

The Book of First Peter

Homegroup Discussion Questions

WESTLAKE CHURCH LAUSANNE

Homegroup Discussion Starter Questions
Sunday 10th January 2010
Passage: 1 Peter 1:3-12

Theme: Eternal inheritance, joy in the midst of trials

Optional Ice-breaker: what games did you play over Christmas

Read the passage: 1 Peter 1:3-12

Suggested Discussion Starters

1. Peter talks about our eternal inheritance in heaven (v3-5). Why does it seem easier to live focused on this life rather than eternity?
2. What are some of the reasons Peter gives for readjusting our perspective? [short-time v eternity (v6-trials are for 'a little while', our inheritance is unfading-eternal; perishable v imperishable etc]
3. Is it possible to be so heavenly minded as to be no earthly use?
4. Then Peter talks about trials (v6-7). When you go through trials, what are some of the questions you ask/demand of God in those times?

Which of these does Peter answer here?

If not already: why does God allow us to face such stuff?

4. How is it possible to know joy in the midst of grief (v6)?

Suggested Song: My Troubled Soul

Home Group Discussion Starter Questions
Sunday 10th January 2010
Passage: 1 Peter 1:13-25

Optional Icebreaker: What's the kindest thing someone has ever done for you? Or the kindest act you've ever seen done?

Read the passage: 1 Peter 1:13-25

Suggested Discussion Starters:

1. What does it mean to be without hope?
What difference does hope in Christ (v13) make in your life?

2. Before Peter mentions setting your hope on the grace that is to come, he says 'preparing your mind for action, and being sober minded, set your hope...' why do you think he does that?

(The Bible is not interested in a super-spirituality that is devoid of life-transforming application in this life: genuine Christian hope in eternal blessing will radically affect how we live now – in particular it will affect our thinking, and consequently our actions.)

3. What images does the word *holy* conjure up for you?
What does it mean for you and I to be holy as God is Holy?
How does the cross make that possible? (v18-19)

4. What would your ideal church look and feel like?
In v22-25 Peter gives us some crucial elements in the life of the body. What are they?

(Sincere, brotherly love; people getting born again; the preaching of the gospel/word of God)

Home Group Discussion Questions
Sunday 31st January
1 Peter 2:1-8

Optional Ice-breaker: what, or who, (apart from the Bible) has most helped you grow as a Christian

Read the passage: 1 Peter 2:1-8

Discussion Starters:

1. When Peter says, "...that by it you may grow up into salvation", what does he mean?

2. Peter says we should long for spiritual milk. What do you think that milk is? Why?

Do you long for it? How much does a desire to grow as a Christian feature in your life?

How can you increase your longing for it?

3. In v. 4, Peter tells us something vitally important about Christ Jesus. He then reinforces this fact later on in v. 7 and 8. What is this?

(Jesus is precious to God and to those who believe, but to those who don't believe he is a stumbling block.)

4. What does it mean for Christ to be precious?

How do you know if he's precious to you?

5. Why is Christ a stumbling block? Why do people take offence at Jesus?

How should this influence our evangelism?

Homegroup Discussion Questions
Sunday February 7th 2010
Passage: 1 Peter 2:9-12

Optional Icebreaker: what has been your worst culinary disaster?

Read the passage: 1 Peter 2:9-12

Discussion Starters:

1. God calls us His chosen people. How should that influence how we live?
2. In v10 Peter talks about how our lives have been transformed by the mercy of God. Can any of you give a testimony of how God's mercy has transformed you?
3. What do you think were sinful desires at the time Peter wrote this letter? What are common sinful desires today? How do these desires wage war against our souls?
4. Practically, how can you abstain from sinful desires and passions?
5. Peter calls us aliens and sojourners, strangers in the world. We live such a short time on earth, how can we remind ourselves of that fact?

Homegroup Discussion Questions
Sunday 14th February
Passage: 1 Peter 2:13-25

Optional Icebreaker: Which minor law do you find most annoying?

Read the passage: 1 Peter 2:13-25

Discussion Starter Questions:

1. How easy do you find it to submit to others' authority?
2. Why do we have such trouble doing this?
3. When you think of the word 'politician' or 'government' what thoughts enter your head? What's your attitude to government?
4. What is government for? (Also see Romans 13:1-7)
5. What does Peter say should be our attitude to government?
6. Can you think of an occasion when you were unjustly treated? What was your reaction like? Why?
7. Why is Jesus a role model in such situations?

Homegroup Discussion Questions
Sunday February 21st
1 Peter 3:1-7

Optional Icebreaker: If you were to write a book, what would it be?

Read the Passage: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Discussion Starter Questions

1. What thoughts does the idea of submission raise in your mind?

Note: This same word is used for submission in the following settings: Christ to his parents (Luke 2:51); demons to disciples (Luke 10:17); citizens to government (Rom 13:1); universe to Christ (1 Cor 15:27, Eph 1:22); spiritual powers to Christ (1 Peter 3:22); Christ to God the father (1 Cor 15:28); church members to church leaders (1 Cor 16:15-16; 1 Peter 5:5); wives to husbands (Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; Eph 5:22-24); church to Christ (Eph 5:24); servants to masters (Tit 2:9, 1 Peter 2:18); Christians to God (Heb 12:9; James 4:7).

2. Why do people struggle with the concept of submission?

3. From this passage what does Peter say submission of wives to their husbands will look like? (and what doesn't he mean by it?)

What it is:

- inner quality of gentleness that affirms the husband's leadership (v1-2)
- this inner quality is very eloquent (v1)
- Obedience like Sarah's: she knows he's the head of the family, and she will follow his lead (v6)
- It is submission with equality of worth (v7)

What it isn't:

- husband is not in the place of Christ (submission for the Lord's sake, 2v13)
- Giving up independent thought (the wife is a Christian, he isn't (v1))
- it isn't giving up trying to influence the husband (v1)
- it isn't giving in to his every demand (she is to be respectful and pure in conduct, so this rules out immorality etc v2)
- it isn't about lesser intelligence (she is wiser than him, as she's a Christian and has obeyed the truth v1)
- it is not being fearful or timid v6
- it is not about a lack of equality (v7)

4. What does a gentle and quiet spirit look like? Describe it.

5. What part have role-models played in the life of your marriage? Who have you looked up to and why? What OT ladies have inspired you?

The notes on other uses of 'submission' and what is/what is not meant by submission are taken from Wayne Grudem: *Wives like Sarah and the Husbands who Honour Them: 1 Peter 3:1-7; Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p194-208; Crossway 1991.

Homegroup Discussion Questions
Sunday 28th February 2010
Passage: 1 Peter 3:1-7 (emphasising v7)

Optional Icebreaker: what was your favourite childhood toy?

Read the passage: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Any questions/feedback from Sunday's sermon?

[Note: one question that came up was my point that submission is unconditional. I do not mean (and stressed this in 'what submission is not') that wives submit no matter what, and to anything demanded of them. That is not the case. I meant that it does not depend on the husband first getting sorted. If husbands wait to love their wives until she submits, or if wives wait to submit to their husbands until he loves like Christ, they are going to be waiting a long time! Submission is unconditional in the sense that Peter calls upon the wives to do this even though their husbands don't obey the word.]

How can a husband show honour to his wife?

[Heart attitudes; words as the overflow of the heart; time; physically – with his body/physical displays of affection; in front of others]

What motivates you to honour someone/anyone? Why do you do it?

Why does Peter say do this to wives? What's his reason?

[note: they are heirs together. Christ died for your wife. If Christ so values your wife, shouldn't you? So this is honouring and cherishing her rooted in the gospel, in what Christ has done for her. So don't trash her for whom Christ gave his life.]

In what ways are women 'weaker' than men?

Why does he call her a 'vessel'?

[The key here is that he says 'live with her in an understanding way'. So, yes, she is physically weaker; but also emotionally: most women are more sensitive to criticism/argument/verbal attack than men. So, if you crush her, or break her by exercising heavy handed leadership/headship, or are domineering, her spirit will shrivel. Also, she is weaker in that the husband is the one with derived authority in the home, so she is also in a weaker position than him. So the picture Peter paints is of the wife being a vessel containing this beautiful, gentle spirit (v4). And the husbands can either cherish that, or smash it by how they do, or don't honour her.]

Peter's concerned about the husbands' prayer lives. Why should that bother him? Why should the way a husband treats his wife affect his prayer life?

[if he mistreats her, he shouldn't think God is going to listen to him; if his home life is a mess, it's hardly conducive to a good prayer life.]

Why do so many men have such a low quality devotional life? In many couples/families, the woman is the driving force in the spiritual life of the family/marriage. Why is that?

Homegroup Discussion Questions

3/1/10

Passage: 1 Peter 3: 8-17

Optional icebreaker: How would you celebrate the anniversary of your arrival in Switzerland?

Read the passage: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Discussion Starter Questions:

1. In verses 8 and 9, Peter tells us what our lives should look like. How are we personally cultivating these traits? How are we disciplining ourselves and training ourselves in these areas?

2. What do all these things ultimately point toward? → Selfless Love

[Peter has just gotten done talking about how husbands and wives need to love each other, and now, he zooms out a little bit and tells Christians in general to die to themselves, in order to find true love.]

3. Verse 9 speaks of a blessing. What is it? → Loving life and good days

In verse 10 and 11, we read, “Whoever desires to love life...” must keep his tongue from evil, his lips from deceit, and must turn away from evil and do good.

4. What things throw themselves in the way of us living lives of selfless love for others, and shunning all evil?

What Peter is saying really shouldn't come as a surprise to us. After all, like verse 13 says, “who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?”

Starting in verse 14 is where this passage takes a twist.

5. When we are obeying God, and he is blessing us so that we “love life” like our passage says, there isn't much reason to complain or act rashly. But, what about when we are trying to live righteously, yet we undergo something that makes us suffer? How do we react then?

How does the passage tell us to react? → “Have no fear of them, nor be troubled...” honor Christ as Lord, and be prepared to make a defense for the hope that we have...with gentleness and respect.

Peter has to be thinking back on the garden when he drew his sword and cut off the man's ear. He didn't have wrong reactions when Jesus was being let on the colt through the city streets and everyone was praising Him, yet he did a very short time later when something unjust took place.

Homegroup Discussion Questions
Sunday 14th March 2010
1 Peter 3:18-22

Optional Icebreaker: describe one of the happiest days in your life.

Read the passage: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Discussion Starter Questions:

1. The passage 3:18-22 sits between 3:17 and 4:1. What's the link between those verses?

[It's suffering! So the passage must have to do with the suffering these Christians are going to go through and, I reckon, help them as they face that.]

Look at v17: Why would God ever will it that you should suffer?

Can you think of a time when you have gone through something painful/difficult and on looking back you are grateful to God for what you learnt?

2. v18: What does this verse tell us about the Cross?

Follow up: how does knowing those things help us when we face suffering?

[When you face suffering it's not God punishing you: Christ has already paid for your sins. When you face suffering you can feel God is a million miles away: it's not true, Christ has brought you near to God].

3. v19-20: Discuss briefly (!): Who were the spirits? Who preached to them? What does it mean for them to be in prison?

[You can debate whether the spirits in v19 are angelic or human, and whether they were in prison/hell when preached to or are in prison/hell now, but not when preached to (ie 'he went and proclaimed to the spirits who are now in prison'.) I am going to argue (I think!) that Peter is talking of Christ preaching through Noah to his contemporaries, whilst he was building the ark, pleading with them to repent. They didn't and are now in prison (Hades).]

Why would this story of Noah be an encouragement to these first century Christians facing suffering and to us when we face it?

[He was in a minority, no-one listened, didn't mean he was wrong, Christ was with him, God saved him etc]

Who has proved inspirational to you in tough times?

5. Does Peter teach salvation by baptism?

[no! He's already said (v18) that it's Christ who bring us to God; he says it's not about the outward washing, but the internal appeal to God – heart cry to God to save us/wash us clean.]

When did you get baptized? Tell the story.

Why is remembering baptism an encouragement in times of suffering?

[It's a reminder of what God has done for us, of his work in our lives, that he will never let us God, even in hard times]

Homegroup Discussion Questions
Sunday 21st March
1 Peter 4:1-11

Optional Icebreaker: what is something that you have lost but never found, or tremendously relieved to find?

Read the passage: 1 Peter 4:1-11

Discussion Starter Questions:

1. Considering v1: 'Whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin'. Peter says that the person who decides that they will face the cost of doing what's right, and be prepared to suffer for it, is saying that they're done with sin, they've finished with it. What are some of the defining moments in your life/Christian walk? - when you made a decision that affected how you were going to live from then on? What were the circumstances around that?

2. v1-2: Peter says that when it comes to being prepared to pay the price for doing what's right, we should have the same attitude as Jesus. What motivates you to do what's right rather than what's wrong?

3. v7. What does it mean to be self-controlled and sober-minded? What have those got to do with prayer? What are the big obstacles in your prayer-life?

4. v8: Why does love on the one hand, and negative criticism on the other have such power to make or break relationships? Why are their effects so different?

5. v9-11. How do you know what your gifts are? Are you using them?

Homegroup Discussion Starter Questions
Sunday 11th April 2010
1 Peter 4:12-19

Optional icebreaker: if you could grow anything in your garden, what would you grow.

Read the passage: 1 Peter 4:12-19

1. v12: Why might a Christian think suffering should not come his or her way?
2. v14: Is our culture or society 'hostile' to Christians/Christianity? (Think about policy makers and media, and the average person in the street) If so why/why not? What shape do 'insults for the sake of Christ' take today? What have you experienced?
3. v16: What is shame? What does it mean to be ashamed? Why is shame such a powerful thing?

Look at Acts 5:41. How do the apostles handle shame?

4. v14: Peter says that when we face insults for Christ we are blessed, as the Spirit rests upon us. What has been your experience of the Holy Spirit's help in times of hostility?
5. V15: Peter says don't suffer as a murderer etc. How do murderers, thieves, evildoers and meddlers suffer? What's the lesson there for us?
6. How does Peter say we should respond to suffering?

[Don't be surprised, expect it; rejoice, you share in Christ's suffering + it's a sign you're blessed, the Holy Spirit lives in you; don't be ashamed; glorify God; entrust yourself to God]

Homegroup Discussion Questions
Sunday 18th April 2010
Read the passage: 1 Peter 5:1-5

1. As a starter: What qualities make a leader? (in church, out of church). How easy is it to follow leaders?

2. v1-2: Why do you think Peter moves from encouraging the Christians to suffer well for Christ's sake (4:12-19), to encouraging the elders to shepherd the flock?

What negative impact can suffering have first on an individual and secondly on a church? And how can leaders mitigate that impact?

3. v2: More generally, within the context of a local church, what does it mean for elders to 'shepherd' the church? Why use the image of a shepherd and sheep?

Think of a church leader/s you've respected: why was that? How did they model the qualities Peter talks about here?

4. What sinful patterns of thought/behaviour do you think leaders are especially vulnerable to?

v2: Peter says the elders should 'exercise oversight'. He qualifies the character of that oversight in v2-3 (note the 3 couplets: 'not like this... but like this').

Given what Peter says here, what will biblical oversight look like in practice? What will its flavour be? Describe the sort of leadership Peter's talking about.

5. v5: Peter calls people to be subject to church leaders. Why do some people struggle with that and why is it necessary?

Peter calls everyone to humility. Why is pride such a killer for relationships? (especially within the church)

Why do you think he especially points out the young?

What does humility look like in inter-personal relationships?

Home Group Discussion Starter Questions

Sunday May 2nd, 2010

1 Peter 5: 5-14

Read the passage: 1 Peter 5:5-14

1. This passage addresses humility. Peter exhorts us to “clothe” ourselves in humility. The opposite of humility is pride, so this command is two-fold: kill your pride and put on humility.

In what areas do you struggle with pride? How can we be proactive against our pride? What things do we find helpful in battling pride?

How can you clothe yourself in humility?

v.7 teaches that we become humble by casting all of our cares, worries, fears, and anxieties upon the Lord.

Do you make that a habit? How?

2. Whilst Peter tells us to be humble, he tell us to be ‘humble blobs’ doing nothing. Instead, Peter says in v. 8 to be sober-minded and watchful.

What does it mean to be sober-minded and watchful?

Why does he encourage such an attitude?

How can you stay that way?

3. Should we fear the devil?

The Bible says we are to resist the devil: James 4:7

How do you do that?