

1. Introduction to 1 Peter

Opening Remarks: We are blessed to have two letters written by the apostle Peter – a man who walked with the Lord Jesus Christ from the start of His earthly ministry, and who was instrumentally used by Him to start Christ's church. His letters encourage us to hold onto our hope, to persevere through trials, to grow in holiness, to remain true to Christ, and to look forward to His return.

In this study series we will be looking at 1 Peter. The title of our series is "Living Hope". But in this first study, let's appreciate the man Peter and Christ's grace to him.

The Author Peter:

Peter was a fisherman from a town near the Sea of Galilee. How did he meet Jesus? (John 1:35-42)
Peter's brother, Andrew, brought him to Jesus, because Andrew believed through John the Baptist's ministry that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah); ie, God's promised Saviour and anointed King for us.

What did Peter realise about Jesus? (Luke 5:4-11, Mark 5:37-42; Matt 14:25-33, 17:1-8)
Peter realised that Jesus was truly the Christ (the Messiah), the holy and divine One.

Peter's faith in Jesus became strong, even when it was tested. What happened in John 6:66-69?
When Jesus challenged the Twelve about whether they would leave Him too, Peter spoke up and declared that he wouldn't because Jesus had the words of eternal life and that He was the holy one of God (Christ).

What was Peter's response when Jesus asked the disciples about who He was? (Matt 16:13-16)
Peter was the first to speak, and he declared forthrightly that Jesus was the Christ, and God's Son.

What were Jesus' words to Peter when he made his great declaration of faith? (Matt 16:17-19)
Jesus revealed to Peter that his faith in Him was because of the work of the Father (cf. John 6:44-45). Jesus also commissioned Peter to be the leader in His church; which occurred after Christ's ascension.

Peter realised the true identity of Jesus, but did he understand Christ's mission? (Matt 16:21-23)
Like the other disciples, Peter thought that Jesus would be a political leader to free Israel from Roman rule. NB: Even at Christ's ascension, the apostles still didn't understand His true mission (cf. Acts 1:6-8).

What did Peter learn from Jesus during the Last Supper in John 13:5-10?
He was given an object lesson on serving, and a powerful picture of the Christ who cleanses us of sin.

What else did Peter learn as he dined with Jesus? What would Jesus do for him? (Luke 22:31-34)
Despite Peter's boast of being loyal to Jesus unto death, Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times. But Jesus also told Peter that He would pray for him, and that Peter would return and follow Him.

What did Jesus do when Peter denied Him? What impact did this have on Peter? (Luke 22:60-62)
Jesus looked at Peter. This would have made Peter feel so ashamed. No wonder he went out and wept.

After denying Jesus in His time of need, and deserting Jesus as He hung on a cross, what did Peter experience from the Lord after the resurrection? (Mark 16:6-7; Luke 24:32-36)

Jesus specifically revealed Himself to Peter, and in so doing, affirmed His choice and love for Peter.

What question did Jesus ask Peter in John 21:15-19, and what did Jesus urge Peter to do?
Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him, and each time Peter affirmed that he did. Jesus also said "follow me"; the same words He spoke to Peter when He first called him at the beginning.

So what conclusion can we draw about the author of 1 Peter?
We have a Holy Spirit-inspired letter written by a sinner, who really knew Jesus and His love for him.

But Peter was not just a man who had walked with Jesus. What happened in Acts 2:1-4, 14?
God's Spirit came upon Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Christ now lived in him, and he was transformed.

Peter became a great leader in Christ's church. What was Peter's main work? (Gal 2:7-9)
Peter was the apostle to the Jews so that they he might help them come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. However, he was also used by the Lord to reach out to the Gentiles (cf. Cornelius in Acts 10:44-45).

Introduction to 1 Peter:

Let us now consider the letter that Peter wrote. Who did Peter write to? (1 Pet 1:1-2)
Peter wrote to Christians who experienced being foreigners in this fallen world, that is hostile to Christ.

What did Peter want to do through the help of the Holy Spirit? (1 Pet 1:3-9, 2:14-16; 5:12)
He wanted to help us persevere because of our living hope in Christ, to encourage us to grow in holiness, and to help believers stand firm in the truth.

Summary: Peter was saved and transformed by Christ, and was greatly used to help believers.

2. The Work of God: 1 Peter 1:1-2

Review: *Besides being inspired, what makes the letter of 1 Peter so special? (1 Pet 1:1a)*

It was written by Peter who walked and talked with Jesus, and who came to know Him and love Him.

Why did Peter write this letter? (1 Pet 5:12)

He wanted to affirm our living hope in Christ, and to encourage fellow believers to stand firm in it.

Aliens & Strangers: (1 Peter 1:1)

How does Peter describe fellow believers in 1 Pet 1:1? Why?

He describes them as scattered "aliens" or "strangers" or "pilgrims". This is because this fallen world is not our home. We are passing through this land, for our true home is heaven (Phil 3:20).

The Greek words used here to describe believers were used to refer to Jews who had been dispersed (Diaspora) from Judah throughout the world. Why are these words appropriate for Christians? Like dispersed Jews who were strangers in foreign lands, living away from their true home, Christians are living away from their true home. We can relate to them!

What do we learn from John 15:18-19 in regard to Christians being "aliens" and "strangers"?

Jesus taught us that we, His followers, are not of this world. The moment we were saved, we were called out of this fallen world, and became part of God's kingdom in Christ (Col 1:13). Indeed, because we are not of this world, the world will hate us (just as it did Jesus). Consider also Heb 11:8-10, 36-38.

Since we are "aliens" and "strangers" and are hated by this fallen world, how should we live?

Not in a commune! We are to be in this world, being a light in the darkness (Matt 5:13-16; Phil 2:14-16).

In what ways do you feel like an alien or a stranger in the world you live in? [Discuss]

The Work of God: (1 Peter 1:1-2)

We didn't become Christians by inheriting a Christian culture, or by absorbing it through meeting Christians, or by working it out ourselves. How did any of us become a Christian? (1 Pet 1:1-2)

We became Christians through God's doing – it has been His work in us that has enabled us to come to know Jesus and to trust in Him, and thereby be redeemed and be reconciled to God.

In particular, according to 1 Pet 1:1-2, what has the Father done? What does this mean?

He has chosen us to be His children according to His foreknowledge. Before we were born, before the beginning of the world, God chose us to be those who would come to believe in Jesus (Rom 8:29-30).

Hasn't God chosen everyone to be saved and to be His children by faith in Christ? (cf. Eph 1:3-7)

In the New Testament, the term "chosen" is used in connection with those who are "saved". If all are chosen, it means all are saved; ie, that there is universal salvation. But this is not true.

Another question that comes up is this: Why hasn't God chosen everyone? (cf. Rom 9:14-18)

What God has done is up to His will. We are not in a place to question Him. Instead, if we are saved, we ought to be so humble and thankful that God chose us and saved us in Christ.

In order for God's choice of us to be effective, and for it to result in salvation, what else has happened in our life? (Consider the Spirit's work mentioned in 1 Pet 1:2)

The sanctifying work of the Spirit has enabled us to come to Jesus. This "sanctifying work" is not the work the Spirit does to make us more like Jesus after we are saved. It's the work He does to convict us of our sin and our lack of righteousness and the coming judgment (John 16:8-11), and our need for Jesus. His sanctifying work "sets us apart" in the sense of calling us out of this world to become God's child.

Through the Father's choice and the sanctifying work of the Spirit, what happens next? (1 Pet 1:2)

We come to obey Jesus and to be cleansed of our sins by His blood; or, put another way, we come to embrace Jesus as our Saviour from sin, and as the Lord we now obey. This is genuine conversion.

Jesus affirmed that it is God's work that enables us to put our faith in Him and be saved. What do we learn from Jesus' words in John 6:37-39, 6:44-45, & 6:65?

The Father is the One who grants us the privilege of coming to know Jesus, and by His Spirit, draws us and brings us to Christ. Without this, we would never be able to believe and trust in Jesus.

Are you able to testify of God's work to bring you to true faith and obedience in Christ? [Discuss]

In what way is the blessing at the end of v.2 true for all genuine Christians? [Discuss]

Summary: God's work in us saves us; and once saved, we obey Christ and live as aliens in this world.

3. Our Living Hope: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Review: *What has God done to enable us to put our faith in Jesus? (1 Pet 1:1-2)*

Firstly, God has chosen us for salvation, and secondly, God's Spirit has enabled us to trust in Christ.

What results from God's work in our life? (1 Pet 1:2b)

It results in us coming under Christ and obeying Him, and turning to Jesus to rescue us from our sins.

Mercy and Hope: (1 Peter 1:3-5)

After greeting his readers (vv. 1-2), what does Peter do next before anything else? (1 Pet 1:3a)

He praises and worships God – it is Peter's foremost thought. Is the worship of God foremost for us too?

In 1 Pet 1:3a, why is the Father of Jesus called the God of Jesus? (cf. John 20:17; 1 Cor 11:3)

Even though Jesus is God (John 1:1), He comes under the Father. He has and will always submit Himself to the Father, even in eternity (cf. 1 Cor 15:27-28).

What does Peter particularly praise God for? (1 Pet 1:3)

Peter praises God for His great mercy. It is God's mercy to us sinners that has brought about our salvation in Christ; ie, to be born again and to have a living hope (cf. the mention of mercy in Tit 3:4-5).

What does it mean to be "born again"? Is it something we do? (John 3:3)

It's not something we do, but something that happens to us. The moment we receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we're born again by God's Spirit coming to live in us (cf. 2 Cor 5:17).

What is our hope and why is it described as a "living hope" in 1 Pet 1:3?

Our hope is to inherit eternal life; to be with God and live forever in His glorious presence. This hope is alive and real, as well as sure and certain. In that sense, it is not a "dead hope", but a "living" hope.

What one event has enabled us to be born again and to have a living (sure) hope? (1 Pet 1:3)

It has been Christ's resurrection. The resurrection confirmed that Jesus' death did accomplish justification for us before the holy God (Rom 4:25), and it paved the way for the coming of the Spirit (John 16:7).

How is our "living hope" in v.3 described further in v.4?

Our "living" hope involves us receiving an eternal inheritance in glory that is permanent and perfect. This inheritance will never be lost. It is being kept for us (cf. John 14:2-3).

Not only is our inheritance kept for us, what else is being kept? Why? (1 Pet 1:5)

We are being kept by God's power so that we may enjoy the inheritance God has prepared for us.

Consider the following verses: John 6:39-40; 10:27-30. Can we be sure of our salvation?

Absolutely! If we have been born again, then God assures us of our salvation. Christ will make sure of it.

Why are many people not completely sure that they will make it to heaven? [Discuss]

Many believe we get to heaven by being good, but they are not sure if they have been good enough, etc.

When will our inheritance be fully realised? (1 Pet 1:5)

It will only be fully realised "in the last time"; ie, when Christ returns and establishes the new heaven and new earth (cf. Rev 21:1-5). Then we will dwell in God's city with our new bodies.

Trials and Faith: (1 Peter 1:6-9)

What's so important about knowing how sure and certain our salvation is? (1 Pet 1:6-9)

It enables us to greatly rejoice, even if we have to endure trials and hardships (cf. Acts 16:23-25).

Why doesn't God keep us from trials? (1 Pet 1:7)

God uses trials for two reasons - to purify our faith and to show us whether it is genuine.

Like fire purifies gold in a furnace, so trials purify our faith. How?

Trials cause us to trust in God rather than to trust in ourselves or other things. God wants us to trust Him.

Discuss: "Muscles are built through exercise; trust in God is built through trials."

If we would allow trials to grow our faith, what will it result in one day? Why? (1 Pet 1:7)

It will result in honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as well as Christ's commendation in Matt 25:21.

While we undergo trials, and though we haven't seen the Lord yet, what must we do? (1 Pet 1:8-9)

We must continue to love Jesus and believe in Him, knowing that our living hope is real and awaits us.

Summary: By God's great mercy and Christ's resurrection, we rejoice in a living hope, despite trials.

4. God's Salvation and Our Holiness: 1 Peter 1:10-16

Review: *Why is the Christian hope of glory called a "living" hope? (1 Pet 1:3-4)*

Our hope is "living" (or vibrant and alive), because it is based on the resurrected Christ who ever lives.

Why does God allow us to undergo trials? (1 Pet 1:6-7)

Trials cause our faith to be refined so that we might trust God more, and walk by faith and not by sight.

God's Salvation: (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Besides calling God's people to repent, what else were the prophets of old doing? (1 Pet 1:10-12)

They were prophesying about God's salvation for us through His Son Jesus Christ.

We are told that the prophets were keen to understand the things that God was revealing to them about this salvation. Even angels longed to look into these things. Why? (1 Pet 1:10-12)

The prophecies in the Old Testament about God's salvation in Christ was the pinnacle of all His works; the pinnacle of His wisdom and power (1 Cor 1:24-25), of His justice and grace (Rom 3:23-26).

Who enabled the prophets to pen for us the details of God's salvation in Christ? (1 Pet 1:11)

It was the Spirit of Christ, ie, God's Spirit (Rom 8:9), that enabled the prophets to write (2 Pet 1:20-21).

What was the Holy Spirit especially revealing (which is the heart of the Gospel)? (1 Pet 1:11)

He was revealing the "sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow"; ie, He was revealing Christ's atoning death for us sinners, and His glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven (cf. Phil 2:9-11).

What Old Testament passages clearly reveal Christ's sufferings and glories? [read one of them]

Some of the clearest Old Testament passages would be Psalm 22 and Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

What striking parallels exist between 1 Pet 1:11 and Luke 24:25-27?

Jesus said to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that the prophets of old predicted the sufferings of Christ and His glories; precisely what Peter declares here at the end of 1 Pet 1:11.

Paul referred to the Gospel being a mystery (cf. Col 1:25-27; Eph 3:1-5). Why? (1 Pet 1:10-12)

As we see in vv.10-12, the prophets weren't quite sure about who the Spirit was speaking of, and what all the details meant. But now, through Jesus and His apostles, the mystery of the Gospel has been revealed.

How should a Christian view the Old Testament Scriptures?

Even though the Old Testament Scriptures were written for God's people back then, they were also written for us. Indeed, we have seen their fulfilment, for they were pointing us to Christ and God's salvation.

How should 1 Pet 1:10-12 affect our view of God's salvation and our glorious hope? [discuss]

We should be even more delighted and more sure of our salvation – it's not only a "living hope" because of Christ's resurrection (v.1), but it's a sure hope that has been revealed by God through His prophets of old.

What parallel exists between 1 Pet 1:11 and 1 Pet 1:6-9?

Just as Jesus suffered and then was glorified, His followers experience the same thing to some degree. We will suffer trials here in this fallen world, but then we will be glorified at the revelation of Christ.

Our Holiness: (1 Peter 1:13-16)

Why should we live like it says in 1 Pet 1:13-16? (cf. what we have considered in 1 Pet 1:3-12)

We should be living like this, because of how certain our salvation and hope are in Christ.

Why are the instructions in 1 Pet 1:13 absolutely appropriate for us who live in this world?

In this world, we will be distracted to live for temporal things, and we will be deceived to live for ourselves, and to follow our own passions and desires. Therefore, we need to be prepared for action; to fight distractions and deceptions, to be controlled by the Spirit, and to keep looking forward to our hope.

In 1 Pet 1:14-16, how are we to live now?

We are no longer to live like we used to, indulging the desires of the flesh (cf. Eph 2:1-3). This is how people in the world may live, but we are to be obedient children of God, living a holy life.

Why should we be obedient to God now, according to 1 Pet 1:2-3?

God's choice of us and the work of His Spirit in our lives has caused us to come to Christ and to receive Him as our Lord and Saviour. As our Lord, and as a result of being born again, we ought to obey God.

The call to "be holy for I am holy" is found in Lev 11:45. Why should we be holy?

Just as God rescued Israel and called them to be holy, we ought to be holy because of our great salvation.

Summary: God has saved us mightily through Christ; in response we ought to be holy as He is holy.

5. **Reasons for Holiness: 1 Peter 1:17-25**

Review: *How should 1 Pet 1:10-12 affect our view of God's salvation and our glorious hope? [discuss]*
Not only do we have a "living hope" because of Christ's resurrection (v.1), but we have a "sure hope", for our salvation was made known by the prophets of old (cf. 2 Pet 1:19), and confirmed by God's Spirit.

We are commanded "to be holy". Why is it so fitting that we live a holy life? (1 Pet 1:14-16)

In the light of our glorious salvation and hope, we ought to live a holy life in order to please the Lord. We ought to live a holy life, to reflect God's glorious character to the world, so that He might be praised.

Holiness from Reverence and Redemption: (1 Peter 1:17-21)

In 1 Pet 1:17, how should we conduct ourselves here on earth? What does this mean?

We ought to conduct ourselves in fear; that is, we should revere and respect God by living a holy life.

Why should we live our life in reverence (in fear) of God? (1 Pet 1:17; cf. also Heb 12:25-29)

Though God be our Father through the reconciliation we have through Christ, He still is the awesome and majestic God, who does (and will) impartially judge all people. He struck down Ananias and Sapphira because of unholiness (cf. Acts 5:10-11), and on Judgment Day, even though our sins have already been judged and dealt with through Christ (Rom 3:23-26), we still will give an account of our life (2 Cor 5:10).

What other reason is given as to why we should live in the fear of the Lord? (1 Pet 1:18-19)

When we think of the incredible cost that Christ paid and the sacrifice He made to redeem us, we ought to fear the Lord and live a holy life to please Him. It's unthinkable that we should continue in sin.

In 1 Pet 1:18 we reminded of the "futile way of life" handed down to us. Why? (cf. Eph 2:1-3)

When we remember our former "futile way of life", it makes us so thankful and appreciative of our redemption in Christ. We inherited a life where we were spiritually dead, without God, without hope, and on the broad road to destruction. Praise God that in His great mercy He has redeemed us.

How were we redeemed according to v.19?

Christ's "precious blood" was shed for us – the blood of the eternal Son who became a man. Christ was "unblemished and spotless", but He took on our sin and stood condemned to save us (2 Cor 5:21).

How should we respond to the Father's love and Christ shedding His precious blood for us?

We should seek to live a holy life and be filled with endless worship of Him.

What does 1 Pet 1:20 indicate about Christ and His sacrifice for us?

God had planned our redemption before the foundation of the world. He knew we would fall into sin, yet He still made us, and planned to save us, by sending His Son in these last days (cf. Gal 4:4).

Besides redemption, what else has Christ's life accomplished? (1 Pet 1:21)

Christ's life and teaching, His death and resurrection, have enabled us to understand God's gracious and eternal plan to save us in Christ, and for us to put our faith and hope in God. Through Christ we believe!

Holiness from Rebirth and the Revealed Word: (1 Peter 1:22-25)

What should a holy life look like according to 1 Pet 1:22?

We should be obedient children (cf. 1 Pet 1:2, 14), purifying our souls from worldly and sinful desires, and having a sincere and deep love for all; especially toward those who believe (cf. John 13:34-35).

We ought to live a holy life in the fear of the Lord and because of the cost of our redemption.

What's another key reason why we should live a holy life according to 1 Pet 1:23a?

We have been born again by God's Spirit (cf. 1 Pet 1:3, John 3:3). We were once only born of corrupt human seed, but now we have been born of holy divine seed through faith in Christ (cf. John 1:12-13). Because of this, we have been enabled to live a holy life, because God's holy nature now lives in us.

What has enabled us to be born again? (1 Pet 1:23)

We were born again through God's living & enduring Word; it has enabled us to trust in God and believe in Christ, leading to our re-birth. Without this we cannot be saved and be born again (cf. Rom 10:14-17).

How is God's Word that was preached to us described in 1 Pet 1:23-25? (Isa 40:6-8; Matt 24:35).

The Word of God is unlike the temporary things of this earth. It's living and it endures forever, for it is God's unchanging truth. Therefore, every word and every promise is true, and thus our hope is sure!

Summary: Since we have been redeemed by Christ's precious blood, let us seek to live a holy life.

6. A Holy House and a Holy People: 1 Peter 2:1-10

Review: *What two reasons are given in 1 Pet 1:17-19 as to why we should live in the fear of the Lord?* We should fear (revere) the Lord, for our Father is the One we are accountable to (the "impartial judge"), and also because of what He has done to save us through His Son. We have been saved at great cost!

How is the Word of God described in 1 Pet 1:23-25? What has the Word accomplished in us? The Word of God is described as being living and enduring. It is eternal. By God's Word (that was preached to us) we have come to believe in God and in His Son Jesus, and have been born again.

Holy Food: (1 Peter 2:1-3)

We have already seen that being holy requires us to live in the fear of the Lord (1 Pet 1:17), and to love one another from the heart (1 Pet 1:22). What else does a holy life look like? (1 Pet 2:1) It means no longer using our tongue for evil, but for good; and not being deceitful in heart, but honest.

In order to live out 1 Pet 2:1, and grow in holiness, what must we do? (1 Pet 2:2) We must thirst and long for God's holy Word, like newborn babies craving milk so that they can grow.

What can we learn from babies in regard to the way we should take in God's holy "milk"? Babies crave milk multiple times a day; otherwise, they will not grow. We also are to take in God's Word daily, and multiple times daily (cf. Psa 1:1-3). Without it, we will not grow, and we may even die.

According to 1 Pet 1:3, why should we have a desire to crave God's holy Word? Since we have tasted of the Lord's kindness, we should want to know God more - through His word.

Holy House: (1 Peter 2:4-8)

Read 1 Pet 2:4-5. What are Christians being built up into? What are we called? Christians are being built into a temple; not a physical temple, but a spiritual one. In this spiritual house, we are like "living stones" making up this temple - not dead physical stones, but living spiritual stones.

As we consider this spiritual house, who is Jesus and who are we? (1 Peter 2:4-6) We are both called living stones, but Jesus is not just a "living stone"; He imparts life to make us "dead stones" spiritually alive. He is also the cornerstone, on whom we are to build, and line ourselves up with.

In this spiritual house, how are we meant to be serving? What does this mean? (1 Pet 2:5) We are meant to be serving as priests, ministering God's holiness to others, ministering to God through praise and service, and ministering God to others - in the name of our great high priest, the Lord Jesus.

Some church leaders are called priests. According to 1 Pet 2:5, who should we call a "priest"? Every believer is not just a "living stone", but part of God's priesthood. We are all priests and have the opportunity to minister; not just some. From this comes the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

Read 1 Pet 2:6. What is the benefit of believing in Jesus and coming to Him - the cornerstone? We will never be disappointed or disturbed (Isa 28:16); we have in Christ a living hope (1 Pet 1:3), great joy (1 Pet 1:8-9), and a glorious purpose in being God's priests (1 Pet 2:5).

In 1 Pet 2:7-8, what do we learn about those who do not believe in Jesus? They don't just "not believe" in Jesus; they reject Him. One day they will face the worst doom of all.

Why do people reject Jesus according to 1 Pet 2:7-8? (cf. also 1 Cor 1:22-24) They reject Jesus because they take offense at Him. Jews don't accept a weak crucified Messiah, and Gentiles reject the message of Jesus as foolishness; but Jesus is the power, wisdom and salvation of God.

Although many reject Jesus, how does God the Father and how should we view Him? (1 Pet 2:4,7) In God's sight and in our sight, Jesus is choice and precious. He is to be our chief joy and delight.

Holy People: (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Through coming to Jesus what have we now become? (1 Pet 2:9-10) We, who were once in darkness and without mercy, and who were lost and far from God, have become God's holy and treasured people. We have become, through faith in Christ, the most blessed people of all.

How should we feel about what we have become? What should we be doing, as a result? We should be so overjoyed. We ought to be proclaiming God's praises and excellencies to the world.

How can we practically declare God's excellencies and glorious character? We can proclaim this through His Gospel of grace; we can declare His light and His mercy to us.

Summary: As God's holy people in a holy house, may we declare His glory and His Gospel to all.

7. Holy Behaviour: 1 Peter 2:11-20

Review: *What are we growing (or being built) into? What for? (1 Pet 2:4-5)*

God is growing us into a holy spiritual house, where we serve as priests for God.

What have we become through faith in Christ, and what are we to do? (1 Pet 2:9-10)

We once were not a people, but now we have become God's holy and treasured people. We are now to declare His excellencies, especially in the light of what He has done for us through His great mercy.

Holy Behaviour for God's Glory (1 Peter 2:11-12)

What does Peter remind fellow believers of in 1 Peter 2:11a (cf. 1 Pet 1:1)? Why?

Peter reminds us that we are aliens and strangers; ie, we have been brought out of this fallen world, into Christ's kingdom (Col 1:13-14). But this reality should show itself in the way we live. As aliens and strangers here on earth, we ought to live holy lives in the midst of unholy people.

Consider 1 Pet 2:11-12. As aliens, and as God's holy people, what two enemies do we battle?

Inwardly, we battle against fleshly lusts which wage war against our soul. Outwardly, we battle against unbelievers who slander us as evildoers. Both enemies want us to become unholy; ie, to be like the world.

In the light of the enemies we face in this fallen world, what does Peter urge us to do? (vv. 11-12)

Peter urges us to abstain from fleshly lusts; ie, to fight them and deny them. He urges us to keep our behaviour excellent, even if we are wrongfully slandered. We are to return good for evil (cf. 1 Pet 3:8-9).

Why should we put effort into fighting our lusts, behaving rightly and doing good to others? (v.12)

We glorify God now (cf. Matt 5:16), and when Jesus returns, God will be glorified through us.

Holy Behaviour in Society (1 Peter 2:13-17)

As God's holy people, how are we commanded to live? (1 Pet 2:13-14) How is this challenging?

We are to submit to governing authorities. This is a challenge - we often despise or dishonour authorities, or ignore authorities if we think we can get away with it. But we are required to submit (cf. Rom 13:1-2).

Are we to submit to governing authorities always? [Discuss]

Yes, unless the governing authorities declare something contrary to God's law.

What reasons are given in 1 Pet 2:13-15 for submission to human authorities?

We submit for the Lord's sake (v.13), to uphold justice (v.14), and to silence those who condemn (v.15).

Read 1 Pet 2:16-17. Christians have been set free from the law (Gal 5:1). What's the BUT?

We are to use our freedom to serve God, rather than to do evil. In particular, we are to honour all people, love our brothers and sisters, fear God and honour (ie, submit to) rulers. This is God's law for us in Christ.

Holy Behaviour at Work (1 Peter 2:18-20)

Read 1 Pet 2:18-20. How does this passage mirror the commands seen in 1 Pet 2:13-17?

Servants must submit to their masters, giving them faithful service and respect, just as we are to submit to governing authorities who rule over us politically.

How is a Christian servant to serve their master, if they are ill-treated? (1 Pet 2:18-20)

They are to keep a good conscience (eg, they are not to have a bad attitude towards their master, or justify not working well for their master), and they are to suffer patiently (cf. Col 3:22-25).

What key reason is given for servants submitting to masters, even if they should suffer unfairly?

We please God when we serve our masters well, and particularly when we suffer ill-treatment.

How should we apply God's Word in 1 Pet 2:18-20 to our modern workplaces?

Even though modern-day employees are not like servants (slaves) in the New Testament who had no rights, we are still under the authority of a boss, and should act faithfully, even if we are treated unfairly.

In the Bible, which great believers can you think of, who in the fear of God, lived out this model of patient, faithful, enduring submission? What did God achieve through them? [Discuss]

Some examples include Joseph in Egypt, David with Saul, Daniel in Exile, and even Jesus with the ruling authorities. Their submission led to God's will being accomplished and God being glorified.

What will our submission to governing authorities and bosses accomplish?

We will silence critics, commend the Gospel to others, please God, and bring glory to His name.

Summary: Let us behave well before God and man. This commends the Gospel and glorifies God.

8. Christ our Holy Example and Saviour: 1 Peter 2:21-25

Review: *What are our enemies to holy living, and what does Peter urge us to do? (1 Pet 2:11-12)*

Our enemies are our fleshly lusts (ie, our sinful nature) and non-believers who slander us. Peter urges us to abstain from fleshly lusts, and to keep our behaviour excellent, even if we are wrongfully slandered.

As God's holy people, how are we commanded to live in 1 Peter 2:13-20? Why?

We are to submit to governing authorities, and to our masters (bosses). We are to do this, even if we face unfair treatment, so that we might please God and glorify Him and commend the Gospel to others.

Our Holy Example (1 Peter 2:21-23)

In 1 Pet 2:18-20 Peter urges servants to submit to their masters, even if they should suffer unjustly at the hands of their masters. What example does Peter then give? Why?(1 Pet 2:21)

Peter gives the example of Jesus. No one suffered more unjustly than He, and yet He patiently endured it.

What word does Peter use in relation to Christians and suffering in v.21? (cf. Phil 1:29-30)

We have been "called" to suffer (in Phil 1:29-30, "granted" to suffer; ie, God has ordained it).

Why has God "called" us and ordained us to suffer? (cf. 1 Pet 1:6-7; 2:12)

God has "called" us to suffer various trials so that we might grow in faith, and also, glorify God. His glory is best seen when we depend on Jesus during our trials and shine Jesus (cf. 2 Cor 12:9) .

Since we have been called to suffer, how should we view suffering? (cf. Acts 5:41, Col 1:24)

We should consider it a privilege to suffer for Christ, even if it is unjust, for God has appointed us to bear suffering for Christ's name. What a different attitude we should have to suffering, compared to others!

We may suffer unjustly, but how unjust was Christ's suffering? (1 Pet 2:21-22)

Jesus was the only sinless man, full of goodness and grace. Besides, He is God's Son, our loving Creator and King. So, when He was slandered as the "prince of demons" by the religious leaders, and was rejected by the Jews, and was crucified by the Romans, he surely suffered the greatest injustices of all.

The pinnacle of Christ's unjust suffering is seen at the cross. Why was it so unjust?

He didn't deserve to be on a cross like those criminals either side of Him. He didn't deserve to be taken, while a murderer named Barabbas went free. He had done no wrong. But above all, the punishment of our sins fell upon Him (Isa 53:6). He who knew no sin became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21).

As Jesus suffered unjustly to save us, He also set an example. How should we suffer? (1 Pet 2:23)

We should suffer, even unjustly, by holding our tongue and temper, and trusting our Father in heaven to deal with our injustices in His time. This is the way of Christ, and it's to be our way as we follow Him.

Why is it hard to follow Jesus' example when we suffer unjustly? What must we do?

It's hard because every fibre in our body wants to plead our justice and to proclaim our innocence. We can only follow Jesus' example if we have His Spirit ruling us and helping us see things from God's perspective. Only then can we be like Jesus and pray like Jesus; ie, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34).

Our Holy Saviour (1 Peter 2:24-25)

Jesus didn't just suffer to set us an example. What does Peter remind us of in 1 Pet 2:24?

Jesus bore our sins on the cross to save us; so that we might be made righteous and be healed spiritually.

What does it mean that "we might die to sin and live to righteousness"? (1 Pet 2:24)

Through Jesus we have died to sin; ie, sin can't harm us anymore. We have been set free from sin to now live for righteousness, out of love for God (cf. Rom 6:1-4).

Compare Isa 53:5-6 with 1 Pet 2:24-25. What striking links do you find between these verses?

Both passages speak about us straying like sheep (due to our sin), and of having our sins placed on Jesus, and of Jesus being wounded (ie, being put to death) so that we could be healed. How remarkable!

What does "by His wounds you were healed" mean?

At the cross Jesus was "wounded"; that is, He died. But He also rose again. In that sense He was wounded. But by being wounded for us, He healed us. He set us free from Satan, He saved us from our sins, and spared us from eternal punishment. One day, we will even have a new body. What a "healing"!

We were straying sheep, but who has Jesus become to us, if we have turned to Him? (1 Pet 2:25)

He is our Shepherd, who laid down His life to save us (John 10:11) and to lead us. He is our Guardian, who protects us until we're in glory (cf. 1 Pet 1:5). What a Saviour! He fulfills Psalm 23 and Psalm 121.

Summary: Christ is both our Saviour and our example; may we trust in Him and follow Him.

9. Holy Living in Marriage: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Review: *In 1 Pet 1:3 and 1 Pet 2:9-10 what have Christians been blessed with through God's mercy?*
We have been blessed with a living hope (1:3), and blessed to be God's dear people (2:9-10).

How should we be living as God's people (1 Pet 1:14-16)? Why (cf. 1 Pet 2:12; 2:20)?

We should be living holy lives, just as He is holy, so that God is glorified (2:12) and pleased (2:20).

Who is our example in living a holy life? In particular, what example has He set for us? (2:21-23)

The Lord Jesus is our highest and perfect example of how to be holy; including when we suffer unjustly. Like Him, we are to maintain holiness and entrust ourselves to our Father who judges justly.

Holy Wives (1 Peter 3:1-6)

In 1 Pet 3:1, what are Christian wives commanded to do? According to Eph 5:22-23 why is this?

Christian wives are to submit to their husbands. That's because the husband is the head (cf. 1 Cor 11:3).

Recall: Submission has been connected to holy living in 1 Peter 1 & 2. Where have we seen it?

1 Pet 1:2 – submission (obedience) to Christ; 1 Pet 2:13 – submission to governing authorities; 1 Pet 2:18 – submission to masters; 1 Pet 2:23 – Jesus' submission to His Father.

Why should a wife submit to her husband if he's disobedient to God or a nonbeliever? (1 Pet 3:1)

Even if a Christian wife is married to a nonbeliever, or to a believer who has backslidden, she is still to submit to him. Such behaviour God can use to bring them to Christ (rather than her arguing with him).

What does it look like for a Christian wife to submit to her husband? (1 Pet 3:1-2; Eph 5:33)

She shows respect (reverence) for her husband, and does not undermine his authority. She also controls her tongue, her temper and her thirsts (passions), so that her behaviour is chaste (pure).

What other things are to mark the life of a holy wife? (1 Pet 3:3-4; 1 Tim 2:9-10)

Her beauty is not to just be outward. She is to develop an inner beauty, which consists of having a gentle and quiet spirit; ie, she shows herself to be Christ-like through the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

How does God view a wife with "inner beauty"? (1 Pet 3:4) What lesson is here for husbands?

God considers a wife with inner beauty to be precious (of great worth) in His sight. Husbands, likewise, should consider Christ-like inner beauty to be more precious than physical beauty (cf. Pro 31:10, 30).

What is the connection between a "gentle and quiet spirit" and submission?

A wife cannot be submissive if she is contentious (cf. Pro 21:9; 21:19; 27:15-16).

Read 1 Pet 3:5-6. What should wives do as they seek to be holy? (cf. also Tit 2:3-5)

They should consider the godly and holy behaviour of those wives in the Bible who are commended for their behaviour; eg, Sarah. Young wives should also look to older godly wives and learn from them.

Why is there a warning at the end of 1 Pet 3:6 for wives not to be "frightened by any fear"?

Fear can stop a wife submitting to her husband, and therefore disobeying the Lord; eg, the fear of not being able to do what she wants because of submission, or the fear of her husband ruthlessly ruling her if she submits to him. In our society, there is the fear of other women mocking you if you should submit.

Holy Husbands (1 Peter 3:7)

In 1 Pet 3:7 we have godly instructions on how husbands are to be? What are the key things?

A husband is to be considerate of his wife (be understanding of her), and he is to honour/respect her.

At the start of this verse it says "in the same way". What does this refer to?

Husbands are also to be submissive; not in the sense of coming under their wife, as if she is the head. Instead, he is to submit to her in the sense of loving her and serving her (cf. Eph 5:25).

What does it mean for a husband to be "considerate" of his wife? (1 Pet 3:7)

It means a husband lives in an understanding way, in a gentle and caring way, with his wife. She is generally more "frail" than he, in that she is more emotionally vulnerable.

A wife is to honour her husband (Eph 5:33). Why is a husband to honour his wife? (1 Pet 3:7)

A wife is a fellow heir of the grace of life. She is a sister in Christ, a child of God. Therefore, she is to be honoured by her husband. There is no place for a husband to belittle or treat his wife with contempt.

Why should a husband be considerate to his wife and honour her? (1 Pet 3:7)

If he doesn't, then God will not hear his prayers; that's because he is sinning, besides not being holy.

Summary: We are to live holy lives in marriage for God's glory and for the benefit of each other.

10. The Blessings of Holy Living: 1 Peter 3:8-16

Review: *What behaviour should characterise a holy wife? Why? (1 Pet 3:1-6)*

They should be submissive to their husbands, chaste (pure) and respectful, and bear the inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. This pleases God, and it also helps to win a non-believing husband to Christ.

What behaviour should characterise a holy husband? Why? (1 Pet 3:7)

They should treat their wives with consideration, as well as with honour for she is a fellow heir of God's grace. Otherwise, God is not pleased, and He will not hear and answer their prayers.

Blessed to be a Blessing (1 Peter 3:8-12)

From 1 Pet 1:13 through to 1 Pet 3:7, the apostle Peter has encouraged believers to be holy in response to God's great mercy in Christ. He sums up holy living in 1 Pet 3:8-9. What is emphasised?

We are to be peaceable (harmonious), loving (sympathetic, brotherly and compassionate), and humble. We are also to bless others, even if others should do evil to us, or insult us or curse us (cf. Rom 12:14).

Jesus taught this same behaviour in the Sermon on the Mount. Read & discuss Matt 5:3-9, 38-42.

Jesus taught us to be humble (poor in spirit), loving (gentle and merciful), and peaceable, as well as to be holy and gracious (eg, turning the other cheek). He taught holy living for His followers.

Another way to put it is this: we are to be a blessing to others. Why should we be?

Because we have been so blessed by God, we are in a position to bless others, even if they should seek to injure us or insult us. Like Abraham, we have been blessed to be a blessing (Gen 12:1-3).

We have been "called" to bless others. As we do this, what will that ensure? (1 Pet 3:9b)

It will ensure that we will be blessed of God; not in regard to salvation (we already have this awesome blessing in Christ), but in regard to God's blessings on our life here on earth (eg, having peace, joy, etc).

In 1 Pet 3:10-12, Peter quotes Psalm 34:12-16. Why does Peter quote this psalm?

It is a fitting psalm that highlights the way God will bless our life here on earth if we walk in His holy ways and bless others. Such blessings include enjoying God's goodness and having prayer answered.

Blessing Others (1 Peter 3:13-16)

We may feel vulnerable when we bless those who insult us. But what may come of it? (1 Pet 3:13)

As we do good and bless others, often this results in others respecting us and not harming us. [Discuss]

Despite blessing others, there is always the possibility of suffering unjustly at their hands. Jesus experienced this more than any one. In such a case, what are we to remember? (1 Pet 3:14; Matt 5:10-12)

We are to remember how blessed we are. Nonbelievers will perish, but we have a great reward awaiting us.

What truly great blessing can result when we don't fear their intimidations, or allow our hearts to be troubled by their insults, but live holy lives, blessing those about us? (1 Pet 3:14-15)

There is a great possibility that nonbelievers will see the reality of Christ in us and enquire about our hope in Christ; in other words, it will lead to us having an opportunity to share the Gospel. Amen!

In contrast, if we react and retaliate toward people who insult us, what will that do? [Discuss]

It will not lead to us having an opportunity to share the Gospel. Even if we should try and share the Gospel, others will dismiss it, for our lives don't reflect what we preach. We may even be called a hypocrite.

Peter mentions a very important phrase that is the key to holy living in 1 Pet 3:15a. What is it?

We are to sanctify (set apart) Christ as Lord; that is, in the midst of intimidation and trouble, and insult and harm, we are to let Christ rule us by His Spirit - especially in our heart, the seat of our emotions.

What should we be ready to do at all times? (cf. also 2 Tim 4:1-2)

We should be ready to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus; ie, prepared to give an answer in regard to the one we love and follow – even Jesus. How ready are you?

What attitude should we have toward others when we share the Gospel? Why? (1 Pet 3:15b)

We should share the Gospel gently and respectfully; even if the other person is hostile. Gentleness and respect will open doors and soften hearts, but if we are rough and rude, we will drive people away. Our manner in approaching non-Christians is most important – we are to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15).

In 1 Pet 3:16, what may happen to nonbelievers when we live holy lives? Why is this good?

They will be shamed by their ungodly behaviour, and this may open the door for them to hear of Jesus.

Summary: As we live holy lives and God blesses us, we are to bless others. Blessed to be a blessing.

11. The Blessings of Christ's Holy Life: 1 Peter 3:17-22

Review: *In 1 Pet 3:15 we have the key to holy living. What is it? What can it result in?*

We are to sanctify (set apart) Christ as Lord; that is, we are to let Christ rule our heart by His Spirit. As we do, it can lead to people seeing that we are different, and enquiring about our hope in Christ.

How are we to share the Gospel with non-believers? Why is this important? (1 Pet 3:15b)

We should share the Gospel gently and respectfully; even if the other person is hostile. Gentleness and respect will open doors; not roughness and rudeness. Remember, God won us by His love (cf. Rom 2:4).

The Blessing of Christ's Death (1 Peter 3:17-18a)

Christians may suffer, but what kind of suffering is not good? (1 Pet 3:17)

It's not good to suffer for doing wrong. Only suffering for doing what is right pleases God (1 Pet 2:20).

Who is Peter mindful as he considers Christians suffering for doing what is right? (1 Pet 3:18)

He is mindful of Christ (cf. 1 Pet 2:21-23). Christ was pure and holy, just and righteous in all His life, and though His suffering was so unfair and unjust, yet He pleased God and made salvation possible for us.

What does it mean that Jesus "died for sins once for all"? (cf. also Heb 7:26-27)

It highlights how powerful and effective Christ's atoning death for us was. Unlike the many animal sacrifices in the Old Testament that needed to be offered daily to atone for sin, Jesus' one death has atoned for our sins, and not only our sins, but for the sins of all (cf. 1 John 2:1-2). Hallelujah!

What is meant by the phrase "the just for the unjust"? (1 Pet 3:18; cf. also 2 Cor 5:21)

Jesus, the only just and perfect One, died for the unjust; ie, us sinners who stand guilty before God.

What is the great purpose of the cross according to 1 Pet 3:18?

Christ has brought us to God; He has reconciled us to God so that we can be in right relationship with Him. That's why our sins had to be dealt with and atoned for, otherwise we could not be in relationship.

The Blessings of Salvation (1 Peter 3:18b-22)

We have some difficult verses in this section. What do you think 1 Pet 3:18b-19 is describing?

Peter is describing Jesus' state after His death but before His glorious resurrection. When Jesus physically died, His spirit was still alive (just as ours is too). While His body was in the tomb, His spirit went to the abode of the dead (Hades in the Greek, Sheol in the Hebrew), just like everyone's spirit did.

What does it appear Jesus did when He was in Hades? (1 Pet 3:19)

He preached to the spirits; ie, spirits of dead people in Hades. We are not sure what He preached, but we can be certain that people were not being given a chance to be saved. We can only be saved through faith in this life; ie, before we die. That's why the Bible declares "today is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:1-2).

What does the phrase "spirits now in prison" in 1 Pet 3:19 mean? (this may be a bit tricky!)

In Hades, Jesus preached to two groups of people – those who had believed in God during their lifetime and who would ascend with Him to glory when He was raised from the dead (cf. Matt 27:52-53; Eph 4:8), and those who would remain in Hades awaiting judgment; this group, were, in a sense, in a prison.

What is 1 Pet 3:20 about? (give it your best shot!)

Some of those in Hades included the spirits of dead people from Noah's time. They serve as an example of those who would remain in Hades after Christ's resurrection. Despite God's patience and Him calling them to repentance, most chose not to. That's why they would remain in Hades (in prison awaiting judgment).

Peter mentions the "days of Noah" for another reason too. What is that? (cf. 1 Pet 3:20-21)

Not everyone perished in Noah's day. Noah's family was saved because they trusted God and entered the ark. Peter uses this story as a picture of our salvation in Christ. Like Noah, we also have been saved from destruction by trusting God and being in Christ. Christ is like our "ark"; in Him we are safe (Rom 8:1).

Is 1 Pet 3:21 saying that we must be baptised to be saved? (cf. Acts 16:30-31)

No! We are saved through "an appeal to God for a good conscience"; ie, asking God for cleansing and forgiveness through Christ. Peter is using the term baptism in the sense of being cleansed through Christ.

Read 1 Pet 3:21b-22. What does Peter want to remind us of concerning Jesus?

Jesus didn't just die for us and preach to spirits in Hades, He also rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and is now above all rule and power (cf. Phil 2:9-11). Our salvation is secure.

Summary: Christ's life (the just one) has saved us sinners (the unjust ones) if we trust in Him.

12. Living Holy in the Light of Judgment: 1 Peter 4:1-6

Review: *In 1 Pet 3:17-18 we may need to suffer unjustly for Christ. What example does Peter set before us, and what did His unjust suffering accomplish?*

Jesus suffered unjustly – more than anyone. But through His one death for all people, He, the “just one”, enabled us “unjust ones” (us sinners) to be made right with God and to be brought back to Him.

Suffering in the Flesh (1 Peter 4:1-2)

Consider 1 Pet 4:1. How did Christ suffer in the flesh?

He suffered in His flesh by enduring insults, persecutions and blasphemies from ungodly men. He also suffered in the flesh, in another sense, by denying Himself ungodly pursuits and passions.

If we are prepared, like Jesus, to suffer in the flesh for righteousness, what does this indicate? (v.1)

It shows that, just like Jesus, we have ceased to live for sin, and to live for God. It shows that we are truly one of His followers, who have been born of His Spirit. Conversely, those who aren't prepared to suffer insults for righteousness, or resist the flesh, do not live for God and are not truly saved.

When it comes to our sinful fallen nature (our flesh), in what sense do we suffer?

We suffer in the sense of being provoked and tormented by sinful desires and passions, and the need to battle against them and to put them to death. It's a real struggle - in that sense we suffer.

In our struggle & suffering against the flesh, what can we rejoice in? (Heb 2:17-18; Rom 8:12-14)

Christ is with us and sympathises with us, and we have His Spirit to help us overcome.

As we suffer in the flesh, what will we be free to do (just as we see in Jesus)? (1 Pet 4:2)

We will be free to do God's will, and to live the rest of our life productively and purposefully for God.

Living in the Light of Judgment (1 Peter 4:3-6)

In 1 Pet 4:3, how does Peter motivate us to continue to “suffer in the flesh”?

Peter argues that, for most of us, we have already spent enough time satisfying the desires of our flesh, and living a wasted life. We ought to now live the rest of our life for righteousness and for God.

Why are Gentiles (pagans) surprised that we don't continue satisfying sinful desires? (1 Pet 4:4)

They live for worldly and carnal desires, and believe that the pursuit of such things is the point of life! They also believe that living a righteous life leads to a restricted and oppressed life. How wrong they are!

Peter uses the terms “abominable idolatries” and “excesses of dissipation” for the ungodly (NASB). Why do people pursue such things?

Deep down, we all have a God-sized hole in our soul, and we seek to fill it with other things other than God. But as we do, we find that they don't satisfy us, and so we pursue even “abominable idolatries” and go to extremes in our excesses. But nothing will truly satisfy us, except Christ (John 6:35; 7:37-38).

Why will the world malign us if we avoid such evils? (v.4) How do we experience this? [Discuss]

Our stance is incomprehensible and different to others, leading them to malign us. But we are also maligned because our righteous behaviour shows up their unholy behaviour and it shames them.

What do non-believers (pagan Gentiles) fail to comprehend? (1 Pet 4:5)

They fail to comprehend that we are not free to do as we please, for one day we will have to give an account of our life and our choices to Him who will judge us (cf. also Heb 9:27).

What does it mean that God “is ready to judge the living and the dead”? (1 Pet 4:5)

There are two groups of people in God's eyes; living people (saved people) and dead people (unsaved people). All will be judged; unsaved people will be judged for their sins (Rev 20:11-15) and be sentenced to hell. Saved people will not be judged for their sins, because Jesus bore them, but they will be judged in the sense that God will reward, or not reward, them according to how they have lived (1 Cor 3:10-15).

According to 1 Pet 4:6, what is God's purpose for all people to hear the Gospel?

He wants people who are spiritually dead to be made spiritually alive through Christ, so that they may escape judgment for their sins in the flesh, and be made alive to God for all eternity. What a gracious God!

What does this passage teach us in regard to how we ought to live in the light of judgment?

We ought to heed the Gospel (trust in Jesus), suffer for righteousness, and do God's will. It's worth it!

Summary: In the light of judgment, may we trust Christ, suffer for righteousness and do God's will.

13. The End is Near – Be Holy: 1 Peter 4:7-11

Review: *In 1 Peter 4:1-2 we are called to live differently to the world. How are we to live?*

We are to fight against the desires of our flesh and the ways of this fallen world and are to do God's will.

Why should we live so differently? (1 Pet 4:5)

Firstly, we will give an account of our life before God one day. But there are other reasons why we should live so differently – to glorify and please God, as well as to help others see the truth in Christ.

Living for the End (1 Peter 4:7-9)

1 Peter has predominantly been about living a holy life. According to 1 Pet 4:7a why should we?

We should live a holy life because the end of this world is near. Even though our salvation is by grace and not works, in the light of the life to come and the giving of rewards, we should be holy.

What other reasons are given in 1 Peter for us to live a holy life? (cf. 1 Pet 1:3, 1:15-16; 2:12)

We should live holy lives because of our living hope, because of who God is, & because God is glorified.

Since the end of all things is near, how should we be as we live holy lives? (1 Pet 4:7)

We should be sound in our thinking (ie, having a right spiritual perspective on things), and we should be self-controlled as we live in a fallen world where wrong desires abound.

Sound thinking and self-control leads to holy living. What else does it lead to? (1 Pet 4:7b)

It leads to prayer. "Sound thinking" helps us pray for God's will to be done (Matt 6:9-10), and a heart for "self-control" helps us pray for what we need (not our wants), and in overcoming sin (Matt 6:11-13).

What key attitude are we to have toward fellow believers in these last days? Why? (1 Pet 4:8)

We are to love each other deeply and fervently. Love is particularly stressed, for in the last days in this fallen world, love will be lacking (cf. Matt 24:12; 2 Tim 3:1-4); but we are to love (cf. John 13:34-35).

What glorious benefits come when we love each other fervently in God's family? (1 Pet 4:8)

"Love covers a multitude of sins"; that is, love prevents many sins arising, such as being judgmental and critical, being impatient and intolerant, being bitter and resentful, being unforgiving and troublesome. Indeed, love for one another results in peace and unity in God's family (cf. Eph 4:1-3).

What particular aspect of love do we need to practice as the end draws near? (1 Pet 4:9)

We need to be hospitable toward each other, without grumbling or complaining; ie, instead of gossiping and slandering, we are to be warm and friendly toward each other (cf. Eph 4:31-32).

Living for God's Glory (1 Peter 4:10-11)

What has every Christian received? (1 Pet 4:10; cf. 1 Cor 12:4-11)

We have received a special (spiritual) gift(s) from God according to God's grace.

Are these special (spiritual) gifts just natural talents? (1 Cor 12:11)

They are not natural talents; though they can work hand in hand with natural talents. They have come from the Holy Spirit, and they are a wonderful expression of God's manifold grace to His church.

According to 1 Pet 4:10-11 why have these special gifts been given?

They have not been given for personal gain, but for us to use in Christ's church for serving fellow believers. We are called to serve others and to be good stewards of the gift(s) God has given us.

According to Eph 4:11-14, spiritual gifts have been given for what purpose?

They have been given for building up the body of Christ, helping us mature, and to be firm in our faith.

We all have been given spiritual gifts. Do you know what yours are? Do you use them? [Discuss]

In 1 Pet 4:11 two special (spiritual) gifts are highlighted and the way these gifts are to be used is mentioned. This is indicative of all spiritual gifts. Therefore, how should we employ our gifts?

Our spiritual gifts are to be used for God's glory and are to be exercised with His enabling and strength; in other words, we are not to exercise our gifts in the power of the flesh, but in the power of the Spirit.

What is the goal of life; especially for us who have been born again through faith in Christ? (v.11)

We are to glorify God through Jesus Christ; giving Him the praise and honour that alone belongs to Him.

In the light of 1 Pet 4:7-11 how can we glorify God?

By living in the light of eternity ("the end is near"), by being sound minded and self-controlled, by loving each other and being hospitable, and by using our spiritual gifts to serve fellow believers. May we all do so.

Summary: The end is near! Let's glorify God by being holy – sound, self-controlled, and serving

14. Suffering in a Holy Manner: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Review: *"The end of all things is near" (1 Pet 4:7a). How then should we live our lives? (1 Pet 4:7-9)*
We should live holy lives, being clear minded (sober), self-controlled, loving and hospitable.

How else are we to serve one another in love? (1 Pet 4:10-11)

We are to employ our gifts (that have been given to us from God according to His grace), to help build up the body of Christ, the Church. This helps us grow in holiness, and we also glorify our Father in heaven.

Suffering for Christ (1 Peter 4:12-14)

When we go through trials, should we be surprised? Why or why not? (1 Pet 4:12)

We shouldn't be surprised. As a Christian, while we walk this earth, we are not immune to trials. God has not promised to save us from all trials. Our Lord Jesus and His apostles endured trials.

Why would our loving Father allow His beloved children to go through trials? (1 Pet 4:12, 1:6-7)
God permits us to go through trials to "test" us; ie, to specifically "test" our faith. The idea of our faith being "tested" is in relation to purifying it and making it stronger and purer. This is necessary for us.

As we go through trials, what should we consider ourselves to be "sharing" in? (1 Pet 4:13)

We are sharing in the sufferings of Christ. He suffered, and we do in like manner, if we endure trials for His name's sake. Consider Paul's example of sharing in the sufferings of Christ - Phil 3:10; Col 1:24.

When we share in Christ's sufferings how should we feel? Why? (1 Pet 4:13; cf. also 1 Pet 1:8-9)

We should rejoice. The reason we can rejoice is because we know our trials and sufferings are only temporary, and one day we will be free of all this and be with the Lord in glory – what a joy!

As we suffer for Christ, what state are we in and what does that show? (1 Pet 4:14)

We are blessed of God; ie, we please God and have His favour upon us. It also shows that we are a genuine believer, born of God's Spirit ("the Spirit of Glory and of God rests on you").

Suffering Righteously (1 Peter 4:15-19)

*As we suffer, how are we **not** to suffer? (1 Pet 4:15)*

We are not to suffer as a wrongdoer. This obviously does not please God, and is indeed shameful.

How are we to suffer (for doing what is right)? (1 Pet 4:16; Matt 5:11-12)

We are to suffer unashamedly, for we are suffering by bearing Jesus' name, and in our suffering, we are seeking to glorify God (cf. Paul and Silas in Acts 16:22-25).

As an aside, how should we see suffering when we have done something wrong? (cf. Heb 12:4-11)

When a Christian suffers for doing something wrong, we should see it as God disciplining His children, so that we might repent and return to Him. Such discipline from God is for our good; not for our harm. It is refining and restorative; never retaliatory and retributive. What a loving Father we have!

For the fourth time in his letter, Peter reminds us of God's judgment (1 Pet 1:17, 2:23, 4:5, 4:17).

What do we learn about God's judgment in 4:17, and what does it mean that Christians are judged?

Judgment begins with God's house (His people) first. Indeed, it's already happening. As we walk this earth, God's judgment is upon us, as well as His grace and mercy. In His judgment He disciplines us, and even sends trials to test our faith. One day in glory, we will also be judged, not for sin, but for how we have lived for Christ, and from this judgment will come rewards (1 Cor 3:10-15).

In 1 Pet 4:17-18, God's judgment of believers and non-believers is contrasted. Is it different? How?

Yes it is! God is just in His judgments for both groups, but Christ makes a huge difference. Christians are disciplined and they experience trials, but will never endure eternal punishment, because Jesus has borne our punishment. But in contrast, non-Christians will be judged and will face eternal punishment in hell.

What does it mean that "it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved"? (1 Pet 4:18)

It's not meaning our salvation is in doubt. No! Our salvation is secure (cf. Rom 8:1). But we have been saved in great difficulty (cf. Christ's suffering), and we endure great difficulties as we cling to Christ.

What is indicated by the words "what will become of the godless man and the sinner" in v.18?

It indicates that judgment will be severe for those who have not turned to Christ; hell is eternal torment.

In the light of judgment how should we live when we suffer in doing God's will? (1 Pet 4:19)

We should be entrusting ourselves to God, as Jesus did (cf. 1 Pet 2:23).

Summary: Christians do suffer for Christ, but may we rejoice and glorify God in our sufferings.

15. Holiness with Humility: 1 Peter 5:1-7

Review: *How should we view the trials that we endure as we follow Christ here on earth? (1 Pet 4:12-13)*
We should not be surprised by the trials we suffer here on earth. Christ also suffered. Indeed, we can rejoice as we go through trials for Christ, for they test (purify) our faith, and we are bound for glory.

How is God's judgment already upon believers? Does it differ to non-believers? (1 Pet 4:17-18)
Believers are already undergoing "judgment"; God disciplines us to help us repent of sin and be holy. But unlike non-believers, we will never be judged for our sins, because Jesus has borne them.

Humble Leadership (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Peter has a word to "elders" (1 Pet 5:1-2). Who are elders? (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 5:17, Tit 1:5-9)
Elders are men who are given the task of exercising oversight over God's people (governing Christ's church). They are men who display godliness, and who are blessed by God with certain spiritual gifts such as pastoring, teaching God's Word, and discernment, so that they can govern God's people well.

Peter is an apostle – one hand-picked to witness Christ's sufferings and resurrection, and chosen by Christ to lay the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20). Yet, what does Peter call himself? Why?

Peter calls himself a fellow elder; even though he was much greater, in that he was an apostle of Christ. He did this in order to humble himself before them, and to set an example of humility before them.

In 1 Pet 5:2-3 we have a helpful picture of elders. What are elders likened to? What are they not?
Elders are likened to shepherds. Just as a shepherd cares for his sheep, an elder is to care for God's people. Elders are not bosses or CEO's who use their power to control and lord it over fellow believers.

What do we learn about eldership in 1 Pet 5:2-3?

Elders are to exercise oversight, looking over and looking out for God's people. They are to do it willingly and gladly. They are to do it God's way, just as He shepherds. They are to do it without personal gain. They are never to use their position for power and control. Instead, they are to be an example.

Who is Jesus in relation to elders? What does that mean for elders? (1 Pet 5:4)

Jesus is the chief (or head) shepherd; ie, even though elders are called shepherds, He is above them. As a result, elders should view themselves as shepherds under the chief shepherd; ie, they are under-shepherds.

What encouragement does Peter give to help elders govern well? (1 Pet 5:4)

He reminds them that one day they will see the Lord Jesus, our Chief Shepherd, and they will receive a great reward of an unfading crown of glory from Him, for shepherding God's people here on earth.

Humble Christians (1 Peter 5:5)

After addressing elders, younger people are addressed. What instructions are given? (1 Pet 5:5)
Like elders, they are to be humble too. They are to particularly humble themselves before the eldership; ie, to come under their leadership. This can be challenging for the young, but God commands it.

Whether we are an elder or a young person, what are all Christians to be? (1 Pet 5:5)

We are to be humble toward one another. Phil 2:1-7 gives us great teaching on this, as well as setting before us the supreme example of Jesus, who humbled Himself to do God's will and save us.

Why should we be humble according to 1 Pet 5:5?

The opposite of humility is pride – and God hates pride. He actively opposes the proud, but He gives favour (grace) to those who are humble. Cf. Isa 66:1-2 – God dwells with those who are humble.

Humble before God (1 Peter 5:6-7)

Since God's favour rests on the humble, what does Peter encourage us to do in 1 Pet 5:6-7?
He encourages us to humble ourselves before God, and practically, to humbly bring our worries and concerns to the Lord, rather than trying to deal with them on our own and in our own strength.

Consider the phrase "cast all your anxiety on Him". What are we to understand by this?

There is no concerns that we cannot bring to the Lord. "All" are to be brought to Him. We are to "cast" it all on the Lord. This literally means to "throw it all on" to the Lord. We can trust Him to look after us.

Peter encourages us to cast our cares on the Lord. What does he say to encourage us to do it?

He reminds us that the Lord loves us and cares for us. This is what Jesus taught as well (cf. Matt 6:25-32).

Summary: As God's holy people, we are to be humble before God and others. God hates pride.

16. Standing Firm as God's Holy People: 1 Peter 5:8-14

Review: *How should a Christian be toward others? (1 Pet 5:5) What should that look like? (Phil 2:1-7)?*
We should be humble. Following Jesus, we should serve one another and consider others more important.

As we humble ourselves before God, what should we also be doing? Why? (1 Pet 5:6-7)

We should humbly look to God to help us. We can bring to him all our worries, because He cares for us.

Our Adversary (1 Peter 5:8-9)

As Peter concludes his letter, what vital warning does he give us in 1 Pet 5:8? (cf. Rev 12:10, 17)

We have an adversary, the devil. He's also "the accuser of the brethren", and is at war with us.

What picture is given of the devil? What does this image convey? (1 Pet 5:8)

He is pictured as a lion – such an image conveys that he is powerful and dangerous. As a roaring lion, he is seeking to terrify us, and as a prowling (stalking) lion, he is looking for opportunities to devour us.

Can the devil really "devour" a Christian? (cf. 1 John 4:4, 5:18)

For a Christian the devil is limited in what he can do to us, because we have One who is greater than the devil to protect us. The devil is like a lion without any teeth. He can only terrify us and try us.

We are never to be fearful of the devil, but what are we to do instead? (1 Pet 5:8-9)

We are to be self-controlled and alert. We are not to be naïve about the devil's schemes (cf. 2 Cor 2:11). We are to resist him, using faith to extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one (Eph 6:14-16).

As we experience temptations and trials, what word of encouragement is given in 1 Pet 5:9?

Other believers experience the same temptations and trials as we go through (cf. also 1 Cor 10:12-13).

Our Father (1 Peter 5:10-11)

Despite trials and the devil's schemes, what encouragement do we have in 1 Pet 5:10?

God our Father will help us and keep us, and bring us safely into glory (NB: In 1 Pet 1:5, we saw that God will protect us and safely bring us to glory for us to enjoy our eternal inheritance).

Why is God referred to as the "God of all grace" in this verse? (1 Pet 5:10)

As we experience temptations and trials, we often fall into temptation and fail to have faith. But God is gracious, and He will never let go of us, despite our sins and shortcomings. By His grace, He will save us.

According to 1 Pet 5:10, why can we be sure that God will save us?

God has **called** us "to His eternal glory in Christ", and so we shall be saved despite our failures. God's call (or promise) is irrevocable; it cannot be broken (cf. Rom 11:29, Heb 6:17-20).

As we experience trials and temptations, and at times fail the Lord, what will God do in our life (besides bringing us to glory)? (1 Pet 5:10 – consider the last words of this verse)

God will perfect us (restore and transform us), He will confirm us (cause us to become immovable), He will strengthen us (cause us to be more able), and will establish us (cause us to be firm and unwavering). God will use our trials and testings to mature us and make us holy.

How should we be in the light of God's gracious call and the way He helps us? (1 Pet 5:11)

We should be filled with praise – praise be to God for His grace to save us and for the glory to come.

Our Selves (1 Peter 5:12-14)

In 1 Pet 5:12 what is Peter referring to when he says that "this is the true grace of God"?

The true grace of God is our living hope in Christ (1 Pet 1:3), and our life in Christ that consists of suffering trials and growing in holiness. This is the true Christian life – and it's all of God's grace.

In 1 Pet 5:12 what closing exhortation does Peter give? Why is this such a fitting conclusion?

Stand firm! We need to stand firm because we have trials, but it's also worth it – we have a living hope.

If the "she" in 1 Pet 5:13 is a sister church, what do we learn about how churches should be?

We should be aware of each other and be warm to each other. We're part of God's kingdom by His grace.

What does Peter encourage us to do in the first half of 1 Pet 5:14?

He encourages us to greet each other with a "kiss of love"; that is, we are to love each other (1 Pet 1:22).

What is the final benediction? What's so precious about this? (1 Pet 5:14b)

Peter calls on God's peace to be with us all – how precious it is to be at peace with God (cf. Rom 5:1) and to enjoy God's peace each day; a peace that we can have despite our circumstances (cf. Phil 4:7).

Summary: As God's holy people, may we stand firm in the true grace of God, resisting the devil and trusting in the God who helps us and who has called us to His eternal glory in Christ.