

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Keep Life in Perspective
1 Peter 1:1-12

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #...). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Ask an older child or youth to read the Scripture passage found in the Gathering Time. It is also copied at the end of the session for the person to read. Give it to him/her ahead of time and ask that he/she practice reading. This reminds both young people and older people that reading Scripture should be done prayerfully -- and powerfully.

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

Choose songs that fit with the title and passage of Scripture. If possible find the words to “God Leads His Dear Children Along.”

During the “**Praying for the World**” moment, ask someone to pray for the un-reached people groups around the world.

Music Sources:

Down at the Cross, *The Worship Hymnal* #252; CCLI # 57667 Public Domain
The Solid Rock, *The Worship Hymnal* # 511; CCLI # 25417 Public Domain
Take the Name of Jesus With You, *The Worship Hymnal* #313; CCLI # 22410 Public Domain
Faith is the Victory, *The Worship Hymnal* # 521; CCLI # 22410 Public Domain
Be Strong in the Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #504; CCLI # 52105

Joy Unspeakable Barney E. Warren, 1900 Public Domain

I have found His grace is all complete,
He supplies us every need;
While I sit and learn at Jesus' feet,
I am free, yes, free indeed.

Refrain:

It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Full of glory, full of glory;
It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Oh, the half has never yet been told.

I have found the pleasure I once craved,
It is joy and peace within;
What a wondrous blessing, I am saved
From the awful gulf of sin.

I have found that hope so bright and clear,
Living in the realm of grace;
Oh, the Savior's presence is so near,
I can see His smiling face.

I have found the joy no tongue can tell,
How its waves of glory roll;
It is like a great o'erflowing well,
Springing up within my soul.

Faith Publishing House, *Evening Light Songs*, 1949, edited 1987 (88)

The Gospel Trumpet Company, *Select Hymns*, 1911 (183)

You may want to watch a music video of this old song. Search for Bill and Gloria Gaither with Jay Gardner, Tanya Goodman Sykes, Wesley Pritchard and Sarah DeLane. A new song with the same theme and a few of the same words is sung by Todd Agnew on KLOVE.com.

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Keep Life in Perspective

Focal Text

1 Peter 1:1-12

Background

1 Peter 1:1-12

Main Idea

The blessings of being a Christian exceed by far the temporary trials one may face because of one's faith.

Question to Explore

Is being a Christian worth what it costs?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to explain why being a faithful Christian is worth what it may cost.

Gathering together:

Sing **The Solid Rock**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 511; CCLI # 25417 Public Domain and/or **Be Strong in the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #504; CCLI # 52105

Have an older child or youth read the following call to worship.

“Do you see what this means---all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we’d better get on with it. Strip down, start running---and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed---that exhilarating finish in and with God---he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he’s there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!” (Hebrews 12:1-3 - *The Message*.)

Pray: Thank God for Jesus the example He set for all of us. Give us the strength to follow. Amen.

First thoughts:

Near Cripple Creek, Colorado, gold and tellurium occur mixed as tellurite ore. The refining methods of the early mining camps could not separate the two elements so the ore was thrown into a scrap heap.

One day a miner mistook a lump of ore for coal and tossed it into his stove. Later, while removing ashes from the stove, he found the bottom littered with beads of pure gold. The heat had burned away the tellurium, leaving the gold in a purified state.

The discarded ore was reworked and yielded a fortune. God's word is the Gold that we are mining. We are the tellurium. We and God's Word together make the tellurite. The world is the fire that separates the two. God's Word is within us but we just can't get a handle on it until we face the fires of living in what has become a very sinful world.

Once we go through the fire and get that pure Gold we can start to live and know the Creator and Righteous God (Sower's Seeds).

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Keep Life in Perspective

Focal Text

1 Peter 1:1-12

Background

1 Peter 1:1-12

Main Idea

The blessings of being a Christian exceed by far the temporary trials one may face because of one's faith.

Question to Explore

Is being a Christian worth what it costs?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to explain why being a faithful Christian is worth what it may cost.

Introduction to your personal study:

Wherever you are in the world today and whatever your current circumstances may be, you can relate to this message. It is easy to become discouraged about our personal circumstances. It is also easy to become discouraged about the political situations, war, greed, environmental issues, and ethical issues of today's world. Peter's message is as current today as it was when he wrote. Stay firm. Keep your eyes on your eternal reward. Know that God is in control. As you prepare to teach, ask God to make this message real to you in new and meaningful ways.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

OUTLINE

- 1. Introducing how to keep life in perspective 1:1-2**
- 2. Keeping the hope of your salvation will help keep life in perspective 1:3-5**
- 3. Keeping the joy of your salvation will help keep life in perspective 1:3-5**
- 4. Believing the witnesses of your salvation will help keep life in perspective 1:10-12.**

I. Introducing how to keep life in perspective (1:1-2).

Verse 1. The author of this epistle is Peter. His name means a rock. Most scholars say the writer is the Apostle Peter. Those who disagree do so based on the scholarly grammar that was used. They believe that Peter was not refined enough or learned enough to write this letter. The rebuttal by those who believe the letter was written by Peter say that thirty years of ministry have brought him to the place where he can write with good Greek grammar. Greek was a common language that many could read. “The power of the Holy Spirit made the man who had denied the Lord a great and powerful preacher. It is surprising that a Galilean fisherman could write 1 Peter, but it is not surprising that the Spirit-filled preacher of Pentecost did write 1 Peter”.¹

The particular group of Christians to whom this epistle first went lived in the northern Roman provinces of Asia Minor (modern north western Turkey), north of the Taurus Mountains. When Peter wrote this epistle it was estimated that about one million Jews lived in Palestine and two to four million lived outside. Asia Minor held the third largest concentration of Diaspora Jews after Babylon and Egypt.² The Diaspora means the dispersion of people from their original homeland. The first Diaspora of Jews was in the sixth century B.C. when they were exiled to Babylon. The use of the word by Peter identifies all believers - Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians - as aliens or sojourners in the land.

Peter stated his reason for writing which was to encourage his readers who were facing persecution for the faith. He wanted them to stand firm (5:12). This persecution was evidently wide spread among his readers. Local enemies of the gospel were not the only people responsible for it. It may have spread from Rome itself. Nero accused the

¹ “Triumphant Strangers, A Contemporary Look at First Peter”, Robert L. Hamblin, Broadman Press, 1973, pg. 15.

² Notes on 1st Peter, 2012 Edition, Dr. Thomas L. Constable, pg. 6.

Christians for the burning of Rome.

When Paul traveled around the Roman Empire preaching the Gospel some churches he planted experienced persecution from the unsaved in their communities, but others did not. However, 1 Peter reflects persecution of the Christian throughout northern Asia Minor. While persecution seems to have widespread, it may not have been official yet.³

There would come a time when just being a Christian would be a crime. This letter has come down to us as one filled with hope. It is a challenge to stand firm because of who one is and for whom one lives.

There are several words that one must address to understand the verse. They are: apostle, elect, and exiles. This will help one understand who wrote the letter and to whom it was written.

An apostle was one sent forth with orders (Matthew 10:5). Jesus called twelve and they were His apostles. Later that title would be attributed to those who had been with Jesus and had witnessed his words and deeds.

Peter writes to “exiles”. They are strangers or pilgrims. W.A. Criswell translates it as “a people alongside”. Christians are in the world but not of the world (John 17:16). They are people alongside, separated, and different. We are not to withdraw out of the world, or from the world. We are in the world, witnessing to the world, but we are not a part of it.⁴

The Jews were first scattered during the *Diaspora*. Peter uses the idea of this term in writing to the Gentiles. The congregations in Asia Minor were of “the Diaspora.” That is, the Diaspora of God, the children of God scattered among the unbelievers.⁵

“Elect” was an uplifting word for a people struggling to witness among dangers and persecution. William Barclay translates elect as “chosen, according to the foreknowledge of God”. The church is not only a human organization; it is an organism whose origin lies in the eternal purpose of God.⁶

Verse 2. Who are these congregations scattered throughout Asia Minor? They are the chosen ones of God. Peter uses this term that had once been used of Israel only. Now these believers are the elect. Using “chosen” would send a strong message of hope.

³ Ibid, pg. 3.

⁴ “The New World of the New Birth”, sermon by W.A. Criswell, 1-9-83.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Triumphant Strangers, A Contemporary Look at First Peter”, Robert L. Hamblin, Broadman Press, 1973, pg. 17.

To understand the term election or chosen one, a student must begin from the perspective of God. God is omniscient. He knows all things. He knew what he was going to do before the worlds were framed.

The believers to whom Peter is writing are not believers because God had an afterthought. He had forethought. God is at work in the lives of each of them. They have always been a part of his plan.

They are chosen and set apart by the work of the Holy Spirit. To be sanctified is to be set apart for a purpose. Peter wanted them to know who they were living for and how they got to be Christians in the first place.

Not only are they chosen, set apart, they are anointed or sprinkled with the blood of Christ. To be sprinkled with Christ's blood means to take a person into the realm of influence of Christ's dying, to align him or her with the One who died.

For more information of the Old Testament use of blood read the Book of Leviticus.

This verse mentions all three members of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. Keeping the hope of your salvation will help keep life in perspective (1:3-5).

Verses 3-5. Peter begins to teach his readers what salvation means. Knowledge without understanding does a person very little good. What a person believes determines their action.

He begins with this great doxology ringing with hope for the exiles. In this praise Peter gives the ideas that define salvation. Praise God for mercy, new birth, a living hope, and an inheritance that will never perish, spoil, or fade. Salvation is found in God's mercy, the believer's new birth which is brought about by God. Salvation is alive. It is a "living hope". Salvation includes an inheritance for the children of God. The words let them know where he, Peter, stands before God and turns their attention away from the present to the future.

The word translated praise is one we use often at funerals. It is eulogy. This is over and above thanks. It is an outpouring of the heart for what God has done.

The first gift Peter mentions God giving is "great mercy". He does not pour out his wrath upon the believer's sin. That would be just. ***"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"*** (Romans 6:23, King James Version). He gave them mercy instead of wrath.

Then Peter mentions the gift of "new birth". New birth is the overflow of God's mercy. There is hope for the believer because Christ arose from the dead and so shall they. Their hope is alive and well and should not be forgotten in times of persecution. This is part of Peter's own testimony. He had seen his hopes dashed at the cross. Then came

Sunday and he rushed to the empty tomb. Later he personally greeted Jesus and was given a new purpose in life, **“feed my sheep”** (John 21:16). When Peter decided to follow Jesus his life was never the same.

The Apostle Paul expressed it to the Corinthians this way: **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”** (2 Corinthians 5:17, King James Version).

Thirdly Peter writes about an inheritance. It is not like any earthly inheritance. It is shielded by God’s power and will never “perish, spoil, or fade”. Here early in the letter Peter is moving the emphasis away from earthly things to that which is in heaven and eternal. A believer has a future that is indestructible because it is shielded or kept by the power of God (See 2 Corinthians 11:32; Galatians 3:23, & Philippians 4:7). It will come to complete fruition when Christ returns. Stay the course.

The second coming of Christ was a strong doctrine in the early church. Jesus’ return was always imminent. A strong belief in the second coming helped them keep the faith and push on despite setbacks. Peter pointed them again to the belief that one must live in the hope of the return of Christ. The salvation to be revealed is Christ.

3. Keeping the joy of your salvation will keep life in perspective (1:3-5).

Verses 6-9: **“In all this”** refers to what has already been written. The reward of a Christian far outweighs whatever might take place in mortal life. **“Greatly rejoice”** might well have been translated “jump for joy”. Peter admonishes them to view their many trials as only temporary. This is one of the principle reasons for this letter.

This is one biblical answer for the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” God is working out their faith. Paul expressed it this way. **“We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope”** (Romans 5:3, King James Version). In another place Paul writes **“That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong”** (2 Corinthians 12:10). God working in and through it all is significant for Paul.

Patience is steadfastness. It is “keeping on”. Tribulations help make one patient. Patience is the experience that brings about hope. It is a strong pattern for believers to develop. Some will go through more than others. But, a strong hope in the future is born of these things. Peter’s own life is a testimony to it.

Jesus taught **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal”** (Matthew 6:19-20, King James Version).

Peter heard these words spoken by Jesus and is giving testimony to its truth.

The believers to whom Peter is writing had not had the experience of personally being with Jesus. They believed upon the testimony of others like Peter. Nevertheless their salvation has brought inexpressible joy. This letter is to remind them of that joy lest they forget and lose sight of who they are and to whom they owe their allegiance.

John Piper wrote “While Peter’s teaching on how salvation is applied gave attention to the beginning and continued process of living as a Christian, the actual words for ‘salvation’ have a predominantly future orientation in 1 Peter”⁷

4. Believing the witnesses of your salvation will help keep life in perspective (1:10-12).

Verses 10-12. The salvation that believers in Asia Minor enjoyed was sought by the prophets of old. God through the Holy Spirit spoke to them and gave them a vision of the suffering Messiah. You can find more by reading Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets”** (Hebrews 1:1, King James Version).

The Holy Spirit has always been operating in the hearts and lives of men. The message that the prophets received was the message that the preachers had spoken to these churches.

Once again we see Peter getting the attention of the churches. He reminds them to remember who they are and with what they have been entrusted. The Holy Spirit, a part of the Trinity, has made this available not only to the prophets, but also to them.

Angels intently look into this. Angels have had a part. Gabriel was the angel who came and made the announcement to Mary and later spoke to Joseph. It was Gabriel who spoke to Zacharias to tell him he would have a son who was to be named John.

“Keep Life in Perspective” is the message for the churches. Their future and ours is secure in the hands of God who has covered us with the blood of Christ. There should be no doubt of heaven. Whatever happens in this life should never cause one to take one’s eyes off the prize—eternal life with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

The passage in a nutshell: Peter writes to churches about to be engulfed by suffering. He encourages them to continue to place their faith in the redemptive power of the Holy

⁷ Notes on 1st Peter, 2012 Edition, Dr. Thomas L. Constable, pg. 9.

Spirit. They are never to forget that their future benefits far outweigh the circumstances of the moment.

Before you teach this lesson there are some things to consider:

1. Be prepared.
2. Ask questions and then give plenty of wait time for the class members to answer.
3. The first five minutes are very important. Tell the class what will be the main thought.
4. Do not run out of time and simply quit. Have a conclusion time no matter where you must finish the lesson.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Keep Life in Perspective

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.

Focal Text

1 Peter 1:1-12

Background

1 Peter 1:1-12

Main Idea

The blessings of being a Christian exceed by far the temporary trials one may face because of one's faith.

Question to Explore

Is being a Christian worth what it costs?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to explain why being a faithful Christian is worth what it may cost.

Connect with Life:

Write on a large piece of paper or on a board write the following two words: **HOPE** and **SUFFERING**.

Ask the group: “What comes to mind when you think of a Christian suffering? Do you think the thought of suffering might drive potential disciples away?” Between the two questions let people respond. Be sure and give them time to think.

Tell them: “Suffering can be a means to hope for a Christian. God uses the trials of life

to prove the sincerity of our faith. 'A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted'".⁸

Ask: "Is being a faithful Christian worth what it may cost?"

Seek an answer: "Should prospective converts be made aware of the possibility of suffering for Christ's sake?"

Guide the Study:

Read the verse to the class. ***"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:41-42, King James Version).*** Peter was one of them.

Ask someone to tell what they know about the Apostle Peter from their own experience in Bible study.

Inquire: "What did Peter give up to follow Jesus?" If no one knows, "remind them that he was a fisherman by trade." Tell them "that approximately thirty years had passed from the time he chose to follow Jesus and the writing of this epistle."

Tell them: "He wrote the letter to give encouragement to the churches in a time full of trials and tribulations brought on by the Roman government. He wanted them to keep their lives in perspective. What was happening to them was nothing compared with the coming glory of heaven with Christ."

At this point have them take out their Bibles and turn to today's scripture passage.

Request the group to read through the passage and find any key words. This is a brainstorming exercise. As they call out the words write them on a board or newsprint.

These might include: chosen, mercy, sanctifying, new birth, living hope, inheritance, grief, trials, faith, and salvation. Encourage the class to read and encourage them to speak. They may find other words that seem important to them. Be sure the ones above are included.

I. Introducing how to keep life in perspective (1:1-2).

You read verses 1 and 2.

Inform the group: "Verse one is the salutation or greetings to the churches. This letter is a cyclical one. It is not going to one church only. It was written to all the churches in the region. They were to read it and pass it on. It begins with encouragement. The first encouraging word Peter gives them is the word 'chosen'. God did the choosing and it

⁸ Wiersbe, pg. 35.

was done before the worlds were made.”

Tell the class: “God chooses those who are His. Think of choosing like you would if picking a team. You have in mind who you would like to be on your team. But, even if you ask them to be on your team they have the choice to refuse. God is always choosing.”

Give them an explanation of “foreknowledge”. Knowledge is based upon facts. God has all the facts. There are facts that you know. The sun will come up in the morning. The stars can be seen at night. Barring any catastrophe those things remain a fact. God knows all things. He is omnipotent. He knows all the facts.

“The response of the churches of Asia Minor was obedience. Obedience is the mark of a follower of Christ. He calls and we follow.”

Let them know: “the church is made up of members saved under the blood of Christ.”

Share: “Peter uses both a Hebrew greeting “grace” and a Greek greeting “peace”. There were undoubtedly both Jewish and Gentile believers in the churches.

II. Keeping the hope of your salvation will help keep life in perspective (1:3-5).

Have someone read verses 3-5.

Tell the class: “The key to keeping one’s life in perspective lies in ‘the hope of our salvation’. Never lose sight of the future glory. Hope along with suffering is two of the main themes of this epistle”.

Encourage a brief discussion with this: Have any of you ever been persecuted for your faith? If so, would you mind telling about it?

Add: “In light of suffering why does Peter say they have a ‘living hope’”. (It is a living hope because it is grounded in God’s living Word and made possible by the living Son of God.)⁹

Tell the group to “look at the words ‘mercy’, ‘new birth’, and ‘resurrection’ in verse 3. Mercy is something none deserve. Instead of death God mercifully gives life. New birth indicates a new life. Paul reminds believers that old things pass away and they become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). A believer is changed completely. Resurrection is that point in time when Christ will return for His own. The return of Christ was what originally fired the New Testament church. Thirty years of waiting might well have quenched some of that fire.”

Explain: “Hope is confidence in what God says and does. Don’t lose hope”. **“So do**

⁹ Be Hopeful, Warren Wiersbe, David Cook, 2nd Edition 2009, pg. 32.

not throw away your confidence, it will be richly rewarded” (Hebrews 10:35).

III. Keeping the joy of your salvation will keep life in perspective (1:6-9).

Have someone read verses 6-9.

Give this information to the group: “Warren Wiersbe, in his book on 1 Peter entitled ‘Be Hopeful’, writes this about trials. Trials meet needs. Trials are varied. Trials are not easy. And, trials are controlled by God.¹⁰ Trials are only temporary.”

Ask: “Why should the readers rejoice?” (Verse 6, because the trials are only temporary.)

Continue: “In verse 7 Peter used an illustration from the work of a goldsmith. Ore is put into the smelting furnace long enough to remove the impurities. Then the gold is poured out and a beautiful object is fashioned. An eastern goldsmith would keep the gold in the furnace until he could see his face reflected in it. So our Lode keeps us in the furnace of suffering until we reflect the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ¹¹ The idea is to be our best when Christ returns”.

Seek answers from the group: “Has your faith ever been tested?” (Give them time to respond.

In verse 8 reminds them of why they are to be so joyous. Say, “The readers were much like we are today. They had not seen Jesus and neither have we. But, we are excited because we have accepted Him on the basis of the preaching of the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Give this illustration: **“Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and believed”** (John 20:29, King James Version).

Draw the group’s attention to verse 9. Ask, “What is the end result of your faith?”

Ask: “Is salvation something we receive at the end of life?”

Search out ideas on this: “Is salvation worth any trials one might encounter?”

Tell the group: “Joy comes with confidence and hope in salvation now and in the future”.

IV. Believing the witnesses of your salvation will help keep life in perspective (1:10-12).

¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 34.

¹¹ Ibid, pg. 35.

Have someone read verses 10-12.

Say: “Every believer has a witness to their own salvation.”

Discuss what that means. (Their salvation lets others see Christ in them).

Tell the group: “This passage has to do with the prophet’s witness of the coming of Christ. The Old Testament writers gave witness of the Messiah. They wrote about One who would come without ever their being able to see for themselves. Peter ties the salvation of his readers to their knowledge of what the prophets wrote in the Old Testament.”

Share: “There are times when everyone feels as if what they are going through is unique to their own experience. Peter lets them know, as he does us, that others have experienced tribulations too. They give witness in the Scriptures to that fact”.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

After reading the passage, studying it together, and considering the title “Keep Life in Perspective”, then place these questions before the group:

Do you find it hard to keep your perspective of the Christian life focused on the future with Christ? Why?

Do you find it easy to keep your perspective of the Christian life focused on the future with Christ? Why?

What is the one thing that troubles you most in your staying the course of your Christian walk?

Read this in closing:

Many of us lose confidence in prayer because we do not recognize the answer when it comes.

We ask for strength:
God gives us difficulties to make us strong.

We pray for wisdom:
God sends us problems to solve.

We plead for prosperity:
God gives us brains with which to work and think.

We ask for courage:
God gives us dangers to overcome.

We pray for favors:
God gives us opportunities.

We plead for abundance:
God gives us talents.

We pray for patience:
God gives us trials.

Author: unknown

Remind the group that Christ promised to be with them always (Matthew 28:20). Keep the same vibrant hope that Christ had. Have His perspective.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Keep Life in Perspective 1 Peter 1:1-12

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Feeling Harassed????

Take time to share thoughts on these things:

“Are youth exempt from trials and tribulations?” **Obvious answer but think about it, OK?**

“Are you ever harassed by anyone because of your faith?”

Share what you did or could do if harassed for your faith?”

Ask each other: “What can your church do to help you?”

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Keep Life in Perspective***
1 Peter 1:1-12**Beginning the Service:**

Choose songs from those listed under Music Sources or chose others which are familiar to your group. Be aware of the topic for study and worship as you choose songs.

You may choose to use the words to **Joy Unspeakable** as a reading or watch a music video of the song.

Offering:

In a certain West African village the native Christians had no privacy for prayer in their huts. So each Christian made off to the bush, behind his hut, for a season of prayer. After a while there was a worn track from the hut to the place of prayer. Then if it ever happened that the track became overgrown from want of use, another Christian villager would admonish his neighbor, "Brother, there is something wrong with your track". There are outward signs of one's prayer life.

Our prayer life is basic to all other demonstrations of our commitment to Jesus. Without a solid life of prayer, we will never feel completely free to give back to Him our lives through our talents, time, money, energy, ministry though our home, businesses, and all else that God has entrusted to us. Think prayer, first. Then think offerings and everything else.

Praying for the World:

There is a renewed interest in reaching "unreached people groups". This is the popular term today for the hundreds of groups of people around the world who have never heard the Gospel. Take time to pray for those who are going to these groups.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

ENDURE HARDSHIP AS DISCIPLINE

Hebrews 12:4-12

Introduction

In line with the study this morning of keeping life in perspective we will consider this passage in Hebrews. Hebrews was written about the same time as 1 Peter. It had been thirty years since Christ had risen from the grave and the church had grown.

The promise of His return, which was to become a dominant theme in preaching, had not yet come to pass. There were some who were wavering and considering either quitting all together or going back to pick up part of their Jewish religion—wedding it to Christianity. Heresies taught by some leaders were dividing the church.

Many did not understand why trials and tribulations were beginning to happen to them. The writer of Hebrews lets them know that trials and tribulations had always been a part of the lot of those who chose to live for God. Rather than run from it, learn from it.

Discipline comes from the same root for disciple. A disciple is a learner. Discipline is for learning. It is not the same as punishment. The Lord's discipline is used to make a disciple stronger. Notice carefully the three points that follow.

I. THE LORD DISCIPLINES IN LOVE (4-6).

Believers struggle. It is an ongoing battle. It seems like trials and struggles are God's main way of training believers. But, what a disciple endures does not compare with the cross Christ bore.

Therefore, do not "lose heart" when the Lord disciplines you. He loves each disciple as a son. He chastens each disciple as a son. His discipline marks a believer as His son. The end result is holiness.

Children know that a parent who loves is a parent who sets the boundaries. A parent who disciplines is a parent who loves. Our Father disciplines in love.

II. THE LORD DISCIPLINES AS A FATHER (7-11).

A neighbor does not discipline another's son. He disciplines his own. In doing so he legitimizes his own. A disciple of Christ is treated as a son of God.

Children respect a father who disciplines. They know that the boundaries set are for their good. If an earthly father sets boundaries should not a heavenly father do so too? God's discipline is for a disciple's good.

God's discipline has a goal. It is to prepare one to share in His holiness. God's discipline produces a harvest of righteousness and peace. The disciple becomes more like Christ. God teaches us, disciplines us, that we might do the right thing and live in peace with God and man.

III. THE LORD DISCIPLINES FOR THE WALK TO COME (12).

A quote from the late Tom Landry, coach of The Dallas Cowboys says: "The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don't want to do, in order to achieve what they've always wanted to be."

The writer says to strengthen "**feeble arms, and weak knees**". The idea is to lift up the arms. Do whatever it takes to get going again.

There is an Old Testament incident recorded in Exodus 17:10-13. The Amalekites were battling the Israelites. As long as Moses lifted up his hands the Israelites won. Whenever he became weary and let his arms fall down the Amalekites won. In order for Moses to keep his hands up two men, Hur and Aaron, sat Moses down and held up each of his hands. They were helpers in a time of need. In times of discipline the Lord is there to strengthen us.

Discipline today is preparing one for the walk tomorrow. The road today might be rough, but discipline today makes for a smoother road tomorrow. Someone said, "The bumps in the road are the hand-holds we use to climb upward".

Commentator John MacArthur says of this verse: "And make straight the path for your feet refers to staying in your own lane in the race. When you get out of your lane, you not only disqualify yourself but often interfere with other runners." [John MacArthur. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Hebrews. (Chicago: Moody, 1983) p. 402]

The road is not only smoother for the one disciplined, it is also smoother for the ones who follow. Once a disciple has been trained by adversity, he can give aid and comfort to those who follow behind (2 Corinthians 1:3-6).

Conclusion

What can be concluded from this passage? Godly discipline is given in love and if received with respect and applied to life it can strengthen one's life.

Do not lose your perspective. God is never your enemy. He is a God of love; that love will strengthen us through the trials of life.

Call to Commitment:

Choosing to follow Christ involves discipline. Discipline strengthens a believer. Will you choose Christ and follow Him? Will you accept Christ's call to a disciplined life?

Concluding the Service:

Pray: Thank God for the thorns of life. They are as important as the roses. Trials and tribulations come, but, God never leaves us alone".

Copy these two pages as needed:

Have an older child read the following call to worship during the **“Gathering Time”**. Provide it for him or her earlier in the week and suggest that the child ask an older person to help with any words that might be difficult to say or understand.

“Do you see what this means---all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we’d better get on with it. Strip down, start running---and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed---that exhilarating finish in and with God---he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he’s there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!” (Hebrews 12:1-3 - The Message.)

May be used as a reading. Recordings are available on the internet if the group would enjoy watching.

Joy Unspeakable Barney E. Warren, 1900 Public Domain

I have found His grace is all complete,
He supplies us every need;
While I sit and learn at Jesus' feet,
I am free, yes, free indeed.

Refrain:

It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Full of glory, full of glory;
It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Oh, the half has never yet been told.

I have found the pleasure I once craved,
It is joy and peace within;
What a wondrous blessing, I am saved
From the awful gulf of sin.

I have found that hope so bright and clear,
Living in the realm of grace;
Oh, the Savior's presence is so near,
I can see His smiling face.

I have found the joy no tongue can tell,
How its waves of glory roll;
It is like a great o'erflowing well,
Springing up within my soul.

Faith Publishing House, *Evening Light Songs*, 1949, edited 1987 (88)
The Gospel Trumpet Company, *Select Hymns*, 1911 (183)

You may want to watch a music video of this old song. Search for Bill and Gloria Gaither with Jay Gardner, Tanya Goodman Sykes, Wesley Pritchard and Sarah DeLane. A new song with the same theme and a few of the same words is sung by Todd Agnew on KLOVE.com.