

Study 1

1 Peter 1v1-12 Aliens do exist!

The aim of **Impact** is to make sure that as a whole CU and as groups of believers in every college, we are united in the gospel and in a desire to see people reached with that gospel. We do that by spending time in God's word.



Just because Main Event week has finished, our focus doesn't change. We exist to make Jesus known to every student in Durham!

Your role as an impact leader is vital, as the CU spend time together, to be reminded of the gospel, to support each other in gospel partnership, and be equipped by the gospel to go back out into college and university life, to live distinctively, and speak boldly for Jesus.

We're studying 1 Peter with those aims in mind: to be reminded of the gospel (Peter calls it 'the true grace of God' in 5v12), to support each other as we live 'as aliens and strangers in the world' (2v11), and to be equipped to 'live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us' (2v12), and 'always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have' (3v15). In particular, looking at 1 Peter will encourage us to expect suffering for following Jesus, and will spur us on to count it a blessing to be insulted for the name of Jesus.



Impact Group Time

We're aiming for Impact studies to fit into 1 hour. That should give time to spend together being encouraged and challenged by God's word, and opportunity for the group to support each other in their evangelism, sharing and praying with each other about personal and college group evangelism. So here's how the timings might work:

40 mins Bible study *including* time to chat through implications, and pray
20 mins Chat and pray about friends and plan CU evangelism

Those timings within the hour will have to be a bit flexible – but the plan is that God's word will fuel discussion and prayer in the 2nd half of the Impact group time. In the notes we're aiming to help you with that, making the opening discussion, and the applications evangelism focused.

1 Peter – the man and the letter

The apostle Peter tells us why he wrote his letter in 5v12. We need to read the whole letter asking 'What does Peter mean by *the true grace of God?*', 'Why do these Christians need to be told to *stand fast in it?*', and 'What does *standing fast* look like?'. For your own prep, and maybe for your groups too, why not read through the whole letter, and think about the big themes. You might also want to get your groups to think about what they know about the apostle Peter; 'What was he like?', 'What role did Jesus give him?'. Suffering for being a Christian is a big theme in this letter. If people in your groups don't feel as though they suffer much, don't skip over this emphasis: instead seek to find out why they are not facing flack as followers of Jesus.

Some Notes

v1-2 Peter uses OT language and imagery to refer to these Christians. They are God's chosen/elect people, and they are being set-apart (sanctified or made holy), but they are not Jews. We know they are Christians because Peter introduces himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. They are being made holy by the Spirit (not by keeping the law), and the sprinkling of Jesus' blood - rather than the blood of sheep and goats.

v3-5 Although these Christians live in the places listed in v1, they do not belong here – hence the idea of being strangers or exiles. Their true home the glorious imperishable inheritance made certain by Jesus' resurrection.

v6-9 This certain future is worth rejoicing in, whatever is thrown up by this life which is momentary by comparison. In fact, more than that, hard times now actually have a refining and purifying work to do in us, resulting in more praise on that final day.

v10-12 highlight what a privilege it is to be a Christian, even if we face suffering. We are following the pattern of Jesus – suffering first and glory later, and, we know the salvation that angels long to know about, and that the prophets of the past could only search and enquire about.

THE STUDY (40MINS)

- **The Big Idea:** Christians are God's chosen people, they have an amazing and certain future. Know who you are, and where you are headed and rejoice in it – no matter what!
- **Dig:** Look up 1 Peter 5v12. What does Peter tell us about why he is writing? What questions should we ask as we read this letter?
- **Ponder (discussion question to kick off with):** What things stop you standing up for Jesus more? What do we find hard about being known as a follower of Jesus? What do you think might change our attitude?

1:1-5

- **Think:** What things strike you about how Peter describes the Christian? How does his description compare to how you think about being Christian? What difference would it make if we viewed ourselves more like Peter does?

What things in life do we class as 'a dead cert'? According to Peter what makes our future so certain? How do v3-5 compare to how we usually think about our Christian lives and our future? How can we help each other remember this?

1:6-9

- **Think:** What do we find hard to grasp in these verses? What are the two things that might make us doubt or stop rejoicing in our glorious future?

What is our attitude to trials and suffering in the Christian life? What do we miss out on by avoiding them?

1:10-12

- **Think:** What response is Peter looking for in his readers? Given verses 6-9, what is the impact of telling them these things? Grief and trials doesn't sound nice, but what are the privileges for the Christian?

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

- **Summary:** What is the big thing Peter wants these Christian readers and us to know and believe here? What do we learn about our identity, our future, and the place of suffering in the Christian life?
- **Look at Jesus:** How does this passage link our identity, our experience of the Christian life and our future with Jesus? Is that reflected in the way we think about Jesus normally?
- **Look at the world:** What things make the world feel comfortable, content and 'at home'? How do we compare/differ? What does the world look forward to? How are we similar/different? What does the world rejoice in? How are we similar/different?
- **Live:** How do you think knowing who we are, and knowing where we are headed, should impact our lives day by day? Share one way that this passage challenges you to think or live differently? How might that impact your relationship with non-Christian friends, and your evangelism with them?
- **Pray:** Share one way that your impact group can pray for you as you seek to live and speak for Jesus this week. **Chat and pray** through the big challenges of these verses for each other.

REMAINING IMPACT GROUP TIME (20MINS)

Share some things to give thanks for from Main Event. Share the names of people who heard the gospel in Main Event week. Pray for more opportunities to chat to them. Pray for anyone you know who signed up for the follow up course.

Pray for the Easter Service in the Cathedral on Monday March 16th. Mark O'Donoghue is the speaker.

Your reps may also have other college events planned before the end of term.

Why not commit to going to your college bar after Impact, to spend time with mates and spread the great news about Jesus!