

## ***Suffering and the Christian Life***

*While we live in a culture that seeks to insulate itself from all forms of discomfort, disappointment, and pain, suffering is an inevitability in every human life. Unlike modern advertisements that tend to overpromise comfort and ease but under deliver, Christ was incredibly honest about the place of suffering in the Christian life. In Matthew 16, directly after the well-intentioned Peter scoffed at the idea of Christ suffering death at the hands of the chief priests, scribes, and elders, Christ responded frankly about suffering.*

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." Matthew 16:24-25.

*Similarly, in the weeks before His impending death, Jesus was honest with the trouble he carried in his own heart. "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." John 12: 27.*

*Before he died, he intentionally sought to prepare his disciples with honest expectations as to the Christian life. Trouble and temptation would abound. Rather than being exempt from pain as his chosen disciples, they would be called into deeper pain and persecution. But they would not be alone, for Christ had promised to send them a helper and comforter in the indwelling Holy Spirit.*

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of this world, the world would love you as its own, but because you are not of this world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15: 18-19.

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

*Although we need not seek out suffering for its own sake, Christ calls each of his followers to be ready to receive whatever God allots and apportions, to pick up whatever crosses or comforts are before them each day with his strength, trusting his divine purposes.*

*Paul picks up a similar theme of suffering in his letters to the early Church, who in addition to the normal brokenness of life in a broken world, as Jesus had predicted, were exposed to pain and privation on account of their faith. Paul shows that for the Christian, suffering does*

*not have the last or only word. Rather, suffering can be used by the Lord to lift our eyes from the seen things to the eternal things.*

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh...So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4: 8-11 & 16-18.

*Elisabeth Elliot, one closely acquainted with suffering through the tragic murder of her missionary husband, is prolific in her writing on the Christian perspective on suffering. Her definition of suffering below is practical for all of our lives.*

*"The word suffering is much too grand to apply to most of our troubles, but if we don't learn to refer the little things to God, how shall we learn to refer the big ones? A definition which covers all sorts of trouble, great or small, is this: having what you don't want, or wanting what you don't have."*

*Suffering of all kinds weans us off of this world, whets our appetite for the everlasting life and also unites us to our Savior, who though sinless, suffered to the point of death on a Cross.*

*At the end of his life, we find an aging Peter writing a letter to Christians who have been scattered by persecution. Written with a true shepherd's heart, the letter of 1 Peter carries themes of suffering & coming glory and endurance & reward for the chosen people of God who likely felt far from cherished in their painful and trying circumstances.*

*Peter writes this letter to the "elect exiles" encouraging them to endure suffering in light of the unfading, imperishable inheritance that was being kept for them in heaven by God's power. Just as their inheritance was being kept, Peter reminds them that they are being kept by the power of God. Although they were a scattered flock, Peter reminds them that they are shepherded by the Lord, the Great Shepherd who laid down his life for the flock (see*

*John 10). The book of 1 Peter is laced with life: living hope, the living and abiding Word of God, and Christ the living stone.*

*To study this letter is to begin to lay a theological foundation for the suffering that is sure to come to each one of us this side of glory. But by studying this book, we will also come to know not only the assurance of his presence now but also the glory to be revealed!*

*As we dig into this book, may we begin to see what C.S. Lewis so powerfully wrote:*

*“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”*

*What is the culture’s view of suffering?*

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*What has been your experience of suffering?*

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*How has suffering shaped or changed your walk with God?*

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*Read Philippians 1: 29. Read 1 Peter 5:10-11. What is the connection between suffering and glory?*

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## **Background Information**

*Peter wrote this letter to the scattered believers in Asia Minor sometime between 58 and 61 A.D. Most scholars believe that Peter was writing from a city on the Euphrates called Babylon to a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity. The letter was written by an aging Peter to comfort the afflicted and persecuted. A tender letter that can apply generally to anyone who is suffering, Peter wants to encourage the exhausted to endure through the strength and power of the gospel.*

## **A Portrait of Peter**

*In his early years, Peter was known for being impetuous. He was the first out of the boat to attempt to walk on water (Matthew 14: 22-33). He was the first disciple to call Jesus Lord (Matthew 16: 13-20). He was among the inner circle with whom Jesus spent the most time (along with James and John). These inner three were with Jesus when He was transfigured and when He prayed in agony in the garden, though they fell asleep.*

*Though he said that he would be willing to die for Christ (John 13: 36-38), Peter failed publicly and significantly in thrice denying the Lord the night before His death. However, after this terrible failure, Peter had a life-changing encounter with the forgiveness of Christ. In John 21, Jesus gently reminds Peter of his three-fold failure by asking him three times, "Do you love me?" After his first response, Jesus tells Peter, "Feed my lambs," after his second response, "Tend my sheep," and after his final exasperated response, "Feed my sheep."*

*Clearly, that seaside conversation of forgiveness, reconciliation and calling shaped Peter's entire life. He who had begun impetuous ended as a gentle, faithful shepherd. Three-fold failure and three-fold forgiveness had lead to a three-fold confidence in the power of the gospel. In reading 1 Peter, one cannot help but see an older believer tenderly loving, feeding and tending to the flock of God.*

*Historians believe that Peter was crucified under Emperor Nero in Rome sometime between 64 and 68 A.D. He requested to crucified upside down since he saw himself unworthy of dying in the exact same manner as his Lord and friend.*

# Five Week Overview

## Week One: 1 Peter 1

**Day One:** Entire book of 1 Peter  
**Day Two:** 1 Peter 1: 1-9  
**Day Three:** 1 Peter 1: 10-12  
**Day Four:** 1 Peter 1: 13-21  
**Day Five:** 1 Peter 1: 22-25

## Week Two: 1 Peter 2

**Day One:** 1 Peter 2.  
**Day Two:** 1 Peter 2: 1-3.  
**Day Three:** 1 Peter 2: 4-8.  
**Day Four:** 1 Peter 2: 9-12.  
**Day Five:** 1 Peter 2: 13-25.

## Week Three: 1 Peter 3

**Day One:** 1 Peter 3.  
**Day Two:** 1 Peter 3: 1-7.  
**Day Three:** 1 Peter 3: 8-12.  
**Day Four:** 1 Peter 3: 13-17.  
**Day Five:** 1 Peter 3: 18-22.

## Week Four: 1 Peter 4

**Day One:** 1 Peter 4.  
**Day Two:** 1 Peter 4: 1-6.  
**Day Three:** 1 Peter 4: 7-11.  
**Day Four:** 1 Peter 4: 12-14.  
**Day Five:** 1 Peter 4: 15-19.

## Week Five: 1 Peter 5

**Day One:** 1 Peter 5.  
**Day Two:** 1 Peter 5: 1-4.  
**Day Three:** 1 Peter 5: 5-7.  
**Day Four:** 1 Peter 5: 8-11.  
**Day Five:** 1 Peter 5: 12-14.

## Summary & Synthesis

# Week One: 1 Peter 1

*Day One: Read the entire book of 1 Peter, remembering that when it was received, it would have been read in one sitting as a whole letter.*

*1. What words, phrases or ideas were repeated throughout the book?*

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*2. What images did Peter use in this book?*

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*3. What was the tone of the letter?*

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*4. If you were one of the scattered, suffering believers first reading the letter, what would you have said its purpose was?*

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**Day Two: Read 1 Peter 1:1-9.**

**1. How does Peter introduce this letter? Why is he writing?**

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**2. Where do you see the Trinity in v 3-5? What role does each person of the Trinity play in salvation?**

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**3. What does Peter say about the inheritance of the saints? Why would that be comforting and significant in light of their current circumstances?**

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**4. How does Peter approach the suffering and trials of these saints?**

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**5. How does this view of suffering impact you where you are today/ in this season of life?**

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**Day Three: Read 1 Peter 1: 10-12.**

**Peter takes a little excursion away from talking about their trials and faith to double-click on the wonder of salvation.**

**1. What does Peter say about salvation?**

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**2. Salvation is used so often in the Church that sometimes the word and the corresponding concept become thread-bare. Read Titus 3: 3-7. What is salvation?**

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**3. Because we live on the other side of the Cross, we are able to look back upon the life, death and resurrection of Christ. However, for many centuries, God’s people looked ahead to some coming fuzzy salvation. Isaiah was one of those who prophesied but never saw or fully comprehended the salvation he proclaimed. Read Isaiah 53. What did Isaiah predict that we get to fully see?**

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**4. How do these verses cause you to wonder more at the reality of our salvation?**

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**Day Four: Read 1 Peter 1:13- 21.**

**Here, Peter moves from restating the glorious gospel (indicative) to what the proper and right response to such a gospel and inheritance should look like in the lives of those who have received it (imperative). Note the “therefore” in v 13 that connects this section with the preceding concepts. Peter reminds them of an Old Testament command that was issued to God’s ancient people, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**

**C.S. Lewis reminds us that God is not speaking metaphorically here, but really intends on having a holy people.**

**“The command Be ye perfect is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command. He said (in the Bible) that we were ‘gods’ and He is going to make good His words. If we let Him—for we can prevent Him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said.”**

**1. What actions does Peter call the believers to do? For what purposes?**

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**2. Read Leviticus 11: 45. The command to be holy is rooted in the character of our holy God. Even though we cannot achieve holiness on our own, God intends that we strive for holiness. What is our part of this? What is God’s?**

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**3. Peter brings up the theme of imperishable again in these verses. What is speaking of this time?**

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**4. Peter brings up the theme of foreknowledge again. Initially, he had reminded the believers that their salvation was foreknown (1v2). What is he referring to this time?**

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**Day Five: Read 1 Peter 1:22-25.**

*Here, Peter moves from the internal response of the believers to the external/ relational responses of the believers to the gospel of grace. Yet, again, he anchors this action (imperative) in who they are in Christ (indicative).*

**1. What does Peter command of the suffering believers? Why is that significant, knowing their circumstances?**

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**2. Peter brings up imperishable yet again. This time what is he referring to? Why do you think Peter keeps bringing up the imperishable?**

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**3. Read Isaiah 40: 6-8. Summarize what Isaiah was saying below. Why do you think Peter might have chosen to refer back to the prophet Isaiah?**

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**4. If the Word of God, indeed, will endure forever, how should that change the way we approach it and relate to it today?**

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# Week Two: 1 Peter 2

*Having begun talking about the enduring Word of God, Peter continues along that vein, encouraging them to rightly hunger for the Word by which they will grow to maturity.*

*Day One: Read the entire second chapter of 1 Peter.*

*1. What was confusing, challenging or comforting?*

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*2. What words or phrases stuck out to you?*

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*3. Summarize, in your own words, what Peter focuses on in this portion of the letter.*

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*4. What part of this chapter was most challenging or uncomfortable to you? Why?*

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**Day Two: Read 1 Peter 2: 1-3.**

**1. Peter uses the image of a newborn baby craving milk. Describe a time in your life when you hungered for the Word of God. Do you long for the Word of God now?**

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**2. Peter talks about “growing up into salvation.” Since salvation happens in a moment, Peter is referring to the ongoing, slow process of sanctification. Both are connected, but they are different. Explain, in your own terms, the difference and relationship between the two.**

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**3. Peter seems to assume that those who have tasted the goodness of the Lord will continue to grow in their longing for more of Him. When did you last taste and experience the goodness of the Lord? What grows yours longings for God? Likewise, what shrinks your longings for God?**

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**4. We cannot continue to grow up into salvation without the painful process of putting off those things which hinder us and keep us from running. Read Hebrews 12: 1-2. What sins cling closely to you? What things, perhaps not sin in and of themselves, keep you from running to the Lord?**

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**Day Three: Read 1 Peter 2: 4-8.**

**Peter now introduces a new image, Christ the living cornerstone. Without a cornerstone, carefully crafted and perfectly fitting, an arch or a wall will collapse. Peter draws the picture of believers being fitted together into a spiritual house with Christ being the cornerstone, the most necessary part.**

**1. What do you think came to the mind of Jewish believers when Peter talked about a spiritual house?**

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**2. Read Isaiah 28:14-16. Once again Peter refers back to the prophecies of Isaiah. Why do you think such references were chosen?**

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**3. Peter calls God’s people a holy priesthood, intended to offer spiritual sacrifices. For the Jewish converts, this would have been a loaded statement, as in the Old Testament only those in a select tribe were called priests. Read Romans 12:1-2. What does Paul say about offering spiritual sacrifices as a believer?**

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**4. Peter references the Old Testament once again, this time Psalm 118. Read Psalm 118: 19-24. What sticks out to you?**

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**Day Four: Read 1 Peter 2: 9-12.**

**Peter continues with the thread of a holy priesthood and begins to further unpack the identity of the people of God.**

**1. Compare the earthly experience of these believers with their eternal identity. Why do you think Peter seeks to continually remind them who they are?**

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**2. Peter explains to the people their worth in God’s sight, then he reminds them of their eternal purpose. Read Deuteronomy 7:6-11. To what end (for what purpose) has God chosen them?**

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**3. Like the scattered, suffering believers, it is easy for us to forget who we are in God’s sight. What lies do you tend to believe about your worth and identity? What Biblical truths counteract these lies?**

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**4. Peter calls the people sojourners and strangers on the earth. Read Hebrews 11: 13-16. What would our lives look like if we really lived as those who are strangers on this earth.**

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**Day Five: Read 1 Peter 2: 13-25.**

*Peter now moves his attention to the concept of being subject. Flesh, whether ancient or modern, hates the idea of being subject. However, Peter says that the gospel and the coming glory for the believer ought to change the Christian’s view on being subject to authority.*

**1. What different examples of being subject does Peter use in these verses?**

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**2. Read Philippians 2: 1-11. How does Christ submit to the Father? How might that change the way we think of submission to earthly authorities?**

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**3. What does Peter say about freedom in verses 16-17? How is this different from the culture’s view of freedom?**

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**4. Peter introduces a new image in these verses (v 25). What is it? Why is it significant.**

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**5. Read John 10:7-18. Describe what a good shepherd looks like according to Christ.**

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**Week Three: I Peter 3**

**Day One: Read and then reread the third chapter of 1 Peter.**

**1. What was confusing, challenging or comforting?**

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**2. What words or phrases stuck out to you?**

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**3. Summarize, in your own words, what Peter focuses on in this portion of the letter.**

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**4. What part of this chapter was most challenging or uncomfortable to you? Why?**

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**Day Two: Read 1 Peter 3: 1-7.**

*Peter continues the same line of thinking regarding being subject to earthly authorities out of a deeper being subject to the good shepherd of our souls. He presses a little closer to home with the idea of wives being subject to their own husbands. However, rather than simply giving them the command, he also explain the deeper purposes behind such behavior.*

**1. Reread 1 Peter 3:1-2 and 1 Peter 3:7. What specific things does Peter ask of wives? Of husbands? Read together as a pair, one can more easily see what Peter is asking of Christian marriages.**

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**2. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. Paul lays out in more detail what Peter mentions in this chapter. What is the deeper meaning of Christian marriage? What is ultimately at stake when we move away from the Biblical view of marriage?**

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**3. What does Peter say about the beauty of a woman? While some of the applications and practices may be different in today’s culture, what principle is he offering to the women that could apply in any time or culture?**

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**Day Three: Read 1 Peter 3: 8-12.**

*Here, Peter leaves off the specific examples of being subject and moves back to the greater theme of trusting the Lord in suffering. When we suffer, especially unjustly, our fleshly response is revenge and defensiveness. Peter calls the believers to a different, gospel-enabled and gospel-empowered response.*

**1. What responses does Peter call the believers to when they experience evil or unjust suffering?**

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**2. Once again, Peter refers back to an Old Testament scripture. Read Psalm 34: 11-22. What does David say about the Lord that would be a comfort to those suffering?**

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**3. Peter reminds the believers that God’s people were called to obtain a blessing. This would likely have brought Jewish minds back to the calling of Abraham. Read Paul’s account of Abraham’s faith in Romans 4: 13-25. When the blessing to which we have been called feels far from reality, what can we learn from Abraham?**

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**4. Where in your life practically can you begin to practice the art of blessing when reviled or even simply disappointed or misunderstood?**

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**Day Four: Read 1 Peter 3: 13-17.**

**1. Peter says that those who suffer for the sake of righteousness will be blessed (v14). He also gives us a hint at how we are actually able to suffer well (v15). What is to enable such suffering?**

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**2. Peter assumes that the watching world would be filled with curiosity and would wonder when people suffered for doing what was right, but continued to trust God. Has there been such a time in your life when someone asked about the hope with you?**

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**While we often fear the raised eyebrows of people around us, the reality is that many believers throughout the world fear the raised fist. Read the excerpt (on the following page) from a contemporary Chinese pastor of a partner church who is now imprisoned for his faith, along with his wife and countless elders in their congregation. He wrote this letter just days before his impending arrest. After reading it, take some time to pray for the persecuted church and also for such a deep confidence in the gospel for our own hearts here in America.**

**3. What emotions does this letter stir in your heart?**

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### My Declaration of Faithful Disobedience

On the basis of the teachings of the Bible and the mission of the gospel, I respect the authorities God has established in China. For God deposes kings and raises up kings. This is why I submit to the historical and institutional arrangements of God in China...

If God decides to use the persecution of this Communist regime against the church to help more Chinese people to despair of their futures, to lead them through a wilderness of spiritual disillusionment and through this to make them know Jesus, if through this he continues disciplining and building up his church, then I am joyfully willing to submit to God's plans, for his plans are always benevolent and good...

Even though I am often weak, I firmly believe this is the promise of the gospel. It is what I've devoted all of my energy to. It is the good news that I am spreading throughout Chinese society.

If I am imprisoned for a long or short period of time, if I can help reduce the authorities' fear of my faith and of my Savior, I am very joyfully willing to help them in this way. But I know that only when I renounce all the wickedness of this persecution against the church and use peaceful means to disobey, will I truly be able to help the souls of the authorities and law enforcement. I hope God uses me, by means of first losing my personal freedom, to tell those who have deprived me of my personal freedom that there is an authority higher than their authority, and that there is a freedom that they cannot restrain, a freedom that fills the church of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ...

Separate me from my wife and children, ruin my reputation, destroy my life and my family - the authorities are capable of doing all of these things. However, no one in this world can force me to renounce my faith; no one can make me change my life; and no one can raise me from the dead.

Jesus is the Christ, son of the eternal, living God. He died for sinners and rose to life for us. He is my king and the king of the whole earth yesterday, today, and forever. I am his servant, and I am imprisoned because of this. I will resist in meekness those who resist God, and I will joyfully violate all laws that violate God's laws.

The Lord's servant,

Wang Yi

**Day Five: Read 1 Peter 3: 18-22.**

**1. Peter talks about the patience of God in regards to salvation. Just as God offered a way of salvation from the literal flood in Noah's time, God offers rescue through salvation from the flood of ultimate judgement through hiding in the work and person of Christ. Peter talks about this again in his second letter. Read 2 Peter 3:8-10. What does Peter say about God's desire for men to be saved?**

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**2. In addressing outward rites and rituals and other behavior modifications, Paul uses the imagery of shadows and substance. A shadow is real thing, but not a substantial thing. The substance always belongs to Christ. So often we are shadow chasers and worshippers, building our lives around the shadows but ignoring or not making it all the way to the substance. What shadows do you chase?**

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**3. In his argument against these ingredients, Paul reminds the Colossians that they have died with Christ. Read Galatians 2: 20-21. What does Paul say here about dying with Christ?**

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**4. Paul talks about things that have the appearance of wisdom but are powerless to actually change us. Our culture and our hearts are full of these things. What are some of the things that look like they will help you but have no power to transform? What does have transforming power? Where have you seen the gospel transform you from the inside out?**

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**Week Four: 1 Peter 4**

**Day One: Read and then reread chapter four of 1 Peter.**

**1. What was confusing, challenging or comforting?**

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**2. What words or phrases stuck out to you?**

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**3. Summarize, in your own words, what Peter focuses on in this portion of the letter.**

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**4. What part of this chapter was most challenging or uncomfortable to you? Why?**

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**Day Two: Read 1 Peter 4:1-6.**

**Remember that in the Scriptures the imperative (commands/ doing) always flows from the indicative (what Christ has done/ who we are in Him/ being).**

**1. What indicative does Peter begin with (v1)?**

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**2. What imperatives flows out of this reality (v2)?**

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**3. In v4, we have the outside world being surprised once again by the life of the believer. What does Peter assume will cause the watching world to wonder at believers?**

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**4. Peter reminds the believers that everyone will one day give an account to the Lord. How does this reality stir compassion in our hearts and boldness to share the good news with the lost world?**

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**Day Three: Read 1 Peter 4: 7-11.**

**Again, we see Peter setting the present in the longer timeline of eternal history, as he reminds these weary believers that the end is nearing.**

**1. Read 1 John 3: 1-3. How does keeping in mind the coming rest and deliverance enable us to keep fighting in the present?**

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**2. If we believed that the Lord could come back at any moment (which He very well may!) how would that change the way we live now?**

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**3. How does Peter expect the believers to treat one another, even in the midst of pain and exhaustion?**

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**4. Peter assumes that the body of Christ is given gifts for the good of the greater whole. What spiritual gifts do you have? How are you presently using them for the good of the greater body?**

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**Day Four: Read 1 Peter 4: 12-14.**

**Peter calls the believers to a radical perspective on suffering: to not simply endure suffering and trials, but to rejoice in them, in so far as our part in glory is connected to our part in suffering.**

**1. How does the culture view suffering? How does your flesh view suffering?**

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**2. Peter tells the believers to not be surprised when trials come. Read John 15: 18-25. Why should we not be surprised?**

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**3. What are some of the trials (big or small) in your life or the lives of those you love right now? Stop and pray for God’s perspective in these places of confusion or pain.**

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**4. Although the assumption is that full glory is coming, sometimes we get little glimpses of the glory that come through suffering while on earth. Describe a time in your life when you felt, experienced or saw glimpses of glory that came through suffering?**

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**Day Five: Read 1 Peter 4:15-19.**

**Peter makes a distinction between different sources of suffering. Because we have indwelling sin and often make poor choices, sometimes we bring suffering upon ourselves. Peter makes it clear that he is not calling them to make poor choices, but to suffer for the sake of doing what is right and good.**

**1. Are there places in your life right now where you are suffering because of sinful choices or habits? If so, confess them and ask God for His strength to begin anew.**

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**2. When have you suffered (again, in big or small ways) for identifying yourself with Christ? Do you know someone who is suffering as such right now? If so, write, email, call or text them and pray with them for strength.**

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**3. Peter reminds the believers that everyone, believers and nonbelievers alike, will give an account to the Lord, the ultimate judge and authority. While we are covered in the righteousness of Christ, we will still have to give account for the ways we lived. Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-14. How does this reality motivate you to live differently by His grace?**

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**4. Peter reminds the believers that when they suffer, they are entrusting their souls to a faithful creator. How does this image help you in suffering?**

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**Week Five: 1 Peter 5**

**Day One: Read and then reread chapter five of 1Peter.**

*Having finished up his extended talk about suffering as a believer, Peter narrows the scope of his letter to the leaders of the churches, who were known as elders. He reminds them that as they shepherd God’s flock, they are both accountable to and aided by the Lord, the Chief Shepherd. They will give an account to the Good Shepherd for the way they led. As such, Peter reminds them to lead as Christ led His flock while on the earth.*

**1. What was confusing, challenging or comforting?**

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**2. What words or phrases stuck out to you?**

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**3. Summarize, in your own words, what Peter focuses on in this portion of the letter.**

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**4. What part of this chapter was most challenging or uncomfortable to you? Why?**

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**Day Two: Read 1 Peter 5: 1-4.**

**1. Peter was among the last of the disciples still living. As such, his statement in v 1 about being a witness to Christ’s life is significant. Why would Peter want to remind them that He knew the Shepherd directly?**

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**2. According to v2-4, what does spiritual leadership look like?**

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**3. According to v4, what is the motivation and/or reward for the hard work of spiritual leadership?**

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**4. Who has God called you to shepherd/ lead/ oversee in love? How can you practically seek to lead more like Christ?**

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**Day Three:** Read 1 Peter 5: 5-7.

**Peter again mentions the theme of being subject. This time, Peter calls the younger believers to trust and submit to the leadership that God has placed in authority over them as Good Shepherds.**

**1. According to these verses, what connection does humility have with being subject to human authority?**

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**2. Read Hebrews 13: 17-18. How does what the Apostle Paul writes here mirror what Peter says to the scattered believers?**

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**3. According to v 6, humility leads to something. What is it? And how does that help us to seek to remain humble? Where do we see this example in Christ’s life, death, resurrection and ascension?**

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**4. Peter assumes that both the spiritually young and the spiritually old will have heavy weights of anxiety. What does he tell them to do with these cares?**

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**5. What cares do you currently need to cast unto the Lord who cares for you?**

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**Day Four:** Read 1 Peter 5: 8-11.

*Having reminded these beloved believers that they have a Shepherd who cares for them, Peter also reminds them that they have a hateful enemy. He commands them to stand firm and be alert. He also reminds them that they are not the only ones experiencing these things throughout the world. Rather, suffering should be the normal Christian experience for this short season on this side of glory.*

**1. Peter compares Satan to a roaring lion. A similar comparison was also used of sin by God Himself as early as the book of Genesis. Read Genesis 4:1-7. What do we learn about the enemy within and without from these Scriptures?**

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**2. How does Peter encourage the believers to fight? Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. How does Paul tells other believers to fight?**

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**3. In v10 (as in chapter 1) Peter sets the present experience of the believers in deep time. How does the knowledge of God’s foreknowledge and the coming peace and rest of the New Heavens and the New Earth affect present sufferings?**

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**4. Pastors often use 1 Peter 5:10-11 as a benediction. What in these verses strengthens the faith of a believer? Where do you need to fight to remember that one day Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you?**

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**Day Five: Read 1 Peter 5: 12-14.**

**Here, as one might expect, Peter wraps up his letter with some practical concerns. While there is a temptation to simply fly over the introductions and conclusions to letters, there is much to be gleaned here. Namely, we are reminded that Peter was a real person with a real community and real needs. He commends Silvanus who delivered the letter and also sends greetings from the local church body in Babylon where he was when writing the letter.**

**1. Christian community is the presumption of the entire New Testament; however, it is easy for us to read the Scriptures through the individualistic eyes of our modern culture. Who do you consider faithful brothers and sisters in your own walk with the Lord? How can you better invest in them and appreciate them?**

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**2. What can we learn from these relationships between Peter and those he mentions?**

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**3. While v14 might strike our ears as strange, this was a common Middle Eastern greeting. The point is not that we must kiss one another, but that we ought to meet other believers (those we know well and those we don't know at all) with warm hospitality. What role does hospitality play in the Christian life? Where have you practiced sacrificial hospitality lately?**

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**4. Peter ends wishing peace to all who are in Christ. Read Colossians 3:15-16. What is the peace of the believer based in?**

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**Summary & Synthesis**

**Any teacher will tell you that the transfer of information does not necessarily equate to learning. Synthesis (bringing things together) is a significant step in the learning process and helps us move from information to transformation.**

**Write down a summary of 1 Peter.**

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**What practical take-aways can you apply to your life next week and beyond?**

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**How has your knowledge of God changed through this study?**

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**How has your knowledge of self changed in this study?**

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**How has your heart for the world changed from this study?**

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