

LIVING AS IF

1 & 2 PETER

Week 1

Getting started: Summer is coming. (No, really it is!) What is something you are looking forward to about this summer? Are you doing anything to get ready for your summer plans?

This week ... We begin a journey through the letters written by Peter. Peter walked with Jesus as a disciple; he was one of the three disciples closest to Jesus. Peter was changed by Jesus' life; he was transformed by Jesus' resurrection. Peter writes his letters near the end of his life after living a life committed to the radical changes that the good news of Jesus as Lord and Redeemer brought. He is most likely in prison waiting execution as he writes to his fellow Christ-followers encouraging them to remember who God is, what He has done, and who they are. Peter encourages them (and us) to live differently daily because of these realities. No matter what the circumstances being faced, we are encouraged to living as if the truth of Christ was more real than the situations being experienced.

Main Idea: Jesus is alive! His resurrection gives us a salvation that changes everything. Remembering what we have been given, what our future is, and who we are now gives us perspective and hope for the circumstances we are in and the commitment to live differently.

Passage: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Read the passage a couple of times. You might even retell the passage together as a group. Be listening for what this passage says about what we have been given because Jesus is alive.

Peter begins his letter by reminding us what God has given us—a salvation that even the angels are in awe of.

Start thinking at a Head level. These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What do you see that God has given you through Jesus?
- What does this passage tell us about what's coming and the impact now?

Peter says that our salvation fills us with joy, and our hope and faith in Jesus' promises give us endurance. *Start sharing at a Heart level. These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.*

- What is a trial that you have experienced or are experiencing? How is it challenging or growing you? (How does what Peter writes affect you?)
- When you set goals and priorities, how does thinking about what Jesus has given you, and that He will return, impact your decisions?

- What in this passage challenges you about how you believe life works?

In 1 Peter 1:13-2:3, Peter continues on by challenging us to live differently because we are new; we are given a living hope; we have a promised inheritance; ours is a faith and hope greater than the circumstances we are in.

Start doing at a Hands level. These questions help us commit to a next step and live it out in our everyday lives.

- Peter gives several directives about how to live differently. Which one stands out to you? Why?
- In what way does it challenge you to adjust how you think and live? Think of practical steps to take this week.

Start practicing. Things to try out this week:

Choose one suggested practice to try this week, or develop your own.

1. Take 5 minutes to be still and meditate on Jesus' death, resurrection, and promised return. Think about what salvation He has given you. Thank Him for what He has done and given you. Try this 2 or more times this week. Notice what comes to mind. Think on it through out your day. Notice how this impacts your actions, responses, and relationships.

2. "Live holy lives" means to live set apart—differently—by focusing on who God is and what He is like. What attribute of God is most meaningful to you at this point in time? Write it down on a card or sticky note. Put it on your mirror or in your pocket every day this week. This week, intentionally, reflect that characteristic in how you live. Let it impact your choices, your decisions, your reactions, how you are in your relationships. Notice what happens this week.

3. God's word helps us grow just as babies need milk or they fail to thrive. Actively take in God's word this week. Be diligent in setting aside time to be in the Word. Every time you eat food, ask yourself, "Am I as hungry for God's word?" Ask God to help you crave His word to speak into your life. Take this challenge this week: every day that you eat food for your body, find a way to "eat" from God's word for your heart and soul. (Ideas: You can listen to the Bible on tape, CD, or .mp3; take a few minutes before bed to read a few verses; have a devotional time; read it with your family, memorize a verse and review it daily.)

Reading: This week covered 1 Peter 1:3-2:3. Next week will look at 1 Peter 2:4-25.

Try reading the chapter two or three times during week. You might try reading or listening to 1 Peter all the way through—maybe even in one sitting.

