

# First Peter – Lesson One

## Peter introduces to the Christians the reality of persecution. 1 Peter chapter 1

- Persecution was not unknown to the saints. A read of the book of Acts brings persecution and even death to a point of reality.
  - Peter's writing is about 30 years after the establishment of the church, around AD 63-64.
  - Nero is reigning in Rome and will punish the Christians living there. In time, more persecution would come that will affect even a greater number of saints.
  - Peter's letter is written with these events as the backdrop.
- Persecution being leveled against saints is a matter becoming more real in our present day.
  - To watch the current landscape through the viewfinder of Scripture and history is revealing as we see the forces gathering against righteousness.
  - Like saints of old, we have reasons to be concerned, and so, Peter's letters are applicable to us.
- Followers of Jesus will not be spared harassment from the ungodly.
  - Suffering for Jesus' sake should not be a surprise, but it does require preparation.
  - Jesus told us that hatred should be expected. **Matt. 5:10**
  - Paul warned that it was a certainty. **2 Tim. 3:10-12**
  - Peter is trying to provide preparation in the form of two letters sent to believers spread out across Northwest Asia.
  - Their faith needed to be reinforced to withstand the coming oppression.
  - We should relate to this too. Peter's writings are relevant to our times.

## The Greeting. 1 Peter 1:1-2

- The letter was from, "*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.*"
- What weight would that greeting carry to the ones it is addressed to?
  
- "*To the pilgrims scattered ...*" What is the implication of 'pilgrims scattered'?
- (consider also **1:17** and **2:11**)
  
- These pilgrims are called the "*elect.*" This word signifies, "picked out, chosen." (Vines)
- Because there is some confusion among many about this idea of being 'chosen,' consider carefully the following questions.
  - Think of examples in this life of being chosen and what that means. Keep in mind that generally it is the idea of selected, preferred.
  
- The real question becomes, how did these being addressed become the elect, the chosen?
  
- Who did the choosing?
  
- What was the criteria for this election?

### **A Heavenly Inheritance. 1 Peter 1:3-9**

- One of the first things Peter addresses with these saints is to remind them of what they have.
  - The challenge for these saints as the persecution intensifies is to not give up what is most important ... a relationship with God, and the inheritance He promises.
  - Sometimes, Christians just need to be reminded of what we have.
- The Greco-Roman world did not have a hope of an afterlife. One of their writers, Catullus, stated that “though the sun can set and rise again, once our brief light sets, there is but one unending night to be slept through.”
  - That is not so hopeful. Peter is saying that there is much more. Ours is a *“living hope,”* based on the historical event of the *“resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” v. 3*
  - The apostle Paul spoke about the world that sorrows at the death of a loved one, as those *“who have no hope.” 1 Thess. 4:13-18*
    - Saints have so much more to look forward to ... and so much to lose if we give it away.
- Find four words or phrases in **verse 4** that describe our inheritance and define what these words mean.
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- How are we “kept” by the power of God?
- Is there a purpose or a blessing in the afflictions and temptations of the saints? **vs. 7-9**
  - If one continues faithful living what is the end result?

### **The Salvation Revealed. 1 Peter 1:10-12**

- The prophets before did not understand all that they were led to prophesy.
  - Peter is trying to tell the saints how blessed they are to have God’s promise for man fully revealed to them.
  - Break down the passage ... list two or three points that just stand out.
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# First Peter – Lesson Two

## Living Before God. 1 Peter 1:13-21

- In the previous verses the Christians were reminded about *who they were* ... pilgrims, the elect, the sanctified. “Therefore” is the first word in this text connecting it with the preceding discussion.
  - Since we have the hope of a great inheritance awaiting us, “therefore,” we need to make sure we do not jeopardize it by being the kind of people whom the Father cannot give what He has promised for His children.
  - So now, the apostle reminds the saints of *what they must do* to remain God’s people and to *remember the price paid* for the sins of man.
- This rich passage suggests things that one must do to be pleasing to the Lord. Make a list of some of the distinct and decisive actions that disciples must make as found in **verses 13-16**.
  
- Why does it say we must live “*in fear?*” v. 17
  
- What price can be placed on our redemption? vs. 18-19
  
- God planned the redemption of man through Christ for how long? vs. 20-21

## God’s Word Endures and It Will Change Us. 1 Peter 1:22-2:3

- Having been “*born again*” into a new family (1:3) we must change our behavior so that we are no longer living like rebels against our Father, but instead, living like obedient children who are taking on the very image and qualities of our Father.
  - That which has the ability and power to change us is *the word of God*. Everything of this life will fail us ... but His word and all that it offers abides forever.
  - The change that affected the saints Peter is writing to was brought about by God’s word.
    - Stop, think for a moment, and jot some notes about someone you know who was changed because of the effect of God’s word.
  
    - Stop again ... think ... has God’s word changed You?
- Make notes on the following and be prepared to comment on these phrases ... (vs. 22-23)
  - “*obeying the truth*”
  
  - “*pure heart*”

- *“born again”*

- *“through the word of God”*

- The nature of man and the nature of God’s word are contrasted in **vs. 24-25**. What is the point?

- *“Therefore”* is used once again in **chapter 2 verse 1**.

- What is it tying in?

- God’s word will change us! **1 Peter 2:1-3**

- To be like Him requires *“laying aside”* some things. The imagery of *“laying aside”* is literally that of one ripping off clothes ... the idea of making a definite break, get rid of. Why? These traits do not belong to us any longer ... none of these grow out of the word of God ... and they do not represent who we are.

- List the traits found in **2:1** and explain each one.

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- Think about this ... taking on our Father’s image, His character, His traits.

- We use the phrase sometimes, “the apple does not fall far from the tree.” The fact is, children are like their parents, and it is “natural” for it to be this way. Likewise it is so in the family of God ... our Father raises us up to share in His qualities.

- The imagery Peter uses here of babies who long for milk is a powerful one. The overall picture is that of children who are nurtured, in this case by the heavenly Father ... by His word.

- So ... to get rid of these dirty attitudes and bad traits, what must we do? (**v. 2**)

- Let’s break this down. Explain and define the following.

- *“newborn babes”*

- *“desire”*

- *“pure milk of the word”*

- *“grow thereby”*

## First Peter – Lesson Three

### God's Chosen Stone. 1 Peter 2:4-10

- Read this passage several times. It is full of symbolism and meaning. The message is one of great hope to the Christians of long ago, but carries with it tremendous optimism for disciples of today.
  - Take the time to savor the blessings described in this text ... stop right now, read it again.
  
- Peter is writing to a people who feel like they do not belong in the land. After all, they are *“pilgrims scattered throughout ...”* 1:1
  - To help them understand that they are not abandoned, Peter assures them of their place before God ... that they are *“being built up a spiritual house ... a chosen generation ... His own special people.”* 2:5, 9
    - These statements are reminiscent of the description of God's people of old, the children of Israel.
      - Look at these references. **Exodus 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6, 14:1-2**
        - Make some notes and be prepared to discuss this description of God's people ... old and new.
  
- Peter addresses a people who indeed, have a homeland, a citizenship. They may be pilgrims right now, but they will not always be sojourners.
  - First, consider the *“living stone.”* v. 4 Who is this?
    - Contrast **verse 4** with what prophecy says about this stone in **Isaiah 28:16.** (v. 6)
  
  - Second, Peter goes on to tell them that they are *“living stones ... a spiritual house.”* v. 5
    - The Jews worshipped in a temple. What is the image being presented in this verse?
  
  - Add into the discussion, *“living stone”* (v. 4) and *“living stones.”* (v. 5)
    - Describe ... define ... what is the power of this symbol?
  
- Think about the meaning of the following in **verse 5.**
  - *“spiritual house”*
  
  - *“holy priesthood”*
  
  - *“spiritual sacrifices”*
  
- Be prepared to talk about what we have gained *“through Jesus Christ.”*

- Jesus came, but men looked at Him and rejected Him. Their rejection should not have been a surprise because the prophets foretold it. What was the cause? Why did some stumble? **vs. 6-8**
- When considering **vs. 6-8** there is a contrast that stands out. Compare those in these verses to the ones described in **1:22-23**. What is the difference in the two?
- Some teach that the church is built on Peter. Take a moment to think about that and then use **verses 4-8** to explain whether that belief is true or false.

### **God's Chosen People.**

- Read once again **verses 9-10**. Point by point, describe the people portrayed here.

- *“but you”*
- *“a chosen generation”*
- *“a holy nation”*
- *“His own special people”*
- *“now the people of God”*
- *“have obtained mercy”*

- It would be hard to not realize that those described in this text are people of a special caliber ... people who are perceived as somebody in the eyes of God. Think about that and comment.

- Those described here have every reason to be excited and to *“proclaim the praises of Him who called us.”* In Christ, we have every reason to want to tell the world His story!
  - Serious personal moment of reflection ... are we telling the world this story?

# First Peter – Lesson Four

## Pilgrims Living In The World 1 Peter 2:11-12

- Peter wants us to think about the way we will come across as spiritual sojourners and pilgrims.
  - The manner in which we conduct our lives makes a difference ... God says so.
  - We have a responsibility to conduct our lives in a way to not give our adversary a reason to speak against us ... or ultimately, to speak against God.
  - The life of a Christian will be seen by many and must be an example to all.
    - This manner of life is applied to different relationships in the verses which follow.
- Comment on Peter's words, "*beloved, I beg you ...*" v. 11
  
- Why should Christians "*abstain against fleshly lusts ...*" v. 11
  
- A contrast is presented – ‘fleshly lusts vs. honorable conduct.’ v. 12
  - What advantages are given for honorable conduct?
  
- A thought question ... what might the phrase "*glorify God in the day of visitation*" be referring to? v. 12

## Peter discusses three relationships in 1 Peter 2:13-3:7.

- Each of these relationships in the first century were difficult ones that often brought about exploitation and oppression.
  - Peter urges Christians to challenge the values of the corrupt age by displaying a Christ-like hope.
    - This would require a willing subjection to some who may not be kind to us.
  - The idea of submission is a key thought in Peter's letter to the Christians.
    - The words submit, submissive, or be subject to, are used six times in this writing. Since Christians are the "*spiritual house*" of God, they are foremost subject to Him.
      - In this passage and following, the point is made of our submission to others.
- **Submission to the Government** – Read 1 Peter 2:13-17
  - What is the relationship of Christians to governmental authorities?
  
  - Christians are to be "*subject*" for what cause and according to whose will?
  
  - Is there a limit to this subjection?

- What two purposes of government are listed in **v. 14**?
  
- Christians are not to use their ‘Christian liberty’ as what?
  
- Comment on these four statements from **v. 17**.
  - **“honor all people”**
  
  - **“love the brotherhood”**
  
  - **“fear God”**
  
  - **“honor the king”**

**- Submission to Masters 1 Peter 2:18-25**

- A second aspect of the social order that Peter addresses is the slave/master relationship.
  - First century slavery was not racially based, in fact, some voluntarily sold themselves into slavery. Regardless, slavery could be a brutal affair.
- Peter’s instructions include submission to what kind of masters? **v. 18**
  
- The question that goes right along with the previous is ... why? Why be submissive, especially if having to endure abuse?? **vs. 19-20**
  
- It is interesting that the rest of this paragraph is addressed to servants who suffer. It is here that Peter draws upon the powerful account of the Suffering Servant. **vs. 21-25** (ref. **Isaiah 53**)
  - **“for to this you were called ...”** Called to what?
  
  - **“leaving us an example ...”** Who left an example? An example of what?
  
  - We should **“follow in His steps.”** In what way should we follow in His steps?
  
- This subjection in the face of oppression was not easy ... but would be rewarded.
  - Peter uses Jesus as the example of submission ... who **“committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” v. 23**
    - What is Peter’s point to us with regard to our call to submission?



**- Submission to Husbands ... and then, a word to husbands. 1 Peter 3:1-7**

- The third social order that the apostle deals with is marriage.
- The situation in the forefront is that of a woman married to a man who is not a Christian.
  - As noted in previous verses Christians can have a great impact for good among those in the world by demonstrating Christ-like submission.
  - Likewise, Christian wives can have tremendous influence for good by presenting a pure heart and a submissive attitude.
- Discuss the difficulty of being a Christian and being the spouse of someone who is not.
  - What practical challenges would be faced in this situation?
  
  - How does Peter advise that believing wives approach this issue with their husbands?
- How might a woman “win” her husband to the Lord? **vs. 1-2**
  - Explain “*chaste conduct.*”
- What kind of beauty is precious in the sight of God? **vs. 3-4**
  - Contrast the two kinds of beauty described in these verses.
- How did women who trusted in God in former times adorn themselves? **vs. 5-6**
  - In what way are godly women the daughters of Sarah?
- What admonition is given to husbands? **v. 7**
  - What does it mean that the wife is a “*weaker vessel?*”
  
  - What consequences does the husband receive if he does not honor his wife?

# First Peter – Lesson Five

## Called to Righteousness – 1 Peter 3:8-12

- Those who have become “*pilgrims*” by “*obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,*” (1:1-2) are now walking by a “*living hope*” (1:3) and have been called to a higher standard for living. This standard is not by man’s design, but is from God. No longer can we be satisfied to judge our conduct by the conduct of the world, because now we walk by “*the will of God.*” (4:2) As we can see from the text previously, our character must stand above that of the world.

- Peter’s point of emphasis once again starting in **verse 8** is character ... the character of one called to righteousness. How are we to treat our brethren? What five things are charged in this verse?

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Look at the instruction for relationships with brethren as given in **Phil. 2:1-4**.

- In what way does this help us deal with Peter’s teaching?

- What kind of suffering is discussed in **verse 9** ... and how should we deal with that?

- Do you think the words of Jesus influenced Peter’s thoughts? **Matt. 5:11-12**

- **Verses 10-12.** In the face of hardship, disappointment, persecution, and sorrow, some may ask the question ... ‘why keep going?’ Peter paraphrases **Psalms 34:12-16** to make his point and answer this question.

- To “*love life and see good days*” what must we do?

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- Do these “*good days*” ensure deliverance of suffering in this life?

- Make some notes here on the idea that “*the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous.*”

- Thought question – Does the Lord hear the prayers of the unrighteous? **1 Pet. 3:12**
- Consider – **John 9:31; Prov. 15:9, 29; 28:9**
  
- What about the prayer of Cornelius? **Acts 10:2**

### **Suffering for Doing Good – 1 Peter 3:13-17**

- Peter continues to speak in a guarded way about the suffering and persecution that is coming upon these Christians. Yet, in face of suffering they are told that they are blessed and to not lose focus. Their enemies may cause them harm, but **“do not be afraid of their threats or be troubled.”**

- Read **verses 13-14**.
  - How would you answer the question posed in this verse?
  
  - What does this mean for one who suffers for righteousness sake?
  
  - Of what should the Christian not be afraid?
  
- Consider the admonition that is given in **verse 15**.
  - Define the following terms ... and what do they mean as they are used in this text.
    - Sanctify –
  
    - Meekness –
  
    - Fear –
  
- Considering the context ... what is meant by **“having a good conscience”** in **verse 16**?
  - Does having a good conscience guarantee acceptability before God?
  
- **Verse 17**. Suffering for **“doing good”** or suffering for **“doing evil”** still requires suffering! How can one be better than the other?

## First Peter – Lesson Six

### Salvation and the Role of Baptism. 1 Peter 3:18-22

- The purpose and hope that the suffering of Christ brought is seen in this passage. Jesus, as the just, suffered for the cause of bringing the unjust to God. It is an incredible thought to realize that through the death of Jesus we can be made alive. We need to remember the suffering of Christ.
  - The suffering of Christ has been addressed already in this letter. Connect these passages to this thought and make comments. **1:19, 2:23, 2:24**
  
  - There is a difficult thought found in **verse 19** speaking of preaching to the “*spirits in prison.*”
    - Of what or of whom is this referring to? (keep in mind the context)
  
- Many reject the idea that baptism has anything to do with salvation, or that baptism is in any way necessary to come into fellowship with God.
  - Use **verses 20-21** to give a response to those claims.
  
  - What is the similarity between the situation of Noah's day and our baptism into Christ?
  
  - What is the point ... “type and anti-type?”
  
  - Point of emphasis – How were eight souls saved?
  
  - What does Peter say our baptism is not? What does he say it is?
  
- Focus for a moment about the risen Christ. Those who rejected Him thought that He was nothing more than mere man, but the resurrection proved otherwise.
  - Where is Jesus now according to **verse 22**?
  
  - What does the description given here tell us about the place and position of Jesus?

## Salvation That Changes Everything. 1 Peter 4:1-6

- Changes. Some events in life change you in dramatic ways.
  - A new job changes challenges us day by day and affects the things we know.
  - Making a move to another state or country changes our environment, but it also changes everything that we were once comfortable with.
  - Getting married changes our focus from living for one to living with the interests of two.
    - From these changes each of us carry around both smiles and scars from events that altered our life forever.
  - **Stop for a moment.** Think about changes in your life and **be prepared to discuss** how they have affected you.
    - What does this example have to do with our study?
  
- In our text, Peter is talking about changes ... lives that have been altered because of the preaching of the gospel. (v. 6)
  - Having been baptized and “*saved through water*” requires a change in those who are “*obeying the truth.*” (1:22)
    - What does Peter call us to do? **4:1** Explain.
  
  - What contrasting purposes are spoken of in **4:2**?
  
  - Reference as well **chapter 2 verse 21**. What points need to be made from this?
  
- Pursuits of ‘non-believers’ are different from those who are living for the “*will of God.*” (v. 2)
  - Describe life before having been “*born again.*” (1:23) How has life changed?
    - What activities have changed?
  
    - How have friendships been affected?
  
    - What awaits those who continue to engage in such activities?
  
- **Thought Question:** What is the meaning of **verse 6**?

# First Peter – Lesson Seven

## Be Strong in Suffering. 1 Peter 4:7-11

- Salvation changes our attitude about service. Christians are admonished once again to have a serious view of their service to God, especially as ***“the end of all things is at hand.”*** (v. 7)
  - In Christ, our focus has changed. It is not on self, but on the great blessings received by the grace of God and our service to Him ... and, a focus on serving each other.
  - We might notice the collective responsibility these verses require. It helps us to see that we need each other if we are going to make it in this world.
    - It even changes our outlook on suffering ... our life is now looked at in view of eternity.
- What event is introduced in **verse 7**? What does this mean?
  - Look at these passages; **Romans 13:11; Matt. 24:42, 25:13**
    - What is the admonition of these verses?
  - What else does the text say we are to be serious about?
- **Verse 8-10** carry a common theme with regard to our relationship to one another.
  - What is meant by ***“love will cover a multitude of sins?”*** v. 8
  - What is hospitality and how should it be extended? v. 9
  - What ‘gifts’ are being talked about in v. 10?
    - What was to be done with the gifts?
    - Who is the focus of these gifts?
- What are the admonitions given in v. 11?
  - What is the purpose of the gifts/talents according to **verse 11**?

## **Suffering for God's Glory. 1 Peter 4:12-19**

- **Expect persecutions ...** that message would be hard for most of us to expect, so why would we think our first century brethren found it any more appealing?
  - The fact of the matter, trials that would challenge faith was upon these brethren already. How would they endure? Maybe we should ask ... how would we fair? ***Think about that.***
  
- Why should the Christians not think it 'strange' that the trials happened? **v. 12**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Give some thought to what this means and comment on; ***"the fiery trial which is to try you."*** **v. 12** (also see **1:7**)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What does it mean to be ***"partakers in Christ's sufferings?"*** **v. 13**
  - What is the hope promised in **v. 13**?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- If we are 'reproached for the name of Christ,' what are we able to do? **v. 14**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Explain the differences of ***"if you suffer as a sinner"*** (**v. 15**) and if you ***"suffer as a Christian."*** (**v. 16**)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What is the meaning of ... ***"the time has come."*** **v. 17**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Make comments on ***"commit their souls to Him."*** **v. 19**

# First Peter – Lesson Eight

## Christ-likeness 1 Peter 5:1-14

- In view of the *“living hope”* possessed by those who are obedient to the *“sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”* ... how should we conduct ourselves? That is what the apostle is trying to tell us.
  - This final chapter presents one last effort in this letter to spell out what Christ-like living looks like in the midst of a world that is hostile to us.
    - This chapter brings together concluding thoughts, but first, let's **review** the exhortations of the apostle that bring us to this point.
- In just a few words answer the following. (just capture the key point(s) of the passage)
  - *“has begotten us again to a \_\_\_\_\_.”* **1:3**
    - What is that hope? **vs. 4-5**
  - Peter exhorts us to abstain from \_\_\_\_\_. **2:11**
  - Have your conduct \_\_\_\_\_ ... that others may observe our \_\_\_\_\_ and glorify God. **2:12**
  - We are to submit to \_\_\_\_\_. **2:13-16**
  - Honor \_\_\_\_\_. Love \_\_\_\_\_. Fear \_\_\_\_\_. Honor the \_\_\_\_\_. **2:17**
  - Briefly describe the attitude of Christian wives. **3:1-6**
  - How should Christian husbands act? **3:7**
  - What are key words and thoughts from **3:14-17**?
  - Christ suffered for us to ... ? **3:18-22**
  - We should not be afraid of who we are as Christians, even if what? **4:1-6**
  - In view of the end that is at hand, how should Christians treat one another? **4:7-19**



**Peter pens final exhortations: First, to shepherds of the flock. 1 Peter 5:1-4**

- Elders are to cultivate brotherly love and proper behavior in others, and they help to do so by demonstrating it themselves.
  - What gives Peter the unique right to give instruction about elders?
  
- What is the function of elders? What restrictions are placed on them and the work they do? What reward are they promised? To answer ... comment on the following:
  - *“Shepherd the flock”*
  
  - *“which is among you”*
  
  - *“serving as overseers”*
  
  - *“not by constraint but willingly”*
  
  - *“not for monetary gain, but eagerly”*
  
  - *“not as being lords over those entrusted to you”*
  
  - *“being examples to the flock”*

**Notice the exhortation in the next few verses about humility. 1 Peter 5:5-7**

- Who is addressed in verse 5?
  - What expressions help to bring out the meaning of humility?
  - How does humility show itself in a person?
  - What is the benefit of humility promised in this passage?

**Contrast – The exaltation of God ... the evil work of the devil. 1 Peter 5:8-11**

- The devil works in a lot of different ways. What specific work does Peter mention here?
  - How are Christians to meet this threat?
  - What encouragement is given about our faith? **v. 10**

## Second Peter – Lesson Nine

**In the apostle Peter's second letter to the saints there seems to be three points that just stand out.**

- 1) Peter teaches that knowledge of the absolute truth of God will bless us, and if we fail to grow in that knowledge and to use it to guide our lives, we will be drawn away from Him.
- 2) Peter tells us of the effectiveness of false teachers and their evil attempts of substituting human words for Divine words. The results are disastrous if we follow the teaching of men.
- 3) Peter affirms the certainty of the Lord's second coming ... and, what a blessing that is to those counted as God's own and a tragedy to those who have rejected Him.

**All things pertaining to life and godliness.**

- To reflect on our past helps us to remember where we have been and it may help us to get a better focus on where we need to be. Failure to remember can make us shortsighted ... or even blind. (**2 Pet. 1:9**)
  - Peter is trying to help the disciples see who they are ... they are those who have a very special relationship to God through His Son Jesus Christ ... and those of *"like precious faith"* who are not alone in a battle against the ways of the evil one.
- Peter's emphasis at the beginning of this second letter is to remind these Christians of what they have received. Sometimes, to deal with issues of life and the temptations that come our way we need to fully understand where we are ... and to be reminded of what we have.
  - To these Christians Peter reaffirms the great blessings found in Jesus Christ.
  - As disciples of Jesus today we need the same reminder.

**Read 2 Peter 1:1-4**

- Think about the powerful phrases below ... think about how God has made it possible to be in a right relationship with Him ... about what it means to be partakers of His *"divine nature."*
  - (capture your thoughts ... write some notes... and be prepared to discuss them)
- *"like precious faith"* v. 1
  
- *"His divine power"* v. 3
  
- *"has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness"* v. 3
  
- *"through the knowledge of Him"* v. 3
  
- *"given to us exceedingly great and precious promises"* v. 4
  
- *"that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature"* v. 4

**These precious gifts from God demand a response from us.**

- The previous verses describe some of the most beautiful blessings we have in Christ.
  - God has offered us, through His Son, a nearness to Him ... a closeness to the Maker of all creation ... and a means for us to escape the corruption of the world.
  - The previous text helps us to see all God has done to draw us near, but now wants us to understand how we must grow closer to Him by faith.
- People who partake of the divine nature must grow in their faith. This new life in Christ does not signal an end, but a beginning. Our faith is in a transformation as it grows in the attributes of God.
  - If we are not growing in faith we will stumble. Some Christians are forever weak and some fall away because they do not secure their faith. We can do this!
  - Our text tells us that it is with all diligence we need to grow our faith.
    - Read carefully **2 Peter 1:5-11** and prepare for discussion.
  - Explain what is meant by **“giving all diligence.”** (note verse 10 as well)
    - Emphasis here is on **‘diligence.’**
  
- **“add to your faith ...”** (v. 5) This is a powerful statement. Stop and think a moment.
  - What does the text imply about our faith?
    - What is the foundation of our Christianity? **Heb. 11:6**
  
    - What is the one source of saving faith? **Rom. 10:17**
  
- **“add to your faith virtue”** Virtue is a word that is not so commonly used. Define virtue.
  - Explain how Christians strive for moral excellence. **Phil. 4:8**
  
- **“add to your virtue knowledge”**
  - For a Christian to maintain faith and grow in that faith, effort to seek greater knowledge is needed.
    - Lack of knowledge is a problem. **Hosea 4:6**
    - What did Peter say in the first letter? **1 Peter 2:2**
  
- Take the following passage and break it into three parts ... explain those points. **2 Tim. 2:15**
  - 
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  -
  
- Growing in knowledge is an absolute point of emphasis throughout this letter.
  - Do a quick search of Second Peter for the number of times the word “knowledge” is used and write those verses down.

- **“add to your knowledge self-control” (v. 6)**
  - Self-control is one of the most difficult characteristics for us to get a hold of.
    - It is more than controlling our temper ... it is absolute control of self.
      - We are not alone in the struggle to demonstrate self-control.
  - Moses allowed his own frustrations with the children of Israel to get to him.
    - The complaints of Israel overwhelmed Moses. **Numbers 20:1-13**
      - Moses was angry and demonstrated a lack of self-control ... and it had serious consequences.
        - Not only did Moses strike the rock, but what else did he do in this text that angered God?
  
- David let his lust for Bathsheba consume him. **2 Samuel 11:2-27**
  - Here is a man who had already demonstrated tremendous self-control ... but allowed a moment of weakness to control him.
    - Think about the consequences of his lack of self-control. **Make a list.**
  
- On the other hand, Jesus demonstrated incredible self-control. **Matt. 4:1-11**
  - When He was tempted, Jesus never lost focus of who He was or His purpose.
    - **“then the devil left Him ...”**
      - In this text, what lessons on self-control can we learn from Jesus?
  
- With the characteristic of self-control in mind, think about the attitude displayed by Jesus in **1 Peter 2:21-24**.
  - In what ways was Jesus an example of self-control for us?
  
- **“add to your self-control patience” (v. 6)**
  - Patience involves more than temper ... it involves endurance and perseverance.
    - It is the ability to do what we know to be right even when we have no encouragement to do so.
      - Patience is needed to endure the problems we face in life.
  - Can you think of some times when life issues stretch our patience to the edge?
    - Be honest ... (you don't have to share this out loud ... but, think about it ... **list a few.**
  
- Read **James 1:2-4** ... and then list two or three points that just stick out in this passage about patience and then be prepared to discuss them.
  
- When suffering and afflictions come, it is easy to look around for someone to blame ... it is even easy to blame God.
  - Read **James 1:12-14** and comment on that point.

- God can use adversity for our own good, or to accomplish His purposes.
  - Joseph is a good example. **Gen. 45:5-7**
    - Who could have foreseen in the life of Joseph where his life was headed? Not even Joseph could have predicted how God was using evil circumstances for good things.
    - What did Joseph say about circumstances in his life?
  
- Read **Hebrews 12:1** What does ‘patience or endurance’ mean as it is used in this text?
  
- Be prepared to discuss how Paul demonstrated patience. **2 Timothy 4:6-8**
  - Notes –
  
- James speaks again about patience. **James 5:7-8**
  - What should we learn from this passage?
  
- **“add to patience godliness” (v. 6)**
  - The word ‘godliness’ is not found many times in the Bible text, but words that carry similar meaning are often used. Biblical writers prefer such words as ‘righteousness,’ ‘faith,’ ‘steadfastness,’ ‘holiness,’ etc., to describe the faith and life pleasing to God.<sup>1</sup>
  - Think for a moment and then jot some notes about what godliness means.
  
- There is little in our society that lends itself to godliness.
  - This is not a new problem since man has always struggled with ‘holiness’ before God.
    - **Psm. 12:1; 14:1**
  
  - In view of the final judgment to come, Peter reminds us of what kind of people we should be. **2 Pet. 3:10-12**
  
  - Godliness is an absolute if we are to be the ‘special people’ of God. **Titus 2:11-14**
    - Explain –
  
  - Only through Christ is true godliness possible, for God’s power ‘has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.’ **2 Pet. 1:3**
    - Discuss the power of that statement.

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<sup>1</sup> Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper’s Bible dictionary* (1st ed.) (351). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

- **“add to godliness brotherly kindness” (v. 7)**

- The words ‘brotherly kindness’ are used together only in our text though the meaning of what this expression implies is found throughout the Bible.
- Brotherly kindness (*philadelphia*) literally means **“love of the brethren” (Hebrews 13:1, NASB)**.
  - Think of application for what this means ... jot some notes.
  
- A gospel preacher, Leslie Diestelkamp once said that “kindness is never wasted.” “Whether it is a word or a deed, isn’t it nice to know that we can do something that will never be destroyed, and only enhances both our own lives and the lives of those it touches.”<sup>2</sup> (adapted, jg)
  - There are many blessings both given and received by kindness.
  - Affectionate brotherly kindness will arrest the attention of an unbelieving world. As someone said, “They’ll know the Lord of love lives in us.”<sup>3</sup> Consider what Jesus said in **John 13:34-35**.
    - What is the point of this passage?
  
- Think about how we demonstrate the character of God when we show brotherly kindness.
  - **1 John 3:10-15** Notice ... ‘children of God vs. children of the devil.’ Comment on this.
  
- In a simple way, brotherly kindness is the act of being loving and kind to others.
  - On one hand, we might assume it is a trait that comes natural to all men ... but on the other hand we know that is not the case.
  - For one thing, if it were an inherit attribute there would be no need for our ‘adding it to our faith.’
    - Practical suggestions? How can we add this trait to our character?
  
- Brotherly kindness is found in **1 Peter 1:22**. Where does this characteristic come from?
  
- Think about it ... brethren will not always agree on every matter. How will our love for each other keep us agreeable and able to work out our differences. Discuss.
  
- Love will express itself in kindness. **Eph. 4:32**
  - Explain ... how is love evident from this passage?
  - Practical application – provide examples of how this ‘kindness’ should be evident in our lives.
  - How can we encourage ‘kindness’ among brethren?

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<sup>2</sup> Lewis, B. (1997). And Then Some. In *Christianity Magazine: February 1997, Volume 14, Number 2* (8). Jacksonville, FL: Christianity Magazine.

<sup>3</sup> Walton, W. F. (1984). Brotherly Kindness: A Special Kind of Love. In B. Lewis (Ed.), *Christianity Magazine: October 1984, Volume 1, Number 10* (B. Lewis, Ed.) (19). Jacksonville, FL: Christianity Magazine.

- **“add to brotherly kindness love” (v. 7)**

- To the Greek mind, love was not so hard to define, in that, the Greeks had several different words for our one word love. Three of the words ‘love’ that is used in the NT...
- The idea of **love between the sexes**, the Greeks used the word *eros*.
  - It is the same word from which we derive *erotic* and has to do with sexual love.
  - *Eros* was the Greek god of love, the son of Aphrodite, which the Romans identified as *Cupid*.
  - Erotic love often results in sexual intercourse, the highest manifestation of physical attraction, and when satisfied within the realm of marriage, an honorable action. **Hebrews 13:4**
- There is the word *phileo*, **brotherly love**.
  - This kind of love is emotional at its base – tender, affectionate feelings for someone.
  - It is this emotional response to being a part of the human race which results in what we call *philanthropy*, or love of mankind.
  - It results from knowing that some injustice or difficulty in life can happen to me, so I am therefore sympathetic, when it happens to someone else. It is often used in the New Testament. **Romans 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Hebrews 13:1**
- Then, there is *agape* love. It means “affection, goodwill, love, benevolence.” (Thayer 4)
  - It is this kind of **love that seeks the best interests of the object** of the affection whether or not there is any reciprocity.
    - In other words, this love allows a man to love his enemies, to do good to those who would do him harm, to love the unlovely, the unlovable, while expecting nothing in return.
  - It is the love of **John 3:16**, “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*”
  - It is this love that caused Christ to die for our sins. “*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us ...*” **1 John 3:1**<sup>4</sup>
- This love (*agape*) represents a selfless interest in the welfare and benefit of the one to, or for, whom something is done.
  - “*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*” **John 15:13**
  - “*If you love Me, keep my commandments.*” **John 14:15**
  - “*Love does no harm to a neighbor.*” **Rom. 13:10**
  - “*For whom the Lord loves He chastens.*” **Heb. 12:6**
  - See that you “*love one another fervently with a pure heart.*” **1 Peter 1:22**
    - Notice ... love (*agape*) has origin in the agent, not in the object. It is love which flows out of us and shows itself in sacrificial action for that person’s good.

**The result of adding these attributes to our lives is found in 2 Peter 1:8-11.**

- Look at these verses and find the most powerful points in each one ... **write them down ... explain!**
  - Verse 8
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Verse 9
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Verse 10
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Verse 11

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<sup>4</sup> Bowman, D. (1990). Front Lines: Love Is .... In *Christianity Magazine: November 1990, Volume 7, Number 11* (2). Jacksonville, FL: Christianity Magazine. 23

## **Second Peter – Lesson Ten**