



Unmistakable

Parramatta
baptist church



A Devotional Guide Through 1 Peter

Why 1 Peter?

The letter of 1 Peter was written to Christians who were living in an environment that was not supportive of the Christian faith. The Roman Empire viewed Christianity as a threat and so the Christians of that day were struggling with how to remain faithful to Christ when their faith brought persecution and rejection. As we seek to be salt and light, one of the realities today is that our beliefs and values often clash with the world around us. As a result, we face many of the same questions and issues that 1 Peter's original audience faced as we seek to live our faith. In this short yet powerful letter there is Godly wisdom that will help us shine the light of Christ brightly in today's world.

How to use this guide

The guide is divided into six distinct weeks, with the individual devotions each week slowly unpacking the passage leading into Sunday's message. There are 5 or 6 devotions each week (giving you some catch up days if needed). We encourage you to dwell on each Scripture passage and reflect on what the Lord might be saying to you, before reading the further reflection.



We pray that this will be a rich time as we spend time in 1 Peter together.

Unmistakable Hope

Day 1

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:1-2

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

According to this passage, Christians are exiles. They are strangers in the world, not because of their nationality, but because of their obedience to the call of Christ.

And unlike those who are exiles because of their ethnic backgrounds, the Christians addressed in 1 Peter could have ceased being exiles simply by blending in with the larger population. All they had to do was act and talk like everybody else.

That is a temptation that many of us deal with. Christ calls us to live by different values and moral standards than the rest of the world, but that can be challenging. We don't like being treated differently, being excluded or standing out as different. Like everybody else, we want to fit in with our friends, neighbours, and co-workers. So, we can find ourselves facing the temptation to compromise our calling and values for the short-term pleasure of fitting in.

Every Christian has to come to grips with the fact that following Christ will cause us to be a "stranger in the world" and it will, at times, make us feel as though we are an "exile".

A moment of honesty

What is more important to me - the approval of God or the approval of others?

Express your desire to the Lord going forward and confess any wrong desires that place the approval of others above the approval of God.

Unmistakable Hope

Day 2

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:3-5

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

We have a living hope, because our hope is in Jesus Christ! No matter what circumstances we are facing, no matter what tests we may be enduring, no matter how afraid of the future we are, there is always hope. And that is because our hope is not tied to anything associated with this world. Our hope is connected to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the inheritance of God's Kingdom, and the salvation "that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

There is one more thing mentioned in this passage that ought to fill us with hope today: We are shielded by God's power according to v.5. So, when doubts or discouragement threaten to overcome us, we can lean into our hope in God with confidence that his power will shield us.

A moment of honesty

Think of one thing you are facing today that the living hope of Christ puts a new perspective on. Spend a few minutes in prayer about it and ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit and with the knowledge that you are shielded by his power.

Unmistakable Hope

Day 3

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:6

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

For Peter, suffering (or trials) is the means by which the quality of the Christians' faith can shine all the more. This is a theme that he will develop throughout his letter.

Peter's view of trials can be challenging to adopt, but just imagine the results if you did.

What would happen if you viewed your trials as great opportunities to shine the light of Christ, instead of focussing on hardship, unfairness or grief caused by your trials?

How much less anxious would you be if you were confident that your trials were simply a season of life that will pass? How much more joy would you have if you thought more about the glory of heaven and less about the difficulty of your circumstances?

A moment of honesty

What is the particular trial that you currently face? Complete these two sentences:

1. I have the opportunity to shine the light of Christ through this trial by....

2. During this trial I will keep my eyes on Christ by....

Unmistakable Hope

Day 4

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:7-9

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Yesterday, we saw that Peter sees trials as opportunities to shine light on our faith and make it visible. Today, we see that Peter also sees trials as opportunities to grow our faith. Trials have a way of revealing where we are seeking our confidence or comfort from lesser things. In the midst of trials, God calls us to redirect our trust back to Him, which strengthens our faith in Him.

A moment of honesty

Recall a past trial that God brought you through... How did that experience grow your faith in Him?

Ask God to grow your faith in your current trial, as He was able to do in the past.

Unmistakable Hope

Day 5

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:10-12

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

While there is much to consider in this passage, there is one phrase that stands out to me above all others: “they were not serving themselves but you.” That phrase speaks to the purpose and mindset of the prophets. Regarding purpose, God was working through them to inform others about the salvation that he offers. Regarding mindset, the prophets were not preaching the Word of God for their own glory or gain; rather, they were sincerely seeking to help others be reconciled to God.

That phrase also stands in contrast to the prevailing attitude of today’s culture, which is a “me-first” attitude. So many people seek to serve themselves above others. But this is not an attitude that should be adopted by Christ-followers since it does not reflect the character of the One who “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

As Christians we, like the prophets of old, speak the Word of God to others through our speech, our attitudes, and our actions. Let us do so in a way that causes others to say about us: “they were not serving themselves...” !

A moment of honesty

Have I been more “me-centred” or “others-centred” recently?

How might I serve another in an unexpected way today?

Unmistakable Holiness

Day 1

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:13

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Peter has already spoken of the hope we have in Christ and the second coming of Christ in his letter. In this verse he returns to those themes and urges his readers to fully immerse themselves in those two realities. So much so, that the imminent return of Christ becomes a motivating force guiding how they live their lives.

It's not a passive way of living. The way of Christ is active. It requires us to walk in step with the Holy Spirit who will lead, convict and empower us to control our emotions, appetites, and impulses. If we are being lazy about our faith, unprepared for the opportunities God places in front of us, or unable to control ourselves, the Holy Spirit will beckon us to repent and align our lives more closely with Him. We do this with future oriented vision, setting our hope on the grace to be given to us when Jesus Christ is revealed.

A moment of honesty

Take stock of your current spiritual vitality by asking yourself these questions:

- Am I active or passive about my faith?
- Do I exhibit self-control over my emotions, appetites, and impulses?
- What can I do to walk more in step with the Holy Spirit?

Recommit whatever is needed to the Lord.

Unmistakable Holiness

Day 2

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:14-16

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Peter identifies one of the most fundamental expectations of Christians: we are to be like the One we worship. The NIV Life Application Bible shares the following comments about this passage: "After people commit their lives to Christ, they usually still feel a pull back to their old ways. Peter tells us to be like our heavenly Father - holy in everything we do. Holiness means being totally devoted or dedicated to God, set aside for his special use and set apart from sin and its influence. We are to be set apart and different, not blending in with the crowd.

What makes us different are God's qualities in our lives. Our focus and priorities must be his. We cannot become holy on our own, but God gives us his Holy Spirit to help us obey and to give us power to overcome sin."

A moment of honesty

- What are the ways that your life reflects the One you worship?
- Ask Him to show you an area where your life does not reflect His
- Confess and invite the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh and to keep making you more like Jesus.

Unmistakable Holiness

Day 3

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:17-21

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Peter encourages his readers to embrace their status as “temporary residents”, with lives that are fully submitted to God, even if living in such a way brings disapproval from others. He is encouraging us to keep living this way, because our redemption was not bought lightly with the temporary treasure of this world, but rather with the precious blood of the lamb.

As Peter reminds us of the costliness of Jesus’ sacrifice, it also underscores the depth of God’s love for us. Living as strangers in this world can be a lonely experience that can make us feel unloved and less significant than others, but when we pause to consider what God has done for us through Christ we remember that we are loved and valued by our God. And knowing that helps us stay the course.

A moment of honesty

Reflect on the price that the Father paid to redeem you to himself.
Recommit yourself to live for Him above all else.

Unmistakable Holiness

Day 4

Bible reading 1 Peter 1:22-23

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Obeying God's truth purifies us from sin and this enables us to love our Christian brothers and sisters sincerely. Peter asks us to also love deeply with a "want to" kind of love rather than an "ought to" kind of love.

The motivation for loving others deeply from the heart is because Jesus loves each of us deeply from the heart. Peter's desire is that the community of Christ should mirror the character of Christ. As a church we are called to be people who offer authentic, Christ-like love to one another and to all who we encounter.

A moment of honesty

- How well have you been loving others from the heart recently?
- Who is it that God would have you express his love to this week?

Ask the Lord to grow your capacity to love others with Jesus' kind of love.

Repent of the ways that you have not been loving well.

Unmistakable Holiness

Day 5

Bible reading 1 Peter 2:1-3

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

The phrase that stands out to me in this passage is, “now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” It is a reference to Psalm 34:8. Here, Peter uses the line from the Psalm to explain the motivation for changed behaviour and changed priorities. And there is a “before and after” effect to it: Now that you tasted that the Lord is good, live differently as a result. Now that you have been given a taste of the God-life, get rid of everything that doesn’t belong to that life. Now that you have experienced the Lord and know who he is, act in ways that reflect his character. Now that you have seen the Lord’s work in your own life, make his work in your life the priority of your life - crave the things of God. Peter believes that everything changes once you experience the Lord, and it seems as if he can’t fathom how anyone who has “now tasted that the Lord is good” would want to go back to a lesser way of living.

A moment of honesty

- Do your attitudes, values and behaviour reflect what you have tasted in the goodness of God?

Ask the Lord to replace everything that doesn’t reflect who he is with his character and goodness in how you live.

Unmistakable Holiness

Day 6

Bible reading 1 Peter 2:4-5

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

God has always had a desire to live among the people he created. We first see it in the creation narrative of Genesis 2-3, but it's a theme that runs throughout the story of Scripture, culminating with the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the indwelling nature of the Holy Spirit. This desire is what motivated God to establish the Temple in the Old Testament. The Temple was a visible symbol of God dwelling among his people, which is why it was treated with so much reverence and why it was a strategic target for destruction by the enemies of God's people.

In this passage Peter builds on the understanding that under the new covenant, God's dwelling place is no longer the Temple building, but rather is each of us. We are the "living stones" that make up a new "spiritual house." God's presence is established in the church - the followers of Christ.

Furthermore, we are also given the identity of priests, one who offers spiritual sacrifices in this new temple – offering our bodies, offering our money and material things and offering our praises. As we do this, we are bringing both ourselves and others to God and being a visible symbol of God's presence to our communities.

A moment of honesty

With each of us being the temple who carries God's presence with us, how might you make God's presence visible or able to be experienced by someone in your sent place today?

Unmistakable Relationships

Day 1

Bible reading 1 Peter 2:13-15

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

This passage presents a real test for how Christians respond to authorities and those who govern us. Peter urges his readers to live according to the laws of their land and to submit to the civil authorities. The basis for Peter's rationale is that is for "the Lord's sake." Everything a Christ-follower does, is for the sake of the Lord and the expansion of His Kingdom. According to Peter, critics of Christianity are silenced by the sincere demonstration of the Christian faith that respects those in authority.

Moment of honesty

- What does your attitude and things that you say about our government and other authorities, say about your faith to those who don't know Jesus?

Repent of any wrong attitudes and pray for our prime minister, our government and all in authority.

Unmistakable Relationships

Day 2

Bible reading 1 Peter 2:16

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

We often define freedom as the ability to do whatever we want, whenever we want, however we want. Following Christ changes how we view freedom. The kind of freedom that Peter is talking about in this verse is the spiritual freedom we have in Christ. In Christ, we are free to choose Him, not out of obligation but out of love. We are free to live for Him because of our gratitude for what He has done, instead of relating to Him on the basis of law. But this kind of freedom should never be used to mask evil or to cover up our selfish agendas. We are to always live as genuine servants of God who sincerely seek the things of God.

Moment of honesty

- To what extent is your faith driven by duty (should and oughts) versus freedom that is expressed in obedience to Christ that born out of gratitude to Him?

Declare your desire to live from the latter.

Unmistakable Relationships

Day 3

Bible reading 1 Peter 2:17

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

We live in a society that is experiencing a decline in respect. We see it in the media and social media, in our workplaces and so many other places. People are critiqued and spoken ill of and treated in a way that devalues, manipulates, divides, and discards them. The right to express our opinion seems to trump the right for a person to be respected and treated well.

Peter calls us to be counter-cultural by showing “proper respect for everyone.” Respect is esteeming or attributing a sense of the worth or excellence to a person. This was how Jesus treated us. In fact, he attributed so much worth to us that he was prepared to die for us. As disciples of Christ, we must exhibit the same attitude. Not just to people who are worthy of our respect, but to all people, because all people are made in God’s image.

Moment of honesty

Allow the Lord to bring to light any people that you fail to show ‘proper respect’ to. Confess and ask God to renew your attitude.

Unmistakable Relationships

Day 4

Bible reading 1 Peter 3:1-2

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Peter continues to apply the Christian ethic to real-life situations. Here, Peter entertains the question, "What should a wife who has converted to Christ do if her husband isn't a believer?" Peter's answer is noteworthy because he assumes that a non-believer can be won over to Christ through the conduct of a believer. This assumption is based on the fact that a changed life speaks loudly and clearly, which is why Peter says that the best approach for a woman who is married to an unbelieving husband is loving service that demonstrates the kind of self-giving love that Christ displayed.

Each of us is surrounded by people who are either sceptical of the Christian faith or simply don't believe in Christ. And the best strategy for influencing those people for Christ is to exhibit respectful and pure conduct that mirrors the holiness of Christ. As the old saying goes, "Actions speak much louder than words."

Moment of honesty

Think of a person you know who is not yet a Christian.

Think of some specific ways you can exhibit respectful and pure conduct toward them.

Unmistakable Relationships

Day 5

Bible reading 1 Peter 3:7

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

The statement about wives being “weaker” than husbands is most likely a reference to physical strength, which makes sense when placed in 1 Peter’s original context. To a culture that prized physical strength and even judged a person’s worth by physical strength, the assertion that a woman is an equal partner to a man is a stunning example of just how counter-cultural God’s new reality is. God evaluates a person’s worth by a different set of standards than the world. God also breaks down the walls of division that the world builds up by throwing open the doors of his kingdom to all people, regardless of gender, status and ethnicity. As the people of God, we should be treating people according to God’s standards instead of worldly standards. This is how we partner with God in making his will “done on earth as it is in heaven.” And what better place to start than in the home?

In this verse, Peter also provides a stark reality-check for husbands by reminding them that the way they treat their wives says more about their faith in God than they may realize because it impacts their connection to God by hindering their prayers. God responds to those who treat their wives well.

Moment of honesty

- Does the way you treat people reflect the way that God has treated you?
- Ask God to renew your love and grace especially toward those who you struggle with.

Unmistakable Relationships

Day 6

Bible reading 1 Peter 3:8-9

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

The NIV Application Bible notes that, in verse 8, Peter lists five key elements that should characterise any group of believers:

- (1) harmony - pursuing the same goals;
- (2) sympathy - being responsive to others' needs;
- (3) love - seeing and treating each other as brothers and sisters;
- (4) compassion - being affectionately sensitive and caring; and
- (5) humility - being willing to encourage one another and rejoice in each other's successes. When we repay the poor attitude of another with our own poor attitude, we are lowering the standard. Rather than respond in kind, we are called to be the one who brings the maturity of Christ to a relationship.

Moment of honesty

- Is there a person who has wronged you recently?
- How is God calling you to respond coming out of this passage?
- Ask God to fill you with His grace to do what He is calling you to do.

Unmistakable Witness

Day 1

Bible reading 1 Peter 3:13-14

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

“Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened” is a quote from the prophet Isaiah who pleaded with his contemporaries to trust in the sovereign power of the one true God. Those people did not listen to Isaiah; instead they made alliances with enemy nations and adopted the gods of those nations because they mistakenly thought that those actions would bring them safety and security. Their idolatry and sinfulness was motivated by fear.

When we give in to fear, we begin to compromise who God calls us to be in this world in order to avoid disapproval or persecution from others due to our faith. Peter reminds us that Christians are blessed even if they suffer, because God will reward their faithfulness.

Moment of honesty

- Where do you need to be who God has called you to be, even if will attract disapproval from others?

Ask God to help you.

Unmistakable Witness

Day 2

Bible reading 1 Peter 3:15-16

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Notice the sequence in this passage? When you “set apart” Christ as Lord in your heart, you are filled with hope, and your behaviour is changed for good. This can then attract comments or questions from those who don’t walk with Christ. Peter encourages us to be prepared to speak about our faith in Christ when opportunities arise.

Sometimes Christians are afraid of being seen to be pushing their beliefs on others, however if we speak with gentleness and respect as Peter says, then we need not be afraid.

Moment of honesty

- What would you say if someone asks you today ‘why are you so kind’?

Practice what you might say. Being prepared, actually means...being prepared!

Unmistakable Witness

Day 3

Bible reading 1 Peter 3:17

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

This simple statement appeals to the practical element of the Christian faith. Since living in a fallen world involves suffering, isn't it better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil? But there is something else to think about: Suffering for doing good infuses our suffering with a redemptive quality. If we suffer for doing good, we can still experience the peace of mind, satisfaction, and fulfillment that comes from doing good - and this helps us know that our suffering is not wasted or meaningless. None of this can be said about suffering for doing evil.

Moment of honesty

Pray for yourself or others you know who are suffering for doing God's will.

Be sure to pray for the 245 million Christians who are facing persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ in 2020.

Unmistakable Witness

Day 4

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:1-2

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Once again Peter holds up the suffering of Christ as a model and inspiration for his readers. The ESV Study Bible notes: "Peter's point is that when believers are willing to suffer, the nerve centre of sin is severed in their lives. Although believers will never be totally free from sin in this life, when they endure suffering for the sake of Christ they show that their purpose in life is not to live for their own pleasures but according to the will of God and for his glory." Our preparedness to suffer as a result of our witness for Christ grows our spiritual muscle.

Moment of honesty

Are there places and ways that you need to be bolder in your witness for Christ, being prepared to endure a little more disapproval or suffering because of your faith? If you were among the 245 million Christians who face persecution in our world, would you still choose to follow Jesus?

Unmistakable Witness

Day 5

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:7-9

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

This passage describes the lifestyle of the Christ-follower that flows out of his or her knowledge of what is to come in the future. Peter says that “the end of all things is near”, meaning that the story of God is marching on toward its ultimate conclusion. And when the end comes it will be God who reigns. We are called to have such a firm grasp of this that it changes our worldview and priorities. Christians value and practice self-control, prayer, love, and hospitality because these are “of God” and therefore we know that these things will have eternal value.

Moment of honesty

Reflecting on yesterday, what things in your day might have had eternal value?

What choices can you make today to include more of those things?

Ask for the Lord’s leading.

Unmistakable Witness

Day 6

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:10-11

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

We often talk about giving glory to God in our lives, but what does that mean? One of the ways we glorify God is every time we use the gifts we have been given by God for his purposes. This means using our gifts to speak the words of God, to extend the grace of God, to demonstrate the love of God, to offer the help of God, etc.

Just as there is a variety of gifts, there is a variety of ways those gifts can be used to serve one another both within the church and beyond. It is wonderful to think about all the different ways we can bless others with what God has given to us.

Moment of honesty

- What are some of your strengths and gifts?

How can you use them today to be salt and light (and bring glory to God at the same time)?

Unmistakable **Suffering**

Day 1

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:12-13

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

This is one of those passages that make us realise just how honest Scripture is with us. Here, Peter says that we should not be surprised when we suffer trials. This completely undercuts the way in which many of us react to suffering - with claims of unfairness, cries of "why me?", and criticisms of how God works. Peter acknowledges that suffering is simply a reality of living in a fallen and broken world. So instead of acting "surprised" that we suffer, we should look for ways in which we can glorify Christ through our sufferings. If Christ suffered, we will suffer. If God glorified Christ through his suffering, God will glorify us through our suffering. And when that happens, we will be overjoyed.

Moment of honesty

What is one way that you can glorify Christ through the suffering or difficulty or trial you are currently facing? Ask God that you might see the opportunities that exist in the midst of your challenges to bring Him glory.

Unmistakable **Suffering**

Day 2

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:14

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Insults are designed to tear us down, embarrass us, and make us feel small. But even insults can be redeemed by the power of Christ! Peter helps his readers, many of whom experience insults every day, to view the insults that are heaped on them because they bear the name of Christ as signs of blessing - because in those moments the Spirit of God rests upon them in a powerful way to remind them that they are people of great worth who are loved by God. Remember this next time you are made to feel small or face some form of discrimination because of your faith.

Moment of honesty

We live in world that likes to insult, criticise, and belittle.

Choose to be countercultural today by lifting others up instead.

Make it your goal to sincerely compliment five people today.

Unmistakable **Suffering**

Day 3

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:15-16

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

We've already seen that Peter accepts suffering as a reality of life that every person has to deal with. So, if that's the case, then why not suffer for something positive instead of something worthless? There is nothing to be proud of when a person suffers for doing evil. But a Christian can take pride in suffering for the cause of Christ because we know that it glorifies God.

Moment of honesty

If you are not facing any form of opposition or hardship because of your faith, ask yourself how conspicuous your faith actually is?

Many of our Christian brothers and sisters who live in countries where they face persecution ask us not to pray that the persecution will stop (they can easily stop persecution by being silent about their faith in Christ), instead they ask for courage to keep sharing the message of Christ.

Ask God for greater boldness.

Unmistakable **Suffering**

Day 4

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:17-18

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Most Bible scholars believe that the persecutions that believers were undergoing were divinely sent judgment intended to purify God's people. Think of judgment not as punishment on followers of Christ, so much as a refining process for followers of Christ. Many Christians in persecuted countries are passionate, determined and courageous in their faith, compared to Christians in the West who can be complacent and unwilling to share their faith with others. Could it be that we in the West need some of the "judgment" that Peter speaks of?

Moment of honesty

Is being a 'Jesus-follower' just one part of your life or is it your life?

Are you willing to do the hard and uncomfortable things as you live your faith out loud?

Unmistakable **Suffering**

Day 5

Bible reading 1 Peter 4:19

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

The conclusion of Peter's sustained discourse on suffering is to commit ourselves to God and continue to do his will. This flows out of Peter's belief

- (1) that God and God's people can be glorified in suffering;
- (2) that God rewards the suffering of his people; and
- (3) that suffering for the name of Christ is not something of which to be ashamed.

Peter also notes that our Creator is faithful and His faithfulness to us inspires us to respond to him with a faithful commitment of our own.

Moment of Honesty

After reflecting all week on being prepared to suffer for our faith in Christ, take a moment to reflect on Jesus' preparedness to suffer for you.

What is your response?

Unmistakable Humility

Day 1

Bible reading 1 Peter 5:5

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Humility is an essential element of the Christ-follower's wardrobe. Humility is not thinking less of ourselves, it is thinking of ourselves less. We live in 'me-first' culture that is marked by people asserting their rights and feeling entitled. Humility seeks to understand where another person is coming from, it listens and respects, and it is prepared to submit our will and desires for benefit of another. Every time you choose humility, be encouraged that you are attracting God's blessing.

This verse is also a sobering reminder that God sees when we act out of pride, and he actually opposes those who are proud!

Moment of honesty

Think of some particular ways that Jesus demonstrated his humility.

What are some practical things that you could do to be more like him?

Unmistakable Humility

Day 2

Bible reading 1 Peter 5:6-7

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

Peter continues the subject of humility and gives us the secret to being able to adopt a humble attitude: trusting God to lift us up. The temptation we all face is to want to self-promote in order to be seen or thought of well and to defend ourselves if we are not. We want others to know about our accomplishments.

When our identity comes from being recognised for what we do, the recognition of others is important. But when our identity is firmly in Christ, then we can be confident that he sees and knows what we do and it is his opinion that matters most. Knowing that God will lift us up encourages us to more willingly submit to others.

Moment of honesty

Whose opinions matter more to you, the opinion of others or the opinion of God?
In what ways is that reflected in what you do?

Unmistakable Humility

Day 3

Bible reading 1 Peter 5:8

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

From the NIV Life Application Bible: "Lions attack sick, young, or straggling animals; they choose victims who are alone or not alert. Peter warns us to watch out for Satan when we are suffering or being persecuted. Feeling alone, weak, helpless, and cut off from other believers, we can become so focused on our troubles that we forget to watch for danger, making us especially vulnerable to Satan's attacks. During times of suffering, seek other Christians for support. Keep your eyes on Christ and resist the devil. Then, James says, 'he will flee from you' (James 4:7)."

Moment of honesty

Where are you particularly vulnerable to Satan's accusation, temptation, deception or discouragement in the current season that we are in?

What can you do to be more aware of that and to resist his ploys? Take authority in Jesus' name right now.

Unmistakable Humility

Day 4

Bible reading 1 Peter 5:9

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in this verse?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

This is an important verse of Scripture because it challenges two false narratives we tell ourselves when we are attacked by the devil: (1) that we are powerless against him, and (2) that we are the only one experiencing it. Those two narratives contribute to a victim mentality that is not congruent with the Christian faith. Peter says that we have the ability to resist the devil, because of Christ. We are not powerless against him. We don't have to be his victims. We can stand against him.

Peter also reminds us that Christ-followers all over the world are also engaged in this same battle. We are not alone. We can help each other resist the devil and, when we stand our ground against him, we can inspire each other to not give in to him.

Moment of truth

Pray for yourself that you will readily recognise when Satan is seeking to undermine you and that you will stand against him in the authority that you have in Christ.

Pray especially for those facing persecution because of their faith that they would have the strength to stand against the ways that Satan would seek to undermine them.

Unmistakable Humility

Day 5

Bible reading 1 Peter 5:10-11

Pause to reflect:

- What is the Lord drawing to your attention in these verses?
- What might He be wanting you to take hold of?

A further reflection

These verses remind us that our present suffering is temporary. Persecution for our faith is temporary. These verses carry a promise of restoration. We will be made strong and steadfast, by the God of grace. Be encouraged that our restoration doesn't depend on our own self-effort to get through, but God himself will restore us.

Moment of honesty

Take time to dwell on the temporary nature of suffering and allow yourself to imagine what Christ's completed work of restoration in you might be like.

Parramatta Baptist Church
84-94 Kleins Rd, Northmead NSW 2152
www.parramatabaptist.com

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