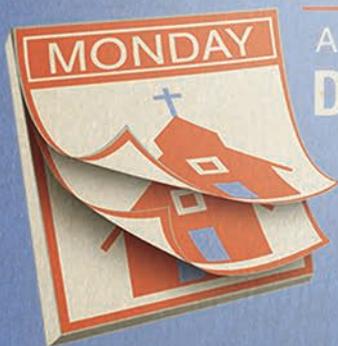




EVERYDAY CHURCH



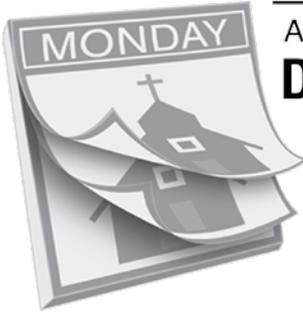
A STUDY THROUGH 1 PETER
DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

EVERYDAY CHURCH

A STUDY THROUGH 1 PETER
DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



EVERYDAY CHURCH



A STUDY THROUGH 1 PETER
DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



exoduschurch
Belmont, North Carolina

Everyday Church: A Study of 1 Peter Devotional Guide

© 2014 Exodus Church, Belmont, NC

Published by Exodus Church, PO Box 126, Belmont, NC 28012

<http://www.theexoduschurch.org>

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Everyday Church logo design by Kirk Brown.

Jacket & Book Layout by D. Brian Nettles

Edited by Valerie Stranathan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

How to Use this Devotional Guide 3

Everyday Church 5

Article: The Church..... 7

Everyday Gospel..... 11

Article: The Reason We Rejoice 14

Everyday Calling..... 17

Everyday Word..... 21

Everyday Disciples: Gospel Identity..... 25

Article: Gospel Identity 29

Everyday Disciples: Compelling Community..... 31

Article: Compelling Community..... 34

Everyday Disciples: Worship..... 37

Article: The Disciple’s Worship 40

Everyday Disciples: Aliens and Strangers 45

Article: Disciples Have a Peculiar Mission 48

Everyday Employees..... 53

Everyday Women 59

Article: Biblical Femininity..... 63

Everyday Men..... 67

Article: Biblical Masculinity 70

Everyday Suffering 73

Article: Suffering Well 76

Everyday Service..... 81

Everyday Trials..... 85

Everyday Pastors..... 89

Everyday Promise..... 93

Article: Apologetics for the Glory of God 96

Writer Biographies..... 101

INTRODUCTION

It was just an ordinary **Everyday** for Peter. He and his brother Andrew are fishing when Jesus calls him to be a fisher of men and his **Everyday** is radically redefined. He's one of Jesus' closest disciples. He's the spokesman—for good or ill. One moment he's declaring that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; the next, he's being rebuked as Satan himself. He promised he would never deny Jesus, but he did. Three times. But, **Everyday**, Jesus was working on Peter.

Another day—not so much like **Everyday**—Peter stood in front of a multi-ethnic crowd gathered in Jerusalem. Just fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, men and women from around the known world were gathered for Pentecost. This everyday man, who less than two months ago had denied Him, now stands to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. (Acts 2:22–24)

Among the throng of people that day were those from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bythinia and a host of other nations. Some of these responded, “What shall we do?” Peter responds:

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Acts tells us that about 3000 people got saved that day. The gospel is shared. God's people are growing, eating, praying, learning, and worshipping together. The gospel changes **Everyday** life for them and they are never the same. **Everyday** is radically redefined.

Many of these pilgrims chose to stay in Jerusalem rather than return home to their Roman districts. After some time, persecution caused a dispersion from Jerusalem. **Everyday** Christians from those Roman districts then made their way home and shared this good news of the Gospel in their regions. Churches were planted. Disciples made. Elders appointed. God was at work. But, like any church, these churches need encouragement, assistance, and instruction in the gospel.

While the gospel is spreading, Peter's Everyday becomes anything but normal. He has a fruitful period of ministry visiting churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), encouraging them to set their hope fully on the grace of Jesus. His ministry, however, has not been without its share of hardship and suffering as Peter finds himself in Rome during Nero's reign and his violent persecution of Christians. In spite of his own difficulties, Peter writes two letters to encourage the churches living out the mission of Jesus in the Everyday.

So, when we read 1 Peter, we read a letter from an everyday follower of Jesus to everyday churches filled with everyday people. Peter knows what it is like to fall and fail while following Jesus, and, as a result, Peter understands grace. The churches in this region needed to be encouraged in the midst of persecution and suffering, so we hear about hope. 1 Peter is written to people who have found their Everyday radically redefined by believing in Jesus—yes—but also by suffering for Jesus, and so, we hear about courage. 1 Peter tells us about the courage we need to live out the everyday mission of Jesus in our jobs, families, friends, and in our suffering.

Our prayer is that 1 Peter will fill us with grace, hope, and courage for the Everyday.

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

This 1 Peter Devotional Guide was written and prepared by members of Exodus Church, a joint effort of both the Belmont and the Northlake congregations. We sincerely pray this guide will be a help and a blessing to your family.

The guide is broken into weekly sections that are designed to be done the week before the sermon. For example, you will begin your first readings and devotionals on Monday, August 11, in preparation for the sermon that will be given Sunday, August 17. For each week, there are daily readings from the Bible and three family devotionals. Some weeks also include an additional article that will allow you to delve deeper into God's word.

Thank you and welcome to 1 Peter!

EVERYDAYCHURCH

SERMON DATE: 8/17/2014 • 1 PETER 1:1-2

BY RICHI REID

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Getting to know you

Have you ever met somebody new and after meeting them, you wanted to learn more about who they were or what they were passionate about? Read Matthew 4:18-20. When we are first introduced to Peter, all we know about him is that he was a fisherman chosen by Jesus to be one of his disciples. As the story of the Bible continues, we are able to learn more about Peter and we see him act foolishly, we see him get angry, and we see him deny that he knew Jesus. (Read Matthew 14:28-32, Matthew 26:51, and Matthew 26:69-75 for examples of these descriptions of Peter.)

Now in the letters Peter wrote, we are introduced to a different Peter, the same man but with a more mature heart. This Peter encourages the church to cling fast to the word of the Lord and does not waiver.

What would you like to know about Peter as we go through the sermon series? What was he passionate about? What did he want people to know about Jesus? Did Peter encourage and support his fellow Christians? Did he point others to Jesus?

Discuss the following questions: "What are some characteristics you think should make up a disciple of Christ Jesus? Did Peter exhibit them? Do you?"

2: Choosing to follow

Have you ever chosen to do the right thing only to be made fun of for it?

Read 1 Peter 1:1

The "elect exiles" in this verse were church communities that were following Christ, who, in return, were experiencing terrible backlash from non-believers around them. However, Christ offers them hope and reminds them of their call to community as well as their purpose.

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 1:1, James 1:1

Day 2

Hebrews 12:24, Romans 8:29

Day 3

Hebrews 7:25, Isaiah 61:1

Day 4

1 Peter 1:2, Acts 2:23

Day 5

Romans 11:2, 1 Peter 5:14

When is a time you chose to do the right thing and were made fun of? How did you feel? Who was there to encourage you? Would you do it again?

3: Encouragement

Throughout 1 Peter, there is a theme of encouragement. Sure, there are passages of direction and instruction, but there is a constant background theme of encouragement. Possibly the most encouraging statement in this book is 1 Peter 1:1-2. Peter speaks specifically to a group of Christians who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in spite of the turmoil they are dealing with. Peter reminds them that God the Father has known of and ordained this instance for them since the beginning of time. Peter reminds them that the Holy Spirit has sanctified them and their sins are covered because of the sacrifice Christ Jesus made. He then sends them grace and peace and prays that it be multiplied.

During times that are hard and painful, or times when we think what we are doing might be for nothing, or when we just think the struggle isn't worth it, we can be encouraged by this passage. Our God knows us, he has known us always, the Holy Spirit has sanctified us, and our sweet Jesus died on the cross for us. Even when hardship or hurt comes upon us, God knows that moment and He is right there with us.

So friend, if you are struggling right now with something that is hard or painful or you feel lost in your journey, may grace and peace be multiplied to you because you are not alone.

Discuss a time when you were going through something hard in your life. Who helped you through it? What helped you through it? How can you help somebody else who might be struggling?

ARTICLE THE CHURCH

BY DAVID KEEN

Jesus told Peter that he would build his church and nothing, not even the gates of hell, could stop it (Matthew 16:15-18). Then, after Christ ascended to Heaven, the Holy Spirit used Peter to preach the first sermon to people who became the first church in the New Testament. Peter continued to serve the King as a part of his church until he was crucified upside down. It was apparent that Peter believed that nothing would stand in the way of Christ building his church. Peter writes this letter to help the local church honor Christ in everyday life. Like the people Peter was writing to, we are prone to forget what Christ has called the church, his bride, to be. We are wise to often remember and reflect on the majesty of the bride of Christ.

The church belongs to Christ. He purchased the church with His own blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). He has shown her great mercy. Christ has elected his people and caused them to be born again (1 Peter 1:1-4). Jesus left heaven, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died a brutal death, was raised from the grave, and then ascended back to heaven. He did the heavy lifting. He did what no one else could do. He is and always will be the hero of the story. He is the chief shepherd who lovingly and sacrificially laid his life down for the wayward sheep (1 Peter 2:24-25). These wonderful realities should continually create a culture of humility in his church (1 Peter 5:6-7). The people that make up the church have done nothing to earn his love or fix themselves. He has shown them and continues to show them his great mercy. They are his.

The church is a people. Though building imagery is used in 1 Peter to describe the church, the church is always a people and never a building. They are people who love Jesus (1 Peter 1:8). They are a large family made up of broken people who have been redeemed by Jesus. 1 Peter 2:9-10 says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession...Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people..." This means that the Christian life cannot be done in isolation. We are intended to live in community with one another as a part of a local church in order to most effectively proclaim his excellencies to the world. When sin entered the world back in Genesis 3 it not only separated us from God, it separated us from one another. The beauty of the gospel is that we are reconciled back to God and to one another. Without the gospel we are not a people. Because of the gospel the church is now a beautifully, diverse people who are able to reflect the majesty of his glory to the watching world.

The church has a mission. Christ ransomed his church to be his people to live out his mission in the world. Peter spells out some parts of the mission the church is called and equipped to pursue. While Peter does not give us an exhaustive list of all the church is to do, the church's mission is certainly not anything less than all the apostle calls the church to in his letter. Peter tells us that the church is to proclaim the gospel to all people (1 Peter 2:9). The church carries out the mission when individuals each play their important roles well (1 Peter 2:5, 3:1-7, 4:10-11). The church is to be led by the chief Shepherd Jesus who calls qualified men to lead his church as elders (1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The church will suffer. Christ suffered for us and tells us to rejoice if we are able to share in his sufferings (1 Peter 4:12-13). The church is where people will grow into maturity (1 Peter 2:1-5). The church is to love earnestly (1 Peter 1:22-23, 3:8, 4:8). As Sho Baraka says, "Love ain't love unless it can be taken advantage of". The church is to pursue unity and humility (1 Peter 3:8, 5:5-7). The church is to pursue holiness. (1 Peter 1:14-16, 2:5,9)

By God's grace, may we be the church that Christ ransomed with his precious blood.

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAY GOSPEL

SERMON DATE: 8/24/2014 • 1 PETER 1:3-12

BY JOHN YASENCHOK

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Living Hope

One of my favorite holidays is Christmas. We remember how Jesus left his wonderful, heavenly kingdom to come down to Earth, live among us, and save his people from their sin. While that is the most important part of celebrating Christmas, another part that we all enjoy is opening presents on Christmas Day! What is the best gift you've ever received on Christmas morning? Why was it the best gift? Do you still have that gift?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-5

Peter tells us that Jesus gives us a gift too. But, instead of calling it a gift, he calls it an "inheritance." Our gift, or inheritance, is Jesus himself! Peter calls this gift that you and I receive from God a "living hope." Let's break that phrase into two parts. The word "living" means that we get the gift now. We get to enjoy Jesus every single day. But the second word is even better. The word "hope" means that there is a part of the gift that we get later. Peter tells us that God is keeping the gift in heaven, no one can take it away from us, and we get it when we go to be with Jesus. What is that? It's the gift of eternal life!

So, think back to those Christmas gifts. Many of the gifts you received on Christmas probably became boring, broke, dirty, lost, or even stolen! The truth is, that will happen to every single gift you receive on this Earth. You will be very excited, open your gift, enjoy it for a little while, then you will want something else new and exciting. Peter tells us that the gift Jesus gives us, the gift of eternal life, is "imperishable" (will never go away), "undefiled" (perfect and spotless), and "unfading" (never lose its freshness) and that God is keeping it in heaven for us. Nothing can happen to it.

Do you view Jesus' gift of eternal life as a "living hope – something you can enjoy right now and for eternity?"

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 1:3, Titus 3:5

Day 2

1 Peter 1:3-5, 2 Timothy 4:8

Day 3

1 Peter 1:6-7, James 1:2-4, Psalm 66:8-12

Day 4

1 Peter 1:8-9, John 20:29

Day 5

1 Peter 1:10-12, Matthew 13:16-17

2: Visible Trials, Invisible God, Inexpressible Joy

If you live on this Earth (which you do), you have experienced tough times. These could include homelessness, a loved one passing away, losing a job, being picked on at school, or feeling “left out” in certain situations. If we’re honest, at some point during these “trials,” we have asked God why he’s letting it happen. What trials have you experienced that caused you to ask why?

Jesus’ friend, Peter, has an answer to this question.

Read 1 Peter 1:6-9

Peter tells us that we should “rejoice” while we experience these trials. Why? Because God allows trials in our lives to test our faith bring us closer to him so that all the “glory and honor” will go to Jesus. Many would respond, “But, it’s just so hard to trust God during hard times! I know in my mind that he cares for me, but it’s difficult to remember that in my heart.” Peter reassures us that God is trustworthy. He says in verse 8, “Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him...”

Now, don’t be mistaken; this is all easier said than done. Peter definitely does not expect people to not be sad or even cry. In fact, he points out in verse 6 that people will be “grieved by various trials!” But Peter does promise that, when we put our trust in Jesus during our trials, our joy will be “inexpressible and filled with glory.” That is a strong statement! That means that putting our trust in Jesus during our trials will make us so happy, we will not even be able to put it in words. What a wonderful promise!

Take a moment to pray together, but don’t pray for God to not send you trials. Instead, pray that he would use them to make your faith stronger, and bring you closer to him forever. This attitude will bring you “inexpressible joy” and Jesus all the glory and honor that is due to him.

3: Blessed Are Our Eyes and Ears

Ask your family to name as many Old Testament prophets as they can off the top of their heads.

Point out that these men were very close to the Lord. Most of them were able to hear the audible voice of God. They devoted their lives to preaching God’s Word to thousands of people, many of them even died doing so. There have been very few people on this Earth closer to the Lord than them!

Next, ask your family to describe what angels are like. Point out that they are created beings who have lived in God's presence since eternity past. Again, not many have had the privilege of being that close to God for eternity!

Read 1 Peter 1:10-12, then read Matthew 13:16-17

Peter tells us that even the prophets and angels did not (and will never) have the privilege that we have as Christians! We have experienced the "good news" of the Gospel. We have experienced God's grace. This reality sets us apart from everyone, even those who interacted intimately with God here on Earth and in eternity past. Jesus says our eyes and ears are "blessed" now that they have seen and heard God's redemptive grace on the cross.

Spend some time praying that God would work in your family to open your eyes and ears to his truth.

ARTICLE THE REASON WE REJOICE

BY JOY LAPRADE

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.”

1 Peter 3:18 is an easy verse to miss. Coming as a transition between two longer passages, we could read it as a summary of basic gospel facts, nod our heads and move along.

But if we pass over this verse in search of something “more,” we can miss beautiful elements of the gospel that form the foundation of Peter’s letter and provide “living hope” (1 Peter 1:3) in our everyday.

“For Christ also suffered once for sins”

As our substitute on the cross, Christ experienced physical suffering and death. But more than this, he bore the sin of all his people as God poured out his wrath on him. This is propitiation. Christ took on or absorbed the wrath of God, making God “propitious,” or favorable, toward us.

God could not simply wipe away sin – that would be unjust. Rather, his wrath stored up through the ages (Romans 3:25), a force no created being could have endured, was directed against Jesus. Only Christ was able to bear God’s wrath to the end. It was finished.

“The righteous for the unrighteous”

God does more than simply forgive us and say we have no penalty to pay for sin. In such a morally neutral state, we could not approach a holy God. Only one who has lived a life of perfect obedience may do this. Only Christ has done this. In justification, God declares us not just free from sin, but also righteous in his sight. He imputes Christ’s obedience to us, which means he thinks of it as belonging to us. We are now “a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” (1 Peter 2:9)

“That he might bring us to God”

Through propitiation, God’s wrath against sin is removed. In justification, we are declared righteous to stand before a holy God, but adoption brings us into relationship with this God, allowing us to call him Father.

We were once “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3), but in adoption we are made members of God’s family, with its many privileges and blessings. (John 1:12)

Does it matter if we know these doctrines? It depends on what we believe makes the gospel good news.

Forgiveness from sin or eternal life in heaven are not the good news, but rather gifts through which we may know and enjoy their giver. Christ died to bring us to God.

In his book “God is the Gospel,” John Piper says 1 Peter 3:18 is Scripture’s clearest statement that the aim of all Christ accomplished is “summed up in the ultimate gift of God himself.”

“It is God himself who will satisfy our souls forever,” Piper says. “Everything else in the gospel is meant to display God’s glory and remove every obstacle in him (such as his wrath) and in us (such as our rebellion) so that we can enjoy him forever.”

In these doctrines we see him, and because of these doctrines we may see him.

Propitiation removes God’s wrath, so we are not consumed as we come to him. Justification allows us to stand in the presence of this holy King, and adoption makes him our Father.

And 1 Peter tells us not just that we will see God some day in the future, but that even now we see his glory in the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit in a way that transforms our daily lives.

Because of adoption, we can give our anxieties to our loving Father (1 Peter 5:7). Secure in our relationship with him, we are freed to love and serve one another as brothers and sisters (1 Peter 4:8-11).

Because of propitiation and justification, we can remember that God has no more wrath for our sin; that he sees us not as pardoned criminals who have avoided a death sentence, but perfect through Christ’s righteousness. Therefore, any trials we face are not punishment.

Instead, we can be confident our Father is working in them for good (1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-14). And this “good” is not an abstract concept, but is God’s revelation of himself to us, giving us “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6) and transforming us into his image.

In fact, because we are justified and adopted, it is not possible for God to act towards us in any way but love. In everything he is showing grace to us, revealing himself to us in glimpses of glory each day, so that we may “rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8) both now and forever.

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAY CALLING

SERMON DATE: 8/31/2014 • 1 PETER 1:13-21

BY KATHRYN STRANATHAN

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Been There, Done That

What awesome things have you done in your life? Maybe your family went to Disney World or camping in the Smokies or maybe you visited The Discovery Place. Maybe you even folded the laundry, today! But let me ask you another question: If I offered you a free ticket to Disney World, would you go even if you've already been there? Even though you may have camped in the Smokies before, would you do it again? Even though you already know a lot of things, will you go to another museum? And even though you folded the laundry today, will you do it next week, too?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-15

The author of this book, Peter, writes his letter a whole thirty years after being with Jesus. Don't you think Peter learned a lot when he was with Jesus? But just like you'd jump at the chance to go to Disney World again, Peter wants us to know that, even if you think you've experienced a lot, there's still so much more to learn. Yes, you folded the laundry today, but tomorrow you'll have to put away the dishes. Being holy isn't a one and done type thing; it's continuous. You might be tempted to say, "Mastered holiness? Been there, done that!" But God calls us to be humble and open to learning. Pray for His grace, guidance, and strength as you daily seek holiness.

2: Obsessed

Here is the definition of "obsess" from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: to haunt or excessively preoccupy the mind. That's not a very positive definition. What is something that you have "obsessed" over? Whether you obsess over how many good grades you have, how cute your outfit is, or how organized your desk is, being obsessed with things other than God is not a good thing. Being obsessed with the wrong things

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 1:13-14, Hebrews 12:1-2

Day 2

1 Peter 1:15-16, Romans 12:1-2

Day 3

1 Peter 1:17-21

Day 4

1 Peter 1:22-25, James 1:21-25

Day 5

Job 36:5-12

won't just irritate those around you, it will ruin the heart inside you. An obsession can be an idol.

Read 1 Peter 16-21

The Pharisees of the Gospels are an example of obsessed people. The Pharisees were obsessed with being holy. They were constantly finding rules that they might be breaking, such as not washing properly, working on the Sabbath, eating unclean food, and much, much more. The Pharisees' obsession came from a desire to make themselves right with God with their own righteousness. What the Pharisees failed to understand was that were unable to please God with lots of work and no faith. While we try our best to be holy, only God in his grace can truly purify us, and he will be gracious when we fall short. Unlike the Pharisees, we must trust God to be merciful through the cross of Jesus. Without this trust, we could become obsessed with an outward appearance of being holy without the holiness that is offered by trusting the finished work of Jesus.

3: Cinderella

A lot of people say life isn't a fairytale. Well have you ever heard the story of Cinderella? The young girl who was left in the house of her evil stepmother was motherless and fatherless, and she was treated like a slave. Life is kind of like "Cinderella". In life, Christians are fatherless until they find God and accept him as Savior, but we don't immediately get our happy ending. Jesus, the Prince, hasn't swooped in to save us yet. Though we look forward to a day when sin will be no more, we still struggle with sin in our own hearts and in the world around us. We desperately need hope and strength to wait faithfully. Some days, it feels nearly impossible, but Peter tells us something in his letter that can help.

Read 1 Peter 1:22-25

What is the last sentence of this passage?

Good news! Yes, life gets hard, but at the end of our marvelous, God-woven story, there is a happy ending! Based on this passage, what should you, as a Christian, do to remember this hope?

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAYWORD

SERMON DATE: 9/7/2014 • 1 PETER 1:22-25

BY DUSTIN BENTON

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Everyday Word in a World Looking for Love

What is love? Why do we love? If you ask these questions to 100 people, you will most likely get 100 different answers. Love has long been a mysterious word with many meanings. We can look at love as a desire, like a delicious ice cream cone on a hot day, or admiration of something, like your favorite sports team. It can be an emotion that we feel towards other people. The recent Disney movie, Frozen, is a perfect example of the love one sister has for another. Love is also defined by many people as an action, but this isn't a biblical idea. Love goes much deeper. Love for someone or something can motivate us to "do", however, love starts by understanding who we are. We are no longer of this world, but we are born into a new family, a family guided and rooted in God's word. Let's look at what Peter tells us about love in verse 22.

Read 1 Peter 1:22-23

To be sure, love can be described as an action, emotion, or even desire for someone or something. In a world where we are constantly challenged and told what love is, what it looks like and how we should "love", we are rarely, if at all, told why we should love, or even that we should love something that doesn't love us back. Peter is quick to remind us by his letter to the church that our love should be a reflection of the true faith that we have been given through the Gospel. We love because we have been born again and are loved by the author of love. It is only the word of God that creates an enduring life and love. We have been purified by the Gospel for love, so we love.

Do you love those that you know can't or won't love you? Knowing that our love is a reflection of our faith, what does your love for others tell you about your faith? What are ways that you can begin to grow in loving people from a pure heart?

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 1:22, Romans 12:9-21

Day 2

1 Peter 1:23, John 1:9-14

Day 3

1 Peter 1:24, Isaiah 40:6-8

Day 4

1 Peter 1:25, 1 John 2:7-14

Day 5

1 Peter 2:1-13, 2 Timothy 3:16

2: Everyday Word in a Changing World

Have you ever been to your grandparents house and found something there that was made a long time ago? The color and the style probably makes it look really old. We only have to look to a few years ago to remember the days when cameras were cameras and phones were phones. Or when you had to “be kind and rewind” your favorite movie before returning it to Blockbuster. The older you get, the quicker things seem to change as well. Trying to keep with the newest technology or the newest fashions is an uphill battle. That is because, by design, this world is passing away; it is changing and will continue to change until Jesus returns. However, there is an exception to this rule, and what an amazing exception it is!

Read 1 Peter 1:23-25

Peter is quick to remind us of the source of the love to which he called us. That source, the Gospel, is unchanging. When Peter quotes Isaiah, he is reminding the Christians of a time in the Old Testament when Israelites were slaves to Babylon and were struggling to believe God’s promises that he would deliver them and stay true to his promises. In the same way, Peter is reminding both the church under the Roman rule and us today that God’s promises, his word, and God himself does not change. In a world where we see change every day, we are often quick to trust in changing things, but the Gospel of grace is not a passing fad, not trendy, not temporary. The Gospel that Christians believe in has no expiration date!

In 1 Peter 1:23-25, we are reminded that the things of this world perish but God’s word is eternal. In what ways have you placed your hope in things that are temporary and perishable (i.e., power, success, status, relationship, money, etc.)? How can you build your life and hope on the indestructible truth of God’s word?

3: Everyday Word in a Bad News World

One doesn’t have to look far to find bad news. Turn on the tv, open an internet web page, tune into the local radio station and you will hear a constant stream of hard things happening in this world. Even within your home, bad news or disappointment sometimes comes about. We as sinners in a fallen world see things happen in which we do not have an answer, or we may not understand why things happen the way they do. As we read in 1 Peter 1:24, he used Isaiah’s words to remind us of our frailty. Ordinary human life is compared to grass. Those who are extraordinary, the particularly beautiful, talented, brilliant, gifted or powerful, etc., are compared to wildflowers. But at the end of the day, both perish.

“The grass withers and the flower falls.” This reality can be very overwhelming and really hard to take if that is all we understand. Praise God that he doesn’t leave us there! If we were to just read verse 24, we would be like so many that have no hope. But we do have hope!

Read 1 Peter 1:24-25

As we have already read about the unchanging and imperishable word by which we have been saved, Peter gives us a way to understand that our circumstance and situations are temporary—this is not our home. We are exiles on our way to our eternal home in heaven. The trials that the Lord allows help us not to become too comfortable here in this world. The Lord has arranged these trials to test and prove the genuineness of our faith and to wean us from loving this world so that our desire is for Jesus and our heavenly home.

How do you think trial and adversity can help us stop loving this world and instead to treasure Jesus and long for our heavenly home? Do you see the truth and beauty of the Gospel? Are you alive with the hope of the promises of God? What are some ways that you can remind yourself of the joy that has been given to you through Jesus?

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAYDISCIPLES

G O S P E L I D E N T I T Y

SERMON DATE: 9/21/2014 • 1 PETER 2

BY LENORA CRABTREE

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: The Dreaded “Sin List”

Have you ever hurt someone else - or wanted to? Have you ever told only part of the story? Have you ever pretended to be someone you are not to try to impress someone else? Have you ever felt jealous or said something bad about someone else?

Read 1 Peter 2:1

This verse is not fun to read! Several “sin lists” like this one can be found in the Bible. When we read a list of sins, we can be tempted to think that it’s only for really bad people—people who are in jail, or should be. But if you answered yes to any of the questions above, you have done one of the things this verse tells us not to do.

Look again at the first few words of 1 Peter 2:1. The word “so” or “therefore,” reminds us that we can only stop doing these things because of what we learned in 1 Peter 1. As children of grace, we have been given an incredible gift. Jesus’ death paid for our sins! As we accept that good news, God gives us a new heart and we want to live in a different way.

The next words of 1 Peter 2:1 are “put away.” If we are to stop hurting others, lying, trying to impress, and wanting what someone else has, how should we act instead?

Read Colossians 3:12-13

Let’s think of the bad things as dirty clothes, things we need to put away out of sight! This list tells us what to put on instead. I need to be kind to others, even my brothers and sisters, even when it’s hard. I should treat my family members and friends as more important than myself. I should be patient with people I like and with people I don’t like. I need to forgive, because God has forgiven me. Remember, we cannot do these things by trying hard. We can only live this way by allowing God to love others through us.

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 2:1; Ephesians 4:22-24, 31-32

Day 2

Colossians 3:8-5; Matthew 5:23-24

Day 3

1 Peter 2:2; Matthew 18:2-4; 1 Peter 1:23-25

Day 4

1 Peter 2:3; Psalms 100:5; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14

Day 5

Psalms 34:8; Nahum 1:7

Take time to pray together as a family. First, be silent and ask God to show each person anything that needs to be confessed. If you need, confess to one another any way you may have sinned against each other. Ask for forgiveness. (It may be best to do this individually at a later time.) Thank God for salvation and grace! Ask God to help you live out Ephesians 4:32. “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

2: It's OK to “Cry like a Baby”

Have you ever been around a baby that is hungry? If you have, you know that only one thing will make a hungry baby happy. You may have tried other things. Did you put a pacifier in the baby's mouth? A hungry baby will spit that pacifier out and cry harder. Did you try to give the baby a toy and get the same results? When babies are really hungry even cuddling and holding them won't help. When a baby is hungry, he only wants milk!

Read 1 Peter 2:2

Peter says we are to be like babies and want pure spiritual milk. That milk is the gospel, the Word of God. Is Peter saying that we are to scream, cry, and get red in the face if we don't get to read the Bible? No, he is saying that as Christians, the good news of the gospel is what we need more than anything else. Sometimes we think that other things are what we need. We may think that a new game or toy will change our lives! We may long to have a friendship or special relationship with another person and think that if that person likes me, then life will be great! Sometimes we think that a new house, a new school or a new job is the answer, but Peter reminds us to be like a baby and long for only one thing – the word of God.

Babies are actually much smarter than we think. Somehow they know that it is only milk that will help them grow. The pacifier, toy or even cuddling will not give the baby what it really needs. God gave the baby the ability to scream and cry until he gets what he needs to grow. The Holy Spirit has put in each person who trusts in Jesus the same longing. We will not have true joy without pure spiritual milk. We won't grow in our faith without feasting on the word of God!

3: Tasting the Goodness of the Lord

I love to taste things! Of all of the senses God gave us, I think tasting is the best. It is nice to look at something pretty, or hear a lovely song. But when I put something in my mouth and taste it - wow!

Read 1 Peter 2:3

Peter had tasted the goodness of the Lord.

How did Peter experience, or taste, God's goodness?

Read Matthew 26:69-75

While Jesus was on trial for his life, Peter told three different people that he didn't know Jesus at all. Peter denied knowing his best friend! Can you imagine how this hurt Jesus? Peter did all of the things he listed in 1 Peter 2:1. He hurt his friend, lied, and pretended to be someone he wasn't.

Read John 21:4-14

After Jesus died and rose from the dead, he came to the place that several of the disciples were fishing. He even fixed breakfast for them! How wonderful the fish must have tasted by the sea that morning. But the breakfast wasn't the best part.

Read John 21:15-17

After breakfast Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. He gave Peter three chances to say, "Yes, Lord! I love you!" What an incredible gift to Peter! After saying that he didn't know his best friend and Savior three times, Peter got to tell Jesus that he loved him three times. That's why Peter could write years later, "if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good." Peter had experienced the goodness of God's grace in a very special way.

At the place where many people believe Jesus cooked this wonderful breakfast there is a church, a garden, and a rocky beach. The church is built around a large rock upon which people believe Jesus served this special breakfast. People come from all over the world to see the rock, pray at the church and put their feet in the Sea of Galilee. Some of them have water from the sea poured on their head. Others walk into the sea and splash the water on their face! It is incredible to see the joy on their faces and know that they, too, "have tasted that the Lord is good." Regardless of who we are, where we live or what language we speak, Jesus offers us forgiveness, peace and a chance to truly taste that the Lord is good!

SERMONNOTES

ARTICLE GOSPEL IDENTITY

BY BRIAN LOWE

What disciples look like

Over the next four weeks, we will be taking an in-depth look at what a disciple looks like from 1 Peter 2. Who better among the New Testament writers to show us what a disciple looks like than one of the men who walked with Jesus for three years? So, I'm very excited about this opportunity for us to learn what a disciple looks like from this great letter.

Our Disciple Description will center on four things:

- **Gospel Identity** - A disciple has a new identity as a child of God rooted not in our performance or obedience, but in Jesus' work in our place for our sin.
- **Compelling Community** - Peter describes the church as a house of living stones built to worship God. A disciple is not an isolated stone set off in the yard as art. Rather, a disciple belongs with other living stones.
- **Redeemed Worship** - A disciple has been brought out of darkness not simply to enjoy the light, but to proclaim the excellencies of the one who rescued us. We were made and remade to worship.
- **Peculiar Mission** - A disciple lives as an alien and stranger in the world. Our lives are to be marked by our love for Jesus and His people.

Gospel Identity - vv. 1-3

Peter writes his letter to those who are "elect exiles" who have been "born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." We are "a people for God's own possession." Peter roots the disciple's gospel identity as one who has been saved and now belong to God as his prized, chosen possession. This is our identity.

Crucial to this issue of identity is that we understand that this gospel identity is not based on our performance for God, but on the performance of Jesus in our place for our sin. Peter tells us that "Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God." Our gospel identity is based neither on our performance nor our perspective, but on Jesus' work in our place for our sin.

Gospel Identity and Gospel Living

Again, the imperatives in the Bible are always grounded in indications. 1 Peter is no different. Our gospel identity motivates and empowers

gospel living. In our passage there are three imperatives that flow out of our gospel identity.

- **New Appetites** - As born again, children of God, we have been blessed with a taste of something glorious - the kindness of God. We have tasted his kindness in bringing us from death to life, unwanted to wanted, needing mercy to receiving mercy. We have tasted his goodness and we want more. A disciple's identity as a child of God who has tasted the kindness of God grants us a new appetite for this thing we have tasted. We know what kindness tastes like and we want more of the thing that brought us to life. Notice that this kindness is tasted in the word of God that has caused us to be born again. And, like a newborn baby, we long for this pure spiritual milk. Our Gospel Identity creates New Appetites. We want more and more of this goodness we have tasted.
- **New Expectations** - Peter then shows that our gospel identity should guide our expectations for our experience as a disciple. As we long for the milk of the word in the gospel, this same gospel that brought us to life will cause us to grow up into salvation. Don't miss this. The same gospel that brings us to life makes us grow up. We never outgrow the gospel. As a disciple, we have an expectation that we will grow in our salvation.
- **New Obedience** - The commands of the Bible are always grounded in the gospel truths of the Bible. What we are to do is always based on what God has done for us in Christ. Our gospel identity as a born again, prized possession of the King has implications that we will do what the King says. Not so that we can be a child of the King, but because we already are (and forever will be). So, the call to "put away" what doesn't resemble our King is a call to gospel obedience *from* identity, not *for* identity.

A disciple has a gospel identity because of the work of Jesus. Our gospel identity prompts gospel living with new appetites, expectations, and obedience. If you have further questions about what it means to be a disciple or about how to better understand your gospel identity, please speak with your community group leader or one of the pastors.

EVERYDAYDISCIPLES

COMPELLING COMMUNITY

SERMON DATE: 9/28/2014 • 1 PETER 2:4-8

BY VALERIE STRANATHAN

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Made for Community

Think about the last time you went to a restaurant. Did you see many people sitting alone? How about the movies? Were people sitting alone there or were they sitting in groups? Do you play a sport? If you do, it's probably one where you play on a team rather than one that you play by yourself. The point is, it's more fun and natural to do things in a group than it is to do them alone.

But why do we choose to do things together?

Read Romans 1:11-12

Paul wrote this sentence in a letter to a group of Christians in Rome. Paul had never been to Rome and he'd never met these Christians, yet he still says he really, really wanted to go see them. He wanted to give them a spiritual gift, something that would help their faith to grow and he wanted to just see them, to be with them. He knew that together they could help each other to have a bigger faith.

But wait! Paul was kind of like a super Christian. He already had a HUGE faith! Why did he need people he didn't even know? How could they help Paul to have a bigger faith? Paul was wise enough to know that people are made to be together.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

These verses show lots of ways that people can help each other and they show how it's much better than trying to do everything alone. Just like Paul, we need other people to encourage us and help our faith to grow. Did you know there are actually three parts to our one God? God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, so even God lives in community!

Who helps you and encourages you to grow a bigger faith? Who can you help?

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 1:1, James 1:1

Day 2

Hebrews 12:24, Romans 8:29

Day 3

Hebrews 7:25, Isaiah 61:1

Day 4

1 Peter 1:2, Acts :23

Day 5

Romans 11:2, 1 Peter 5:14

2: The Building Blocks of Community

(You can choose to act this out with any kind of building set you have or you can just talk about it.)

Pretend you have one lego building block. Even if it's the coolest lego you've ever seen, there's just not much you do with only one lego. Basically all it's good for is making your parents yell when they step on it in the dark. It would be much more awesome to have a whole set of legos - big blocks and small ones, blocks with wings and blocks with wheels, blocks that look like flames and blocks that have eyes. With all those different blocks, you could put them together and build something amazing!

The church is like that. No, not the church building, though that is a structure made with lots of different parts. A church is all the people who meet together to worship God.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-22, 24-27.

Paul is explaining to the church at Corinth how the church is made up of many different types of people who all have different ideas and skills. Each different kind of person serves a different purpose. If everyone wanted to play the guitar, then who would preach? If everyone taught a children's class, then who would help you cross the street? We can't all do the same job and thankfully, we don't all want to, but sometimes it's easy to think of some jobs as more important than others. It looks fun to play the drums on stage, but it's just as important to be the person who opens the door and says "Welcome to Exodus!" Our church needs everyone doing what they do best because that helps us to serve God best.

What ways can you serve God at Exodus Church? What can you do to make sure everyone feels important at church?

3: The Cornerstone of Community

Have you ever played Jenga? It's a pretty fun game where you have a tall tower of blocks and everyone takes turns carefully removing a block until the whole tower falls down. It always amazes me how many blocks you can take out and keep the tower still standing! But eventually, someone tries to pull out a really important block and the whole thing comes tumbling down.

This week, we've talked about how people are like blocks that build our church. We're all different, but equally important, and we all need each other for our church to be strong and grow. But there is one special block that really is more important than all the others. It's called the cornerstone and it's the one block that if you tried to take it out, the whole

church would come tumbling down. If all our blocks are people, can you think of who would be the cornerstone? It's Jesus!

Read 1 Peter 2:6-7

Jesus is the very most important block. Without him, we wouldn't have even built a church. Jesus has to come first and he has to stay. If we ever tried to take Jesus out, our whole church would come tumbling down just like the Jenga tower.

But that's silly, you say. How can we forget Jesus at a church? If we start doing what we want instead of what the Bible tells us Jesus wants, then we will have forgotten Jesus. And trust me, things would not go well for our church if we did that!

How can you make sure you don't forget Jesus?

ARTICLE COMPELLING COMMUNITY

BY NATHAN CHAPMAN

Depending on your history, your reaction to the promise of the Gospel to make us a “people”, a “race” and a “nation” in 1 Peter 2:9-10 may range from skepticism, to something easily assumed. The relational connections that we have experienced over our lives can sometimes make us disillusioned, sometimes naively hopeful, or sometimes both. Whatever your experience is, one identifying trait for all disciples is that we belong to a community. God’s intention in redemption was never to have individuals belonging to him without belonging to one another. Disciples not only belong to God but to the people God has ransomed for himself. We are no longer identified by preferences or backgrounds but by His work in and through our lives. The story of how disciples belong to compelling gospel shaped community follows the narrative of the Gospel.

Creation

Starting with Creation, we were not made to be alone. When God created Adam and Eve he created them to reflect His trinitarian Glory. God who has always lived in perfect communion with himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, created us to display this beauty in our relationships to one another. In fact in the beginning when God created Adam, the only critique God made of his creation was that it wasn’t good for Adam to be alone. The race of humanity was created with a God glorifying desire to connect. Everywhere all over the world people as a whole survive and thrive within communities. People groups with as much diversity and similarities as you can imagine cover the world.

Sin Divides

There is nothing in our experience that has not be tainted by the stain of sin. Once sin entered the world there was shame, hiding, and blame that destroyed what God had intended for our relationships with him and one another. The disparity of Adam and Eve’s experience with God and with one another before and after sin had to be devastating. We still feel the affects of this sin in our current relationships. Sometimes understanding one another and even working together towards a common goal can seem impossible. It doesn’t take long to feel disillusioned with even the most trusted friend. There is also hope. During the day to day interactions there are signs along the way that are hopeful. There are clues that our connections to one another have some weight of glory attached to them. These moments point us towards God’s intention and design and his plans to make all things new.

Redemption

Part of what we learn in 1 Peter is that God is making a people. Through Christ, we are both reconciled to God and to one another. We were once just individuals, no shared experience of God's mercy, or shared purpose to declare God's excellence. Because of the cross that is no longer the case. Christ's work on the cross accomplished more than our right standing with God. The Holy Spirit is working to reconcile us, by God's grace, to one another. The communion of saints with one another is being formed and reformed by the message and power of the Gospel.

All things New

As we have windows into what the gospel lived out in community can be like, our thirst for these rich relationships will only be more acute. There is a reason it is hard to close a good conversation or end a night shared with friends, or wrap up working on a project with a friend. We were made for those things. We long for them because we are being transformed for a coming kingdom where all things will be made new. For those in Christ, there will be a day when our joy in these things will be complete. Our communion with one another will be ultimately redeemed. There will no longer be sin to hinder our understanding of one another. Until that day, we will pursue community with one another, so that the transition is as seamless as possible.

It is hard sometimes to remember that the gospel is not just ideas that we can learn and put away. The truth of the gospel is the only remedy for sin's effects. By God's grace we are reconciled to him and to one another. The redeemed are now part of a company, a nation, a people. The Gospel is proclaimed in our relationships to one another as we connect, acknowledge sin, and forgive as we have been forgiven. Disciples pursue life with Jesus alongside all of the redeemed. Our relationships are not yet what they will be, but as the Spirit changes us more and more into his likeness, Our community is dynamic beautiful and compelling.

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAYDISCIPLES

W O R S H I P

SERMON DATE: 10/5/2014 • 1 PETER 2

BY JULIE CROSHAW

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Worship - A Living Sacrifice

Pray: Ask God to teach you about worship.

Read 1 Peter 2:5, Philippians 4:18, and Ephesians 5:2

Think: Christians are compared to stones connected both to each other and to Christ to build a holy structure, like a temple or altar. This imagery is tied to Old Testament passages where God-fearing people worshipped by offering sacrifices. Often times, God was pleased by the fragrant aroma of those burning sacrifices. Sometimes, he was not. As living sacrifices, our actions and words rise up to Christ in the same way smoke would rise from a burnt offering.

Worship: For this week's devotions, we are going to create a structure made of "stones" with "rising smoke" to help us visualize "worship."

- First, decide what you are going to use for your "stones." Big families might choose one "stone" per person, while others might choose stones to represent different aspects of life. You may use actual stones with names written on them and placed in a stack near an unused wall. You could draw stones on a poster to put on a wall. Or, each member might choose an item to represent his or her life, and stack these items in a pile. Whatever you use for your "stones," do not forget to have a "stone" to represent Christ as your Cornerstone!
- Next, decide what you are going to use for your "smoke." You can use post-it notes or a posterboard to write words on the wall above your "stone" structure. Have each member write phrases to express feelings held for Christ. Since being thankful is just one aspect of worship, work together to think of phrases to praise God's name and character as well as expressing thanksgiving.

Share or journal: Reflect on your creation. What does it reveal about worship?

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 2:1-5; Psalm 144

Day 2

1 Peter 2:6-8; Psalm 145

Day 3

1 Peter 2:9-12; Psalm 146

Day 4

1 Peter 2:13-17; Psalm 147

Day 5

1 Peter 2:18-25; Psalm 148

Worship: Spend time reading the worship phrases out loud in a closing prayer.

2: Worship - Powerful Words

Pray: Ask God to help us pour out our hearts to him in worship.

Read: 1 Peter 2:9

Think: Many of us have sweet memories of our grandparents, which grow sweeter with each passing year. I know I do! Several years ago, my grandmother, Vera Christine, passed away, and I sure do miss her sweet smile. I can still remember her saying, "Love you...bless you." Those four little words seem so small and insignificant on paper. What makes them so huge and powerful in my heart and mind is the love that was in her eyes when she spoke them over me so many times. When she said those words to me, she communicated the volumes in her heart which had been written throughout fifty years of praying over my mother, my family, and me.

Share or journal: Tell about one of your favorite people, be it a grandparent, teacher, best friend, or child. How does it make you feel for them to tell you how special you are to them? Imagine how God feels when his beloved children worship him.

Think: Later in life, when my grandmother was in a lot of pain because of the cancer that was overtaking her life, often she could barely speak. But, because of Christ's love in her heart, tender words of blessing from an immortal soul continued to squeak out of her failing mortal frame. Amazingly, through God's grace even through painful times in our lives, our spirit can rejoice in life-giving worship to him.

Read Acts 16:23-25

Share or journal: Recount or imagine painful situations through which Christians learn to praise. How would praising God affect the person in pain as well as others involved?

Worship: Read Psalm 149-150 aloud. Add words of praise to your worship creation from yesterday. Reread the phrases again, this time concentrate on expressing words to Christ from a heart of love. You may want to kneel or close your eyes to shut out the world around you and imagine being in his presence as you speak lovingly to him.

3: Worship - Genuine Hearts

Pray: Ask God to help us see the true motives of our hearts the way he does.

Read James 3:9-12

Think: Words are strange. Recently, I sneezed, and someone said, “Bless you!” However, he meant something quite different from my grandmother’s, “Bless you.” He meant, “Lady, get your germs away from me!” And, we have all heard people say, “Bless your heart,” when they really mean, “Ain’t nobody got time for that!” When we worship, we use words, but God hears our heart. Sometimes, we say the right words, but our hearts are far from him. Other times, we say things we know we should not.

Share or journal: Here is a tough challenge. Write something you have said or done recently you know you should not have. You can write in “code” if you like. Place these on the wall with the words of praise from the last two devotionals. Notice how the words on the wall now show a mixed message. Notice how those words and actions drift up to the Father from the entire body of Christ, not just one person’s isolated life. Discuss how our mixed messages affect God’s heart. What can be done about this?

Read Micah 7:18-19, Ephesians 1:7 and Hebrews 9:11-14

Worship: The blood of Jesus covers all our sin! Use something red (crayon, marker, paper, etc.) to cover those confessions of sin you just wrote in the “smoke” rising from your altar. Say or pray words of thanks as you do.

Think: The psalms are much like hymns and praise songs we sing today. They help us come together to express worship corporately. While we know God enjoys the worship of individuals, he is uniquely pleased when his people come together as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession” to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called (us) out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (paraphrased from I Peter 2:9)

Worship: Read Psalm 144 aloud and think about how precious it would be for God to hear them spoken from the genuine hearts of his people who are living their lives totally devoted to him together in unity.

ARTICLE THE DISCIPLE'S WORSHIP

BY NATHAN CHAPMAN

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matthew 13:44 ESV)

All of us are constantly worshipping something. Each day we make hundreds of decisions that are determined by what we value. Even in this moment there are things competing for your time and attention and ultimately your worship. You are likely aware of some of the values that have shaped the direction of your life leading up to this point. Those values determine many things in your life. God is about the business of gathering worshipers of himself. For those who know him, there is a growing awareness that God's kingdom and his lordship is of utmost importance. We are like the man who has found the hidden treasure (Matthew 13:44.) Disciples are people who have discovered that knowing God is the most valuable treasure that they can possess in this life. God calls us to value himself supremely. That means more than any other thing in our lives.

Scattered

Because worship is not a particular action, but all of life, Disciples seek to make their lives about valuing God supremely. We worship God both during our times together and times scattered in our workplaces, our homes and all over the world. Every moment of our lives is an opportunity to ascribe worth to our Creator.

Gathered

The reality that we are always worshipping makes the times that we join our worship together into a gathering that much sweeter. Our gatherings are opportunities to praise in community the truths that unite us. Disciples gather to celebrate our creator, confess our sin, revel in our redemption and hope for our glorious future. When we make a corporate confession that God is Lord and savior and worthy of our praise. We complete the joy that we have in those realities.

There are several values of the time we spend worshipping together. Hopefully if you have been part of Exodus Church you would be able to notice these values in our gatherings.

- We want to make much of the Lord during our gathered time. That means that the preaching, singing, and readings will stir our affections and attention towards our God.

- We want the Gospel to be central. Everything from the order that we place songs in to how we proclaim God's word is connected to the narrative of the Gospel message. We weekly acknowledge: that God is creator and sovereign, that we are all sinners, that Christ has accomplished the work needed for our salvation, and that we are looking forward to complete restoration when all things will be made new.
- We hope to be connected both to timeless and timely music. We will sing songs that have been sung for generations and songs that are recently written.
- We hope to be excellent in everything we do to exalt our great God.

Our worship services are not about individuality but about a corporate celebration of shared redemption and truth. We join our hearts in songs, prayers, and listening as we gather our lives together in one room to value Christ supremely.

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAYDISCIPLES

ALIENS AND STRANGERS

SERMON DATE: 10/12/2014 • 1 PETER 2

BY ALEX POOLE

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Exiles in a hostile world

Read 1 Peter 9-12

Imagine you woke up in the morning and you were not in your bed. You were laying in a strange bed, in a strange room that you were sure must be in a strange house. There are different sounds all around you, none of them comforting or familiar. Would you be scared? Who would you try to find? Who would you want to have with you?

This strange house you find yourself in is in a faraway place where very few people speak the same language. The people of this strange place think the way you do things is silly. They do not think it's important to love or serve others. Everyone here just does whatever makes them happy. Being happy is good, right? You might find this new way of life attractive. It would be *very* hard to remember how you're supposed to act.

As followers of Christ, we find ourselves in this situation every day. We wake up each day and come in contact with people who do not share our beliefs. We have friends and family members in this world that do not believe it's important to obey God's laws. This makes it hard for us to continue to make the right decisions. But there is hope! When we accept the salvation that God offers us, we are changed inside. We no longer believe it is okay to be selfish or unkind. We believe that we should follow God's laws. Through the grace of God and the blood of Christ we are clean in God's eyes! This gives us the freedom to strive towards living a Christ-like life full of love and compassion, keeping the commandments, without worrying that God will leave us if we fail. When we live this kind of life, it is glorifying to God, and that is why we are here! We must set ourselves apart in the way we live our lives.

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 9-12; 1 Peter 3:13-17;
Galatians 5:22-26

Day 2

Titus 2:8; Matthew 5:14-16;
Philippians 2:14-16

Day 3

2 Corinthians 8:21; Leviticus
25:23; James 4:13-17

Day 4

Romans 13:14; 1 Peter 5:8-9;
James 4:1-3

Day 5

John 15:8-12; Revelation 4:11;
John 1:6-13

Think about how living a radically different life than those around you could help spread the gospel. Spend some time in prayer.

2: We are not alone

Though we are aliens in a hostile world, we are not alone. As followers of Christ, we look to God for our salvation. God, in his endless love, responds to our faith and repentance by adopting us into his family. We have each other and we have our heavenly Father!

Read John 1:6-13

What do you think it means to be part of a family? What do family members do for each other?

Read Matthew 18:21-22

In addition to forgiving and loving each other, we should support each other and honor each other. Answer aloud whichever questions below are appropriate for your family.

How can you honor your siblings?

What is honoring to your parents?

Husbands and wives, how can you honor each other?

What about the other people in our community group and church? How can we show honor in the family of God?

We should also be looking for ways to help each other through hard times as children of God. God loves us so much that he sent his only son to die for our sins. Christ was raised again and we are now brothers and sisters in him! As a people, we should choose to support each other through hard times in order to war against sin in our lives for the glory of God.

Read 1 Peter 5:8-9

Take some time to confess sin and pray together.

3: “Timeout” Exile

We’ve all been put in “timeout”. Even adults can remember it happening, or at least we know we deserved it a time or two. Have you ever seen anyone put in timeout forever? No!

What about a timeout during a soccer game? Ever called, “TIME-OUT!”? Did that timeout last forever with the game over and no more to look forward to? No! Timeouts are temporary; they don’t last forever. Our exile in this hostile world is only temporary. As believers, the promise of

an eternity in the presence of a loving God is REAL! We must live this life to the fullest, knowing that truth.

Read James 4:13-17

We are only a mist that vanishes. While we are here, living on this earth together, we should seek to glorify God by working for his glory, making this choice all day, every day can be hard. What is a daily struggle for you?

Read Luke 12:25-34

We must view this world with an eternal perspective. We must focus on eternal things: God, people, and scripture. We are sojourners in a hostile world. We must stand strong together, obey God's law, accept his grace, and look forward with excitement to one day entering the kingdom of heaven.

Spend some time in prayer being thankful for the grace of God, salvation from this hostile world, and the promise of eternal life.

ARTICLE DISCIPLES HAVE A PECULIAR MISSION

BY DAVID KEEN

A disciple's identity is firmly rooted in Christ. Disciples are not just redeemed by Christ, they are also called into a new community with other believers where they worship God and live out a peculiar mission throughout everyday life. In 1 Peter 2:11-12 we see three things about our call to this peculiar mission.

This ain't home

I remember the first time I saw someone from the north come to the south and eat grits. I love salt, but even I thought that was way too much salt. Then I realized that wasn't salt at all. It was sugar. They had just destroyed those perfectly fine grits by trying to make them cream of wheat (whatever that is). I was able to forgive them because I realized that where we are from determines what we do. Peter reminds the believer of this. For the believer, we are citizens of heaven. This changes everything about who we are and what we do. This world is not our home. The NIV says that we are "aliens and strangers" here. As Christians we always work out of our identity, not for our identity. By remembering that we are beloved by God in Christ and that this world is no longer our home we are able to abstain from the passion of the flesh.

Fight the flesh

Even though we have a new home and a new identity, it can be tempting to want to fall back into our old way of life. In fact, Peter says that our flesh wages war against our souls. There is a war raging between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17). The flesh wants cream of wheat. The Spirit desires perfectly salted cheese grits. The way we fight this battle is by continuing to enjoy the wonderful cheese grits until the cream of wheat begins to be less and less appealing. Then, one day we won't believe that we were ever able to actually enjoy the cream of wheat. The believer has "tasted that the Lord is good". We wage war to "abstain from the passions of the flesh" by continuing to daily feast on His goodness. We can win the battle over our flesh because Christ has already won the war. We can walk in the certainty of His finished work. We are called to live lives that are utterly different, out of this world, and compelling. We are called to stop pursuing all the pleasures of this world because we have found the ultimate source of joy and pleasure in Christ. When we do this, our conduct will be honorable.

Honorable Conduct

Peter tells us to keep our conduct among the Gentiles honorable. Honor is not a word that we use everyday in our culture so we sometimes forget the weight of what it means. As R.C. Sproul says, "Honor goes beyond respect; to honor is to bend over backwards to show respect for other people." To have honorable conduct carries the idea that even when (not if) people speak evil of us, our actions will prove them wrong. It is the idea that our actions would be so utterly different and compelling that others would want to bring honor and glory to the God we serve and represent. It's important to note that we are to live in a way that those outside the faith see us. We are here as sojourners and exiles to "proclaim the excellencies" of God to the world, not to retreat and hide out in our safe houses. Like Jesus, we are to take the gospel into this world in order to invite people to experience the love of God that is out of this world.

I love what Lecrae says in the first verse of his song "Aliens" that is based on this passage in 1 Peter...

*Aliens! New Creations, new free agents, ain't signed to sin
What the world do, we don't do
Cause we wanna do what the Lord does; Christ within our system
Listen our mission's the Great Commission, we come here to represent
Him
That's why we call ourself Christians, Ha, Let me spit another line
For the Plumbline and the Frontline one time on the front lines
keep holdin' it down for all the pilgrims
All over the world representing for the bloodline*

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAY EMPLOYEES

SERMON DATE: 10/19/2014 • 1 PETER 2:13-25

BY JOEL BOYCE

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: A Subject: All Day, Everyday

The word “subject” can mean a couple different things. A subject can be a discipline that you master in school. A subject line tells us what an email correspondence might be about. A subject can also be a person who is under someone else’s authority, or control. We are all subjects of someone or something. Children are subjects of their parents. Workers are subjects of the people who own the company they work for. The subjects of a king and queen are those who live in the kingdom they rule over.

Often, we do not like being under somebody else’s authority. We want to make our own rules and do our own thing. We want to tell other people what to do, but we do not want to listen to other people tell us what to do. This is especially true when we don’t like who is telling us what to do or what we are being told to do.

Read 1 Peter 2:13-15

Remember the story of Jesus praying in the garden on the night he was arrested (see Mark 14:32-42)? Jesus knows that the time for him to die is quickly approaching. Jesus prays three times that God would allow him to not die. However, there was no backup plan. Now, Jesus could have chosen to be disobedient. He could have run away from the soldiers that came to arrest him, but he did not. While on the cross, he could have called down an army of angels to save him, but he did not. He was the perfect subject to God’s authority and we are to follow his example. Even when we do not like what we are being told to do, we are to subject ourselves to those who are in authority over us. Every single day.

Are there times when you do not want to be the subject of those who have authority over you? How can you follow Jesus’ example and submit, even when you do not want to?

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 2:13-15, Romans 13:1

Day 2

1 Peter 2:16-17, Galatians 5:13

Day 3

1 Peter 2:18-19, Colossians 3:23-24

Day 4

1 Peter 2:20-21, Ephesians 5:1-2

Day 5

1 Peter 2:22-25, Isaiah 53: 3-10

2: Work for the Lord Everyday**Read 1 Peter 2:16-21, Colossians 3:23-24**

When Adam and Eve lived in the garden, God gave them the job of caring for plants, animals, and one another. He also gave them responsibility to oversee creation, but then sin entered the picture and changed everything. Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, work was made difficult. We read about this in Genesis 3:17-19. Because of sin, people would think of themselves as greater than God. They would complain about how hard work was. People would think mostly about themselves and believe that they should be in charge rather than God. With one act of disobedience, all of creation would move from being obedient subjects of King Jesus to wanting to be the king of their own lives.

Work provides a great picture of the far-reaching effects of sin. Children always know better than their parents. Employees always know better than their bosses. Business owners always know better than the government. Presidents always know more than everybody else. Everybody tends to get worn out and lazy at times because work is so difficult. This is because we want to be in control. We all want our own desires to come true. We are all prone to complaining because we are all in need of Jesus.

Jesus, however, has set us free from complaining. Jesus has set us free from needing to be in charge. When we become followers of Jesus, we see that we have no reason to complain. We were in need of a Savior and he saved us. When we understand what Christ has done for us, we are able to recognize that he is and always has been in control of everything. The same God who set the planets into motion, called plants up from dry ground, and created people from dust, loves us and is in control of every aspect of our life. Because we know he is in control of every aspect of our lives, we can submit to our parents, bosses, and government. Because he made us and paid a great price for us, we should work at everything as if we are doing it for the Lord.

3: Suffer Well Everyday**Read 1 Peter 2:22-25, Romans 8:35**

When was the last time you were disappointed because something did not go exactly as you would have wanted? Have you ever had something terrible happen that made you really sad or upset? Maybe you have had a grandparent die or you lost your job unexpectedly. Because we live in a world full of sin, we must learn how to deal with disappointment and sadness. Many times we have a hard time being a good subject of King

Jesus when things are not going well. I know I do, at least. I want to get mad and try to figure things out without the help of Jesus.

I own my own business, and things have been difficult lately. We have not made the amount of money we expected to, and we have lost far more money than we expected. Sometimes I think about how easy it would be to operate my business for my own gain, unethically. I get mad at God for bringing my family to a brand new city, having to work a lot of hours, and not receiving the paycheck I think I deserve. Sometimes work seems overwhelming, but the Bible speaks to this.

When things do not go exactly as we would have hoped, we are to suffer well. When we are disappointed, we are to trust Jesus and act as he acted. We are able to do this because Jesus suffered and died without complaining, getting angry, or fighting back. He lived a perfect life and he did not deserve to die, but he knew he had to. His blood has prevented us from having to die for our many wrongdoings. So, when things go terribly wrong, we can trust Jesus and believe that he still cares about us. When he faced a cruel death, he remained an obedient subject, even though it was not deserved. Therefore, we should rejoice and stand firm in times of trial. Nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus.

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAYWOMEN

SERMON DATE: 10/26/2014 • 1 PETER 3:1-6

BY LEAH AMMONS

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Godly Living for Girls (and Boys, too!)

Because of God's amazing salvation, we are free to live lives that reflect godliness. Christ died and was resurrected that "we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24). Jesus gives us real, abundant life so that our lives will shine before others and give glory to God. If we belong to God, then our lives are going to look different.

Read Proverbs 31:10-31

This passage describes the ideal or 'perfect' wife—an excellent woman. It is also an acrostic poem in which the first letter of each line begins with subsequent letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

With your family, use the following passages along with Proverbs 31:10-31 (feel free to use the entirety of Scripture) to craft your own alphabet acrostic (partial) showing what godly conduct looks like for girls (and boys, too). For example, for "A" you might put "Authority: submits to authority" from 1 Peter 3:1-5; for the letter "G" you might put "Gives generously" from Proverbs 31:20; for "I" you might write "Is self-controlled" from Titus 2:5.

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 3:1-2; 1 Corinthians 7:16; Matthew 5:15-16

Day 2

1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Samuel 16:7

Day 3

1 Peter 3:5-6; Proverbs 3:25-27

Day 4

Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:16-18

Day 5

Proverbs 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5

1 Peter 3:1-6

Colossians 3:12-17

Galatians 5: 22-23

Titus 2: 3-8

1 Timothy 2: 9-10

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
M

2: Beauty...comes from the inside out

Which is more beautiful: the sun coming up over snow-capped mountains or the sun setting over the bluest ocean? Most would say that would be a matter of opinion. As a matter of fact, however, God created both the mountains and the oceans. It's safe to say he doesn't just know a thing or two about beauty—he knows *everything* about what is beautiful! From the Grand Canyon to fields of brightly colored flowers, all the beauty the earth contains was created by God. With such a keen eye (and creative hand) for beauty, what is it that God finds truly beautiful?

1 Peter 3:4 reads, “**the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.**” From this verse, we see that in God's eyes, our beauty should start on the inside—“a gentle and quiet spirit.” How do we make ourselves beautiful on the inside? Are we born with it? In a word, no. The next verse gives us a clue.

“**For this is how the holy women *who hoped in God* used to adorn themselves...**” (1 Peter 3:5, emphasis added)

Hope in God changes us from the inside out! “A Christian woman does not put her hope in her husband, or in getting a husband. She does not put her hope in her looks. She puts her hope in the promises of God”

(John Piper). Hoping in God helped women of faith submit to their own husbands (even ones who weren't Christians) and live fearlessly. Hoping in God gentles and quiets our spirits making us beautiful from the inside out.

With your family, write down some of the promises of God contained in the following passages. Encourage your children to think on these things—to put their hope in God.

Psalm 46:1	Deuteronomy 31:8	Isaiah 41:10	1 John 1:9	Romans 8:38-39
	<i>Ex: -God will not leave you</i>			

3: Under Authority

Imagine playing a game of “Simon Says” when several different people are trying to be “Simon” and calling out instructions. It wouldn't work very well, and it wouldn't be a very fun game, would it? Everything works better when there is order. God created order in our world and our relationships for our benefit. Many times we call this order “authority.” “Being under authority” means to “submit” or to have “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden” (Thayer’s definition of the Greek). 1 Peter mentions “being subject to authority” several times. He is reminding us about being under authority and the proper order that God intends for us to follow.

- Authority of the Government (1 Peter 2:13-15)
- Authority of Bosses or supervisors (servants to masters) (1 Peter 2:18)
- Authority of Husbands/Fathers (wives to husbands) 1 Peter 3:1
- Authority of Elders (younger to older) (1 Peter 5:5)

It’s not easy being under authority, mostly because it is in our nature to want our own way and to want to be in charge. But when we admit

that God is the BIGGEST authority, and that he is in charge, he begins to transform us.

Read Titus 3:1-8

“when the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us” (Titus 3:4-5). Because he saves us, we love him, and want to please him. **“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work”** (Titus 3:1).

Why should we have an attitude that willingly submits to authority?

- We have been saved by God and love him (Titus 3:4-5)
- Jesus did (Philippians 2:3-8)
- All authorities were placed there by God, so he is ultimately in charge (Romans 13:1)
- It is God’s will that our attitude to authority points to Him (1 Peter 3:1-2; 2:18)

Discuss:

- Who are your authorities? [ex: parents, teachers, coaches]
- What does it look like to be subject to them?

ARTICLE BIBLICAL FEMININITY

BY ALEX KNEEN

In the beginning, we read in Genesis, the earth was formless and empty. Then God began the work of shaping and filling. He separated light from dark, day from night, the heavens above from the earth below, the waters from the dry land, and all living things he made distinct, each to bear fruit or offspring after its own kind. Then he made man, both male and female, creating a distinct boundary so that men are not women, nor are women men. Thankfully, we do not live in a world where dark and light intermingle, or where the seas arbitrarily switch places with land. We can expect a cow to be a cow for all of its life and not give birth to baby alligators. Without these distinctions, the resulting confusion would not reflect a God who is three in one, where each member is distinct, but completely unified.

Beautifully and mysteriously separated into male and female, we reflect our Creator so that we might have some understanding of who he is. I am not certain I can define biblical femininity as an essence apart from physiology, psychology, or roles to which women are called, but I offer a definition given by John Piper in the book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*:

*At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships. (pg. 37)**

I think Piper's definition helps paint a very tangible picture of biblical femininity. For this article, however, I will focus on the passage in 1 Peter 3:1-6. Peter tells us two things about biblical femininity: first, a godly woman is submissive to proper authority, and second, a godly woman has a gentle and quiet spirit. This statement often appears backward and enslaving to contemporary cultures. However, this does not define biblical femininity. Neither Piper nor Peter suggest this. Rather, biblical femininity is characterized most importantly by a gentle and quiet spirit. The soul of a woman who has set her hope on God is unshakeable. No matter her circumstances, whether she lives with an unbelieving husband, whether she is experiencing great persecution, she rests. In the face of unfairness or even sin against her, her spirit is gentle. To say it another way, she is not harsh. Also, in the midst of confusion or unfairness, her spirit is quiet. The opposite suggests a soul in tumult. In turn, her outward behavior reflects this. Peter illustrates this further by saying that godly women do not fear anything that is frightening. Notice that he does not say, "Do not fear

anything that shouldn't be frightening." He encourages women to exhibit real rest in the face of real fear.

There are three things Peter says about this gentle and quiet spirit. First, he describes it as eternally beautiful. This beauty never fades and only increases as time and circumstances continue to prove a woman's faith in her Creator. This beauty manifests itself within the endless diversity of personality that God has fashioned in each woman. Just as God set boundaries between one thing and another, he also created diversity within and across those boundaries. Whatever a godly woman wears, whatever her actions, whatever her personality, such expressions are rooted in a spirit firmly rested upon God.

Secondly, it is precious to God. Personally, thinking of something as being treasured by God incites a deep desire to possess whatever it is! However, this gentle and quiet spirit may not be a treasured thing of beauty to anyone else but him.

Lastly, remember that biblical femininity is impossible to achieve. It is not a work of any woman's effort that she should boast, any more than she could boast in her salvation. It is the work of the Spirit alone. Godly women rejoice and rest in the fact that Jesus died for their sins, rose again, sent his Spirit to work in them, and stands in Heaven now, interceding for them. So as godly women express themselves within the roles they have been called to and uniquely created to fill, they do not have to fear. They trust that God will take care of them. They do not have to doubt their worth if they are women and not men. They do not have to grieve as their physical appeal fades. They do not have to vindicate themselves when treated unfairly. They do not have to fear anything that is frightening, because they know that in Jesus, God is for them and no one can stand against them.

*Other resources:

Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood cmbw.org

John Piper desiringgod.org

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAYMEN

SERMON DATE: 11/2/2014 • 1 PETER 3:7

BY JEREMY LEFEVERS

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Gospel Men Love Jesus First

When I was a kid, I was always active in sports, but mainly in baseball (I have never been very tall, so basketball was a little out of my reach). Baseball was fun. It allowed me to hang out with friends that I wouldn't normally see. I loved the feeling of the ball smashing off of the face of the bat. I loved the smell of the leather of my baseball glove, and the feeling of the ball hitting the sweet-spot after a line-drive or hard thrown ball still makes me smile. I remember one year I was voted "Most Improved," and I was thrilled! But after that, I never got another most improved trophy.

You see, I fell in love with the ball and bat, the smell of the glove. Even though the uniforms always felt a little tight, I kind of liked them, too. What I hated most about baseball was practice.

Read Matthew 6:33, Mark 12:29-31

Something I've learned through the years is that no matter how much you appreciate the stuff God gives, loving his son Jesus is the most important part. However, if I only love Jesus because of what he does for me or just for the gifts he gives, then I miss out on really getting to know him as my Savior.

Gospel men can't really love their wives, and families well - unless they love Jesus first. How can we grow to love Jesus more?

Pray that God would help you to love him first as you seek to love the people around you.

2: Gospel Men Love Their Wives Well

Blech! How many times did I see my stepdad wrap my mom in his arms, kiss her, and call her "Princess!" For the longest time, I remember thinking, "Really?! Please go to your room and do that, after you close

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

Genesis 2:18-25, Ephesians 5:25-31

Day 2

Ruth 4:1-17, 1 Peter 3:7

Day 3

Proverbs 5:15-19, 6:20-33, Ecclesiastes 9:7-10

Day 4

Genesis 29:18-20, Exodus 20:17

Day 5

Proverbs 25:28, Galatians 5:16-25

the door! My eyes will never be the same!” This happened all of the time! He would kiss her, say “I love you,” hug her, and tell her she’s precious. Yuck, right? And he used to say the cheesiest things when he was praying for her! “God, thank you so much for my beautiful wife,” and “God, you have made me a better man because you gave me this beautiful woman to love.”

I’m now married to a beautiful girl, and I say some of the same ridiculous things to her! Gross, huh? But, I understand it so much better now. You see, the way I love my wife reflects the way God, through Jesus, loves me. So, if I constantly tell my wife I love her, that she’s special, that I believe she’s pretty, and that I know she’s a great cook, then maybe some day she’ll believe it, too.

Read Ephesians 5:25-33, 1 Peter 3:7

The Bible says that men should love their wives like Jesus loves the church. That’s a **BIG** deal! Think about it. Jesus loved the church, *his bride*, so much that he *died* to save her! God may not tell us to physically die to save our bride, but he definitely says that after Jesus, she must be the most important person in our lives. This is definitely worth talking about.

Gospel men do whatever it takes to ensure their wives feel honored, protected, and cherished. What are some ways that husbands can love and honor their wives? Why is this important for followers of Jesus?

Spend some time praying that God would help your dad to love your mom and family well.

3: Gospel Men Love Others

I’m short. There, I said it. And my kids, well, they’re short, too, shorter than a lot of other kids. God even gave me a short wife. I think he did this so that I would feel like a giant at least some of the time! Being short, I have memories of other kids picking on me, telling me to stand up (when I was already standing) and yelling “Jeremy! Where are you?” (when I was standing right in front of them). I don’t think they were really *trying* to hurt my feelings, but at the time I thought what they did was mean.

Read Luke 19:1-10

There’s a short guy in the Bible, too. His name is Zaccheaus, but we’ll call him Zac. Not only was Zac a short guy, he was also very rich from the money he had stolen from innocent people, forcing them to pay higher taxes than they were supposed to pay. *What kinds of things do you think people said about him?*

Jesus stopped all of the country traffic when he called Zac down from a tree to say hello, then he had dinner with him at his huge house. The Bible says that when Jesus did this, Zac immediately repented and said he would do the right thing and repay everyone he had stolen from 4x over. Jesus saved Zac that day.

Gospel men see not only the sin, but they see the sinner. Jesus came to save the lost. It's our job to find out who the lost are, and tell them about Jesus.

Read Luke 19:10

How can we be part of Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost? Spend some time praying for your neighbors and friends who do not know Jesus.

ARTICLE BIBLICAL MASCULINITY

BY BUBBA HINES

The violent squall of sin, whirling upon the winds of time, has eroded the lines that once marked the contrast between that which is innately masculine or feminine. Many grew up hearing the legends of great men, from a time when the tenants of culture, at least vaguely, reflected biblical masculinity. Few of us have ever seen those legends walking among the living.

Little boys immediately leap upon the dream of becoming a man, longing for the day when other men, particularly fathers, will recognize us as such. The moment our sons conceive the sentence, they give birth to the declaration, "I am a man!" Ignorant of the meaning of manhood, yet certain of the desire.

Boys develop muscles and grow mustaches, reaching some age that dictates adulthood, and yet their knowledge of manhood remains a void filled with silly social values such as how to:

- Change a Tire
- Hunt Food
- Obtain Wealth
- Seek Pleasure
- Dominate

Marking their own measures, they analyze success against other pygmies, trying to ignore the long shadow cast by the legends. God lays out epic work, prepared before the foundations of the world, Christ calls men to legendary lengths today, the Spirit inspired a Tome that lays out every tenant of Biblical Masculinity.

Biblical Men glorify and enjoy God. Apart from the truth that we rejoice in salvation (1 Peter 1:6), there is no hope, much less hope for masculinity. Against all odds, in the face of the fieriest trials, an authentic man glorifies God with great joy. Burdened by pain, suffering, and back breaking responsibility, this man grins and preaches to himself, "I was built for this and the rarest treasures are mine!"

The Gospel Man knows how to pursue a woman. Boys chase a multitude of girls around the playground; however, a mature man sets his eye on one, passionately pursuing her to the end. Some are greatly gifted with a life of celibacy for the sake of the gospel, the majority are gifted with marriage, a lifelong partner. We see directions in 1 Peter 3:7 for this

partnership, and Paul provides great proof (Ephesians 5:22-33) that single men who love Jesus comprehend this critical truth about marriage and teach it.

Real men know how to raise children. 1 Peter 5:2-5 discusses what it means to shepherd others, and this is particularly compelling in regards to shepherding a child's heart. Whether their offspring, or someone else's, the Christian man echoes Christ's words, "Let the little children come to me."

Men live in community with other believers, as demonstrated in 1 Peter 4:8-11, by loving and serving one another, showing hospitality, without grumbling. Men also live in community with those who do not yet believe, through honorable conduct, submitting themselves to the government as laid out in 1 Peter 2:13-20.

Note that Peter places a particular emphasis on men under submission. In 1 Peter 3:22, we are reminded that everyone has been subjected to the authority of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 5:5 admonishes us to be subject to the elders within Christ's body and 1 Peter 2:13-17 to be subject to "every human institution". Men are commanded to live in relation to Christ, other believers, and nonbelievers as men under authority. This is not an optional component of Biblical Masculinity.

Gospel Men know how to make war. Never as the aggressor, yet indomitably as the protector. To protect and care for families and communities, explicitly to protect the widow and orphan. Never confusing the physical for the spiritual, comprehending the war our flesh wages against our very souls (1 Peter 2:11); men arm themselves (1 Peter 4:1) to stand in Christ against the adversary (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Perhaps you have only heard vague whispers of the legends, having never seen such a man. Quite possibly you only know boys with muscles and a mustache. Find great hope and encouragement in 1 Peter 1:18-19, "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

Daughters, learn what God declares a man ought to look like, and do not be fooled by the foolish creatures presented by this culture. Sons, be Biblical Men, make your Father proud.

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAY SUFFERING

SERMON DATE: 11/9/2014 • 1 PETER 3:8-22

BY BARAK WEST

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Unity in Suffering

Anyone who has traveled over a suspension bridge has noticed the relatively small cables. They seem too small to keep the bridge together. Each of the those cables is actually a braided, twisted group of even smaller cables. Taking a hint from history's wisest man (see Ecclesiastes 4:12), engineers learned that using smaller, braided wires to hold up a bridge creates a cable that is stronger than a single large cable of the same size. If bridge builders used a single large cable to hold up the bridge, one small crack in the single wire cable would cause the cable to fail, and the bridge to fall. When smaller braided wires are used, a crack in one of the little wires prevents the cable from failing because the other smaller wires are still able to support the bridge and keep it standing.

Read 1 Peter 3: 8-9, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Just like the braided cables holding up an enormous bridge, the many members of the body of Christ are designed to hold it together. How, specifically, can we support each other when suffering comes, and we begin to 'crack'? Ultimately, our own survival is not the goal of Christian unity. Read John 17:20-21. In his High Priestly Prayer, what does Jesus say is that ultimate purpose of this unity? How does Jesus' prayer change the ways you view the importance of unity with other Christians?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, teach me today how to be unified in your body so that the world will know that the Father has sent you.

Spend some time praying for unity for your family, your community group, and our church.

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 3:8-9, John 17:11, 20-23, John 13:34-35, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 4:1-16, Psalm 133, Ecclesiastes 4:12

Day 2

1 Peter 3:9-17, Luke 6:27-36, John 15:20-21

Day 3

1 Peter 3:13-17, Matthew 5:38-48

Day 4

1 Peter 3:18, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Day 5

1 Peter 3:18-22, Genesis 6:5

2: Suffering For All the Wrong Reasons

Most people tend to believe if they do good things themselves, then good things will happen to them in return. In general, this rule may seem to be correct, but experience and evidence shows the equation is not always true. When our 'do good, get good' formula fails, revenge or thoughts of getting even can quickly overcome us.

Read 1 Peter 3:9-17, 1 Peter 4:12, John 15:20-21

In these verses, Peter anticipates mistreatment and instructs us not to return the misdeed. In fact, he even goes as far as to tell us to bless the person who hurt us. Peter tells us this type of blessing is what we have been called to do as Christians. Can you remember a specific incident where you were treated unfairly? Did you forgive and bless the person who hurt you or did you scream out with fists clenched, Revenge!!!?

When we're faced with a situation where our suffering is unjust, how can we bear under the mistreatment? (see 1 Peter 2:19) What are some practical ways we can struggle through suffering that we do not rightly deserve? How does unity, as previously discussed, fit in to our perseverance through suffering?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, create a humble heart in me today that allows me to bless anyone who mistreats me so that the world will know that the Father has sent you.

3: Christ our Example

Big achievements never come easy. Regardless if it's a big project at work or school, an Olympian's gold medal, or even a small backyard garden, the end result is the purpose of all the hard work. Only through great effort is the project completed. Years of training are required for a gold medal winner to be the best in the world. Much sweat is poured tilling the ground, planting the seeds, and removing weeds to harvest the first vegetable in a garden. The ultimate purpose of the hard work is not to learn lessons about work, or training, or gardening. Ultimately, people work hard so that the project is successfully presented. Olympians train constantly so that the gold medal is placed around their neck. The gardener works daily until the vegetables are finally picked.

Read 1 Peter 3:18

What was unique about Jesus' suffering? Why does Peter say Jesus suffered and died? How is this different from what others seem to think about Jesus' death? Does this change what being a christian means to you?

Read 1 Peter 3:18-22

Regarding baptism, what is a person “saying” when they submit to be baptized? Peter tells us in chapter 1 that God has “caused us to be born again”. So, we know the act of being placed underwater does not save a person. Rather, baptism is a faithfully symbolic appeal to God, through the resurrection of Jesus, to have the dirt of sin removed from us, and brought cleanly to God.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for doing the hard work to bring me to God.

ARTICLE SUFFERING WELL

BY AARON WILSON

Suffering always seems to catch us off guard. It feels like a sucker punch. We lie on our back staring at the banana peel we slipped on while traveling the straight and narrow and think, “Man, I wonder how that got there?!”

Peter calls us to a more intentional and observant life. He writes, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you...as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 1:4). According to Peter, suffering is to be expected. The question he poses in his first epistle isn’t, “Will I suffer as a Christian?” It’s “How can I suffer faithfully?”

What Is Suffering Exactly?

As we ask this question, we should recognize there are at least three kinds of suffering the Bible describes. The first is common suffering - witnessing the curse on the world and in our bodies. Whether it’s experiencing a natural disaster, receiving an unwanted medical diagnosis, or simply stubbing our little toe, every human experiences these sad reminders that we live in a fallen world. Common suffering is well documented in books of the Bible such as Ecclesiastes.

The second kind of suffering is brought on as a result of sin and is sometimes referred to as worldly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10). Worldly sorrow is not true remorse; It’s the “sorry I got caught” attitude. Peter says of this kind of suffering, “What credit is it?” The resolution for worldly sorrow is rather straightforward: believe in the gospel and repent of sin. Peter doesn’t allocate much of his letter to addressing this issue.

Instead, Peter is concerned about a third type of suffering, one that is unique to Christians. It involves being persecuted for the sake of professing Jesus and suffering for doing good in his name.

Too often we view our response to this kind of suffering as a passive act. We try to avoid persecution if possible and only bear through it if necessary. For Peter though, “hanging on and pushing through” is just a stripped-down version of this grand spiritual act.

For this disciple, suffering well is one of the most action-packed, purposefully minded, sanctifying actions a Christian can engage in. He lists no less than sixteen different commands by which to actively engage persecution for the sake of Christ (and that’s just in his first letter alone!).

These commands are sprinkled throughout the five chapters of his book, but they are primarily centered around these three themes:

Renew Your Vision (Form an Eternal Perspective)

Psalm 112:7 says of the believer, “he is not afraid of bad news.” Echoing this sentiment, Peter writes, “do not fear anything that is frightening” (3:6). Doesn’t this advice sound contradictory on the surface? After all, if we can’t be afraid of bad news, what are we supposed to do with it? Peter’s answer is to fix our eyes on our future dwelling. Over and over again he admonishes us to remember we are but exiles and that a future restoration is coming which will make sense of our present suffering. It’s why this letter’s promises are so often forged in the future tense. Peter reserves some of the last words of his epistle with this promise, “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (5:10). The Christian who has their hope set on their future state will not be shaken when they find their present circumstances difficult (1:4, 23-24).

Renew Your Mind (Think Rightly)

If we’re not to be surprised by trials, we’ve got to be anticipating and processing them in a right manner. This is why Peter fills his letter with commands such as, “arm yourself with right thinking” (4:1), “prepare your mind for action” (1:13), and “be sober-minded” (4:7). The main way we do this is by remembering Jesus and modeling his approach to suffering. 1 Peter 2:19-25 paints a wonderful picture of Jesus as the Suffering Servant. In light of this, Peter says, “so, being mindful of God, endure sorrows while suffering unjustly.” When we’re mindful of God, our disgust at suffering can mysteriously turn into praise. Note the apostles (Peter included) who after being beaten, were “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name [of Jesus]” (Acts 5:41).

Renew Your Heart (Pour into Others)

To appropriately respond to suffering we must think internally, but serve outwardly. It’s why Peter commands Christians to love one another earnestly “above all” (4:7). What does suffering and serving have to do with one another? The answer is Jesus! His suffering was the greatest act of service and love the world would ever know. A willing death spurred on by love infused purpose into his pain. In a counterintuitive manner, suffering doesn’t drain us of the resources we need to live life abundantly; it actually serves as a catalyst to ignite our faith to action when we anchor it to his story.

So for Peter, suffering is synonymous with living a life of faith. This disciple who was rebuked as Satan for telling Jesus not to talk about suf-

fering, became one of the Bible's greatest spokespersons on the subject. He who was frightened to suffer the ridicule of a teenage girl, would later die for his faith and instruct others to "stand firm" (5:13). What made the difference? A right view of Jesus! If the thought of suffering for the sake of Christ feels daunting, look to Jesus (the one who tells us not to worry) and follow his instructions in 1 Peter. When you do, you might just find that something strange is happening to you.

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAYSERVICE

SERMON DATE: 11/16/2014 • 1 PETER 4:1-11

BY DEBBIE MILLER

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Arm Yourselfs

Read 1 Peter 4:1, Romans 6:3-4, Ephesians 6:10-18

Have you ever seen a hermit crab? Maybe Mom or Dad will show you one on the computer. They have very soft bodies and need a shell to protect them from their enemies. They need to change their shell sometimes to make sure they have the space they need for their growing bodies. They're very selective about the shell they use. Sometimes they even hold the old shell with their walking legs to make sure the new one is best.

We also need protection from the world we live in and from our unhealthy desires. Peter says we are to arm ourselves with the same way of thinking as Christ who suffered in the flesh when he was crucified. We can know Christ's way of thinking through his Word. We need a daily dose of his Word to think correctly, to answer correctly, and to act correctly.

Discuss: What was Christ's way of thinking? What are the components of armor that God provides for us? How do we change our armor as we grow (mature)?

2: The end of all things is at hand

Read: 1 Peter 4:1-9

How do we react when we hear "the end is at hand"? Think about a great movie that all your friends have said is the best movie ever! If you know this is the last weekend it will be in theaters, you want to go see it. If your best friend is moving, you want to go see them before they leave and tell them what their friendship has meant to you. You want to exchange addresses and say that you hope to see them again. If someone in your family is very sick and dying, you want to visit them and talk to

DAILY READINGS

Day 1 Arm Yourselfs

1 Peter 4:1, Romans 6:3-4, Ephesians 6:10-18

Day 2 Ceasing from sin

1 Peter 4:1-6, Romans 6:9-11, Phil. 2:13, 1 John 1:7-2:1

Day 3 What is the will of God?

1 Peter 4:1-2, Micah 6:8, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 2:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:3a

Day 4 Are people surprised by your behavior?

1 Peter 4:3-6, Proverbs 1:10-19, 1 Peter 2:9

Day 5 Is God glorified in our lives?

1 Peter 4:7-12, Romans 12:5-21

them one last time. In all of these cases, the knowledge that the end is near causes you to want to act on it. Peter expects that same response to his statement. If you know the end of all things is at hand, what will you do about it? What will be important to you? Will you remember petty arguments or will you forgive and restore old friendships?

What are the instructions Peter gives for the time left to us?

1. Live for the will of God, not our human passions
2. Be Self-controlled and sober-minded
3. Keep loving one another earnestly (Notice he assumes we are loving and says “keep loving”. He also qualifies it as doing so earnestly, sincerely, and with purpose. He says love covers a multitude of sins, which tells me that he is directing us to give up grudges and forgive.)
4. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling (How? Without grumbling, with a cheerful heart!)

Spend time praying that God would help you and your family to see these things lived out.

3: Use your gifts

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11, John 15:8, 1 Cor. 6:19-20

Christmas, birthdays, special occasions....what do they have in common? Sometimes we receive gifts from the people who love us. What good would a gift be if we did not use it? If we never opened our gifts, but rather put them on a shelf in the closet, it would be no better than if we never received the gift at all! God also gives us gifts and Peter tells us to use our gifts, not hide them away where they serve no purpose. He also says to use our gifts to serve others. In doing this, we are being good stewards, or managers, of the gifts from God.

God also gave us the greatest gift, his Son. Jesus said he came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. As Jesus served, we also are called to serve others, to think of others' needs as more important than our own. Peter goes on to say that our serving is for God's glory, just like Jesus said in John 17:4, **“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.”**

What gifts has God given you? Some examples are speaking, serving, loving, giving, helping, organizing, encouraging, and leading.

How can you serve others in your family? In your church? In your community?

Peter says that for the one who serves, God will supply the strength. It is God at work in us to give us both the desire and the ability to do his work. If we are walking in the Spirit, he is changing our will, our desires, and he is giving us the strength to do what he has called us to do. Are you walking in the Spirit or is something keeping you from yielding completely?

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAY TRIALS

SERMON DATE: 11/23/2014 • 1 PETER 4:12-19

BY LAUREN HELTON

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: “Do Not Be Surprised”

Read 1 Peter 4:12-14.

Have you ever been to the beach and waded out into the water? If you stood still for more than a few seconds, you probably began to feel little nibbles and bumps against your legs, which, no doubt, made you jump a bit! Everyone knows there are fish in the ocean, but you don't expect those fish to get so friendly with your feet! As Christians in a fallen world ruled by Satan, we know that there is sin and evil out there, yet we are still surprised when we are made fun of and persecuted for our faith.

In the passage for today, Peter was encouraging the church to be ready for the persecution they were facing. These Christians seemed to believe, as we often do, that their suffering was unusual, as if Christianity is supposed to make our lives easy. It's natural to look on trouble as something undeserved or abnormal, yet the exact opposite is true. As disciples of Jesus, we can't expect to be treated any differently than Jesus himself was treated. It probably means something is wrong if we're not persecuted; because when we're living our lives according to the Gospel, the sinful world won't like us very much. Peter reminds us that suffering is the price of being a Christian. Jesus certainly had that in mind when He warned his listeners to count the cost of following him.

Read Luke 14:27-28

Jesus made it clear that we can expect persecution, but amazingly, we can rejoice in it! That may sound ridiculous - after all, who in their right mind would be happy about suffering? Instead, we rejoice because this suffering is allowed by God to strengthen our faith. God knows that testing our faith through difficulties is important to our growth as disciples. Nothing joins us to Christ like suffering for him, because as we share in his suffering, he is sharing in ours as well; and one day we will also share in his glory when he returns and calls us to him. Through it all, God's

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 4:12-19; 1 Peter 1:6-7;
John 16:33

Day 2

1 Peter 4:12; John 15:18-21;
Hebrews 2:10

Day 3

1 Peter 4:13-14; Romans 5:3-5;
Romans 8:17-18

Day 4

1 Peter 4:15-18; Hebrews
12:1-8

Day 5

1 Peter 4:19; Galatians 6:9;
Jeremiah 29:11

Spirit is with us and in us, providing the strength we need to stand firm.
Read Matthew 5:11-12

What do you do when you feel you've been mistreated or made fun of because of your faith in Jesus? How do you feel? How should we react according to the Bible?

2: "Suffer As Christians"

Read 1 Peter 4:15-18 and 1 Peter 2:20

Have you ever done something you knew was wrong, and then had to "pay for it" later? Have you ever been fined for speeding or gotten hurt while doing something your mom told you not to do? These things could be considered suffering; but, though unpleasant, they are the results of sinful choices. On the other hand, have you ever been made fun of because you stood up for what you believe in? Been laughed at because you bring your Bible to school? In other countries, people are actually put in prison and killed for following Jesus! Whether it is suffering for sin or suffering for Christ, neither is usually very pleasant.

However, they are different in that they have very different purposes and results. Suffering as a result of sin is, for the Christian, similar to a spanking at the hands of a loving father. It is a warning to run from the danger we are putting ourselves in, the desired result being a heart led to repent and return to God. There is little comfort in suffering, though, when it is brought upon us by our own sin and foolishness. While God is always faithful to forgive us when we repent, there is no blessing or honor in this kind of trial.

The trials we go through for Christ, however, are an important part of God's design that in the end, produce good for us and glory for him. This world, with all its evil, is God's purposefully chosen environment for his people to grow in character and relationship with him. Trials help us develop discipline, endurance and patience. They teach us to trust God with our whole hearts because he has proven himself to be a faithful friend over and over. There is especially great comfort when we suffer for the name of Christ, because we know that Jesus stands with us – the One who died in our place - and we realize just what an unspeakable honor it is to bear his name.

Are you ready to stand up for Christ, no matter the cost?

3: "Trust and Obey"

Read 1 Peter 4:19

Most of you have probably heard of the trust fall exercise, where a person falls backwards and has to trust someone behind them to catch them before they hit the floor. Why don't you give it a try with your

mom or dad? This is a great show of trust on your part, not only of your parent's *willingness* to catch you, but also of their *ability* to catch you. It would do you no good at all if they wanted to catch you, but weren't strong enough to do it. Or if they could catch you but didn't want to, it would be equally useless. Yes, this exercise requires a great deal of trust. It requires you to give up complete control and knowledge of what will happen to you and place it in someone else's hands. You wouldn't even know if you were going to hit the ground until you felt it, because, unfortunately, people don't have eyes in the back of their heads!

This is basically what God asks us to do, and it's not always easy. Most times, we find it very hard to give up control of our lives - although in truth, they are always in his control anyway. Everything within us screams, "Don't do it!". We want to make our own plans and know what is ahead of us. We desire an easy, safe, and happy life; but that is not always the path God puts us on. Sometimes, God calls us to suffer, and we can't always see his hand in our struggles. The thing we can hold onto, though, is that we can trust him to act to do what is best for us and what accomplishes his good and perfect plans. He is not only willing, but he is able. His desire is to help us, his strength is more than enough. God has proven his faithfulness to his people time and time again, and has shown there is nothing too big for him to handle. All we have to do is trust and fall into his waiting arms.

Read 2 Chronicles 16:9

What do you need to trust God with today? What are you holding onto that God wants you to give up control over?

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAY PASTORS

SERMON DATE: 11/30/2014 • 1 PETER 5:1-5

BY WILL STRANATHAN

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Everyday Pastors Are Called

Many professions in the world not only require that somebody pass an interview for the position, but that they meet other objective criteria before the interview even comes. Doctors have to have a medical degree in the specific field of medicine they practice. Police officers have to be trained in the law, the situations with which they might be faced, and with the equipment they will use on the job. These are often skills that are learned in a particular school or academy. What are some other professions which require specific certification or evaluation criteria?

Read 1 Peter 1:1-3 and Titus 1:6-9

Pastors (also called elders or overseers) also have criteria which they must exhibit in order to be called elders. What are some of those criteria? You can see a similar list in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. What are some of the things that a man must **not** be or do if he's to be qualified as an elder? Besides some of the very practical requirements, what is the most important criteria Peter gives in 1 Peter 5:1, and Paul gives in Titus 1:9?

Why do you think these requirements are so important to becoming a pastor? Does Jesus also exhibit these qualities? Is the Holy Spirit working in you to make you match some of these qualities?

Spend some time thanking God for your pastors and pray for them.

2: Everyday Pastors Serve Well

Many of the professions we think of as jobs of power have a creed or motto that implies something different from being more powerful than others. For example, the motto of the Los Angeles Police Department is "to protect and to serve". One of the tenants of the US Army Soldier's Creed is "I serve the people of the United States". Once a person takes one of these positions, they have an obligation to perform their duties, and many of them are centered around serving, rather than "bossing". What are some

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 5:1-5, Acts 20:28-32

Day 2

1 Peter 5:1-5, Titus 1:5-9

Day 3

1 Peter 5:1-5, 1 Timothy 3:1-7

Day 4

1 Peter 5:1-5, Proverbs 3:34

Day 5

1 Peter 5:1-5, James 4:6-10

of the duties you have as a worker or as a student? Are these objectives in order to benefit only yourself, or are they for the benefit of others as well?

Read 1 Peter 1:1-4, Acts 20:28-31

What are some of the responsibilities of pastors? Do you think these are easy to do well? Pastors need the Holy Spirit every day to help them to do their duties well and to the glory of God.

Take some time this week to encourage your pastors. Encourage them in person when you see them, send an email or message to them to encourage them, or write them a letter to encourage them. Remember that before serving the church, they're servants to God and to their families.

3: Everyday Pastors Lead Everyday People

If you're a student in school, the teachers and staff are there to help you to get an education. If you're a worker, your leaders work to ensure that you have the resources you need in order to do your job effectively. Similarly, in your position, you have things that you need to do in order for the system to work. As a student, you should listen well, study well, and focus on your studies in order to succeed. As a worker, you should work hard for the benefit of the company and to the glory of God.

Read 1 Peter 5:5 and James 4:6-10

What word is used several times in both of these passages to describe how we should act? Humility is a tough attitude for us to have because it requires that we not only see the gifting that others have, but also that we might not have that gifting - at least not yet. When Jesus showed humility to the Father, he showed that not only was the Father's will perfect, but that he was perfectly satisfied with the Father's will over his own wants (Matthew 26:39). For us to be humble toward God requires that we see that he is in control and that we can't control anything. Being humble to our pastors requires that we see them as wise, and that we don't have the same depth of vision that they do.

How does being humble toward your pastors look? How should we act toward our pastors to show that we're humble toward them? How should we act when they're not around that demonstrates our humility toward them?

SERMONNOTES

SERMONNOTES

EVERYDAY PROMISE

SERMON DATE: 12/7/2014 • 1 PETER 5:6-11

BY KRISTI LEE

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

1: Carry or Cast

Imagine you are running a race while carrying a sack of bricks. Someone stops and offers to take the bricks for you. But you are too proud to admit that the bricks are heavier than you had imagined, and you certainly don't want to appear weak, so you continue the race carrying the bricks. It's hard. You grow tired and weary underneath the weight of the bricks. The race is no longer about running; it's all about trying to carry the bricks. You are concentrating so hard on these bricks that you lose sight of what is going on around you.

When you finally realize you can't go on, you look up to try to find the one who offered to help. You needn't look far, for he is running right next to you. In fact, he's been there the whole time; you've just been too busy to notice him. He takes not just one brick from your sack, but all of them. You decide to trust that he'll take care of them until the end. Sure, you'll no longer prove that you're the strongest runner in the race. But at least you are now free to run without the extra weight.

Read 1 Peter 5:6-7

These verses teach us that the way in which we humble ourselves before God is by casting our anxieties on him.

Instead of carrying a load of bricks (fears and worries) through life, we can give them all to God. Why? Because he cares for us! When we admit our weaknesses, failures, fears, and worries, and hand them over to God, we are humbling ourselves before him. What anxieties are you carrying right now that you can cast on God?

God promises that he will take care of us. He will never leave or forsake us. Pray that God would give you the grace to trust in these promises.

DAILY READINGS

Day 1

1 Peter 5:6-7, James 4:7-10

Day 2

Psalms 55:22, Matthew 6:25-33

Day 3

1 Peter 5:8-9, Ephesians 6:10-18, Colossians 2:13-15

Day 4

2 Timothy 3:12-15, 2 Timothy 2:8-13, Revelation 2:10

Day 5

1 Peter 5:10-11, John 21:15-19

2: Stand Firm

You continue running your race. You are now able to run with increased alertness because you've handed over your bricks to the one beside you. Up ahead you see a lion. The lion is in your path, so you must face it. Yet you realize there is no way you can fight this lion on your own. The one standing next to you hands you a breastplate, a shield, a helmet, and a sword. Better yet, he walks with you and stays with you during the whole encounter. The lion hurls more bricks at you. You suffer wounds - deep wounds - from the lion's attacks. But you stand there, trusting that the armor will protect you. And it does. The lion is not able to devour you. So he flees.

You notice along the way that the lion continues his fight with other runners. You take comfort in the fact that you are not alone. And the one beside you assures you that the battle made you a stronger runner.

Read I Peter 5:8-9

How is the devil portrayed in these verses? Sometimes the devil acts like a snake, sneakily poisoning us with lies and temptations. And sometimes he roars like a lion, seeking to terrify and frighten us by throwing accusations, trials, and sufferings into our lives.

Read Colossians 2:13-15. How has Jesus already taken away the power of accusation from the Enemy? At the cross, Christ provided us with the armor we need to resist the devil and stand firm in our faith. Read Ephesians 6:14-17. What armor do we have?

Although Satan means to use sufferings to devour us, we can take heart in the fact that God uses those same trials to perfect us! If we belong to God, the devil may hurt us, but he cannot devour us because Jesus has already defeated him!

3: The J-Curve

You look at a map to find where you are, and you realize that the path you are running is not actually the straight line you thought it was. Rather, it is shaped like a "J." Your map reveals that you are at the very bottom of the J - in the valley. You realize there is absolutely no way you can hoist yourself up the other side of the J-shaped path. The one beside you tells you to be patient, to continue running as you have been, and he will help you up when the time is right.

To tell the truth, you are relieved. You thought you were stuck in a never-ending line, but on the contrary, this J-shaped path means something else entirely: there is hope.

Draw the letter “J” in the air with your pointer finger, starting on the left, curving down, and back up on the right. This curve represents life - the race that we’re all running. As we move down the curve, we will suffer attacks from snakes and lions, and we will fall beneath the weight of our bricks. God asks that we humble ourselves before him, admit our sins and our struggles, give him our bricks, and trust him when we’re suffering. At the bottom of the curve, we have no choice but to die to ourselves. And then we wait....

Read I Peter 5:6 and 5:10

Good news: Life does not end at the bottom of the curve! Why? Because God is alive! And because our risen Savior is a God of grace, He promises that resurrection awaits those who endure. And who better to remind us of this than Peter, who denied Christ and later was restored by that same Christ. Humiliation will be followed by exaltation. Death (which can come in many forms) will be followed by resurrection. Whether our restoration will come in this life or the next, we don’t know, but we can be assured that it will come, for God has promised it, and we can trust in his promises!

The J-curve: we live, we die, we rise. How does this curve reflect the gospel story?

We cannot do resurrection. But we can wait for and hope in the God who can!

ARTICLE APOLOGETICS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

BY KYLE MCNAMARA

Preparing your Christian apologetic is a high calling to which God commanded every follower of Christ in 1 Peter 3:15 and that verse explains it as being prepared to make a defense for our hope in Christ alone. What makes this uniquely sanctifying is not the hard work it takes to equip ourselves. That comes down to simply reading and understanding scripture, and then exploring the endless apologetics materials now available that effectively defend the faith.

It is that wee phrase at the end “yet do it with gentleness and respect” that represents the truly challenging part. That is the lifelong, sanctifying work in becoming a godly apologist, to which every follower of Christ is called. People cannot hear us or the see the spectacular beauty of Christ and his gospel through our normally unrighteous anger, as we are reminded in 1 Corinthians 13:1.

God is calling us to be prepared to defend the faith, in love, in all circumstances. The reality is that when we look at 1 Peter 3:15 in its surrounding context, verse 14 lets us know that this is often going to be difficult. Then looking verses 16-17, we see the same. So do not be surprised that this will be uncomfortable at times since God said “when” you are slandered, not “if”.

More times than not, the intellectual objections people raise are rarely their actual objections. The presenting questions might be, “Wasn’t the bible written by a bunch of men?”, “Doesn’t the bible contradict itself?” and “Hasn’t science disproved all that?”. The real questions-behind-the-questions come down to things like, “Why does God allow suffering?”, “Why is my life not like I want it to be?”. To discern well, we need to be wiser than we are capable of by being filled daily with the Holy Spirit, because if we attempt to answer only the intellectual questions, we will end up in fruitless debate rather than sharing the gospel. The good news is that in preparing as an apologist you will be led to a deeper walk with Christ. In that, you will be more prepared to identify and answer non-believer’s deeper emotional questions.

Do you feel inadequate for the task? No one could have been less prepared than I. I do not exaggerate in saying that as a young person I could barely identify who Jesus was. I could have told you “something to do with Christianity”. I never even met a professing Christian until college! The first prayer I ever heard prayed for me by believing, faithful followers of Christ was that God would give me a thirst for him. He answered

that prayer powerfully. He will honor that same prayer in your life. I can promise this with confidence because in James he said if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." It will be given him.

As a warning, to quote others, our hearts are idol factories, and this is no exception. We are uniquely capable of turning God's very blessings into idols and curses. I count myself among those many souls who at one time or another exchanged the glory of God in some measure for worshiping (through pursuing) the facts of his kingdom. As breathtaking as those facts may be, they cannot compare to the one who created them. If you lean on apologetic facts and your own understanding, those things will ultimately fail and disappoint you and you will be left empty, wondering why sinners will not understand your very clear arguments. Let God do the saving while you do the obeying, and watch how he blesses you and others in your obedience.

Apologetics has a unique place in my heart, as it is part of the means God used to draw me, a former pseudo-intellectual atheist- at the statistically improbable age 29- to saving faith in Christ. Please let me exhort you to obey 1 Peter 3:15 as uniquely suited to this time in history, when the objections raised are often based on a "rationality" that is as false, flimsy and as damning as is any other trick of Satan. Even if one more soul were added to the kingdom in all the world by removing intellectual stumbling blocks to belief, would it be not worth it? I am personally grateful that while I was still in darkness and an enemy to God, someone took the time and effort to prepare and present the reason for the hope in their heart, and that they did it with gentleness and love.

SERMON NOTES

SERMONNOTES

WRITER BIOGRAPHIES

Leah Ammons



Leah Ammons: Former teacher and librarian, I attend Exodus Belmont with my husband, David and nearly 4 year old son, Asher. I usually work with Exodus Kids, but am taking a break while I care for our family's newest addition--Annelise, born in May.

Dustin Benton



Dustin Benton attends Exodus Northlake with his wife Mary, and three children (Caleb, James, and Karis). He is an financial advisor by day, an avid FSU fan, outdoors-man, crossfiter, and serves at Exodus Northlake where ever there is need.

Joel Boyce



Joel is the worship leader at Exodus Northlake. He and his wife Amanda have two lovely daughters.

Nathan Chapman



Nathan attends Exodus Belmont with his wife Casey and their children Brakian, Betsy, and Jed. He serves as the worship pastor as well as leading in many other capacities.

Lenora Crabtree



Lenora, an empty nest mom whose three sons Taylor, Seth and Sam have flown the coop, attends Exodus Belmont with her husband Scott. She is currently "on sabbatical" from a 16 year teaching career and will re-enter the classroom as a student this year, pursuing a Masters in Biology at UNCC.

Julie Croshaw

Julie Croshaw has been teaching High School Math for several years and is transitioning to work part-time from home seeking free-lance painting, pottery, graphic design, and writing opportunities. In the fall, she also plans to devote time to tutoring students in math and art. She attends Exodus Belmont with her husband, Steven, and their daughter Natalie.

Lauren Helton

Lauren Helton attends Exodus Northlake with her best friend and husband, Joe, and their two kids, Emma and Maddox. Lauren is a homemaking wife, homeschooling mom and serves as a Community Group leader/host as well as helping out in a number of other capacities within the church.

Bubba Hines

Bubba Hines and his wife Tracey, who attend Exodus Northlake, have five children and twelve others for which they have cared and mentored. He enjoys working with and solving complex problem spaces, and is an enthusiastic evangelist, prophet, and leader.

David Keen

David enjoys good food, good drink, good conversation, music, sports, working out, reading, taking in God's creation and growing a healthy beard. Outside of salvation, his beautiful wife Jordan along with his children Lucy James and baby number two due September 11th are his most cherished gifts from God.

Alex Kneen

Alex Kneen attends Exodus Belmont with her husband, David, and two children, Rowan and Bastion. While raising two boys, she manages to squeeze some time in to write, study, and compose a song or two for the worship team.

Joy LaPrade

Joy La Prade attends Exodus Belmont with her husband Konrad and their two children. She serves as a teacher for the Exodus Kids K-2 class and with the York County prison ministry, and spends her free time reading and working as a freelance writer for the Gaston Gazette.

Kristi Lee

Kristi, along with her husband Adam and their three children, attends Exodus Belmont, where she plays keys for the band, serves on the hospitality team, and helps her husband lead/host the South Point Community group. Kristi spends her days raising her children and teaching piano lessons and also enjoys reading and cooking in her spare time.

Jeremy LeFevers

Jeremy LeFevers attends Exodus Belmont with his wife Dana, and children, Taylor, Wes, and Will. He works in the automotive industry by day, enjoys sleeping and cigars, and nachos, and is a Deacon of Worship Leadership for Exodus Belmont, leading every now and then while playing his trusty, very heavy bass.

Brian Lowe

Brian serves as the lead pastor of Exodus Belmont. He and his wife Cheryl have four children, TJ, Nathan, Corinne, and Elea.

Kyle McNamara

Kyle McNamara attends Exodus Belmont with his wife Michelle, and their 4 daughters Emma, Lily, Grace & Chloë. He loves music of most any kind, reading, writing, theology, gardening, being outdoors and bow hunting with his wife and daughters.

Debbie Miller



Debbie Miller attends Exodus Belmont with her husband, George. They have 3 children, 2 of which are married and one granddaughter. She enjoys gardening, cooking, Bible study, needlework, and traveling to see God's amazing creation. She serves Exodus by hosting community group, hospitality for meetings, Bible study in her home, and subbing in children's ministry.

Alex Poole



Alex Poole attends Exodus Belmont with his wife, Katie, and his two daughters, Caroline and Juliet. Follower of Christ, husband, father, friend and engineer; he enjoys reading, hiking, spending time with his family...and space, outer space, that is.

Rici Reid



Rici attends Exodus Belmont with her Jesus lovin' handyman husband Josh and their two firecracker little girls, Teagan (4 1/2) and Kyra Mae (2 1/2). Rici is currently serving as the deacon for social media and the postpartum encouragement team, loves a good run and an even better cup of coffee.

Kathryn Stranathan



Kathryn is active in Exodus Students at Exodus Belmont. She is a student leader and works in childcare.

Valerie Stranathan



Valerie is a deacon at Exodus Belmont, serving as admin to the worship pastor. She and her husband Will have two daughters, Kathryn and Lydia.

Will Stranathan



Will Stranathan and his wife, Valerie, and their daughters, Kathryn and Lydia, attend Exodus Belmont. Will writes rotten code to help the worlds' best programmers identify their own rotten code and serves at Exodus on the worship teams and security team.

Barak West

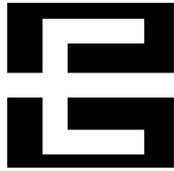
Barak, his wife Carrie, and their children attend Exodus Belmont. Barak enjoys all types of karate, but he does not like eating his vegetables.

Aaron Wilson

Aaron is a member at Exodus Belmont with this wife Jennifer and their three-year-old twins, Abel and Belle. Aaron works for LifeWay Christian Resources and is a writer by night, blogging at www.theaaronwilson.com.

John Yasenchok

John Yasenchok and his wife Baird have been attending Exodus Church Belmont since November of 2010. John is fulfilling his dream of being a high school social studies teacher. He enjoys good coffee while he greets people at the door before worship service in the morning.



exoduschurch

theexoduschurch.org