

Study 8 - 1 Peter 5v1-14

it's official and it's normal - suffering now/glory later

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

Keeping the big theme of 1 Peter in mind is useful as we draw to a close. Look out for the big ideas we have seen over and over coming out here.

5v1-4 Earlier in the letter Peter addressed specific teaching to various groups (slaves, wives & husbands). Here the elders are in view. Peter identifies himself with them, rather than emphasising his authority as an apostle. He stresses that he is a '*fellow-elder*', and will '*share*' with them in the glory to be revealed. He does however bring a wealth of experience – he was a '*witness of Christ's suffering*'. This central theme of the letter is back on the table. As Peter addresses the elders and goes on to encourage them to be an example to the flock, it is the selfless, sacrificial, humble and other-person-centred suffering of Christ that he has in mind. Just as we are to follow Christ's example and walk in his footsteps (2v21), Peter also wants us to have the 'closer to home' Christ-like example of our church elders. Like Christ, their leadership is to be marked by a willingness to serve others, and just like the rest of us their focus is to be fixed on the glory to come. That makes sense because presumably they are to be an example to us **both** of the good/holy life Peter has spoken so much about, **and the suffering** that he expects to follow that kind of life. Remembering that as shepherds they have a chief Shepherd who is returning, will be a big motivation not to be greedy, or lord it over those entrusted to their care. How often do we thank God for the Christ-like shepherds he gives us, and how often do we pray for them to remember that they have a Chief Shepherd?

5v5 The young men get a brief specific mention next. Peter says '*in the same way...*' and then tells them to be '*submissive*' – but he hasn't mentioned that above? We saw a similar thing in 3v1 and 3v7. Like in those verses, Peter is appealing to a more fundamental principle than just submission. He's appealing to the other-person-centred example of Christ, who willingly humbled himself and served us in his death. When wives submit, they are not *just* obeying, they are being like Christ. '*In the same way*', when young men submit, they're walking in Jesus footsteps - who humbled himself and was obedient even to death (Phil 2v5-8). If in our church elders, God has given us Christ-like shepherds to follow, then we should be slow to reject and quick to humbly submit.

5v5b-7 We're all back in view again. The attitude of humility that the elders demonstrate in serving and leading the flock well, and that the young men show in submitting, is the attitude we are all to have *'towards one another'*. We're given 3 reasons why i) *'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'*. Whether it's the outsider who maligns the Christian (4v4-5), or the proud insider, God is opposed to them. It is the humble He gives grace to – saving grace that calls us who were not His people to belong, and grace to stand firm and endure to eternity and the glory to come. ii) The second half of that is made explicit in v6, *'humble yourselves... that [God] may lift you up in due time'*. Just as all the way the letter, the pattern is suffering now (humility, trials, being maligned - just like Jesus) for a little while (1v6; 5v10), and glory to come. Just like Jesus in Philippians 2, he humbled himself even to death, then was exalted. iii) But we are not just to grim and bear it, putting up with hard times now doggedly hanging on for the glory, we have a mighty God, the faithful creator (4v19) who cares for us now. We can cast all our anxiety on him. What a privilege and comfort when times are really hard.

5v8-9 Peter adds two more instructions to be humble: *'Be self-controlled and alert'*. The logic seems to be that when suffering we're more likely to give up and not stand firm. The devil, who is like a prowling lion, would love to devour the Christian who gives up and ducks their head down, blending in with the world around. We are not to let the suffering we face have that effect (which is why Peter has been at pains to warn us that suffering is to be expected, 4v12). Instead, we're to be self-controlled and alert, like back in 1v13, clear about our identity, and our amazing future to look forward to. And just look at your brothers around the world, v9b-this is the normal Christian life! Amazingly, as scary as the devil sounds here, Peter simply says *'Resist him'*, v9. We can resist him and stand fast, because of Jesus who defeated Satan on the cross (Colossians 2v15), *'and ...'*

5v10-12 *...the God of all grace... will restore us and make us strong, firm and steadfast'*. Peter concludes by restating the pattern that we've seen all through – suffering now for a short while, marks the normal Christian life, and has ever since God's King Jesus, suffered and died for us. But, certain glory will follow (1v6-7, 11; 2v12; 4v14; 5v2,4)! This challenges our view of eternity. Peter is happy to call this life *'a little while'*. We are so wrapped up in this life, that we will never be willing to live the kind of lives that bring almost certain suffering. We need a much bigger view of the eternal glory Jesus has won for us, and that God is keeping us for. From these verses, we also need to see that *'the true grace of God'* we are to stand fast in, doesn't exclude, but rather must include suffering and trials of various kinds. Peter has spent his whole letter saying that suffering now is to be expected and is normal, even is a blessing, now he sums up saying this is the true grace of God. We can stand fast in God's grace, in the face of trials of many kinds, sure in the knowledge that the God in whose mighty hand we're held, will lift us up, and will bring home to eternal glory with him. ***'To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen'***

THE STUDY (40MINS)

- **The Big Idea:** the life Christ-like, other-person-centred humility, and steadfastness, flows from confidence that the God of all grace, after we have suffer a little while, will call us home to eternal glory!
- **Ponder (discussion question to kick off with, before you read the passage):** What really excites you? How much do you think about it/him/her!? How often do you consider eternity?

Big Questions for 2v13-3v7

Catch-up: Sum up the big theme we have seen in 1 Peter.

BigQ1: We've seen lots in 1 Peter about the attitude we should have as aliens and strangers. What attitudes are we encouraged to have from these verses?

- Live: How does it help to think about Jesus as we seek to clothe ourselves with an attitude of humility?** What do you think this might mean for you in practice? Where do you need more self-control?
- Live: How does v8 challenge us to view sin more seriously?** What do you think our brothers around the world think when they look at us (v9)?

BigQ2: Why don't we have an eternal perspective? How could we encourage each other in this?

- Live: How might having the attitude of v10 shape the way you use the end of term?** What stops us believing v10?



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 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 for each other as you head away for the summer**, for godliness and steadfastness
- **Pray for those graduating**, that God would help them keep living for him in the workplace

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