

S T U D Y G U I D E

THE MESSAGE OF FIRST PETER

SOJOURNERS AND EXILES

SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON



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Sojourners and Exiles

The Message of First Peter

Sinclair B. Ferguson



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Introduction

In recent years, many Christians have felt more and more like strangers in a hostile culture. The Apostle Peter wrote a letter to a church living in a similar situation. First Peter teaches us that the gospel empowers Christians to live faithfully anywhere and at any time. In *Sojourners and Exiles*, Sinclair Ferguson shows us what great encouragement we can find in this letter written to Christians going through a “fiery trial” in a pagan empire.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind yourself of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills that the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge that each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that is intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The time stamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Sojourners and Exiles* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 14-Week Plan	Standard 12-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1 & 2	1–3
2	1	2	3 & 4	4–6
3	2	3	5 & 6	7–9
4	3	4	7 & 8	10–12
5	4	5	9 & 10	
6	5	6	11 & 12	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8	9		
10	9	10		
11	10	11		
12	11	12		
13	12			
14	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

A Tract for Our Times

INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Peter wrote his letter to teach Christians how to live in a pagan culture. He offers his original readers comfort by showing how the gospel works even in the hostile Roman society. In this lesson, Dr. Ferguson introduces 1 Peter as a tract for our times. Christians today often feel like cultural outsiders and need to know that the gospel works everywhere and in any age.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain why Christians today should study 1 Peter
- Understand why the Apostle Peter is well suited to offer comfort to suffering Christians
- Describe the Christians who first read this letter

KEY IDEAS

- The gospel works in any culture because Christ is always with His people.
- Peter writes as one who knows from experience what these churches are suffering.
- Christians are those who have been chosen and set apart by God.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Do you ever feel that your faith in Christ makes you a cultural outsider? Why or why not?

- Why do you think God allows His people to suffer?

Scripture Reading

About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

—Acts 12:1–5

- What did Peter and the other Apostles experience as described in this passage? How did the church respond? How might knowledge of this event affect the way you read 1 Peter?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Why Study 1 Peter?

0:00–12:10

- Why do Christians often find it easy to identify with the Apostle Peter?
- What is the “general reason” that we should study 1 Peter?
- What three attitudes can Christians have when living in an anti-Christian culture?

The Apostle and His Readers

12:10–23:17

- Why did Peter not complain about the suffering that he and these churches were enduring?
- What are two ways that Peter describes his original readers?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Why is 1 Peter a tract for our times?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss how they tend to imagine the New Testament church. Ask: How is the political and cultural situation of the early church different from that of modern Western culture and how is it similar? How hard is it to relate to the experiences of the first Christians?

- How does the way that Peter identifies himself help us understand the purpose of this letter, and how should we respond to it?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss what impressions they have of Peter as they begin this study. Ask: How is he like and unlike other Apostles who wrote the New Testament? How easy is it to trust his teaching?

- The Christians who read this letter were chosen and sanctified, or set apart. Who chose them and set them apart? For what purpose were they chosen and set apart?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss what they think uniquely identifies Christians. Ask: Which aspects of your Christian identity most encourage you? How comforting do you find the identity that Peter applies to these suffering churches?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for choosing us to belong to His Son.
- Confess any doubts you have that Jesus is enough for you as you face difficult circumstances.
- Thank God for comforting His people through the promise of Christ's presence.
- Ask God for a growing faith in His providence and promises as you face fear and pain.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. What makes it easy for many people to identify with the Apostle Peter?
 - a. His strong faith
 - b. His love of Christ
 - c. His failures
 - d. His doctrinal clarity
2. Contemporary Western culture is a threat unlike any other that the church has ever faced.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Which of the following is *not* a way that Peter identifies himself in this letter?
 - a. Fellow elder
 - b. Friend
 - c. Eyewitness
 - d. Fellow sufferer
4. Thinking about what future experience can help us see our present suffering as light and momentary?
 - a. Spiritual growth
 - b. Relief from pain
 - c. Peace
 - d. Glory
5. Which member of the Trinity is mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1–2?
 - a. The Father
 - b. The Son
 - c. The Holy Spirit
 - d. All three members of the Trinity
6. What is *not* one of the ways that we as Christians persevere through trials?
 - a. Focusing on Christ
 - b. Living by the Spirit
 - c. Pure positive thinking
 - d. Remembering that the Father chose us

Answer Key—A Tract for Our Times

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What did Peter and the other Apostles experience as described in this passage? How did the church respond? How might knowledge of this event affect the way you read 1 Peter?

The Apostles were persecuted by a political leader, King Herod. James was killed, and Peter was sent to prison. Herod did this to please the church's enemies. The people of the church responded by praying; they called out to God for help. Knowing that Peter faced hostility and persecution can help readers trust his teaching. He has endured trials like those that his readers face.

During the Video

Why Study 1 Peter?

- Why do Christians often find it easy to identify with the Apostle Peter?

It is easy to identify with Peter because Scripture has recorded his many faults. Peter betrayed Jesus during His earthly ministry. He also wavered as a leader of the early church and was confronted by the Apostle Paul (see Gal. 2:11–14). We often find it easiest to open our hearts to a writer or teacher who shares our weaknesses.

- What is the “general reason” that we should study 1 Peter?

We should study 1 Peter for the general reason that it is the Word of God. All of the Bible teaches us about the Lord Jesus Christ and how to serve Him. The Scriptures correct us and then heal us spiritually.

- What three attitudes can Christians have when living in an anti-Christian culture?

First, we can put our heads in the sand and try to ignore potential dangers. Second, we can complain about everything that is going wrong in society. Third, we can find exhilaration in the New Testament's teaching and its relevance to our times.

The Apostle and His Readers

- Why did Peter not complain about the suffering that he and these churches were enduring?

Peter did not complain about their circumstances because his focus was not on earthly life. His focus was the glory that God will reveal in His people when Christ returns—a glory that Christians begin to experience now. Peter lived his life backward from the future, so even terrible suffering seemed light and temporary.

- What are two ways that Peter describes his original readers?

Peter describes his readers in terms of their geographical locations and their spiritual identity. Geographically, they were scattered around Asia Minor, the area that is the nation of Turkey today. Spiritually, they were chosen by God and set apart from the world as servants of Christ.

After the Video

- Why is 1 Peter a tract for our times?

Peter wrote this letter to ancient churches, but their situation is similar to ours. The New Testament church lived centuries before the beginning of “Christendom,” the attempt to make whole societies Christian. Peter wrote to churches that faced hostility from a pagan culture, and modern Christians increasingly face hostility as Christian influence on Western society fades away.

- How does the way that Peter identifies himself help us understand the purpose of this letter, and how should we respond to it?

Peter identifies himself as an Apostle—a “sent one.” As an Apostle, he was a witness to Christ and His sufferings and was sent to tell the world about Jesus. Because he is an Apostle, he has authority: readers can know that what he says is true. He also identifies himself as one who has suffered as his readers have. He is not above them. He shows readers that he and they together have fellowship with Christ in their trials.

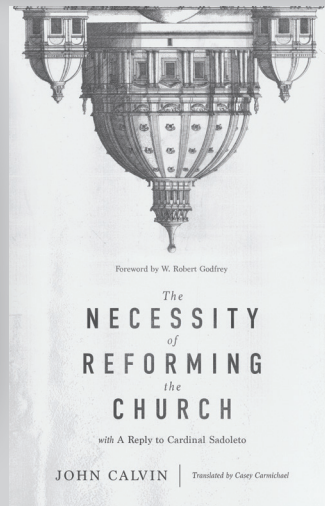
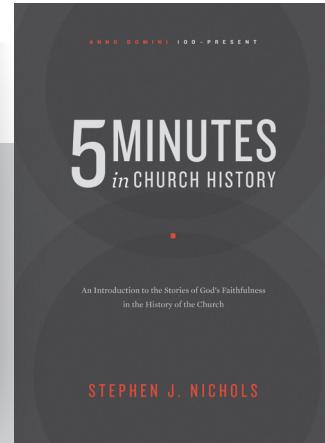
- The Christians who read this letter were chosen and sanctified, or set apart. Who chose them and set them apart? For what purpose were they chosen and set apart?

God chose and set apart—sanctified—these Christians. Each person of the Trinity plays a role in this. God the Father chooses Christians before the foundation of the world. He chooses them so that they will be obedient to Christ, God the Son. God the Holy Spirit sets apart or sanctifies those whom the Father has chosen. These things form the identity of Christians.

REVIEW QUIZ

1. **C.**
While Peter had strong faith and taught sound doctrine and certainly loved our Savior, he can seem easier to identify with than many others in Scripture because his failures are plainly retold through Scripture.
2. **B.**
Certain aspects of modern culture are new, but living as Christians in a non-Christian society is not new. This was the condition of all Christians for the first three hundred years of the church.
3. **B.**
Peter identifies himself as an Apostle, an eyewitness of Christ's suffering, a fellow elder, and a fellow sufferer. He does not identify himself as a friend, though his affection for the church is apparent throughout his letter.
4. **D.**
Christians have peace with God now through the gospel, but Peter emphasizes here the glory that will be revealed in them when Christ returns (1 Peter 1:7). Thinking about this future glory, which in some ways Christians already have, puts our suffering in perspective.
5. **D.**
Peter mentions all three members of the Trinity in these opening verses. The Father knew us and chose us before He created the world. The Holy Spirit sanctified us or set us apart for God's purposes. Jesus Christ, as our King, saved us through His blood so that we could worship and obey Him.
6. **C.**
The work of each member of the Trinity contributes to our encouragement and comfort. As we focus on Christ, our Savior and King, live by the power of the Spirit, who does the work of sanctifying us, and remember that the Father has chosen us as His own, we grow in hope and the ability to press on. In a general sense, these truths are "positive," but Peter does not want Christians to focus on whatever makes them feel good and ignore harsh realities. Instead, he wants them to focus on God so that they can persevere and know that their suffering has a purpose.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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