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DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

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A STUDY OF 1 PETER

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

WELCOME

At GracePoint, our mission is to be people who...

Encounter Grace

Grow in Grace

Give Grace

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR STEVE

Our theme for the year 2022 has been "Identity in Christ." As ones who follow Jesus, we will lead different lives with different priorities.

This fall, our series from 1 Peter entitled "Different" will address many relevant topics that are illustrative of how and *why* God's people are different.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit touches you as you work through this discipleship guide, so the experience becomes transformative. May our Lord bless you and may you be anointed with power from on high to live a life set apart for the purposes and pleasure of Jesus our Lord.

Love in Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Steve".

Pastor Steve Norby

OVERVIEW

Part 1—Praise, Glory & Honor to Jesus

1 Peter 1:1-7 | Sept. 11

Part 2—Inexpressible & Glorious Joy

1 Peter 1:8-12 | Sept. 18

Part 3—Be Holy

1 Peter 1:13-21 | Sept. 25

Part 4—Therefore Love

1 Peter 1:20-2:3 | Oct. 1

Part 5—Living Stones

1 Peter 2:4-12 | Oct. 9

Part 6—The Strength of Submission

1 Peter 2:13-25 | Oct. 16

Interlude: A Life That Blesses

Part 7—Blessings in Relationships

1 Peter 3:1-7 | Oct. 23

Part 8—Repay With Blessing

Peter 3:8-12 | Oct. 30

Part 9—Status: Blessed

1 Peter 3:13-22 | Nov. 8

Part 10—Live for God

1 Peter 4:1-11 | Nov. 13

Part 11—Reminder of a Faithful Creator

1 Peter 4:12-19 | Nov. 20

Part 12—Humble Yourselves Under God's Mighty Hand

1 Peter 5:1-11 | Nov. 27

STEPS FOR BIBLE STUDY

The Bible is God’s living Word—Spirit-breathed Scripture—revealing the Lord’s plan and purpose for all of Creation through His Son, Jesus Christ. That’s why Bible reading is so important to knowing Who God is and what He has done, as we learn and grow in relationship with Him. Here’s one basic approach to help you dig deeper in your Bible study habits.

Step 1: Observation—What does the passage say?

- Look carefully at what is *actually* being said, and *how* it is said. Ask questions about the content: who? when? where? why?
- Examine the structure of paragraphs, passages, and connections between main points. How are the points related?
- Pay attention to repetition. The number of times a word, phrase, or topic appears is an important indicator of its significance.
- Notice relationships between ideas: causes and effects, ifs and thens, questions and answers, comparisons and contrasts.

Step 2: Interpretation—What does the passage mean?

- Understand the context. At a minimum, read the verse immediately before and immediately after. Better yet, read the *chapter* immediately before and immediately after!
- Look up cross-references. Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Other passages in the Bible can shed a lot of light on the passage you’re studying.
- Research biblical times. Some cultural/historical factors are explained in the Bible, but most are not. Look up unfamiliar words, read study notes, or search for background information online.

Step 3: Application—What will you do with the meaning?

- How does the truth revealed in this passage affect your...
 - relationship with God?
 - relationships with other people?
 - responses to weakness or temptation?

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, **2** who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with His blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, **5** who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Think About It

Would you say the world is a hopeful place? When you look at culture today, which traits characterize our population?

The epistle of 1 Peter is a letter written to encourage Christians in the Roman provinces in Asia Minor—Christians who faced troubles within and without, threatened by persecution from the culture around them as well as division over issues among them. Sound familiar?

Addressing this letter, the Apostle Peter refers to these Christians as “exiles” (1 Peter 1:1), or ones displaced from home, scattered throughout territories belonging to others. In other words, these places are not their own. As the people of God, their place is in heaven!

To such ones, endeavoring “through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ,” Peter says, “Grace and peace be yours in abundance” (v. 2).

Do Christians today live in that same grace and peace? Are we people who

“greatly rejoice” even as we “suffer grief in all kinds of trials” (v. 6)?

By nature, Christ followers are ones who ought to see the troubles of this world differently than most. After all, we’ve been born into “a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (v. 3), with an inheritance “kept in heaven” where things of eternal value can never be damaged or destroyed (v. 4).

As fellow travelers sharing our true citizenship in the kingdom of God, then, the opportunity to persevere through trial allows our faith to bring praise, glory, and honor to Jesus. And that changes everything!

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Have you ever felt “out of place” with a group of people? What was that like?

1. What does it mean to be a citizen of heaven? What does it mean to be a citizen of this world?

2. How does a Christian know they’ve been given “new birth into a living hope” (v. 3) through Jesus Christ? Is the inheritance of the Christian in heaven “real” to you? How does this influence the way you see the world?

3. Consider the balance between faith and reason. How do these work hand in hand?

4. Consider the difference between faith and foolishness. How can these be confused?

5. Think about greatly rejoicing through trials. What griefs have you seen affecting the local church in recent times? How well does Western Christianity understand suffering? How about the universal Church? Does this affect your perspective?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: What's one thing this week that might be hard for you? Let's ask God to help you with it.

Memory verse: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: God, I give praise to You, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ! Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to You be all praise, glory, and honor.

C = CONFESSION: Lord, You know my heart. It isn't easy to keep an attitude of rejoicing when there's so much trouble and suffering around.

T = THANKSGIVING: Thank You, Jesus, that because of You, I am born into a living hope: the power of the Resurrection, salvation in Your name!

S = SUPPLICATION: Please keep me in Your grace and peace, O God, that by the sanctifying work of Your Spirit, I may be obedient to Christ.

Notes

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **8** Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, **9** for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, **11** trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. **12** It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Think About It

What makes you happy? This is a question Western culture uses to determine many courses of action. The problem is happiness is an emotion, and emotions change!

Feelings come and feelings go, depending on circumstances. Joy, on the other hand, comes from Christ. In his letter to Christians facing persecution and trials, Peter draws a direct connection between believing in Jesus and being “filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy” (1 Peter 1:8).

It's important to pay attention to who's doing what in this Scripture. You “are filled” (v. 8) with joy, Peter writes; you “are receiving” (v. 9) the joy of salvation. Notice you're not “filling yourself” with joy or “creating your own”! Joy is not produced by personal effort but provided by faith in Jesus Christ.

Because joy comes from Christ, it's not subject to external conditions. It's a result of an inward state: “the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (v. 9). Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, as we read in Galatians 5:22, governing the outlook of the Christ follower instead of—even in spite of—whatever's currently being experienced in life.

This is the kind of outlook that, by the Spirit of God, had ancient prophets looking ahead to the glory of Christ yet to be revealed (v. 10-12). Today, this

same Spirit continues to fill the life of the believer by faith.

With the joy of the Lord as our strength, we, too, can look beyond the circumstances of today, anticipating the hope of eternity—a different way of looking at current events, indeed!

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Have you ever experienced something that made you happy for a while but lost its appeal over time?

1. What's the difference between happiness and joy? What causes one or the other?

2. Can a person who struggles with depression, anxiety, illness, grief, or other form of suffering still experience joy?

3. What does it mean to “feel” joy? What does it mean to “have” joy? Why is the difference important to the life of a Christ follower?

4. Do you see what God is up to in your life? How does this perspective affect the way you endure hard times? How do you live in the present without letting it dominate your outlook?

5. What are some current circumstances in which you or a loved one need the joy of the Lord to be your strength?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: Take the following "joy quiz" and discuss.

How do you define joy?

In what ways does God give you joy?

How do you express joy?

Why is joy important in the life of a Christ follower?

What helps you renew your joy?

Memory verse: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: Lord Jesus Christ, You alone are the source and the provider of joy for Your people—a gift of God given by Your Holy Spirit!

C = CONFESSION: When I look around me, it's easy to focus on the troubles of the day and lose sight of the joy of my salvation in You.

T = THANKSGIVING: I thank You and praise You, Christ Jesus, that because of You, I may already receive the end result of my faith!

S = SUPPLICATION: By Your grace and by Your Holy Spirit, Lord Jesus, fill me with the inexpressible and glorious joy of knowing You always.

Notes

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **13** Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at His coming. **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."

17 Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners 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 ancestors, **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.

Think About It

Remember this basic pointer for Bible study: when you see the word "therefore" in Scripture, look to see what it's "there for!"

"Therefore," Peter writes, referring back to what he's just shared previously, "with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope" on Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13), "do not conform" to the old life of sin (1:14), but instead "be holy in all you do" (1:15).

Why? Remember that if we are believers in Jesus Christ, we are recipients of the very grace spoken about by the prophets and longed for among the angels (1:8-12). Knowing this, the way we live our lives should therefore be very different than it would be otherwise!

Just as the One Who calls us is holy, we are called to be holy (1:16). The "inexpressible and glorious joy... the salvation of your souls" (1:8-9) produces an outlook that sees beyond "the empty way of life handed down" (1:18) from a world that's forgotten God. In fact, we're redeemed from that way of life, and our hearts are set on the ways of Christ instead!

"Holiness" is a word that's been scorned by culture—skewed by attitudes of rejection and sarcasm against God. But if someone's uncomfortable with

concepts like purity or perfection, one must wonder what understanding that person has about the nature of God.

After all, if we truly believe that God is good... why wouldn't we want to live in His goodness?

Through Jesus, we aren't limited to an empty, meaningless existence focused on perishable things. We come to know the eternal value of the things of God and experience them in the here and now, with faith and hope in the glory of Christ—Who empowers us to live for what really matters.

Because He is holy, we want to be holy. If we know anything about Christ, we know there's nothing better than to be like Christ.

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Have you ever been given a project or assignment that was too hard for you? Did you give up, decide not to even try—or did you give it your best work? Describe your reasoning process.

1. What do you think when you hear the word “holy”? Where have you picked up your impressions or associations about what it means to be holy—from the Word, or from the world?

2. Why is it important in these matters to have “minds that are alert and fully sober” (1:Peter 1:13)? How can this be a part of being holy?

3. Why do you believe many people are uncomfortable with the idea of holiness? What does this tell you about their concept of God?

4. As citizens of heaven, how does the awareness that God “judges each

person's work impartially" act as a reminder for believers to "live out your time as foreigners here" (v. 17)?

5. Think about the end of v. 17: "...in reverent fear." If we are afraid to be seen as different from the world around us, what kind of fear are we living in?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: Do you ever feel pressured to do something that you know isn't God's best for you? Is it scarier to follow God or to follow other people?

Memory verse: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: O God, You are the One Who raised Jesus from the dead and glorified Him—You are my reason for faith and hope!

C = CONFESSION: Lord Jesus, it's intimidating to think about being like You because You are perfect and I am not, and it feels really hard.

T = THANKSGIVING: I give thanks, Father, for the precious blood of Christ, that You have revealed Him for our sake and shown us Your glory.

S = SUPPLICATION: Holy Spirit, make me alert and fully sober in You! May all Your children be joyfully obedient to our Father's call to be holy.

Notes

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **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 each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. **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 people 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 endures forever." And this is the Word that was preached to you.

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. **2** Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, **3** now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Think About It

So far in his letter, Peter has exhorted the family of believers to act in submission and obedience to God's call on their lives. Now Peter addresses a state of "already" and "not yet."

Remember, a few verses ago, Peter just got done urging believers, "just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do" (1:15). But then... "Now that you *have* purified yourselves," he writes here, "*by* obeying the truth *so that* you have sincere love for one another, *love one another deeply, from the heart*" (1 Peter 1:22).

Read that again. If the believers already have love for one another, why does Peter tell them to *now* love one another?

"For you have been born again" (1:23).

In a sense, these believers have to learn how to do life all over. Because they have obeyed God, they are now to continue obeying God. Now that they have the love of Jesus in their hearts, they are to go on loving one another in the love of Jesus.

Our lives on this earth are fleeting, here today and gone tomorrow, like the grass on the ground or the flowers in the field (1:24)—yet when we live in Christ, we see beyond the temporary to the eternal.

Therefore, temptations to sin—such as by malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander (2:1)—these pale in comparison, not worth holding on to. We continue in our same lives, living life differently. Like newborn infants, we see the world with new eyes... eyes opened by faith and hope in God.

By coming to know Christ, we already walk with Him in eternity. And now that we've developed a taste for the good things of God, no less will do—we'll want only what's of God. Having the love of God in our hearts, then, we therefore love.

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Have you ever been given a gift and then needed to learn how to use it? Describe your experience.

1. Can you decide to love someone? Consider the command: "love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22).

2. What does it mean to be born again (1 Peter 1:23)? Is obeying God's truth something that happens more than once? Discuss your thoughts.

3. Consider that Christians are both "made holy" and "being made holy" by the work of Christ in their lives. What kinds of tensions or conflicts do you encounter with this?

4. How does ridding ourselves of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander (2:1) grow us up when it comes to loving one another?

5. In what ways have you “tasted that the Lord is good” (2:3)? How has this made your life different?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week’s Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: When we’re young, we often dream of growing up so we don’t have to obey someone else’s “rules” anymore. When it comes to following Jesus, maturity means learning to obey God’s Word more and more. What’s the best part of growing up in your faith?

Memory verse: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you’re gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: Awesome Father, so many things are temporary, and this world is passing away, but I know that Your Word endures forever!

C = CONFESSION: I confess the truth of Your living and enduring Word, O Lord, that in Christ Jesus, I am born again—that I am made new in You.

T = THANKSGIVING: Thank You, Father, for Your truth in my life and Your love in my heart, growing me and maturing me as a child of God.

S = SUPPLICATION: Holy Spirit, purify me—develop my taste for the goodness of God, so I am one who loves others deeply, from the heart.

Notes

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **4** As you come to Him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to Him— **5** 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. **6** 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."

7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," **8** and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. **10** 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.

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. **12** 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.

Think About It

When you think of a church of people, what comes to mind? Do you picture many different parts built upon one another to make a whole?

This is the image Peter draws as he reminds God's people about who they are in Christ. They, "like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). And Christ is the "cornerstone" (v. 6) upon which these other stones are laid.

A cornerstone determines the foundation of a house, assuring the structure is square and level. It's the stone by which the rest of the house is made, aligning the parts to keep the whole true to design.

The Church is both a living organism and a growing organization, made up of systems and structures that interconnect many parts. Each part has a distinct function and purpose in the building of God’s kingdom.

Consider—if part of a house is missing, that’s problematic! If a house is built on a faulty foundation, it will eventually crumble and fall.

But God has laid a living Stone upon which His people, like living stones, will be built, “and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame” (v. 6).

There are those who’ve disobeyed and rejected the message of Christ (v. 8), but the people of God are different. You are put in place so you “may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness” (v. 9). In the end, the house that Jesus built will stand to bring glory to Jesus (v. 12)!

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Have you or someone you know ever tried to put something together and discovered you were missing some of the pieces? What happened?

1. Why do you think the metaphor of a “spiritual house” is used to describe Jesus’ building of the Church?

2. What “parts” of church do you enjoy? Which would you say you could do without?

3. Consider these six models of church:

Institution

Church as structure & order, offices, doctrines, laws & ritual forms

Mystical Communion

Church as connectedness with God & other believers

Sacrament

Church as the continuing presence of Christ in the world

Herald

Church as carrier & messenger of the Good News

Servant

Church as commitment to social justice & action

Community of Disciples

Church as people imitating Jesus

Which church model do you find most challenging? interesting? confusing? uncommon? Why?

4. How would you describe the different functions of the “parts” that make up the Church? How would you explain the Church’s purpose overall?

5. How does obeying the message of Christ produce good deeds in your life? How does a personal and a communal foundation in Christ bring glory to God?

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **13** Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, **14** or to governors, who are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. **15** For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. **16** Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. **17** Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

18 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. **19** For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are 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."

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 cross, 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.

Think About It

Have you ever heard the saying, "Everybody wants to be different, just like everybody else"? What qualities would you say set someone apart from the crowd? Considering today's culture, would you think of submission as a strength?

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority" (1 Peter 2:13), says the Apostle Peter. Many of us are probably already saying, "Yikes! Peter must not know the authorities we deal with today."

Yet he's writing directly to Christians under the rule of an ungodly government. These are Christians facing persecution and ridicule—living in oppression, violent times, and outright slavery. Do you see any parallels to today?

Maybe our American Way would be shouting on social media. "Stand up! Fight! Protest! Boycott! Speak out! Cancel!" But Peter encourages believers to submit (v. 13), to do good (v. 15), to show respect and live with love, reverence, and honor (v. 17), to bear up under suffering and endure it (v. 19-20). We're reminded that Jesus bore more injustice, unfairness, insult, and injury than any of us, and He did not repay any of it with the same. "Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him Who judges justly" (v. 23).

The life of Christ is different from what we'd expect. Those whose identity is in Him are dead to sin and live for righteousness (v. 24). That changes the way we respond to government figures, work or school authorities, people in our community, relatives in our family of origin and even fellow believers in God's family, the Church.

Want to really be different? Be more like Christ.

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Can you think of an example of someone who's endured peacefully through hardship? What's commendable about their actions?

1. What are the top qualities or traits most people would agree lead to success in today's world? Where do you see the strength of submission?

2. How do you talk about those in authority over you that you dislike or disagree with? How is your performance impacted by your attitude?

3. What is it like to continue doing good in such cases with an attitude of submission?

4. Consider the rewards of doing what is right because it's right, not because you like a person in authority. How would your life be different?

5. How is submitting to authorities really about entrusting yourself to God?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: What's one thing you don't like to do when someone asks you to do it? Let's do that thing this week in a way that honors Jesus and what He's done for us.

Memory verse: "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." (1 Peter 3:8)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: Lord Jesus, You alone are worthy of our praise! You bore our sins on the Cross; You are our example, to follow in Your steps.

C = CONFESSION: O God, You know the rebelliousness of the human spirit—how hard it is for me to submit to authorities even in Your Spirit.

T = THANKSGIVING: Thank You, Lord Jesus, that by Your Holy Spirit, it is possible to endure suffering and to do good, by Your power and grace.

S = SUPPLICATION: God, help me to entrust myself to You, to live for righteousness, to show respect and honor to everyone, in Your holy name.

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **1** Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the Word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, **2** when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. **3** Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. **4** Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. **5** For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, **6** like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Think About It

Q: What do the relationships between 1) citizens and governments, 2) slaves and masters, and 3) wives and husbands all have in common?

A: The way Jesus submits to the authority of the Father—which is the way we are to submit to God's authority in all of these other relationships, too!

By so doing, we experience God's blessings in our relationships, and we are a blessing in our relationships. This applies to our community life, and it applies to our home life.

Notice that in 1 Peter 3:1-7, the Apostle Peter goes straight from the example, right before these verses, of Christ's submission to the Cross, right into a teaching about submission in our most intimate human relationships.

He says "in the same way" that Christ submitted to God's will (v. 1), wives are to submit to their husbands. And before you think this sounds unfair or out of touch, the Word goes on to say that also "in the same way" (v. 7)—that is, in the same way as Christ, referred to previously—husbands are to be considerate with their wives.

In fact, the way Peter lays out these teachings, Christ serves as the example for wives...and wives (in Christ) serve as the example for husbands!

And the point is, both are called to set themselves aside, lay down their Curse-induced desires to control and to be harsh, and submit to one another with reverence and respect—as befits two people following in the example of Christ.

Just as we are to live in such a way that our behavior blesses others in our community relationships, we are to carry this same heart of submission to the Father into our relationships at home, too. Your behavior in Christ is to be a blessing to your own family and to the family of God.

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Think about the saying, “Familiarity breeds contempt.” How have you seen this play out in relationships between family members?

1. Why does it seem that it’s easier to treat people disrespectfully within one’s own family than in relationships outside the home?

2. Does Peter’s instructions to wives and husbands seem realistic to you? Have you seen reverence and respect modeled in marital relationships? Is this common in the world?

3. Consider the example of Christ, quoted just before this in 1 Peter 2: “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth” (2:22). Remember what Jesus endured. What is it like to commit no sin and speak no deceit in our relationships, regardless of how other people behave in our relationships?

4. Imagine an argument with a family member or other loved one in a relationship that might feel contentious at times. What would it look like to “submit” your opinion or “be considerate” of their perspective?

5. How different would the world be if family members sought to bless one another rather than get their own way? How would this change things for you personally?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week’s Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: Can you think of one thing someone close to you says to you that really gets on your nerves? Let’s think of what you could say in response that would be respectful and considerate of them.

Memory verse: “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.” (1 Peter 3:8)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you’re gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: God, You have made me of great worth in Your sight, and You’ve designed me to be a blessing to the people in my own family.

C = CONFESSION: Lord Jesus, I admit I can’t even imagine submitting to the things You endured without trying to fight back or defend myself.

T = THANKSGIVING: O Lord God Almighty, I thank You for Your power and Your kindness—these things are not possible without You!

S = SUPPLICATION: Please, Holy Spirit, work in me so others are won over to Christ through me, when they see You in my behavior and speech.

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **8** Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. **9** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. **10** For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech.

11 They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. **12** 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."

Think About It

If you learned someone had been speaking poorly about you, would you start telling everyone about all the good qualities you've seen in that person? Maybe you would, and you know how freeing this kind of response can be!

How does the way we take an insult reflect our identity in Christ? In passages leading up to this point, the apostle Peter has moved from discussing submission to human authority (1 Peter 2:13-20)—reminding early believers how Jesus endured injustice and insult without retaliation (v. 21-25)—to submission between husbands and wives (3:1-7). This teaching links community life to home life: the reverence and respect Christians are to show to others no matter what.

Whether dealing with a government, a workplace, or a loved one, the way believers respond is not to return like for like when we experience sinful behavior, but to be like Christ.

Now, between "all of you" (v. 8) in the family of believers, Peter explains why we're to submit to the will of God regardless of treatment from others. When we experience evil, we are called to "repay evil with blessing... so that you may inherit a blessing" (v. 9). Notice those words "so that"!

If we repay evil with evil or insult with insult, it might feel temporarily gratifying, but really, we're turning away from God's ways for lesser things. What's the longer term response, for the one who "would love life and see good days" (v. 10)?

“They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it” (v. 11). By seeking and pursuing peace, we find and experience the presence of God. “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer” (v. 12).

When we repay evil with blessing, we know God sees us and hears us—a blessing that far surpasses any temporary satisfaction of a lesser response.

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Are you familiar with the saying, “Kill them with kindness”? Have you or someone you know ever put this principle into practice?

1. What does it mean to be “like-minded” (1 Peter 3:8)? How about “sympathetic,” “compassionate,” and “humble”? Look up definitions of these words and consider how they describe you. Now remember these are commands of Scripture. What are we doing when we say things like “That’s not me” or “I’m just not like that”?

2. Peter writes that we are to “repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing” (v. 9). Have you ever considered that this is what you’re called to—repaying with blessing—in the example of Christ? How does this change things?

3. What is the blessing we may inherit (v. 9) when we follow this calling?

4. Whoever wants to enjoy life “must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech” (v. 10). This means we not only “must turn from evil” but we also “must seek peace” (v. 11). What happens if we only focus on one or the other? Is it possible to speak against sin in a way that does not lead us to peace?

5. What does v. 12—“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer”—tell you about how repaying evil with blessing grows us closer to God?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: If someone is mean to you, does it make you want to be mean to them, too? Do you feel better or worse about the situation in the end?

Memory verse: “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.” (1 Peter 3:8)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: Father, nothing escapes You—You see everything and You hear everything. You know every word and deed on this earth!

C = CONFESSION: O Lord, I struggle to be like-minded, sympathetic, compassionate, humble—to love others the way You would have me love.

T = THANKSGIVING: Thank You, God, that You smile on me where I walk in Your ways—that You hear and respond when I pray in Your will.

S = SUPPLICATION: Holy Spirit, keep my tongue from evil; keep my lips from deceit. May I greet evil with blessing and inherit Your blessing.

Notes

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **13** Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." **15** But in your hearts revere 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, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. **17** For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. **18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. **19** After being made alive, He went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— **20** to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, **21** and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22** Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him.

Think About It

From a biblical worldview, we understand we live in a fallen world. We will experience the consequences of sin and separation, which result in broken relationships and many forms of suffering. That doesn't sound like the "positive vibes" the world is trying to sell us, does it?

What's hard for most people to embrace is that in this world, we will have troubles. Jesus Himself tells us this. Yet even in these troubles, followers of Christ may also experience the deep, rich, enduring blessings of God—right in the middle of whatever suffering may come.

Peter, writing to believers experiencing persecution for their faith, urges these Christians to "revere Christ as Lord" and point to their hope in God "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15). This is the way modeled by Jesus and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

This is what allows us, even if we're mistreated for it, to respond by doing

good, not evil. And we experience the blessing of Christ in doing what is right—yes, despite everything that’s wrong in the world!

Consider the blessings and challenges of “keeping a clear conscience” (v. 16). Compare that to knowing you’ve behaved wrongly or reacted poorly in a rough situation. It’s hard to do what’s right while we’re suffering evil from others; it’s harder to stand before God when we know we’re doing evil ourselves. Peter acknowledges we’re going to suffer hardships, one way or another. Even if you’re eager to do good, you might still suffer for what’s right!

But knowing we’ll face hardships, the way we respond to these hardships changes the very nature of our suffering. “For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” (v. 17).

We will still go through difficult situations, but by the power of God, we can go through them differently. What a blessing indeed!

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Think about a time you or someone you know has chosen to “be the bigger person” in a difficult situation. Was the outcome better or worse because of this response?

1. Have you ever experienced suffering that, when looking back, you can see was at least partly self-inflicted?

2. What’s the difference between suffering for doing good vs. suffering for doing evil? Can you think of some examples?

3. Do you consider yourself blessed? Describe some hard blessings of God in the midst of difficult times. Why is fear such an enemy to the follower of Christ in these matters?

4. How do our reactions to suffering tend to distort our understanding of what it means to be blessed? How does blessing endure through suffering?

5. Think about your family, school, workplace, or social environment—especially any area where it feels difficult for you to talk about your faith. How has God positioned you to be a blessing to others in this environment?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: Has there been a time when you knew the right thing to do but you were afraid to do it? How did you feel afterward? What would you do differently in that situation if God brought another opportunity?

Memory verse: "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." (1 Peter 3:8)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: Lord, it's You Who saves by the resurrection of Jesus—praise God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit blessing my life!

C = CONFESSION: Dear Jesus, You know what a struggle it is to withstand the fear of man and to revere You in my heart as Lord.

T = THANKSGIVING: Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your great patience with Your people over time and Your patience with me today!

S = SUPPLICATION: Holy Spirit, keep me in good conscience, and may I always be ready to give the reason for the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **1** Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. **2** As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. **3** 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. **4** They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. **5** But they will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. **6** For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. **8** Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **9** Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. **10** Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. **11** If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so 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.

Think About It

Several times in the New Testament, a comparison is made between spiritual fitness and physical fitness. Why is this? Take into consideration 1 Peter 4:1 and the concept of suffering in the body.

Reflect on the grueling commitment it takes, for example, for an athlete to compete in the Olympics. (Remember, the Olympic Games predate the New Testament writings by several hundred years, and the Apostle Paul makes multiple references to training for these events in his epistles!)

Now imagine... how will the people of God be different if we live for God with as much commitment as such athletes live for their games?

It doesn't mean our spiritual status is earned by our earthly efforts. But in his

letter to early Christians, Peter makes clear there is a choice to be made: between living these earthly lives “for evil human desires” or “rather for the will of God” (v. 2).

As Peter describes in v. 3, the life of the believer who chooses to live for God will, consequently, look very different from the life of the person who continues in the ways of the world. In fact, Peter says, such ones “are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you” (v. 4).

But in the end, no one will give an account to other people—all accounts will be given to God. So let human judgment be what it may be. More important for the follower of Christ, Peter points out, is that we may “live according to God in regard to the spirit” (v. 6). This way of life, as Peter goes on to describe (v. 7-11), is much different from what the world is used to... and much better for everyone touched by it as well.

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Have you ever struggled to stick with a physical exercise regime? How does this compare or contrast with your practice of spiritual disciplines?

1. What does it mean to live for the will of God (v. 2)? In what ways is this the same for all believers, and in what ways will it differ for every believer?

2. Is there an area of your life where you feel “stuck,” or where you don’t know God’s will in a specific situation? What do you know about God’s will that informs the choices you’re making?

3. What would you do if you had one day to live? What would be your urgent priorities? What simply wouldn’t matter at that point?

4. In what ways has God gifted you to serve others? How have you worked to shift your commitments away from worldly desires and toward serving as a part of the body of Christ?

5. Consider v. 7-11. Which of these verses challenges you the most? Why? How will your life be different if you are alert and committed to Him in this area? How might a regular practice of spiritual disciplines be a means of God's grace strengthening you in His will?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: What do you think about the saying, "It's better to give than it is to receive"? What is one way, together, that we can practice setting aside an area of our own focus this week, to focus on meeting someone else's need instead?

Memory verse: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: In all things, Father God, I praise You through Jesus Christ—to You be the glory and the power for ever and ever!

C = CONFESSION: Lord, I admit that it is hard to avoid falling into the habits of the world and patterns of living that do not serve You.

T = THANKSGIVING: Thank You, Jesus, for suffering in the body and for showing me it really is possible to live for God, by Your Holy Spirit.

S = SUPPLICATION: Holy Spirit, make me alert, of sober mind; grace me to love others and serve others as a faithful steward of Your gifts.

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **12** Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13** But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. **14** If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. **15** If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. **16** However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. **17** For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18** And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" **19** So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Think About It

Ever wonder where people get the impression that once they've accepted Jesus, all problems will be solved and life will be easy? That's certainly not a biblical idea!

In fact, the Apostle Peter urges believers outright: don't be surprised when ordeals come your way—they're only to be expected! (1 Peter 4:12). And these tests of faith are an opportunity to rejoice in Christ and abide in the blessings of God (v. 13-14).

Maybe it's hard to comprehend how anyone can rejoice in suffering or experience blessing in the midst of insult. But if we do suffer for the glory of Christ, it's His power that sustains us and allows us to continue doing good even in times of suffering. It might seem hard to do all that God asks of us, but it's much simpler than living apart from God!

In other words, when things begin to go wrong, it's time to renew our dependence on the One Who makes all things right. Trials and suffering allow us to relate to Jesus and respond like Jesus. With Christ, we can face challenges knowing we are made to be revealers of God's glory. Thanks to our faithful Creator, we can live in the goodness of God, even when the going gets tough.

This life isn't going to be easy. We live in a fallen world full of broken people, including us! If life's going to come with challenges either way, why not entrust ourselves to the One Who designed us for this?

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Have you ever succeeded at something you didn't think you could do? What was that like?

1. What's the difference between suffering for Christ and just experiencing the typical hardships of life? Why does our attitude about these things matter?

2. What kind of suffering is Peter discussing in this passage? How does that shape your perspective of rejoicing in this context?

3. In what ways can a person continue doing good even while they are suffering? Describe some examples.

4. Peter points out that judgment begins with the household of God—not with unbelievers, but with God's people first (v. 17). Why is this important to understand?

5. What is the good that Christians are to continue to do? (Think about this in terms of loving God and loving people.)

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: Think of someone who has insulted you. What is one good deed we can do in order for that person to experience the blessings of God?

Memory verse: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

Pray About It

Consider praying together while you're gathered and daily on your own with God.

A = ADORATION: Almighty God, Maker of all, I give You praise and thanks that I bear the name of Christ—that You are my faithful Creator!

C = CONFESSION: Heavenly Father, I confess that I don't necessarily rejoice when life is hard, or take insult as an opportunity to give thanks.

T = THANKSGIVING: I thank you, God, that Your Spirit of glory rests on me—that I may suffer for Your name rather than just insult or shame.

S = SUPPLICATION: Please, O God, keep me committed to Your will, my faithful Creator, so I may obey Your gospel and continue to do good.

Notes

Our Prayer:

That as we come to understand and embrace our identity in Christ, our lives will be forever different by His power and grace.

This week's Scripture: **1**To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: **2** Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; **3** not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. **4** And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

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 alert and of sober mind. 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 the family of believers throughout the world is 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.

Think About It

Most of the Western world can't even comprehend the kind of submission that's taught in 1 Peter. What does it take to live this way?

When you look at many leaders of today, you might not rank "humility" too high on the world's list of values. But in 1 Peter 5:2-3, mature believers are given a set of specifications that describe humility, clearly contrasting God's way from the world's ways: serving "not because you must, but because you are willing," "not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve," and "not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

Do these descriptions bring any negative examples to your mind—perhaps in family, school, or workplace situations?

Many of us are familiar with the sort of authority that resents responsibility, seeks self-serving interests, or uses positions of power to boss other people around. In turn, it's probably no surprise that submitting to authority is the last thing most of us want to do!

But the people of God interact differently. Whether someone is new in faith or mature in faith, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble" (v. 5). Whether we're those entrusted to care for others or those who have something to learn from others, we're all urged to "clothe yourselves with humility toward one another," humbling ourselves under the care of God.

Though we may experience challenging dynamics, difficult relationships, and anxiety about outcomes, we know these troubles are temporary. The glory of Christ will be revealed in God's due time. Hope is reliant on humility.

After all, we face a very real enemy, the devil, who hasn't changed his plan of attack. But we also know the battle's already won, and that changes everything about the way we engage in the meantime!

Talk About It

Discuss with your growth group, a mentor or accountability partner, or friends.

Icebreaker: Think of a time you've faced a challenge and you had the opportunity to see somebody else go first. How did their example encourage you to know how to proceed?

1. Who are "the elders" (1 Peter 5:1) addressed in this passage? Who are those "who are younger" (v. 5)? Do you see yourself as newer in faith or more mature in faith? Why?

2. Given the charge to shepherd (v. 2) and/or to submit (v. 5), how does humility apply either way? Consider the example of the Chief Shepherd, Who submitted Himself to the will of God.

3. Why does Peter instruct believers to humble themselves under God's mighty hand (v. 6), then immediately urge them to cast their anxiety on God (v. 7)? How are these exhortations linked?

4. Consider that we face the same enemy today as believers faced in Peter's time (v. 8). Knowing "the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings" (v. 9), and that others have gone before you, how does this encourage you to stand firm in the faith?

5. How does the blessing described in v. 10-11 give perspective to the troubles you might face in a day? In what ways does this worldview allow you to be a person of humility, hope, and holiness in Christ?

Take it Home (Family 15)

Go back and read this week's Scripture with your family at home and/or with your church family, then discuss as you connect this week.

Conversation starter: What does it mean to be an example for others? Are older people always a good example for younger people? Can younger people be an example for older people?

Memory verse: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

