



## Small Group Notes

### Hope 1 Peter 1:3-12

Take a few minutes to write down every phrase in this passage that makes you hopeful.

- Of all the phrases you wrote down, which one is your favourite and why?
- Make a list of things our culture finds hope in, and then a list of things legalists find hope in.
- How could these things eventually fail you?
- Why might it be easier to find hope in these things instead of God?

Verses 2-3: We can stand firm in our lives because we belong to a different family. Peter talks about the idea that we were born into a family whose inheritance was only death; the best things in this world just pass away. But because of what Jesus did at the cross, we have been born again into another family, God's family, whose inheritance is "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading."

- How does knowing that we belong to a new family help give us hope?

Peter says that we are being guarded by God's power through faith. This means that our inheritance is guaranteed, or, in other words, if we truly believe in Jesus, God will not let us fall away from Him.

- How would this idea help give us hope? Knowing these things, how would you counsel a friend who was going through something?
- Was there ever a time in your life that something you had your hope in let you down? What happened? How did it let you down?

Pray:

- Thank God for causing us to be reborn and giving us an inheritance that is imperishable.
- Thank God for getting rid of our dead hopes and giving us a living hope.
- Ask God for strength to hope in Him instead of the things culture hopes in.
- Take time to pray through the phrases you wrote down, thanking and praising God for these truths.

## Holiness 1 Peter 1:14-25

Peter commands us not to live according to "evil desires (or passions) you had when you lived in ignorance." These passions can inhibit us from standing firm in our Christian lives.

- Write something down that you struggle with; it could be lust, anger, insecurity, etc. Ask yourself why you struggle with this. Write it down and then ask yourself again why you gave this reason. Continue this process until you can't think of anything more. Asking "why" reveals motives, motives reveal longings, and longings reveal passions.
- What are some cultural definitions of holiness?

Culture approaches holiness from a "deficit position" - you lack holiness so you need to do x, y, and z. Christian approach to holiness beginnings from an "abundant position" - You are already holy, so live like it.

- Do you find this second view more or less helpful? Why?

In verses 17-21, Peter gives us motives to be holy. Reread these verses and write down all the motives your group can find.

- What is likely to motivate you most from this list and why?
- How could this motive help you when you are tempted?
- Share the answers to your "why" questions that you wrote down earlier. How would a Christian view of holiness help you to live according to the God who ransomed us, specifically in the area with which you struggle?

Pray:

- Take some time to pray for each other's struggle for holiness.
- Pray over the last answer to your "why" questions. Ask God to show you if there is an even deeper passion you need to uproot.
- Write down some practical steps to live your life according to your new passion (Jesus) instead of your old passion.



## Community 1 Peter 1:2

Write the first five communities that you belong to (i.e. family, different friend circles, gyms, church, running mates, neighbourhood associations, colleagues, etc.) that immediately come to mind in the columns on the following page.

Next to those columns are characteristics of good communities. If the characteristic describes the communities you have listed, put a tick under that community.

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
Longs for Jesus					
Have seen each other in the last week					
Have seen each other in the last day					
Pushes each other to be better					
Deals with conflict well					
Rushes to help each other					
Encourages you					
Points you to Jesus					
Holds you accountable					
Honest					
Humble					
Sympathetic					
Forgiving					
Kind					

Look at your ticks. What do you think?

Peter continues building on chapter one. He has said, "Because you belong to a new, holy family you are holy, so live like it." In chapter two, he is saying, "Because you belong to a new, holy family, you have a new community, so live like you belong."

- What did you learn from the community exercise you did above?
- Have you ever been a part of a community that was torn apart by the behaviours in verse 1?
- What happened? Ultimately, what was "the straw that broke the camel's back" that broke up the community?



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- Reread verses 9-10: list everything in these verses that are true about living differently as Christians.
- How do you think these would be different from cultural communities?

Reread verses 11-12: Peter here seems interested in silencing the critique that Christians of his day did not obey the government. Today, some people say that Christians shouldn't care what others think of them, they should just be followers of Christ and not care what anyone else thinks. But Peter clearly cares what the lost think, and clearly wants to make sure that those who hold that view are wrong.

- What are some critiques you feel others make about Christians?

Peter actually responds to the cultural critique by commanding the Christians should be godlier.

- Based on the critiques from the previous question, how can Christians change our behaviour to be godlier?
- Tell a story about the best community you have ever been a part of. What did they do that made you think it was the best?

Pray:

- Verse 2 - Pray that God would give you a longing for Him.
- Verse 9 - Thank God for including us in this kind of community.
- Verse 12-Ask God to help our church be the kind of church that silences accusations.
- Look at the communities you listed at the start of this study. Is there anything you need to change about your communities?
- How would you go about doing that?



## Marriage 1 Peter 3:1-7

The following chart offers a quick, insightful look at areas you may need to focus on in your marriage. If you are dating, rate your relationship but skip number 5 (and possibly 12 and 13). If you are single, think through the marriages you know; what are ways you can encourage them to have a healthy marriage?

Rate the satisfaction of your marriage in the areas listed on the chart on the next page, using a scale from 1-5. 1 meaning not satisfied and 5 meaning fully satisfied.

1) Shared Values	
2) Commitment to each other	
3) Communication Skills	
4) Conflict Resolution Skills	
5) Intimacy/ Sexuality	
6) Spirituality/ Faith	
7) Money Management	
8) Appreciation/ Affection	
9) Lifestyle	
10) Recreation	
11) Decision-making	
12) Parenthood	
13) Household Chores/ Gender Differences	
14) Careers	
15) Balancing Time	

Verse 3: "adornment" in Greek is the word "kosmos," meaning universe or world. This is the only place it is not translated as such. At its root, "adornment" means, "What makes us glorious." So, Peter is saying not to let your external appearance be what makes you glorious.

- What are some ways our culture adorns themselves with the external?
- Verse 7: What are some ways husbands can show honour to their wives?

At the end of verse 7, Peter says that both men and women are heirs with Christ. Men are not worth more than women; we are all equal heirs to the inheritance Christ purchased.

- Do you think the church in general has treated women like they are equal heirs? Why or why not?

Some churches use this verse to say that women should simply accept bad husbands. Read Matthew 18:15-20.

- Based on this passage, what would you tell a woman who had a bad husband to do about it?
- How did your marriage rate on the test above? Share one area you want to personally improve on in your marriage and ask the group to hold you accountable.

Pray:

- Pray for the marriages in your group and in our church to be selfless in their pursuit of Christ and in their pursuit of each other.
- Pray for those in our church who are dating, that they would be selfless in their pursuit of Christ and in their pursuit of each other.
- Pray for those in our church who are single.

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Further thoughts

- In the test above, which areas were high? Take time to celebrate those with your spouse by praising them.
- Which areas were low? Take time to talk to your spouse, non-confrontationally, about ways you can get better as a team.
- Are you single? Take some time to pray over each of these areas for your friends' and family's marriages.

## Perseverance 1 Peter 3:8-22

Over and over, Peter roots his commands in the life and the story of Jesus. He does this because when we see Jesus - the God who loved us enough to die - doing these things, we are called to do the same.

Read: 1 Peter 3:8-22

Make a note of all the things Peter commands us to do in verses 8-9. Then, read Luke 23:26-43. Look to see how Jesus behaved when He was suffering. Connect the ways that Jesus accomplishes each of the commands Peter outlines.

We typically have 3 responses to those who hurt us:

- 1.) To change ourselves, even when we don't want to
- 2.) To run away or withdraw
- 3.) To attack

- Which of these do you think is most like you?

Peter says that Christians are to behave differently when persecuted. Reread verses 13-17.

- In contrast to the responses above, how should Christians respond to those who hurt them?

Verse 18: Peter says we are to be holy even in suffering because Jesus was holy when He suffered.

- Why do you think it would be important to be reminded of that?

Verses 10-12: Peter gives us a couple reasons why it is important for the Christians to live holy lives even when we are being persecuted.

- What are these?

Share:

- Has someone else ever hurt you because you did the right thing? Have you ever felt pressure to do the wrong thing? Tell a story about a time when you either of these happened to you.
- What happened? How did you respond?

Pray:

- Pray for Christians who are being persecuted around the world. Pray for the end of their persecution. Ask God to give them the strength to not repay evil for evil but to bless those who hurt them.
- Pray for our church. That we would be zealous for what is good and that this would be a testimony to those who do not yet believe.
- Pray for each other. That we would respond to painful situations just like Jesus did.
- Pray through all the commands you saw Jesus carry out. Ask God to give you a sense of wonder at how good He is, even when suffering for your sins. Thank Him for His example. And, finally, ask Him to help you be just like Him.



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## Grace 1 Peter 4:1-11

Read: 1 Peter 4:1-11

There are many ways to cope with suffering. Maybe you blame yourself in a harsh and critical way. Maybe you binge (drinking, sleeping, eating). Or maybe you dispel your anger onto other people who don't deserve it.

- Think about a time when you went through something difficult; how did you cope?
- What encourages you in this passage? What convicts you?
- Verse 1: What do you think it means to "arm" ourselves with Christ's way of thinking?
- Verse 3: How would "arming" ourselves with the mind of Christ be better at getting us through suffering than anything on that list?

Verse 8: Peter says that what makes a good community is love.

- Is there anyone you can think of that you are having a difficult time forgiving? How do you think could this lack of forgiveness and love lead to suffering being harder?

Peter sums everything up by saying that it is all for God's glory. Go back through the passage and write down all the commands.

- How do each of these bring glory to God?

Share:

- Tell a story about a time when the grace of God got you through something hard. Why was the situation hard? How did God's grace get you through?

Pray:

- Thank Jesus for suffering on our behalf.
- Ask God to help us arm ourselves with the mind of Christ.
- Ask God to fill our hearts with love for each other so that we can be a stronger community.
- Go through the things that encouraged you and convicted you. Thank God for his grace in encouragement. Ask Him for strength to change the things you were convicted about.



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## Blessing 1 Peter 4:12-19

Hope is crucial to making it through suffering. If you can't see the light at the end, you will only get discouraged and depressed. In the passage this week, Peter is talking about the blessing we receive in suffering. Peter does this to give us hope, to ensure that this suffering isn't for nothing.

Identify the blessing suffering brings in the following passages.

- Hosea 2:6-7:
- Jeremiah 2:19:
- 1 Peter 1:7:
- 1 Peter 4:14:

Read: 1 Peter 4:12-19

- Has 1 Peter helped you with anything over the past few weeks?

Verses 14-15: Peter says that it is a blessing when you suffer for Jesus because God the Holy Spirit rests upon you.

- Why would that be a blessing? (Hint: read 2 Corinthians 3:18, Psalm 16:11, John 14:26)

Peter here seems very concerned with showing the silver lining in suffering. According to one study, *"Feeling cheerful and dejected at the same time [having hope despite the struggle], preceded improvements in well-being, even if the mixed feelings were unpleasant at the time"*

- According to this, why might it be important to rejoice even in suffering?
- What do you think Peter means when he says, "For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household"?
- Why do you think it would be important to "commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good"?
- Did any of these verses change how you feel about suffering? Why or why not?

Share:

- Do you struggle with the idea that God allows us to suffer for our good? Why or why not?

Pray:

- Pray that God would give us such joy in the Spirit's presence that we would be able to rejoice in Him, even in the midst of suffering.
- Pray that God would continue to help us do good even when we suffer at the hands of someone else.
- Pray that God would give us a greater trust in Him so that we can entrust our souls to Him in suffering.



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## Leadership 1 Peter 5

Read: 1 Peter 5

Peter ends this letter with a blessing: he prays for peace for all who are suffering. Living differently as a Christian, very often, causes heartache and division.

- Think over the past few weeks, did you experience any heartache? Of all the things we covered in this study, what gave you the most peace? Why?

Real leadership serves people. Whether it's yourself, your family, a friend group, or a team, everybody leads somebody. In order to gauge how well you are leading, look at who you are serving and how well you are serving them.

- List all the things you feel you are leading. Remember, at the very least, you are leading yourself. For each item listed, write out areas that you are not serving in, what areas you are serving well in, and what areas you are not serving well in.
- To whom are you being an example? Could you be a better example for them?
- List everything Peter commands the leaders to do. What do you think would happen to the flock if the leaders didn't do these things?
- What does Peter command those who are not in leadership in the church to do? Do you think there are people who really won't like this? Why?
- According to verse 10, what four things will happen after our suffering? What do you think that means?
- Think about people you know. How could you address areas you are not serving them in? How could you address areas you are not serving them well in? How could you improve areas you are serving them well in?

Share:

There are a lot of stories about pastors and elders failing.

- Tell a story about a time when someone in church leadership exemplified one of the characteristics in verses 1-5. What did they do? Why was it so good?

Pray:

- Pray for the leaders of GBC, that God would help them live out the characteristics in v1-5.
- Pray the same for the leaders of other churches in our community.
- Ask God to help you lead well by inspiring you to serve others as Jesus served you.



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