

Study 6

1 Peter 4v1-11 with an eye on the past & on the future, live to the glory of God, not sin

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.

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 max. 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 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 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 to add in some follow up questions to help people see how things fit together. The notes below should help (*lots this week sorry!*).

Some (hopefully helpful) notes (*I've printed verses from the ESV for clarity*).

4v1 'therefore', because of what Peter has just argued... do this... Or rather, Peter is telling us how to **think** in light of 3v18-22 (v1 'arm yourselves with the same way of **thinking**'). The theme that continues here, is that of Jesus' death – He died in the **body** (Lit. 'flesh'), and was made alive by the **Spirit** (which we saw set the overall pattern of death/judgement and salvation/resurrection in v19-22). The same language is here in v1 'whoever has suffered in the **flesh**', v2 'so as to live the rest of the time in the **flesh**, not for...'. v6 'that though judged in the **flesh**...', 'they might live in the **Spirit**'. So the suffering we are primarily thinking about here in 4v1, is that of Jesus on the cross. Why? The 2nd half of v1 tells us 'For... whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin'. This can't mean that by **our** suffering we overcome sin because Jesus didn't need to do that! Rather, the verse is talking about a **present reality**, because of a **past event**. A **new situation** for us as God's people, because of a **past suffering**, i.e. the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Jesus suffering does away with sin, so that now, as we look back, and as we arm ourselves with the same way of thinking, we can say to sin "Hello, what are you doing here?". "You don't belong here any more, I am done with sin, you have no place here!". That's what the pattern of 3v18-22 taught us, that death and judgement in the flesh results in victory over sin and brings salvation. So **think** like that!

4v2-6 This radical attitude towards sin, will work out in a radically different and distinct life, to the extent that the watching world will be **surprised** at how different you are. In addition to the death of Jesus that has done with sin once for all, the time we live in is highlighted here as an added motivation to keep living good lives. V3 the time is past and gone for living how we used to, if sin is done with, why go back to it? Plus, v5,7, judgement is coming, so even if the world gives you a hard time now (for a **short while** 1v6; 5v10), v7 '**the end of all things is at hand**'. So if the past and Jesus death is not enough to convince us continuing in sin is profitless, judgement day should.

4v6 Is often unhelpfully linked to the tricky verses in 3v19-22 last week. I think it's much more straightforward. We seek to live a radically new life, because of Jesus death. But the world pokes fun at us, even persecutes us, perhaps even kills some, so the Christian life doesn't look or feel so great. In fact, it feels a million miles away from victory, and salvation and new resurrection life in the Spirit? What's going on? Peter says don't worry. What's the worst that can happen. Even if you die, that doesn't quench the power of Jesus death and resurrection. Those who have heard the gospel preached, and have believed, and then have died (before Jesus has returned), will live in the Spirit, the way God does! So don't give up. Don't give up living the good life, don't give up even being prepared to suffer (v4 *they malign you*) for living this good life, even if you die, don't give up – stand fast (5v12).

4v7-11 The life of v7-11 is again set in the context of the future, and is set in contrast to the life of v3. Rather than being sinful, self-centred and out of control, it is other person centred, loving, and self-controlled. It is a radically different, Christ empowered, future focused life of selfless love.

V7 reminds us that we can't separate out our lives from our relationship with God (like the husband in 3v7). We may well say our prayers, and go to church/CU and give the impression of being ok with God. But it's a thin veneer over a life that Monday to Saturday isn't really any different to the rest of the world, or to how you were before you believed. Maybe that explains why the world is surprised at so few of us!? And Peter says it doesn't just affect your witness, it affects your prayers, your relationship with God!

The end of v11 draws our big section from 2v11 to an end, with a return to the focus on God's glory. That reminds us that these verses have been an encouragement to live such good lives among the watching world (2v12), and they give us more motivations to keep going at it; It's possible because of Christ's empowering death, and it's worth it, even if we suffer, and even if we die. So we keep on living like this, in light of the fast approaching, almost here day of judgement, looking forward to our glorious inheritance.

THE STUDY (40MINS)

• **The Big Idea:** don't live how you used to, but love how you're used to (i.e. the love Christ has shown us!), looking back to the cross for victory over sin, and to the future and the end of all things.

• **Ponder (discussion question to kick off with, before you read the passage):** What surprises your friends about you? How are you different to them? How are you different now, to before you were a Christian?

Big Questions for 2v13-3v7

Catch-up Q: What have been the 3 big intertwined themes since 2v11-12?

Dig: You might want to get your group to come up with a time line from our passage, what does Peter talk about here, when does it all happen? Draw it in a big sheet of paper.

BigQ1: What is our default attitude towards our sin? How do we feel about the sins we constantly fall back into? What attitude does v1 suggest we should have towards sin?

Live: In practice, how might that way of thinking help us in our battle with sin? What excuses do we give ourselves for keeping on doing what we used to do?

Live: How surprised is the world at you? If they aren't really? Why not? What areas of your life need to change in order that you stand out, no longer living how you used to? (see v7-11 too)

BigQ2: When you think about the future, what do you think of? How does Peter want us to think (v5,7)? How are the lives of v3 and v7-11 contrasted? What words would you use to sum up the life of v3, and the life of v7-11? What motivates us to like this kind of life?

Live: Does this describe you? Why not? What do you think this kind of life might look like in a CU context? How does v7 challenge our view of how much our sin affects our relationship with God?



IMPACT: try and *sum up* the big impact of this passage for you as individuals, and as a college group.

• **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 behaviour in light of this passage? Pray together.

REMAINING IMPACT GROUP TIME (20MINS) *The remaining time is a great opportunity to support each other as Christians in college. Share the joys and struggles, particularly your personal evangelism.*

- **Pray for the evangelistic BBQ on Saturday 6th June**
- **Pray for Release**, the mini events week at the end of term 11-13th June. Watch out for details, and pray that many would hear and believe the good news of Jesus in those last few weeks.
- **Pray that during exams**, Christians would be distinct and a witness

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