

People Under Pressure

Opportunity for Growth

1 Peter 2:1-10

The book of 1 Peter because it was written to people under pressure, scattered around the Roman Empire under intense persecution. Peter wrote his letter as a source of clarification and encouragement to them, and us...

We will all go through a season of pressure and difficulty. Some are in one right now. When Cows sense a storm is coming, they scatter and run away trying to avoid it altogether, but the storm catches them, so they spend much longer suffering, all alone. Bison will sense a storm coming and turn directly into it for three reasons: 1) It shortens the length of time they are in the storm, 2) They're less likely to get lost in a group, and (3) their fur is thicker on the front which keeps them warm.

"Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Romans 5:3-5 – Growth is a Good Thing, and Pressure Demands It!

Main. Idea: People Under Pressure are in a Season of Accelerated Growth

"So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' 7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,' 8 and 'A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.' They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." 1 Peter 2:1-10

Three Facts About Growth from 1 Peter 2:1-10

I. Growth Under Pressure is Primary – 1 Peter 2:1-3

Last week we read how Peter reminded us that loving one another must be a high priority for us and this section builds on that instruction. Love was never to be merely emotional sentimentality but should change how we live!

"So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 1 Peter 2:1– Malice results in the other four

Under pressure, malice turns into envy/hypocrisy. Instead of pursuing deceitfulness, hypocrisy, and envy we get to crave something very different!

"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk..." 1 Peter 2:2a – Pure Spiritual Milk = Unadulterated/Uncontaminated Word of God

Babies crave milk. When they're hungry for milk, they don't care about anything else (playtime, diaper changes, sleep, etc.). That's the relationship that people under pressure should have with the word of God. And, why?

"...that by it you may grow up into salvation—" 1 Peter 2:2b

At the moment of conversion, you are declared righteous and fully formed in Christ Jesus. The rest of your time on earth is spent growing up into the salvation that has been given to you as a gift. You are not growing up FOR your salvation, rather you are growing up INTO your salvation!

Everyone Knows that **Kids** Can Be:

- 1) **Unstable** in their emotions (crying, then laughing, then both)
Immature Christians: Top of the World until financial trouble or relationship issues or health concerns makes them doubt it all.
- 2) **Insecure** in their relationships (constant reassurance, where's mom).
Immature Christians: Insecure about the goodness of God. Sing about the cross, then something bad happens...WHY, GOD WHY???
- 3) **Gullible** - Believe anything, Ex.- that my grandfather could control stop lights.
Immature Christians: Anybody with a well curated Instagram feed claiming to know the Bible has them pulling away from their church.
- 4) **Possessive** – Parents spend so much time refereeing what's "Mine."
Immature Christians: Selfish, greedy, stingy, and entitled!

"So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ." Ephesians 4:14-15

Just as children are not supposed to stay babies forever, neither are followers of Jesus. You should desire this for yourself...

"If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good." 1 Peter 2:3 – Big IF

II. Growth Under Pressure is Purifying – 1 Peter 2:4-8

Next, Peter reminds his readers that they are precious to God.

"As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious." 1 Peter 2:4 – God's love and value is fixed!

In persecution, these believers may have started to wonder if God really loved them. There may have been some insecurity due to the fact they were not coming to Christ from a Jewish background. But Peter invites them to "come to him" (Jesus, not Jerusalem) as *"living stones being built into a spiritual house"* (Jesus' body, not the Temple), to *"be a holy priesthood"* (as a priest, not through a priest). Jesus has made you precious to God, believe it!
Pressure May Not Be God's Punishing Wrath Against You.
It Might Be God's Purifying Grace Growing You.

Did you know that one of the most precious stones on earth (diamonds) are formed out of one of the most commonplace elements on earth (carbon). That's right, the most expensive piece of jewelry you own was once nothing more than a common piece of carbon. But time and pressure made it special!

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." **James 1:2-4 – Growth Under Pressure is Purifying**

III. Growth Under Pressure is Purposeful – 1 Peter 2:9-10

God has a plan for you. Your growth has a purpose. You matter!

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of him** who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* **1 Peter 2:9**

As you grow under pressure, you are uniquely positioned to tell others about the goodness of God. It will ring true to them because they will see the *tested genuineness of your faith* (1 Peter 1:7) and recognize its authenticity.

We may say the right things, but we aren't authentic! Embracing your season Under Pressure will transform your testimony...

*"For it stands in Scripture: 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' **7** So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,' **8** and 'A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.' They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do."* **1 Peter 2:6-8**

Peter Describes Jesus as 1 of 2 Types of Blocks, Depending on Us:

- 1) Building Block (Cornerstone of the Church, Foundation for Life)
- 2) Stumbling Block (Rock of Offense, Rejected in Disobedience)

"Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." **1 Peter 2:10 – Come!**

Under Pressure? Don't be like a cow scattered and running away, group up with others and walk straight through it growing more mature with every step!

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, General Editor (2021)
- *Wiersbe Bible Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (2007)
- *Swindoll's Living Insights: James, 1 & 2 Peter* – Charles R. Swindoll (2014)
- *1-2 Peter St. Andrew's Expository Commentary* – R.C. Sproul (2011)
- *1&2 Peter, Jude: Sharing Christ's Sufferings* – Helm & Hughes (2008)
- *New American Commentary: 1&2 Peter, Jude* – Thomas Schreiner (2003)
- *MacArthur NT Commentary: 1 Peter* – John MacArthur (2004)
- *Notes from my Bible* – Dwight L. Moody (1895)
- *Tony Evans Study Bible* – Tony Evans (2019)
- *The Spurgeon Study Bible* – Charles Haddon Spurgeon (2017)
- *Grow Up – 1 Peter 2:1-10* – J.D. Greear (2020)

- *Bison Bellows: The Winter Survivor* – NPS.gov (2015)