

a living hope

[IN A SUFFERING WORLD]

GUIDE BOOK 2

a living hope
[IN A SUFFEREING WORLD]



"The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray" 1 Peter 5:7

No, this verse isn't talking about our COVID world, though it may seem that way. Because Christ is returning, to judge and rule the world we should be praying about all kinds of things-including our friends who aren't yet trusting in Jesus.

1 Peter is letter to Christians, reminding them that they are aliens, strangers in a foreign land. Our home is in heaven with Jesus. It's like we are in a plane - no one lives on a plane, because the point of a plane is to get you somewhere. Our lives should be pointing towards God's kingdom, that's our destination, where we get to be with Jesus and his people forever.

So 1 Peter is all about how do we live now amongst the world, knowing that we don't really belong here. We aren't to hide in a **cocoon** from the world, nor are we to **conform** to the world and live exactly the same, nor are we to **combat** against the world who don't follow Jesus. Instead we are **commissions** cooperating with Jesus' mission to make disciples of all nations. That's a huge task! And thankfully it's not ultimately up to us. But each of us get to play a small role in making it happen. So with that in mind as we have talked about earlier this year, each week, we are asking you to be commit to the 3-1-1 challenge. Pray for three friends, at least once a week for one minute.

Have a think about who you could choose for **3-1-1** – it could be a family member, a neighbour a, work colleague, a mate you play sport with, an old friend with whom you catch up, someone you've only recently gotten to know, or perhaps it's someone else's friend from church that you've met. It could even be someone you have met online.

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Each week, you could do the 3-1-1 challenge differently ie. pray as a large group for all the names, or break into pairs and just pray for the three each of you have chosen, or...there could be various ways of doing it!

This week, in pairs share your names, and maybe think is there one opportunity that COVID-19 has created to share the gospel with them (online church/Explore/Lockdown Live/zoom/sharing content/more time at home/people being uncertain about the future). Then pray for your friends.

[STUDY 6]

vindicated suffering

1 PETER 3:18-22

INTRODUCTION QUESTION

Tell your group a story about a time when you faced a significant challenge (personal or physical) but came through on top (or failed miserably if you like!).

EXPLORING TOGETHER

In our Growth Groups, we've been using what's known as the 'Swedish Method'. It's a way of giving us time to process what's there in the passage and to get discussion going on what we've observed. Follow the directions below and note down some of your own observations and thoughts. Then we'll discuss what you've found!

Light Bulb. Write down any interesting observations you get from the passage. This includes things that stand out, repeated ideas/words or something you found unusual.

Question Mark. Any questions from the text or an issue or point that doesn't make sense from the passage. Questions are great! They encourage us to think a bit harder about the passage and its implications. They also give us a chance to help each other understand Scripture better.

Arrow. Note down any reflections on things you found challenging or applicable to you. The bible addresses our heads, hearts and hands, or if you like, our thoughts, attitudes and actions so reflect on whether the passage addresses any of these.

1 Peter 3:18-22 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. There's a 'for' at the start of v18, which suggests a direct connection with our passage last week. What was that context and how might it help us understand this passage?

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2. Peter restates what Jesus has achieved for us in his death in v18 but why do you think he brings it up here? What's his emphasis?

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On Sunday, we heard about some principles of interpreting the Bible. Discuss these as they might apply to this passage.

- Scripture is clear in its central message and can be understood and interpreted via ordinary means (the perspicuity of Scripture).
- Not all parts of scripture are equally comprehensible to us (Deut 29:29).
- Interpret the unclear or ambiguous parts with clear and unambiguous parts of scripture on the same topic/teaching/event (the analogy of Scripture).

3. Verses 19-20 are some of the most perplexing verses in the New Testament. Discuss some of these options of what you think is going on and why.

a) Between Jesus' death and resurrection, Jesus went and proclaimed redemption to Old Testament saints who have died, liberating them from captivity (see 1 Peter 4:6).

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b) Between Jesus' death and resurrection, Jesus went and proclaimed judgement to the spirits of those condemned people in Noah's time (see Gen. 6:11-12).

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c) Between Jesus' death and resurrection, Jesus went and proclaimed judgement to those spirits (perhaps fallen angels, see Genesis 6:1-2, Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4-6) in Noah's time who were opposed to God.

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d) Noah preaches in the Spirit of Christ about the coming judgement on his contemporaries, in which 8 were saved through water.

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4. How is the flood similar to baptism? How does baptism save you?

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5. In all the confusion of this passage it's easy to miss the bigger picture. What is Peter's conclusion in v21-22?

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♥ BRINGING IT HOME

6. How might Jesus' authority give us confidence in times of persecution?

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7. Do you worry about the state of Christianity in the world? Should we be worried?

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8. How might Jesus' example help us see God at work in the midst of our suffering?

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Write down your 3 friends that you are praying for and spend 1 minute praying for them.

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Study written by Matthew Fong

[STUDY 7]

the purifying power of suffering

1 PETER 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION QUESTION

Have you ever had someone make a surprised comment about your “Christian behaviour”? what Happened?

EXPLORING TOGETHER

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Read 1 Peter 4:1-6 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. What do you think is meant by the statement arm yourself with the same attitude of Jesus in verse 1?

2. Verses 2-4 talk about "evil earthly desires" especially those of which were taking place at the time (debauchery, lust, drunkenness etc.) What are some of the "desires" you see being glorified around the world today?

3. What do you think is meant by verse 6: *"So that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit"*?



BRINGING IT HOME

4. How can we be living God honouring Christian Lives among our non Christian friends?

5. Verse 4 states that because we are living a life for God and not for earthly desires that people will heap abuse onto us. How can we go about dealing with this and sticking firm to our beliefs (Vs 1)?

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6. What are some of the earthly desires you struggle to leave behind in your journey to live like Jesus?

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7. How can the way Jesus lived help inspire and guide us with how we interact with those around us to help bring to light the Glory of God?

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Write down your 3 friends that you are praying for and spend 1 minute praying for them.

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**

Study written by Luke Jardine

[STUDY 8]

living like there's no tomorrow

1 PETER 4:7-11

INTRODUCTION QUESTION

"Living like there's no tomorrow" is somewhat of a common catchphrase today. What do you think it means in our world?

EXPLORING TOGETHER

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1 Peter 4:4:7-11 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. What does it mean that the end of all things is at hand? Take a look at some of these verses below (you might like to split them up amongst the group) and note down what we learn about these end times and how we ought to live.

a. 1 Peter 1:7, 1:13, 1:20, 2:12

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b. 2 Peter 3:8-15

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c. Mark 13:32-37

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d. Romans 13:11-14

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e. 2 Tim 3:1-5

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f. Hebrews 10:24-25

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2. How different is that compared to how the world might respond if it knew the end was near?

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BRINGING IT HOME

3. How much of our lives is spent worrying about, investing in or securing the future? Where is that appropriate wisdom and where do you need to be challenged about that?

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4. Why don't we pray more?

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5. Look through the list of all the commands you find in verses 7-11. Pick out 1-2 that you find particularly challenging and commit to doing something in response this week. Note down each others so that you can return to these next week or remind each other during the week! In a passage that is almost all application, let's not be hearers only but doers of the word.

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"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like."

James 1:22-24



Write down your 3 friends that you are praying for and spend 1 minute praying for them.

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2.
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Study written by Matt Fong

[STUDY 9]

unsurprized by suffering

1 PETER 4:12-19

INTRODUCTION QUESTION

What is a type of suffering to come upon you or your family that you fear the most?

EXPLORING TOGETHER

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DIGGING DEEPER

1. According to this passage, what is the place and purpose of suffering for Christians?

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2. 1 Peter 4:12 has similarities to 1 Peter 1:6-7. What is the perspective on suffering that the apostle Peter is giving and how do you think suffering works in this way?

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3. The theme of 'suffering followed by glory' in 1 Peter 4:13 is seen throughout this letter eg. 1 Peter 1:11, 5:1, 5:10. How essential is it that we suffer for the name of Jesus?

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4. What is the implied answer to those questions in verses 17 and 18?

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BRINGING IT HOME

5. 1 Peter was first written as an encouragement to those who will suffer for being Christian in the 1st Century Roman empire. It's worth noting that 1 Peter 4:16 is one of only 3 times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26 & Acts 26:28) that this brand new word 'Christian' is used, meaning 'follower of Christ'. What do you think it might mean to suffer for being Christian today?

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6. What is the answer for how we might not be surprised and overcome when fiery trials come upon us, and more than that even – rejoice?

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- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**



CHRISTCENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH