

***FOCUS – Part 2***  
Community Group Discussion Guide  
June 13, 2021

We take the Bible seriously because we take the Gospels seriously.

We need a short and ***focused*** answer to the question of why we've chosen to follow Jesus. To do that we need to ***focus*** on the essentials of our faith and how we share that with others?

Sometimes we have been asked a question about our faith or why we would follow this guy named Jesus and maybe our focus is off. We know why we follow him for the most part, but the way we articulate our faith... comes out a little less than clear.

\*When was the last time you went to the optometrist? What did you discover about your eye site? Is everything in FOCUS? If not, what measures were taken to bring things into correct focus?

Today we continue talking through this idea of how we can focus our thoughts about our faith and explain why we believe what we believe.

\*When was the last time you had an argument with someone? What was it about and what was the outcome?

Pastor Mark reminded us that we often argue when we want to prove we're right and the other person is wrong. None of us like to be told we're wrong, especially when the other person is trying to prove they are right. Nobody wins.

Hebrews helps us FOCUS on the main thing and not get lost in some of the details that may not really matter.

**Read together Hebrews 12:1-3**

**Scripture Support:**

**v. 1;** Long distance runners work hard to build endurance and strength. To run the race that God has set before us, we must get rid up, tear off, anything that slows us down.

**v. 1-4;** The Christian life is hard work. It requires us to give up what might be a hindrance to our relationship with God. We must keep our eyes on Christ.

**v. 3;** not if, but when we face hardships and discouragement it's easy to lose sight of the big picture. We are not alone. Suffering is the training ground for Christian maturity. Suffering develops patience in us.

Peter introduces the idea that we may have to suffer for our faith and the behaviors that flow from it. Peter shares some insight that can help us keep our focus even during the most challenging times of our lives.

*\*Read together 1 Peter chapter 3:13-14; “Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.”*

I don't know about you, but I don't know of anyone who likes to suffer. In fact, most of us do not suffer well.

Suffering is the state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship.

*\*Share an example of your experience with suffering.*

### **Scripture Support:**

-1 Peter was written as a source of encouragement to suffering Christians.

Peter goes on to share, *“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared (have clear focus) to give an answer (a defense or reply) to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the HOPE that you have.” (revere – feel a deep respect or admiration for – something)*

Peter is NOT saying be ready to defend your Christian world view, your religion, the Bible, or your church. Peter says stay focused, keep the main thing the main thing, and be laser focused to defend your decision to follow Christ and share the **hope** that you have in Jesus.

Peter relates two specifics to **HOPE** in earlier chapters of 1 Peter

Why does Peter tell us we have **HOPE**? Because Jesus died, came back to life, and said he'll return.

1 Peter 1:3 *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living HOPE through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”*

1 Peter 1:13 *“Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your HOPE on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”*

1 Peter 1:21 *“Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and HOPE are in God.”*

\*How does having hope inform and encourage you to share with others why you have chosen to be a follower of Jesus?

**prepare a defense, but don't be defensive**

***FOCUS***