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Lesson 2 – 1 Peter 2:1–25

In the closing verses of chapter one, Peter’s audience is left with the understanding that our hope and inheritance are made real through God’s living, enduring Word. Chapter two is all about growing spiritually, and it is here that we make the discovery that the process begins and continues through the daily application of God’s Word. The moment a person accepts Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, they are reborn into the family of God as a life-long member of His master building program. As the process continues, the Holy Spirit is able to build believers into a spiritual house. Once the construction nears completion, the improvements and finishing touches become visible to others. Likewise, the believer’s attitudes and actions are revealed for the better as we grow closer to completion and receiving our eternal inheritance.

Memory Verse:

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” 1 Peter 2:2–3 (NIV)

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

FIRST DAY – 1 PETER 2:1-3

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 Peter 2:1–25.

The opening of chapter two immediately draws the reader’s attention back to chapter one by Peter’s use of the word “*therefore*” (v.1). Right away it connects the concept of our rebirth through God’s Word (1:23) with the evidence of our new birth being lived out in daily life. Peter’s use of the term “newborn babies” is not a reference to his readers being new Christians, but is rather an exhortation to all believers to *desire* or *crave long* the spiritual nourishment of God’s Word in the same way a baby longs for milk in order to be satisfied and grow.

1. Peter lists five sins in verse 1 that we must be rid of before we can grow unhindered in the Christian life. List them in the space below.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

To *rid* ourselves can also mean to “put off” or “put away.” The same term is used in other places in the New Testament to indicate the decisive act of removing or taking off the believer’s former sinful life.

2. What do you learn about this *putting off* from the following?

a. Romans 13:11–14

b. Colossians 3:6–10

c. Why is this process so important to spiritual growth? See Ephesians 4:14–15.

d. What important familiar warning is there in James 1:21–22?

3. Using the resources you have on hand, look up each of the five sins Peter lists in verse 1 and write down why it will hinder *your* spiritual growth as a Christian. Be specific in your answers. (Note: the first two, *malice* and *deceit* are general in nature. The last three, *hypocrisy*, *envy*, and *slander*, flow out of the first two.)

a. *Malice will hinder my spiritual growth because*

b. *Deceit will hinder my spiritual growth because*

c. *Hypocrisy will hinder my spiritual growth because*

d. *Envy will hinder my spiritual growth because*

e. *Slander will hinder my spiritual growth because*

f. Which, if any, of these sins is evident in your life right now? (Be honest with yourself; God already knows the answer.)

4. Personal: What does *your* spiritual diet consist of? Are you malnourished because you're prone to skip meals in the Word? Are you perhaps "picky choosy," jumping from one section of the Bible that you like without perhaps taking in the whole counsel of God and savoring how it's nourishing you? As a child of God, it's not only a pleasure but a privilege to taste the Goodness of God's Word for yourself. To taste His goodness is to want more of His goodness. It means you will no longer be satisfied with anything less than God's best! How's your spiritual diet? Please share your thoughts.

SECOND DAY – 1 PETER 2:4-8

Read 1 Peter 2:4–8 for review.

Christians grow up together—as *living stones*—having been built upon the foundation of Christ, the Cornerstone. Each time a new believer is admitted into God's family, a new living stone is added to the building. Together, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, we grow into the temple of God.

In order to emphasize the importance of Jesus Christ as the centerpiece of the church and the believer's life, Peter wove together two portions of Old Testament prophecy from the books of Isaiah and Psalms.

1. What do you discover about the Lord Jesus from the verses Peter quoted?

a. v. 6: Isaiah 28:16 –

b. vv. 7–8: Isaiah 8:14 and Psalm 118:22 –

The structure and design of a building rest upon the foundation or cornerstone, with the capstone being the topmost piece or finishing touch. Peter's point is that from its inception to its completion, the Church, which consists of these *living stones* is built upon THE Living Stone: "*For no one can lay any other foundation than the one we already have—Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 3:11 NLT). He is both the *cornerstone* upon which it rests and the *capstone*—the point up to which it grows. He is the beginning and the end!

2. Not everyone chooses to "accept" the cornerstone God put in place. Finish the following . . .

a. v. 6: *Whoever believes in Him* _____

b. v. 7: *To you who believe* _____

The "builders" referred to in verse 7 are those who willfully choose to reject Christ. What does Peter say about them?

c. vv. 7–8: *To those who are disobedient (do not believe)* _____

Despite their rejection of God's *chief cornerstone*, Jesus was given the preeminent position in the Church. When you come to Christ, you become part of a building—the Church. You also become part of a holy priesthood. As such, you have the privilege of gaining direct access to God anytime, anywhere. You also have the great honor of serving Him by bringing others to Him.

3. In this privileged position, what are you called to do? v. 5

In the Old Testament, the position of *priest* meant having an attitude of repentance, remaining pure, and continually offering prayers of supplication and thanksgiving to God. The New Testament goes somewhat further in its practical application to all believers.

4. In Romans 12:1–2, we find the ways we can offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. What are they?

Although we will never achieve perfection this side of heaven, the standard for every believer is a walk of holiness. Remember, as a *priest*, you are set apart by God for His use. Your life's purpose is to proclaim His praises. Your life's goal is that when people look at *you*, they see and hear Jesus!

THIRD DAY – 1 PETER 2:9-12

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12 for review.

1. In verses 9–10, Peter specifically details the value that God places on you. How does Peter describe your relationship with God? Put these in your own words.
 - a. When God called you out of darkness, from whose power were you released? See Acts 26:18
 - b. Contrast who you were *before* with who you are *now*. What precious gift has God given you? v. 10
2. Peter refers to believers as “*sojourners*” and “*pilgrims*” in verse 11? (Remember to whom he was writing.) As one of today’s believers in a foreign land (a world to which you do not belong), from what must you abstain? Why?
 - a. What kind of example are you to be? Why?

Peter is referring in these verses about the quality of life that will cause non-believers to stand up and take notice! He isn’t speaking of a one-time encounter with another person, but rather the process of being watched over a long period of time. He is emphasizing that we are to model the kind of behavior that is free of criticism or offense until the day of the Lord’s return.

- b. Personal: Can you say that you are living up to your high calling? Yes or no? If not, has the Holy Spirit revealed something specific that is hindering you from doing so?

FOURTH DAY – 1 PETER 2:13-25

Read 1 Peter 2:13–25 for review.

Relationships can be difficult and sometimes very demanding, offering us the opportunity to really appreciate the difference God's grace has made in our own lives. The remainder of chapter two deals with how Christians are to relate to one another and how we are to respond to those that don't know Christ. In the final analysis, no matter what our circumstances may be at any given moment, we believers are God's instruments to proclaim to the world who He is and what He's done on our behalf. In other words, our lives should be a continual living testimony of His character and love.

In verses 13–25, Peter begins to illustrate the testimony of the life that is fully submitted to God. Although he wanted Christians to submit willingly, a closer look reveals that Peter's words are not presented as an option but rather a command. In every area, we are called to follow in *His steps*!

The remainder of the chapter breaks nicely into three sections, each dealing with a different aspect of how the believer should respond to authority.

Submission to government authorities (vv. 13–17)

1. Think about it: who are some of those in authority over your life? Name them below.
 - a. For whose sake are you asked to submit to these authorities?
2. Personal: What does your submission look like in practical everyday life. Why does God want you to submit in this way? vv. 15–16

The spiritual freedom you enjoy as a Christian includes freedom from sin's rule, freedom from guilt because you are forgiven, and freedom from thinking you have to earn God's favor. In areas where the Word of God gives no guidance, you are free to make your choices responsibly. In all things you have the freedom to do—not what you *want*—but what you *ought*. This should be your code of conduct in everyday life.

3. In verse 17, Peter says every believer is to *fear God, love the brethren, and respect everyone* e/se. In order to live up to this calling, you will need to exhibit Christ's example of humility. Read through Philippians 2:3–8, and share what you discover about the Lord's example that ministers to you today.

Submission as an employee-servant (v. 18)

Peter does not attempt to condone slavery, but to encourage those who were suffering in a society that permitted it. Believers who were servants (slaves) were not free from serving their masters, but were free from the slavery of sin. Whether their employer was a Christian or non-believer, they were to be respectful and responsible in their behavior.

- a. What should a believer's heart-attitude be? Who are they ultimately serving? See Colossians 3:22–24.
- b. Personal: Have *you* ever worked for a harsh employer? How did it affect you? How did God's grace enable you?

Submission to unjust authorities (vv.19–25)

The reality of life is—believers will suffer in this world. Sometimes we are even called to suffer at unjust hands for the greater glory of God and for our own maturity (v. 21).

- a. Peter isn't saying that it's commendable to endure punishment that is deserved; to what kind of suffering does he refer?

- b. What does Peter point to in these verses about Christ's own suffering?

- c. Personal: How does possessing an understanding of who/what you once were help to motivate you to adopt Christ's example?

- d. Take a moment to contemplate verse 25 in light of Psalm 23. How does the assurance that Christ is *your* Shepherd—*your* Overseer—encourage you today?

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?