

## 2 | The Expression of Our Hope



### THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Fraud. Cheating. Scandal. Millions upon millions of dollars paid to college administrators. The 2019 college admissions bribery scandal uncovered all of this. High-profile celebrities, student athletes, coaches, admissions counselors, and other professionals all were exposed in the largest case of its kind ever prosecuted by the United States Justice Department. The scandal left many scratching their heads wondering why any parent would go to such lengths to get a child into a university.

At the bottom of it all was misplaced hope—misplaced hope in a university, degree, team, or status. All those things can come crumbling down. But it doesn't take a high-profile case to see misplaced hope; we see it when people pursue a bigger house, a better job, or a certain status as if these things truly matter. Hope in such things is never sure; these things can disappear overnight. Is there a firm footing for hope that will never disappoint? Faith and hope in Christ transforms our perspective so that life is no longer about what we can gain but about how we love and serve God and others.

# GROUP TIME

**THE POINT:** Our hope in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ how we view the \_\_\_\_\_ and live in it.

The first recipients of Peter's letter were facing persecution, but Peter didn't call on them to take up physical weapons against the Roman Empire. Rather, he understood that Christians fight the true battles in the mind; our battle is over our affections, time, disciplines, anxieties, and priorities.

**1 Peter 1:13-16** <sup>13</sup> **Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

<sup>14</sup> **As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance.**

<sup>15</sup> **But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct;** <sup>16</sup> **for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.**

**Live in grace and \_\_\_\_\_ rather than conformity to the world.**

As Christ-followers, we're called to remain focused on the hope we have in Christ. Peter gave five admonitions to help us stay aligned with that hope:

- ▶ **Be ready.** "With your minds ready for action" (v. 13). We should be mentally alert as we prepare for Christ's return.
- ▶ **Be alert.** "Be sober-minded" (v. 13). In this context, Peter was referring to the danger of letting our minds be clouded by deceit or our own passions and whims.
- ▶ **Be hopeful.** "Set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (v. 13). This isn't wishful thinking or idly passing time; this is rock-solid, assertive trust. And this hope-setting has an object; it's focused on the grace of Christ!
- ▶ **Be distinct.** "Do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance" (v. 14). The lives of believers should be counter-cultural; we've been radically transformed by the gospel.
- ▶ **Be holy.** "As the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy" (vv. 15-16).

**1 Peter 1:17-21** <sup>17</sup> **If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as**

strangers.<sup>18</sup> For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold,<sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.<sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for you.<sup>21</sup> Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

**Live as God’s people because you have been \_\_\_\_\_.**

Humanity isn’t getting better. Life without Christ is futile, empty, and meaningless. Sin snatches the meaning out of life and leaves us searching for direction and purpose. Jesus said He came to give us abundant life (John 10:10). All the silver and gold in the world can’t redeem us or change our spiritual condition. The bondage of sin can only be broken with the blood of Christ.

**1 Peter 1:22-25**<sup>22</sup> Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly,<sup>23</sup> because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.<sup>24</sup> For All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

**Live according to \_\_\_\_\_ in order to remain pure in this world.**

God’s Word forever stands as the sole authority for how to live in the world, no matter where we are or what difficulties confront us. Peter recognized that because we’ve experienced new life in Christ, our obedience is the means of our purification, and that purity overflows in love for one another. In this passage, Peter wasn’t commanding us to love—he reasoned that our faith meant we are already loving—but he called us to do so “constantly” (v. 22).

## BE SET APART

Using the acrostic below, record four actions you can take to live a holy life through your hope in Christ. An example has been provided.

Honor God through prayer each day.

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**LIVE IT OUT**

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Hope in Christ changes how we view the world and live in it. How will you live out that truth?

▶ **Confess.** Confess to the Lord where you have misplaced your hope. Be honest and open about the people or things that you’ve looked to for hope apart from Christ.

▶ **Read.** Commit to read and apply God’s Word to your life every day. It’s through continually reading the Bible that we can develop a lifestyle of obedience and holy living. Use the daily devotional readings on pages 19–22 for your time in God’s Word each day.

▶ **Commit.** If there is an area of your life where your hope in Christ isn’t evident through your obedience to God, commit to change that. Surrender that area of life to God and remove all the barriers that stand between you and total obedience.

**TALK IT OUT**

**Want to go a step further? Gather with two or three Christ-followers of the same gender. Read 1 Peter 1:13-25, then use the following summary and questions for a deeper discussion.**

The saying “He who dies with the most toys wins” aptly describes how many people in today’s culture live. Whether it’s a bigger house, a better job, or getting our children into a certain school, people chase after the things of this world. Faith and hope in Christ transforms our perspective. It places Christ at the center of our lives, so that life is no longer about what we can gain but about how we love and serve God and others.

*What does it look like to set our hope on Christ?*

*In practical terms, what does it mean to be holy?*

*What step of obedience to His Word is God calling you to take?*



## **DAY 1: As Christians, our lives display the hope we have in Christ.**

### **Read 1 Peter 1:13-16.**

We live as God's people because we've been redeemed from the world. Living as strangers in this world doesn't mean that as Christians we're to be detached and isolated from other people. However, it does mean we are no longer driven by the culture's values and demands. We fight the battle of the mind, ready for action, living according to God's standards of holiness and purity through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The created world isn't evil in and of itself. We may build houses, buy cars, enjoy meals at nice restaurants, go on vacations, exchange gifts, and work to earn money. Nonetheless, Satan controls this world's system, and any of these good gifts can quickly become idols in our lives. When our minds become consumed with the gifts and forget the Giver, we're out of balance; then we need to realign our minds with the hope we have in Christ.

*Place 1 Peter 1:13-16 somewhere you'll see it often. For one week, read these verses aloud one or more times as you prepare to start your day. At the end of the week, reflect on how beginning your day in this way has impacted you.*

*“Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

1 PETER 1:13

## DAY 2: Christ redeems us from our old lives, paving the way for new lives in Him.

### Read 1 Peter 1:17-19.

*Redemption* is a rich word with huge implications for our walk with Christ. The Greek word *lutroo* means to gain release by paying a ransom price. Here are ten biblical truths about redemption:

- ▶ We cannot redeem ourselves (Psalm 49:7-8).
- ▶ God's great love planned our redemption (Isaiah 52:3; 63:9).
- ▶ God sent His Son to redeem us (1 Corinthians 1:30; Galatians 4:4-5).
- ▶ Christ became a man so that He could redeem us (Hebrews 2:14-18).
- ▶ Christ paid the ransom that frees us from the bondage of sin (Romans 3:24; Titus 2:14).
- ▶ Redemption is through the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:9).
- ▶ We've been redeemed from our old lives (1 Peter 1:18).
- ▶ We've been redeemed from the bondage of the law (Galatians 3:13; 4:4-5).
- ▶ Redemption implies a change of masters (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
- ▶ Redemption is permanent and eternal (Hebrews 9:12).

*Which of the truths listed above resonated with you today? In prayer, thank God for His gracious gift of redemption.*

## DAY 3: Christ's resurrection is the basis for our hope.

### Read 1 Peter 1:20-21.

We see two wonderful truths about God in this passage. First, God is an impartial God. He judges impartially. He's not impressed with wealth, education, social standing, physical appearance, or intellect. God doesn't appraise our value based on externals; God looks at the heart. And, second, God redeems us through Christ. Our salvation wasn't secured by anything perishable, "like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ" (vv. 18-19). The accumulation of worldly goods will fade away, but our redemption is forever secure in Christ.

Peter linked back to the brilliance of the resurrection as the basis for our hope and faith in verses 20-21. Without the triumph of God raising Jesus from death, we truly are without hope and have nothing in which to place a confident faith. This kind of hope is found only in Jesus.

*Underline verse 21 in your Bible as a reminder that our hope comes from Jesus.*

## DAY 4: Loving God means we're to genuinely love people.

### Read 1 Peter 1:22-23.

It's impossible to love God's truth and hate another person. Since we believe the Word, we must act on it—and Scripture is abundantly clear on the matter of love. Love for one another is the hallmark of Christianity. We're not to use others for our own advantage, and we don't mask inward grudges with a smile. We see no superficial unity painted over hate-filled hearts. This isn't love in word only; we are to constantly display "sincere brotherly love" (v. 22). Sincerity means our love is to be genuine and real, without hypocrisy or pretense.

The Word of God shows us how to love sincerely. In fact, we can't love in this way without knowing the Word. Throughout the pages of His Word, God reveals what love is, how He has shown it to us, and how we are to manifest it to the world around us. We aren't left on our own to determine how and in what manner we're to love others. We're to be known by our love. And, not just any love; it's to be authentic.

*Serve someone this week. Ask your pastor for the name of someone you can serve in the church. Consider visiting someone in the nursing home or a shut-in at home. Pray with them, talk to them, and show them Christ's love.*



## DAY 5: God's Word is our trustworthy guide for living out our hope.

Read 1 Peter 1:24-25.

Peter gave us two important truths about the Word in this passage:

- ▶ **God's Word is living. It is alive and active.** The Word is always working to accomplish God's purposes. It isn't dead, meaningless, or outdated. "For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).
- ▶ **God's Word is enduring.** The original Greek language the apostle Peter used here means to remain, stay, abide, endure, and be permanent. Often in the New Testament we see this word translated as *abide* or *remain*. God's Word is here to stay. It's fixed and unchanging because the God who spoke it is fixed and unchanging.

*To live by the Word, we must know the Word. Commit to memorizing one Scripture passage a month, beginning with 1 Peter 1:24-25.*

*"God's Word is here to stay. It's fixed and unchanging because the God who spoke it is fixed and unchanging."*

DR. MICHAEL CATT