

Study Guide for I Peter

(The True Grace of God)

by

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How to Use This Study Guide

Study Guide For I Peter is designed to be especially helpful in connection with Dr. Gutzke's teaching of this subject on radio or tape recordings. However, this Guide may also serve as a profitable basis for other individual, group or class study.

In using this Guide, first read through the articles. Next familiarize yourself with the "Outline of Thought," perhaps reading rapidly through I Peter at the same time, noting where we have made the divisions in our outline. Finally, proceed with the "Study Questions," one section at a time.

If you are coordinating this study with Dr. Gutzke's teaching on radio, you can work ahead of him and then check your answers and ideas against what he says. Or, you can jot down notes as he teaches. Or, you can summarize in your own words under each question after Dr. Gutzke has completed his teaching.

Notes of further explanation are provided in most of the sections.

The purpose of the questions is to re-inforce your learning by getting you to summarize the teaching and write it down in your own words. You will then know the material better, understand it more thoroughly, and have it fixed in your memory. We have no set of "correct answers" for you. The object of the questions is to stimulate your thinking while letting God speak to your heart. Approach each time of study both in prayer and in faith.

You will be blessed as you use this study guide . . . in direct proportion to your own active participation.

Organize A Study Group

Why not share this study with others? We recommend that you find 8-12 persons who are interested in Bible study. Your group could plan to meet once each week or every other week in homes. Where it is possible to hear the studies by Dr. Gutzke on radio, urge each member of your group to listen faithfully and to take notes of Dr. Gutzke's comments, their own impressions and ways of applying the truths of Scripture.

After having heard Dr. Gutzke present his study of the section, with each person taking notes, let the group go over the passage together and answer the "study questions." Encourage each member to join in the discussion and to share matters from his own personal study and notes. Give a time for consideration of personal applications. Close with a period of group prayer.

Make your sessions informal but in order. Have some refreshments as you come together each time. Set a time limit on each meeting. We suggest an hour and a half. Encourage faithful attendance. Be considerate of your host and of one another.

When a group has a clear sense of purpose and calling in the Lord, it will provide added blessing and growth. Pray together for this. And members of your original group, after a time, may want to start additional groups so that the study may multiply. Whenever average attendance exceeds 12, plan to divide into two groups.

The Nature and Purpose of the New Testament Epistles

The Epistles of the New Testament are written to believers in Christ to explain the implications and the applications of the salvation provided by the Lord Jesus Christ. *Living in the Spirit* is quite different from *living in the flesh*. The natural man learns to live in this world of earthly things by *seeing* the phenomena of nature, whereas the spiritual man learns to live in the world of heavenly things by *understanding* the principles of Grace. *Walking by faith* involves different techniques than *walking by sight*.

Salvation is a term with meaning as wide and even more profound than *creation*. Just as every child must learn how to live in the natural world of creation, so must every regenerated person learn how to live in the spiritual world of salvation. The Epistles are designed to help the Christian grow in grace and knowledge "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

The Epistles are written to persons who have been born again. Hence they do not deal with such problems as the existence or nature of God, the birth, life or crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, the account of Pentecost, etc. Each Epistle reads as though it was addressed to everybody. Yet, there is usually a clear indication, in the salutation or in the body of the Epistle, that the writer was specifically addressing believers. Within the group of believers, the writer addressed everybody.

The readers are not told how to be saved, but rather how to live if they are saved. The Epistles do not dwell on the fate of the lost. That is referred to, but it is not the main topic under consideration. The Epistles do not present dire warnings calculated to move men to serve the Lord from the standpoint of fear, but they remind the readers of what Christ has done for them, and they point out what He is doing now and what He will do for them by way of stirring up their "pure minds by way of remembrance." The Epistles are written to willing hearts to guide, exhort, comfort and encourage them to continue and prosper in believing the gospel.

The Epistles are written from the point of view of certain promises. The readers are considered to be persons who once were sinners, but who have "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven." Being born again, they are counted as having the new nature of eternal life within them, and thus now having two natures: an "old man" experienced in, addicted to, and corrupted by sin, and a "new man" begotten of the Word and the Spirit.

Believers are reckoned as being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. What is written to them is commended to their hearts with the confidence that they will recognize, admit, accept, obey, cherish and cling to the truth of the gospel; the Holy Spirit is there to illuminate, to show, to energize and to guide their own thinking and doing. They are classified as "strangers and pilgrims" upon the earth, "sojourners" passing through this changing temporary scene, whose "citizenship is in heaven." They are referred to as sitting "together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus," being "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Their destiny is dwelt upon with joyful assurance: they are to be with the Lord, "without spot or wrinkle," "conformed to the image of his Son." The Epistles do not speak of these things as desirable possibilities to be chosen, but as glorious facts already established in the believers' relationship in Christ Jesus.

The Epistles are written with the perspective of "living in the Lord." Reference is made to "them that are without." But even such references are addressed to those who are "in the Lord." There is no analysis of the problems of living as faced by the natural man. The Epistles treat the problems of living as these arise in the course of *spiritual* living. There is no discussion of the affairs of state or society. There is no evaluation of policies or programs as promoted by the people at large. The Christian is instructed how to conduct himself in this present world, but no message is addressed to this world, nor to the leaders of this world.

The Epistles are definitely a manual for those who are "walking by faith," who look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. There are words of comfort and instruction

to souls who endure "as seeing him who is invisible." The values they cherish are heavenly values derived from spiritual relationship with the living Lord. The principles they follow are implied in the living will of the eternal God. The strength they count on is the strength of the Lord. The typical formula which serves as a characteristic pattern for every discussion is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Salvation is the work of God in man through Jesus Christ. It is indicated to man by promises in the Word of God. It is experienced or realized by the man who believes, and this is the operation of the power of God through the Holy Spirit. God is holy. Man is sinful. Christ Jesus is the mediating Savior who achieved man's reconciliation to God by His death on the Cross, and secured man's deliverance by His resurrection from the dead. What God will do for "whosoever believeth in him," is set forth in His promises, which are "Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus." These are the "exceeding great and precious promises" by which believers become "partakers of the divine nature." The formative rule in all salvation is "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). The more one understands about the promises, the more one can believe: the more one believes, the more one can receive.

The Epistles speak of being "renewed in the spirit of your mind," and of being "transformed by the renewing of your mind." Under the Old Covenant where consequences following conduct were appraised in judgment, it was the fear of the Lord that was the beginning of wisdom. Under the New Covenant, where promises preceding conduct are freely given in grace, it is the faith in Christ that is the way to all blessing.

Evangelism, in its announcement of the promises and its exhortation addressed to the heart and mind of man, culminates in the soul accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But this is not the end of Scriptural instruction. Rather, it is the beginning, just as it is the beginning of "living in Christ." The natural mind conceives of "becoming a Christian?" as a sort of exit, a sort of last step which, as a matter of fact, accounts for the natural inclination to put it off as long as possible. The spiritual mind, as set forth in the Epistles, conceives of this matter of becoming a Christian as an entrance, a first step. This accounts for the spiritual urgency to take it up as soon as possible: "Now is the time, today is the day of salvation."

Both of these attitudes indicate a great truth. Accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, as set forth in the gospel, is the exit of the natural, just as it is the entrance of the spiritual.

Believers live in the New Creation. Every man in Christ is "a new creature." The Scriptures teach that God creates and sustains by His Word. This was true in the first creation when "God spake" and "it stood fast." It is likewise true in the New Creation: the Word of God has creative and sustaining power. The minister of the gospel, who preaches the Word, is a "co-laborer with God." Something vital happens when a believer sees or understands the truth in Christ: he is changed from glory to glory into the same image "as by the Spirit of the Lord." Thus, in writing his Epistles, Paul was continuing his function as "a wise master builder." To read and to study the Epistles is to put oneself into the hands of God to be made, shaped, and fashioned into the likeness of Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father.

Introduction to I Peter

This is a letter by the Apostle Peter to certain believing Christians, as identified in the first verse. However, the contents of the letter indicate no reference to conditions or situations that were peculiar to or limited to those persons alone. So we receive this as a letter written to all who are in Christ Jesus.

The whole outlook of the life in Christ is novel to any man. The natural man spends his life seeking what he wants and needs. His personal, sensory experience develops in general according to the pattern common to "the world," viz., "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I John 2:16). His environment is "this world," and his interests and values are derived in the course of "this life." As the natural man views God, his conscience and his knowledge of the character and the will of God convict him of his own failure and unworthiness to qualify for the favor of God. This results in the chaotic darkness of guilt which enshrouds his consciousness of God. It may be noted in passing that it is in such a condition of mind that pagan peoples conjecture what God is like and produce the grotesque imagery that characterizes idolatry everywhere (Romans 1:23).

Into this darkness the gospel presents the light that shines forth from Calvary: God will forgive sin on the basis of the death of the redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. When any man accepts Christ as Savior, God works in him, regenerating him in the New Birth, as a child of God. There is then a new nature, with new interests, with new outlook, operating in new principles. Inasmuch as the consciousness of man had reached any degree of settled patterns of thought, taste, conduct, etc., there will be a great reconstruction, a reformation of the personality to give expression to the regeneration, the transformation involved in this new life, this new set of relationships in Christ.

This new outlook is to be learned. There is a new orientation to be established from a new point of view. There are new goals to be adopted, new procedures to be identified. This is the essence of the First Epistle of Peter. It is addressed to Christians and it sets forth "the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (5:12). Here then is the sort of instruction, interpretation and teaching that a minister should present to any flock of believers and that believers anywhere should expect to receive.

Our study will show that the purpose of the Church is to glorify the living Lord Jesus Christ. The significance of the Church in the world is not to be construed from any appraisal of the need of contemporary man. Nor should it be construed from any interpretation of the history of the service of the Church in the affairs of men. The significance of the Church is in the origin, the nature, the operation of that work of God in the believers which makes them "one in Christ."

Outline of Thought

I Peter

I Believers are saved through Christ, 1:1-12.

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are "elect," "begotten again," "kept" and "saved" in the salvation program of God, which had been predicatively promised in the prophecies of the Old Testament and is now announced to all men in the preaching of the gospel.

II Believers' lives should be affected, 1:13 - 2:12.

In view of such work of God on their behalf, believers are urged to be deliberately diligent in their response to the Grace of God:

- as obedient children . . . they are to be holy;
- as new born babes . . . they are to grow;
- as living stones . . . they are to serve;
- as strangers and pilgrims . . . they are to do good works.

III Believers can expect suffering, but must perform "good works," 2:13 - 5:14.

The good works in which believers glorify God "in the eyes of the world" are various applications of the general principle of meek submission in the course of their relations with other people.

A. In civil matters, 2:13-17

Counting that God's sovereign providence overrules in any given situation.

B. In industrial matters, 2:18-25

The only role prescribed is that of servant.

C. In domestic matters, 3:1-7

Think of self last; live out of the gospel.

D. In general matters, 3:8 - 4:19

The Christian submits to man, but he commits his soul to God.

E. In church matters, 5:1-14

Submit to others, commit to God, humble yourselves.

Organization of Studies

55 studies are planned by Dr. Gutzke in this series. Use this chart to keep track of your place with his teaching, and for reading ahead. From this you should turn to the appropriate section of the study guide questions.

1:1 Sent to the Strangers
:2a Elect unto Obedience
:2b Grace and Peace
:3 Begotten Unto a Living Hope
:4 Inheritance in Heaven

1:5 Kept Unto Salvation
:6 Burdened For a Time
:7 More Precious Than Gold
:8 Joy Unspeakable
:9 Receiving Salvation

1:10-11 Sought by the Prophets
:12 Preached in the Gospel
:13 Brought by Jesus Christ
:14-16 Be Ye Holy
:17 Be Reverent

1:18-19 Redeemed by the Blood
:20-21 Faith and Hope in God
:22 Love One Another
:23-25 The Word of God
2:1-3 The Milk of the Word

2: 4-5 Living Stones
:6-8 The Chief Corner Stone
:9-10 A Peculiar People
:11 Strangers and Pilgrims
:12 Good Works Glorify God

2:13-16 Well Doing
:17 Servants of God
:18-20 Patience in Suffering
:21-23 Christ an Example
:24-25 Healed by His Stripes

3:1-2 Wives in Subjection
:3-6 Ornament of a Meek and Quiet Spirit
:7 Husbands Honoring Wives
: 8-9 Love as Brethren
:10-12 Life For the Righteous

3:13-15 Ready to Testify
:16 A Good Conscience
:17-18 Suffering for Well Doing
:19-20 Preaching to Spirits in Prison
:21-22 Saved by the Resurrection

4:1-2 Suffering in the Flesh
:3-6 The Quick and the Dead
:7 Be Sober and Watch
: 8-9 Have Fervent Charity
:10-11 Good Stewards of the Grace of God

4:12-13 Partakers of Christ's Sufferings
:14-15 Reproached for Name of Christ
:16-17 Judgment Begins at House of God
:18-19 Committing the Soul to Christ God
5:1-4 Elders to Feed the Flock

5:5 Believers to be Humble
:6-7 Casting Care Upon the Lord
:8-9 Resist the Devil
:10-11 God Makes Men Mature
:12-14 The True Grace of God

Study Questions and Notes

This guide is divided into 13 sections for the convenience of classes or groups. Used weekly, this guide will provide study material for one quarter. On a monthly frequency, your study would cover one year if you combine Sections 11 and 12.

Section 1 – 1:1-2

This section contains several words important to understanding the Christian faith. Comment on the meaning of

Strangers

Elect

Sanctification

Sprinkling

Grace

Peace

Memorize verse 2.

Section 2 – 1:3-5

How is God Father to believers?

What is the meaning of "begotten" in verse 3?

Trace the work of God in the believer.

How does "salvation" have a present and a future meaning?

Memorize verse 5.

Notes:

1:2, 3-4, 5, 8-9 Note the parallel construction

"Elect according to . . . through. " . . . unto . . . "

"begotten us again unto . . . by . . . to . . . "

"kept by . . . through . . . unto . . . "

"yet . . . receiving . . . salvation . . . "

1:5 There is an aspect of salvation not yet "revealed" but "ready."

Section 3 – 1:6-12

Why does a Christian continue to experience temptations and troubles?

How is a Christian able to have joy continually in spite of these troubles?

What is the object and result of Christian faith?

What relationship do you find between the Scriptures as the Written Word and Christ as the Living Word?

Memorize verse 7.

Notes:

1:6 Trouble of varied sorts may depress the believer's feelings temporarily even though he rejoices in his salvation.

1:7 The testing of faith can have ulterior significance.

1:10-12 This is the classic statement of the sort of revelation implicit in Old Testament writings which gives meaning to the Biblical doctrine of inspiration (II Peter 1:20-21). The Old Testament prophets knew they were saying authoritatively more than they understood.

Section 4 – 1:13-21

How does a Christian receive grace?

What should God's grace produce in the Christian?

What does verse 17 mean?

Why is the blood of Christ essential in the Christian faith?

Is Christ's death considered a tragedy?

Memorize verses 18-19.

Notes:

1:14-25 An attitude – in the matter of God

1:15 & 22 Here is a clear indication as to the gist of what it means to "be holy."

Section 5 – 1:22 - 2:3

How should a Christian regard other believers?

How is this possible?

Why should we follow the Word of God rather than man's wisdom?

Give two reasons why "milk" is a fit term for the Word of God.

Memorize 2:2.

Notes:

2:1-3 An ambition – in the matter of personal development.

2:2 Here is a clear indication of the function of the Word of God in the growth and maturing of a believer (Matthew 4:4).

Section 6 – 2:4-12

What possible concepts are suggested by use of the word *stone*?

Describe the relationships between Christ and believers indicated in this passage.

Comment on the meaning in this Section of

"chosen generation"

"royal priesthood"

"holy nation"

"strangers and pilgrims"

"conversation"

Memorize verse 9.

Notes:

2:4-10 A task – in the matter of corporate relations with other believers.

Note the similar mixing of figure in speech as used by Paul (Ephesians 2:21) in an attempt to describe the organic structure of the vital relationship "in Christ."

Each believer has his place (like a stone in the wall) but this place is not static; rather it is dynamic. It is not an arbitrary assignment, but it is a vital differentiation of function in the one purpose "to show forth the praises of him that hath called you."

Section 7- 2:13-17

How is obedience to the laws of the land made important here?

What is the approved motive for doing good?

What is the connection between freedom and obedience?

Discuss this section in regard to the relationship between church and state.

Memorize verse 15.

Section 8 – 2:18-25

What does this Section have to say about "standing up for our rights"?

How is Christ an example for the Christian?

What two explanations of the Cross do you find in this passage?

How should the non-Christian understand what Christ did on the Cross?

How do you apply this section to yourself?

Memorize verse 24.

Notes:

2:18 Any Christian in any place in the industrial order is just that – a servant.

2:20 It is to be expected that a certain unfairness will be encountered.

2:21 Here is the only New Testament reference to the Lord Jesus as our example. The significance is plain enough: His own submission unto death before unfair hostility is our example "unto death of self."

2:24-25 It should be remembered that as we "live in the spirit" we do not have Christ as an example to follow, but as an indwelling head to obey.

Section 9 – 3:1-7

What does the word *likewise* in verse 1 refer to?

How should a Christian wife whose husband is not a believer behave?

Why is it important to be like Sarah, Abraham's wife?

How is Christ the example for the Christian husband?

What blessing is promised?

Memorize verse 4.

Notes:

3:1 Note that a man may be "won" by the humble and modest conduct of a meek and quiet woman. This does not remove the necessity of his being "regenerated" by the Word of God as preached in the gospel; rather it makes his regeneration possible and relatively easy when once his esteem has been won and his interest aroused.

Peter addresses the Christian as citizen and not as governor. He addresses him as servant and not as master. But he addresses the Christian as wife and as husband.

Section 10 – 3:8-22

List the things Christians are exhorted to do in this section and the reason given for each.

What is the ministry of Christ?

From this section, describe how Christ performs His ministry.

What is the importance of baptism?

Memorize verse 18.

Notes:

3:8-12 Contributing good will in kindness, courtesy and consideration toward all men. This is acceptable to God and qualifies a man to receive the favor of God.

3:13-22 Such conduct will deliver a Christian from the fear of suffering. It is true that occasionally some evil person may abuse the meek, but the Christian can rejoice in his good conscience and make his experience an occasion for testimony to the Glory of God. In all this he has the pattern of Christ's own suffering and His ultimate triumph to inspire and to encourage him.

Section 11 – 4:1-11

How is suffering helpful to the Christian?

Where is it indicated that the differences between the Christian and the non-Christian will show up?

What do you understand about prayer life from verse 7?

What evidences of Christian charity or love are indicated in this section?

Are there any areas of his life in which the Christian is not to act as a steward

Memorize verse 1.

Notes:

4:1-6 The willingness to suffer affliction in the flesh as a consequence of doing the will of God definitely establishes the believer in spiritual experience.

4:7-11 The believer should fortify himself with deliberate resolution, with prayerfulness and with a love toward the brethren.

Section 12 – 4:12-19

In what way could a Christian rejoice in his sufferings?

What does it mean to be "reproached for the name of Christ"?

How is the Christian's response to suffering a judgment?

Does this Section give encouragement that all will be saved?

Who shall be saved, according to this?

Memorize verse 19.

Notes:

4:12-14 The believer may expect "fiery trials," but he may also expect special grace and sweet fellowship with God during such affliction.

4:15 Certainly he should watch scrupulously that his own conduct doesn't merit harsh treatment.

4:16-19 If he should "suffer as a Christian" he need not be astonished nor humiliated. Such suffering will be "according to the will of God."

Section 13 – 5:1-14

What are the elders to do?

Is the Christian to give in to everything?

What is meant by the words:

perfect

glory

dominion

Why is "The True Grace of God" an appropriate theme for this book of the Bible?

What theme would you choose for this entire study?

Memorize verse 7.

Notes:

5:1-5 Note that within the fellowship of believers the first word is spoken to the elders. A subsequent word to the younger follows. Contrast the order of reference in affairs centered in the world.

5:3 The elders are to be "examples to" not "lords over," in this exercising a form of submission.

5:8-9 At the point of suffering (strain, irritation, etc.) the adversary is alert to take advantage of any opening. He is to be resisted by steadfast acceptance of the portion of suffering as being in the will of God.

5:10 Suffering is for a time, and is a prelude to maturity and strength.