

Strangers on the earth

Getting to grips with the message of 1 Peter

This first letter of Peter speaks right into the challenges Christians face in the western world in the 21st century.

Its aim is to encourage you as a believer, and to instruct you in how to live in such a way that you *“declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”*

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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5. 1 Peter 2.11-3.7 [w/b Sunday 3rd March 2019]

“.., that they may .. glorify God ..”

Our identity in Christ has been carefully articulated by Peter in the opening chapter and a half of his letter. That culminated in the great affirmation that we are now the people of God whose primary purpose is to *“declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light”* (2.9).

But how do you declare the praises of God if you’re not given the platform to speak? It’s to that question that Peter now turns our attention by highlighting the ways in which the distinctive manner of our living will be an eloquent testimony to the goodness and the glory of God.

[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! It may be helpful to try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 3, 4 and 6. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read 1 Peter 2.11-3.7. Reading the whole of this passage will give you a feel for the thrust of Peter’s message and the different directions in which he applies it.

Which verses in this passage do you find particularly pertinent for yourself at this time?

What is the basic theme of the passage?

2. Read 1 Peter 2.11-12. As a people whose basic calling is to '*declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness..*' (v.9) how we live clearly matters as a means of proclaiming God.

Why do you think Peter reminds them (again - see 1.1 and 1.17) that they are 'foreigners and exiles'?

Read Matt.5.13-16: how in our living can we be 'salt' and 'light' in such a way that God is glorified through us?

3. Read 1 Peter 2.13-17. The teaching which Peter gives here in relation to the 'state' is consistent with the teaching of the rest of Scripture (see, eg, Rom.13.1ff).

What do you see as the challenges in the exhortation to submit 'to every human authority'?

What does Peter mean by stressing that it is '*for the Lord's sake*' that we are to submit to the authorities?

How will the final verse here (v.17) help ensure there is a healthy balance in our submitting?

4. Read 1 Peter 2.18-20. Peter moves on from the context of our 'citizenship' to that of the workplace: what's said about slaves and masters is applicable to the arena of employment.

What (from your observation and/or experience) can make the workplace a difficult environment (and sometimes especially so for a Christian)?

How do you *'bear up under the pain of unjust suffering'* without becoming simply a 'doormat'?

5. Read 1 Peter 2.21-25. As those indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we carry Jesus with us into the workplace: we 'follow in His steps' in the workplace as much as in any other context.

What is the example of Jesus to which Peter refers here and how might this find expression in the workplace?

What is the point which Peter is impressing on his readers in vv.24-25?

6. Read 1 Peter 3.1-6. Alongside the work context, home and family life is the other major sphere in which the way we live

will point people to God (2.12): Peter focuses, for illustrative purposes, on one such 'domestic' relationship.

In the society into which Peter was writing, a wife was not always able to *voice* the gospel message: how can the good news of Jesus still be communicated in that sort of context?

Whose lives have made the greatest impact on you, and what was it about them which had that effect?

7. Read 1 Peter 3.7. In a '*Strictly Come Dancing*' sort of way, Peter recognizes that there are different 'steps' which each member of the family must learn in the 'dance' of domestic life.

What are the qualities which Peter here suggests will prompt others to "*see your good deeds and glorify God*"?

What does Peter mean by the words - "*.. so that nothing will hinder your prayers*"?

Against the backdrop of all he has been saying, why are our prayers so important?