Letters of Peter

Bible Conversations
Study Series

Bible Study Comparison

Other Bible Studies	Bible Conversations
Fill in the blank answers	Critical thinking open-ended questions
Doctrine development	Doctrine and personal development
Little reading of scripture aided with much additional text	Little text aided with much scripture reading
Man-based gathering of knowledge with little to no group or Holy Spirit involvement	Holy Spirit guided and collective group sharing and challenging of scriptural knowledge
Attain knowledge	Attain knowledge with personal introspection
No "heavy-lifting" of seeking Biblical truths	"Heavy-lifting" of seeking Biblical truths

^{*}The use of <u>blueletterbible.com</u> is an excellent aid in defining ancient languages in their original grammatical context.

Overview

The letter of 1st Peter was written approximately 64AD during the reign of Nero before his death around 66-68AD. Both of his letters were addressed to believers that were "scattered" due to Roman persecution during that time period. His audience was most likely to both Jews and Gentiles.

Throughout Peter's letters, he makes multiple references to the Torah and other ancient writings.

Behind the Scenes

Did you know there are many documents that were recorded during this time period that we still have today? There are actually a collection of letters written between Trajan- the Emperor and Pliny the Younger- the Governor of Bithynia about Christians. Pliny had left it unclear about whether a person should be convicted of guilt and punished when there was no specific crime; it seems confessing to be a Christian was insufficient for proof of guilt.

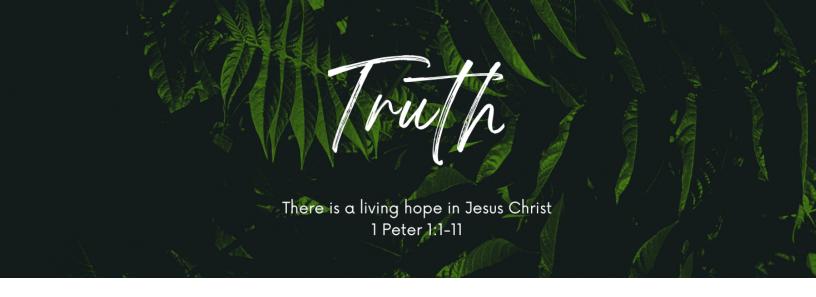
1 Peter 1

Observation Who?
Where?
When?
Key Words

Summary

Interpretation

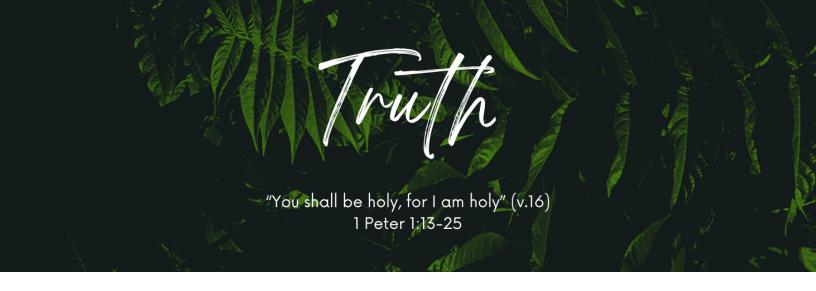
Titles: 1 Peter 1:1-12
1 Peter 1:13-25
Key Verse: Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining why you chose it. (Memorize it???)
Key Attributes: Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.
Most Meaningful attribute in my present circumstances: Why?
Key Theme:
"Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" 1 Peter 5:12
How does this passage encourage believers to "stand firm" in their grace? Why is it important in consideration of the topics presented? What realm do I need to be better established? How does He wish for me to to better understand the grace He gives?
Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding or curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?



Application Questions:

Examining the Word: Define "living" (ζ á ω g2198) What does he mean by a "living hope?" Why does belief in Jesus have long-lasting effects? How does this differentiate from some of the Christian practices today? How does a person have hope in Jesus? How does this hope relate to the mercy that He has provided? What other scriptures aid my understanding of this truth?

Examining my Heart: Is my hope alive? What do I hope for? What is the purpose or goal? What am I placing my hope in? How do I know my hope is real? Why or why not is my hope important to me?

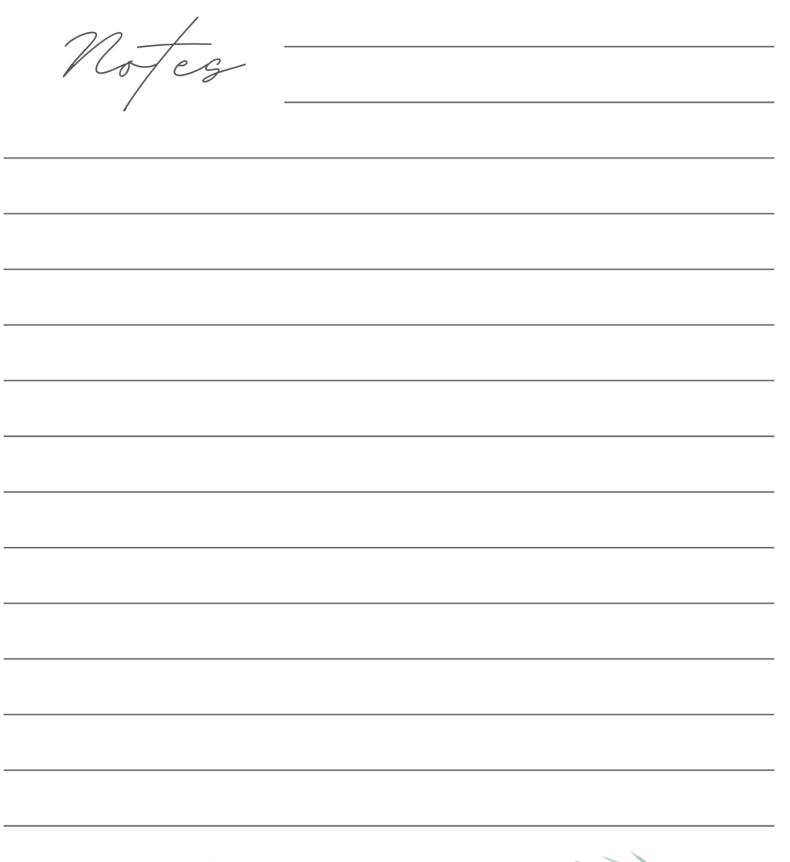


Application Questions:

Examining the Word: Define "holy" (ἄγιος g0040). Why is it important to Him for believers to be considered holy? How does a person become holy? How does this way of living differ from a futile way of living? How do these scriptures enhance my understanding of this truth? (Ephesians 4:17-5:21; Leviticus 19:1-4; Romans 8:1-11; Isaiah 52:1-6)

Examining my Heart: Have I noticed a change of holiness in my life? What does this spiritual journey look like to me in my present circumstances, past failures and successes? Do I strive for holiness? How has He changed me and/or convinced me to allow Him to make me a different kind of person? Why would I allow Him to do that? What does it mean to me whether or not He chooses to make me holy?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:





So What?

Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 1 Peter 1 to shape your thinking, stir your neart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with hese living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?
Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the bower of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you
endeavor to LIVE 1 Peter 1?



1 Peter 2

Observation

Who?

Where?

When?

Key Words

Summary

Interpretation

	Titles:		
		Peter 2:1-3 —	
	1	Peter 2:4-8—	
	1	Peter 2:9-12—	
	1	Peter 2:13-20—	
	1	Peter 2:21-25—	
Memo	Key Versorize it???	se: Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining w?)	hy you chose it.
	Key Attr	ibutes: Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus	s, and/or the Holy Spirit.
	Most Me	eaningful attribute in my present circumstances:	Why?
	Key The	eme:	
exhorti	"Throug ing and te	h Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I ha estifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm i 1 Peter 5:12	ave written to you briefly n it!"
	ant in cor	es this passage encourage believers to "stand firm" in nsideration of the topics presented? What realm do I n ow does He wish for me to to better understand the gr	eed to be better

Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding or curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?



Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (v.10)

1 Peter 2:1-11

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: What old testament passage(s) is Peter referring to? Why is it important to note how I was "not a people", but now I am? What does he expect of me now as one of His own? How is being part of the people of God an extension of His mercy?

Examining my Heart: How has this mercy changed my circumstances/character? What does it mean to me as a person who has partaken of such mercy? How do I know I am not simply assuming a role in the family without being part of it? How has "not being a people" to But now are the people of God" demand change in my life? Are there things that need to be changed? If so, what's stopping me?



Believers are to honor all people; demonstrating that honor by living Christ's example

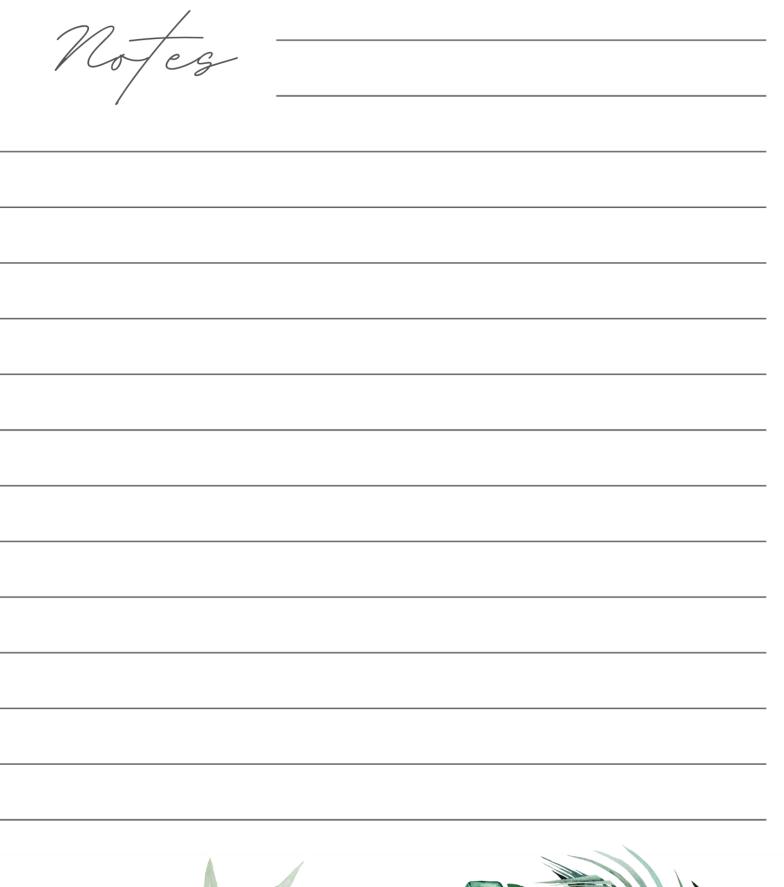
1 Peter 2:12-25

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: Define "honor" ($\tau \mu \dot{\alpha} \omega$ g5091). What does it mean to place value on a person(s)? To what standard or measurement are we supposed to honor others? How does this relate to being like Jesus? In what ways does culture seek to influence Christians differently? Similar to the examples of honoring others as represented in the passage, what other Bible passages show how to truly honor another human being? What relevance does this have with the Commandments? How do these scriptures aid my understanding of this topic? (Isaiah 53; Matthew 15:1-9; Isaiah 29:11-14)

Examining my Heart: When I think about honoring others, what comes to mind? How have I not shown honor to others? When I see other humans, do I think about their value? Does it make me sad when I see them treated poorly? How do I know I am truly seeking their best interest?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:





So What?

Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 1 Peter 2 to shape your thinking, stir your neart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?
Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the bower of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you
endeavor to LIVE 1 Peter 2?



1 Peter 3

Obser	vation Who?
	Where?
	When?
	Key Words

Summary

Interpretation

the group?

Titles: 1 Peter 3:1-12—
1 Peter 3:13-22—
Key Verse: Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining why you chose it. (Memorize it???)
Key Attributes: Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.
Most Meaningful attribute in my present circumstances: Why?
Key Theme:
"Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" 1 Peter 5:12
How does this passage encourage believers to "stand firm" in their grace? Why is it important in consideration of the topics presented? What realm do I need to be better established? How does He wish for me to to better understand the grace He gives?

Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding or curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with



Christians are to characterize their life by righteousness 1 Peter 3:1-12

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: Define "righteousness" (δίκαιος g1342). Why is the way we live important being a Christian? Does the Law contain all of the rules a Christian should live by? Should a Christian live by those laws? How does Jesus talk about how believers should treat others? What other passages enhance my understanding of this truth? (Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 5-7,22:34-40; Psalm 34:12-16)

Examining my Heart: Do I have righteousness? Is my righteousness real or manufactured? What does that say about my relationship with Him? Do I use grace as an excuse to do wrong to others? How do I know if I am a righteous person verses a self-righteous, pious individual? Has my righteousness toward Him or others diminished lately? What things do I need to change?



"...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts..." (v.15)

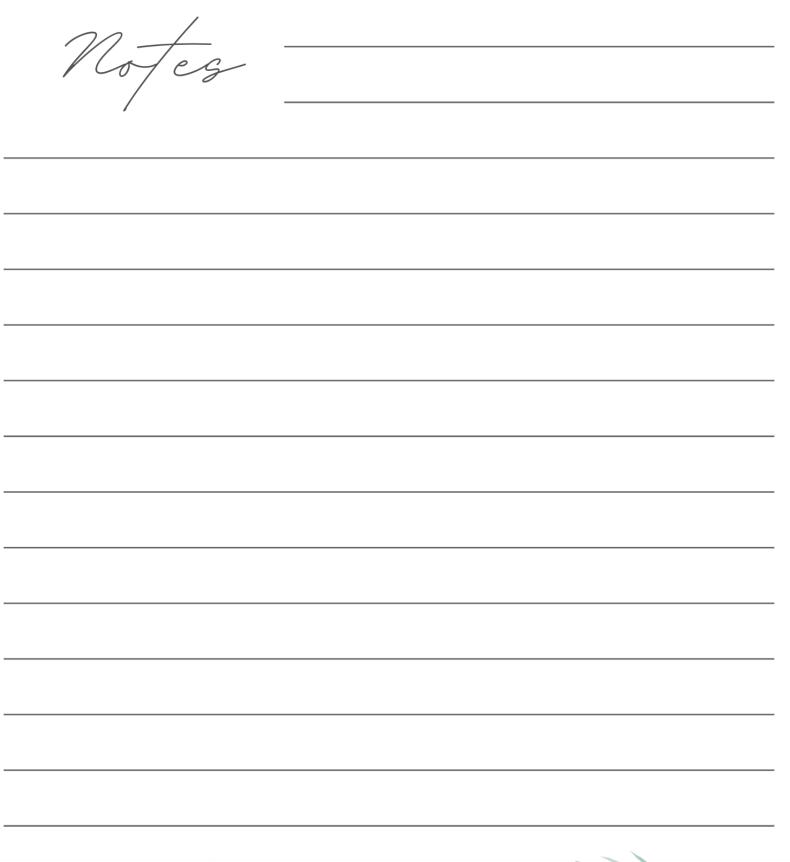
1 Peter 3:13-22

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: What does "sanctify" (ἀγιάζω g0037) mean? Why is this important to do as a believer? How is sanctifying Christ in a persons heart accomplished? How does Peter use baptism to relate to purifying? What is the correlation between purifying something and being holy? How do these scriptures aid my understanding of this truth? (Isaiah 8:11-22; John 17:13-21; Exodus 19:1-7)

Examining my Heart: Have I allowed Him to purify me? In what ways have I not been receptive to the cleaning He wishes to do within me? Do I fight for the Light He offers or do I choose moral compromise? If I am being honest with myself, do I really want my heart to be renewed? If so, do I push against Him whenever He shows His light?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:





So What?

Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 1 Peter 3 to shape your thinking, stir your neart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?
Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the
oower of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you endeavor to LIVE 1 Peter 3?



1 Peter 4

Observation
Who?

Where?

When?

Key Words

Summary

Interpretation

Titles: 1 Peter 4:1-6—
1 Peter 4:7-11—
1 Peter 4:12-19—
Key Verse: Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining why you chose it. (Memorize it???)
Key Attributes: Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.
Most Meaningful attribute in my present circumstances: Why?
Key Theme:
"Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" 1 Peter 5:12
How does this passage encourage believers to "stand firm" in their grace? Why is it important in consideration of the topics presented? What realm do I need to be better established? How does He wish for me to to better understand the grace He gives?
Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding o curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?



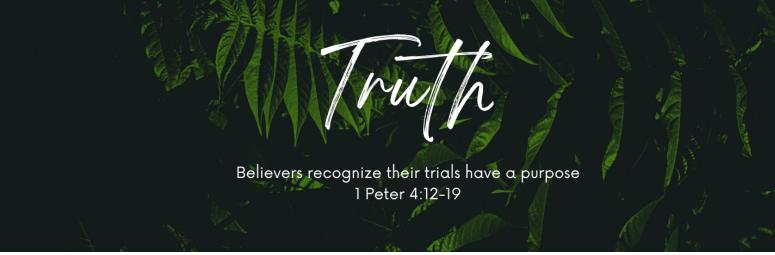
Believers will suffer in the flesh in a similar way as Christ suffered in the flesh

1 Peter 4:1-11

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: How does Peter connect this thought with the previous passage(s)? What relevance does His suffering have to do with me today? How are Christians to suffer for righteousness? Why is it important though inevitable? What is the hope of it effecting those who haven't accepted His truth? What other scriptures expose this truth further? (Luke 9:18-27, 24:36-49; Romans 6:1-19; Ephesians 4:17-32; Romans 13:8-14; Philippians 3:7-11)

Examining my Heart: Does Jesus' sufferings mean anything to me? Do they really? How do I know? What is my purpose or reasoning for believing in Jesus when I see His suffering? Why would I want to suffer for doing right? Do I seek God's favor? How does identifying with His sufferings appealing to me?

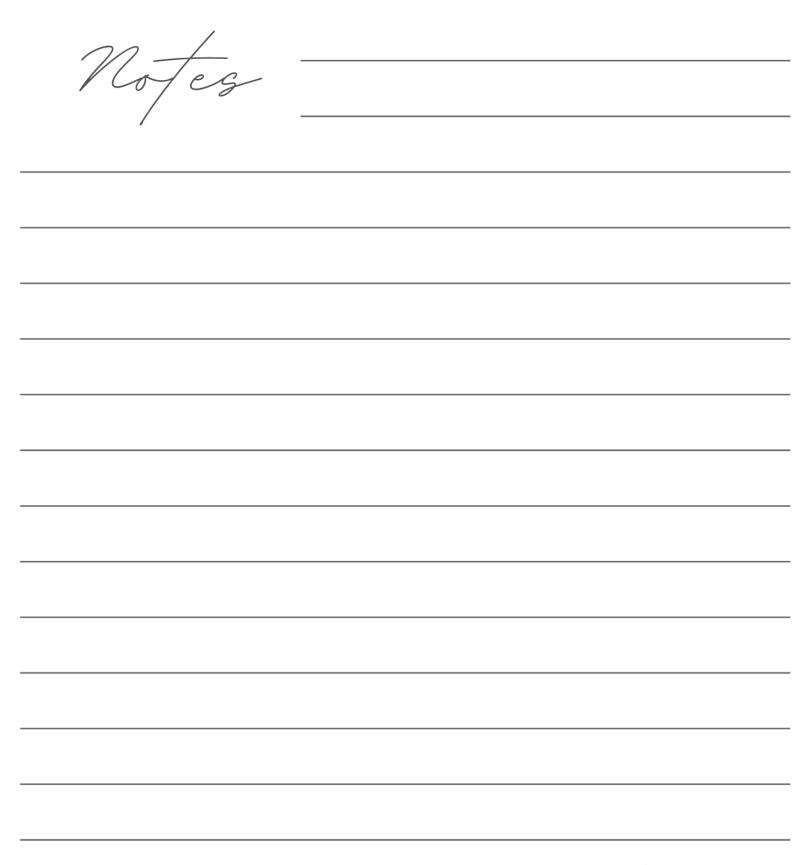


Application Questions:

Examining the Word: What is the purpose for testing? Who else experienced His testing in scripture? How does testing relate to the kingdom? How does He look at us in our testing based on His character? What is the goal or purpose in doing so? What does he use to make it happen? In what way does testing relate to the devil and the higher powers? What scriptures aid my understanding of truth? (Job 1:1-12, 2:1-10; Jeremiah 20:7-13; Psalm 7; Luke 4:1-13; 1 John 2)

Examining my Heart: Do I see trials as something that He uses for me or against me? Do I think I pass them? How do I know? If I fail, why? How does He want me to respond? What are some present trials I face? Do I suffer for righteousness or am I ashamed?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:





So What?

Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 1 Peter 4 to shape your thinking, stir your neart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?
Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the cower of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you endeavor to LIVE 1 Peter 4?



1 Peter 5

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Observation
Who?
Where?
When?
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Key Words

Summary

Interpretation

Titles: 1 Peter 5:1-5—
1 Peter 5:6-11—
1 Peter 5:12-14—
Key Verse: Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining why you chose it. (Memorize it???)
Key Attributes: Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.
Most Meaningful attribute in my present circumstances: Why?
Key Theme:
"Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" 1 Peter 5:12
How does this passage encourage believers to "stand firm" in their grace? Why is it important in consideration of the topics presented? What realm do I need to be better established? How does He wish for me to to better understand the grace He gives?
Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding o curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?



Elders are to shepherd the flock the right way and for the right reasons
1 Peter 5:1-7

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: How does understanding Jesus is God cause others to believe in Him? For what purpose did He work on the Sabbath? What is the purpose of the Sabbath? For whom is the Sabbath for? How does Exodus 16:4 and Leviticus 16:29-34 support Jesus' teaching of the passage? Why is it important Jesus is equal with God? What other passages challenge my understanding of this truth? (Matthew 15:1-9; 1 Timothy 3-4, 2 Timothy, Titus 1, Matthew 23)

Examining my Heart: How do I know if I am like a Pharisee or not? Am I? Why is it critical to understand the difference? What does He expect me to do/change to be the person He wants me to be? How am I going to choose to be different than a Pharisee? Do I seek to help others for the right reasons or do I have selfish ambitions? What has He helped me to see that I can use to aid others even if I am not a shepherd/elder?



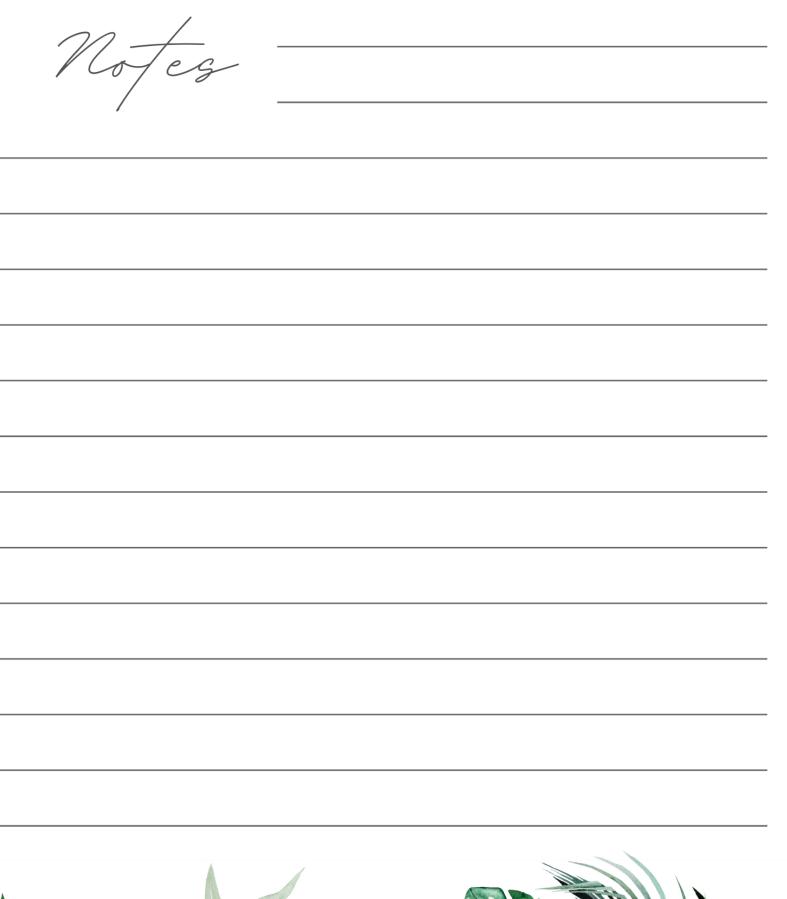
Believers are to stand firm in the true grace of God 1 Peter 5:8-14

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: How does understanding the true grace of God make a means for a person to be established (θεμελιόω g2311), perfect (καταρτίζω g2675), confirmed (στηρίζω g4741) and strengthened (σθενόω g4599) in their faith? What is the true grace of God? How does knowing

Examining my Heart: How has examining these truth(s) challenged my thinking/beliefs? How has it caused me to better understand the true gospel Peter is talking about? Am I willing to allow that grace to effect me and change me forever? Can I see this true grace in my life? Do I really want it? If so, what's stopping me from embracing it? What truths of this grace has/will cause me to take a stand in my belief in allowing Him to make me a different kind of person? Am I happy about this truth? Does my heart long to stand firm in this grace in a sin filled world?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:





So What?

Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 1 Peter 5 to shape your thinking, stir your heart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?
Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the power of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you endeavor to LIVE 1 Peter 5?



2 Peter 1

Observ	vatior
,	Who?

Where?

When?

Key Words

Summary

Interpretation

Titles: 2 Peter 1:1-11—
2 Peter 1:12-21—
Key Verse: Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining why you chose it. (Memorize it???)
Key Attributes: Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.
Most Meaningful attribute in my present circumstances: Why?
Key Theme:
"This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by
your apostles." 2 Peter 3:1-2
How does Peter seem to use his words to "awaken" the hearts of his readers? Why is this important to him and how should it be important to me? What am I to be reminded of? Do I find my heart challenged by those things he considers to be a reminder?

Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding or curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?



Application Questions:

Examining the Word: What does Peter mean when he says to "supply" or "furnish" our faith? Why is it important to be a part of this divine nature? How is this supposed to be accomplished/applied? Why should not being a partaker of these qualities demand spiritual reevaluation in faith? How do these scriptures enhance my understanding of this topic? (Matthew 13:18-23; Ephesians 5:1-21; John 15:1-11; Jude)

Examining my Heart: Do I make an effort to supply my faith? How so? How do I know if it is real or working? What are some good ways to furnish my faith? Why is it I haven't time(s) in the past? Why, assuming I do, participate in a nature different nature than my flesh? What is the purpose in living that/this way? Am I hoping it will grant me some favor from Him?



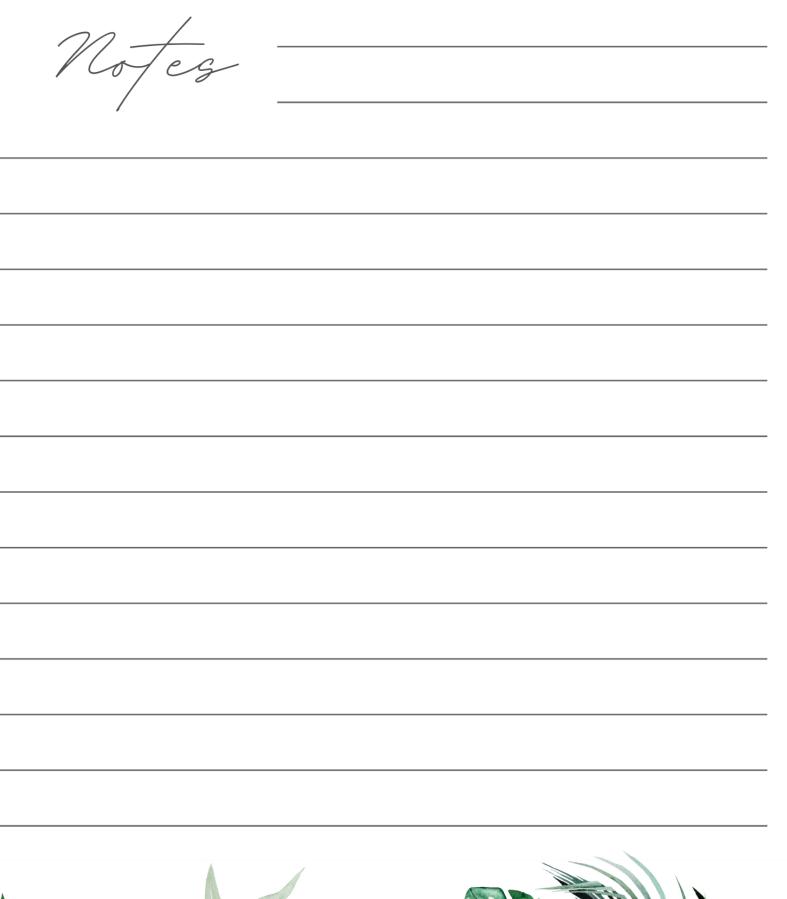
Those who believe in Jesus follow the true reality of the Gospel 2 Peter 1:12-21

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: How do believers know they are following an accurate representation of the Gospel in a world filled with inaccuracies? Based on the example Peter provides in the text, what are some thoughts he wishes to remind believers about that event? Why does Peter feel the need to remind believers of this truth? How can following a Christ-like counterfeit be detrimental to a person's faith? What passages aid my understanding of this truth?

Examining my Heart: Do I see this divine nature as a mystical belief or as a different way of life? In what ways have I changed as a person as proof of the reality of Jesus' sacrifice? Do I see myself not giving into former sins? Do I lack the qualities of divine nature? If so, did I receive true salvation, or am I short-sighted having forgotten the purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:





Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 1 Peter 1 to shape your thinking, stir your heart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?

Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the power of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you endeavor to LIVE 1 Peter 1?



2 Peter 2

Obser	vation Who?
	Where?
	When?
	Key Words

Summary

Interpretation

Titl	es: 2 Peter 2:1-3—
	2 Peter 2:4-10—
	2 Peter 2:11-22—
Ke (Memorize	y Verse: Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining why you chose it. it???)
Ke	y Attributes: Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.
Mo	est Meaningful attribute in my present circumstances: Why?
Ke	y Theme:
"This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by	
your apos	tles." 2 Peter 3:1-2

How does Peter seem to use his words to "awaken" the hearts of his readers? Why is this important to him and how should it be important to me? What am I to be reminded of? Do I find my heart challenged/awakened by those things he considers to be a reminder?

Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding or curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?



Application Questions:

Examining the Word: Define "rescue" (ῥύομαι g4506). How is Peter exposing the religious imposters that have deceived others with their teaching? Why is the idea of rescuing people from moral compromise an objective that demands His attention? How do these scriptures challenge my understanding of this truth in light of the Gospel? (Matthew 6:7-13; Romans 7:14-25; Colossians 1:1-13)

Examining my Heart: Do I see His involvement in my life as a rescuer from sin or do I choose it willingly? In my life, how do I see others justify wrong doing? When I see myself, do I wish for righteous living? How has this passage reminded me of the grace believers get to participate in? Do I wish for His light to infiltrate me?



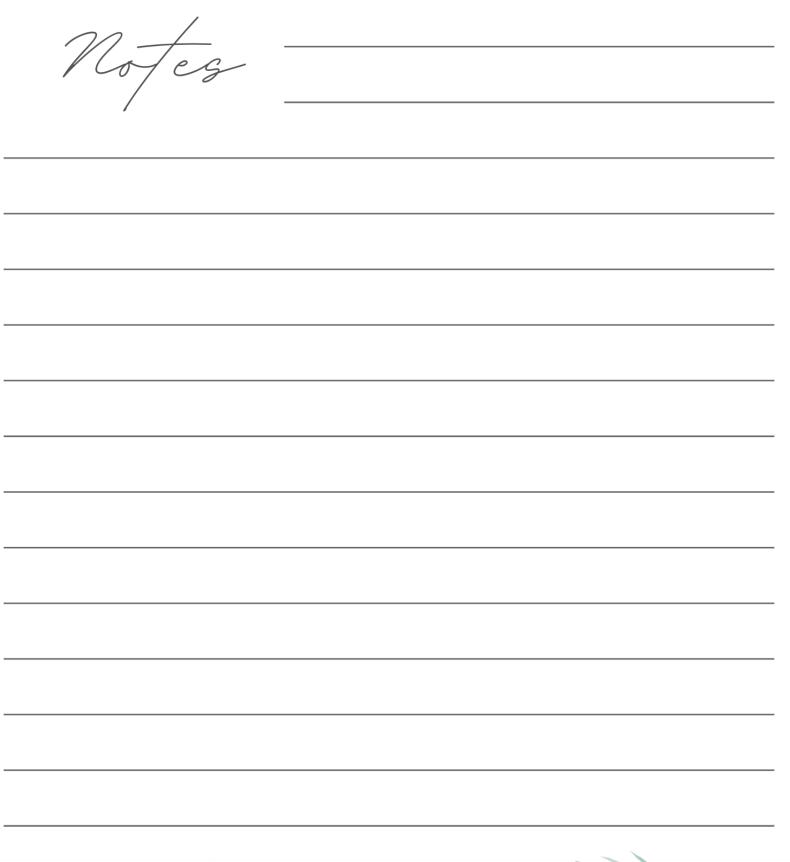
The LORD knows how to rescue the godly from temptation 2 Peter 2:1-9

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: How does this passage characterize the unrighteous person(s) who are ungodly? What are the results of their living? Why do they go back to their previous way of living? How is Balaam used as a reference for ungodly living? What are the opposite characteristics believers are supposed to exhibit as saints? How are we to respond to people who live in this condition? How do these scriptures aid my understanding of this truth? (1 Peter 1:1-9, 2:21-25; Ephesians 2:1-10, 4:17-24; John 8:31-38; Genesis 6, 19)

Examining my Heart: Do I wish to do unrighteousness to Him and others? Do I want sin more than I want Him? If so, am I willing to let Him change me and me cultivate my faith appropriately? Is there some callousness in my heart that is causing me to sin against Him or others? Why haven't I let go of this sin already? What is required of me to get rid of it? Do I see myself as a slave to sin or righteousness?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:





Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 2 Peter 2 to shape your thinking, stir your heart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?

Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the power of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you endeavor to LIVE 2 Peter 2?



2 Peter 3

Observation			
	Who?		
	Where?		
	When?		

Key Words

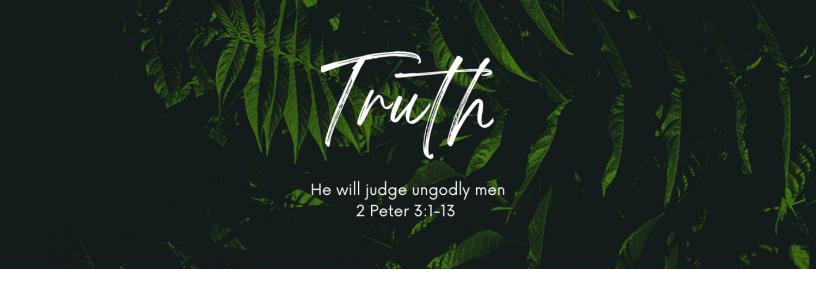
Summary

Interpretation

	Titles:	2 Peter 3:1-2—			
		2 Peter 3:3-13—			
		2 Peter 3:14-18—			
Memo	Key Ve	rse: Identify the key verse of t ??)	his passage, explaining wh	ny you chose it.	
	Key At	tributes: Record attributes of o	or truths about God, Jesus	, and/or the Holy	Spirit.
	Most N	leaningful attribute in my pres	ent circumstances:		Why?
	Key Th	eme:			
"This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring upour sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken be					-
our a	oostles.		2 Peter 3:1-2		

How does Peter seem to use his words to "awaken" the hearts of his readers? Why is this important to him and how should it be important to me? What am I to be reminded of? Do I find my heart challenged by those things he considers to be a reminder?

Other Insights: Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding or curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?



Application Questions:

Examining the Word: Who is doing to be judged? Why are they to be judged for their actions? What does that say about Him? How do those religious importers relate to what Peter is writing in this passage? What does that have to do with the promise in the ancient scriptures? How are believers supposed to respond to the judgement this is to take place and the content of the passage? What other scriptures aid my understanding of this truth? (Genesis 18:16-19; Romans 5:15-6:17; Proverbs 2:21-22; Psalm 9; 1 John 2:25-29)

Examining my Heart: Am I an ungodly person? On that day, do I see myself as someone who will be ashamed of my actions I have committed against other and Him? How does my life exhibit the function of the Gospel in my life? Do I see Jesus' death as a fire insurance policy? Do I utilize His grace to give me permission to live life as I wish? Do I see His death as a means to liberate my present life as much as my future life?



Believers eagerly anticipate the promise of a new heaven and new earth 2 Peter 3:14-18

Application Questions:

Examining the Word: What new heavens and new earth are believers to look for? How are believers supposed to respond to the current earth they are on? How did those in the old testament view this promise? How does what it is supposed to be like a demonstration of His character? Why is holy conduct something to want or strive for? What other passages aid my understanding of this truth? (1 Thessalonians 5; Philippians 2:14-18; Revelation 21; Isaiah)

Examining my Heart: Does my life exhibit holy conduct? What do I need to change to love others and show them Jesus as pieces of heaven on earth? Why would I want to show participate in this strange behavior in the first place? Am I expecting/ hoping for a new place where righteousness dwells? Why do I want to go to heaven? When I get to heaven, how do I know I wish to live there?

Personal Applications: Record another truth or expound on one already stated. What questions is the Holy Spirit asking you based on this truth? Record your response and commitment to follow His leading.
Truth:
Application Questions/Answers:

Reflect on and note how the Lord has used 2 Peter 3 to shape your thinking, stir your heart/soul, and /or prompt your to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week's text?

Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the power of God. How can your group most effectively intercede for you this week as you endeavor to LIVE 3 Peter 3?



Review

Take the time to write down all of the different truths you have learned about the true grace, standing firm, and how your spirit was challenged. As these truths resonate within you, consider how you are willing to let Him change your life forever in this new grace and divine nature.



Appendix I: Letters Between Trajan and Pliny

*These letters were translated from latin to English

[96] L To Trajan.

It is my custom, Sir, to refer to you in all cases where I do not feel sure, for who can better direct my doubts or inform my ignorance? I have never been present at any legal examination of the Christians, and I do not know, therefore, what are the usual penalties passed upon them, or the limits of those penalties, or how searching an inquiry should be made. I have hesitated a great deal in considering whether any distinctions should be drawn according to the ages of the accused; whether the weak should be punished as severely as the more robust; whether if they renounce their faith they should be pardoned, or whether the man who has once been a Christian should gain nothing by recanting; whether the name itself, even though otherwise innocent of crime, should be punished, or only the crimes that gather round it.

In the meantime, this is the plan which I have adopted in the case of those Christians who have been brought before me. I ask them whether they are Christians; if they say yes, then I repeat the question a second and a third time, warning them of the penalties it entails, and if they still persist, I order them to be taken away to prison. For I do not doubt that, whatever the character of the crime may be which they confess, their pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy certainly ought to be punished. * There were others who showed similar mad folly whom I reserved to be sent to Rome, as they were Roman citizens. ** Subsequently, as is usually the way, the very fact of my taking up this question led to a great increase of accusations, and a variety of cases were brought before me. A pamphlet was issued anonymously, containing the names of a number of people. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians and called upon the gods in the usual formula, reciting the words after me, those who offered incense and wine before your image, which I had given orders to be brought forward for this purpose, together with the statues of the deities - all such I considered should be discharged,

especially as they cursed the name of Christ, which, it is said, those who are really Christians cannot be induced to do. Others, whose names were given me by an informer, first said that they were Christians and afterwards denied it, declaring that they had been but were so no longer, some of them having recanted many years before, and more than one so long as twenty years back. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the deities, and cursed the name of Christ. But they declared that the sum of their guilt or their error only amounted to this, that on a stated day they had been accustomed to meet before daybreak and to recite a hymn among themselves to Christ, as though he were a god, and that so far from binding themselves by oath to commit any crime, their oath was to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery, and from breach of faith, and not to deny trust money placed in their keeping when called upon to deliver it. When this ceremony was concluded, it had been their custom to depart and meet again to take food, but it was of no special character and quite harmless, and they had ceased this practice after the edict in which, in accordance with your orders, I had forbidden all secret societies. † I thought it the more necessary, therefore, to find out what truth there was in these statements by submitting two women, who were called deaconesses, to the torture, but I found nothing but a debased superstition carried to great lengths. So I postponed my examination, and immediately consulted you. The matter seems to me worthy of your consideration, especially as there are so many people involved in the danger. Many persons of all ages, and of both sexes alike, are being brought into peril of their lives by their accusers, and the process will go on. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only through the free cities, but into the villages and the rural districts, and yet it seems to me that it can be checked and set right. It is beyond doubt that the temples, which have been almost deserted, are beginning again to be thronged with worshippers, that the sacred rites which have for a long time been allowed to lapse are now being renewed, and that the food for the sacrificial victims is once more finding a sale, whereas, up to recently, a buyer was hardly to be found. From this it is easy to infer

what vast numbers of people might be reclaimed, if only they were given an opportunity of repentance.

- (*) Pliny leaves it unclear whether the Christians were accused of a specific crime; it seems that to confess to being Christian was considered sufficient proof of guilt.
- (**) Except by special delegation of the Emperor's own legal powers, no provincial governor had power to inflict the death penalty on a Roman citizen, but must allow him to take his trial at Rome.
- (†) Or 'political societies'. The same word $\{hetaeriae\}$ is used in relation to a guild of firemen, in letter $\underline{34}$ of this book.

[97] L Trajan to Pliny.

You have adopted the proper course, my dear Pliny, in examining into the cases of those who have been denounced to you as Christians, for no hard and fast rule can be laid down to meet a question of such wide extent. The Christians are not to be hunted out; if they are brought before you and the offence is proved, they are to be punished, but with this reservation - that if any one denies that he is a Christian and makes it clear that he is not, by offering prayers to our deities, then he is to be pardoned because of his recantation, however suspicious his past conduct may have been. * But pamphlets published anonymously must not carry any weight whatever, no matter what the charge may be, for they are not only a precedent of the very worst type, but they are not in consonance with the spirit of our age.

(*) For an early Christian reaction to Trajan's decision, see Tertullian's 'Apology', <u>chapter 2</u> (written in about 197 A.D.).

Bibliography:

1. <u>http://www.attalus.org/old/pliny10b.html</u>



1 Peter: Stand Firm! 2 Peter: Stirring Up a Reminder

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