

# 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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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## 10. 1 Peter 5.5-14 [w/b Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2019]

*“.. the true grace of God ..”*

This letter speaks directly into our experience as Christians in Scotland today. In this concluding section of the letter Peter makes sure that his readers ‘position’ themselves well in relation both to each other and to the Lord Himself.

These right relationships are more important than ever: and the key to such relationships always involves our learning to live in the world of grace. This is the final lesson of the letter.

*[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, 5 and 6. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]*

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**1. Read 1 Peter 5.1-14.** It’s worth reading the whole chapter to get the flow of Peter’s teaching as he brings his letter to a fitting conclusion.

What stands out for you in this chapter?

In what ways (if any!) does what Peter writes in this chapter fortify you as you follow Jesus?

2. **Read 1 Peter 5.5b.** The 'submissiveness' which Peter has exhorted his readers to show (see especially 2.13-3.7) has humility as its 'flip side': this is the note on which his letter ends.

How should our 'clothing ourselves with humility towards one another' find expression in a fellowship?

What important incentive does Peter give towards such humility by quoting the verse from Proverbs (Prov.3.34)?

3. **Read 1 Peter 5.6-7.** The humility which Peter is enjoining begins with our learning to relate rightly to God Himself, entrusting ourselves to 'Him who judges justly' (1 Pet.2.23).

To what truths about God does Peter point his readers?

**Read Phil.4.4-7:** in practical terms, how do both Peter and Paul encourage us to handle our anxieties?

What are your coping mechanisms in the face of anxiety?

4. **Read 1 Peter 5.8.** Not for the first time (see 4.7) Peter urges his readers to be vigilant, underlining the reality (behind the hostility and adversity they face) of an unseen, powerful enemy.

What do you learn about the devil from what Peter writes in this verse?

What steps might we take if we are to 'be alert and of sober mind'?

**5. Read 1 Peter 5.9.** The most important truth about the devil which the Bible stresses is simply that he is already a *defeated* foe: we're not to lose sight of that or be frightened by him.

How do we 'resist the devil'?

Read **James 4.6-10** and note the parallels with this passage: why does the motivation Peter gives here help?

*How familiar are you with the persecuted church throughout the world today? Organisations such as [Barnabas Fund](#) and [Open Doors](#) provide information about, and channel practical help to, persecuted Christians throughout the world.*

**6. Read 1 Peter 5.10-11.** Peter brings all that he's been saying to something of a climax, giving his readers a glorious, final reassurance in the face of all their trials.

Why do you think Peter refers to God here as “*the God of all grace*”?

What is the call of God to which Peter refers (look back at 2.9 as well), and how does a proper understanding of His call fortify and strengthen our spirits?

**7. Read 1 Peter 5.12-14.** The greetings with which the letter closes are not unrelated to all that Peter has just been writing, highlighting ‘the family of believers’ (5.9) to which we belong.

What does standing fast in ‘the true grace of God’ entail?

Read **Acts 13.4-13** and **2 Tim.4.11** along with v.13: in the light of the letter as a whole what lessons might we learn from Mark’s experience?