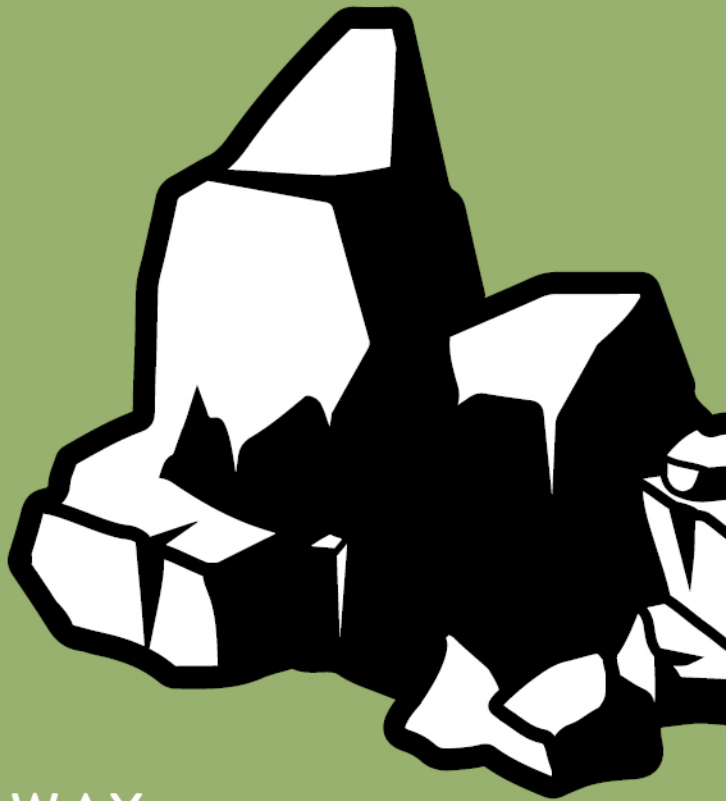


8 STUDIES
+ LEADER NOTES

1 PETER

Living Stones



PATHWAY
BIBLE GUIDES



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Living Stones

1 PETER

BY MATTHEW JENSEN



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SYDNEY • YOUNGSTOWN

Living Stones

Pathway Bible Guides: 1 Peter

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Before you begin

Peter's first letter was written to Christians to encourage them to stand firm in their present situation because it was the place where God had put them:

I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. (1 Pet 5:12)

The reason Peter's audience needed to hear this was because they were suffering for their faith (1:6-7). Peter wanted them to think correctly about their situation in life, and to understand who they were and what they could look forward to, so that they would be able to continue in the present. They would do this by recalling the message they heard from the prophets and from the apostles. He puts it this way in 2 Peter:

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles ... (2 Pet 3:1-2)

In other words, 1 Peter is written to encourage believers in the face of suffering to stand firm in their faith by remembering the words of the prophets, Jesus and the apostles.

The original recipients of 1 Peter were Jewish believers who were living outside of Judea in areas of Asia Minor (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; 1:1). Being away from their homeland,

these people were “exiles of the Dispersion”, “sojourners” from the land of Israel (1:1, 17; 2:11). They especially felt this status because they were now suffering for their faith in Jesus while they lived outside of the promised land. They had the salvation foretold in the prophets, but were not in Israel living under the rule of the new Jewish king Jesus. Yet even though they were suffering in exile, they were waiting to receive their salvation and their eternal inheritance, which would happen when Jesus returned (1:4-5). They were the new people of God in the present (2:9-10) while they waited for Jesus’ return and his glorification (2:12).

The theme of *identity*—being in exile, suffering for their faith while they wait for Jesus’ return—can be seen in the structure of the letter. In the first part, Peter explains to the readers who they now are: their present identity (1:1-2:10). In the second part, he then turns to explain how they should live out this identity (2:11-5:13). Accordingly, these studies follow the structure of 1 Peter. The first three studies examine what Peter says about believers’ identity:

Study 1: A new birth and family (1:1-12)

Study 2: Family life (1:13-25)

Study 3: A newborn people (2:1-10)

The last five studies explore Peter’s description of how we should live because of this identity:

Study 4: Living in this world (2:11-17)

Study 5: Living as a slave, wife or husband (2:18-3:7)

Study 6: Living in suffering (I) (3:8-4:6)

Study 7: Living in suffering (II) (4:7-19)

Study 8: Living as an elder or young man (5:1-13)

I hope and pray that at the end of these studies you can better understand what it means to be living away from our home in heaven—not just the assurance that we have an inheritance in heaven

and are God's special people, but that you also know what it means to live as such. Further, I hope that this knowledge encourages you to stand firm in "the true grace of God" (5:12) found in the Lord Jesus, no matter what situation confronts you.

1. A new birth and family

1 PETER 1:1-12



Getting started

In the face of life's difficulties, where do people turn, and why?

Where do *you* turn, and why?



Light from the Word

Read 1 Peter 1:1-12.

1. How does Peter introduce himself?
2. What stands out to you about his description of his audience (vv 1-2)?
3. Why does Peter bless God (vv 3-4)?
4. What is God guarding us for, and how is he guarding us (v 5)?



To finish

Why is it hard to rejoice when we suffer trials?

How can the assurance and the promises offered by this passage help you in the midst of trials?



Give thanks and pray

- Thank God that he has raised Jesus from the dead and thus we are born again into a living hope and a certain inheritance.
- Thank God that he guards us and tests us to purify our faith.
- Ask God to strengthen you in the face of trials so that you may be filled with joy as you understand the security of your salvation guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus.