
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 1 Peter

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1 Peter 5: 10-14: "Depend on God's Grace!"

General idea: Have you considered how kind God is with us (even when we are in the depths of stress and despair), how His hand is guiding, and how He will restore us for our benefit and His glory? This passage is about the great hope we have because Christ our Lord is our Great Hope! There is no escape from suffering; living in a fallen world, we will, at times, experience pain and despair. The incredible news is that He still cares. Jesus will lift us up out of whatever we are in now or will ever face! And in the meantime, He will give us the strength to endure and even to learn and grow from it. This process will make us better and more mature so we will be a better help to others and more insightful and character-driven ever than before. Our foundation is secure and our standing is firm when we are in Him; we can withstand anything this world throws at us when we are in Him!

Peter's main mission was to be an encourager to the people who were in distress. How sweet words of encouragement are to those in anguish, and how much more impacting those words are when we know that the person saying them is real and sincere! Peter also offers the assurance that the Gospel is real and is relevant. It is for us now, no matter who we are, where we are, or what we face, Jesus Christ loves us and has a plan for us. God is not far off, unapproachable, detached, or antagonistic. He is here, He is with us now, His love is real and He is totally concerned for us. Peter then closes his epistle to let his people know they are not alone or distanced from God or from others. We are in this world as a community; we are together. The only time we are not is when we cut ourselves off from others; however, we can never cut ourselves off from God!

Vs. 10-11: Jesus is our Promise, Strength, and Validation! God called us to eternal glory, but we must never think of ourselves as equal with God. Rather, we are to humble ourselves, whatever comes into our lives--strife, adversity, goodness, or riches. We are to accept God's hand. Otherwise, Satan will have his hand upon us!

- *The God of all grace* means that God is a God who blesses us. Thus, we can have firm faith and confidence in Him for whatever we face. Here, it is referring to Christ's return; we have hope now, but the ultimate Hope will come, in His time, and He will lift us out of our situation (Isa. 44:6; Jonah 4:2; John 14:27; 20:19; Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2)!
- *Called you* here is a doxology, that God has a plan and purpose for us (Rom. 8:1, 28-30; 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:10)! Consequently, we have an ultimate Hope beyond the hope we can see! The only barrier to this hope is our discouragement, our feelings that result from a lack of faith and spiritual

maturity; this impacts all that we are and do in life! Peter, in this context, is calling for an attitude of self-control.

- *In Christ* refers to how He has freed us from sin, how He suffered for us, and our union in Him, as He dwells in us and represents us before the Father. All that we are, have, or could have comes from Christ. This translates into how we are to treat others (Rom. 6:3-11; 8:9-11, 17; 1 Cor. 6:15-17; 2 Cor. 1:5; 13:3-6; Gal. 3:26-29; 5:24; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; 3:3-4, 11-15)!

To God be the glory and to nothing else! It may not seem that we are in the loop with God's plans and purpose, but we can take comfort in that He is indeed in control. God does not need us to reconcile all the truths, reasonings, and intricacies of theology or understand His dealings with humankind. He only desires that we exercise simple faith and trust in Him. We can praise Him for His glory, even when we are being persecuted and are suffering. The key is to keep our focus on who He is, and not on ourselves or our circumstances .

Vs. 12-14: Closing salutations. In the context of submission and humbleness, the application is for Peter's audience to realize their dependence upon God so they can accept their situation. We are still to be proactive, but dependence on God removes our frustration, prevents disillusionment, and keeps us centered on what is important in life, which is Christ. We can depend on God's grace because God will provide a way out--in His time (Job 1-2 ; Psalm 31:9, 15; 62; 103; 119:50; Isa. 26:3; 41:10; Jer. 27:11; Luke 10:20; Rom 8:28-29; 35-37; 12; John 14:1; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 1:6; James 1:2-3; 1 Pet 4:12-19; Rev. 21:4)!

- *With the help of Silas.* Perhaps Peter (as with Paul, the most educated of all of the Disciples) dictated his letter; here it may mean it was dictated to Silas or that Silas delivered it for him. Silas was Paul's companion on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:22-29, 40). (Acts 16:37). Peter does not go about ministry or live his life alone; even this epistle is a collaboration by others united in Christ and guided by the Spirit to glorify the Father.
- *She in Babylon* was, perhaps, a cryptogram (codeword) referring to the Christians in Rome. It may also refer to the coming judgment that takes place a few hundred years later.
- *Mark* refers to John-Mark who was the secretary who dictated the Gospel of Mark. Peter was also a prime author of the book (Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5-13; 15:37-39).
- *Kiss of love* was a common form of affectionate greeting among those who were close, such as friends and relatives. It is more than just a handshake, but has no sexual connotations to it at all (Luke 15:20; Rom. 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:26).

This passage in First Peter composes the final section of this great epistle.

We are given the essential, fundamental postures and exercises for being a spiritually mature Christian, a Christian rooted in the call to be solid in the foundation of our Lord! This is not to be for selfish gain, rather for an attitude of spiritual maturity. If we desire to be close to Christ, walking in the Spirit, spiritually mature and effective, and to be all that God wants us to be, then we will build our lives on what our Lord has done. This does not mean just saying our doctrines and being faithful to our faith and our church; rather, it means being right with Christ and right in our being. It is essential to have correct thinking, be in personal study of His Word, prayer, and devotions, and know the fundamentals of doctrine. So, the result is not just self-gratifying knowledge for us to sit on and ponder, but to know more and be more than a surface imitation of following Christ (1 Cor 11:1). We need to model His character because our whole being is in Christ!

The purpose of this epistle is to make us realize that we have true grace in Christ; this leads us to trust God in all things! It is about who we are in Christ, what He has done, and our response to Him that is rooted not just in our actions but also in the core of self--who we are. Because our core values come from our inner most thoughts and desires, they are a result of how we see ourselves, our world, and most importantly, our God. This translates into how others see us!

Peter's main theme was *submission*. Our Lord showed us the way of submission, the way of obedience, and the way for us to live out our lives. If there ever was someone who did not need to submit, it was the Creator of the universe; if there ever was a being who could have gone it alone, without any submission, it was God. Yet, He did submit; do we consider ourselves higher than God? Do we refuse His call and replace it with our fallen self? Real spiritual maturity is being submissive, even though it goes against our culture and our own preferences. This is the essential foundation for healthy growing in the Lord, and for a Christ-centered church!

One of the clearest evidences of being a mature Christian is an increased awareness and knowledge for the need to be in Christ so that our focus is no longer on ourselves. When we have an increased awareness of others that goes beyond self, then we are humble. When we have an awareness that goes beyond our self-confidence, then we are humble. When our confidence is in our Lord, then our self-confidence becomes Christ-confidence. So, our confidence is humbleness, rooted and dependent on Christ who is working through us. The result is that we are not self-driven, but Christ-driven. Thus, we will be in total surrender to God's will as the driving force for our existence.

Spiritual maturity is essential! Nothing is more distressing than a church filled with people who do not have respect for those who are in spiritual authority over them. Conversely, nothing is more discouraging to a congregation than immature and irresponsible spiritual leadership. Many churches go under every year mainly because of pride, arrogance, bitterness, envy, and strife, the opposites of what God calls us to--the opposites of maturity (Phil. 2:5-11).

When we are not focusing on maturity, then we are focusing on self which ends up destroying the Lord's work rather than building His kingdom. We are not perfect. It is a question of spirituality that we are to submit as we are called because Christ did. Without a life approach of submission, we will reveal that our foundation for life is not spiritual maturity; hence we and our churches will be hindered in growth. We cannot be a caring community if we are not submissive and humble in our relationship to God and then to one another (Eph. 5:21; 1 Thess. 5:12)!

God sometimes brings pressure against us to examine us, to purge us, to purify us so that we become stronger and are more willing and able to be used to give Him glory. God's goal is not to personally attack and destroy us; rather, He seeks to improve us and to make us our best for His glory. He wants to grow us like an oak, which grows its strongest under harsh conditions. We are to accept and grow from our experiences. The other choice is to become bitter and harsh, ending up as a burden to others and to ourselves. Our Lord will bring us the solution to our problems on His time schedule and for our benefit. We want it done *yesterday*; He may say *tomorrow*.

Our Lord gave us the prime example of this in the Garden of Gethsemane. Three times, as it is recorded, Christ asked that the suffering that was to come be stopped; but each time He said to the Father, *not my will, but yours be done!* Jesus demonstrated the way. Will we not follow (Psalm 88:8-9; 119:50; Matt. 26:36-46)? These things do not come to you by chance; they come by knowing and following Christ (Proverbs 12:4; 28:20; 31:10)!

Remember that people will always disappoint us; we will even disappoint ourselves as well as others. Christ will never disappoint us; He gives us the care, love, and His grace that we do not deserve. Submission is a risk; there is a danger to it because people may take advantage of or lead us astray. However, this can only happen if we take our eyes off our Lord (Psalm 37:5; 55:22; Isa 41:10; John 14:1; Rom 8:28-29; 35-37; James 1:1-5; 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-19).

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me? How am I encouraged and strengthened?
4. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
5. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?

6. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
7. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
8. What can I model and teach? What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What have you received from this study series? Have any issues really hit you? How have you grown?
2. What does it mean to you that God has a plan and purpose for you? How has this epistle helped reveal that to you?
3. Have you considered how kind God is with you even when you are in the depths of stress and despair? He will restore you for your benefit and His glory. Do you believe this? How so? Why not?
4. What do you suppose it meant to the early church for Peter to identify with and encourage them in the midst of their sufferings and discord?
5. How is knowing that Christ is not just your Lord but also your Great Hope give you the strength to endure the rough times of life?
6. How is knowing that Christ will restore you for your benefit and His glory give you encouragement? Now add to this that He still cares and that He will lift you up, giving you further support and assurance in your daily life? What will this mean to you?
7. What does it mean to you that Christ is your foundation, hope, and conviction? Do you believe that you can withstand anything this world throws at you when you are in Him? How so? Why not?
8. What does *hope* mean to you? What are the barriers to hope? How do discouragement or feelings impact your hope?
9. How can you take comfort in that He is indeed in control? How does this help you with *submission* and *humbleness*? What about preventing disillusionment? How does this translate into how you are to treat others?
10. Real spiritual maturity is being submissive--the essential foundation for a healthy growing church. Why? What can you do to model this in your church? How can your church be more centered upon Christ as Lord rather than on trends or personal ideas?

11. Why should we not go about ministry or our lives alone? How does collaboration with others help us produce better modeling of His character?
12. What needs to take place in your life for you to be more insightful, spiritually and socially mature, and character-driven? What is in the way? What are you going to do about it?

He has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. Psalm 66:9-10

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