

A TEACHING MANUAL FOR USE IN ADULT STUDY GROUPS

A LIVING HOPE



LEADER'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

How do I keep my life together when everything around seems to be against me? How do I live a consistent Christian life when somebody in the office is always criticizing me and my work? What do I do if my spouse is a non-Christian and an alcoholic?

The book of 1 Peter provides answers for living the Christian life in the midst of trials and difficulties. Hope is given to lift us up when we are in the middle of seemingly unsolvable problems. We are also fortified against sin and made more like Christ. God assures us he will not leave us in this hostile world without his presence and guidance.

Through the apostle Peter the Holy Spirit gives us solutions for these and many other troubles. As we prayerfully wrestle with the truth God has given in this book we will find ourselves growing in grace.

Using the Manual

This manual provides the teacher with suggestions for teaching thirteen lessons based on Frank Barker's *A Living Hope*. Each lesson has the same format, which should help in the efficient use of the manual. The first section is entitled "Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson." Provide a copy of the Bible and the textbook for each of your students—don't assume they will always bring their own! — and have a supply of paper and pencils available. Some lessons may require additional materials. Be sure to read this section early in the week to allow time for accumulating whatever will be needed.

The following books will be invaluable at some time during the course—begin gathering them now so you will have them when you need them: an unabridged dictionary; Calvin's *Institutes* (Volume 1) or another book on systematic theology; John Bunyan's *Holy War*; a copy of at least two of the books suggested in Chapter 9 of the textbook.

The second section, "For Your Study," indicates what you will need to study in order to teach the lesson. For each lesson you will study the corresponding chapter of the textbook, together with the relevant passage in 1 Peter.

The "Lesson Objectives" section sets a goal for the teaching of the lesson: to bring about a change of behavior in your students. Pray that God the Holy Spirit will be pleased to use each lesson to accomplish part of this larger goal.

The "Lesson Summary," based on the textbook, provides an overview of the lesson. There you will find which material from the text is emphasized in the teaching plan. Remember, this is just a summary: you should not depend solely on the section in preparing the lesson. Be sure to read the textbook as well in order to understand the whole thrust of the lesson.

The section entitled "Classroom Presentation" is the teaching plan for the class session. Here you will find suggestions on leading your class. These are only suggestions to help you teach the

lesson; you must decide for yourself what may or may not work in.<your class.

At the end of each chapter there is an "Assignment" to give your class. This is usually the next chapter of the textbook plus an activity. Some of these activities will be to write out answers to some of the questions at the end of the chapter.

Each student should have his own copy of the textbook. It will be very helpful if your class will read the assigned chapters beforehand — but don't be surprised if this does not happen. This is an excellent, helpful book from which they can receive benefit even without the classroom activity. (One way to encourage them to prepare for class is to suggest that they include the weekly Scripture and textbook assignments in their daily devotionals.)

A Word about Methods

The suggested methods should help your students get a fresh insight into the teachings of 1 Peter and apply them to their own lives.

Visual Aids

In each lesson you are encouraged to use either an overhead projector or a chalkboard. It is important that you have one or the other in order to outline the lesson, write out questions, or summarize and record student responses. (If neither is available you might substitute large sheets of newsprint.)

An overhead projector offers some distinct advantages: it enables you to prepare material beforehand and you can use it much as you would a chalkboard. But the major asset of this piece of equipment is its versatility. With imagination there are many ways it can be used to improve your teaching.

You the Teacher

As you use this manual and any other aids in teaching this course, please bear in mind that *you* are the one who must do the teaching. A number of tools are available to assist you, but these are useful only if they help you achieve your stated goals as teacher.

As you teach these lessons from 1 Peter you will find that they are making a difference in your own life. No matter how much you already know about this letter, thinking all this through again will sharpen your focus. You will receive fresh encouragement in your pursuit of holiness.

1

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Read 1 Peter in one sitting. List the things that caught your attention and why. Study 1:1-12 and Chapter 1 of the textbook. Write down your answers to the review questions and think how you would answer the discussion questions.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to define the Christian's living hope and (2) to look for ways in which this hope can have an increasing effect in their lives.

Lesson Summary

The apostle Peter writes his letter to Christians who are suffering persecution. He reminds them that they are strangers and pilgrims on earth and their permanent home is in heaven. They are also God's elect. God chose them not for anything that was in them or anything they would do but solely because he desired them to be his children. This election resulted in their salvation. They came to know who Jesus Christ was and what he did for them in his death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit caused them to be regenerated, and in faith they turned to Christ for salvation. They are justified and sanctified that they may become obedient servants of Jesus Christ.

God has given them a living hope — a confident expectation of an inheritance in heaven. This inheritance is received through faith and is made certain by God's power, which preserves them to the end.

The assurance of their inheritance, even in the midst of suffering, enables them to rejoice greatly. But why does God permit their trials? It is to refine and prove their faith. Our faith is refined as we get rid of actions and thoughts that do not belong in the Christian life. Our faith is proved as we remain steadfast in Christ even in suffering.

The realization that God has chosen and made us his own should make our trials bearable. Knowing that he has promised us an inheritance in heaven should bring rejoicing no matter what our circumstances.

Classroom Presentation

Introduce this study with a brief overview of 1 Peter with the help of the Introduction to this manual and whatever observations you jotted down as you studied 1 Peter. Allow about five minutes for this.

On a chalkboard or overhead projector list the questions below as an outline for teaching your class, either for an inductive study (with class participation) or as an outline for your lecture. Have the class read aloud the verses for each group of questions. This should take about thirty minutes.

Verses 3-5:

1. What is the living hope?
2. What is its content?
3. How does one come to possess it?
4. Why is it certain?

Verses 6-9:

1. What conflicting emotions did those to whom Peter wrote have as they faced trials?
2. What reasons are given for these trials?

Verses 10-12:

1. For whom were the Old Testament prophets writing?
2. What was the source of their writings?

Verses 1, 2:

1. How did we become possessors of a living hope?
2. Define foreknowledge.

In the remainder of the period have the class share answers to Discussion Questions 1 and 3 at the end of the chapter.

Assignment

Urge your students to read Chapter 2 of the textbook. Also have them read through 1 Peter at one sitting, noting the passages in which the words *hope*, *holy* and *suffer* appear.

2

CAN I REALLY BE HOLY?

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 1:13-21, then read Chapter 2 of the textbook and compare the author's outline with yours. Write out your answers to the review questions and plan your answers to the discussion questions.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to be more consistent in their growth in holiness and (2) to see the relationship between hope and holiness.

Lesson Summary

Because Christians have the hope of eternal life that is a gift from God they should live lives that reflect our special relationship with God. This life is to be *godly* (or *holy*). We are to learn first to think like Christians, and to be self-controlled and disciplined. This means that we are to exercise moderation regarding the things of this world.

As Christians we are to set our sights on heaven; we are to live expectantly and to persevere in the face of trials (see 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1).

Throughout life we are to be obedient to the commands of God. Our loving obedience is a part of our growth in holiness. The Bible tells us that we are to be holy because God is holy, which means that our character is to reflect his character. Both our actions and our motivations are to be godly.

We are to live as pilgrims on the earth with reverent fear because this is not our permanent home — we have the hope of heaven. Fear is the awe we have for God because he is God and the resulting desire we have not to offend him.

The reasons for these exhortations are, first, that God will judge each man's work impartially, so we are to be faithful to him in all we do; another reason has to do with the way we have been redeemed — Jesus, God's beloved Son, died for us. Our lives are to reflect by godly living the awesome price that was paid to give us the hope of everlasting life.

Classroom Presentation

Begin the class by having the students share what they learned from their reading of 1 Peter. Ask them how Peter used the word *hope* and how hope and suffering were linked. Take about five minutes for this.

Use the next fifteen minutes teaching the content of 1 Peter 1:13-21, having the students read it aloud before you comment on it.

Have the class write their answers to the review questions and share them with the class. (It's a good idea to have the questions on the overhead projector or chalkboard for those who may not have brought their textbooks.) This should take about ten minutes.

Divide the class into two groups, assigning Discussion Questions 1 and 2 to one group and Questions 3 and 4 to the other. When they have worked out their answers have them share them with the class.

Assignment

Urge your students to read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3 and Chapter 3 of the textbook, writing out answers to the review questions. Select two members of the class to prepare and be ready to share their answers to Discussion Question 2.

3

I THOUGHT I WAS GROWN UP ALREADY

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students; a dictionary; volume one of Calvin's *Institutes* or some other work on systematic theology.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 1:22-2:3 and read Chapter 3 of the textbook, writing out your answers to the review questions.

Copy your dictionary's definitions of *mortify* and *vivify* and look up these terms in the *Institutes* (3.3.3ff) or your other reference work. If you have difficulty with their significance ask your pastor to help you. He may be able to provide additional sources of help as well.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to deal with problems that keep them from loving their brothers and sisters in Christ and (2) to encourage them to have daily devotions.

Lesson Summary

This lesson deals with problems that can impede Christian maturity. Verses 22-25 are an exhortation to love your fellow believers. We have been born again, which means that we are a new creation, and we have a new heart with the capacity to love our brothers. Peter urges us to put that capacity to work.

Love for other believers doesn't develop automatically: there is still sin in us. In 2:1 we are told to get rid of sins that keep us from loving one another — that is, to repent of thoughts and actions that are unloving or that keep love from being expressed. The implication is that, as we repent, the Spirit through the word will fill us with right thoughts which will issue in loving actions.

Another ingredient vital for spiritual growth is the reading and studying of the Bible. Peter calls this "milk" because it is indispensable to spiritual growth. Even adults need a balanced diet for physical health. Spiritual growth also requires daily food, and that food is the word of God. And we need to meditate and pray over it that it may be assimilated into our lives.

Classroom Presentation

Begin the class period by giving an outline and overview of the Scripture passage, then have the class share their answers to the review questions at the end of the chapter. Help them to answer in a way that shows that they understand what the author intended. Take about fifteen minutes for this.

Have the two students you appointed last week give their answers to Discussion Question 2. This could be a springboard to the discussion of problems that keep the students from loving one another. Use Discussion Question 3 to encourage their sharing—but be careful to keep control and not let this become a gossip session. Allow about fifteen minutes for this.

The last part of the session should be used to encourage your students to have daily devotions. A quiet time should include Bible reading, meditation and prayer. Have your class share their present devotional habits, then ask for answers to Discussion Question 4.

Part of a quiet time should be spent in prayer, including praise, thanksgiving and intercession. Our prayers should also include confession, for we are to confess and repent of our sins. When Peter says to rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind he is saying that we must first acknowledge that such action is sin. Then we are to confess our sins with godly sorrow and determine to put such behavior behind us. Claiming the power of the Holy Spirit, we are then to seek to replace these sins with Christlike thoughts and actions. We are not demonstrating repentance when we confess a sin and then turn around and do it again. We are to *die* to sin and self (mortification) and *live* to righteousness (vivification). When we do this daily we are growing spiritually. Encourage the class to make this a part of their quiet times.

Assignment

Ask your students to keep a diary of their quiet-time habits during the following week, listing time spent, Bible passages read and insights gained; also how they prayed and for whom and what they interceded. Urge them to begin praying daily for someone they find it difficult to love.

Also urge them to read 1 Peter 2:4-10 and Chapter 4 of the textbook.

4

HOW CAN A STONE BE ALIVE?

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students; a copy of John Bunyan's *Holy War* (you should be able to find this in your church library or public library).

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 2:4-10 and read Chapter 4 of the textbook, writing out your answers to Review Questions 1-4.

Read Bunyan's *Holy War* and jot down ways you can tell this allegory briefly. The answers to Question 5 in both the review and discussion questions will be the two points you'll want to make with this story.

Lesson Objectives

(1) To lead your students to a deeper appreciation of the great privileges that are theirs as Christians and (2) to encourage them to share their faith with others.

Lesson Summary

This portion of 1 Peter tells of the privileged position we have as a part of God's family. When we were converted we were made part of a living temple corresponding to the Old Testament building that was the Jewish temple. The foundation of this living temple is Jesus Christ, and conversion occurred when we trusted him alone to save us. Christ makes us living stones as he incorporates us into his temple.

We are also the priests of that temple, and the sacrifices we offer are spiritual ones of praise, obedience and daily service.

There can be no other cornerstone or foundation than Jesus Christ. There is no other way to become part of this temple than through him, for he has said that no one comes to the Father except through him. This is difficult for some to accept, but if we are going to call Jesus *Lord* we have no other option. Those who truly believe in him know that he is the most valuable thing in the world and will follow him no matter what the consequences. All who stumble over this claim of Christ will surely fall into utter ruin.

Peter uses terms that refer to Old Testament Israel to describe other privileges of the church. We are a chosen people, which means that God chose us to be his family from before the

foundation of the world. We are also a holy nation, which means that we are set apart for God, a people who belong to God.

Our function as his people is to show forth his praise. This means that we are to show forth his glorious attributes and to manifest his power. This we do by living godly lives before a watching world.

Our motivation for showing forth his praises is found in the contrast between what we were before we became Christians and what we are now that he has changed us. The privileges we have received should lead us to ever-greater faithfulness, joy and loving obedience. All these bring us a joy that sings through our lives in thanksgiving and praise.

Classroom Presentation

Begin by asking the students to share their experiences in starting or maintaining their quiet times. Were they able to discipline themselves to set and keep a schedule? How do they feel about a personal devotional time? What problems did they encounter and how did they solve them? Urge them to continue keeping their diaries so they can report on them later.

Explain the meaning of 1 Peter 2:4-10 and use Review Questions 1-4 to lead a discussion. You want the class to know that this passage lists the privileges of being a Christian. Discussion Questions 1 and 2 may help them gain insight in this area. Use about twenty minutes for this.

Take five minutes to tell the story of Bunyan's *Holy War* and make the two points suggested in For Your Study above.

Follow up on Discussion Question 5 by asking if your students are witnessing to some who are having difficulty in surrendering their lives to Jesus. What objections have they heard raised? How did they answer them? What other answers could be given? The purpose of this discussion is to encourage your group to witness even though it may be difficult and seemingly ineffective. Their motivation is in the living hope which is theirs and a desire for others to share in it. And if Christ is precious to us it should encourage us to share him with others.

Assignment

Have your students read 1 Peter 2:11-17 and Chapter 5 of the textbook. Ask them to begin praying in their quiet times for a particular person to whom they can witness.

5

FREE TO DO WHAT?

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 2:11-17 and read Chapter 5 of the textbook, writing out your answers to the review and discussion questions.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to understand the need for them to live moral lives, (2) to submit to proper authority and (3) to appreciate the biblical teaching with respect to Christian liberty.

Lesson Summary

In 1 Peter 2:11, 12 we are told that Christians are to live moral lives, abstaining from sinful desires and practices—that is, to repress them when they arise and to be on guard against temptation. We must live righteous lives because we belong to God: our life-style should glorify him. Moreover these sinful desires keep us from spiritual growth. One way to overcome these desires is to crowd them out with good thoughts such as are listed in Philippians 4:8. Another way is to see to it that our manner of living is characterized by goodness. This is to be observable so that even our enemies will have to testify that we are godly.

Verses 13-16 deal with the Christian's submission to proper authorities, which has to do primarily with the civil government with its responsibility for maintaining law and order. We are to submit to such authority in the fulfillment of its responsibility because the Lord has called it into being for just that purpose. Of course if we are called upon to disobey God we must obey him rather than men.

Peter then assures us that we have Christian liberty; however, we are not to use liberty as a cover for evil but to be law-abiding.

In verse 17 Peter summarizes our duty in various relationships: we are to have proper respect for everyone. This has application to many social evils such as racism, abortion and pornography. Man is made in the image of God, and even though that image is greatly distorted by the fall God still commands us to respect all men.

But we are especially to love our brothers in Christ, for God has put us into his church and

called us his family. We are to worship together and serve together, and together we are to spread the kingdom of God. We show our love for his church by being part of a local body of believers and working together to accomplish the purposes for which God has called us. This love extends beyond our local church to the whole brotherhood of true believers.

We are told also to fear God, which involves reverence and obedience. Finally we are commanded to honor the king, which refers us back to what has already been said: we are to respect the civil government.

Classroom Presentation

Prior to class time write out on separate sheets of paper the assignments for the three groups proposed below and outline 1 Peter 2:11-17 on the overhead projector or chalkboard.

As the class period begins comment briefly on each point of your outline of the Scripture passage. This is for orientation only — the meaning and application will come from small-group studies.

Divide the class into three groups and give them the assignments below.

Group 1 — Study verses 11 and 12 and answer the following questions:

1. How can we abstain from sinful desires?
2. What reasons are given for abstaining from such desires?

Group 2—Study verses 13-15 and answer the following questions:

1. For what purpose has God ordained civil government?
2. Why should Christians obey the civil government?
3. Is a Christian ever justified in resisting or attempting to overthrow a government? Why? Can you give an example for today?
4. Cite examples of how Christians may tend to disregard the civil law today.

Group 3 — Study verses 16 and 17 and answer the following questions:

1. Describe Christian liberty.
2. How may Christians abuse their freedom?
3. How can the use or abuse of Christian liberty affect our witness?
4. In what ways can we love the brotherhood in our local church? In the church universal?

Allow twenty to twenty-five minutes for this exercise, then rejoin the groups and hear their reports. Control the time so that each group can make at least a partial report.

Assignment

Have your students read 1 Peter 2:18-25 and Chapter 6 of the textbook. Also have them write out their answers to Review Question 1 and Discussion Question 2.

6

IT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 2:18-25 and read Chapter 6 of the textbook, writing out your answers to Review Questions 1-4 and Discussion Questions 1 and 4.

Lesson Objective

To enable your students to respond properly to unjust treatment.

Lesson Summary

Christians are to submit to unjust treatment. In verses 18-21 Peter addresses slaves and tells them that they are to submit to their masters whether they are good or evil. We all have masters—in business, school or home. Some are fair, some are not. We are to be submissive to them all, and if we are treated unfairly we are not to rebel or retaliate.

We are to respond this way because we know it pleases God. We know that God is in control of our lives and that he uses every situation for our good and his glory. Moreover we are to behave this way because it is a part of our calling: we are being conformed to the image of Christ. This means that we are to submit to unjust suffering even as he did.

Verses 21-23 show that Christ is our example in submission to unfair treatment. He was sinless and did not deceive when he spoke. When he was insulted he did not retaliate. When he suffered the cruelties leading to the cross he did not curse or threaten; rather he handed himself over to his Father, who would vindicate him—in his resurrection and ascension. Jesus is our example: we are to have the same submissive spirit that he had. There are times when we should defend ourselves, but even then we are to have the same Christlike spirit.

Verses 24 and 25 speak of the nature and purpose of Christ's death: it was as a substitutionary atonement. When he died he suffered the punishment our sins earned for us. His death also destroyed the dominion of sin in all who come to him in faith. He frees us from the tyranny of sin and sets us free to live godly lives.

Classroom Presentation

Ask your students how their quiet times are coming along. Have they had opportunities to witness to the ones they are praying for? Has anyone experienced a breakthrough in the matter of loving others? Ask for prayer requests in these areas and spend five to seven minutes praying together.

Using your outline for this lesson, work through 1 Peter 2:18-25. Your answers to the questions should help organize and clarify the lesson. This should take about twenty minutes.

Suffering unfairly presents us with an opportunity for spiritual growth. Relate the following illustration: A woman falls to her knees hundreds of yards from the front of a great cathedral. She "walks" on them all the way to the steps, up the steps, through the doors and down the aisle. When she reaches the altar her knees are torn and bloody, but she believes she has done a good work.

Ask the group if this is what Peter is writing about. Does our suffering play a part in earning our salvation?

Ask for answers first to Discussion Question 3 and then to Question 2. In the time remaining have your class propose answers to the questions in the Putting It into Practice section of Chapter 6 of the textbook.

Assignment

Ask your students to use part of their quiet times during the next week to think of someone who treats them unjustly. Have they responded as Christ would? Apply the principles of mortification and vivification to any response that is not biblical. Pray with your class for the one who is being unfair.

Urge your students to read 1 Peter 3:1-7 and Chapter 7 of the textbook. Also have them write out their answers to Discussion Question 4.

7

ISN'T MY HOME MY CASTLE?

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 3:1-7 and read Chapter 7 of the textbook, writing out your answers to the review questions and Discussion Questions 1 and 4. How does the author define *submission* and how is this lesson related to the previous one?

Lesson Objective

To enable your students to understand, and commit themselves to practice, the principles of submission and considerateness as they apply to marriage.

Lesson Summary

Today many marriages are in trouble, and the basic problem is selfishness: many marry for what they can get, not for what they can contribute to their marriage.

Peter's instruction to wives in verses 1-6 is to submit themselves to their husbands. Submission does not mean that wives are inferior— Christ is not inferior to his Father, yet he submitted to him so that he could accomplish the work of a mediator. The reason for submission is so that a husband-wife team may function in an orderly way.

This principle applies even when the husband is an unbeliever. The wife must try to win him to Christ; but she is to do so not by preaching at him but by her manner of life. She witnesses to him by her godly life and her reverence for God.

A woman's true beauty consists in an inward spirit that is quiet and gentle. An inner being that is becoming more Christlike is what makes any person truly attractive. Christian wives are to be the spiritual daughters of Sarah, Abraham's wife. She was submissive, having a spirit of quiet confidence rather than fear.

The husband is to be considerate of his wife. He should keep himself well-informed about his wife's needs and lovingly meet all of them that he can. The Christian husband is*also to honor (respect) his wife as the weaker vessel, realizing that she is heir with him of eternal life. There may be a difference in function, but there is no difference in worth: theirs is a spiritual partnership that is to bear fruit which will bring glory to God.

If husbands and wives do not apply these principles their prayers will be hindered. Not to obey what God has commanded concerning our marital relationships is sin. The consequences are disharmony that will spill over from the home into other relationships. Our relation with God is disrupted, our prayer life suffers (see Ps. 66:18). We must guard against anything that damages our relationship with our spouses.

Classroom Presentation

Have your students share their answers to Discussion Question 4 (which you assigned last week). Lead in prayer that God would use the Scriptures to bring more harmony into the marriages of those present.

Work through your outline of 1 Peter 3:1-7. In commenting on verse 1 refer to the author's definition of submission and relate it to Review Question 4. When you come to verse 7 explain Mr. Barker's definition of honor, followed by your answer to Review Question 5. The foregoing should take about twenty minutes.

Lead a discussion of the author's questions in the following order: Review Questions 1, 2, 3; Discussion Question 1. What does the author mean when he says that the home is not so much a castle as it is a crucible? Ask those of your group who are married how they rate their relationships with their spouses. What principles does the author suggest that a couple use to help them *give* more to each other instead of *taking*? Encourage your class to try applying these principles during the coming week.

Assignment

Urge your students to read 1 Peter 3:8-12 and Chapter 8 of the textbook. Also have them write out their answers to Review Question 5.

8

WHY NOT GET EVEN?

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 3:8-12 and Chapter 8 of the textbook, writing out your answers to the review questions and thinking about answers to the discussion questions. Be ready to share a personal example of how you overcame the spirit of retaliation, or use the author's illustration in the How to Act toward Those Who Wrong You section of the textbook.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to use their quiet times to examine their actions toward other Christians and those who wrong them and (2) to mortify all that is unbiblical, prayerfully living the principles in this lesson.

Lesson Summary

In verse 8 we are given five commands with regard to our actions toward our fellow Christians. We are to be of one mind, united by what we believe and practice. (This does not mean that we have to think alike in everything; but on the essentials of our faith there must be agreement, which comes as we submit to the word of God.) We are to be sympathetic, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. We are to be loving, practicing brotherly love as members of the same heavenly family. We are to be compassionate, showing kindness and caring toward those who are in trouble. We are to be humble, as Christ was meek and lowly in heart. This is not weakness, it is strength.

Verses 9-12 tell us how to act toward those who deliberately harm us. We are not to try to get even but are to be a blessing to those who wrong us, speaking well of them and being kind to them. We do this because Christlikeness is part of our calling. It will also bring God's blessing upon us.

Classroom Presentation

Divide your class into two groups, one to study and write out answers to Review Questions 1 and 2 and the other to do the same with 3-5. Allow about five minutes for this and reconvene the class to share answers.

For his own use, have each student prepare a list of the five duties toward our fellow Christians and the two principles of behavior toward those who wrong us that are taught in this passage. This should take about five minutes.

Share with the group your personal example of overcoming a spirit of retaliation and ask if anyone in the class has had a similar experience.

Have the students share their answers to Discussion Question 4. Conclude the class with a season of prayer.

Assignment

Ask your students to use their quiet times this week to examine their relationships with others in the church, using the lists they prepared. Remind them to make prayerful use of the principles of dying to sin (mortification) and living to righteousness (vivification) as they examine themselves.

Urge them to read 1 Peter 3:13-22 and Chapter 9 of the textbook.

9

I NEVER KNOW WHAT TO SAY

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students; the books mentioned in the Apologize for Our Faith? section of Chapter 9 of the textbook.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 3:13-22 and read Chapter 9 of the textbook.

Using the books you selected from the list in the textbook, make a list of the most common objections to Christianity and prepare answers to at least six of them. Mark the pages where answers can be found and bring the books to class with you for use in your classroom presentation.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to answer critics' objections to Christianity and thereby (2) to be more confident and effective in witnessing.

Lesson Summary

Peter continues to teach concerning the proper response to persecution. He points out the unlikelihood of our suffering if we live godly lives, but goes on to say that if we *are* harassed because of our stand for what is right — because of our faithfulness in witnessing, for example, or our condemnation of some immoral practice such as abortion—it will become a source of blessing to us because we are suffering for Christ's sake. We are told not to be afraid of those who threaten us but to set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts. He is in control and will see that all things work out for his glory and our good.

We are cautioned also to be ready with answers to objections to our faith. If we are challenged concerning what we believe we should be prepared with logical and clear reasons for believing as we do, but always with gentleness and respect. All our actions and attitudes should be godly so that our attackers may be put to shame for slandering us.

Peter again relates our suffering to God's will. The author distinguishes between God's *preceptive* will and his *planned* will. Those who persecute us violate God's preceptive will, but still the trial was part of God's eternal plan. The clearest example of this was when evil men with evil purpose crucified Christ; but what men intended for evil God used for man's salvation.

Verse 18 tells of the reason for Christ's death: as our substitute he suffered once and for all the punishment for our sins to bring us to God.

After Jesus died his body was resurrected by the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit by whom Christ had preached through Noah to those who are now disembodied spirits in prison. This introduces a comparison between Noah's salvation and baptism. The water that drowned those who wouldn't listen to Noah saved *him* by floating the ark. In a similar way *we* are saved by baptism. Peter does not mean water baptism (that which is external and washes away dirt) but an inner baptism by the Spirit—baptism by which we are placed in Christ and given a clean conscience. By his resurrection we have victory over sin and death, and by his ascension he assumes a position of authority to save all his own.

Classroom Presentation

Work through your outline of 1 Peter 3:13-22 and take about ten minutes to explain the passage.

Divide the class into three groups to study objections to the Christian faith. Give each group at least two objections in writing, together with one or more of the books with marked answers you brought with you to class. Ask them to find and write out their answers, and when the class is rejoined have them share them with the class through role-playing, one student making the objection and another giving the answer. As they respond remind them to do so with gentleness and respect. Use the remainder of the class time for this.

Assignment

Encourage your students to obtain for themselves one of the books listed in the textbook and continue this study.

Urge them to read 1 Peter 4:1-11 and Chapter 10 of the textbook. Ask them also to prepare a report on their quiet times.

10

WHY IS EVERYONE LOOKING AT ME THAT WAY?

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 4:1-11 and read Chapter 10 of the textbook, writing out your answers to the review and discussion questions.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to enhance their quiet times and (2) to help them to respond biblically if they suffer for doing God's will.

Lesson Summary

The theme of suffering on account of our faith continues, and in verses 1-6 the suffering of Christ on our behalf challenges our willingness to endure persecution rather than disobey God. The phrase "he who has suffered in his body is done with sin" (vs 1) appears to refer to the purifying effect of suffering, which may be to deliver us from sin and stimulate our desire for godliness. We should long for this kind of change because of the fruitlessness of our former lifestyle. But we cannot expect our former associates to understand our new way of life—they will ridicule us for not joining them in the things we used to delight in. Our new manner of life may convict them of their own sin and lead them to repentance; but if it does not it is likely they will shun us or even attack us.

Six aspects of Christian service are listed in verses 7-11. We are to keep our minds awake and clear so that we can be ready to pray about anything at any time. We are to have so deep a love for each other that we are always ready to forgive those who harm us. We are to be warmly hospitable to each other. We are to use whatever spiritual gifts God has given us to serve his people. The final two areas of service appear to be the use of special gifts, one being the preaching and teaching of the pure word of God, the other the giving of oneself to a life of service so that explicit praise may be directed to God because of it.

Classroom Presentation

Begin the lesson by asking your students to share some aspects of their quiet times. Are they

being more consistent in setting apart time for their devotions? Has there been a change of attitude toward those with whom they may not get along? Have they had opportunities to witness to some for whom they are praying? Have they seen other answers to prayer? Allow ten minutes for this.

Work through your outline of 1 Peter 4:1-11. After verse 6 ask for answers to Review Questions 1-3 and follow with Discussion Questions 1-3. This should bring you about thirty minutes into the period. Use the remainder of the lesson time explaining the six aspects of Christian service in verses 7-11.

Assignment

Ask your students to meditate during the week on Peter's admonition concerning prayer in verse 7 and have them search their hearts to see if their practice in this area conforms to Peter's emphasis.

Urge them to read 1 Peter 4:12-19 and Chapter 11 of the textbook.

11

WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS?

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 4:12-19 and read Chapter 11 of the textbook, writing out your answers to the review questions and thinking about answers to Discussion Questions 4-6.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to recognize that suffering is normal for a Christian and (2) to practice the principles laid out in this passage if they are persecuted.

Lesson Summary

In some sectors of American religious life there is a teaching that God wants us to expect a trouble-free life. It is said that by applying certain biblical principles we can be healthy and wealthy. This idea is enticing but it is not true. In this passage Peter tells us how to deal with the problems of suffering and persecution.

Verses 12-14 tell us not to be surprised when we suffer. Suffering is not something strange in the Christian's life—it is a way in which our faith is tested and purified. We are told to rejoice when we suffer for our faith, because thereby we become partakers in Christ's sufferings. This is not to imply that the sufferings and death of Christ were not sufficient for our atonement: they were. Rather we share in his sufferings because we belong to him. As we serve in his name we suffer, but we also rejoice because such suffering shows that our faith is genuine and we will receive great joy when he returns.

Moreover we are to understand that to suffer insults or reproach for holding up the name of Christ will bring blessing upon us. We are not to be filled with resentment when this happens but are to feel that we have been blessed. This is a sign that the Holy Spirit is working in us to make us Christlike and thus different from the world. This suffering will also bring his presence and power upon us in greater measure. But none of this is for us if we bring trouble upon ourselves for wrongdoing (verse 15).

In verses 16-19 Peter continues to deal with the proper response to suffering. We are told not to be ashamed when we suffer but rather to praise God that we are his. And if trials are to fall upon us, the children of God, consider the dreadful condition of those who do not receive the

gospel. With this in mind we are exhorted to entrust ourselves to God, who is taking care of us even while we are suffering. And we are to keep on doing good, not allowing persecution to sidetrack us from continuing to trust and obey.

Classroom Presentation

Prepare a copy of the following questions for each student. Note: this is intended to get the class thinking about the content of the lesson, so don't let them get away with yes-or-no answers! When they have finished have them read their responses, but don't get into a discussion of who's right and who's wrong.

Do you agree or disagree . . .

1. That we are to rejoice when we suffer?
2. That if we don't suffer we may not be Christians?
3. That sharing Christ's sufferings helps us get into heaven?
4. That suffering for doing wrong is right?
5. That Christians are judged by God?
6. That it may be God's will for us to suffer?

Work through your outline of 1 Peter 4:12-19, pointing out the various ways that Christians are to respond to persecution. Explain the reasons for the response of rejoicing. Use about thirty minutes for this.

Go back to the test and discuss the responses in the light of this passage. Share your answers to Discussion Questions 4-6.

Assignment

Have your students prepare brief (two minutes or less, depending on the size of your class) reports on what their quiet times have meant to them during these studies. Urge them to read 1 Peter 5 and Chapter 12 of the textbook.

12

MY TURN TO LEAD

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Study and outline 1 Peter 5 and read Chapter 12 of the textbook, writing out your answers to the review questions.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to use biblical principles of leadership in their lives and (2) to discern the exercise of these principles in others when officers of the church are being elected.

Lesson Summary

The church needs good leadership, and God has equipped men with the necessary gifts to be leaders. Those so gifted for this role must humbly assume their responsibilities and fulfill them in accordance with his commands.

Peter calls these leaders "elders" and charges them to feed the flock—which is precisely the command that Jesus had given to him. Church members need, and have a right to expect, spiritual nourishment, guidance, comfort, encouragement, discipline, etc. Elders are also called "overseers," which speaks of governing as well as shepherding.

They are to perform their labors with the right spirit, not because they are compelled to but because they want to. Nor are they to labor out of self-interest, as for money or fame, but because they are concerned to build up the body of Christ. And they are to govern not by being bossy but as good examples.

Verses 5-9 describe some responsibilities that fall not only to leaders but also to followers. We are to be humble, for God gives grace to the humble. In humility we show not only our awareness that God is sovereign over all things but our willingness to yield to him and to trust him in everything. We are to cast our cares upon him—a sure antidote for anxiety. When circumstances cause us worry we are invited to turn everything over to him and trust that he will work things out to his own glory and our good. We are to exercise self-control and to remain alert because the devil is laying wait to destroy us. We are to resist temptation, and should we suffer for Christ's sake we must remain faithful. We are to resist the devil, standing firm in the faith. This refers to sound doctrine as well as faithful, obedient living. As an encouragement to

steadfastness we are reminded that we are not alone in our suffering—many brothers and sisters in the Lord have suffered and are continuing to suffer. For their encouragement, then, we must be faithful.

In verses 10 and 11 Peter concludes his letter with assurances of the sufficiency of God's grace, and in 12-14 he sends personal greetings. God has graciously called us to be his people; and although we may suffer for awhile he has promised us eternal life: this is our living hope. While we remain in this world he promises to cause us to grow to be more like Christ—to be strong and firm and steadfast. We may experience suffering, but the promised end is glory, and this prompts Peter to burst out in praise to God for the eternal power with which he sustains us.

Classroom Presentation

Begin the session by having the students share what their quiet times have meant to them during this course. (Keep your eye on the clock if you have a large class.)

Take about twenty-five minutes to work through your outline of 1 Peter 5, spending most of your time in the first four verses where the emphasis is on leadership. Discuss answers to Review Questions 1-4.

Have the class cooperate in drawing up a list of the qualifications for leaders (elders) found or implied in this passage. Then pose the following questions:

1. Does every leader in the church have to fulfill all these qualifications?
2. Can some of these qualifications begin in seed form and then develop?
3. When voting on elders for your church, how would you use these qualifications to determine your vote? (This may not be as simple as it sounds.)
4. What methods does your church use to develop its leadership?

Assignment

Have your students read through 1 Peter in one sitting and review the textbook to this point. Finally urge them to study Chapter 13 but *not* to rate themselves until the next lesson period.

13

GETTING IT TOGETHER

Some Things You'll Need for This Lesson

PowerPoint projector or whiteboard; Bible, pencils and paper for students; a few extra copies of the textbook for visitors or new students.

For Your Study

Read Chapter 13 of the textbook and rate yourself. Think how you would answer Discussion Question 1.

Review your outline of 1 Peter and condense it to give to your students, preferably on paper of a size to fit in their Bibles so they are handy whenever they read this letter. Be sure that all the major themes are included.

Lesson Objectives

To enable your students (1) to review the major lessons learned during the course and (2) to continue their quiet times on a daily basis.

Lesson Summary

Refer to the summaries of previous lessons and the outline you have developed.

Classroom Presentation

Pass out copies of the abbreviated outline you prepared for your students and work through it with them, noting major themes. Use about fifteen minutes for this.

Have your students rate themselves in the categories in Chapter 13. When they have finished, share with them your own personal ratings and point out some of your strengths and weaknesses. Follow with ten to fifteen minutes of group prayer, encouraging each student to praise God for specific things they have learned during the course and to ask for his help in those areas where they are weak. Lead off the season of prayer yourself — your example should direct and encourage your students to pray sincerely and expectantly.

Assignment

Exhort your students to continue their quiet times, applying the principles they have learned during these sessions. Remind them to continue to pray for people who are not Christians and to be alert for opportunities to witness to them.