

## Study 3

# 1 Peter 2v4-12 God's privileged people with a purpose

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
- 20 mins Pray in light of the passage. Chat & pray about how living & speaking for Jesus is going

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 focussed.

### Leading your impact study

Remember the big context and theme of the letter. Peter is writing to young Christians who are facing hard times for following Jesus. He wants them to stand fast in the true grace of God (5v12). On page 2 are a few big questions to help your groups unpack some of the riches of God's word in this passage. Don't worry if you don't get into all the detail, our aim is to be encouraged and challenged by God's word to want to live for God more, so that we'll be more up for making Him known to people. Use the **BigQ** questions to get people pulling ideas out of the passage, use the **Live** questions to help draw out the implications. You may need some follow up questions to help people see how things fit together. The notes below should help.

### Some Notes

v4. At 1<sup>st</sup> reading, you think that the '*word of the Lord*' (1v25) and tasting that '*the Lord is good*' (2v3) are both referring to God the Father. But the 2v4 would suggest they were both talking about Jesus: '*the living stone – rejected by men, but chosen by God*'. The verses that follow tell us some of the amazing **privileges** for those who '*come to him*': Note the Old Testament Language used, but these are God's new people, followers of Jesus!

v5-10 Using temple language, Peter tells us that the Christian is part of the true temple. Because of Jesus, God's dwelling place is no longer a physical, fixed building, but the people He has chosen. Great for people who can't get to Jerusalem – they don't need to! Because of Jesus, Christians are also the priests made holy and fit for service in God's presence. Those who are built on this chosen and precious foundation, will never be put to shame - An amazing promise for people who were probably tempted to feel very ashamed of being followers of Jesus. Using the Old Testament titles for God's people, Peter highlights that all the promises and privileges of being God's people are now for those who have come to Jesus – whatever you are going through in this present time.

v7-8 remind these Christian and us, that people rejecting Jesus shouldn't knock our confidence in Him. In Jesus rejection, nothing has gone wrong. Rather, the scriptures have been fulfilled. Only what God has intended and appointed is happening (by implication, the same can be said of any hard times God's people are going through).

V5, 9 Not only are God's people privileged, they have a **purpose** in the world – to offer spiritual sacrifices v5, and to declare God's praises, v9. Here then is the reason why God has got us as His people in the world, and why he doesn't whisk us straight off to our glorious eternal inheritance. These sacrifices are

v11-12 In light of v5 and v9, these three verses unpack our purpose more and show us God's plan for achieving it. Because of who we are, God's chosen, holy people and royal priesthood etc, we are to live radically differently. This will involve action on our part (like 1v13), to '*abstain*' from the desires of the flesh, and instead live good lives. The pressure will be on us, because the world will be watching (v12), and more than just watching - accusing us. But here is the heart-beat of our purpose: We have the chance, by our good lives, to change the world, and turn people from being God ignorers and haters, to God glorifiers on the final day. Once again the future is our motivation, this time not our glory and inheritance – but God's glory. But we mustn't get the order wrong, we are called to live like v11-12, because of who we are.

## THE STUDY (40MINS)

- **The Big Idea:** Peter tells us how **privileged** God's people are, their **purpose** in the world, and the **plan** for bringing glory to God.
- **Ponder (discussion question to kick off with):** Where do people get their **purpose** in life? How would you describe your **purpose** in life? If you were filmed for a week, what do you think would be concluded about your top priorities and purposes in life?
- **Dig:** Keep the big theme of the letter in mind, look up 5v12. What did we see last week that encouraged us to stand fast? From so far in the letter, how can we sum up the 'true grace of God'?

## Big Questions for 2v4-12

**BigQ1:** How does Peter describe the **privilege** of being one of God's people in the world?

- **Live:** Given the situation, what difference should this have made to Peter's hearers? What about to us?

**BigQ2:** What do we learn about the **purpose** of God's people in the world?

- **Live:** How would knowing this purpose have helped Peter's hearers stand fast? How does this purpose compare to yours?

**BigQ3:** What's exciting about v11-12? And what sounds hard? How do they flow out of v4-10?

- **Live:** Do v11-12 describe your life? How would your life need to change for it to?

**IMPACT:** try and sum up the big impact of this passage for you as an individual, and for us as a group of Christians in your college, trying to '*live such good lives among the pagans...*' so '*...they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us*'? What would that film crew need to see to be convinced that your purpose in life is to declare the praises of God, and bring him glory as peoples lives are transformed?

- **Share and pray:** What do you find hardest to grasp or believe from this passage? What challenges you the most? How do you need to change your thinking, or your behavior in light of this passage? Pray about some of those things in your groups.

## REMAINING IMPACT GROUP TIME (20MINS)

Your remaining time in impact groups is a great opportunity to support each other as Christians from your college. Lots of the challenges you face will be similar, and we all find evangelism hard. Here are a few suggestions to make this time productive as you seek to support and encourage each other.

- Share the names of people you are seeking to follow up after Main Event, or keep using the FREE bookmarks to pray for friends. What is the best next thing for them? How can your impact group pray for them?
- Share any encouragements from the last week. How is evangelism going? What's been hard?
- Pray for any college events planned before the end of term, and for each other as you head home over Easter.

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