1 Peter: Walk the Talk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Study 1: THE BATTLE FOR HOLINESS
Leader's Guide — Participant's Guide
1 Peter 1:13–16

Study 2: WHEN I DON'T FEEL LIKE BEING GOOD
Leader's Guide — Participant's Guide
1 Peter 1:17–25

Study 3: AN APPETITE FOR BEING GOOD
Leader's Guide — Participant's Guide
1 Peter 2:1–12

Study 4: REFUSE TO GET REVENGE
Leader's Guide — Participant's Guide
1 Peter 2:19–25

Study 5: LEARN TO LIVE IN PEACE
Leader's Guide — Participant's Guide
1 Peter 3:8–17

Study 6: GET READY FOR A ROUGH RIDE
Leader's Guide — Participant's Guide
1 Peter 4:1–19

Study 7: YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS
Leader's Guide — Participant's Guide
1 Peter 5:5–11
1 PETER

Why read this book?
Wouldn’t it be great to be free of trouble? That’s what we sometimes think. But 1 Peter shows us that difficulties and hardships don’t have to wear us down. In fact, this letter teaches us that God can use difficulties to strengthen us. Knowing this can bring hope and reassurance that eternal life is God’s ultimate purpose. Read 1 Peter to discover how faith, refined by suffering, can help us see the Lord more clearly. This is valuable advice for holding firm in difficult times.

Who wrote this book and why?
Peter, the apostle, saw that increasing hardship and persecution had caused some Christians to wonder if God had abandoned them. He wrote to encourage these believers, offering them hope and meaning in the midst of their suffering.

To whom was it written?
To believers scattered throughout the region of Asia Minor, in what is now Turkey.

Where and when was it written?
Probably in Rome, sometime between A.D. 60 and 64.

What was the background behind this book?
At first the Roman government had given Christians the same freedom of religion as the Jews. But as the rift between Jews and Christians grew, tolerance for Christianity faded. Roman policy was to ban problem religions, which were perceived as a threat to the stability of the empire. Christians began facing discrimination, acts of violence, arrest, and confiscation of property. Some were beginning to waver in their faith. Others feared how much they would have to endure. Peter himself was imprisoned and beaten for his faith; thus he earned the right to address the subject of suffering.

What to look for in 1 Peter:
Reason for hope in the face of trouble and suffering. Take note of the encouraging news Peter sent to his readers.

From the Quest Study Bible (Zondervan)
1 Peter: Walk the Talk - Study 1

PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE

The Battle for Holiness
*If you want to act holy, you have to learn to think holy.*

Transformation—the process of becoming holy—begins in your mind. In 1 Peter we are challenged to live holy lives, and Peter shows us that the process of holy living begins with the way we think. Once we win that battle, we will begin to see changes in the way we live and the things we do. This study will explore how to begin that process.

Scripture:
1 Peter 1:13–16

Based on:
The sermon "The Battle for Holiness" by Steve May, PREACHING TODAY SERMONS
PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

For Christians, the problem is not so much a matter of wanting to be holy as it is winning the battle to be holy. Most of us aren’t effective warriors. We are in the battle, but we’re not sure why. Many of us don’t know what it means to be holy or how to be holy.

Transformation—the process of becoming holy—begins in your mind. In 1 Peter we are challenged to live holy lives, and Peter shows us that the process of holy living begins with the way we think. Once we win that battle, we will begin to see changes in the way we live.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: To be holy, you must prepare your mind for action.

Teaching point two: To be holy, you must think differently.

Which of the following best describes a holy life?

- a. Never indulging in anything pleasurable
- b. Never sinning
- c. Only thinking about spiritual things
- d. Being passionately in love with Christ, which colors the way you think and act

Teaching point three: To be holy, you must learn to concentrate on God rather than your own efforts.
### Apply Your Findings

There is a story about a college professor who told his students on the first day of class, “I’ve given you all an A. Now, learn all you can about the subject.” In a sense, that is what God does for us. Hebrews 10:10 says, “We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

He has already made us holy. Our sins are forgiven, and we are clean. It is now up to us to apply holiness to our lives. Holiness begins in the mind. We have to prepare our minds for the battle for holiness, separate our thoughts from our emotions, and fix our eyes on God’s grace.
1 Peter 1:13–16

1 Peter: Walk the Talk - Study 1

Be Holy

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”[a]

Footnotes:
a. 1 Peter 1:16 Lev. 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:7f
This study discusses what is a split-second decision—whether in any given moment you do the right or the wrong thing. Our goal is to get good at being good. This means learning to live a life of integrity. To put it another way, it’s about learning to become obedient to God. Integrity and obedience go hand in hand.

Scripture:
1 Peter 1:17–25
PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Being good may be easy to define, but it’s not always easy to do. By our very nature we don’t always want to do what we know we should. The choice to obey is a split-second decision, and it is always our choice. There is not a sermon you can hear, a church you can attend, a seminar you can go to, or a self-help book you can read that will compel you to act with integrity in any given situation. It is your choice. However, there are things behind the scenes of every choice you make—things you think about and believe—that either empower you or cause you to fail to act with integrity.

So what if you don’t feel like being good? Then you need to remember that being good makes good sense, and build the necessary foundation to develop a habit of obedience.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Being good opens the door to God’s blessing in your life.

Teaching point two: Being good is the right response to the goodness of God.

Which of the following do you think best represents 1 Peter 1:18–21?

a. Since Jesus died for me, I feel guilty and should serve him to pay him back.
b. Since Jesus died for me, I’m convinced of his love for me. Therefore, I want to obey him because he obviously has my best in mind.
c. Since Jesus died for me, I must obey him or I’ll be punished.

Teaching point three: Being good makes you qualified to spread goodness to others.
PART 3

Apply Your Findings

If there are times when you don’t feel like being good, welcome to the club. We all have days when we do not live up to what we know we should do. Regardless of how we feel, being good makes sense because when you obey God you open the door to his blessings in your life; when you obey God you express gratitude to him for his love and mercy; and when you obey God you make yourself a better person and, ultimately, the world a better place. If you don’t feel like obeying, remember these reasons why being good makes sense.
1 Peter 1:17–25
1 Peter: Walk the Talk - Study 2

17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.[a] 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord stands forever."[b]

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Footnotes:

a. 1 Peter 1:22 Some early manuscripts from a pure heart
b. 1 Peter 1:25 Isaiah 40:6-8
An Appetite for Being Good

Mastering the Christian life is like mastering other things: it’s a matter of doing the basics again and again.

The apostle Peter told us to “crave pure spiritual milk.” Peter wasn’t writing these words to new believers only; his letter was written to all kinds of Christians at every imaginable level of maturity. No matter how long you have been a believer, the only way to grow in your salvation—to become spiritual and master the art of obedience—is through pure spiritual milk.

This study will examine four basic elements that contribute to your spiritual growth. If you will make these things part of your daily life, you will develop an appetite for obedience.

Scripture:
1 Peter 2:1–12
PART 1
Identify the Current Issue

There are some basic elements of spiritual nurture—Peter refers to them as “pure spiritual milk”—that all baby Christians need to grow spiritually; but even 10, 20, and 30 years later, the Christian needs that “pure spiritual milk.” We go deeper by doing the basics again and again.

PART 2
Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Read the Bible.

Which of the following methods of learning God’s Word do you enjoy most?

- Simply reading it
- Doing an in-depth study on my own
- Studying it with others
- Listening to a sermon
- Memorizing it

Teaching point two: Declare God’s praise.

Teaching point three: Identify with God’s people.
Teaching point four: Avoid sinful situations.

PART 3
Apply Your Findings

If we are going to get good at being good, we need to find our nurture in pure spiritual milk; we need to excel in the basics. We will never outgrow our need for the fundamentals of the Christian life—reading the Bible, declaring God’s praise, identifying with God’s people, and avoiding sinful situations. To the extent that we master these four simple principles, our appetite for obedience will grow, and we will be able to walk the talk according to the will of God.
1 Peter 2:1–12

1 Peter: Walk the Talk - Study 3

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."[a]

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,"[b][c]

and,

"A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."[d]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Footnotes:

a. 1 Peter 2:6 Isaiah 28:16
b. 1 Peter 2:7 Or cornerstone
c. 1 Peter 2:7 Psalm 118:22
d. 1 Peter 2:8 Isaiah 8:14
Refuse to Get Revenge

If you refuse to become consumed with the idea of revenge, and instead become consumed with forgiveness, you will experience the grace of God in a powerful way.

If you’ve ever been taken advantage of, or if you’re secretly harboring thoughts of getting even with someone who has done you wrong, this study will challenge the way you feel about the subject. First Peter 2 will help you make the transition from wanting to get even to being willing to forgive. We’ll examine three things: Why it’s best not to seek revenge; what to do instead of seeking revenge; and how to get your mind off of seeking revenge.

Scripture:
1 Peter 2:19–25
PART 1
Identify the Current Issue

When you become consumed with revenge, the particulars of the offense lose significance. It could be $14, or it could be $14 million; it could be that someone cut you off in traffic, or it could be that someone did actual bodily harm to you or to someone you love; it could be that a co-worker made a snide remark, or it could be that a co-worker intentionally sabotaged your career. Regardless of the offense, once you have become consumed with the idea of getting revenge, the focus of your life shifts from being good and doing good to getting even. The desire for revenge can destroy you if you let it.

PART 2
Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Refusing to seek revenge pleases God and helps you to identify with and be like Christ.

Q Which of these statements best reflects what it means to not seek revenge?
   a. I won’t try to get back at others as long as they treat me right.
   b. I will take, without complaining, anything anyone dishes out to me.
   c. I will show grace, mercy, and kindness even to those who don’t deserve it.
   d. I won’t do anything physical to someone who has hurt me, but I’ll make them suffer emotionally.

Teaching point two: Instead of seeking revenge, show kindness.
Teaching point three: Instead of seeking revenge, forgive.

PART 3
Apply Your Findings

You may have been taken advantage of, mistreated, used, abused. If you have, please remember that Jesus can understand your pain, because he experienced the pain of mistreatment also. If you refuse to become consumed with the idea of revenge, and instead become consumed with the idea of forgiveness, you will experience the grace of God in a powerful way. By his wounds you will be healed.
1 Peter 2:19–25

1 Peter: Walk the Talk - Study 4

19 For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”[a]

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Footnotes:
a. 1 Peter 2:22 Isaiah 53:9
Learn to Live in Peace

By working hard at being at peace with one another, we honor God.

If we’re not careful, it’s easy to forget the priority that Scripture places on unity. We sometimes get sidetracked with our pet theologies—health and wealth, who will be left behind, how many Isaiahs there were, or any number of secondary issues. Meanwhile, God makes it clear that he wants us to get along—and that doing so is foundational to Christian living.

Scripture:
1 Peter 3:8–17
PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Peter wrote this letter to Christians who were suffering all kinds of trials—slaves suffering at the hands of abusive masters, citizens suffering persecution by an oppressive government, everyday believers suffering slander and mistreatment from those in their community who were hostile to the Christian faith. The primary theme in this epistle is how to deal with suffering—and yet, in the middle of the book, Peter talks about how to simply get along with each other.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Think about what you say.

Teaching point two: Think about what you do.

[Q] Which of the following describes what our motive should be in doing good?

   a. To be rewarded in heaven
   b. To earn favor with God
   c. To earn a place in heaven
   d. To show my joy in what God has done for me

Teaching point three: Think about your attitude toward others.
### Apply Your Findings

Think about what you say. Follow the example of Jesus. Be slow to speak; keep silent if necessary.

Think about what you do. Every day look for the chance to do something for someone else.

Think about your attitude toward others, even those who have offended you. Seek to be at peace with everyone. Try harder than anyone else is willing to try.

If you apply these standards to your life, your standard of living will change. According to God’s promise, he will take notice.
Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

For, "Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from deceitful speech.
He must turn from evil and do good;
he must seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."[a]

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear[b]; do not be frightened."[c] But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, [d] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Footnotes:
  a. 1 Peter 3:12 Psalm 34:12-16
  b. 1 Peter 3:14 Or not fear their threats
  c. 1 Peter 3:14 Isaiah 8:12
Get Ready for a Rough Ride

Things get rough from time and time, but you can prepare yourself for the difficult days ahead.

The apostle Peter tried to prepare us to live boldly in tough times. He wrote this letter to encourage believers to live a life of courage in spite of the hardships they faced, such as poverty, oppression, persecution, slander, abandonment, and loneliness. This study of 1 Peter 4 will help prepare you in advance for the tough times that surely are ahead.

Scripture:
1 Peter 4:1–19
PART 1

**Identify the Current Issue**

From the beginning, Peter makes it clear that we will experience many different kinds of trials. Just as Jesus said, “The rain falls on the just and the unjust”; everyone goes through hard times. It’s inevitable and inescapable. The question is: How will you respond? In 1 Peter 4, he prepares us to answer that question. He begins this chapter, “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose” (v. 1). He’s saying, “Get ready. Jesus suffered. So will you.” Things get rough from time and time—there’s no getting around that—but you can prepare yourself for the difficult days ahead. Peter shows us what we need to do to. Read 1 Peter 4:1–19.

PART 2

**Discover the Eternal Principles**

**Teaching point one: Prepare your mind.**

**Teaching point two: Prepare your soul.**

[Q] What do you spend most of your time praying about?

- a. Forgiveness of sins
- b. Strength to serve
- c. Praise to God
- d. Asking for things
- e. Praying for others
- f. Wisdom and guidance

**Teaching point three: Prepare your heart.**
PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Suffering is inevitable and unavoidable. We must do what we can to prepare. This means that we need to prepare our minds by seeing suffering for what it can accomplish in our lives: “He who has suffered has ceased from sin.” We need to prepare our souls by getting serious about prayer and taking a long, hard look at our spiritual lives. And we need to prepare our hearts by serving one another in love.

You could say it this way: We need to stop judging others and start judging ourselves, and we need to stop serving ourselves and start serving others.
1 Peter 4:1–19

1 Peter: Walk the Talk - Study 6

Living for God

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for Being a Christian

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"[a]

So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Footnotes:

a. 1 Peter 4:18 Prov. 11:31
1 Peter: Walk the Talk - Study 7

**PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE**

**You’re in Good Hands**

*You are in God’s hands.*

We will face hard times, but God promises to make it worth our while. Whatever difficulties this life holds, faithfulness and obedience to God will be rewarded beyond what the hardship costs us. This study looks at why we can trust God with it all.

**Scripture:**

1 Peter 5:5–11
PART 1
Identify the Current Issue

There will be times when the events in your life take an unexpected and unpleasant turn, and you will find yourself exactly where you don’t want to be. Don’t waste time worrying over something that you can certainly get through. The phrase “you can certainly get through” is our trump card. We have an advantage nonbelievers don’t: We have God’s promise to see us through whatever storms life brings our way. Peter closes his letter to suffering Christians with an encouraging word: “You’re in good hands,” he says, “because you’re in God’s hands, and he will not let you go.”

PART 2
Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: God will honor you if you humble yourself.

Teaching point two: God will take care of you.

[Q] Which of the following best describes worry?

a. Lack of faith in God
b. Reasonable response to the stress of life
c. Necessary to be prepared for life
d. Unavoidable since we’re human
Teaching point three: God will restore you.

PART 3
Apply Your Findings

Peter closes this letter with this idea: “My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that the grace of God is with you no matter what happens” (v. 12). Just before this he says, “Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are” (v. 9). When you face hard times—and all of us certainly will—it is easy to think, *I am all alone in this; there is no one to stand with me.* Remember, you are not alone. And no matter what happens, God’s grace is with you. You can endure anything life has to give. You are in good hands. He will honor you. He will take care of you. He will restore your life.
5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."[a]

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Footnotes:
a. 1 Peter 5:5 Prov. 3:34