23 He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. 24 He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. 25 Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

Day 6

1 Peter 2:4-10

Devotion written by Josh Mathews

The time had finally come for my parents to move. My dad's job had come to a close and it was time for them to gather their belongings, pack up, and head to the next city. As they were packing up, they found some things from my childhood that I had never taken with me. When they came to visit the next time, they brought a couple of boxes. These items had no value to them, but they brought back so many memories. Memories of playing games with my sister. Memories of my dad bringing this video game system home for the first time. Memories of the tiny old tv that we would play them on. Memories of the house I grew up in.

As I looked through the games and other items, I realized that a couple of these games had become collectables. Two of these games together were worth about \$500! But now I had a dilemma. Should we sell them? Should we keep them and hope their value continues to increase? Should I plug these things back in one more time to remember the fun I had?

1 Peter 2:4-10 says that we have been chosen as God's people. Peter reminds us that our identity is found first in Christ, the living Cornerstone. Because we belong to Him, we are also "living stones" that God is building together into His spiritual temple. Peter's emphasis is not simply that we have value individually, but that God has brought us into His redeemed people with a shared purpose. As His holy priesthood, we now have the privilege of offering our lives as spiritual sacrifices that honor Him and proclaim His goodness to the world.

Peter's words are wonderful news for each of us individually, but they are primarily a reminder that God has made us His people together. As individuals chosen by God, we come together as a people chosen by God, not delineated by race, ethnicity, gender, or any other factor, but as a beautiful mosaic of His faithfulness and access to all people.

- What does being chosen by God mean to you?
- How are you called to show others God's goodness?

Prayer: God, thank You for making me part of Your people through Christ. Help me remember that my identity is found in Him and that my life is meant to proclaim Your goodness to those around me.

One day in fifth grade my best friend was called out by the teacher to have a private conversation. What none of us knew is that he had been accused of saying some inappropriate things to a classmate. When he was confronted, he was adamant that he did not say those things. The teacher, knowing that he was one of the “good kids” decided that he must be innocent and sent him on his way. As my friend came back from this interrogation, he gave us the full story. This is when we came to learn that he was in fact guilty of these accusations.

My friend was guilty, but the point still stands. Peter encourages believers to live such honorable lives that even when others make false accusations, their conduct points people to God rather than confirming the accusations. Our goal isn't simply to protect our reputation—it is to reflect Christ so clearly that others see the difference He has made in our lives. Every day we have opportunities to choose between following our culture or following Jesus. Whether it's responding with kindness to someone who is difficult, refusing to cut corners when no one is watching, or speaking with honesty and grace, our actions become a testimony to the goodness of God.

There are plenty of opportunities around us to choose between following our culture or following Jesus. You may be tempted to say something hurtful to the person who always bothers you. You may be tempted to cut corners on a project when no one is watching. Peter reminds us that our everyday choices are opportunities to point others to Christ. As people see His work in our lives, God receives the glory.

- Who is someone that you always think positively about?
- What is it about the way that they live that makes you think positively about them?
- When are there “worldly desires” that tempt you? What are the worldly desires that tempt you?
- You are a citizen of heaven. How does that change how you fight temptation?

Prayer: God, help me to remember that my residence is a part of the kingdom of Heaven and that this is my temporary home. Help me to live in a way that honors you so that others may glorify you.

Day 8

1 Peter 2:13-17

Devotion written by Josh Mathews

Many scholars believe that 1 Peter was written somewhere around A.D. 62-64. At this time there was an emperor named Nero. In A.D. 64 The Great Fire of Rome happened. Because of this fire thousands of people lost their homes, many businesses were destroyed and many residents were displaced. Nero needed someone to take the fall for this disaster, and he chose to blame the Christians. The punishments that were handed out to this group at the time were incredibly brutal. This is the emperor that Christians are instructed to honor.

If you have ever struggled to honor someone in authority, you are not alone. Christians for thousands of years have faced various forms of oppression from people in authority. Honor does not mean blind obedience. In fact, this was modeled by the apostles in Acts 5:27-32. They stand before the religious leaders and honor them, but Peter does not confuse honor with disobedience to God. It is possible to honor a person's position and not agree with everything they do. There seems to be a misconception in our culture today that if you honor a person's position that you automatically affirm every decision that they have and will ever make.

We are instructed to honor those in positions as an act of obedience to God. This is another way our lives bear witness to Christ before the world. But how do we honor someone who is obviously against Christianity? Maybe you have a teacher that has very specific beliefs. Maybe you have a boss that has different morals than you. Every season of life will bring its own challenges in how you respect authority. We have been given a tremendous amount of freedom and it is our responsibility to use that freedom to live for God.

- When is a time that you have struggled to submit to authority?
- How can you choose to show respect even when you do not agree with someone who is in authority?

Prayer: God, please show me how I can honor you by honoring those that you have placed in authority. May your goodness and grace be shown to others by the ways that you work in and through me.

Day 9

1 Peter 2:18–20

Devotion written by Josh Mathews

In our day to day, we often hear phrases like, “What goes around comes around.” We also hear people talk about “karma” as though good and bad deeds must be equal in the universe. However, this is not the reality in which that Peter is writing. Peter instructs to patiently endure unjust treatment. There is no promise other than that it is pleasing to God.

In the time around 60 A.D. when 1 Peter was written, slavery was a real aspect of the culture. When we think of slavery, we tend to think of one race abusing another. However, in this time slavery looked a bit different than in American history. There were multiple ways that someone could have become a slave in that time. For example, some slaves may have been taken in war while others sold themselves into slavery because they were in debt. There was also ethnic diversity amongst the slaves. In this time some slaves were able to be freed from slavery and move up the social ladder. One thing that was apparently still common was slave owners that were not just.

It is important to note that Peter is not writing to affirm slavery. Peter is addressing the real people who are living in a culture that cannot be quickly changed. His pastoral counsel is a continuation of thought from the previous verses. When we act well toward others, we testify to the goodness of God.

So, when should we expect that the unjust slave owners get what is coming to them? When should we expect that the evildoers face punishment? Here is a challenge: While there are consequences for every action, the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that everyone can come and ask for forgiveness. The ultimate price for sin was paid on the cross by Jesus. So, our hope is not that people get what is coming to them. Our hope is that our lives can show the goodness of God and the love of Christ. This way others will come to know Him.

- When is a time in your life when you have seen injustice? How’d it make you feel?
- Do you find it easier to pray for someone who is unjust or hope for revenge? Why?

Prayer: God, help me to persevere in obedience even when life isn’t fair. Help me to know that my obedience is pleasing to you to rest in that being enough.

Day 10

1 Peter 2:21–25

Devotion written by Josh Mathews

There are people in this world that have incredible artistic gifts. They can see a mountain and then paint a beautiful scene. They can see an animal and carve an incredible sculpture. They might even be able to draw pictures of the stars from memory. Many of these pieces of art begin with inspiration from an example. Others take ideas from different examples and present them in ways that bring a fresh perspective.

The text today points us to Jesus as our example, but Peter first reminds us why Jesus is able to be our example. Christ willingly suffered for us, bearing our sins on the cross so that we could die to sin and live for what is right. Because Jesus has already accomplished our salvation, we now desire to follow in His footsteps. When obedience is difficult, we are not simply trying harder—we are following the One who has already walked the path before us and made a way for us to live a new life.

Most artists don't look at the sky once and then make their painting. They study the scene over and over. They look at each detail as they try to imitate it. We should be the same way with Christ. As we seek to follow his example, it is important that we continually fix our eyes on Jesus. Following Jesus' example is not something where we can read about Him once and expect to follow perfectly. In fact, we will continually make mistakes. But just as an artist continually perfects their craft by studying, we can continually look more and more like Jesus by studying His life.

- How does knowing that Jesus suffered for you encourage you when doing what he said is hard?

- How can you remind yourself to live like Jesus today when life is difficult?

Prayer: God, help me to remember to fix my eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith. Please give me wisdom and direction when I strive to follow after You each day.



Week 3: 1 Peter 3

In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives.

3 Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. 4 You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. 5 This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands. 6 For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.

7 In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

8 Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. 9 Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. 10 For the Scriptures say,

"If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. 11 Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. 12 The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers.

But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil."

13 Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. 15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. 17 Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!



18 Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. 19 So he went and preached to the spirits in prison— 20 those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood. 21 And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 22 Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

Day 11

1 Peter 3:1–6

Devotion written by Marc Boudouris

We all have areas of life where we are expected to live under the authority of others. Children are under the authority of their parents, students are under the authority of their teachers, athletes are under the authority of coaches, employees are under the authority of supervisors, drivers are under the authority of the traffic laws. Authority in our world is meant to help us. Without some level of authority, we lose order, direction, and the ability to live well together. So, because we know that authority exists for the common good, we show respect to those in positions of authority. But what happens when people do not show respect toward you? What if you have a boss, teacher, or coach that is a jerk? You might think, “they don’t deserve my respect.” Or, you might even want to retaliate.

Well, the Bible has some things to say about respecting authority. The Apostle Peter writes a section of a letter to Christians in the first century, about how they should respond toward those in authority. He begins with how Christians should obey governing authorities (1 Peter 2:13–17), and also how Christian slaves must respect their masters, even when they are harsh (1 Peter 2:18–20). Then we get to chapter 3, where Peter begins with the phrase, “In the same way.” It is a connecting phrase. It means the writer or speaker is tying what they are about to say to something they just said before. Peter has already reminded believers that they are God’s chosen people—set apart by grace to reflect His character and fulfill His purpose in the world (1 Peter 2). But here is the challenge: God calls His people to reflect His character regardless of how others act or treat them—including those in authority.

1 Peter 3:1 says, “In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands.” We likely have a difficult enough time accepting a master’s authority over slaves, even in first century culture. So the idea of husbands having authority over their wives may feel even more difficult for us to accept. But what does Peter mean by “in the same way”?—the same way he instructs Christians to submit to governing authorities and the same way he instructs Christian slaves to submit to their masters. And that is, to do good! Do what is good and godly, even if it means suffering (1 Pet. 2:21). A Christian wife (or husband) living with an unbelieving spouse is hard. This is why Christians are warned to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). And yes, the Bible teaches that since the fall of mankind, the husband’s role is to lead the wife. But the Bible also teaches about God’s grace, gentleness, and patience. Peter’s primary concern is not to define every aspect of marriage but to encourage believing wives whose husbands do not share their faith. Rather than responding with fear, resentment, or retaliation, Peter calls them to trust God and let the beauty of a godly life bear witness to Christ.

Peter continues in verse 3, instructing wives not to be concerned about outward beauty, like “fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes.” Okay, let’s be clear, Peter is not saying women should not style their hair, nor wear jewelry and nice clothes. Peter is saying to women—your worth, your value, your beauty is not based on these things. True beauty is inward, having a desire to please God and do good. Peter describes this as a spirit of gentleness and quietness. This does not mean women should be silent or passive, but that they should live with humility and peace, rather than being quarrelsome, disruptive, or consumed with outward image. In that posture, wives could faithfully honor their husbands while ultimately trusting God. Peter concludes this section in verse 6, with this example from the Old Testament. “Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.” (1 Peter 3:6)

For all of us, it is important that we don’t miss Peter’s big idea—followers of Jesus live differently than the world. And regardless of our circumstances, position or relationship with others, we are to live godly lives. Sometimes this is hard, especially when we are mistreated or disrespected. This is not to say mistreatment from others is ok, nor that we should ignore harmful behavior. Rather, Peter’s point is that we always reflect the character of Jesus. To look back again in 1 Peter 2, we read how Jesus is our model. “...He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right...” (1 Peter 2:22-24)

- When was a time you were mistreated or disrespected by someone in authority? How did you respond?
- How has this passage helped you see why God has given us a structure of authority, even within the marriage relationship? What do you think that looks like in relationships?
- What are your next steps after reading these verses?

Prayer: Lord, I desire to do what is good, to reflect your character and your ways. Lord, forgive me, when I seek retaliation more than gentleness and grace. Help me be more like Jesus.

Day 12

1 Peter 3:7

Devotion written by Marc Boudouris

Everyone of us has things in our lives that we value. Let's take our phones for example. We value our phones because we use them often to communicate important information for school or work, we store pictures of our memories, and we use them for social interactions—whether that be through text, social media, or maybe an actual phone call. Because we value our phones, we do what we can to protect them. We are careful to not drop them or leave them in our car, and we try to keep the battery charged so the phone doesn't die.

In 1 Peter, the apostle Peter has been writing to encourage Christians to value the things that come from God. He writes about how our salvation is much to value. Not because of anything we have done to earn salvation, but because of God's great mercy through faith in Jesus. Salvation through Christ is the greatest gift we could have, we value this gift; we want it protected. Peter writes, "And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see" (1 Peter 1:5). If you noticed, it is God who is protecting you, but how does God protect those who follow Jesus? ...through your faith. Faith is not just about things you believe about God, but how you live out your faith—including with the relationships God puts in your life. This is why Peter writes to Christian wives in 1 Peter 3:1-6, instructing them how to live godly in their relationship with their husband.

And then, Peter turns to husbands in verse 7. "In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). Once again, Peter uses the phrase, in the same way... Peter is saying to husbands that the respect that husbands and wives are to show to each other is the same—in a godly manner. Peter instructs husbands, "to give honor to your wives." Honor is a word we use in our world today in phrases like: honor roll, badge of honor, maid/matron of honor, guest of honor. To give honor means to show deep admiration and respect toward someone based on their character, achievements, or position. The Greek word for honor in 1 Peter 3:7 has a similar meaning. τιμή (timē) means to give value, worth, respect; preciousness. Peter also instructs husbands, "to treat your wives with understanding," and adds, "she may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life." Here is the point. If you are married now or plan to be one day, value, respect, and honor your spouse. God created men and women with equal value, but He has given each unique strengths that are meant to complement one another, work together as partners, and live godly lives as an example to others.

Lastly, Peter instructs husbands to treat their wives, "...as you should so your prayers will not be hindered." Whether you are married or not married, have you ever prayed for a problem but didn't see yourself as part of the solution? Asking God to change something, while ignoring your attitude or actions in the situation is not honoring God. Peter is reminding husbands that their closeness to God is connected to how they treat their wives. Let's do good to one another, so our prayers are not hindered.

- What is something you own that is of great value? How do you protect it?
- When it comes to relationships, who is someone in your life that you show honor and respect toward and why?
- How has this passage helped you see the value of godly relationships? What is one step you can take to help grow a relationship with a friend, family member?

Prayer: Father, thank you for creating us to be in relationships. We value the gift of your Son Jesus, for the salvation we have through faith in Him, and that our relationship with you has been restored. Help us Lord to value, give honor, and respect the people in our lives that you gave to help us. Amen.

Day 13

1 Peter 3:8–12

Devotion written by Marc Boudouris

Think about all the times in your life where you were given rules to follow. When you were a child, your parents or guardian set rules. Like, make your bed in the morning, be home by 10PM, don't lie, don't talk back. When we are older, we continue to have rules and laws to follow: pay your taxes, wear your seatbelt, don't text and drive, don't use drugs.

Have you ever heard someone complain that the Bible is nothing but a bunch of rules? On the flip side, have you ever heard that the Bible and being a Christian is not about rules—the dos and do nots, but about a relationship? But what would you think if you were told that rules and relationships work together for your good? That is why the apostle Peter is writing to Christians, to show them how to live for God and get along with others. We have learned the last two days from 1 Peter 3, how Christian wives and husbands are to live and treat one another. Peter now turns to instruct everyone in verses 8–12. Take a look at these verses, and notice all the dos and do nots. Be of one mind, love one another, be humble, don't repay evil with evil, don't retaliate or insult people. This looks like a bunch of rules. But Peter does not leave us with, "Do this and don't do that, because God says so!" No, he tells us that if we do good, God will grant you his blessing (1Peter 3:9).

Peter then uses Scripture to give evidence of God's blessing, in verse 10 and 11 he writes, "For the Scriptures say, 'If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.'" Most people want to enjoy life and have happy days but there is a difference between what the Bible teaches about what we need to obtain happiness and what our culture teaches. Our culture says, "Have lots of money, nice things, lots of friends, a good job—and you will be happy." Though it is not bad to have these things, they are not what brings true happiness. Peter is not promising an easy or trouble-free life. In fact, throughout this letter he reminds believers that following Christ often includes suffering. Instead, Peter points us to the kind of life God blesses—a life marked by truthfulness, peace, humility, and obedience. Even when circumstances are difficult, there is deep joy in knowing we are walking faithfully with the Lord. Now, this doesn't mean if we just obey God, we get what we want or life won't be hard but we can be confident that God is with us, He loves us, and that we can be happy and blessed when we live as His chosen people, in Christ.

- What are some examples of rules that are meant for our good?
- When have you chased worldly things for happiness but were never fulfilled?
- How have you experienced happiness through your relationship with God?
- Read Psalm 34:12-16. What is one practical way you can seek peace with others and honor God with your words this week?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for being a loving Father, who cares for us and instructs us. Thank you for your grace when we fall short, and help us to seek you and your ways. God, we pray that we will reflect your goodness and character, in our actions, words, and attitude towards others. We pray this in Jesus' name!

Day 14

1 Peter 3:13–17

Devotion written by Marc Boudouris

When was a time in your life you experienced suffering? Maybe it was physical suffering from an injury or emotional suffering from a broken relationship or a disappointing circumstance. Whatever the suffering may be, likely the suffering had a cause. Sometimes the cause is accidental, other times it might be from our own poor choices. But has the cause of your suffering ever been from trying to do what is right?

In 1 Peter 3:13–17, Peter addresses this kind of suffering for believers who face opposition from others. The believers that Peter was writing to included many gentiles who had heard the gospel and became followers of Jesus. Because their allegiance was now to Jesus, they began to abandon pagan practices. Often, we hear how ungodly our culture is today, but these believers were scattered throughout Asia Minor (modern day Turkey), where idol worship, drunken parties, sexual immorality, and pagan celebrations were part of everyday life. So, when followers of Jesus in these regions no longer participated in these pagan practices, it didn't sit well with their communities. And though many Christians in the first century had suffered physical persecution, these believers were faced with another form of suffering. They were ridiculed and rejected for not joining in the cultish lifestyle. This brings up an important question. In our culture today, are we faced with a similar type of suffering? When we are seen living differently than some of our classmates, co-workers, or even some of our friends, how do they respond? There is a good chance that many would say, "You do you, I'll do me." You may not be directly ridiculed or abused because you live differently but you may experience rejection, exclusion, or simply people begin to avoid you. This is a form of suffering that we may face as we grow to follow the ways of Christ.

Following the ways of Christ is not just about what not to do. It's not just about refusing to participate in an ungodly lifestyle. In verse 15, Peter gives us two clear directions for what we are to do, in response to cultural pressure. Here is the first one: "You must worship Christ as Lord of your life." The pagan lifestyle of the time included the worship of false God and idols. So, Peter is reminding Christians then and today that we worship Jesus. And worship is not just one day a week, when we attend a worship service. Worshiping Jesus Christ is a daily lifestyle regardless of who is watching, regardless of the pressure we might have from others to do otherwise. Worshiping Jesus means our allegiance and devotion belong to Him above everything else. It means we allow Him to shape our values, guide our decisions, and direct the way we live. Whether at school, at work, with friends, or at home, Jesus is not just part of our lives—He is Lord over every part of our lives.

In the second part of verse 15, Peter instructs followers of Jesus, "...if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it."

Our hope in Jesus Christ is not a wishful thinking kind of hope but a confident hope. The Apostle Paul, in Romans 12:12 tells us to “Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.” So, if someone asks you about your hope in Christ, you don’t need to have all the answers or be full of biblical knowledge. You don’t have to debate and try to win arguments. But be confident, be honest, be ready to explain why Jesus is Lord of your life! Sometimes people will ask with curiosity; they see that you are different and want to know why. Your story can give hope to those who have no hope. This is why Peter tells us to share in a gentle and respectful way (verse 17). But others might ask because they are trying to cause trouble. When you are faced with opposition, be patient and pray. Jesus often tells his disciples that they will face trouble when sharing the gospel. But He gives them confidence when he tells them, “When you are arrested, don’t worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time. For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matthew 10:19–20).

Let’s be honest, following Jesus can be hard. But the payoff is found through the difficulty. The goal is not comfort, but faithfulness. “If you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it” (1 Peter 3:14). Our reward is life, stay faithful to Jesus!

- When have you experienced ridicule, rejection, or exclusion for not participating in things that could lead you away from representing Christ?
- What are some examples of worshiping Jesus daily?
- Why do you think it would be important to be gentle and respectful when sharing with others the hope you have in Jesus? What are some things that can make it hard to be gentle and respectful?
- How can you be ready to give a reason for your faith when others ask?

Prayer: Lord, we love you. We put our hope in you. We worship you! Help us Lord to remember who we are in Christ, not just when we are at church or with our church friends, but daily Lord. We live in an ungodly world. Give us the strength to endure when we are faced with temptation and opposition. And give us the confidence and the words to share our hope in Christ with others. Amen.

Day 15

1 Peter 3:18–22

Devotion written by Marc Boudouris

Over the last four days, we have been looking at 1 Peter 3 and learning how we can live godly lives—in our relationships with one another and as followers of Jesus in an ungodly world. But why does this matter? What would motivate anyone to respect authority even when they aren't given respect, or to not retaliate when mistreated for following God, or to suffer for doing what is right? The answer to the why is in the who. All of this comes down to what Jesus has done for us and has given to us. Back in chapter 2, Peter writes "For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Jesus is our example but his suffering did something that our suffering cannot do. 1 Peter 3:18 tells us that "Christ suffered for our sins, once for all time..." This contrasts the Old Testament Law, where repetitive sacrificial sin offerings were required. But Jesus' sacrifice was one time and it was for all sin. Let's say you have a credit card with a \$50,000 balance due. Each month you can afford to pay the minimum, maybe even you can add a little bit of principal. The monthly payment buys you some time, but it's a struggle. It feels like you are always going to have this debt. But then a parent, friend, or someone from your church family comes to you and offers you a gift. Though they have no debt themselves, they sacrifice \$50k of their money to pay the debt. It's a gift, they paid your debt once and done! That is like what Jesus has done for us. "...He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God..." (1 Peter 3:18b). This is good news!

Peter then reminds his reader about the days of Noah—the disobedience of mankind, the great flood, and how God saved Noah and seven members of his family who were on the ark. Peter takes them there to point them to the saving power of God! God saved Noah and his family through water, He does the same for us, through our baptism. Peter writes, "And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience..." (1 Peter 3:21). Why is baptism important? It represents a washing away, not of actual dirt, but as a response to what Christ has done for us. Baptism is not meant to be a checklist item for Christians, it's not your ticket to Heaven, but it's how we demonstrate our trust and surrender to the One who has washed away our sin! Baptism by itself has no power to save, take a look at the end of verse 21. "... (baptism) is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Jesus didn't stop with paying our debt. "...He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit" (Peter 3:18c). Jesus conquered death, so that we too can have a resurrected life! This is why we live for God. We have been set apart—forgiven, freed from sin, saved.

Not because of our own doing, but God's doing. Paul writes, "When we were unable to help ourselves, at the right time, Christ died for us, although we were living against God" (Romans 5:6, NCV).

1 Peter 3 begins with calling us to respect earthly authority but ends with reminding us who is our ultimate authority. "Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority" (1 Peter 3:22). Jesus paid our debt, He conquered death, He has given us hope and new life, He is above all things! He is King of kings and Lord of lords, let's commit our lives to Him!

- What are some ways you can be better at showing Christ's example in your life?
- How expensive was your sin to God? Why does that matter?
- Why do you think baptism is important for your life?
- How does Jesus dying and resurrecting give you hope for eternity?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your love for us. Because of our sin and our disobedience, we do not deserve your love. But you love us so much that you gave of yourself, in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice, for paying our debt. God, we praise you for resurrection life, because Jesus has conquered death, we have the hope of new life, now and in the life to come. You forever reign, and we pray that we learn to trust You more each day, surrender our lives to Your authority, and follow You faithfully! It's in your name we pray, the mighty name of Jesus, Amen!



Week 4: 1 Peter 4

So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. 2 You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. 3 You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.

4 Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you. 5 But remember that they will have to face God, who stands ready to judge everyone, both the living and the dead. 6 That is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead—so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit.

7 The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. 8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.

10 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11 Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

12 Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. 13 Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.

14 If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you. 15 If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs. 16 But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name! 17 For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News? 18 And also,

“If the righteous are barely saved,
what will happen to godless sinners?”

9 So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you.

Day 16

1 Peter 4:1–6

Devotion written by Dave Faust

Have you ever said these words? “I’ve had enough!”

Maybe you leaned back after eating a big meal or devouring a fifth slice of pizza and said, “I’ve had enough!” Or you were tired from studying or working on a project, and you needed to take a break. Do you ever get tired of bad news, political disagreements, and hateful attitudes? Maybe a quarrel with friends wore you down till you finally said, “I’ve had enough of this bickering.”

Peter insists it’s time to say, “I’ve had enough” and be “finished with sin” (v. 1). Why spend the rest of your life “chasing your own desires” (v. 2)? Haven’t you had enough of unsatisfying, degrading things that drag you down and leave you feeling exhausted, empty, and used up? On the surface, it looks appealing to engage in “immorality and lust, drunkenness and wild parties” (v. 3). But where does that lifestyle lead in the long run?

My friend Jim was a hard-driving entrepreneur in the real estate and construction business—a self-made millionaire by age 26. His family bought fine houses, took European vacations, and drove expensive cars. By age 29, he was heading a government bureau with 700 employees and a nearly billion-dollar budget to manage. But soon afterward, Jim entered a decade he describes as “desperate and futile.”

“Nothing filled the emptiness in me,” he remembers. “I began buying personal things at a frantic pace. I was making repeated trips to Las Vegas and gambling tens of thousands of dollars. With partners I bought four banks. We built shopping centers, 1,100 homes, and a lumber yard. We were racing thoroughbred racehorses all over the East coast. All in a desperate attempt to fill that emptiness.” Like King Solomon, Jim experienced many pleasures, only to discover that without God, life is meaningless and empty, like “chasing after the wind” (Ecclesiastes 2:11). He became addicted to alcohol and drugs. He was in the winner’s circle for the Kentucky Derby and attended a party filled with dignitaries. “I know this because people told me,” Jim says, “But I don’t remember doing it. I experienced frequent blackouts.”

Finally, Jim said, “I’ve had enough!” He entered a treatment center, and with the Lord’s help, he hasn’t taken a drink or another mind-altering drug since. He joined a support group sponsored by a Christian church in Lexington, Kentucky, where he was greeted warmly. There, Jim and his wife finally found the one thing that could fill the void, as mature Christians shepherded and taught them.

"I'm not going to suggest to you that my life was easy," he points out. "One word to describe it is tumultuous when we first accepted Christ. It wasn't easy." Tumultuous, but also victorious as Jim and his wife continued to grow in the Lord. Ultimately Jim dismantled his business.

He says, "The money's gone, but I'm rich in the things that matter! I'm a child of the King!" Eventually Jim went to Bible college—he was a straight-A student in classes I taught—and in time, he became a preacher of the gospel. His life is a testimony to the saving, transforming power of God.

Like Jim discovered, it's time for all of us to say, "Lord, I've had enough of this world's shallow, empty ways. Fill me with your Spirit. Let me find true satisfaction in my relationship with You."

- Be honest here. Are you really desiring to do the will of God or are you chasing your own desires? Why or why not?

- When was a time that you didn't do something a worldly friend did? What was their reaction?

Prayer: Lord, give me strength to resist temptation and follow you with all my heart, instead of looking for satisfaction in the things of this world.

Day 1?

1 Peter 4:7–9

Devotion written by Dave Faust

“The end of the world is coming soon” (1 Peter 4:7). Wow! Peter’s words sound startling, don’t they?

But wait. It’s been over 1,900 years since he wrote that sentence. Was Peter wrong? No. What Peter said is correct. Our perspective about time is wrong.

We act like we have lots of time, but even if we live 100 years, our time on earth is short compared to eternity. The end looms just over the horizon. That’s why we should “number our days” (Psalm 90:12) and make the most of every opportunity God gives us (Ephesians 5:16). Life is like a mist that quickly passes away (James 4:14).

Since eternity is real and the end is drawing near, how should we approach life? What would you do differently if you really believed your time on earth is short? How would you invest your time if you knew you only had a few more days to live? Would you eat your favorite foods? Listen to your favorite music? Tell your family and friends how much you love them?

The Lord’s instructions in 1 Peter 4:7–9 are down-to-earth and easy to understand—though sometimes hard to do. They boil down to three practical steps involving prayer to God, love for others, and sharing with those in need.

“Be earnest and disciplined in your prayers” (v. 7). Prayer should be a daily habit. Our conversations with the Lord should be earnest, honest, and consistent.

“Show deep love for each other” (v. 8). This means far more than fake friendliness or shallow politeness. Deep love is sincere, heart-felt, and authentic. It’s more than a warm feeling; it’s an active commitment. Deep love requires unselfish choices, generous giving, and a willingness to sacrifice personal comfort for the sake of others.

“Share your home” (v. 9). Hospitality is a realistic way to demonstrate the love of God. Do you open your home and invite others over for dinner or dessert? Could you house overnight guests? Has God given you the means to pay for someone’s meal or support them through a rough financial season?

If the world comes to an end today, will the Lord find us praying earnestly, loving deeply, and sharing generously with others?

- Which of these three actions (disciplined prayer, deep love, and open-handed hospitality) do you find easier to do? Why?
- Which of these three actions do you find most difficult? Why?
- If you knew you would die at midnight tonight, how would you spend the rest of your day? What would be your highest priorities?

Prayer: Lord, help me to see beyond the problems and pressures of this world and live with eternity in mind.

Day 18

1 Peter 4:10–11

Devotion written by Dave Faust

Did you ever receive a gift that you didn't like and didn't use? Maybe you got an ugly sweater for Christmas . . . a shirt that didn't fit . . . or a book you had no interest in reading. If "it's the thought that counts," some gifts leave us wondering, "What in the world were they thinking?"

Or maybe you received a thoughtful and generous gift, like a gift card for a nice restaurant, but you forgot to use it.

What if God gave you a special gift? Would you put it on a shelf and forget about it? Or would you appreciate it and use it?

Peter says, "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts" (1 Peter 4:10). Notice what this verse says:

- God himself is the source of our spiritual gifts.
- He gives unique abilities to "each" of his followers. He doesn't leave anyone out. In Christ, all of us are "gifted."
- God's gifts come in "great variety." God pours out his grace in different ways, bestowing different talents on his people. We shouldn't picture Christ's church as gray and dull—a blah, bland, boring body where everyone looks and acts exactly the same.
- And notice: God doesn't give us special abilities so we can show off and impress others. Concerning these gifts, the instruction is, "Use them well to serve one another" (v. 10). God's gifts are meant to bless and build others up, not to make ourselves look important.

I love small children, but teaching them in Sunday school isn't my strength. I admire the work of skillful artists, but I can barely draw a stick figure myself. I enjoy good music, but you won't want to hear my terrible toots when I try to play the trombone. The Lord has filled his church with a diversified assortment of people with different abilities. We all need to discover our gifts, opportunities, and passions—and put our them into action for the glory of God.

Some believers are skillful speakers; if so, they must teach truth that harmonizes with Scripture. Peter says, "Speak as though God himself were speaking through you" (v. 11).

Other believers are not public speakers, but they have "the gift of helping others" (v. 11). Whatever gift you have received from God, please don't leave it sitting a shelf, unopened and unused. "Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ" (v. 11).

- Do you know what spiritual gifts that God has given you? If not, would you be open to discovering them? If so, what are they?
- What do you think your next step is in using your gifts? Have you thought about using them at E91?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the spiritual gifts you have given me. Help me to use them for your glory.

Day 19

1 Peter 4:12–13

Devotion written by Dave Faust

M. Scott Peck's best-selling book, *The Road Less Traveled*, starts with this statement: "Life is difficult. This is a great truth, one of the greatest truths. . . . Once we truly know that life is difficult—once we truly understand and accept it—then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters."

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Bible said something similar. Peter wrote to first-century Christians who were suffering and said, "Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12). Someone said, "To be surprised at suffering is to be surprised that one of Jesus' predictions actually came true." Jesus was bluntly honest about the likelihood of facing difficulties and experiencing pain. He told us to expect hardship in this world (that's the realistic part), but he also said, "I have overcome the world" (that's the hopeful, optimistic part).

Difficulties come in different forms: physical pain, emotional turmoil, mistreatment by enemies, betrayal by friends, spiritual persecution, social discrimination, personal rejection, and other kinds of suffering. The Bible doesn't downplay these sorrows. In fact, the Lord Jesus himself experienced these same kinds of hardships. But no matter what suffering we face, God's grace can help us endure it, learn from it, and ultimately overcome it.

In the original Greek New Testament, Peter used a form of the same word (*poikeles*, which means many-colored, variegated, or manifold) to describe both the trials Christians face (1 Peter 1:6) and the grace God gives to his people (1 Peter 4:10). Trials come in many forms, but there is grace from God to meet every challenge.

As Peter points out, "These trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering" (v. 12). If we open our hearts to the Lord, painful experiences can actually draw us closer to him. The Lord doesn't just hang around on the sidelines. He is "a very present help" in times of trouble (see Psalm 46:1).

One gloomy afternoon, I was driving through heavy traffic with thunderclouds looming overhead. A light rain began to fall, but as I inched my car onto an exit ramp, I was amazed to find myself staring at a double rainbow—two arcs of vivid color displayed in the eastern sky. Apparently, the rainbow had been there all along, but I was looking the wrong direction. Preoccupied with problems and pressures, I nearly missed a beautiful reminder of God's faithfulness.

Yes, life is difficult and often painful. But . . . “despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

- What is the Lord teaching you right now? What is troubling you?

- Can you think of a friend or family member—perhaps someone at E91—who is going through a tough time? What could you do to encourage them?

Prayer: Father in heaven, please give me grace, peace, wisdom, and endurance. Build my faith and teach me what you want me to learn through suffering. And help me to bring comfort and encouragement to others who are suffering, too. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 20

1 Peter 4:14–19

Devotion written by Dave Faust

Do you ever ask God, “Why did you let this happen to me?”

To be honest, when bad things happen, sometimes it’s our own fault. If we drink too much, we shouldn’t blame God for the pounding head and nausea of a hangover. Many problems come from our own foolish or sinful choices. That’s why Peter says, “If you suffer . . . it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people’s affairs” (1 Peter 4:15). We’re just asking for trouble if we kill, steal, or meddle in others’ business.

But not all suffering can be explained this way. What about innocent, law-abiding citizens who are victims of crime? What about little children who are neglected and malnourished? What about careful drivers who get into car accidents because of someone else’s carelessness? The same interdependence of human life that provides opportunities to love, give, and serve, also makes it possible for people to hate, take, and harm.

A sarcastic friend of mine says, “Sometimes in life you get what you deserve. But sometimes you just get what you get!” God is fair and just, but life isn’t always fair and just. And faith in the Lord doesn’t make all injustice immediately go away. Jesus didn’t promise an easy road.

In fact, sometimes we suffer precisely because of our faith. Peter says, “It is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name!” (v. 16).

Do you ever wonder why God doesn’t step in and intervene? What doesn’t He do something to put an end to suffering once and for all?

Remember: God has done something. He has done the greatest, most impactful thing. He came to earth in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. He lived among us, experienced unimaginable suffering—betrayal, discrimination, hatred, injustice, brutality, rejection, and violence—but then He conquered death by rising from the grave. We won’t experience the full and final benefits of Christ’s victory until He returns at the end of time. But in the meantime, He empathizes with our suffering, comforts us with his Spirit, guides us with his Word, and assures us that brighter and better days are ahead.

There is no easy or “ouchless” answer to the problem of suffering. But when all is said and done, the main issue isn’t how we handle suffering, but how God handled it at the cross and the empty tomb. So “keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you” (v. 19).

- The Bible says we “reap what we sow” (Galatians 6:7). Have you ever gotten yourself into trouble and suffered the consequences of your own poor decisions? What did you learn from that experience?
- When was a time that God blessed you despite your bad decision? Do you think he does that?

Prayer: Gracious Father, in times of suffering, give me strength and peace, and help me to keep my eyes on Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross (Hebrews 12:1).



Week 5: 1 Peter 5

1And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: 2Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. 4And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

5In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for
“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

6So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. 7Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 8Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. 9Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

10In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. 11All power to him forever! Amen.

12I have written and sent this short letter to you with the help of Silas, whom I commend to you as a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that what you are experiencing is truly part of God's grace for you. Stand firm in his grace.

13Your sister church here in Babylon sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14Greet each other with a kiss of love.

Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.

Day 21

1 Peter 5:1-4

Devotion written by Adrian FehI

Chapter 5 continues a theme that has run through 1 Peter: the contrast and connection between what believers experience in the here and now with the reward that will come later. In these opening verses Peter urges the elders to be faithful now to their calling as leaders, and he reminds them of the crown that awaits them later when Christ returns. Now and later. What we do now matters, and what comes later makes it all worth it.

Leadership is always a heavy burden, but leadership during a crisis or a time of persecution would be especially difficult. Local elders not only had to protect and care for their own physical families, but they also had to care for the families in the church during a very trying time. Peter writes to encourage them, and he spells out clear expectations: Take care of those in your charge; Do it joyfully without complaint; Serve in humility; And set an example for them to follow. As Peter charges the elders to shepherd God's flock, surely he must have heard the echoes of Jesus' own words to him: "Simon, son of John, do you love me? Then take care of my sheep." (John 21:17)

Receiving this encouragement directly from the Apostle Peter must have been powerful in its own right, but even more so when Peter modeled the humility that he was advocating. Instead of stressing his position as one of the closest apostles to Jesus or appealing to his authority as a leader in the church, Peter identified himself as a fellow elder. He was one of them, and he carried the burden along with them. Identification with others can be one of the most powerful motivators.

There is a true story from 1873 about Father Damien who volunteered to serve people with leprosy on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. Damien lived among the lepers, preached, built homes and churches, organized schools, and cared for the sick rather than keeping his distance. His actions endeared him to those in the leper colony.

After years of close contact with the community, however, he contracted leprosy himself and his relationship with the lepers changed. One morning he began his sermon with these powerful words "We lepers," and the people realized that he had become one of them. He now carried the same burden that they did. His Christian witnesses shone all the brighter for it.

- Although not many of us are called to be elders, do you think it would be challenging to be an elder? Why?
- What can you do to make the light of Jesus seen more in your life?

Prayer: God, Help me to be humble and to identify with those in need so that I can share the hope I have found in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 22

1 Peter 5:5-7

Devotion written by Adrian FehI

It seems there always has been, and always will be, a natural tension between the old and the young. Older folks wish the younger ones would slow down, be quiet and listen more, and the young wish the older folks would hurry up, or at least get out of the way, because it's time for a change. Of course, in a perfect world, with age would come patience, wisdom, understanding, and grace. And in a perfect world, every young person would respect their elders and show deference, patience and gratitude to those who have been about the business of living longer than they have. But neither of these "ideal" scenarios is the case, because this is not a perfect world. Peter has to remind the elders not to "lord" their authority and position over those in their care, and Peter also has to remind the young to readily accept the authority of those over them.

The admonition for both groups is to embrace humility, not because the other group is "better," but because everyone is under the power of God. He is strong and we are not. He is wise and we are not. Our primary relationship is not to other people, it is to God. And when we rightly position ourselves in a place of humility under God, it is much easier to accept the power dynamics among people.

Humility, however, requires a great amount of faith. If we are worried about our future: basic provisions, escaping persecution, or securing long-term safety, it is much easier to "take matters into our own hands" than it is to trust that God will provide for us in His timing (which so often doesn't line up with our preferred timing). But the "now and later" theme arises again to address the need for faith. If we humble ourselves now (even though it takes great faith), God will raise us up later in honor.

But what do we do with our worries and concerns as we await God's perfect timing? We give them to God. Peter calls them worries and "cares". The image that comes to mind is of something that is too heavy to carry (like a piano) or something you were never meant to carry (like the burden of trying to keep your loved ones safe in every situation). Not only is God qualified to carry these burdens, but He is also eager to do so because He cares for you. In fact, he is eager to carry you! Have you seen young families at the end of a long day at an amusement park? As darkness falls and it's time to go home, the smallest kids, exhausted from such a long day, simply can't walk another step. What do the parents do? They pick up the little ones and carry them to the car. No matter if you are young or old, humble yourself and let God carry you.

- Humility is hard. Do you think our culture values humility? Why or why not?

- Do you think you value humility? Why or why not?
- What is one “heavy” thing you are carrying that you need to give to God so He can carry it for you?

Prayer: God, Help me to be humble and to trust that you will provide for my needs.
Thank you for loving me and caring for me. Amen.

Day 23

1 Peter 5:8–9

Devotion written by Adrian Fehl

Lions are not noble. They are not self-sacrificing. They do not rule benevolently over the animals on the African plain. In contrast to what *The Lion King* would have you believe, lions are ruthless, opportunistic and are not concerned with group harmony. Above all, lions are dangerous and built for survival. Their speed, raw power, and cooperative hunting make them among the most feared predators on the planet.

It is with this understanding in mind that Peter chooses to call Satan a “roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” You do not want to be that someone. So how do we avoid it?

First, Peter says to “stay alert.” Lions sometimes go on hunts to bring down large antelope or zebras, but far more often they prefer the easier targets. They look for the youngest, smallest and slowest in a herd, or the animal that is distracted. Why? They put up less of a fight. The meal might be smaller, but it’s just easier. In a similar way, Satan prefers to attack the weak, distracted and complacent. An unguarded strength can be a point of weakness. A confident leader who slips into self-reliance instead of daily dependence on God can be open to attack. A person who ignores the reality of spiritual warfare is a prime target. We can never let our guard down when it comes to Satan.

Next, Peter says we must recognize Satan for who he is—the great enemy. He is not someone to be taken lightly or to be toyed with. Any interest or dabbling in the forces of evil (Ouija boards, attempting to communicate with demons or evil spirits, seances, tarot card readings, witchcraft, etc.) opens a person to the influence of Satan. The children of God live in the light, never the darkness.

Finally, Peter says to “stand firm and be strong”. When we stand against Satan and his attacks it will not be on our own or in our own strength. Others around the world fight the same battles that we do. Take heart! We are not alone. Our greatest weapon is faith—faith in the salvation of God, in the goodness of God, in the protection of God, in the presence of God, in the provision of God, and ultimately in the power of God. When we stand in God’s strength and surrender to His will, He will faithfully sustain us and accomplish His purposes in us. He will safeguard us in Christ, by the Holy Spirit, through this life and into the next.

- What do you think spiritual warfare is? How would you define it?

- How do you know if spiritual warfare is happening to you?

Prayer: God, increase my faith. Help me to trust you in every circumstance in my life. Please remind me anytime I slip into self-reliance instead of depending on You. Amen.

Day 24

1 Peter 5:10–11

Devotion written by Adrian FehI

God wants to share His glory with you, and He has extended an invitation through Jesus for you to join Him in heaven. Do you deserve it? Of course not! But the way has been opened through Jesus, and it is the costly way of faith—faith that requires perseverance. In these verses, Peter makes his clearest now and later argument. “After you have suffered a little while”...the reward will come. Suffer now, be rewarded later. Be encouraged that God is not unaware of our suffering. In fact, He makes it part of the deal. We’re the ones who are always asking “why?”

Delayed gratification and perseverance in the face of suffering are not new concepts, but they can be very difficult to embrace. Choosing to remain faithful to the Lord even when it brings persecution is just plain hard. And it’s hard for two reasons. First, it runs counter to our culture’s high value of immediate gratification. And second, it runs counter to our natural instinct of pain avoidance.

Much of our western culture since the industrial revolution has focused on how to improve the quality of life now through creativity, invention and efficiency. Why wait for something better later when you can have it all now? It is not a stretch to say that “everything” is in some way faster, easier and more convenient than it was 100 years ago: train/car/plane vs. horse; phone vs. letter; microwave vs. open fire; computer vs. hand calculations; etc.

And while pain avoidance is a healthy trait, it can never become our highest value. Suffering is a part of life, and few things shape us more into Christ's likeness than remaining faithful in suffering. Our calling is higher than pain avoidance; it is obedience to God and glorifying His son Jesus—no matter the cost. Delayed gratification and perseverance in the face of suffering are absolutely worth the cost.

Francis Chan has often used a rope illustration to contrast the length of a human life with the length of eternity. He brings out an extremely long rope that extends beyond the edge of the stage and asks people to imagine that it goes on forever. He holds one end of the rope in his hand and reveals that the first inch of the rope is colored red. He explains that the red section represents a human life, and the rest of the rope represents eternity. His main point is that many people spend all of their time and energy worrying about what happens to them in the one inch of rope instead of what will happen during the rest of the rope.

Peter would agree with Francis Chan. How can “a little while of suffering” compare to an eternity with God? It can’t. In due time, God will lift us up and give us a secure future forever. Like Peter we respond, “Praise God!” “All power to Him forever! Amen.”

- Can you think of a modern example of someone being persecuted for their faith?
- What is the most appealing aspect of heaven to you?

Prayer: God, help me lift my eyes up from this earth and give me a clearer understanding of eternity so I can have a heart of wisdom. Amen.

Day 25

1 Peter 5:12-14

Devotion written by Adrian FehI

In the closing verses of Chapter 5, Peter summarizes the purpose of his letter: to encourage the believers who are scattered throughout Asia minor (modern day Turkey). The believers are suffering persecution for their faith, and discouragement is a real threat to their well-being.

Undoubtedly, these believers had been and were continuing to pray for God's help and deliverance from persecution, and Peter felt compelled to remind them that God heard their prayers and they were not alone. To our ears, Peter's phrase "what you are experiencing is truly part of God's grace for you," may be hard to hear. God's grace? Suffering for Jesus is grace? Well, it can be.

Grace, (i.e. unmerited favor), comes in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes it comes in unexpected blessings like a promotion, a pay raise, the birth of a child, the blind date that blossoms into life-long love, or the realization of the beauty and depth of God's amazing love for us despite our sinfulness. But other times it comes in trials, chastisement for sin, disappointments, seasons of loneliness and even unanswered prayers. We might not be able to see how God is using a particular season for our good, but that doesn't change His ability or intent.

In 1990 Garth Brooks co-wrote and sang a song called "Unanswered Prayers." The song tells the story of a man who crosses paths with an old girlfriend at a local football game while he is with his wife. Seeing his high school sweetheart again reminds him of a time when he desperately wanted to marry her and prayed for that future, but it never happened. As he reflects on the life he has built with his wife and the happiness they share, he realizes that not getting what he wanted back then was actually a blessing now. Sometimes life's disappointments lead to better outcomes than we could have imagined. Unanswered prayers may ultimately be God's grace in disguise.

And so it was for the recipients of Peter's letter. Suffering was part of their life, and God would use it—even their unanswered prayers for deliverance—for their ultimate good. Peter knew what they needed, even more than temporary relief from trouble, and that was peace. They need deep peace to help them accept whatever God chose to give them. And so he prayed for peace, and he let it be the final word. "Peace be with all of you who are in Christ."

- Can you think of an “unanswered prayer” in your life that turned out to be a blessing?
- What has been your deepest experience of God’s grace?

Prayer: God, help me to live with open hands that accept all things from you. Help my heart to be at peace. Amen.



Week 6: 2 Peter 1

1 This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior.

2 May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

3 By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

10 So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. 11 Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught. 13 And it is only right that I should keep on reminding you as long as I live. 14 For our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that I must soon leave this earthly life, 15 so I will work hard to make sure you always remember these things after I am gone.

16 For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes 17 when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy." 18 We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.



19 Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, 21 or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

Day 26

2 Peter 1:1-4

Devotion written by Abby Carrow

Welcome to 2 Peter! As we mentioned at the start of 1 Peter, we always want to pay attention to the author and the audience any time we begin a study of a new book of the Bible. The good news is that both of those are the same for 2 Peter, which means we get to dive right into the message of this letter.

Have you ever watched a movie that was based on a true story and you were absolutely blown away by one of the actors' performances? Many times, this is because they were employing a technique called Method Acting. Method Acting is when a performer attempts to fully immerse themselves into the life, mind, and circumstances of the character they're playing. For historical figures, they research first hand accounts that were written about that person, or even read that person's own journals if they are available. If the person being portrayed was a musician or artist, the actor might spend countless hours listening to their songs or admiring their work. To become like the character they intend to play, they have to know everything there is to know about that individual. They have to know their character to reflect their character.

This is part of what Peter is trying to convey in the opening verses of 2 Peter 1. In either your Bible or on the chapter text page provided, circle every occurrence of the words "know" or "knowledge" in 2 Peter 1. In verse 3 we read "By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence." We understand how to live a life that is pleasing to God by growing in our knowledge of His character. In other words, we have to know God to reflect His character.

So how do we know God? By spending time in His Word! Verse 4 talks about the promises that are ours in Christ. It says "These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires." The time we invest in learning Scripture is what allows us to understand God's will and live according to it.

- Does your current knowledge of God shape your actions to become more like Him?
- Think of a time when you were reading God's Word and were convicted about an attitude or behavior that was not in line with the character of God. How did you respond?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for giving me everything I need to live a godly life. Help the level of my obedience match the level of my knowledge.

Day 27

2 Peter 1:5-11

Devotion written by Abby Carrow

Have you ever noticed how challenging it can be to build a new habit? You want to read more, but a week goes by and you never did pick up that book you checked out from the library. Or you make it a goal to have less screen time this month and you shave off thirty minutes one week, but it creeps right back up the next. You go to the gym three times a week for a month, but then the holidays hit and you fall out of routine. It's hard to make new habits stick.

This is why some people recommend habit stacking. Habit stacking is when you tie something new you want to add to your life to something that is already a part of your routine. If you want to work on flexibility, you sit down for ten minutes of stretching while you watch your favorite show each night. If you want to incorporate more prayer into your day, you commit to pray for a classmate or coworker while you brush your teeth every morning.

Well in 2 Peter, the apostle has several key areas he wants his readers (and us!) to grow in. Verses 5 through 7 say "Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone." That can start to sound like an exhausting list until we realize that all of them are an overflow of our faith. We can "stack" these other virtues with one that already exists.

And the beautiful thing about faith is that God's grace is involved. Our growth in faith involves both God's work through His Spirit and our obedient response. And as we grow in our knowledge of the Lord, like we talked about yesterday, these other things will come. We can grow in patience because it is connected to our faith. We develop self-control because it is rooted in our faith. They are less a checklist, and more an outpouring of the work that the Spirit is doing within us.

So, it's no wonder that it all culminates in love! Faith is always moving us toward love for God and love for our brother. And this section closes by Peter telling them (and us!) that if they grow in these virtues they (we!) will never fall away. Faith is our foundation and love is our aim.

- Of the list of virtues in verses 5-7, which is the hardest for you to develop? Which one do you see the most in yourself?

- How can rooting it (virtue above) in your faith help you to grow in that area?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, please develop these characteristics within me as my faith deepens.

Day 28

2 Peter 1:12–15

Devotion written by Abby Carrow

If you have ever sung in a choir, there are certain things that your teacher might hit on: dynamics, breath control, posture, hydration, open vowels, pitch, etc. You might hear your instructor bring up the same issues every rehearsal. “Breathe through your stomach. I shouldn’t see your shoulders moving.” “Everyone needs to drink plenty of water before tonight’s performance.” It may seem like you hear the same key things over and over again. The choir teacher knows that every instruction now becomes a habit on the stage.

Or maybe sports are more your thing. You show up to practice and the coach has a line up of drills that you work through week after week. You refine your swing. You run passing plays. You shoot free throw after free throw. And, no matter your sport, you run to build endurance. At a certain point you may look at your coach and just want to know “can we just play already?!” But the coach knows that every reminder now becomes muscle memory on the field.

This is what Peter is telling his audience in these verses. He’s saying “you’ve heard me say it before, but I don’t want you to forget.” The stakes are too high—remembering matters. Like we did with the word “know” two days ago, in your bible or on the chapter text page, put a box around each occurrence of the words “remind” or “remember” in verses 12–15. Peter understood that we can know truths in our heads, but sometimes it takes a little longer for those truths to settle in our hearts.

Peter was clear that he knew his days were numbered, but he was set on fulfilling his calling to make sure that when he was gone the Church would still thrive and carry on its mission in his absence. And in Scripture, a call to remember wasn’t just an intellectual exercise; it’s a call to obedience. Like “remember the Sabbath.” That didn’t simply mean they should think about God resting—it meant that they, too, should rest.

A biblical call to remember is an invitation to do. Peter admonished them to hold on to the truths that he passed down and live them out in their day to day lives. We are to do the same.

- Do you respond well to reminders? Or do you tune out after hearing something a couple of times?

- What is one way that you can remind yourself daily of the truths we are studying?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for your patience with me when I so often need to be reminded of who You are, what You've done, and how I am to respond.

Day 29

2 Peter 1:16–18

Devotion written by Abby Carrow

When we define the “gospel,” we regularly refer to it as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus—and it certainly is! But a key facet of the good news of Jesus is not just His completed work on the cross and His resurrection three days later, it also includes the promise of his eventual return. Jesus is coming back for His Bride, the Church (John 14:3; Acts 1:11). That is wonderful news, indeed!

But in Peter’s day, there were many false teachers who denied the parousia, a Greek word that means “arrival”, referring to the second coming of Christ. Verses 16–18 mark the transition from the book’s introduction to the beginning of Peter’s actual argument. He is ready to stand up to these false teachers who would deny some basic truths of Jesus’ own teaching.

We love stories. God’s people have always been shaped by story. Israel recalled their historic escape from Egypt each year at the Passover. We mark Jesus’ death every Sunday with Communion. These are ways of retelling our history. Stories are powerful. And while made-up stories can be entertaining, comforting, inspiring, and even stir our emotions, at the end of the day, no matter how they make us feel, they still aren’t true.

This is what Peter is addressing in verse 16. He wants them to know that no matter what they have heard from other teachers, the story he has to tell is the truth. So he appeals to what he witnessed with his own eyes at the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–10). Right after predicting his own death, Jesus had gone with his inner circle of Peter, James, and John to the top of a mountain where Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, representing the Prophets, appeared together with them. As they were there, the apostles heard a voice from heaven proclaim, “This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him” (Mark 9:7).

Peter related this moment as a preview to Christ’s second coming. A voice came from the clouds; one day Jesus would return through them. The story Peter shared wasn’t just for entertainment value, it was to point them to the truth of Christ’s return.

- Why is an eyewitness account such a powerful form of testimony?
- What are some ways you can combat false teachers today?

Prayer: Thank you Jesus, that you are coming back again, just like you promised. We eagerly await your return!

Day 30

2 Peter 1:19–21

Devotion written by Abby Carrow

While using a smart phone does require some wisdom (we weren't designed for unfettered internet access!), they have some features that undoubtedly make our lives easier. From iCal to GPS to Spotify, most of us have found ways to simplify aspects of our lives. One of the best updates, though, came in 2013 with the addition of the flashlight. Being able to turn a phone that's already in your pocket, into a light, at the press of a button, was a major upgrade.

We all need light. Whether it be a literal light in the darkness or spiritual light to guide our lives, light is essential for our lives. And in these final verses of chapter 1, Peter describes the prophecies of the Old Testament as a lamp—a light to guide us. They illuminate the way, pointing to Jesus. Verse 19 says “their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts” (see also Psalm 119:105). The prophecies direct us to Jesus and serve as our guide until he returns for us at the final day.

But remember, Peter was combatting false teachers who said that Jesus wasn't actually coming back. Not only does he want them to remember the purpose of the prophecies, he wants to remind his readers that they can trust what they had been taught in the past. So what are some key factors that define your relationships with the people you consider to be trustworthy? They don't knowingly mislead you. They are up front with you. They follow through on their commitments. They have a proven track record.

This is the connection that Peter is making in the second half of today's passage. His second letter was written just thirty years after Jesus' life on earth, so his audience was well acquainted with the Old Testament and the prophecies that had been fulfilled in Jesus. Logically, if Jesus had fulfilled all of the prophecies about his birth, life, death, and resurrection, why would he not also fulfill the prophecies—and even his own words—about his return? Both Jesus, and the prophets who pointed to him, had a track record that Peter's readers could trust. And we can trust it too! Why? Because the source is not the prophets themselves, but the Holy Spirit who inspired their writing.

- How have you experienced Scripture as a light in your own life?
- Why is it important to understand that prophecy is more than the opinion of the writer, but the inspired Word of God?

Prayer: Thank you Lord for the gift of your Word that lights the way for me.



Week 2: 2 Peter 2

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. 3 In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.

4 For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment. 5 And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God’s righteous judgment. So God protected Noah when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood. 6 Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people. 7 But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. 8 Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day. 9 So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment. 10 He is especially hard on those who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority.

These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at supernatural beings[c] without so much as trembling. 11 But the angels, who are far greater in power and strength, do not dare to bring from the Lord] a charge of blasphemy against those supernatural beings.

12 These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed. They scoff at things they do not understand, and like animals, they will be destroyed. 13 Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They delight in deception even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals. 14 They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God’s curse. 15 They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong. 16 But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice.

17 These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness. 18 They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With an appeal to twisted sexual desires, they lure back into sin those who have barely escaped from a lifestyle of deception. 19 They promise freedom, but



they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. 20 And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. 21 It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life. 22 They prove the truth of this proverb: "A dog returns to its vomit." And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud."

Day 31

2 Peter 2:1–3

Devotion written by Arnold Alvarez

We are entering chapter 2 of the apostle Peter's second letter, where he warns believers from different regions of Asia Minor about the danger of false teachers. The apostle Peter begins by highlighting one of his greatest concerns, reminding them that just as there were false prophets in Israel, there are now false teachers within the church who have turned away from the truth. They are trying to harm our fellow believers with teachings based on lies, and believers need to be prepared to discern this and hold fast to the truth of Christ.

One of the most important things to consider in life is being prepared. We prepare for an exam, for a game, for a presentation, or for any challenge ahead of us. But Peter reminds us that we must also be spiritually prepared.

We live in a world full of voices that want to tell us what to believe, how to live, and what matters most. Social media, friends, culture, and many other influences can share ideas that seem good, but are not always aligned with God's truth. That is why Peter warns believers about false teachers and false teachings. These are voices that try to pull us away from Jesus and make us doubt the path of truth. It is important to learn to compare everything we hear with the Word of God. When we know the truth, we can more easily recognize the lies.

The good news is that we are not alone in this battle. God is with us and fights for us. He gives us His Spirit, His Word, and a community of believers to help us stand firm. When we face doubts, pressure, or confusion, we can trust that God guides us and strengthens us.

So get ready... Prepare yourself for the blessings that God has for you, but also prepare yourself to identify and reject any teaching that distances you from Him. The more you know Jesus, the stronger your faith will be, and the easier it will be to remain on the path that leads to life.

- What voices or influences do you listen to most frequently in your daily life?
- How can you ensure that those voices are aligned with God's truth?

Prayer: Father, help me to be prepared at all times and to anchor myself solely in Your Word of Truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 32

2 Peter 2:4–9

Devotion written by Arnold Alvarez

Imagine traveling through a big city for a week. Most people there do not know God, and there are many strange things happening in the middle of a wild lifestyle. Most people march to the beat of their own drum. You notice that there is no order in that place; everyone drives according to their own rules, but you decide to follow the laws. There's trash on the streets and in public places, but you decide to keep your trash in your backpack. Then, in an alleyway, you see someone getting robbed. In the middle of all of this chaos, do you join in with the ways of the city, or do you remain rooted in what is right?

Peter's letter presents several examples from biblical history to show that God takes sin and rebellion against Him very seriously. He mentions the angels who sinned, the flood in the days of Noah, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. All of this comes as a consequence of a life distanced from God, a life of disobedience. Now they will have to give an account of their poor decisions, their sin, and the way they turned away from the path of good—imminent heavenly judgment!

Wait... not everything is negative...

Something interesting is that, in the midst of destruction and judgment, God rescues the righteous and those who fear Him. Lot is one of them; he decides to live uprightly despite how tormented he feels living in the midst of sin every single day of his life. It is a matter of choosing which path we decide to take: a path that seems easy to walk but whose end leads to death, or a more difficult path whose end leads to life.

Return to the question we asked in the city. If your desire is to be rooted in the ways of God, you are of the same mind as Lot and Noah.

No matter where you come from or what your family story looks like, God faithfully sustains those who remain faithful to Him. Just as He cared for Noah and Lot, He promises to be with His children through every trial. Can you say amen to that?

This is the invitation... let us live in obedience to God so we can delight in His help in the midst of our struggles and fears. No matter what we do or where we came from, let our lives reflect that obedience and our love for our Creator, regardless of the daily pressures we face in our environment. Lot teaches us how to do it... Will you try?

- How would you define a life without God?

- In what way does it encourage you to know that God fights for you when you face doubts or pressure to walk away from your faith?
- What has been that low moment in your life where you have doubted God's faithfulness to you?

Prayer: Loving God, I praise You infinitely for rescuing me from evil and for grafting me into Your ways that lead to salvation. In the name of Your beloved Son Jesus, Amen.

Day 33

2 Peter 2:10–11

Devotion written by Arnold Alvarez

We have all felt the great protective care of our parents, hearing things like: “don’t do that,” “don’t go out with that person,” “don’t hang out with that guy,” etc. In the Bible, we find the comparison of God caring for and protecting His people just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Matthew 23).

This is also what the apostle Peter is doing with the church regarding the false teachings that are threatening the community of faith. As he describes them, these false teachers live without fear of God, walking in immorality and far from the truth, denying the authority and lordship of Christ, deceiving others, and walking in their sinful desires. And even worse, they are trying to lead others down the path of destruction. In this context, the followers of Christ are under imminent danger, placing them at a point of tension between their faith and the empty teachings of their adversaries.

We live in a fallen world, where evil appears on our path every single day of our lives with a clear purpose: to pull us away from Jesus, away from the truth, and away from life. But God is greater than any evil being, and He gives us life and security in moments when we are attacked by evil. Just as a hen cares for her chicks, so the Lord cares for us—with love, gentleness, and tenderness.

You are deeply loved by God, and protected by the Creator of EVERYTHING. You are a child of the King of Kings, and He wants you to live each day under His wings, confident and secure. That is David's declaration in Psalm 91:4. It is an invitation to live with confidence, knowing that no matter how strong the storm may be, we have a strong and powerful God who gives us refuge and keeps us safe.

Come to the Lord; He wants to take care of you and set you apart from all the evil around you.

- At what moment in your life have you felt God caring for you and covering you under His wings?
- How will you express gratitude to God, knowing that He is with you today?

Before moving on to the next devotion, there is a special task for you today! Write a "Thank You" card to that special person who has shown you boundless care and has given you security in moments of fear.

Prayer: God, I praise You for Your protection over me and the ones I love. Let me live confidently under Your wings. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 34

2 Peter 2:12–16

Devotion written by Arnold Alvarez

After reflecting yesterday on God's care and love, and after writing that expression of gratitude to that special person, let us think for a moment about a question that many of us have asked ourselves or heard at some point in our lives: the way we would like to be remembered. Some think about the legacy they can leave behind, others think about the level of knowledge they can attain, and others about the amount of possessions they will accumulate. Perhaps this is a question you have never asked yourself, and now is the first time you are considering it.

Continuing with Peter's description against the false teachers, can you imagine being remembered as one who lived under a curse (verse 14) or as one who was a disgrace to others? Peter compares them to creatures driven solely by their instincts and personal interests. Instead of living under God's guidance, they live following their own desires. As a result, they cause harm to others and drift further and further away from the truth.

We all know how cruel the animal world and its survival instinct can be, living under the law of the fittest. Destruction will be the punishment for those who commit these actions. Peter's strong words expressing his anger toward this group of people causing harm are striking. Can you imagine the great love he has for the community of believers in this place?

Returning to the idea of how we would like to be remembered, our desire is to be remembered as children of God living a life that reflects the grand character of Christ in the midst of a fallen world, but under His eternal purpose. This brings to mind what Jesus said in John 16:33. In the world we will have tribulation, discouragement, suffering, and pain, but we find peace in Jesus because He has overcome the world—He is our victor!

Pause and think for a moment about the magnitude of believing in the One who already fought for you on the cross and now invites you simply to trust...

May we live each day of our lives taking hold of those words of Jesus, knowing that in His peace we rest, and in His presence we rest. Whatever it is you are facing, may it never separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Where do you find peace when you experience chaos in your life?

- What areas of your life need to be surrendered to God?

Prayer: Lord, my prayer today is that You help me live a life that reflects Your love and glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 35

2 Peter 2:17–22

Devotion written by Arnold Alvarez

After looking at who they are and how they deceive others, in the final verses of chapter 2, Peter describes the spiritual condition and the danger these false teachers represent to everyone else. These people promise empty things they cannot fulfill because they lack them. When we see a dark cloud, we expect rain; when we plant a tomato plant, we expect to harvest tomatoes; if we give love to another person, we expect to receive the same from them.

In life, there are many things that promise us happiness, freedom, fulfillment, contentment, and identity, but in the end, they lead us into darkness and separation from God. Peter uses what Proverbs mentions: a dog that returns to its vomit, and a freshly washed sow that goes back to the mud (Proverbs 26:11). By the way, for the Jewish people, these animals were considered unclean. Something important to consider here is that sometimes external changes are not enough when a person has not completely surrendered their heart to the Lord. When that happens, we return to the place God lifted us up from, and we fall even deeper into our sin.

Go back to the text and underline the words or phrases that show the empty promises of the false teachers.

Empty promises...

How many times have you been disappointed by these kinds of promises? Promises that seem very attractive at first, but do not have what you actually need. Possibly, you are struggling right now with trusting those kinds of promises or identifying whether they are real or not. Perhaps you find yourself in a difficult dilemma, wanting to trust someone who is promising you something incredible, but deep down, you know there is a major conflict with the spiritual foundation you have received.

God is calling you to return to that faith you have received. To embrace that true promise of Jesus that leads you to eternal life. That promise is for you. Now remain in the truth!

- How do you embrace the promises of Jesus in your life?
- Who do you need to talk to about the promises of Jesus?

Prayer: Father, teach me to walk in Your eternal promises. I want to dwell in Your presence and show the world the truth about You. In Jesus' name, amen.



Week 8: 2 Peter 3

This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. 2 I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles.

3 Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. 4 They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.”

5 They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. 6 Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. 7 And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed.

8 But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. 9 The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

11 Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, 12 looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. 13 But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness.

14 And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.

15 And remember, our Lord’s patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him— 16 speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction.

17 You already know these things, dear friends. So be on guard; then you will not be



carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. 18
Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.

Day 36

2 Peter 3:1–2

Devotion written by Leo Silva

Peter finally tells us exactly why he wrote this letter. in 2 Peter 3:1–2. These verses act like an anchor for everything he has written. Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly calls His people to remember because remembering His truth strengthens our faith and shapes the way we live. Peter knew that the believers were facing opposition from false teachers within the church who were spreading dangerous ideas and leading people away from the truth. He wanted them to be prepared, not by offering a new teaching, but by helping them develop sincere, pure, and biblically grounded thinking. Instead of chasing new ideas, they were to think clearly by holding on to God's truth. Peter lovingly reminded them of what they had already learned because the truth they already possessed was exactly what they needed to stand firm.

Peter points them back to a truth that had been faithfully passed down through history. He reminds them of the words spoken long ago by the prophets and the commands of the Lord Jesus given through His apostles. The Christian faith was not built on a new philosophy or a passing trend. It was rooted in God's unchanging plan, revealed throughout all of Scripture and then fulfilled in Christ. This was a message the believers already knew, trusted, and belonged to. Peter wanted them to see that the gospel they had received was firmly connected to God's work throughout history, rather than something new.

We need the same reminder today. Our world is full of voices offering new ideas and different versions of the gospel. It is easy to become distracted or confused if we are not firmly grounded in God's Word. Like Peter's readers, we are not called to discover a new truth but to faithfully remember the truth God has already revealed. We do not need a new message—we need to be continually reminded of the true Gospel that has been handed down through Scripture. This is why Paul writes in Romans 12:2, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." As our minds are continually shaped by God's Word rather than the world's ideas, we become better able to recognize His will and discern truth from error. God's truth does not change, even when the world around us does. Remaining rooted in that truth is what guards our hearts and minds against deception.

As we keep returning to God's Word, our minds are renewed and our hearts remain steady. The true Gospel becomes the solid ground beneath our feet, helping us recognize and reject false teaching and lies. Let us be people who faithfully remember what God has already spoken, trusting that His unchanging truth is enough to strengthen our faith and keep us steady until Christ returns. Rather than seeking what is new, may we treasure what is true and continue to stand firmly on the true Gospel that has been proclaimed from generation to generation.

- Why does truth matter? What can you do to stand up for the truth of the Gospel?

- Why do you think reminding yourself of the Gospel will help you?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, please help me remember God's truth so that I may continually be aware of who God is and how He desires me to live for His glory. Keep my mind grounded in Your Word, guard me from deception, and help me stand firm in the true Gospel every day. Amen.

Day 3?

2 Peter 3:3–7

Devotion written by Sara Shetterley

Go back through the Scripture and underline or highlight any phrase that shows what the scoffers believe. Then, mark any phrase that reminds us of what God has already done.

Peter tells believers that in the last days, scoffers will come. A scoffer is someone who mocks, dismisses, or makes light of what God says. These people are not simply asking honest questions. Peter says they are “following their own desires” (2 Peter 3:3). In other words, they reject God’s truth because they do not want God’s authority over their lives. Their question is simple: “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again?” They look at the world and assume that because things seem to be continuing as usual, God must not be involved. They mistake God’s patience for His absence.

That is still a temptation today. When evil seems to flourish, when justice feels slow, when prayers feel unanswered, or when people mock faith in Jesus, it can be easy to wonder if God is really moving. But Peter reminds us that the world has never been outside of God’s control. God created the heavens and the earth by His word. He also judged the world in the days of Noah through the flood. Peter’s point is clear: God has acted before, and He will act again.

This passage uses the word judgment, which means God’s righteous decision against sin and evil. Judgment can feel like a heavy word, but it is also a hopeful one. If God never judged evil, then evil would win forever. But Scripture teaches that God is holy, just, and faithful. He will not allow sin, suffering, violence, pride, or rebellion to have the final word.

Peter is not trying to make believers afraid. He is helping them stay awake. Jesus has promised to return, and His promise still stands. The delay does not mean God forgot. It means God is patient, giving people time to repent and turn back to Him, which we will talk about tomorrow.

The world may say, “Nothing is going to change.” But followers of Jesus know better. God made the world. God sustains the world. God will one day restore the world. Until then, we live as people who remember what God has done, trust what He has promised, and stay faithful while we wait.

- Where are you tempted to mistake God’s patience for His absence?

- What is one area of your life where you need to live more awake and faithful because Jesus will return?
- Where do you feel pressure to treat your faith like it is not important or not true?

Prayer: Ask God to help you trust His promises even when His timing feels slow. Confess any place where you have been living as if God is distant or uninvolved. Pray for courage to stay faithful when others mock, question, or dismiss your faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live with hope, repentance, and readiness for Jesus' return.

Day 38

2 Peter 3:8-14

Devotion written by Aaron Creech

Have you ever looked at the state of the world we live in and felt hopeless? Society as a whole has strayed far from God and from the truth He has provided through His Word. Violence seems to be everywhere. It's on the news, it's on social media, and maybe you've even witnessed it yourself. In all the craziness, it can be easy to look to God and think, "Where are You?" Or maybe you've even found yourself praying, "Jesus, can You just come back already?"

There is a big difference, however, between asking those questions from a place of faith and longing, versus asking them from a place of mockery and unbelief.

The false teachers that Peter warns against in 2 Peter ask a similar question, but from a completely different mindset and motivation. Rather than longing for Jesus to return, they were questioning whether His promise was true at all. In verse 4 they ask: "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

There is a clear sarcastic tone coming from the false teachers. They are essentially mocking believers by saying, "Where is your Jesus?" They look at the world and conclude that because everything appears the same, Jesus must not really be coming back. Their argument is simple: "If Jesus was truly returning, He would have done it by now."

Our passage for today brings us to Peter's response to this false teaching. Here is what he says: "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish."

It's important that we don't misinterpret this. Peter is not giving some "prophetic formula" saying that one day and a thousand years are literally the same. He is instead trying to teach his hearers that there is a difference between how we see time and how God sees time. The famous preacher, Charles Spurgeon, famously noted that God is not within time as we are. Past, present, and future are all equally before Him, which is why Peter says a thousand years and one day cannot be measured by the same standard.

So what does all this mean?

It means that Jesus has not forgotten His promise. His delay is not weakness, indifference, or failure. According to Peter, it is actually mercy. Every extra day is another opportunity for people to repent and turn to Him. But Peter also makes it clear

that this patience will not last forever. “The day of the Lord will come like a thief,” meaning it will come unexpectedly. No one will be able to predict the exact moment Christ returns. Because this is true, Peter asks a powerful question in verses 11–12: “What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?”

In other words, if Jesus could return at any moment, how should that change the way we live today? As believers, we are not called to sit around trying to predict dates or panic about the condition of the world. We are called to live faithfully. We are called to pursue holiness, to share the gospel, to love people well, and to live with urgency because Jesus truly is coming back.

The brokenness of the world should not push us toward hopelessness or mockery like the false teachers. Instead, it should cause us to long for Christ even more and motivate us to live lives that honor Him while we wait.

Jesus is coming back. So live ready.

- Peter says that God's apparent delay is actually an expression of His patience and mercy. How does remembering God's purpose in waiting change the way you view the brokenness and injustice you see around you?
- Peter asks, “What sort of people ought you to be?” (vv. 11–12). If Jesus returned today, what is one area of your life where you would want to be living with greater holiness, urgency, or faithfulness?

Prayer: Father, thank You that Your timing is always perfect, even when I do not understand it. Help me trust that Your patience is an expression of Your mercy and not Your absence. As I wait for the return of Jesus, give me a heart that longs for His coming, a life marked by holiness and faithfulness, and boldness to share the hope of the gospel with others. May my life bring You glory until the day Christ returns. Amen.

Day 39

2 Peter 3:15-16

Devotion written by Betsy Creech

Peter tells us to regard the Lord's patience as salvation. Every day before Christ returns is another expression of God's mercy and another opportunity for people to repent. Therefore, we should not despair while we wait, but remain faithful in prayer, witness, and love.

This is what Peter has been encouraging us to do as followers of Christ. We are called to wait faithfully, doing what we can today with what we have been given and continually grow in knowledge and understanding. But the Bible can be difficult to understand sometimes. It is encouraging to see that even Peter says some of the things Paul wrote are hard to understand! So don't feel discouraged if you don't understand everything you read. What we must be careful of, however, is placing our own understanding above God's Word.

Paul wrote with wisdom given to him by God, and Peter speaks of Paul's letters alongside the other Scriptures. Yet ignorant and unstable people twisted his words, just as they distorted the rest of Scripture. This reminds us that God's Word must be approached with humility and reverence. We should ask God to reveal Himself through His Word and give us understanding rather than forcing the Bible to say what we want it to say.

So how do we discern what God's Word is saying? Pray before you read, asking the Holy Spirit to illuminate His Word and give you humility, wisdom, and understanding. Second, be humble and brave to ask for guidance. Write down your questions and the words you don't understand. Then ask those questions to someone you have seen to be wise, faithful, and grounded in God's Word rather than someone who is ignorant or unstable. Truly seek to understand instead of making the Bible say what you want it to say.

Finally, never stop growing. You're almost done with this devotional. God has spoken to you, shown you something new, and perhaps called you to do something. Don't let that stop here. Maybe your next step is to go through this devotional again with another group of people. Maybe it is to dive deeply into one of Paul's letters and ask questions about the things you don't understand. (Remember, questioning can be good when it leads you to seek answers and deeper understanding.) Maybe God has already confirmed a specific step of obedience He is calling you to take.

Whatever your next step is, take it confidently, knowing that the God Almighty is going with you and will continue the good work He has already begun in you.

Take a moment to reflect:

- What is the next step God is calling you to take?

- How do you know for sure what God's Word is saying to you?

Pray and listen. Ask God to speak to you right now, that you would hear His will clearly, and that the Holy Spirit will empower you to take that next step. Pray for wisdom, then write down one truth from today's passage and one concrete step of obedience that clearly follows from it.

Day 40

2 Peter 3:17-18

Devotion written by Amy Blaskiewicz

Have you ever overheard someone speaking poorly about someone you know well? Suppose someone claimed that your parent had said something cruel. Because you have spent your life with your parent and have seen how they interact with others, even when angry or frustrated, you have many memories and experiences to draw from. You would likely know that speaking cruelly about another person is out of character for them. Because of that knowledge, you could reject the story, and your view of your parent would remain unchanged.

Peter's letter warns us to be on guard against false teachers. But how can we recognize what is false? Think back to the example above. If the person being spoken about were a new friend, you would not have years of relationship or many examples of their behavior to draw from. You might not be sure whether they said something cruel, and you could begin to question their character.

False teaching can be very persuasive, making falsehood sound true and even appealing. Satan was the original false teacher, planting doubt in Eve's mind in Genesis when he asked, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" He then contradicted God directly: "You won't die!" and promised, "Your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." The result was that "the woman was convinced." Jude 1:18-19 gives a similar warning: "In the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them." False teachers are still around us, but God has given us the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the ways He has faithfully worked in our lives to help us recognize what is true and remain confident in who Jesus is.

Peter knew what it was like to misunderstand Jesus, deny Jesus, and then be restored by Jesus. No wonder his final words are to keep growing in grace and knowledge. He reminds us that when we truly know Jesus, we can trust who He is and avoid being led astray. In John 6:28-29, the disciples ask Jesus what they must do to do the works of God, and He answers, "...that you believe in Him whom He has sent." Peter was there to hear these words, take them to heart, and live them out. Having been forgiven after deserting Jesus, Peter knew better than anyone the loving, grace-filled character of Christ. Peter encourages us to know Jesus in the same way.

- What helps you distinguish God's truth from voices that compete for your trust?
- How are you growing daily in grace and knowledge of the Lord?

Prayer: Father, You warned us through Your Word that others would try to lead us astray. Thank You for sending Your Son so that we might truly know You through Him.

As we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, may all the glory belong to Him—now and forever. Amen.