

1 Peter

Living Faithfully in a Hostile World

Course Introduction

Of all the original disciples that Jesus trained during His relatively brief ministry on earth, Peter certainly stands out as the most unique. He was brave and bold on the one hand, but often stubborn and brash on the other. We see him making solid steps of faith in one moment, but in another repeatedly saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Based on how he is depicted in the gospels, we might think he had little chance of graduating from his training. In the crucial moments on the final visit to Jerusalem, Peter even denied the Lord three times. Despite this mixed bag of characteristics and actions, it was none other than Peter who became the primary spokesman for the newly formed messianic community of believers on the Day of Pentecost, and it was Peter who played the key leadership role in the early chapters of the book of Acts.

Before finally dying as a martyr for the Lord Jesus in the late A.D. 60's—tradition tells us he was crucified upside down—God also used him to write two epistles of the New Testament. The rough, rugged fisherman from Galilee served his Lord faithfully all the way to the end of his life. He was well-acquainted with the hardships of ministry as he lived out his faith in the context of the first-century A.D. Roman world. Although the church grew rapidly during those early decades, it was not without cost. In a world where idolatry was rampant and worship of the Roman Caesar as “lord of lords” was expected, Peter “the rock” stood steadfast as an example of faithfulness to His Lord.

In writing this epistle, Peter sought to minister to Christians in the Roman Empire who suffered for their faith in Christ. His message to them was to remain faithful to Christ as they lived in a world hostile to Christianity and awaited their Lord's triumphant return. 1 Peter also speaks to us today, teaching us how and why we should *live faithfully in a world hostile to our faith*.

Reasons for Taking This Course

There are several reasons as to why this course, *1 Peter: Living Faithfully in a Hostile World*, is important for you to study. The first and foremost reason is that Christianity in all parts of the world has come under tremendous attack unlike that in any previous generation since the early centuries. On the one hand, Christianity is ridiculed philosophically on most college campuses, and Christians are made out to be the dregs of society who stand in the way of “the new morality.” In society at large, Christians are often deprived of rights and job opportunities. In many countries, the lives of Christians are even in physical danger. The point is that with each passing year, the world is becoming increasingly more hostile to Christianity, and Christians need to know how to live in such an environment. A second reason for taking this course is to gain conviction that living faithfully for Christ in the present—despite whatever hardships and suffering must be faced—is worth it considering the Bible's promise of our Savior's return in glory. Faithfulness now will mean great reward then! A third reason for taking this course is to learn how we can all better support our fellow believers in such difficult times. The church needs to stand united, building up one another in love. Finally, a fourth reason for taking this course is to learn how we, as Christians, are to respond to various authorities under whom we are placed, particularly government rulers and authorities over us in our respective countries.

By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand the theme and purpose of 1 Peter.
- Be able to trace that theme and purpose throughout the epistle.
- Have developed your own overview chart of 1 Peter.
- Be able to explain several of the difficult passages in the epistle.
- Be better prepared to live faithfully for Christ in a world increasingly hostile to Christianity.
- Have strengthened your conviction that Christ will return victoriously to vindicate your faith in Him and reward you for standing faithfully for Him in this generation.

About the Author

This course was written by Dr. J. Paul Tanner, who holds both a ThM and PhD degree in Hebrew Language and Old Testament studies. He is versed in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, and he has been teaching the Bible for over forty years in various theological seminaries around the world. He has authored numerous articles in professional Christian journals and written several courses for BEE World. He is also the author of an in-depth commentary on Daniel for the Evangelical Exegetical Commentary series produced in conjunction with Logos Bible Software.

Course Organization

For those taking this course online at the Internet Biblical Seminary website, at any time during your online study, you can click the "Course Outline" button located in the top frame to get the linked course outline to display in the left frame.

Units of Study

There are twelve lessons for this course, grouped into four units:

UNIT 1: An Introduction to First Peter and the Opening Verses (1 Pet 1:1-12)

- Lesson 1: A Biblical Introduction to Evil, Tribulation, and Suffering
- Lesson 2: Background and Overview of 1 Peter (incl. 1 Pet 1:1-2)
- Lesson 3: Three Perspectives to Guide Our Lives on Earth While Awaiting Christ's Return and Future Salvation (1 Pet 1:3-12)

UNIT 2: The Call to Live Faithfully as the New People of God in Facing Suffering as Christians (1 Pet 1:13-2:10)

- Lesson 4: Facing Suffering by Holy Living in Expectation of Christ's Return (1 Pet 1:13-2:3)
- Lesson 5: Facing Suffering by Identifying with the Rejected Christ as the New People God (1 Pet 2:4-10)

UNIT 3: Reminders and Counsel for Christians who Suffer Innocently (1 Pet 2:11-3:22)

- Lesson 6: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering: Part 1 (1 Pet 2:11-20)
- Lesson 7: Christian Responsibilities that May Incur Conflict and Suffering: Part 2 (1 Pet 3:1-12)
- Lesson 8: Suffering Innocently: Counsel for Christians and Reflections on Christ's Sufferings (1 Pet 3:13-22)

Lesson 9: Faithfully Following Christ to Face a World Hostile to Christians (1 Pet 4:1-6)

UNIT 4: Final Words of Encouragement and Exhortations (1 Pet 4:7–5:14)

Lesson 10: Final Guidance and Consolations for Christians Who Face Suffering (1 Pet 4:7-19)

Lesson 11: Exhortations to Help the Christian Community Make a United Stance (1 Pet 5:1-11)

Lesson 12: Summary and Final Reflections (1 Pet 5:12-14)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Answers to the Unit Exams

Appendix 2: An Overview Chart of 1 Peter

As you plan your study schedule, decide on what dates you want to finish each unit. You can then divide this time into study periods for each lesson. We suggest that you try to do one lesson each week (at least three lessons per month). The lessons vary in length, but you should allocate about three to four hours per lesson. You can do this if you study about one hour each day. At this rate, you should be able to complete the course in three to four months. Or you may speed this up by doing two or three lessons per week.

Lesson Organization

Please give careful attention to each part of the lesson:

Title

Lesson Introduction

Lesson Outline

Lesson Objectives

Lesson Reading Assignments

Lesson Content

Lesson Self Check Quiz

Answers to Questions in Lesson

Self-Check Quiz Answers

The title, introduction, outline, and objectives provide a preview of the lesson. Your mind will be more alert and receptive, and you will learn better because of this preview. The lesson reading assignments instruct you in any reading material or any exercises that need to be completed.

The lesson development follows the lesson outline. Its comments, suggestions, and questions all help you understand the material and apply God's Word to your life. Be sure to check your answers with the ones provided. These will fix your attention once more on the main points of the lesson. This procedure is designed to make your learning more effective and long-lasting.

Make special note of the maps, charts, and other illustrations that accompany each lesson.

Student Instructions

This course is comprised of twelve lessons, in which you will systematically study through the epistle of 1 Peter to discover the author's intended meaning and apply relevant principles from the text to your life.

Each lesson is made up of approximately 20-25 questions along with pertinent comments that help guide you through the epistle of 1 Peter. Each lesson is designed to be completed in approximately 2 to 4 hours. We highly recommend that you have a study partner for working through these lessons. This helps with accountability, and it makes the process more enjoyable and interesting.

You and your study partner should plan to do a complete lesson in one sitting. To begin, you simply need to turn to Lesson One and start reading the lesson. Each lesson is sub-divided into “topics,” which usually correspond with paragraphs in the biblical text. Your study should proceed like this:

1. Read the biblical passage that corresponds to the “topic” you are studying.
2. Read the notes in the lesson for that “topic.”
3. When you come to a “Question,” stop and carefully write your answer in the space provided. You should try to write down your answer to all the questions for the lesson before checking your answers.
4. The answers for the questions are provided near the end of each lesson in a section entitled “Answers to Questions.” As mentioned above, you should try to complete all the questions for the lesson before checking your answers.
5. After you and your study partner have read the Answer, you may wish to quickly discuss the question and answer, depending on how much time you have remaining. In some cases, this may prompt you to do further study of your own.
6. After you and your study partner have completed the entire lesson and checked your answers, the final step will be for you to complete the Lesson Self Check Quiz located near the end of the lesson. The Lesson Self Check consists of ten questions that are designed to test that you have understood some of the main points of the lesson. Answers to the Lesson Self Check are provided at the very end of the lesson.
7. At the end of each Unit, there is also a Unit Exam. Unless you have been instructed to do so otherwise, you should wait to take this exam when your group meets together for facilitation.

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Map of Asia Minor in the First Century A.D.



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