

Study 4

1 Peter 2v13-3v7 - the good, gospel adorning, life of submission & suffering

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.

Some Notes

2v13-20; 3v1-7 4. The big theme that links this whole section together, is 'submission'. It's there in v13, 18 & 3v1. It turns out, that the good life of v12 that can change the world by bringing glory to God, isn't all that impressive. It looks like submitting to every authority instituted among men (by God v14). V13-17 are a challenge to us, because we think that obeying rules like the speed limit and music copyright have nothing to do with our Christian witness. But our godly submission, done for the Lord's sake can be a potent witness in God's hand. V15 says that it is God's will to use our submission to silence the watching and ignorant world (just like in v12 where some end up giving glory to God). That is spelled out even more explicitly in 3v1. The godly submission of the Christian wife to her husband, is so potent, that even though he doesn't believe, her may see her life, and be won over.

2v18-20 The section about slaves and masters (more similar to an employer/employee relationship than the slave/slave master), the theme of unjust suffering is introduced. The good life of submitting, is to continue, even in the face of harsh treatment. There are obviously big pastoral implications here. Peter's not saying that we should let harsh behavior carry on, when there are laws and protection in place for it to be dealt with (v14).

2v21-25 The Christian life is to be one marked by unjust suffering, and has been ever since Jesus went to the cross. Jesus is the ultimate example of submission, entrusting himself to God (v23), and Jesus models for us how to endure unjust suffering, not retaliating v23. Obviously what Jesus achieves by his suffering is radically different to us (for the place of suffering in the Christian life, look back to 1v7, and we'll see more in 1 Peter on this theme). By his suffering and death, Jesus achieves our salvation, taking our sin in his body.

His death was substitutional and sacrificial. These verses, almost as an aside, crucially come in the middle of this section on submission, showing us how it is possible to live this 'good life' Peter is talking about. We only do so, empowered by the saving death of Jesus, where we die to sin, to live for righteousness (v24).

3v1-6 It's key to remember here, that submission does not mean inferiority – it can't if Jesus submits (see 1 Corinthians 15v28; Philippians 2v6). Out of the idea of submission flow some big implications in terms of what is of great worth in God's sight. For the girls – the inner self is more important than outward adornment. I don't think it's saying that looking nice is wrong, but where does your effort go, on the inside or the outside? Guys – big challenges in terms of what we think of as beautiful. Are you attracted to what God says is attractive? In your groups, you might want to split girls and guys up to talk honestly about implications here.

3v7 It's worth noting that husband don't get off easily. 'Respect' in the NIV is very strong, more like 'honour'. And there is no sense of inequality (except physically – the weaker partner), in fact the opposite is *stressed*, wives are co-heirs of salvation. Also, in some way, the same submission theme continues here (notice the 'in the same way' in 3v1 and 3v7). In order to honour their wives, Husbands will need to *submit* themselves ('be considerate' or act in knowledge' as you live with your wives') to the particular needs of their wives, with their salvation in mind. It's a high calling (See Ephesians 5v25, to love as Christ lived the church!), and I think helps us see that if a husband is seeking to live with his wife like this, what godly girl wouldn't want to submit to his Christ like leadership?

THE STUDY (40MINS)

- **The Big Idea:** This section alters our expectations of the 'good lives' from v12 that will change the world. They look pretty ordinary in submission to authority, and they follow the example of Jesus in suffering.
- **Ponder (*discussion question to kick off with*):** What are the top 5 things that you think impact our world on a big scale. What do you think would help Christianity have a big impact?

Big Questions for 2v13-3v7

Catch-up Q: What are the big ideas we've seen so far in the letter? What has Peter told us about who we are, where we are going and what the Christian life should look like in the here and now. How does all that help us stand fast (5v12)?

BigQ1: On a big sheet of paper, jot down what we learn about the 'good lives' Peter mentioned in v11.
Are there any patterns or common themes in this section? (Focus on v13-17; 18-20; 3v1-6; 7)
What motivations/reasons are we given for living like this?

Live: What are the authorities in place that particularly affect us as students? Are there people who you reserve the right not to 'show proper respect to'? In what ways do we excuse sin (v16), knowing we have free forgiveness? If we lived like this, what difference do you think friends would notice? From 3v1, how significant can our godly lives be? Do we believe this? How does what we say and how we live fit together here?

BigQ2: Why does Peter tell us 2v21-25 here? How does Jesus model the kind of life Peter's talking about?

Live: How does looking at Jesus motivate us to live the kind of lives Peter is talking about?

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 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 spend time with, and share the gospel with this term. How can your impact group pray for them and for you in that?
- Share any encouragements from the last week. How is evangelism going? What's been hard?
- Give thanks for the small group events and lunch bar last week, for those who attended and heard of Jesus.

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