



DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

1, 2 Peter; Jude

Jeff Iorg, General Editor

LIFE BY DESIGN

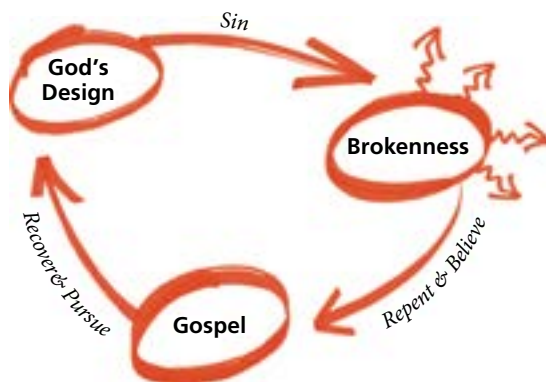
We live in a broken world. This brokenness is seen in suffering, violence, poverty, pain, and death around us. Brokenness leads us to search for a way to make **LIFE work.**

The Bible tells us that God originally planned a world that worked perfectly—where everything and everyone fit together in harmony. God made each of us with a purpose—to worship Him and walk with Him. (See Genesis 1:31 and Psalm 19:1.)

Life doesn't work when we ignore God and His original design for our lives. We selfishly insist on doing things our own way. The Bible calls this sin. Sin leads to a place of brokenness. The consequence of our sin is separation from God—in this life and for all of eternity. (See Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23.)

At this point we need a remedy—some good news. Because of His love, God did not leave us in our brokenness. Jesus, God in human flesh, came to us and lived perfectly according to God's Design. Jesus came to rescue us—to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. He took our sin and shame to the cross, paying the penalty of our sin by His death. Jesus was then raised from the dead—to provide the only way for us to be rescued and restored to a relationship with God. (See John 3:16; Colossians 2:14; and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.)

We don't have the power to escape this brokenness on our own. We need to be rescued. We must ask God to forgive us—turning from sin to trust in Jesus. This is what it means to repent and believe. Believing, we receive new life through Jesus. God turns our lives in a new direction. (See Mark 1:15; Ephesians 2:8-9; and Romans 10:9.)



When God restores our relationship to Him, we begin to discover meaning and purpose in a broken world. Now we can pursue God's Design in all areas of our lives. God's Spirit empowers us to recover His Design and assures us of His presence in this life and for all of eternity. (See Philippians 2:13 and Ephesians 2:10.)

Now that you have heard this Good News, God wants you to respond to Him. You can talk to Him using words like these: My life is broken—I recognize it's because of my sin. I believe Christ came to live, die, and was raised from the dead—to rescue me from my sin. Forgive me. I turn from my selfish ways and put my trust in You. I know that Jesus is Lord of all, and I will follow Him.

Excerpted from Life on Mission: A Simple Way to Share the Gospel.

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» GENERAL EDITOR



We all need an encouraging word from time to time. Life is tough. We need to know God is present and will comfort those who have been afflicted.

The Books of 1 and 2 Peter were written by one of Jesus' closest friends. As one of the original twelve disciples, Peter witnessed the persecution, arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection of his Savior. In these letters, he wrote to believers who were facing severe persecution for their faith, drawing on his experience with Jesus to strengthen them.

I pray that you'll discover similar encouragement as your group studies these biblical books. God intends for His people to thrive, no matter what life throws our way. This portion of God's Word will show you how.

With hope for your future,

Jeff Iorg

» MEET THE WRITER



Hetty Otto has been a Bible study teacher, an interpreter, and a trainer of interpreters for over forty-five years. She started serving in the Deaf ministry when she was a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological

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DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 1

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This study was originally published as
EXPLORE THE BIBLE: DEAF
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE (ISSN
2167-8820; Item 005075111) by Lifeway
Christian Resources of the Southern
Baptist Convention., Nashville, TN 37234,
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BIBLE READING PLAN

MONTH 1

- ☐ 1. 1 Peter 1:1-2
- ☐ 2. 1 Peter 1:3-4
- ☐ 3. 1 Peter 1:5
- ☐ 4. 1 Peter 1:6-7
- ☐ 5. 1 Peter 1:8-9
- ☐ 6. 1 Peter 1:10-11
- ☐ 7. 1 Peter 1:12
- ☐ 8. 1 Peter 1:13-14
- ☐ 9. 1 Peter 1:15-16
- ☐ 10. 1 Peter 1:17-19
- ☐ 11. 1 Peter 1:20-21
- ☐ 12. 1 Peter 1:22-23
- ☐ 13. 1 Peter 1:24-25
- ☐ 14. 1 Peter 2:1-3
- ☐ 15. 1 Peter 2:4-5
- ☐ 16. 1 Peter 2:6
- ☐ 17. 1 Peter 2:7-8
- ☐ 18. 1 Peter 2:9-10
- ☐ 19. 1 Peter 2:11-12
- ☐ 20. 1 Peter 2:13-14
- ☐ 21. 1 Peter 2:15
- ☐ 22. 1 Peter 2:16-17
- ☐ 23. 1 Peter 2:18-20
- ☐ 24. 1 Peter 2:21-25
- ☐ 25. 1 Peter 3:1-2
- ☐ 26. 1 Peter 3:3-4
- ☐ 27. 1 Peter 3:5-6
- ☐ 28. 1 Peter 3:7
- ☐ 29. 1 Peter 3:8-9
- ☐ 30. 1 Peter 3:10-12

MONTH 2

- ☐ 1. 1 Peter 3:13-14
- ☐ 2. 1 Peter 3:15-17
- ☐ 3. 1 Peter 3:18
- ☐ 4. 1 Peter 3:19-22
- ☐ 5. 1 Peter 4:1-3
- ☐ 6. 1 Peter 4:4-6
- ☐ 7. 1 Peter 4:7
- ☐ 8. 1 Peter 4:8-9
- ☐ 9. 1 Peter 4:10-11
- ☐ 10. 1 Peter 4:12-13
- ☐ 11. 1 Peter 4:14-15
- ☐ 12. 1 Peter 4:16-17
- ☐ 13. 1 Peter 4:18-19
- ☐ 14. 1 Peter 5:1-4
- ☐ 15. 1 Peter 5:5
- ☐ 16. 1 Peter 5:6-7
- ☐ 17. 1 Peter 5:8-9
- ☐ 18. 1 Peter 5:10-11
- ☐ 19. 1 Peter 5:12-14
- ☐ 20. 2 Peter 1:1-2
- ☐ 21. 2 Peter 1:3-4
- ☐ 22. 2 Peter 1:5-8
- ☐ 23. 2 Peter 1:9-11
- ☐ 24. 2 Peter 1:12-15
- ☐ 25. 2 Peter 1:16-17
- ☐ 26. 2 Peter 1:18-19
- ☐ 27. 2 Peter 1:20-21
- ☐ 28. 2 Peter 2:1
- ☐ 29. 2 Peter 2:2-3
- ☐ 30. 2 Peter 2:4-10
- ☐ 31. 2 Peter 2:11

MONTH 3

- ☐ 1. 2 Peter 2:12-13
- ☐ 2. 2 Peter 2:14-16
- ☐ 3. 2 Peter 2:17-18
- ☐ 4. 2 Peter 2:19-20
- ☐ 5. 2 Peter 2:21-22
- ☐ 6. 2 Peter 3:1-2
- ☐ 7. 2 Peter 3:3-4
- ☐ 8. 2 Peter 3:5-7
- ☐ 9. 2 Peter 3:8-9
- ☐ 10. 2 Peter 3:10
- ☐ 11. Matthew 24:36-39
- ☐ 12. Matthew 24:40-44
- ☐ 13. 2 Peter 3:11-13
- ☐ 14. Isaiah 65:17-19
- ☐ 15. Revelation 21:1-4
- ☐ 16. Revelation 21:5-7
- ☐ 17. 2 Peter 3:14
- ☐ 18. 2 Peter 3:15-16
- ☐ 19. 2 Peter 3:17-18
- ☐ 20. Jude 1-4
- ☐ 21. Jude 5-7
- ☐ 22. Jude 8-9
- ☐ 23. Jude 10-11
- ☐ 24. Jude 12-13
- ☐ 25. Jude 14-15
- ☐ 26. Jude 16
- ☐ 27. Jude 17-19
- ☐ 28. Jude 20-21
- ☐ 29. Jude 22-23
- ☐ 30. Jude 24-25



ACCEPTING CHRIST



I was born into a Christian family, and my parents were very active in church. Growing up, I attended a hearing Sunday school class. I never understood what was being taught or happening since I couldn't hear. Sometimes during the worship service there would be an interpreter and sometimes I paid attention. I did not fully understand what it meant to be a Christian. I just knew that I, like other people, loved God because He loved me first. I knew this meant you go to heaven when you die if you believe in God.

One of my sisters is 2 years older than me. I looked up to her. The day she was baptized, I told Mama I wanted to be baptized “just like Beverly.” Mama told me to wait until I fully understood what it meant to accept Christ as my Savior. She said she would make plans for me to talk to our minister, Mr. Bussey. Mama dropped me off once a week for him to teach me about God and faith. I read the Bible study lesson and had homework so I would understand clearly. Finally I understood and told him I was ready to be baptized. That day was the best day, and I was thrilled to be baptized. I knew Jesus came into my heart. I felt the Holy Spirit in me.

I grew up and moved away. I faced the real world without my parents close by. I stopped going to church or reading my Bible. Usually, I just went to church when I visited my parents. As time went by, my sister and her husband got really involved in their church. I noticed my sister growing in her faith. During those years, my family encouraged me to find a church, and I knew I was missing something by not going. I believed, but I was still a baby Christian. Then I found a church and got a prayer partner. God gave me a teacher who taught Bible stories. I began to understand that being saved isn't enough. Just going to church would not take you to heaven. I used to think being baptized and loving God was all God wanted. I was so wrong. I grew closer to God. I learned to listen to God telling me what he wants me to do. I learned not to ignore him or do things my way. I am still learning; that will never stop. I continue to read the Bible and make time to have Bible study with friends. God calls me to go on mission trips to share His gospel with people who do not know Him and our Savior, Jesus. Jesus has done so much for us, and we need to follow Him and be as much like him as we can.

My favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13, “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” Why? Because without Him I can't fight through the wrong in the world and Satan. I wouldn't have the strength or skills. Without God I would be weak, unable to accomplish the important things in

life. Through my close relationship with God, I am encouraged to serve as His disciple and witness to those who don't know Him. With Him, I know I can make it through the challenges of life. I feel the Holy Spirit filling me up over and over. I am maturing in my faith journey. I am learning every day how to be humble and to have a good attitude and practice patience. I am so hungry to learn more. I feel my baptism has been refreshed.

You can take that first step to a new life with Jesus. Follow these simple steps and then talk with your pastor or Bible study teacher:

- Tell God you are a sinner (Romans 3:23).
- Tell God you believe Jesus died for you, and ask Him to forgive you and come into your heart to live (Romans 10:9).
- Rejoice and thank God for His gift of salvation (Romans 3:22).

INTRODUCTION TO 1 AND 2 PETER, JUDE

1 Peter

»» Who wrote the Book of 1 Peter?

Peter was one of the first **apostles**. He was with Jesus during all of Jesus' ministry. He was strong and often led the disciples of Jesus. After Jesus went back into heaven, Peter was a leader in the churches.

»» When was 1 Peter written?

Bible teachers believe Peter wrote this letter about **A.D. 60**.

»» Why was 1 Peter written?

When Peter wrote his first letter, persecution of Christians was beginning. Peter encouraged believers to be strong in their **faith**.

»» Who was 1 Peter written to?

Peter wrote these letters to Christian churches in Asia Minor. Today this is the country of Turkey.

»» What are important ideas in the book?

1. Believers need to remember their heavenly hope.
2. Believers are called to lives of holiness and love. They must glorify God in their daily lives.
3. Believers must know about persecution that will come to them.
4. Believers need to know how to live with each other and in **society**.

2 Peter

»» Who wrote the Book of 2 Peter?

The apostle Peter also wrote this letter.

»» When was 2 Peter written?

Most Bible teachers believe Peter wrote this letter a short time before his death, about A.D. 62. He died A.D. 64-68.

»» Why was 2 Peter written?

False teachers came into the early churches. Peter encouraged believers to grow in their spiritual lives. He warned them they would be persecuted.

»» Who was 2 Peter written to?

Peter wrote this letter to the same people as his first letter—the churches in Asia Minor.

»» What are important ideas in the book?

1. False teachers taught against God.
2. Believers need to live godly lives
3. Believers need to stand strong against false teachers.
4. Believers need to be prepared for suffering in their lives.
5. Believers need to remember that God will **judge** all people.

Jude

Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible. It has only one chapter with twenty-five verses.

»» Who wrote the Book of Jude?

Jude was the brother of James. There are several believers with the name James. This James was probably the brother of Jesus, so Jude was also a brother of Jesus. Both James and Jude were not believers until they saw Jesus rise from death and go up into heaven. Jude was a leader in some of the first churches.

Believers knew who Jude was because he was in James' family. But Jude was too **humble** to call himself the brother of Jesus. He called himself a servant of Jesus.

»» When was Jude written?

Most Bible teachers believe Jude was written after 2 Peter, about A.D. 65-75.

»» Why was Jude written?

Jude wrote to encourage believers and to warn them about false teachers. He warned nonbelievers they would face God's judgment.

»» Who was Jude written to?

Jude wrote to all Christians, "to all who have been called by God" (verse 1).

»» What are important ideas in the book?

1. The Lord will judge evil people.
2. God's **grace** will help believers become strong in their faith.
3. Believers need to keep themselves in God's love.
4. Believers need to be merciful to nonbelievers and try to bring them to Jesus.
5. Believers always need to give praise to God.



Session 1

A LIVING HOPE

Jesus' resurrection gives believers a living hope.

1 PETER 1:3-9

FIRST THOUGHTS

Do you have Deaf friends who seem to have no real hope in their life? They go to work, come home, buy groceries, and stay busy. But they have no hope for a better life here or in eternity. Because Jesus was raised from death, and we have accepted Him as our Savior, we have hope now and forever.

Our hope is not like the hope of the world around us. Our hope is a living hope because God raised Jesus from death. We believe God will raise us from death also. Our hope is because Jesus brings us to God the Father.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

First Peter 1:1-2 gives us some background about today's Bible study. It tells us Peter wrote this letter. He said he is an apostle of Jesus. He was with Jesus all during Jesus' ministry on earth. He taught people about Jesus' life and words.

Peter wrote to Christians to encourage them. He said that we are like

foreigners. This world is not our true home. Heaven is the true home of Christians.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Finding Our Living Hope (1 Peter 1:3-4)

Our salvation gives us a living hope. Where do we find our salvation? Through **faith** in Jesus. We have a choice. We can accept Jesus as our Savior or we can reject Him. God gives us our living hope. It is our responsibility to accept it.

VERSE 3.

³*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In God's great mercy, He has caused us to be born again into a living hope, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead.*

Peter praised God for all He did for us through Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, several words are used with the name Jesus. In this verse He is called the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord is a title of authority, as a king. Jesus is Lord over all the world. When He was born, He was named Jesus. This name in Hebrew means "He is the One who saves." *Christ* is the Greek word that we know in English as Savior. In Hebrew this title is **Messiah**. Sometimes in the New Testament He is called Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Peter thought about what God did for people through Jesus. Then he praised God. When we understand what a wonderful salvation God offers us, we will love Him more. We should praise God for His great mercy. Through Jesus, we have been born again into a living hope.

Jesus offers a living hope to all people who believe in Him. The promise of a secure salvation gives believers a reason to rejoice even when facing difficulties. In Christ, we discover a clear picture of God's **grace** and salvation.

VERSE 4.

⁴*Now we hope for the blessings God has for his children. These blessings, which cannot be destroyed or be spoiled or lose their beauty, are kept in heaven for you.*

Our hope is because of the blessings God has for us. They are eternal blessings. God blesses us here on earth with some things. We may be blessed with a loving family or a wonderful church. These blessings last as long as we

are on earth. Other things, such as possessions or popularity, are things that may be destroyed.

The blessings God has for us in heaven will never be destroyed or pass away. He will keep the blessings for us until we are with Him in heaven. We will have eternal life and a new body when Jesus comes again.

God will also give rewards to Christians in heaven. We do not know what these rewards will be. Christians receive just a small part of God's promises in this life on earth. We will receive His promises completely in heaven. God keeps these blessings safe in heaven. God does this for each person who believes His promises. Our goal is to be with Him in heaven. It is our eternal hope.

BIBLE SKILL: *Heavenly Rewards*

Here are some more verses about rewards in heaven. Read each verse. Draw a line from the verse to the sentence on the right that you find in the verse.

Matthew 5:12	"Store your treasures in Heaven."
1 Corinthians 3:8	"Great reward waiting for you."
Matthew 16:27	"I will bring my reward with me."
Revelation 22:12	"Rewarded for his own work."
Matthew 6:19-20	"Reward them for what they have done."

Mary told her Deaf friends, "Nothing good happens for me." Her friends began to remind her of the blessings she had in her life—her children, her health, and her church. They encouraged Mary to make a list of things God had done for her. Two weeks later, Mary had a whole page full of things. She called it her "blessing list."

Write a few words to tell about some of the blessings God gives to you today?

2. Sure of Our Hope (1 Peter 1:5)

VERSE 5.

⁵ *God's power protects you through your faith until salvation is shown to you at the end of time.*

We are protected. God takes care of our souls. He does not let the Devil have us when we give our hearts and lives to Jesus.

We like to feel safe. We want to feel safe in our home or driving on the highway. We look to our police officers to give us that protection. We can also feel safe spiritually. God's power protects us. The word *protect* means "to guard against the attack of an enemy" (**Satan**). It also means "to keep us from going away from God's presence."

Peter and the other **apostles** saw Jesus go back to heaven. "As they were watching, He was lifted up, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. As He was going, they were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men wearing white clothes stood beside them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? Jesus, whom you saw taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw Him go'" (Acts 1:9-11). They heard the angels say that Jesus would return. That will be the end of time. No one knows when Jesus will return. Christians should live good lives as we wait for that day. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 for more information about the time when Jesus Christ will return to earth.

KEY DOCTRINE: *God Protects Our Salvation*

In the Gospel of John, Jesus said no one can take away our salvation. Study John 10:27-29 and write a few words about what these verses mean to you.

Our greatest blessing is the salvation we have in Jesus. If you made a "blessing list," would your salvation be the first thing you wrote? We have hope because of this blessing, but we need to remember that Jesus said He will come back. That means we always need to be ready to meet Him.

List some things you can do to be ready when Jesus comes again:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Celebrate Our Hope (1 Peter 1:6-9)

In the first part of these verses, we read about things that happen in our physical world. Then, we read about our souls. We know we will have new bodies when Christ comes again. Our souls are saved now and for eternity.

Rejoicing during persecution comes by focusing on the hope of salvation. Rejoicing comes from knowing we have a strong **faith**. Paul said, “Be joyful because you have hope. Be patient when trouble comes, and pray at all times” (Romans 12:12).

VERSE 6.

⁶*This makes you very happy, even though now for a short time different kinds of troubles may make you sad.*

During the time Peter wrote this first letter, Christians were persecuted or killed because they loved Jesus. Many books tell about the terrible things that happened to Christians. Some ways they were persecuted are:

1. Crucified.
2. Buried alive.
3. Beaten with leather and steel whips.
4. Killed with the sword.
5. Given to lions to eat.
6. Parents were forced to watch as their children were killed.

But, even with all those bad things happening to them, they had joy. They had an eternal hope. Their hope was they would be with God and have His blessings forever. Some nations in the world today **persecute** Christians. These Christians have joy because of their blessed hope. Use your computer to go online and find stories about “persecuted Christians.” In Christian newspapers and magazines, you can read stories about Christians who have suffered much because they continued to be faithful to Jesus Christ after the government told them to stop.

VERSE 7.

⁷These troubles come to prove that your faith is pure. This purity of faith is worth more than gold, which can be proved to be pure by fire but will ruin. But the purity of your faith will bring you praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is shown to you.

Why do bad things happen to good people? We do not know. Difficult times and suffering help us to prove the strength of our faith. The troubles that happen to Christians are like the process of making gold become pure. When gold is first found in the ground it is not perfect. There are other metals or dirt in the gold. The gold must be heated to 1948 degrees. (Water boils at 212 degrees.) When the temperature of the gold is high enough, the imperfect things are burned away. It becomes pure gold.

When we face troubles, persecution, and hardships, we know God uses those experiences to help us become holy and pure. The purity and strength of our faith will bring us praise, honor, and glory when we see Jesus Christ. Two things happen: We grow spiritually, and we give honor and glory to Jesus.

VERSE 8.

⁸You have not seen Christ, but still you love Him. You cannot see Him now, but you believe in Him. So you are filled with a joy that cannot be explained, a joy full of glory.

We have hope for the future when we will see Jesus. We also hope in the present time.

Peter had the wonderful privilege to see and be with Jesus. He loved Jesus because he was with Him. Peter reminded believers about what Jesus said, “You believe because you see me. Those who believe without seeing me will be truly blessed” (John 20:29). We have not seen Christ, but we still love Him. We cannot see Him, but we believe in Him.

Our love for Christ and belief in Him gives us spiritual joy we cannot understand or explain. When good things happen, we are happy. Joy is not the same as being happy. Our joy does not depend on the things happening around us. Our joy depends on Jesus. Our joy comes from God.

VERSE 9.

⁹And you are receiving the goal of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

In verse 3, Peter wrote about being born again. That is the beginning of our salvation. Verse 5 tells us how God protects us now. He keeps us saved while

we are on earth. Verses 4 and 9 tell about our future salvation, when we reach the goal of eternal life in heaven. We will live in God's glorious presence.

John told the Deaf group at his church, "Many years ago, I was saved. I remember that time. A Deaf preacher at a church camp explained to me what it means to be saved, and I accepted Jesus. But sometimes I don't feel sure that I will go to heaven when I die." His friends asked him if he thought Jesus dropped him. "No, the problem isn't Jesus, it is me." Then his friends shared with him their experience. They said, "We begin to doubt when we stop reading the Bible and stop praying every day." He agreed that he had not read his Bible in a long time. The group prayed with him and promised to encourage him every week so he would feel that joy and hope again. "Then we can celebrate our hope together."

You have not seen Jesus with your physical eyes. Do you love Him?

YES NO.

Why?

There are some verses that John's friends could share to encourage him. Find these verses and write them below.

John 20:29

John 16:27

IN MY CONTEXT

All believers have a glorious hope. Our actions do not always show we are happy to have the hope God gives. Nonbelievers look at our lives to see how we act when we have troubles. They want to see if our **faith** is real. Ask yourself these serious questions.

1. Do I have the wonderful hope in my life? YES NO.

2. Can I think of a time when my life showed happiness because of my eternal hope? YES NO.

Write a few words about that time.

In Iran, it is against the law for Christians to worship anywhere outside their own homes. One Christian pastor has been in prison for several years because he continues to show his faith. The pastor and his family suffer because they tell other people about their hope in Christ. His actions show his faith. He knows he will be punished if he continues to try to start churches in his home nation.

Do you think you could be that strong? YES NO.

We can, with strength from Jesus.

The way we act toward other people shows our hope. The way we act when we have trouble shows our hope. Nonbelievers want to see if our faith is real.

MEMORY VERSE

You have not seen Christ, but still you love Him. You cannot see Him now, but you believe in Him. So you are filled with a joy that cannot be explained, a joy full of glory. —1 Peter 1:8

A black and white photograph of a person's hands holding an open Bible. The Bible is open to a page with a cross symbol. A large, stylized number '2' is overlaid on the image, and the word 'Session' is written in a script font to its left.

Session 2

BE HOLY

Believers can live holy lives because of Jesus' resurrection.

1 PETER 1:13-25

FIRST THOUGHTS

Many Christians are afraid of the word *holy*. In a revival meeting one time, the preacher pointed to a lady and asked, "Are you holy?" She was a new Christian and became very embarrassed. How would you answer that question? We don't like to use the word *holy* because we think it means perfect. God is holy, so how can we say we are holy? In this Bible study, you will learn what the Bible means when you read the word *holy*.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Last week's Bible study helped us understand what *salvation* means. God has given us hope through Jesus. In the verses for today's Bible study, we are encouraged to live a holy life. The first word in verse 13 is *so*. It means "because of what I just said, you need to do these things."

Jesus' resurrection gives us power to live holy lives. Knowing these things in our minds is not enough. What we believe will always affect the way we live.

Peter taught his readers to obey God's commands and to think about God's holiness. As God's children, we cannot become perfect, but we must try to live holy lives.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Obey (1 Peter 1:13-16)

VERSE 13.

¹³ *So prepare your minds for service and have self-control. All your hope should be for the gift of **grace** that will be yours when Jesus Christ is shown to you.*

What we think about leads to the way we act. Our goal is to fill our minds with God's Word, not with things that do not please God.

Deaf believers must do the things that make us ready to serve God. We must make our minds, spirits, and bodies able to pay close attention to the things of God. We must have self-control. Our goal is to remember the gift from God. That gift will be ours when we see Jesus Christ. What is that gift? We will live with God forever.

VERSE 14.

¹⁴ *Now that you are obedient children of God, do not live as you did in the past. You did not understand, so you did the evil things you wanted.*

New Testament writers often said believers were children newly born into God's family. In this verse, born again believers are compared with children who do not know how to live the right way. Children do not know how to tell right from wrong until we teach them. We lived in wrong ways before we accepted Jesus. We did not know any better way. As children of God, we need to learn how to obey and honor Him.

Before they were saved, both Jews and Gentiles did not understand. They did the things they wanted to do. Many of those things were evil. We are the same today. Before we were saved we did things to please ourselves. We did not try to please God.

VERSES 15-16.

¹⁵ *But be holy in all you do, just as God, the One who called you, is holy.*

¹⁶ *It is written in the Scriptures: "You must be holy, because I am holy."*

To be *holy* does not mean to be *perfect*. It means to be completely separate from all sin and evil. It also means to belong to God only. God commands Christians to be holy—to separate ourselves from sinful actions.

Christians may ask why they must be holy. Peter gave a very direct answer. God is a perfect God. He does no wrong. He expects His children to try to be like Him. God called us to be His children and live holy lives. Peter quoted an Old Testament verse: “You must be holy, because I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44-45). Believers must be holy because God is holy.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Obey*

Read these verses and write a note to help you remember what the Bible says about obeying God.

Jeremiah 7:23 _____

John 13:34 _____

John 14:23-24 _____

1 John 2:17 _____

Acts 5:29 _____

1 Samuel 15:22 _____

In the story above, the preacher asked a woman, “Are you holy?” What if someone asked you that question, but with different words, “Do you obey God?” A Deaf person who is holy obeys God. That is easier for us to understand. God said we need to be different from people in the world. We need to be more like Him. When we study the Bible and try to obey what the Bible teaches us, we are becoming holy.

In your own words explain what you think it means to be holy in today’s world.

Do you think you can live a holy life? YES NO.

Why do you think that?

2. Respect (1 Peter 1:17-21)

VERSE 17.

¹⁷You pray to God and call him Father, and He judges each person's work equally. So while you are here on earth, you should live with respect for God.

The second reason we must live holy lives is because God will judge us. God is our Father. He is also our judge. He judges all people by His standard of what is good or evil.

The Bible teaches us two groups of people will be judged. One group is people who reject Christ. They do not accept Him. That group will be separated from God forever. After they die they will not be in heaven. They will be in hell. The second group is people who are God's children—people who have accepted Jesus as Savior. We call God our Father. He will judge His children based on their lives. He will judge us because of the good things and bad things we do here on earth. He does not have favorites when He judges. He judges everyone fairly. He judges with mercy and **grace**.

Deaf believers must respect God while we are on earth. Several Bible translations use the phrase “live in fear” for the word *respect*. Those words do not mean we must be afraid of God. It is the idea of living in reverent awe of God. The words mean we must remember He will judge us. Respect for God means to honor, praise, and obey Him.

VERSES 18-19.

¹⁸You know that in the past you were living in a worthless way, a way passed down from the people who lived before you. But you were saved from that useless life. You were bought, not with something that ruins like gold or silver,

¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, who was like a pure and perfect lamb.

Before they became believers, Jewish and Gentile people lived in the ways their ancestors and **society** taught them. The same is true about people today. Before we were saved we lived in ways we learned from our parents and other people. Some of those ways were good. Some were not good.

God saved us from that worthless life. We were bought. He did not pay for us with silver or gold. God paid for us with the blood of His own Son, Jesus. The Old Testament told people they could be free from sin and be saved if they offered a sacrifice for their sins. The sacrifice must be a perfect, pure lamb. They were required to go back often and offer another perfect lamb as a sacrifice (Exodus 12:1-20). Jesus was the lamb sacrificed for us, one time, for all people, forever.

The reason Jesus is called the *Lamb of God* is because He was pure and

perfect. God provided Jesus to be the sacrifice for us to be free from the punishment of sin. His sacrifice was final. We can pray for forgiveness, and God will forgive us.

VERSE 20.

²⁰ Christ was chosen before the world was made, but He was shown to the world in these last times for your sake.

No person has ever seen God. Jesus showed us the love God has for us. He showed us the heart of God.

Jesus Christ was with God before the world was made. God chose Jesus to be our redeemer. God made the plan of how Christ would save people from their evil lives. He loved us so much that He sent His Son. God showed Christ to us for our **sake**. The word *sake* means “benefit, honor, or blessing.” This means God showed Christ to us so we would not face eternal punishment for sin.

VERSE 21.

²¹ Through Christ you believe in God, who raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory. So your faith and your hope are in God.

How can we know we belong to God? Jesus said the only way is through Him (John 14:6). A person may say he believes in God. That is not enough. He must accept God’s Son, Jesus, as Savior. **Faith** in God is through Jesus. He is our hope.

Let’s change that preacher’s question again. What if he said, “Do you respect God?” It is easier for us to do something for another person if we respect him. If we respect our boss, we will enjoy working for him. If we respect the policeman, we will try harder to obey the laws. When we respect God, we will want to do everything the Bible teaches us to do.

How do you show you respect God? Write a few words about how you respect God.

3. Love (1 Peter 1:22-25)

VERSE 22.

²² *Now that your obedience to the truth has purified your souls, you can have true love for your Christian brothers and sisters. So love each other deeply with all your heart.*

We looked at the word *holy*. Now we need to look at the word *pure*. It is almost the same meaning. God's truth in the Bible makes our souls pure. We become pure when we obey the truth (Psalm 119:9). God makes us pure so we can have true love for our brothers and sisters.

When we are made pure through God's Word, we will love our brothers and sisters. This means to be willing to help them and be with them. It may mean we need to sacrifice the things we own for our spiritual brothers and sisters.

VERSE 23.

²³ *You have been born again, and this new life did not come from something that dies, but from something that cannot die. You were born again through God's living message that continues forever.*

We have been born again. The new birth is not like physical birth. People are born, live, and die. The new birth is everlasting. It is not destroyed by time. It does not decay. The everlasting Word of God gives us eternal life. Our souls will live with Him forever.

VERSES 24-25.

²⁴ *The Scripture says, "All people are like the grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass dies and the flowers fall,*

²⁵ *but the word of the Lord will live forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.*

Peter quoted Isaiah 40:6-8 to reassure believers our new life will never end. He compared our earthly life to plants. No matter how beautiful we may be, our beauty will fade away.

These verses end with the strong assurance that we have the Word of God. He promises us our life is eternal. We have assurance because the Word of God will last forever.

BIBLE SKILL: *Love*

The Bible talks about love in many places. Use a concordance or Bible dictionary to find verses about each topic below.

Love God: _____

Love each other: _____

God loves us: _____

Again, we will change the preacher's question. "Do you love your Christian brothers and sisters?" These verses teach us that when we respect God and obey God, then we will love other Christians who respect and obey God.

If you are a believer, who are your brothers and sisters?

Do you treat them in loving ways? YES NO.

If not, why not?

Write down some different ways you can begin to show love.

IN MY CONTEXT

Our lives today are very busy with things in the world. Because we are so busy, we do not spend time thinking about spiritual things. We sometimes have doubts.

Do you ever doubt your salvation? YES NO.

The Bible tells us we can be sure of our salvation.

Answer these questions:

1. Are you living a holy life? YES NO.

2. Do you think it is important to try to please God? YES NO.

3. Are you trying to please God in your life? YES NO.

4. Do you love other people with pure love? YES NO.

**5. Are there some wrong things you did before you accepted Jesus?
YES NO.**

Do you still do them? YES NO.

What will you do to stop doing those wrong things?

After you make the list, talk with God about each one. Ask Him to forgive you. Ask Him to help you to change. Ask Him to help you become pure in your mind. He will!

MEMORY VERSE

Now that your obedience to the truth has purified your souls, you can have true love for your Christian brothers and sisters. So love each other deeply with all your heart. —1 Peter 1:22



BUILDING OUR FAITH

As God's people, we must turn from sinful behavior and grow as believers.

1 PETER 2:1-10

FIRST THOUGHTS

Our lessons have moved from hope to holiness and now to **faith**. This is an easier concept for us to understand. Our ASL sign for *faith* looks like someone holding onto a rope, maybe like someone in the ocean holding onto a rope that will pull them onto the safety of a ship. Faith is not only agreeing that the Bible is true, but faith means doing some things because of our faith.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Chapter 1 explained what *salvation* means and discussed some of God's requirements for His people. Chapter 2 adds some instructions to help us grow in our faith. Christians are called to live different lives from the nonbelievers in the world around them.

Believers mature (grow) both personally and as a church through God's **grace**. In this Bible study, we learn that God's people must live according to God's desires and not our own desires. We need to give up sinful and selfish behavior and grow spiritually strong so we can serve and honor Him.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Spiritual Milk (1 Peter 2:1-3)

VERSE 1.

¹*So then, rid yourselves of all evil, all lying, hypocrisy, jealousy, and evil speech.*

In last week's Bible study, we learned how believers must live in ways that are pleasing to God. This verse explains some things Deaf believers should get rid of in our life.

- 1. We must get rid of all evil.** *Evil* in this verse means bad actions and evil thoughts. Deaf believers must not hold grudges against other people. We must not hope that something bad will happen to another person. We must not plan to hurt another person in any way.
- 2. We must get rid of lying.** *Lying* means "to say something that is not true." *Lying* also means "doing dishonest things in business." It means cheating on tests or cheating on taxes. Some people say it is all right to tell little lies. The Bible says that all dishonesty is a sin.
- 3. We must get rid of hypocrisy.** *Hypocrisy* means "pretending to be something we are not." Hypocrites say they love other people but they do not. They act nice on the outside, but they are not nice on the inside. Hypocrites say they help other people. They do not. They hurt other people.
- 4. We must get rid of jealousy.** Another word for *jealousy* is *envy*. *Jealousy* means "we want something that belongs to another person." It also means we are unhappy when other people succeed. We want to be better than other people. This includes money, family, home, good looks, job, or reputation.
- 5. We must get rid of evil speech.** Many people think only bad or dirty words and signs are evil. Evil speech also includes gossiping. It includes saying bad or untrue things about another person. Evil speech includes criticizing others.

VERSES 2-3.

²*As newborn babies want milk, you should want the pure and simple teaching. By it you can mature in your salvation*

³*because you have already examined and seen how good the Lord is.*

Deaf believers must want God's Word the same way a baby wants milk. God's Word helps us to grow strong physically, just like milk makes a baby grow strong physically.

If we taste something and like it, we will want more. When new believers get the first taste of spiritual life, they want more. They know how good it is because they tasted it. They want a closer relationship with God.

John and Anna had a new baby. They carried bottles of milk with them when they brought the baby to the Deaf church for the first time. They did not need to remind the baby it was time to eat! The baby let them know he was hungry for more milk. Do you remember when you were a new baby Christian? You wanted to go to church. You wanted to read the Bible. You wanted to know more and more. All of those things were spiritual milk for you.

Do you often feel hungry to spend time reading God's Word? YES NO.

That is where we find the true spiritual food. If the words in the Bible are sometimes too difficult for you to understand, ask God to help you. He wants you to understand and obey His Word.

Can you think of things you must get rid of in your life? YES NO.

Pray and talk with God about these things. Ask Him to help you get rid of those things.

2. Spiritual House (1 Peter 2:4-8)

VERSE 4.

⁴*Come to the Lord Jesus, the "stone" that lives. The people of the world did not want this stone, but He was the stone God chose, and He was precious.*

The **cornerstone** is the stone at the corner that joins together two walls to make a building strong. It is a square stone with straight sides. The builder uses it to help him make the building straight up and square.

Jesus is the cornerstone of our **faith**. People did not want that stone. They rejected Jesus. The stone is precious because God gave the stone to us. He is a perfect stone. We must build our faith and lives on Him.

"Come to the stone" means to come to Jesus. He is the living stone. We worship a living Lord. The word *precious* means "the stone (Jesus) has the highest place of honor." The Jews rejected this cornerstone, but God gave Jesus great honor.

VERSE 5.

⁵*You also are like living stones, so let yourselves be used to build a spiritual temple—*

to be holy priests who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. He will accept those sacrifices through Jesus Christ.

Peter said Christians are also like stones that are living. Jesus makes people alive in their spirit. God lives in Christians. He does not live in a physical building. God is holy. He wants to live in holy people.

Peter encouraged believers to become living stones and spiritual temples. All believers together become a spiritual house. God builds a spiritual house with believers. This spiritual house is the church. When people become Christians, they become part of the church.

Believers are priests in God's spiritual house. The Jewish people who read Peter's letter knew about sacrifices and priests. Believers are also priests. Some churches and religions say only priests can pray directly to God and offer sacrifices to God. Peter assured us that we can offer sacrifices to God. He will accept our sacrifices. We can pray directly to God ourselves. We do not need a priest to go to God for us.

BIBLE SKILL: *Living Sacrifice*

Believers do not offer animal sacrifices. We offer personal sacrifices. Draw a line from our sacrifices to the verse that explains them.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Ourselves | Psalms 116:17 |
| 2. Praise | Romans 12:7 |
| 3. Good works | Hebrews 13:15 |
| 4. Service | Hebrews 13:16 |
| 5. Thanksgiving | Romans 12:1 |

VERSE 6.

⁶*The Scripture says: "I will put a stone in the ground in Jerusalem. Everything will be built on this important and precious rock. Anyone who trusts in Him will never be disappointed."*

Just like a building is built on the cornerstone, our faith is built on Jesus. Our church is built on faith in Jesus.

VERSES 7-8.

⁷*This stone is worth much to you who believe. But to the people who do not believe, “the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”*

⁸*Also, he is “a stone that causes people to stumble, a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they do not obey what God says, which is what God planned to happen to them.*

Jesus is most valuable to all believers. Our life is centered on Him. But nonbelievers stumble over Him like a person stumbles over a rock. They do not accept Jesus as Savior, but they are often faced with the truth about Him and must decide again if they will trust Him or not. Because believers are living stones, people who do not believe will also “stumble” when we talk with them, or when they see how we live, because they refuse to accept Jesus as Savior.

A Deaf man asked his Christian Deaf friend, “Where is your church?” The Christian pointed to himself and said, “Here.” The other man was confused. The Christian said, “The church is the people. We meet in the church house.” And then he told how to find the Deaf church. One Deaf pastor always used the two words, “church house,” when he talked about the building, and “church” when he talked about the people. That is a good way to make sure we say what we mean. Other people use the word “fellowship” to mean the church people. That is a good word. In the Greek New Testament the word often translated as “church” really means the “fellowship of the congregation.”

Are you a living stone? YES NO.

What are some ways God is using you to build His church?

3. Spiritual People (1 Peter 2:9-10)

VERSES 9-10.

⁹*But you are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession. You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.*

¹⁰*At one time you were not a people, but now you are God’s people. In the past you had never received mercy, but now you have received God’s mercy.*

We are God's special people. He chose us. Believers are not from only one nation. We become a holy group or nation when we are born again into His family. In the Old Testament, God chose the nation of Israel (Jews) to be His special people (Exodus 19:5-6). They rejected Him and His son, Jesus, so God chose all believers to be His special people.

God wants Christians to tell other people about Him. Those other people may become Christians too. We should never be ashamed to say that we trust in Jesus. We know how wonderful He is.

People who come out of the darkness of sin into God's wonderful light begin to understand about God. Believers are children of God. Believers are God's special people because He loves us. He brings believers out of spiritual darkness into spiritual light. All believers are united because we have the same Savior. We have a common mission. Our mission is to declare what God has done for us.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Prophecies About Jesus*

A prophecy is a message from God. Sometimes it describes what is going to happen. These verses prophesied that God would make Jesus a cornerstone. Write in your own words what these verses mean to you.

Isaiah 28:16

Psalms 118:22

Isaiah 8:14-15

Joe was a member of the Deaf group that met for Bible study every week. But almost every week, Joe came in late and bothered the group. He tried to start an argument with one of the other members. He criticized how someone dressed. He criticized how people used sign language. He disagreed with many things the Bible teacher said. One day, when Joe was not with the group, the teacher began the study with prayer. She asked each one to say a short prayer for Joe. They asked God to give Joe a right attitude toward the Deaf group. They asked for wisdom to know how to help him. The teacher planned to ask the group to discuss what to do about Joe. But as soon as they finished praying, Joe came in. He went to the front of the group and began to sign. He had tears in his eyes. He asked them to forgive him for his wrong attitude. He said that all week God kept speaking to his heart about his attitude and he asked God to forgive him. The teacher and each person in the group hugged him. Then the teacher prayed a prayer of thanksgiving.

Any group must be united to be successful. Are you involved in a united group? YES NO.

Do you work with other Deaf believers to build God's kingdom. YES NO.

Write a few words telling how you get along with other Deaf believers.

IN MY CONTEXT

This Bible study teaches us about two things God expects Deaf believers to do:

1. We must have a new spiritual diet. We must want the spiritual food that helps us become mature.

What is the spiritual diet that Deaf believers must follow?

2. Believers become part of a new family. We are in God's family. We live in a new spiritual house. We must have a new way of living. As members of God's family, we must serve God in a way that pleases Him.

Do you know how to live in ways that please God? YES NO.

What are some things you do that please God?

How are you living in your new spiritual house (your church)? Name some things you are doing to help your spiritual house stay strong.

Can you think of one way your spiritual brothers or sisters have helped you recently?

Thank that person for helping you in your spiritual life.

MEMORY VERSE

At one time you were not a people, but now you are God's people. In the past you had never received mercy, but now you have received God's mercy. —1 Peter 2:10



Session 4

LIVING AS STRANGERS

Christians must have a life style different from the culture they live in.

1 PETER 2:11-20

FIRST THOUGHTS

A Deaf couple went to another nation as missionaries. They wanted to tell the Deaf people in that nation about Jesus. They wanted to start a Deaf church. Other missionaries (hearing) helped them find an apartment and learn how to shop for food and other things. They went to the center of town and found a nice park. They sat and watched the people. Soon they saw three Deaf women signing together. They talked with them and invited them to church. All of this was easy enough for the missionaries, but for a long time they felt uncomfortable because the people did things differently from the United States. The missionaries were strangers in a different culture. In the lesson today, we will learn how Christians are the same as strangers in this world.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Christians are like strangers living in a different land. We must live in a way that will please God. We must have a positive reputation. Deaf believers honor God through good behavior.

Peter wrote to Christians in the early church. Many were persecuted or killed. He told them how to live during hard times. Life became much different when they became Christians.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Strangers in Our Culture (1 Peter 2:11-12)

VERSE 11.

¹¹ *Dear friends, you are like **foreigners** and strangers in this world. I beg you to avoid the evil things your bodies want to do that fight against your soul.*

The readers of this letter were “dear friends” of Peter. He probably knew many of the believers in churches all over that area. They lived in other cities and nations. But Peter reminded them they are like strangers in the world. Heaven is their real home. Because they were his dear friends, he said, “I beg you.” Those are strong words.

People see the sins of the body more clearly than other sins. Peter said to avoid evil things our bodies want to do. We often think of sexual sin. That is one kind of sin. It also means sins such as overeating or being lazy. We cannot help other people to come to Jesus if our lives show sin.

VERSE 12.

¹² *People who do not believe are living all around you and might say that you are doing wrong. Live such good lives that they will see the good things you do and will give glory to God on the day when Christ comes again.*

Jesus said, “You should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and will praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). We must not give people a reason to criticize us or the gospel. We must live in ways to cause them to give glory to God. Nonbelievers watch how we behave. Sometimes people wrongly say Christians are doing bad things. Or they may say bad things about us.

Early Christians were living among people who persecuted them. People said Christians were evil because they would not worship false gods. But the lives of believers will be one of the reasons nonbelievers will give glory to God when Jesus returns. Everyone, believers and nonbelievers, will bow before Him. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament say everyone will bow and give glory to God (Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11).

KEY DOCTRINE: *Bow to Jesus*

Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit are one. People bowed to Jesus while He was on earth. These verses say one day all people will bow to Him. Think about this wonderful promise. Write a few words to help you remember what these verses tell you.

Isaiah 45:23

Romans 14:11

Philippians 2:9-11

Matthew 8:2

Matthew 9:18

Matthew 15:22-25

Matthew 17:14

Matthew 20:20

Luke 5:12

The missionaries in the story above needed to learn how to act and what to say when their new Deaf friends talked about worshiping their dead grandparents and other ancestors. These Deaf people believed their ancestors would help them after they died. The missionaries knew they could not just say, "You are wrong!" They needed to introduce these Deaf people to Jesus. The missionaries needed to be careful to show love and teach the Deaf people the truth. The missionaries also knew that the government did not let people have churches. They could worship only in the temples with idols.

What can you do to be sure nonbelievers have nothing to criticize you for? Write a few words about that.

2. Toward Officials and Leaders (1 Peter 2:13-17)

VERSES 13-14.

¹³ *For the Lord's sake, yield to the people who have authority in this world: the king, who is the highest authority,*

¹⁴ *and the leaders who are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right.*

Sometimes when people pray, they close by saying, "In Jesus' name and for His **sake**." The word *sake* means "benefit or good or honor." Most Christians mean "for the glory of Jesus." Everything the believer does must honor the Lord.

Christians must yield to the laws of the people who represent the ruler. Why? We **submit** to authority for the Lord's sake. The word *yield* means "to obey." All authority comes from God (Romans 13:1). If Christians do not obey their leaders, they do not obey God.

Do you think Christians should respect and obey bad leaders? YES NO

Peter urged believers to obey laws of their nation so their obedience would show the glory of God. Believers cannot pick and choose which laws they will obey.

It is important to understand we must not obey governments telling us to do things against the will of God. We must not obey a ruler who tells us to do evil things. We must not obey religious laws that are against God's Word (Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-29). In America, we can vote to change laws we do not like. Until the laws are changed, we must submit to government authority. If we decide to disobey sinful laws, we must accept the punishment for breaking the law.

VERSE 15.

¹⁵ *It is God's desire that by doing good you should stop foolish people from saying stupid things about you.*

How can we prevent nonbelievers from saying foolish things about us? First, we must do good things. When nonbelievers see the good things Christians do, they will not have reasons to say stupid things about Deaf believers. Our good behavior will make foolish people become silent.

People who criticize Christians are not always wrong. Often, nonbelievers say all Christians are hypocrites. Some Deaf believers truly are hypocrites, but not all Christians are hypocrites.

VERSE 16.

¹⁶ *Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live as servants of God.*

In this verse, free people means the freedom we have in Christ. We have freedom to live the way God leads us to live. Because of God's **grace** we are free from spiritual death. We are not controlled by sin.

VERSE 17.

¹⁷ *Show respect for all people: Love the brothers and sisters of God's family, respect God, honor the king.*

Four things will show we are God's children. We must:

- 1. Show respect for all people.** It is easy to show respect for important, rich, or well educated people. We may be tempted not to respect poor or weak people. When we show respect for all people, we show we are children of God.
- 2. Love the brothers and sisters in God's family.** Some church people only care about themselves. They say they are Christians, but they do not always show love for each other.
- 3. Respect God.** The most important thing Christians must do is respect the God who made the universe. He gives us salvation through Jesus. Respecting God means living the way He wants us to live.
- 4. Honor the king.** We must respect our rulers. The point is to honor the king. Do not worship the king.

The hearing missionaries told the new Deaf missionaries they must always show respect for the government people, police, and soldiers. If they broke the law, they would go to jail, and it was not easy to get a fair trial. The law said they cannot have a church, but they can worship in their own homes. They invited their new Deaf friends to their apartment and talked with them.

What are some ways you will try to show respect for God?

3. In Our Work (1 Peter 2:18-20)

VERSE 18.

¹⁸ *Slaves, yield to the authority of your masters with all respect, not only those who are good and kind, but also those who are dishonest.*

Slaves must show respect to their masters. The word *slave* in this verse can also mean “servants, not just people forced to work for someone.” Today, we can understand this to mean employees. Employees are paid for their work, and they are under the authority of their employers.

Some employers are not always fair. We must respect their authority even if they are not fair. The employer may use his or her position to mistreat an employee. Employees must respect their employer’s authority. The boss may ask the employee to be dishonest. The believer must decide to obey or leave the job.

Some Deaf people feel they are discriminated against because they are Deaf.

Have you had that experience? Discuss with your class how to handle this.

Some believers do not work. They may be retired or have some other reason they do not work. They are still under someone’s authority.

It is easy to be under the authority of someone nice and kind. It is much more difficult if they are mean and cruel. Some people in authority require people under them to do very unpleasant things. Showing respect for others today does not mean we must accept abuse from them.

BIBLE SKILL: *Respect for Authority*

Read these verses. Who is the authority we must respect?

Job 22:21

Ecclesiastes 8:2

Acts 5:29

Ephesians 6:1

Ephesians 6:5

Titus 3:1

VERSE 19.

¹⁹ *A person might have to suffer even when it is unfair, but if he thinks of God and can stand the pain, God is pleased.*

We do not understand why good people suffer. But we know this happens. God does not make people suffer. Peter wrote to believers who were being punished unfairly. Many had masters who beat them or did not give them food or clothing. He urged them to be strong and accept suffering without complaining. He told them to think of God while accepting the pain. God will be pleased.

Peter's words are meant for us today. There are times believers are punished unfairly. We often read about Christians who are killed by terrorist leaders because of their **faith**.

VERSE 20.

²⁰ *If you are beaten for doing wrong, there is no reason to praise you for being patient in your punishment. But if you suffer for doing good, and you are patient, then God is pleased.*

Most people believe someone who does wrong must be punished. If we do wrong things, no one should praise us for accepting our punishment. But a person who is punished for doing good is different.

Many Deaf people feel they are harassed and treated badly at work, just because they are deaf. They feel they do not get promoted as easily as hearing workers do. Mike was a good auto mechanic. He was good with work on transmissions. His boss often praised him for his good work. But Mike was not promoted to a better job. Mike's friends told him he should sue the company. Mike decided he would continue to do good work and honor God by respecting his boss.

Have you suffered punishment for doing good? Yes No.

How did God help you be patient through the suffering?

IN MY CONTEXT

This Bible study has many words about how believers should live. Think about what you have studied. How will you answer these questions?

Do you always obey the law? YES NO.

Do you do things which do not honor God? YES NO.

**Do Deaf and hearing people around you know you are a Christian?
YES NO.**

Can they tell by the way you act that you love Jesus? YES NO.

Do you do everything for the Lord's sake? YES NO.

We must love our Christian brothers and sisters.

**Are you able to say you love all your brothers and sisters in the faith?
YES NO.**

How do you show that love?

We must obey the laws of our country if they are not against God's laws.

Have you ever broken any government laws? YES NO.

What will you do to change?

Ask God to show you the mistakes you make and help you change your actions.

MEMORY VERSE

People who do not believe are living all around you and might say that you are doing wrong. Live such good lives that they will see the good things you do and will give glory to God on the day when Christ comes again. —1 Peter 2:12



Session 5

LIVING IN RELATIONSHIPS

Believers honor God through healthy relationships with other people. God blesses people who obey Him.

1 PETER 3:1-12

FIRST THOUGHTS

Ted and Carole graduated from high school and wanted to get married. They were both members of the Deaf church. They talked with their pastor. The pastor asked them to study the verses in today's lesson and some other verses from the Book of Ephesians. He told them they were making many changes. In the past, they had a relationship with their parents and teachers. Now their relationship was with each other, with their employer, and with the Deaf and hearing people in their community.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In the Bible study last week, we learned about our relation to people in authority. The Bible study today is about the relationship between husbands and wives and relationships with others.

Believers must relate to their husbands or wives in ways that show their

own **faith** in Christ. Wives show Christ by submitting to their husbands and living pure lives. Husbands show Christ by protecting, understanding, and respecting their wives. Believers can be a blessing to others by offering godly compassion and love.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. For the Wife (1 Peter 3:1-6)

VERSE 1.

¹*In the same way, you wives should yield to your husbands. Then, if some husbands do not obey God's teaching, they will be persuaded to believe without anyone's saying a word to them. They will be persuaded by the way their wives live.*

Marriage is a **sacred** relationship. *Sacred* means “holy.” In that relationship, a wife should **submit** to her husband willingly. It is important to understand what Peter did not say. He did not say husbands are more important than their wives.

In New Testament times, women had almost no rights. They were more like property. It may seem to us, today, that Peter and Paul did not respect women enough. But Jesus and the New Testament writers gave women much more respect than anyone gave them at that time.

A Christian woman must live a holy life. Her husband will see how his wife behaves because she is a Christian. One day, he will also want to know God. It may take a long time. She should pray for her husband. She must live a holy life and trust God.

Peter did not tell wives they must accept any kind of abuse from their husbands. They must not stay in situations when their lives are in danger.

VERSES 2-4.

²*Your husbands will see the pure lives you live with your respect for God.*

³*It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful.*

⁴*No, your beauty should come from within you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that will never be destroyed and is very precious to God.*

A woman can make herself beautiful in two ways. First, she must **focus** on inner beauty and live a godly life. When a Christian woman is beautiful in her spirit, she will have a gentle spirit. She will be peaceful. She will help other people feel peaceful also. God loves a gentle and quiet spirit.

The less important way a wife makes herself beautiful is on the outside.

It is not wrong to look good for her husband. Most husbands appreciate beautiful wives. Wives should not neglect how they look.

VERSES 5-6.

⁵*In this same way the holy women who lived long ago and followed God made themselves beautiful, yielding to their own husbands.*

⁶*Sarah obeyed Abraham, her husband, and called him her master. And you women are true children of Sarah if you always do what is right and are not afraid.*

Christian women are true children of Sarah. Who was Sarah? You can read the story of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 12:1-20. Peter encouraged wives to be like Sarah. They should act in godly ways.

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Godly Woman*

Read each of these verses from Proverbs 31. Match it to a verse in today's Bible study.

Verse 31:11 = 1 Peter 3:___

Verse 31:12 = 1 Peter 3:___

Verse 31:26 = 1 Peter 3:___

Verse 31:28b-29 = 1 Peter 3:___

Verse 31:30 = 1 Peter 3:___

Some of Ted's older Deaf friends told him that he must show his wife that he was boss from the beginning. They told Ted not to let her tell him what to do because he was the boss. Ted was confused. When he and Carole talked with the pastor again, he told them what his friends said. The pastor asked them to look again at what Peter and Paul said about marriage. He told Ted to use the New Testament as his guide and not let his friends lead him away from God's Word.

What do you think makes a wife beautiful to her husband?

2. For the Husband (1 Peter 3:7)

Now, read what Peter said about husbands. This, too, was very different from the culture of that time. In most homes, a husband treated his wife like

property, like a slave. She had no rights. They were not equal. These verses, like many others in the New Testament, **elevated** the status of women in Christian **society**.

VERSE 7.

⁷In the same way, you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way, since they are weaker than you. But show them respect, because God gives them the same blessing He gives you—the grace that gives true life. Do this so that nothing will stop your prayers.

Husbands also have responsibilities toward their wives. Husbands need to understand their wives and honor them as fellow believers. Husbands should learn how to care for their wives.

Husbands must treat their wives with kindness. Why? Wives will receive an equal blessing from God (Galatians 3:28). The **grace** that gives true life means the true grace which brings salvation through Jesus. Husbands are not more **worthy** to be saved than wives. Husbands and wives are spiritually equal.

A husband must treat his wife with kindness to be sure his prayers are not stopped. If the husband does not obey God in relationship to his wife, his prayers may not be effective. Husbands who do not treat their wives with respect are sinning. It is difficult for a husband and wife to pray together if there is conflict between them.

Ted and Carole wanted to have a godly marriage. They thanked their pastor for helping them find God's plan in the Bible. Other Deaf couples said they often had problems and disagreed about things, but they wanted to do it "God's way" and not the way of the people they knew who were not trying to obey God. One Deaf couple in the church was talking about divorce. Each one blamed the other for their problems. They talked with their Deaf pastor and promised to try to understand and respect each other. When the Deaf group met for Bible study, they all agreed that God's way is best, but it is not always easy to keep good relationships between a husband and wife.

What do you think makes a man a good husband?

In your opinion, what is the most important attitude married couples can have for each other?

3. For All Believers (1 Peter 3:8-12)

VERSES 8-9.

⁸Finally, all of you should be in agreement, understanding each other, loving each other as family, being kind and humble.

⁹Do not do wrong to repay a wrong, and do not insult to repay an insult. But repay with a blessing, because you yourselves were called to do this so that you might receive a blessing.

Believers must agree on the basic teachings of God's Word. Some basic teachings are salvation through Jesus and the **grace** of God. Other things, such as which Bible translation to use, are opinions. Believers can peacefully and respectfully disagree with each other.

The first Christians were known by their love for each other. They loved each other the same way they loved their own families. Love shows itself in **various** ways. It is shown in the way believers understand each other. They do not close their minds to the thoughts and feelings of other people. They are not critical or mean when another believer makes a mistake.

We show Christian love in the kindness we give to others. Anyone can be kind to someone who is kind to them. It is difficult to be kind to someone who says bad things to us or cheats us. We must always speak to them with kind words and signs.

We show Christian love when we are **humble**. We like to tell others about the good things we do. It is better to praise them for the good things they do.

We show Christian love in the way we handle insults. We naturally want to give insults back. A Christian Deaf young woman has developed a way to react to insults. She simply smiles and signs, "OK." It does not mean she agrees with the insulter. It simply means she will not say anything back. The person throwing the insult has no response for that kind answer.

We show Christian love when we do not use a wrong to pay back a wrong. If someone does something wrong or hurts us, we must not do something wrong to hurt that person. Why? We will receive a blessing from God.

VERSES 10-11.

¹⁰The Scripture says, "A person must do these things to enjoy life and have many happy days." He must not say evil things, and he must not tell lies.

¹¹He must stop doing evil and do good. He must look for peace and work for it.

These verses are goals for all believers. In your Bible, draw a line under the action words in these verses: do not say evil things, do not lie, stop doing evil, do good, look for peace, and work for peace. What is the reward if we reach

these goals? We will enjoy life and have many happy days.

Peace in this verse is not just world peace. It is peace between people in the church and in the community. Jesus said, “They are blessed who work for peace, for they will be called God’s children” (Matthew 5:9).

VERSE 12.

¹²*The Lord sees the good people and listens to their prayers. But the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

When Christians show love to each other and to other people, God will hear our prayers.

BIBLE SKILL: *How Must Believers Behave?*

Read Psalm 34:12-14 and complete these sentences.

1. The believer must not say _____.
2. He must not _____.
3. He must stop doing _____.
4. He must do _____.
5. He must look for _____.
6. He must work for _____.

Carole’s mother was very strong in her ideas about what Carole and Ted should do. She told them they would need to live with her because Deaf people don’t know how to keep house and all that. Carole tried to be sweet as she told her mother they already had an apartment. Carole explained they had talked with other couples and they already knew about things to help them with phones, doorbells, clocks, etc. Carole stayed calm because she wanted to have a good relationship with her mother, even when her mother did not understand deafness and had never learned ASL. Some Deaf people have problems keeping a good relationship with their family and coworkers. If you have had problems like that, perhaps this Bible study will help you.

Has anyone ever insulted you? YES NO.

Why?

Did you give insults back to them? YES NO.

Why?

We still must be peacemakers.

We still must be kind.

We still must honor marriage vows.

We still must follow God's teachings about husbands and wives.

We still must get along with our Christian family.

We must live to honor God at all times.

Read the list again. Ask God to show you one area that you need to improve so that you can have healthy relationships.

IN MY CONTEXT

Christians may find it difficult to follow the instructions in today's Bible study. People continue to do the same sins they did in New Testament times. Today's Bible study focused on some of the things we still face.

Do you find it difficult to do good? YES NO.

Is it difficult for you to be peaceful and kind to everyone? YES NO.

If you are married do you always respect each other? YES NO.

Are you tempted to argue with other Christians? YES NO.

Does your life always honor God? YES NO.

You know the areas you need to improve. Here are three promises you may want to make:

1. If you are a husband or wife, promise you will follow the teachings in today's Bible study.

Will you make that promise? YES NO.

2. Meet together with your group and promise together to be in agreement with each other.

Will you make that promise to members of your group? YES NO.

3. If people insult you, promise yourself you will not fight back.

Will you make that promise? YES NO.

MEMORY VERSE

Finally, all of you should be in agreement, understanding each other, loving each other as family, being kind and humble. —1 Peter 3:8



Session 6

BE READY

Believers must be ready to honor God by sharing our hope with others.

1 PETER 3:13-22

FIRST THOUGHTS

Rita finished high school at the state residential school and lived at home with her mother. She tried to get a job, but her mother told her no one wanted to hire a deaf person. Rita's mother was a very active member in a group that did not believe in Jesus as the Son of God who died on the cross for our salvation. The group acted like a church, but they did not teach what the Bible says. Because Rita was deaf, she did not know what the preachers and teachers said. They did not have an interpreter for her. When Rita was saved, she was so excited she ran home to tell her mother. Her mother became very angry and wrote a note that Rita could not go to the Deaf Bible study group again.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Peter instructed his readers to honor Christ and to keep a clear **conscience**. When they suffered, it should be for doing something good, not for doing something evil.

┌ We can face suffering because we know we bring honor to God. All life situations include opportunities to point others to Christ. Christ died on the cross to secure salvation for all who accept Him.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Explain Our Faith (1 Peter 3:13-17)

VERSES 13-14.

¹³ *If you are trying hard to do good, no one can really hurt you.*

¹⁴ *But even if you suffer for doing right, you are blessed. "Don't be afraid of what they fear; do not dread those things."*

Christians should always try to do what is right, even if they suffer for it. Nothing can take away our eternal blessings. God has complete control of our earthly and heavenly lives. Believers will not be harmed in an eternal way. If we suffer for doing right, God will bless us.

It is important to understand the use of the word *really* in this verse. Believers who always try to do right will not be harmed or hurt in a real way. Earth is our temporary home. Real life is eternal life. Believers may be hurt here on earth. We may suffer for our **faith**, but our souls are safe eternally. We must not live in fear or worry or let our lives be controlled by **dread**. We all know people who are afraid something bad might happen to them. They do not want to make decisions because they may make mistakes. This is what it means to live in dread. Read Isaiah 8:12-14.

No matter what happens to us, we are blessed. It is difficult to **focus** on blessings when we are suffering for doing the right things. Believers have eternal blessings because of the **grace** of God. We must not focus on our fears. We must focus on our blessings.

VERSES 15-16.

¹⁵ *But respect Christ as the holy Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have,*

¹⁶ *but answer in a gentle way and with respect. Keep a clear conscience so that those who speak evil of your good life in Christ will be made ashamed.*

Christ is Lord over everything. He must be Lord in the hearts of Deaf believers. Other people will see the way we live.

We have joy. Why? We have hope. These verses will help us when we tell someone about our eternal hope of salvation because Christ died to save us.

Deaf believers must honor Christ. He must be the holy One who rules in our hearts.

These verses give us three things to think about. First, Christ must have total control of our lives, actions, and spirits. We must honor Him as Lord. He must be obeyed and respected.

Second, we must always be ready to explain our **faith** in Christ. Do you know how to explain what you believe? Many Deaf people know they have hope in Christ but they do not know how to explain it to people who do not believe. Deaf believers must be able to explain our hope in clear ways that will not confuse the nonbeliever. We need to answer in kind and gentle words. Have you met Deaf believers who are rude or mean when they talk to nonbelievers? They debate, shout, or make harsh signs to try to convince people to come to Jesus. This hurts the work of Christ. Nonbelievers do not want to be around them.

How do we prepare ourselves to be ready to explain our faith? We must study God's Word. We must know the Bible well enough to show God's plan for salvation. We must pray for God's leadership.

Third, we must keep a clear **conscience** (the sense of right and wrong). Deep in our spirits we know the difference between right and wrong. If people criticize us, our conscience will let us know if we did anything wrong. People will be ashamed when they see they criticized us without a good reason.

VERSE 17.

¹⁷ *It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong if that is what God wants.*

No one wants to suffer. We do not want physical or emotional pain. Sometimes God lets good people suffer. God does not cause believers to suffer. We should not do anything wrong to cause us to suffer. If we suffer, it must be for doing good to others.

Rita tried to write to her mother to explain about Jesus, but she did not know the words to use. She asked her Bible teacher to talk with her mother. They went to Rita's home and the teacher tried to explain, but Rita's mother said she was not welcome and must never come back. She told the teacher that the Deaf lady who always took Rita to the Deaf Bible study must never come to the house again.

List some things you can do to be able to explain your faith in a better way.

2. Understand Our Faith (1 Peter 3:18-20a)

VERSE 18.

¹⁸ *Christ himself suffered for sins once. He was not guilty, but He suffered for those who are guilty to bring you to God. His body was killed, but He was made alive in the spirit.*

This verse explains the good news about Jesus in a very simple way.

1. God is holy.
2. Sin separates people from God.
3. The punishment for sin is death.
4. Jesus did not sin.
5. Jesus died to take away our sin.
6. Evil men killed His body.
7. He rose from death.
8. God made Him alive in His spirit.
9. We can have a relationship with God through Jesus. We can be saved.

Christ was not **guilty** of any wrong. He suffered for guilty people. Why? He suffered to bring us to God. God will not permit sin in His presence. In the past, He required sacrifices for forgiveness of sins. Jesus became our sacrifice. He made it possible for us to be with God.

KEY DOCTRINE: *How Are We Saved?*

Draw lines between the verse and its meaning.

John 3:16	because of His mercy.
Romans 3:23	faith in the blood of Jesus' death.
Ephesians 2:5	everyone has sinned.
Ephesians 2:8	by grace through believing.
Titus 3:5-6	by God's grace.
Romans 3:25	by the love of God.

VERSES 19-20a.

¹⁹ *And in the spirit He went and preached to the spirits in prison*

^{20a} *who refused to obey God long ago in the time of Noah. God was waiting patiently for them while Noah was building the boat.*

These verses are difficult to understand. Bible teachers have different opinions about the meaning of verse 19. The most important thing we must understand is the overall meaning of the verses.

Peter said to look back to the time of Noah. The Holy Spirit spoke through Noah. Noah warned people to stop their wicked behavior. God waited patiently for them while Noah obeyed God and built a boat. God gave evil people the opportunity to turn to Him. They did not. They died in the flood. They did not obey God and God destroyed the world with a flood. You can read this story in Genesis 6-9. The spirit of Christ was there in the time of Noah.

This verse tells us Jesus preached “to the spirits in prison who refused to obey God.” Many Bible teachers believe the prison refers to earth where people were spiritually dead. His Spirit preached to their spirits. Evil people still refused to obey God.

This verse does not say the dead will get another opportunity to receive Christ and be saved. Other Bible verses make this clear (Hebrews 9:27-28).

How would you advise the Deaf girl, Rita, in the story above? The next Sunday, Rita slipped out of the house and walked a long way to the Deaf Bible study. She was crying. She didn’t understand why her mother was so angry. The teacher and other Bible study members explained many things to Rita about her **faith** and why some people suffered because of their faith.

Why don’t people get another opportunity to be saved after they die?

Why is God waiting so long before Jesus comes back?

3. Show Our Faith (1 Peter 3:20b-22)

VERSES 20b-21.

^{20b} Only a few people—eight in all—were saved by water.

²¹ And that water is like baptism that now saves you—not the washing of dirt from the body, but the promise made to God from a good conscience. And this is because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

Water baptism does not save us. Our **faith** in Jesus Christ does. Baptism is a sign of what happened in our lives. The water does not save us. It shows the promise we make to God. We promise to love and follow Him. We show our promise when we are baptized.

Peter makes two comparisons:

1. Believers go through baptismal waters. Noah came through the flood waters. The flood washed away all the evil in the days of Noah. Baptism shows our sins have been washed away by Jesus.
2. The boat is like salvation that saves people from death. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sins. Jesus is our salvation. He saves us from eternal death. We make our commitment to God because Jesus rose from death.

Some churches say people are not saved unless they are water baptized. Other verses in the Bible do not support this belief. Salvation is the free gift from God. Look at the Bible Skills box below to understand more clearly about baptism.

BIBLE SKILLS: *Baptism*

Romans 6:4.

Explain in your own words how baptism shows our salvation experience.

Does water baptism save us? YES NO.

Read Luke 23:32-43. Was the criminal baptized? YES NO.

Was he saved? YES NO.

VERSE 22.

²² *Now Jesus has gone into heaven and is at God's right side ruling over angels, authorities, and powers.*

God is a spirit. He does not have a body. He lives in heaven. Jesus is now at the right side of God. Jesus, the Son has the same power and authority as God, the Father.

Our salvation is made possible by the fact Jesus rose from death and still lives. He rules everything. He rules over all angels, authorities, and powers. He rules in the spiritual world and the earthly world. We can have victory in

our lives because Christ is the ruler over everything.

In the story about Rita, the group encouraged her to be kind to her mother and obey her in every way that was right, but they would help her find a way to continue to go to church. Rita wanted to become baptized. She wanted her mother to see it, but her mother was too angry.

Explain in a few words what baptism means to you.

Have you been baptized? YES NO.

If you answered yes, write what you remember about your baptism.

If you answered no, do you want to be baptized? YES NO

Talk with your pastor or teacher about your answer.

IN MY CONTEXT

No person lives without problems or troubles. The Devil may use things like sickness, family problems, job problems, or insults to try to defeat us.

Some believers are able to handle their problems very well. They have confidence God will protect them.

Other Christians are defeated by their problems. They do not depend on God to help them.

Some Christians pretend they do not have problems. They are lying to themselves.

Do you worry about your problems? YES NO.

Do you worry about your future? YES NO.

Are you worried about your family or work? YES NO.

Do you have money problems? YES NO.

How do you face your problems?

Today's Bible study gives us ways to face the problems or suffering we have in our lives.

Look at each of these verses in today's Bible study. Write in your own words what the verses mean to you.

Verse 14 _____

Verse 15a _____

Verse 22 _____

Pray and make a promise to God you will try to follow the instructions in today's Bible study.

MEMORY VERSE

But respect Christ as the holy Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have.

—1 Peter 3:15



Session 7

How We Live

Believers honor God by loving other people at all times.

1 PETER 4:1-11

FIRST THOUGHTS

We must decide to live our lives with Christ as our example. We decide to follow God's will, not the will of others. Other Deaf people can see our life and know if we are Christlike or not.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Peter continued to write to believers who were suffering persecution in their lives because of their **faith** in Jesus Christ. Peter told believers in New Testament times they had a higher standard for their lives than nonbelievers. Suffering did not give them an excuse for bad behavior. They should follow Jesus' example. Believers have the same instructions today.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Live for God (1 Peter 4:1-4)

VERSE 1.

¹*Since Christ suffered while He was in his body, strengthen yourselves with the same way of thinking Christ had. The person who has suffered in the body is finished with sin.*

Christ's only purpose was to do what God sent Him to do. Our only purpose should be to do the will of God in everything we do. We can follow Christ's example, even if we suffer as Jesus did. We must change the way we think and feel. We cannot allow ourselves to think about things that cause us to sin. When we suffer because we are Christians, we show how much we love God. We want to obey God. We must not want to sin because Jesus made us free from the power of sin (Romans 6:6-7).

VERSE 2.

²*Strengthen yourselves so that you will live here on earth doing what God wants, not the evil things people want.*

We must try to strengthen ourselves so we can obey God. Obedience to God is not always easy. We must do things that give us strength to obey Him. Why? "Our fight is not against people on earth but against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness, against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly world." (Ephesians 6:12). Paul explained the ways to fight against evil in his letter to the Ephesian church.

He told us to put on God's full armor. Soldiers wear equipment to protect themselves as they go to war. When we fight against evil, we will be able to stand strong. When we finish the whole fight, we will still be standing.

BIBLE SKILL: *The Armor of God*

Ephesians 6:13-18 teaches us about our armor. Draw a line from each item of armor and what it means.

The belt	Right living
Chest protection	Stop the arrows of the Devil
Shield	God's salvation
Shoes	Truth
Helmet	Help you stand strong
Sword (of the Spirit)	Word of God

VERSE 3.

³*In the past you wasted too much time doing what nonbelievers enjoy. You were guilty of sexual sins, evil desires, drunkenness, wild and drunken parties, and hateful idol worship.*

Peter wrote to both Jews and Gentiles. The first believers were Jews. Many Gentiles heard the disciples teach about Jesus. They had become believers. He reminded both Jews and Gentiles that they were finished with their old way of life. The same is true for us. We are finished with sin. We experienced many of those same sins before we were saved. We must make the decision to be finished with those sins.

This verse names many of the ways believers sinned before they decided to follow Christ: sexual sins, evil desires, drunkenness, wild and drunken parties, and hateful **idol** worship. Are these sins still with us today? We do not have idols made with our hands that we worship as a god, but we do have other things that get the attention we should give to God. Sometimes we pay more attention to television or sports than we do to God. Sometimes we have hobbies that are more important to us than God. Jesus says even our family members should not be more important than our love for God. Read Matthew 10:37.

VERSE 4.

⁴*Nonbelievers think it is strange that you do not do the many wild and wasteful things they do, so they insult you.*

When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us change. We give up our bad behavior. We worship God. Nonbelievers cannot understand why their friends have changed. Nonbelievers may think we are strange because we no longer want to do sinful things. They see our love for God and know there is something different about us.

Jesus said that people who do what is evil hate the light (John 3:19-21). We now have the light of Jesus in our lives. Other people may hate and insult us because we are changed.

Why do you think you need to strengthen your spiritual life?

2. Live the Gospel (1 Peter 4:5-6)

VERSES 5-6.

⁵ *But they will have to explain this to God, who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

⁶ *For this reason the Good News was preached to those who are now dead. Even though they were judged like all people, the Good News was preached to them so they could live in the spirit as God lives.*

Someday people who insulted believers will stand before God. They will be forced to explain why they sinned and insulted believers. God will **judge** nonbelievers who are still alive when Jesus returns to earth. He will judge the nonbelievers who have already died. He will judge both the living and the dead. Everyone will answer to the Father. Nonbelievers will be judged **guilty** because they rejected His Son.

Every person's physical body dies. God gives eternal life to people who believe and trust Jesus. Eternal life means living forever with God in heaven. Nonbelievers will exist forever, in hell. They will be punished forever.

Bible teachers have several different opinions about the meaning of verse 6. One opinion is that the gospel was preached to people who were already dead. But the Bible clearly teaches that sinners will not have a second chance to accept Jesus after they are dead. The verse means God gave them the opportunity to accept the good news of Jesus while they were alive.

The second opinion is that Peter wrote about people who were spiritually dead while they were living on earth. God will judge them in the same way. Spiritually dead means they did not believe or serve God. They did not have the life of God in them.

Are there things in your life God will judge you about? YES NO.

Pray and talk with God about them. Ask Him to help you turn from those things and obey Him more fully.

3. Show the Gospel (1 Peter 4:7-11)

VERSE 7.

⁷ *The time is near when all things will end. So think clearly and control yourselves so you will be able to pray.*

No one knows when the end of the world will happen. We do not know when Jesus will return. We do know He will return. People in New Testament times believed the end would come while they were still alive. That did not happen,

but they knew they must be ready. If we live with that in mind, we will be more obedient to God. We will be able to pray with more wisdom and **faith**. We must always be ready for Jesus' return to earth.

VERSE 8.

⁸*Most importantly, love each other deeply, because love will cause people to forgive each other for many sins.*

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God. The second most important commandment is to love our neighbor (Matthew 22:36-39). This love lets us forgive other people when they do something against us. It helps us love them when they sin against God. We will not make excuses for their sin. We will pray for them to repent and turn back to God. We will talk with them in a loving way and encourage them to turn to Him.

Does your Deaf Bible study group show love to each other and to other Deaf people in your community? YES NO.

VERSE 9.

⁹*Open your homes to each other, without complaining.*

In New Testament times believers opened their homes to other believers. We read in the Book of Acts how Paul stayed in many homes as he traveled on his missionary journeys. New Testament believers thought hospitality was one of the most important things they should do. *Hospitality* means "to welcome people into our homes and help them have the things they need." True love is seen in how much we are willing to share with other believers.

VERSES 10-11.

¹⁰*Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts of grace.*

¹¹*Anyone who speaks should speak words from God. Anyone who serves should serve with the strength God gives so that in everything God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Power and glory belong to Him forever and ever. Amen.*

Every believer has some gift from God that can be used to build up the church. The words *talent* or *ability* can be used the same way the word *gift* is used in this verse. Every believer has at least one talent or ability to use for God's kingdom. The word **various** means "made up of many different things." These gifts are a **grace** from God. Why did God give us these gifts? The gifts help Christians to serve God and other people. They are not to

benefit ourselves.

The two gifts in verse 11 are speaking and serving. Speaking means more than making sounds with our voices. *Speaking* means “the words or signs we use to communicate.” Believers communicate in two different situations. First, speech is the words we use every day. We talk to friends, family, and strangers. All of our speaking must be pleasing to God. As Deaf believers, we must talk in ways that honor God.

Second, speech can be teaching, preaching, or prophesying. The words we say or signs we use must be from God.

The gift of serving is a gift to help in useful ways. We can do **practical** things to help other people. God gives us the strength to do our work as we depend on Him. People who serve have special responsibilities. We use this gift for the glory and honor of God. We serve happily, and not because we feel we are forced to. We must serve without wanting other people to notice us. God is not pleased when believers do things to get praise for themselves. Our services must show glory and praise to God. Deaf believers must serve with the strength we receive from God. If we depend on our own strength, we may not be able to continue to serve (Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12).

God will lead us to know how and when to serve. When we see someone in need, we must respond to that need. There are many ways Deaf believers can serve.

Serving and speaking are alike in one important way. People who serve and people who speak must obey God’s leading. God tells us the things to say. God tells us the way to serve. Whatever we do, we must bring honor and glory to God through speaking or serving in Jesus’ name.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Spiritual Gifts*

Read Romans 12:6-8. List the gifts God gave you. Why do you feel these are your gifts?

1. _____ Why? _____
2. _____ Why? _____
3. _____ Why? _____

These verses end with a wonderful statement of praise to God. Power and glory belong to Him forever and ever. God controls all things. Everything must give Him glory forever. **Amen** means “let it happen, or I agree.”

Do you praise God with your words and signs? YES NO.

Write a few of your own words to praise God.

Think about your planned activities this week. Are there ways you will be able to show the gospel this week? Will you have an opportunity to speak, serve, love, or invite someone to your home?

Write what you can do this week.

IN MY CONTEXT

Are you a believer? YES NO.

Deaf believers must look to Christ when we face persecution for our **faith**. Christians in many parts of the world are facing the same persecutions early Christians faced. There are places in the world today where believers cannot even say the name of Jesus out loud. Deaf people cannot make the sign for Jesus. If they say anything that mentions Jesus, they will be punished severely.

In America, we probably will not face the kinds of persecution early Christians faced. But we are facing some kinds of persecution. We have already seen an increase in insults against Christ and His church. Christian children are bullied at school. Christians are told they cannot pray publicly at public school activities. Our government made laws that go against the gospel. Some employers will not let employees have Bibles on their desks.

The Bible teaches us we must continue to love people who punish us for our beliefs. We must continue to serve them with love.

Have you ever had these kinds of experiences? YES NO.

Have you faced criticism because of your faith in Jesus? YES NO.

You probably will in your lifetime.

Have you thought about the things you will do when you face these difficult times? YES NO.

List a few things you will do when you face these difficult times.

MEMORY VERSE

Open your homes to each other, without complaining. —1 Peter 4:9



Session 8

INSULTED

Believers honor God by being faithful when they are persecuted.

1 PETER 4:12-19

FIRST THOUGHTS

Society in America is becoming anti-Christian. We see it happening when we watch television or read newspapers. People often criticize Christians. Many politicians and government officials are trying to take away the rights of Christians and Christian churches. In some towns, crosses are not permitted on government property. Some officials support religions that try to destroy Christians.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

When Peter wrote his letters, Rome ruled the Jewish nation. Nero was the Roman emperor. At first he let Christians live in peace, but his fear and hatred of Christians grew during the time he ruled. He began to **persecute** Christians in very cruel ways. Emperors who came after him were worse than Nero. Christians were beginning to face more persecution. Peter told believers not to be surprised if they suffered. He warned them to expect trouble.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Expect Insults (1 Peter 4:12-14)

VERSE 12.

¹²*My friends, do not be surprised at the terrible trouble which now comes to test you. Do not think that something strange is happening to you.*

All through his letters, Peter called the people he wrote to his friends. When Jesus and the disciples used the word *friend*, it showed a special relationship of love between them. There was a deep spiritual love between them. Peter warned his friends to expect people to be against them and make fun of them because they were followers of Christ. Believers should not be surprised by this treatment.

VERSE 13.

¹³*But be happy that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings so that you will be happy and full of joy when Christ comes again in glory.*

An important part of this verse tells us after we suffer we will be full of joy. When Jesus returns, we will be full of joy. How can we have joy when we suffer? Because we know about the future. We know Jesus is coming back. It is difficult to imagine people being happy to suffer. Christ suffered. The **apostles** suffered without complaining. We should be happy to suffer for Him.

When Peter became a follower of Jesus, he did not think Jesus would suffer. He thought Jesus would become the earthly king. By the time Peter wrote his two letters to the churches, Jesus was back in heaven. Peter did not know what would happen to him. He already decided he would be happy to share in Christ's sufferings. He decided he would face suffering with joy. In Luke 22:33, Peter told Jesus he was ready to go to prison for Him. (Read about Peter in prison in Acts 12:1-10.) He was ready to die for Him.

Peter's death is not recorded in the Bible. His death is recorded in early church history books written during the first and second century **A.D.** These history writers tell us the Roman emperor sentenced Peter to death. Peter told the Romans he did not feel **worthy** to die the same way Jesus died. He asked to be crucified upside down. All the apostles except John were killed because they loved Jesus. They knew true suffering.

Today, many believers live in countries where they are persecuted for their **faith** in Jesus. They are killed or tortured.

Paul said he wanted to know Christ and the power that raised Him from

death. He wanted to share in His sufferings. He wanted to be like Christ in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10-11).

BIBLE SKILL: *Sufferings of Paul*

Second Corinthians 11:23b-28 describes suffering of the apostle Paul. Write a list the things Paul suffered.

VERSE 14.

¹⁴When people insult you because you follow Christ, you are blessed, because the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is with you.

No one wants to be insulted. Christians are targets for insults. But we have a Savior who cares about us. God blesses Christians when people curse us. Peter called the Holy Spirit the glorious Spirit of God. Because the Holy Spirit is with us, we can face insults. The Holy Spirit in us gives us strength to face suffering with joy.

Believers who suffer because they are Christians have special help from the Holy Spirit. Most of us will not face physical persecution for our **faith**. God has blessed Christians who live in free countries.

Persecution or suffering in free countries is different. Deaf believers may be insulted because we love and follow Jesus. We may lose jobs or promotions because we will not do dishonest things at work.

David is a Deaf man who is an important member of his work group. The group members are good friends and often meet together for meals. David always quietly bows his head and prays before he eats his meal. Some of his coworkers tease him about being open about his faith. He accepts their teasing with joy in his heart. He knows God is pleased with his attitude. He believes his actions may help his coworkers want to know more about Jesus.

Do you think insults are a form of persecution? YES NO.

Why do you think that?

2. Show Jesus in Our Lives (1 Peter 4:15-16)

VERSE 15.

¹⁵ *Do not suffer for murder, theft, or any other crime, nor because you trouble other people.*

Peter challenged his readers to live Godly lives. Christians must not bring suffering on ourselves because we do evil things. The sinful things listed in this verse are part of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17).

The word *trouble* in this verse can mean “to meddle.” **Meddlers** are people who always try to cause trouble between people. They are too interested in the personal affairs of others. They are gossips. These people are as bad as murderers and robbers. Some New Testament churches had troublemakers who wanted to argue with each other and the apostles. Paul’s letters show it was a problem in many churches. It is still a problem in our churches today.

A large Deaf Bible study group met on Monday nights for Bible study and prayer. Most members were loving and helpful. Shirley was a member of that group. She had a bad attitude about the other members. She would argue with them over very little things. She criticized other members behind their backs. She wanted them to take her side in arguments. She criticized the leader of the Deaf Ministry often. Finally the director of the Deaf ministry talked to her and asked her to pray about her poor attitude. She became angry with him. When she refused to change, the Deaf Leadership Council asked her to leave their group. She was punished because of her own actions. She became angry and sad. She brought the punishment on herself.

The point in this verse is that we must not cause our suffering by our own actions.

VERSE 16.

¹⁶ *But if you suffer because you are a Christian, do not be ashamed. Praise God because you wear that name.*

Believers who do evil things and suffer for them dishonor God. We must remember we wear the name of Christ. We do not need labels on our clothes saying we are believers. We do not need to wear crosses as necklaces. We

do not need to put bumper stickers on our cars to say we are believers. Nonbelievers know how Christians should act. We call ourselves *Christians*. We must act like Christ. We should praise God because He lets us wear the name of Christ.

Nonbelievers look at the lives of Christians who suffer without doing anything wrong. They see the love we have for Christ. We do not **complain**. We praise God during our suffering.

Have you ever been teased or mocked because of your faith? YES NO.

Take time to thank God because He trusts you enough to let you suffer for Him.

3. Focus on the Creator (1 Peter 4:17-19)

VERSE 17.

¹⁷ It is time for judgment to begin with God's family. And if that judging begins with us, what will happen to those people who do not obey the Good News of God?

A **judge** decides if a person did something wrong or not. God judges all people. Are they good or bad? Do they love Jesus or not? God will judge His own family first. We are God's children. He will judge our lives for the way we lived. Our actions either honor or dishonor God. We are responsible for our own actions.

God will also judge people who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior. It will be a simple test—did you accept salvation from Jesus or not?

VERSE 18.

¹⁸ "If it is very hard for a good person to be saved, the wicked person and the sinner will surely be lost!"

What does this verse mean, "It is hard for a good person to be saved?" People think they can do enough good things to be saved. We cannot work our way into heaven. We cannot be good enough. We must depend on Jesus for salvation. God sent Jesus to pay for our salvation. We benefit from God's gift of His Son.

The second part of the verse tells us the wicked person and the sinner will be lost. Peter tells us that even good people who do not accept Jesus will face the same punishment as a wicked person or sinner. People who reject God's gift will be severely punished. It is a serious thought for Deaf believers to know their friends who are not followers of Jesus will be lost forever.

VERSE 19.

¹⁹ *So those who suffer as God wants should trust their souls to the faithful Creator as they continue to do what is right.*

It is important for us to be able to trust God to take care of us during our suffering. When we do not trust God, it is the same as saying He is not powerful. The way we trust God shows other people our strength and God's goodness. It is not easy to live a Christian life. God wants Christians to be pure. He lets troubles test our trust in God and make us pure.

We know we can trust God to take care of us if we depend on Him. We can face suffering with joy.

In this verse, God is called our Creator. God created the whole world and everything and every person in it. We understand God is all powerful because He created everything. Since He is all powerful He can surely take care of Christians when we suffer.

KEY DOCTRINE: *God Is Omnipotent (All Powerful)*

As you read these verses, write one of the words about God's power. Praise God with signs or words for His power.

Ephesians 3:20

Luke 1:37

Psalms 65:6

Hebrews 1:3

Jeremiah 32:17

1 Corinthians 1:18

We understand God is faithful. He will use His power to care for all who put trust in Him. He will never fail us. He sent His only son to save us. Our Salvation is secure. We can trust God to take care of us during our suffering because we give glory to God during our suffering.

Write about a time when you experienced troubles or suffered because you are a Christian.

When you had troubles, did you feel like giving up? YES NO

If someone gives up during troubles, do you think they could lose their salvation? YES NO.

Why do you think that?

What does the Bible say about eternal life?

IN MY CONTEXT

Twenty five years ago it was common to have Christian symbols in public places. Today, some laws do not let people put a cross or other Christian symbols on government property.

Have you seen this in your community? YES NO.

Do you think the government should tell a preacher what he can or cannot preach? YES NO.

Why do you feel that way?

Some city governments try to make churches pay taxes on the tithes and offerings they receive.

Do you believe the government should tax the money given to your church? YES NO.

Think about your own life.

Do you notice more insults against Christians? YES NO.

Has someone insulted you for your faith? YES NO.

What did you do when they insulted you?

Do you have joy when you suffer for your Lord? YES NO.

Or are you ashamed to say you are a Christian?

If you are ashamed, confess your attitude to God and ask Him to forgive you.

Today, are you willing to promise God you will be the kind of believer He wants you to be? YES NO.

MEMORY VERSE

If you suffer because you are a Christian, do not be ashamed. Praise God because you wear that name. —1 Peter 4:16

A photograph of two men sitting at a table outdoors. The man on the left is Deaf, wearing glasses and a light-colored jacket over a patterned shirt. The man on the right is hearing, with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark shirt. They are both looking down at an open book on the table. A large, stylized number '9' is overlaid on the image, partially covering the man on the left.

Session 9

LIVING AS LEADERS

Believers can have victory in their spiritual life.

1 PETER 5:1-11

FIRST THOUGHTS

Deaf members of Deaf churches or Deaf ministries have opportunities to be leaders. James was a Deaf deacon in a hearing church. At first he was afraid he would not be able to fulfill the responsibilities of a deacon. The pastor of the church led a training session for newly elected deacons. The new deacons studied the letters from Peter and Paul to learn how to complete their responsibilities and how they should live.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Self **pride** should never be a part of our lives. Peter said he had the right to instruct others. He was with Jesus while He was on earth. He saw the terrible sufferings of Christ.

Other disciples probably read the letter. They did not need to be reminded about the way they should act. They were also with Jesus.

We must want to have spiritual victory in our lives. It is our responsibility to learn how to have victory. The Bible teaches us the things we need to know.

The Bible study today focuses on the things leaders must do. Leaders must humbly depend upon God's strength.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Responsible for Service (1 Peter 5:1-4)

VERSES 1-2.

¹*Now I have something to say to the elders in your group. I also am an elder. I have seen Christ's sufferings, and I will share in the glory that will be shown to us. I beg you to*

²*Shepherd God's flock, for whom you are responsible. Watch over them because you want to, not because you are forced. That is how God wants it. Do it because you are happy to serve, not because you want money.*

The disciples already knew the things Peter wrote about. It seems clear he was talking to leaders who may not have seen or known Jesus when He was on earth. Peter was not bragging about being with Jesus. He was explaining why he could teach them. The word *elder* in this verse refers to a leader of the church. It does not mean they were very old people. They were wise and mature Christians. An **elder** is the same as pastor in some churches today. In other churches, elders are the same as deacons.

Peter wanted his readers to understand he knew what he was talking about. Peter told the elders of the church that he was an elder also. Peter had experience in all the things he wrote about. Also he suffered for his **faith**. After explaining he was an elder, he instructed elders how to do the work of God. He encouraged elders to do their work better.



An elder or leader in the church is like a shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He called his followers sheep. He cared for them and loved them. Jesus told Peter to take care of His sheep (John 21:15-17). Peter told his readers to do the same thing, and to do it willingly.

BIBLE SKILL: *The Good Shepherd*

Psalm 23 says The Lord is the Shepherd. We are His sheep.

List the eleven things in this psalm about how God takes care of His sheep.

1. _____

- 
- 
2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____
 11. _____

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 to learn more about the kind of person an **elder** (leader) should be.

Elders should not serve because they want money. Some people misunderstand this verse. They think churches should not pay pastors. Pastors are expected to do much more work for the church than **laymen** do. They should be paid for the work they do for the church. (1 Timothy 5:17-18). It is the responsibility of their followers to support them financially. But elders should not serve only because they want money. They must give service freely.

VERSE 3.

³*Do not be like a ruler over people you are responsible for, but be good examples to them.*

An elder or leader in the church is not a ruler or boss. Leaders must lead by example and not be like a **dictator**. Deaf leaders must lead other Deaf believers gently. Jesus is the perfect example of leadership. The way He lived is a model for all Christians to follow.

VERSE 4.

⁴*Then when Christ, the Chief Shepherd, comes, you will get a glorious crown that will never lose its beauty.*

An elder is like a shepherd, but Jesus is the Chief Shepherd. He is above all other shepherds.

The reward for good leadership is a crown. People in New Testament times were often honored with different kinds of crowns. Kings had crowns with gold and jewels. Athletes who won races were given crowns made of olive vines. Jesus was given a crown of thorns during His crucifixion. Peter encouraged believers. He told them they will receive a glorious crown. It will not be like an earthly crown of leaves or even of gold. All earthly crowns will lose their beauty. **Humble** leaders may not receive rewards on earth. Every faithful leader will be rewarded when Jesus comes back to earth.

Are you a leader in your Christian group? YES NO.

List some things you try to do to be a better leader.

2. Trust Our Shepherds (1 Peter 5:5-7)

VERSE 5.

⁵*In the same way, younger people should be willing to be under older people. And all of you should be very humble with each other. "God is against the proud, but he gives grace to the humble."*

Peter quoted from Proverbs 3:34. James 4:6 quotes the same verse. Younger people (young in age or experience) should respect and obey their leaders. This pleases God. Younger people must be willing to learn from older people. Younger people must be humble. *Humble* is a Greek word. It describes how a slave put a cloth around his body before he served his master. Jesus did this when He washed the feet of His **apostles** (John 13:4-16).

In the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf, there have been several strong leaders. As they became older, the younger Deaf leaders looked to them for advice and encouragement. They have been honored and loved by many younger Deaf leaders. Scholarship funds to attend Bible training have been established. Dr. J. W. Michaels was a pioneer missionary to the Deaf. A scholarship is in his name to help with mission projects. People honor a good

and faithful shepherd.

All Deaf believers must act in humility with each other. It does not matter if they are young or old. It does not matter if they are leaders. They must act humbly with each other. Then, God will give us His **grace**.

VERSE 6.

⁶*Be humble under God's powerful hand so he will lift you up when the right time comes.*

We must understand God is all powerful. He is in complete control of everything. We must not try to take God's place in any way. Deaf believers must accept all the things God lets happen in our lives. But when Jesus comes again, God will lift us up and give us honor.

VERSE 7

⁷*Give all your worries to Him, because He cares about you.*

This is a wonderful verse. All of us have something we can worry about. We need to remember how much God cares for us. If we trust Him we will give our worries to him. We will tell God what worries us. Then we must trust God to give us the things that are best for us.

There was a Deaf woman who was over ninety years old. Someone in her church asked her why she looked so peaceful. She had a difficult life. She was poor. All her children and husband died many years ago. She answered in a sweet way, "I give all my worries to God." She did not worry about things she could not control. God took care of her for all those many years. No matter what difficult things happened in her life, she trusted God.

Do you have things that worry you? YES NO.

Write a few words about what you do when you have worries.

3. Be Careful (1 Peter 5:8-11)

VERSE 8.

⁸*Control yourselves and be careful! The devil, your enemy, goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat.*

The Devil's name is **Satan**. Christians must be ready for him. He is always looking for ways to make us stumble spiritually. He is like a lion. A lion usually looks for weaker animals, because they are easier to catch. The lion attacks when the animals do not expect it. Satan behaves like a lion.

The Devil tries to destroy believers in different ways. He may cause suffering. He may cause us to be discouraged. He wants to make us do things that displease God. We must be careful. We must always be on guard against the Devil. We can never be careless about our **faith**.

Anytime believers are tempted to sin, they know the Devil is working against them. He may tempt us to sin in a big way, or he may tempt us to be lazy. He does not want us to do the work of God.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Satan*

Read these verses. What do they teach us about Satan?

Mark 4:15

2 Corinthians 11:14

Revelation 12:7-9

James 4:7

2 Corinthians 4:4

VERSE 9.

⁹Refuse to give in to him, by standing strong in your faith. You know that your Christian family all over the world is having the same kinds of suffering.

All Christians face the same enemy. We must understand our enemy is more powerful than we are. We cannot overcome him by our own power. Satan is not all powerful. Only God is all powerful. We must depend on God's power to overcome him. The way to resist and overcome the Devil is to be strong in our faith

Jesus was tempted by the Devil three different times. He refused to be tempted by Satan. Read this story in Luke 4:1-13.

No one likes to be alone. It is important to understand we are not alone. We should feel encouraged that other believers understand our suffering.

VERSE 10.

¹⁰ *And after you suffer for a short time, God, who gives all **grace**, will make everything right. He will make you strong and support you and keep you from falling. He called you to share in His glory in Christ, a glory that will continue forever.*

Suffering will not last forever. We must not let **Satan** cause us to fail. To fail means to fail. We cannot keep ourselves from falling. God will support us and keep us from falling.

A young Christian Deaf man named Jack worried that he might fail in his Christian life. He talked with his pastor. The pastor read and explained this verse to him. He also explained to Jack that worrying about failing meant he did not trust God to care for him. Jack understood he could protect himself from the Devil. God alone could care for him. God would give him grace. All grace comes from God. God wants Christians to take part in the glory of Christ.

VERSE 11.

¹¹ *All power is His forever and ever. Amen.*

God has all power. He is powerful now. He will be powerful eternally. There is no one else with any power greater than God.

Did you know what the Bible tells us about Satan, the Devil? YES NO.

List some things you learned about the Devil in this Bible study.

IN MY CONTEXT

Read these sentences and fill in the blank spaces from today's Bible study.

We must be **humble**. If we are not humble before _____, it means we think we are equal to God. We think we are better than God.

We must be humble to other _____. The Bible says God loves a humble spirit and we must not act proud. We must not think we are smarter than others in our group. We must study God's word and live a humble life. Deaf believers must be humble before _____ and _____.

We must be kind to other believers. We must be kind to _____ also. People will not want to learn from a leader who is not kind.

The _____ will try to cause us to be proud. He will try to cause us to be unkind to other people. Deaf believers must know how to _____ the Devil and his temptations.

If you had trouble filling in the blanks, go back and read today's Bible study. Try to find the answers.

Answer these questions.

- 1. Do I want to be a leader? YES NO.**
- 2. Am I a leader now? YES NO.**
- 3. Am I humble and kind to others? YES NO.**
- 4. Do I know how to resist the Devil and his temptations? YES NO.**
- 5. Am I humble with other Deaf believers? YES NO.**
- 6. Am I humble before God? YES NO.**

MEMORY VERSE

Give all your worries to Him, because He cares about you. —1 Peter 5:7



Session 10

BE USEFUL

God's power improves the **character** of believers.

2 PETER 1:3-11

FIRST THOUGHTS

John was a Deaf teenager. He attended church regularly. One day he accepted Jesus as his Savior. In his heart, he knew he needed to learn more to be able to be a good Christian example. With the help of the Youth Pastor of his church, he started a Bible study group for Deaf teenagers. They all wanted to grow in their **faith** and become useful to God. They studied Peter's second letter to Christians. They all agreed they would try to do the things the Apostle Peter wrote about.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Sometimes, believers may **doubt** the truth of the gospel. We want to be sure we are living in truth. We can believe the truth of the gospel because of our personal experience, the testimony of eye witnesses, and all the Scriptures. Eyewitness testimony means people are telling the things they saw and heard for themselves.

In New Testament days, writers put their name at the beginning of

┌
a letter. In 2 Peter 1:1-2, as in his first letter, Peter described himself as a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. He knew Jesus on earth for three years. He sent his letter to people who trusted Jesus as their Savior. Many Christians never saw Jesus in person, but they believed.

False teachers tried to pull believers away from Jesus. They said Jesus was not God. They said that it was all right for people to do the evil desires of their human nature.

Peter prayed for his readers to know God's **grace** and peace. God loved and forgave them. Peter wanted them to understand more deeply.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Depend on God (2 Peter 1:3-4)

VERSE 3.

³ *Jesus has the power of God, by which He has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know Him. Jesus called us by His glory and goodness.*

Jesus has power in two areas of a believer's life. First, He has the power to save us. There is no other way to be saved except through Jesus. He gives us eternal life when we become His followers. False teachers taught that people needed to know special secrets. The false teachers said they were the only people that knew those special secrets. God does not have special secrets for only a few people. It is no secret that the glory and goodness of Jesus Christ make people want to know Him. He is holy and wonderful.

Second, Jesus gives us the power to live godly lives. At first, John and the other Deaf teenagers were not sure they would be able to follow Peter's teaching. They were not sure they could really obey the commands of Jesus. Their Youth Pastor explained how we receive His power. He makes us able to obey His commands. He gives us ways to live our earthly lives. We can live holy lives. We can please God. He gives us these things because we belong to Him. Goodness refers to all He does. He never does anything that is wrong. He only gives His followers good things. When we trust Jesus, we start to know Him in a personal way. We learn to live close to Him so we can serve Him better.

VERSE 4.

⁴ *Through these He gave us the very great and precious promises. With these gifts you can share in God's nature, and the world will not ruin you with its evil desires.*

God's promises to believers are gifts. Most people love to receive gifts. We give and receive gifts because we love and honor each other. We are usually excited to unwrap the gift. We want to find out what it is. The Bible gives believers about 30,000 promises! All of God's promises are precious to the believer. They are gifts to His children. When we study the Bible, it is like unwrapping gifts from God. We know God gives us the promises of blessings and eternal life. We must depend on these promises to stand strong in our **faith**. We can defeat the powers of evil in our lives. He gives us power over the Devil. He gives us joy, peace, and strength.

When Christians know Jesus personally, we receive the nature and **character** (glory and goodness) of Jesus. The word *nature* means "the way a person feels and acts." Our nature is what we feel and do without thinking about it. Our old nature caused us to do things that did not please God.

The word *world* in this verse means "human **society** that **opposes** God." In the New Testament, world usually means the opposite of God-like. The forces of evil in the world try to pull believers into sinful things. Believers can escape from evil desires. We must not return to them. Christians must aim to become more like Jesus.

List a few things you depend on God to give you.

2. Build Character (2 Peter 1:5-9)

VERSES 5-7.

⁵ *Because you have these blessings, do your best to add these things to your lives: to your faith, add goodness; and to your goodness, add knowledge;*

⁶ *and to your knowledge, add self-control; and to your self-control, add patience; and to your patience, add service for God;*

⁷ *and to your service for God, add kindness for your brothers and sisters in Christ; and to this kindness, add love.*

Jesus has given Christians everything we need. We are responsible to use the things He gives us for His glory. Christians must try to behave in the right way. Acting in the right way will take a lot of effort and a long time.

These three verses tell us the things we need to work on. They are spiritual **qualities**. Doing the things listed in these verses will not save us.

They show our desire to please God.

Brothers and sisters does not refer to a physical family. It means other people who believe in Christ. Many years ago, people in churches called each other brother and sister. It showed respect and love.

These verses list eight qualities we must develop in our character. Christians must work to develop all of these at the same time. All these qualities link together.

- 1. Faith.** Christian character begins with trusting God. The Bible calls this faith. It means we believe the things God says.
- 2. Goodness.** Goodness is one of Jesus' qualities. Look back at verse 3 in today's Bible study. Deaf believers must become more like Jesus.
- 3. Knowledge.** Christians must know more about Jesus. How do we get to know more about Him? We study His Word, the Bible. We learn from reading the things other trusted believers wrote about Him. When we know Him, we will learn to please Him.
- 4. Self-control.** Christians must behave differently. We must learn to control our feelings and desires. We know Jesus' power helps us. False teachers said their special secrets made them free. They were not free. They let their own evil feelings and desires control them.
- 5. Patience.** The true Christian knows God has authority over everything. Christians should be patient even when troubles come. Life is like a long race. Christians must patiently run and not give up. Why? We remember God's promises and our future with Him in heaven.
- 6. Service to God.** We serve God and people. Serving God usually means doing good things for other people. We do things for God's glory. An important part of service to God is our act of worshiping Him.
- 7. Kindness.** Kindness will help us continue to the end. We must be **loyal** and kind to all other members of God's family.
- 8. Love.** The greatest quality is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Jesus said the two most important commandments are to love the Lord our God and love other people. (Mark 12:29-31).

VERSE 8.

⁸*If all these things are in you and are growing, they will help you to be useful and productive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

These qualities will help us become mature spiritually. We will be someone God can use. The qualities Peter named are also called the fruit of the Spirit in Paul's letters.

BIBLE SKILL: *Fruit of the Spirit*

In Galatians 5:22-23 the Apostle Paul listed the fruit of the Spirit. List the things he named. If you do not understand one of the words, use a Bible dictionary to help you and write one or two words to help you remember.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

VERSE 9.

⁹ *But anyone who does not have these things cannot see clearly. He is blind and has forgotten that he was made clean from his past sins.*

Christians who do not have these **qualities** are not lost. They still have their salvation. A person who does not have these qualities is spiritually blind. He cannot see what God has been doing in his life. He has forgotten what happened to him when he accepted Jesus as his Savior. We must open our eyes. We must remember what God has done in and for us.

Isaiah wrote about leaders who were spiritually blind. “The leaders who are to guard the people are blind; they don’t know what they are doing” (Isaiah 56:10). Jesus also spoke about leaders who were spiritually blind. “Stay away from the Pharisees; they are blind leaders. And if a blind person leads a

blind person, both will fall into a ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

Think about your own life. Are you trying to build a godly character?

YES NO.

What are some of the things you are doing to build a godly character?

3. Be Sure (2 Peter 1:10-11)

VERSE 10.

¹⁰*My brothers and sisters, try hard to be certain that you really are called and chosen by God. If you do all these things, you will never fall.*

Peter called believers brothers and sisters. This is a very important thought in his letters to believers. We know of human families where brothers and sisters are mean to each other. They may criticize or argue with each other. Our spiritual families must be different. Why? God is our Father. Believers are His children. He loves all believers equally and wants us to love each other. One of the things we need to remember is that God called and chose us. Jesus called the fishermen to “come, follow me.” He chose them individually. In the same way, He called and chose each of us. When we receive an invitation to some place, we must answer yes or no. If we do not answer, we usually mean no. Our invitation is to believe and trust Jesus.

In this verse, falling does not mean we lose our salvation. Some people believe we can fall from His **grace**. They say we need to be saved again and again. Jesus said we must be born again. We cannot be unborn physically. When we are born spiritually we cannot be unborn spiritually. We will not stumble and fall in our spiritual lives.

VERSE 11.

¹¹*And you will be given a very great welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

After we live by these instructions, Jesus will welcome us into His eternal kingdom. Think about what it will be like when we go to heaven! We do not know what that welcome will be like. Maybe it will be a celebration. Maybe it will be like a class **reunion**. We do not know. We can be sure it will be

amazing and wonderful. We know heaven is a place of joy. We know we will never be sad in heaven.

Another thing we know is we cannot be with Jesus unless we are saved. God made a way for our salvation.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Salvation*

Read John 3:16-17 and John 3:36. Answer these questions in your own words.

What is salvation?

Who needs salvation?

Who gives salvation?

How do we get salvation?

How long does it last?

Do you believe God has given you the gift of salvation? YES NO.

In your own words explain what salvation is.

.....

.....

IN MY CONTEXT

Our Bible study today is about the way Christians should live. Some nonbelievers develop good **qualities**, but those good qualities will not save them. First they must have **faith** in Jesus. They must accept Him as the only way to be saved and go to heaven.

Do you have some friends who are truly good people, but not saved?
YES NO.

What can you do to help them see their need for Christ as their Savior?

Ask yourselves these questions. Pray about your answers.

Do I have faith in Jesus? YES NO.

Am I His follower? YES NO.

If you answered with a no, please talk to your pastor, teacher, or another mature Christian in your group.

After we become believers, there are qualities we must develop. Look back at verses 5-7.

Which qualities do you think you are developing?

Which qualities do you have trouble with?

Does your life cause people to want to know Jesus? YES NO.

MEMORY VERSE

Jesus has the power of God, by which he has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him. Jesus called us by his glory and goodness. —2 Peter 1:3



Session 11

TRUST GOD'S WORD

We can trust God's Word in all ways.

2 PETER 1:12-21

FIRST THOUGHTS

Deaf Christian leaders in a large city talked about the fact that some Deaf believers did not have a strong background in Bible study. They depended on Deaf leaders with more experience. Those Deaf leaders depended on the Bible because they knew it was true. The leaders developed a plan to teach people about the truth of the Bible. They wanted Deaf believers to know they could accept the Bible as absolutely true. They wanted Deaf believers to have peace in their hearts about the truth of the gospel.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Holy Spirit led His servants to write God's Word. The believers in Peter's time did not have the New Testament. Some had letters from Peter, Jude, and James. Some had parts of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Peter knew about Paul's letters (2 Peter 3:15). Paul taught his readers Jesus will return. Paul said strongly in his letters that Christians must live good lives before Jesus comes back. The Christians Peter wrote to probably knew

Paul's letters, also. Peter said God gave wisdom to Paul as he wrote the letters. Most Jewish believers knew the Old Testament well. Some believers who were not Jewish were learning the words from God.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Remember (2 Peter 1:12-15)

We can trust the gospel by remembering what God did in us when He saved us. We can trust the truth of the gospel by knowing God's power. Deaf believers can know the truth by believing the writers of the Bible. God told the writers to write the truth. We can find truth as we study the things people actually saw and heard for themselves.

VERSE 12.

¹² You know these things, and you are very strong in the truth, but I will always help you remember them.

Peter did not say believers forgot the things they were taught. He gave them gentle reminders. These reminders encouraged them. Peter thought his readers were mature, or growing, Christians. He said they were "very strong in the truth." This is a wonderful phrase to describe a mature believer. But even mature Christians need to be reminded of the basic truth of the gospel and how to live as believers. Today when believers celebrate the Lord's Supper, we do it to remember Jesus' sacrifice for us. When Jesus had the last supper with His **apostles**, He gave them the cup of wine and bread and said, "This is my body, which I am giving for you. Do this to remember me" (Luke 22:19). Read what Paul wrote about this in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.

VERSES 13-15.

¹³ I think it is right for me to help you remember as long as I am in this body.

¹⁴ I know I must soon leave this body, as our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me.

¹⁵ I will try my best so that you may be able to remember these things even after I am gone.

Peter knew he must remind them because he was near the end of his life. Most Bible teachers believe Peter was the oldest of the twelve apostles. He wrote these letters about thirty years after Jesus went back to heaven. He served God faithfully. He suffered for the name of Jesus. He was punished because he preached about Jesus. Now he was ready to die for Jesus. Because

he was an older man, he knew he would not live much longer. He remembered Jesus told him he would live to be an old man before he died. Read John 21:18-19 to see what Jesus told Peter about the way he would die.

Do you ever need to be reminded about the truth of the Gospel?

YES NO.

Why do you know you need to be reminded?

2. Eyewitness Accounts (2 Peter 1:16-18)

VERSE 16.

¹⁶*When we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we were not telling just clever stories that someone invented. But we saw the greatness of Jesus with our own eyes.*

There are many religions in the world. Most of them are based on the teachings of just one man. They have no proof to back up their teachings. The Christian **faith** is the only faith that has many proofs. It is true. Old Testament prophesies were fulfilled. Many eyewitnesses saw and heard Jesus after He rose from death. All of the apostles agreed on the basic beliefs of the Christian faith. They were able to teach and preach the truth. Believers knew they were not just making up stories. They knew the apostles were telling them the things they saw and heard.

When Janie was just a little girl, she loved to watch her mother sign stories to her. The stories were called fairy tales. They were not true. They were made up by people who wanted to help children have fun.

When Janie became a teenager, she went to the School for the Deaf in her state. She started going to a Bible study at a nearby church. She heard Bible stories. She heard about Jesus. She did not really believe the stories were true.

One Sunday, her Bible study teacher explained the reasons the stories in the Bible are true. Janie began to believe the truth about Jesus. She accepted Jesus as her Savior. She knew the stories were not made up. She accepted the Old and New Testaments as real truth.

Jesus will return in great glory and power. False teachers said that this was not true. Jesus could not come back because He was dead. They said Peter and other apostles made up these stories. Peter wanted to be sure believers understood the things he said were true. They are not fairy tales or smart

stories someone made up. Peter was there and wanted people to know the truth about Jesus. He saw the greatness of Jesus with his own eyes. He was an eyewitness to the life of Jesus. He was an eyewitness to the crucifixion of Jesus. He was an eyewitness to Jesus' resurrection. He was an eyewitness when Jesus ascended into heaven. He heard the words of Jesus. He saw the miracles of Jesus.

VERSE 17.

¹⁷ Jesus heard the voice of God, the Greatest Glory, when He received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice said, "This is my Son, whom I love, and I am very pleased with Him."

Peter, James, and John went with Jesus to a mountain (Matthew 17:1-5). While they were there, a loud voice sounded. A very bright light appeared. Peter repeated the words the voice said: "This is My Son whom I love. Listen to Him." The disciples knew it was the voice of God. They saw God give honor and glory to Jesus. They did not see God. They saw a great cloud full of bright light. They heard the voice of God, which came from the cloud. The voice told Jesus' disciples to listen to Him. The word *listen* in this verse means "to obey His teachings." That experience is called the **transfiguration** of Jesus. Peter said he knew it was true because he saw it with his own eyes. He saw the glory of Jesus.

VERSE 18.

¹⁸ We heard that voice from heaven while we were with Jesus on the holy mountain.

Peter heard the voice of God when Jesus received honor and glory from the Father. He was there. He knew the things he wrote were true. Peter told about his experience with Jesus on the mountain. This mountain was either Mount Tabor or Mount Hermon. On a New Testament map, you can see where these mountains are located. The mountain was holy because God spoke there. Peter emphasized the things the **apostles** saw and heard. They did not make up the stories. When Peter was in Jerusalem, he spoke to the Jewish leaders. He said, "We have seen and heard many things. We cannot stop speaking about them." Read this story in Acts 4:1-21.

BIBLE SKILL: *Holy Mountain*

Read Matthew 17:1-5. Tell the story in your own words. Explain who was with Jesus, who were the two men who appeared from heaven with them, what the apostles said, and what God said.

Are you a child of God? YES NO.

What will you do to try to please your heavenly father?

3. Written by God (2 Peter 1:19-21)

VERSE 19.

¹⁹ *This makes us more sure about the message the prophets gave. It is good for you to follow closely what they said as you would follow a light shining in a dark place, until the day begins and the morning star rises in your hearts.*

Peter's Scripture was the Old Testament. Our Scripture today is both the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is a light to help us see God's truth and know how to walk with Him. David wrote, "Your word is like a lamp for my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105). In Bible times there was no electricity. People needed to do their work in the daylight. If they wanted to do anything

in the night time, they must have a lamp to show them where they were going. The lamp's light kept them from falling or going the wrong way. It helped them see dangers in the dark.

The Bible will show us the safe path. God's Word will help us know where we are going. It will protect us from danger. It will help us to see right and wrong. The Bible is our lamp. The only way Deaf believers can truly know we are following God's will is to read His Word. The Scripture contains the things we need to know to live godly lives. We will need this light until "the day begins and the morning star rises in your hearts." That phrase refers to the time when Jesus comes again and God will **judge** the world.

The morning star appears just before dawn. The morning star comes at the end of the dark night.

Jesus is called the day star several times in the Scriptures. He will shine like a bright star when He comes again. The spiritual darkness of the whole world will be gone. Jesus said, "I am the bright morning star" (Revelation 22:16). We have the Word of God to guide us until Jesus comes back again. We must use the light from the Bible until the day Jesus returns.

VERSES 20-21.

²⁰ *Most of all, you must understand this: No prophecy in the Scriptures ever comes from the prophet's own interpretation.*

²¹ *No prophecy ever came from what a person wanted to say, but people led by the Holy Spirit spoke words from God.*

Prophets did not make up their own words. The Holy Spirit led them to write the words God spoke to them. "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets many times and in many different ways" (Hebrews 1:1).

The same is true for the people who wrote the New Testament. They did not make up their stories. They were led by the Holy Spirit to write. One interesting thing about this is in the four Gospels. All four men wrote the gospel story, but they did not write exactly the same. They were different men with different backgrounds and different educational levels. Matthew and John were with Jesus. They learned directly from Jesus. Mark and Luke spent much time with Paul and other disciples who had been with Jesus. God used these believers as He inspired Mark and Luke to write His words.

KEY DOCTRINE: *God's Word*

Read these Bible verses. Fill in the blanks.

Psalm 19:7-10

7. The teachings of the Lord are perfect; _____ they give new _____. The rules of the Lord can be _____; they make plain people _____.
8. The orders of the Lord are _____; they make people _____. The commands of the Lord are _____; they light up the way.
9. Respect for the Lord is _____; it will last _____. The judgments of the Lord are true; they are completely _____.
10. They are worth more than _____, even the purest gold. They are sweeter than _____, even the finest honey.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for _____, for _____, for showing people what is _____ in their lives, for _____ faults, and for teaching how to live _____.
17. Using the _____, the person who serves God will be _____, having all that is _____ to do every good work.

What are some ways the Bible is a light for your life?

IN MY CONTEXT

In today's world, we read about many things in different places. Mark each one that you can trust: _____ Television _____ Newspaper _____ Internet _____ Facebook

We cannot trust everything people tell us. Of course we can trust some people, but we cannot trust all people.

**Do you want to know the real truth to help you in your life? YES NO.
How can you find real truth?**

The Bible tells us God's Word is truth.

Here is a simple little test for you. Think about your answers carefully.

**Do you believe God gave the Old Testament prophets words to speak?
YES NO.**

Do you believe the whole Bible is the true word of God? YES NO.

Do you believe all of God's promises are true? YES NO.

Are you willing to trust God's promises? YES NO.

Are you able to talk about your faith using God's word? YES NO.

Do you study God's word so you can be closer to Him? YES NO.

How does studying God's word help you become closer to Him?

MEMORY VERSE

No prophecy ever came from what a person wanted to say, but people led by the Holy Spirit spoke words from God. —2 Peter 1:21



Session 12

BE ON GUARD

God's Word is the only real truth in our world.

2 PETER 2:1-3; JUDE 16-25

FIRST THOUGHTS

There are false teachers and trouble makers in churches today. Deaf believers must be on guard against these people. False teachers may use clever ideas and actions. False teachers may try to pull us into sinful life styles. Deaf believers must continue to grow spiritually. We must reach out to help Deaf believers who follow their false ideas. God can protect us from the efforts of false teachers. We must depend on Him for help.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

At the time Peter and Jude wrote these letters, false teachers were trying to upset the **faith** of new believers. Some of the false teachers were successful. They pulled new believers away from the truth. Peter and Jude warned readers about false teachers. They reminded their readers to hold firmly to God's truth. They may have read each other's letters. Peter and Jude probably knew each other during Jesus' earthly ministry. They both understood and taught about the danger of false teachers.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. False Teachers Uncovered (2 Peter 2:1-3; Jude 1:16)

VERSE 1.

¹*There used to be false prophets among God's people, just as you will have some false teachers in your group. They will secretly teach things that are wrong—teachings that will cause people to be lost. They will even refuse to accept the Master, Jesus, who bought their freedom. So they will bring quick ruin on themselves.*

In Old Testament times, there were false **prophets** and teachers. They taught wrong things. They spoke against God and His ways. There are false teachers with us today. Jude's letter is much like 2 Peter 2. It shows Peter and Jude may have talked together, or Jude was familiar with Peter's writing.

There may be false teachers in our churches. Usually false teachers do not openly go against God's way. They try to make themselves sound smart. They try to pull people away from the truth. False teachers do not accept Jesus as God. There are religion teachers today who say Jesus was a good man, but He was not God.

It is our responsibility to pay attention to the things people teach. We must be sure they are teaching the truth of God's Word.

Peter was very clear when he wrote that Jesus bought their freedom. Jesus died for everyone. He even bought the freedom of those people who taught against Him. Their responsibility is to accept the truth and freedom He gives. If they do not accept the truth of Jesus, they will be ruined.

Those false prophets will bring ruin on themselves. It is their own fault. The people who follow the false teachers will also be ruined. It is also the fault of people who follow false teachers. What did Peter mean when he said they will be ruined? He meant God will punish them. If they do not accept Jesus as Savior, they will be lost forever.

Many people do not like to teach about hell. Deaf believers must not be afraid to tell the truth about hell. It is a real place. It is a place where people go after they die if they do not accept Jesus as their Savior. Peter said the false prophets will suffer in hell.

Deaf church members loved their new Deaf pastor. He was a good preacher. He used beautiful signs and explained Bible verses clearly. He often talked about God's love for people. His preaching made the Deaf members feel good and peaceful. One day as he was praying and preparing his sermon, he felt the Lord speak to his heart. The feeling was very strong. He knew God was talking to him. God touched his heart to talk about what happens to people who reject Jesus. He did not want to preach about hell. He knew he must explain what it meant to be lost. He was afraid he might upset people.

Some members did not like to hear about hell. One older woman heard the truth for the first time. She accepted the truth of Jesus and became a believer.

VERSE 2

²*Many will follow their evil ways and say evil things about the way of truth.*

Many people believed the false teachers. People wanted to hear they did not need to follow God's way. They listened to the false teachers and turned away from God.

VERSE 3.

³*Those false teachers only want your money, so they will use you by telling you lies. Their judgment spoken against them long ago is still coming, and their ruin is certain.*

False teachers usually want money. They ask their followers to send large amounts of money to help them spread their beliefs. We may see some of them in large churches or on television. Most television ministries are good and pleasing to God. Some do not please God. We must be careful to know the difference. God notices their lies and actions. He has already planned their punishment.

Jude, VERSE 16.

¹⁶*These people **complain** and blame others, doing the evil things they want to do. They brag about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want.*

Both Peter and Jude were concerned about the work of false teachers. Jude was very angry with the false teachers. He listed the bad things they did. He called them complainers. They were not satisfied with blessings from God. They blamed other people for things that went wrong. They did not follow the teachings of Christ. They did any evil thing they wanted to do. They were not **humble**. They bragged about themselves. They were not truthful. They said nice things to other people. Why? To get the things they wanted.

Do you know any false teachers? YES NO.

What is the wrong thing they teach?

2. Believers Warned (Jude 17-19)

VERSES 17-18.

¹⁷ *Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said before.*

¹⁸ *They said to you, “In the last times there will be people who laugh about God, following their own evil desires which are against God.”*

In America today it is common to hear television personalities laugh about God. They make fun of Christians who love God. Jude warned us that would happen. Jesus said people will insult those who love Him.

Jude reminded believers Jesus said these things would happen. The **apostles** were not surprised when the false teachers came into the church. We should not be surprised today.

BIBLE SKILL: *Warning*

Jesus warned His followers, wicked people will try to turn people away from God. Read His warnings and write a few words to help you remember what Jesus said.

Mark 13:5-6 _____

Mark 13:21-22 _____

Some people today laugh about God. They mock believers. Jude reminded his readers these things will happen in the last times. That means the times just before Jesus comes back to earth. We do not know when that time will be. Jude warned believers these false teachers followed their own evil desires. Their desires are against God. We must not trust them.

The letters from Peter and Jude use the word *remember*. People needed to remember things the apostles taught them. Most people could not read. They needed to memorize. Why? They taught others God's truth. They helped others stand strong against false teachers.

VERSE 19.

¹⁹ *These are the people who divide you, people whose thoughts are only of this world, who do not have the Spirit.*

False teachers do not have the Holy Spirit living in them. They cause problems and divisions in the church. Their only thoughts are for the things of this world. Their one goal is to divide the group of believers and make the church weaker. God's Spirit tells Christians to love and stay together.

Have you heard people say false things about God? YES NO.

Have you heard them mock Jesus? YES NO.

What untrue things did they say?

3. Protect Yourself (Jude 20-25)

VERSES 20-21.

²⁰ *But dear friends, use your most holy faith to build yourselves up, praying in the Holy Spirit.*

²¹ *Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the Lord Jesus Christ with His mercy to give you life forever.*

These verses list four things believers must do to protect themselves against false teachers.

- 1. Build (verse 20).** Believers must use our **faith** to build ourselves up. We must not let the false teachers tear us down. We are saved. We must grow. If we do not grow, we become weaker. We use our trust in God to build spiritual strength. We must study the Bible to help build ourselves up.
- 2. Pray (verse 20).** Pray in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us to pray things pleasing to God. When we pray, we should not be in a hurry. We must be quiet and take time to ask the Holy Spirit how to pray.
- 3. Keep (verse 21).** Keep ourselves in God's love. Believers can never be out of God's love. We must keep reminding ourselves about God's love for us. He will protect us from evil people.
- 4. Wait (verse 21).** We see the words "wait on the Lord" used often in Scripture. In these verses it means we wait for Jesus to return to **judge** this world and welcome believers. We are preparing for life with God in heaven.

VERSES 22-23.

²² *Show mercy to some people who have doubts.*

²³ *Take others out of the fire, and save them. Show mercy mixed with fear to others, hating even their clothes which are dirty from sin.*

These verses list three groups of people we should try to help.

- 1. Some people have doubts about their faith (verse 22).** We should show them mercy and lead them out of their **doubt**. We must never criticize them. We must love them and teach them.
- 2. Some people need help quickly (verse 23).** Weak believers who almost accept false teachings are in danger. It is our responsibility to take them out of danger. We must pray for them and **witness** to them. We must love them.
- 3. There is a group in greater danger (verse 23).** They are people who have decided to turn away from Jesus. We must reject their teachings. We must hate the things that go with their sin. We do not show mercy on their false beliefs, but we must show mercy to them. Often these people have bitter and ugly attitudes. We must not let our own attitudes toward them be bitter and ugly. We must treat them with love and compassion.

VERSE 24.

²⁴ *God is strong and can help you not to fall. He can bring you before His glory without any wrong in you and can give you great joy.*

This is a wonderful statement of praise. God is powerful. We can depend on God because He is strong. We will see Him when Jesus comes again. God forgave our sins. Christians will go to live with Him in heaven. We will be able to stand before Him without blame. He will give us great joy.

VERSE 25.

²⁵ *He is the only God, the One who saves us. To Him be glory, greatness, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord for all time past, now, and forever. Amen.*

In these verses, look at the words that describe God.

He is the only God.

He is the God who saves us.

He is greater than anything.

He is **worthy** of praise and glory.

He has perfect and complete power over everything.

He does His work through His Son, Jesus.
He is our Lord from time past, now and forever.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Things We Know About God*

There are many Bible verses that tell us about God. Read and fill in the blanks in these verses.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 John 4:8 | God is _____. |
| Psalms 86:15 | God who shows mercy and is _____. |
| Psalms 73:1 | God is truly _____. |
| Deuteronomy 7:9 | God is _____, the _____ God. |

Write your own song of praise to God. Use some of Jude’s words if you want to.

IN MY CONTEXT

In our world today we hear many different people teach about spiritual things. Sometimes it is difficult to know if they are right. Deaf believers must be on guard against troublemakers.

Do you know the difference between true and false teachers? YES NO.

Are they teaching God's word? YES NO.

Decide which teachers are true teachers. You can tell if they are true or false. How? Study God's Word.

The Bible study today teaches us some ways to answer false teachers. We must be ready to answer.

Ask yourself.

Am I able to answer troublemakers in a kind way while I reject their ideas? YES NO.

Am I able to reach out to help Deaf believers who believe false ideas? YES NO.

Am I humble when I talk to people who follow false teachers? YES NO.

Am I willing to stand against false teachers? YES NO.

If you are ready to respond to troublemakers and false teachers, the Bible gives you ways to respond.

What are some of the things you must do?

Will you try to do these things each day? YES NO.

MEMORY VERSE

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the Lord Jesus Christ with his mercy to give you life forever. —Jude 21



Session 13

WITH JOYFUL HOPE

Believers have joy because of their hope in the return of Jesus.

2 PETER 3:3-13,17-18

FIRST THOUGHTS

When we know something good will happen, we become excited. It is hard to be patient. We are like children waiting to open their gifts on Christmas morning. Or we are like brides planning their wedding. We talk about it. We plan for it. We announce the wonderful thing that will happen.

The true believer is like that. We want everyone to know Jesus is coming back to earth again. We want everyone to know how wonderful He is.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Jesus was born into the world a little more than two thousand years ago. One day, He will return to this world. We do not know all the details about the second coming. Many people do not believe that Jesus will return. Believers have God's promise Jesus will come again. He will **judge** the world. He will take us to heaven to be with Him forever.

Old Testament **prophets** and New Testament **apostles** warned believers about the things that would happen in the last days. We can look forward to Jesus' second coming. We do not need to know all the details. We know He will return because God's Word tells us Jesus will come back.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Jesus Will Return (2 Peter 3:3-7)

VERSES 3-4.

³*It is most important for you to understand what will happen in the last days. People will laugh at you. They will live doing the evil things they want to do.*

⁴*They will say, "Jesus promised to come again. Where is He? Our fathers have died, but the world continues the way it has been since it was made."*

In our Bible study last week we learned about false teachers. In today's Bible verses, we will learn about people that mock us because we believe Jesus will come back to earth again. Those people are called *scoffers* or *mockers*. These words mean "to make fun of Christians."

Mockers said, "It has been a long time since Jesus said He would return. Where is He? The world continues as it has always been. God has not done anything different. He has not been involved in the earth since He made it. Nothing will change." Nonbelievers always look for something to criticize in God's Word. They say God is not telling the truth when He says Jesus will come to earth again. They say God has waited too long to fulfill His promise. They say the return of Jesus is a joke.

VERSES 5-6.

⁵*But they do not want to remember what happened long ago. By the word of God heaven was made, and the earth was made from water and with water.*

⁶*Then the world was flooded and destroyed with water.*

Scoffers said God has never been involved in human history. Scoffers forgot one important time. They did not want to remember the time of the great flood that covered the earth.

God made the heavens and the earth. How? By His Word. He created everything by His Word. People in the world were wicked. God judged the world and destroyed them with the water He created.

VERSE 7.

⁷ And that same word of God is keeping heaven and earth that we now have in order to be destroyed by fire. They are being kept for the Judgment Day and the destruction of all who are against God.

In the time of Noah, God caused the flood to destroy all living things on the earth. In the future, God will send fire. He punished wicked people in the past. He will punish wicked people in the future. He will use His Word again to bring judgment on sinful people. God is keeping the sky and the earth safe until the day of His judgment. It is the Word of God that keeps heaven and earth from being destroyed by fire.

KEY DOCTRINE: *God's Word*

Read all of these verses about the Word of God. Choose one. Explain it in your own words:

Psalms 18:30,

Proverbs 30:5,

Isaiah 40:8,

Ephesians 6:17,

Hebrews 4:12,

James 1:18.

What will happen to the world if the world rejects God's offer of salvation?

2. The Patient Father (2 Peter 3:8-9)

VERSE 8.

⁸But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: To the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day.

Jason and Martha are a Deaf couple who live a long distance from their two sets of parents. Their little boy, Jay, loves all of his grandparents. He is excited when his parents take him to visit them. All the way on the trip he says, “Are we there yet? Are we there yet?” His mother tells him to be patient. One time he said to his mother, “I don’t believe you. I don’t think we are really going to see Grandma. We would be there by now.” Martha told him lovingly that she was telling him the truth. She promised they would be there soon. She could not tell him the exact time, but they would arrive at his grandparents’ house.

Some believers wanted to know the exact time for Jesus’ return. Peter explained the reasons we cannot know. We must remember God does not depend on time. God is the ruler over time. He was always God in the past. He will be God forever. Only people count time. God does not depend on time. “To you, a thousand years is like the passing of a day, or like a few hours in the night” (Psalm 90:4). Peter’s words mean for believers to be patient. Do not **doubt** God’s promises.

VERSE 9.

⁹The Lord is not slow in doing what He promised-the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to be lost, but He wants all people to change their hearts and lives.

Even if believers are patient, they must also understand God is not slow. He has a reason for His timing. Deaf believers must understand God does not tell us everything He plans to do. He does not tell us when He plans to complete His purpose here on earth.

Jesus has not returned yet because He wants everyone to have the opportunity to be saved. He does not want anyone to go to hell. God’s delay of the second coming shows His **grace** and mercy. God did not send the flood quickly when people continued to sin. He waited for a long time. He warned people something was going to happen. Noah told people why he was building the boat. He gave people many opportunities to repent. They refused and continued in their sinful lives. Now, we should all be thankful He waited long enough for us to know and love Jesus. God promised there will be judgment. He keeps His promises.

Why do you think Jesus has not yet returned?

3. Giving a Warning (2 Peter 3:10)

VERSE 10.

¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The skies will disappear with a loud noise. Everything in them will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be exposed.*

The day of the Lord means the day Jesus returns to earth. On that day, the earth and sky will disappear. Jesus will suddenly return. When Jesus comes, the sky will disappear with a fierce roar. Fire will burn up the earth and everything on it.

We do not know when that day will come (Luke 12:39-40). It will come like a thief in the night. No one expects a robber to come into their house. If they expected a robber they would be ready to protect themselves from him. Peter heard Jesus say He would come when no one expected Him to come. People will be so busy with their own lives they will not think about the return of Jesus. God will not give people any more time to obey Him. Jesus will come to **judge** them. People must not wait to accept Jesus as Lord.

Does it bother you that we do not know when the last day will come?
YES NO. Why?

Read the next section of the Bible study to help you have peace about the second coming of Jesus.

4. While We Are Waiting (2 Peter 3:11-13,17-18)

VERSES 11-12.

¹¹ *In that way everything will be destroyed. So what kind of people should you be? You should live holy lives and serve God,*

¹² *as you wait for and look forward to the coming of the day of God. When that day comes, the skies will be destroyed with fire, and everything in them will melt with heat.*

The first part of this verse asks a question. When we think about Jesus coming again, we need to think about how we should live.

What should our lives look like?

What kind of people should we be?

What should we be doing when Jesus comes back?

The second part of the verse answers the question. We must live holy lives. We must also be serving Him when Jesus returns to earth.

Christians should not be afraid of the end. Christians should be excited as we look forward to the day when Jesus returns to this world. We should look forward to that day with joy.

VERSE 13.

¹³ *But God made a promise to us, and we are waiting for a new heaven and a new earth where goodness lives.*

What will happen when the Lord returns? We cannot know the exact time. We know these things will happen. But there is good news. God made a promise to us. God promised there will be a new heaven and a new earth (Isaiah 65:17). No one knows exactly what the new heaven and earth will be like. We will be living in the presence of God. We will see Jesus. We know there will be no sin or pain there. **No one will be sick. No one will ever be sad. No one will ever be afraid.** Christians can wait with joy to see what God has promised.

VERSES 17-18.

¹⁷ *Dear friends, since you already know about this, be careful. Do not let those evil people lead you away by the wrong they do. Be careful so you will not fall from your strong **faith**.*

¹⁸ *But grow in the **grace** and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to Him now and forever! **Amen**.*

We know the things that will happen when Jesus returns. Because we know He is coming back, there are things we must do. We must work. We must be careful.

Let's look at the words "be careful" first. Wicked people will try to tempt us away from the truth about Jesus. We must not fall from our strong **faith**. This does not mean we can be lost after we become believers. We must not let the strong faith we have now become weak. Some Christians become weak. They follow the actions of nonbelievers. We must be careful. We must not be led away by evil people.

The second thing we must do is grow. We must grow in **grace** and in the knowledge of Jesus. We read the Word of God. We study the life of Jesus. We grow in grace as we obey the Bible. Christians who do not grow in grace spiritually are like people who remain a little child in their physical body. They are limited in the things they can do. They are weak and cannot do good works.

Peter closed this letter with a statement of praise. He described Jesus as Lord. Jesus rules everything. Jesus is Savior. He forgives people's sins. He saves us from God's judgement. Peter did not call attention to himself. He always gave glory to the Savior, Jesus Christ. We must glorify Jesus now and forever.

BIBLE SKILL: *Day of the Lord*

The Old and New Testaments tell about the Day of the Lord. Read these verses. Write a few words to help you remember what the verse means to you?

Isaiah 13:9-10

Hosea 3:5

Acts 2:20-21

2 Corinthians 1:13-14

How do we grow in knowledge of Jesus?

.....

IN MY CONTEXT

Do you really believe Jesus will return? YES NO.

Deaf believers must show we are sure about the second coming of Jesus. We must resist the ideas of people who **doubt**. We must base our beliefs on biblical truths.

If you truly believe He is coming back, do you share His Good News with other people? YES NO.

Do you have some lost Deaf friends who are not saved? YES NO.

What can you do to help them receive Jesus as Savior?

One way we can show God's grace is to build godly **character**. Our behavior must be true to God's character.

Are you working to make your character stronger? YES NO.

Are you trying to behave like a child of God? YES NO.

We must watch out for false ideas that lead us away from God's truth.

If you answered **No** to any of these questions, write a few words about how you will change your answer to **Yes**.

MEMORY VERSE

The Lord is not slow in doing what He promised—the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to be lost, but He wants all people to change their hearts and lives. —2 Peter 3:9

WORD LIST

A.D.—The time after the birth of Jesus. It is the abbreviation for the Latin words *anno domini*, meaning “in the year of our Lord.” The time before Jesus was born is B.C.

Altar—A table (usually stone) where Jewish priests burned animals as a sacrifice to God.

Amen—A word that means “I agree,” or “It is true.”

Apostles—The twelve disciples chosen by Jesus to follow Him. Jesus had many disciples, but only twelve apostles.

Assurance—Sure knowledge.

Character—The way a person believes and acts.

Companions—Friends.

Complain—To criticize.

Concordance—An alphabetical list of words and the Bible verses where they are found.

Condemn—To say a person is guilty of a crime.

Conscience—How we know the difference between right and wrong.

Cornerstone—A special stone that represents the whole building.

Demonstrate—To show clearly.

Dictator—A ruler who has complete authority and is often cruel.

Disciple—A follower, a student.

Doctrine—Important basic belief.

Doubt—Not sure if something is true or not.

Dread—Fear, worry.

Dwell—To think about something all the time.

Elder—A leader in the church.

Elevated—To lift up or praise something or someone

Faith—Strong belief.

Focus—To pay attention.

Foreigner—A person living in a country that is not their own country.

Grace—God’s great love for all people.

Greed—Wanting too much of something that you do not really need.

Guilty—Knowing we have done something wrong.

Humble—Not proud.

Idol—A piece of stone or wood that people make and worship as their god.

Inheritance—Something received from parents or other relative.

Judge—To decide if something is right or wrong.

Laymen—Any person who serves in the church, but who is not a pastor.

Loyal—Faithful.

Meddle; Meddler—To be a troublemaker or gossip.

Messiah—A Hebrew word. The English word is Savior. The Greek word is Christ.

Omnipotent—All-powerful.

Opposes—To disagree.

Persecute—To hurt, speak badly about, or punish unfairly.

Practical—Something that is useful.

Pride—To feel important or to brag.

Prophets—Men and women that God used to tell the people His words.

Qualities—Words that describe a person.

Reunion—People coming back together after being apart a long time.

Sacred—Holy.

Sake—Benefit, honor.

Sanctify—To make holy.

Satan—The name of the Devil.

Society—A community of people who share the same traditions or values.

Submit, submission—To obey.

Transfiguration—The experience of the three apostles on the mountain where God gave glory to Jesus.

Various—Different.

Witness—To see something for ourselves.

Worthy—Good enough.

Time Line: 1,2 Peter; Jude

~ = Approx. Date

2085–1406 B.C.

2085?	Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
1446	The Exodus
1409?	Balaam's error
1406	Moses' death

250 B.C.–A.D. 29

Winter 5 B.C.	Jesus' birth
A.D. 1?	Simon Peter born in Galilee, probably in Bethsaida
5	Birth of Jude, half-brother of Jesus
20?	Simon, a fisherman by trade, moves to Capernaum
29	Simon's brother, Andrew, introduces him to Jesus.
29	Jesus calls Simon Peter "the rock."
29	Jesus calls Peter to be one of His 12 disciples.

A.D. 30–33

32	Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Messiah
33	Peter, James, and John witness Jesus' transfiguration.
33	Peter vows to die with Jesus.
33	Peter denies Jesus in the courtyard of Annas.

A.D. 33-47

<i>Nisan 14-16</i>	Jesus' trials, death, resurrection, and ascension (or <i>April 3-5, A.D. 33</i>)
33	Following His resurrection, Jesus appears to Peter and recommissions him.
33	Three thousand respond to Peter's sermon at the feast of Pentecost.
<i>Oct. 34</i>	Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road
37?	Paul meets with Peter and James on his first visit to Jerusalem following his conversion.
44	James becomes leader of the church at Jerusalem.

A.D. 48-65

48-52	The letter of James written
49	At Antioch, Paul confronts Peter's refusal to share meals with Gentile believers.
62	James stoned to death

A.D. 66-180

66	The letter of James written
66	Jewish war
66–70	Destruction of Jerusalem
70	Moses' death
96	Jude's grandsons appear before Emperor Domitian.
112–114	James stoned to death
180	Muratorian Canon includes Jude was Scripture.



LEADER GUIDE

1, 2 Peter; Jude

TEACHING HINTS

If you want to keep your class interesting, it will be good to teach in different ways. There are ideas for teaching in the leader guide.

Story & Discussion

Before your class meeting:

- Read the story in the Bible.
- Practice signing the story several times so that you can share the story without looking at the Bible.
- Sign the story to a friend or family member. This will help you become comfortable with the story.

During class:

- Sign the story to the members.
- Ask for a volunteer to sign the story again (as much as he or she can remember). When he or she is finished, let other members add parts of the story that were missing.
- Sign the story one more time. Next ask the following questions:

How do you feel about the story? (Try to get each person to answer.)

Members may feel puzzled and wonder why things happened in the story. They may feel happy or sad about the story. It is good for them to share openly.

What did you learn about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit in the story?

You may need to help the group to focus on this question. It is important for them to notice how God works.

How can you obey God? How can you use this in your life? When God teaches us something, we should always obey Him. After discussing the lesson, members should focus on what God wants them to do. Try to get each person to share how he or she will follow God during the week.

Lecture

Read the Scripture for the lesson and the information in the pupil material and the leader guide. Look at the outline for the lesson. Practice explaining the points of the outline. This will help you to talk about the lesson without “reading” to the class. When you meet with the class, write the outline on the board. If there are names that you will talk about often, write those names on the board also. You can point to those instead of fingerspelling each time.

Teach the lesson and explain the points on the outline. Be sure to let the members of the class ask questions at any time.

Group Work

Divide the class into small groups of three or four. Give each group one section of the lesson to discuss. You can go to each group to help them if they have questions. After 5-10 minutes, bring the group back together. Let each group share what they learned from their part of the lesson.

Another idea for small groups: give them a question to discuss. Each group may have the same question or different questions. Then let them share their answers with the rest of the class.

Drama

Ask some members of the class to act out the story in the lesson. You will need to plan ahead so that the members will have at least a week to prepare and practice. When your group meets, ask the “actors” to present the story to the class. Discuss what they learned from the story.

Session 1

A LIVING HOPE

1 PETER 1:3-9

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ Review the Introduction to the **Book of 1 Peter** in the pupil material.
- ☐ Read all of the Book of 1 Peter from two or three translations. This will help you understand the full content of this book. **The Amplified Bible** will often help you understand the meaning of special words.
- ☐ Review the Scripture and the pupil material for this Bible study. Mark items you feel will need special emphasis. **Use the ASL Bible** each week to help you choose how to sign the Bible verses.
- ☐ Review **Understand the Context** in the pupil material and select ideas to give the group some background for today's lesson.
- ☐ Use a Bible map to show the location of the places named in 1 Peter 1:1 (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia). This is northern Turkey today.
- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion**—Lecture: With a large amount of information to be shared, it will be best to use a lecture style, but plan ahead to make assignments as suggested below.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 1:3-9)

Ask _____ to study the **Introduction to 1 Peter** and summarize it for the group.

Emphasize this is a personal letter from the Apostle Peter to believers. He possibly knew many of them personally. Some were Jews. Many were Gentiles. All these believers faced persecution from outside and false teachers

from within the churches.

Discussion: Help your group identify the problems they face from outside their church, and problems they need to guard against inside their church group.

1. Finding Our Living Hope (1 Peter 1:3-4)

What does the word *hope* mean to you? Discuss appropriate sign(s) for this word.

Ask pupils to sign a few of these verses about our hope: Hebrews 6:19, Romans 8:16, Psalm 145:13, Colossians 1:5.

Discussion: Ask pupils to tell what they wrote for the question at the end of this section. Encourage discussion of God's blessings now and in heaven.

2. Sure of Our Hope (1 Peter 1:5)

Ask pupils to find Romans 8:38-39 in their Bibles (or print out these verses and give a copy to each one). Ask each one to find one thing in this verse that cannot separate us from Christ. (Death, life, angels and ruling spirits, time, powers such as government on earth or supernatural powers, nothing above or below us, not the stars or the deepest ocean.) Discuss appropriate signs for difficult words.

Discussion: Ask pupils to tell what they listed at the end of this section. Encourage discussion of the need to be ready.

3. Celebrate Our Hope (1 Peter 1:6-9)

Ask _____ to sign verse 8. This is today's memory verse.

Discussion: Ask pupils to discuss problems today that can make a Christian sad—economy, illness, job, death of a family member, or lack of encouragement from others to help them live a Christian life.

IN MY CONTEXT

The pupil material asks for comments about their experience. Use this to encourage discussion.

Discussion: Ask the group what they can use in their life from what they have learned today. Use this opportunity to share how to accept Christ as Savior.

Make assignments for next week's lesson and encourage pupils to read all of 1 Peter.

Session 2

BE HOLY

1 PETER 1:13-25

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion—Group Work:** Ask three persons ahead of time to be small group leaders. Give each person one of the sections (Obey, Respect and Love). Ask them to study their section carefully during the week. After introducing the lesson, divide the group into three smaller groups. Let them discuss the verses and the information in the pupil material, and then have the leader report to the whole group what they learned from their study.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goals: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 1:13-25)

Our Bible verses this week do not include verses 10-12, but they are important. Verse 12 begins with the word *so*. That means, “because of what I wrote in verses 10-12.” Those verses discuss the work of the prophets in announcing the coming Messiah. Ask for names of some of the prophets in the Old Testament. Find a list of Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament and show how many times the birth of the Messiah was foretold.

1. Obey (1 Peter 1:13-16)

Many Christians are afraid of the word *holy* because they do not understand it. Many people think of this as perfection and know this is not possible. Ask pupils to explain what *holy* means to them. List their responses on the board.

Discuss the meaning of holiness and how to best express this idea in ASL. The word *holy* and the word *sanctified* simply mean “to be set apart, separated from the things of the world.”

Discuss the difference between God's holiness (perfect, omniscient, omnipotent, no one made God holy) and ours (given to us by God when we were saved). We must be spiritually clean before God can use us.

Paul wrote about holiness often. Ask three pupils to find one of these verses and sign it for the group:

Romans 6:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Christians are baptized to show God has made us spiritually clean.

Peter instructed his readers to obey God's commands and to reflect God's holiness as His children.

Discussion: We are not capable of perfection but we must try to live a holy life.

2. Respect (1 Peter 1:17-21)

Call attention to verse 18. Ask the group to find the words for *God* in this verse: Father, Judge, the object of our respect and honor.

Note the contrast between in the past and now. (In the past—worthless, useless. Now—saved, bought, we have faith and hope).

Emphasize that all people are held accountable to God: unbelievers because they rejected Jesus and believers for how we live for Him.

Discussion: Ask pupils to tell what they wrote at the end of this section. Encourage discussion.

3. Love (1 Peter 1:22-25)

In verse 22, ask the group to find what purified our souls: obedience to the truth. Verse 22 is the memory verse for this week.

What does the Bible mean by the word *pure*? Encourage discussion of the concept and appropriate sign(s).

Ask the group to find one of these verses and sign what different people said about being pure: David—Psalm 24:3-4; Jesus—Matthew 5:8; Paul—1 Timothy 1:5; John—Revelation 14:1-5.

Discussion: Emphasize that the pure heart is a result of trusting in God's enduring Word, the gospel.

IN MY CONTEXT

Ask the group what they can use in their lives from what they have learned today.

Encourage pupils to read all of the chapter(s) being studied each week so they can get the complete story and better understand the importance of the Bible verses selected for each week's study.

Discussion: How can we, as a group, encourage each other to grow in holiness?

Session 3

BUILDING OUR FAITH

1 PETER 2:1-10

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** This is a good lesson to let one of your group be a “student teacher.” Assign this two weeks early so you can help the student prepare. Be ready to summarize and apply as the “student-teacher” finishes each section and make the application at the end. This may be difficult for some pupils, but if you use this method occasionally, it will help them grow.
- ☐ **For section 1:** Bring a baby bottle, a jar of baby food, and a picture of a steak or other meat. Use these to demonstrate the concept in verse 2.
- ☐ **For section 2:** Bring some children’s blocks. Show how Christ is the cornerstone, but the people make up the blocks that build the church.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goals: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 2:1-10)

1. Spiritual Milk (1 Peter 2:1-3)

Note that verse 1 lists things to get rid of. Then verse 2 talks about growing. These are the two sides of spiritual growth—what we stop doing and what we start doing.

What does the Bible mean by spiritual maturity? The picture word Peter and other New Testament writers used to describe an immature Christian is *baby*. Encourage discussion.

Paul also wrote about growing spiritually. Ask each one to find one of these verses and sign it for the group: 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; 1 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Timothy 4:15.

┌
Discussion: Do you feel you are growing spiritually? If not, what do you need to focus on? Encourage group discussion.

2. Spiritual House (1 Peter 2:4-8)

What are the two picture words Peter used in these verses? (Living stones built into a new kind of spiritual house, and members of a priesthood). These traits point to a community committed to serving and pleasing God.

Verse 5 uses the words “spiritual temple.” The Jews worshiped in their temple in Jerusalem. The temple in New Testament times was very poor compared with the temple of Solomon, but it was the center of their worship. Ask someone to sign what Paul said about the Christian’s body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Ask someone else to sign Ephesians 2:20-22. The cornerstone of that spiritual temple is Jesus Christ. The Christian offers sacrifices of praise from the temple in his heart.

Discussion: Encourage discussion of how our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. **What does that mean to you?**

3. Spiritual People (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Note Peter’s use of Old Testament Scriptures. Ask pupils to find and sign these verses (Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22).

Ask the group to find the words in verse 9 that identify believers. These are words used in the Old Testament to describe the Jews. Now these words include all believers.

Discuss the terms “chosen people,” “royal priests,” “holy nation,” and “God’s possession.” Discuss appropriate signs for these concepts.

Discussion: Note that your church is made up of a lot of different people. God has now made those individuals into a spiritual family for His honor and glory.

IN MY CONTEXT

We need to be hungry for the spiritual food that leads to maturity. As members of God’s family, Deaf believers need to serve God in ways that please Him. Deaf believers need to declare to others what God has done and what He is doing now.

Discussion: Use the last question in the pupil material to summarize and apply this Bible study. Encourage discussion.

Session 4

LIVING AS STRANGERS

1 PETER 2:11-20

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** Discuss these verses one at a time. Ask pupils to sign a verse. Discuss how to sign any significant words, and ask pupils to tell what that verse means to them. Make the application at the end of each section.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 2:11-20)

1. Strangers in Our Culture (1 Peter 2:11-12)

Ask if any group member has visited or lived in another country. Ask them to tell how it was different. It is not the same as being in our own country.

Emphasize how we can influence others with our behavior as well as with our words and signs. Remember, we are strangers here in a foreign (non-Christian) land and need to influence everyone around us.

Ask someone to sign the last part of verse 12. This is our memory verse.

Ask someone to sign Matthew 5:16. Notice how much it is similar to verse 12.

The Christian's status in this world as a stranger and temporary resident serves as the background for this Bible study.

Ask the group to find these verses about giving glory to God. In heaven (Revelation 4:9), through our worship and praise (Psalm 22:23), the heavens (Psalm 19:1), our actions (1 Corinthians 10:31), and when we serve Him together (Romans 15:6).

Discussion: Emphasize how we cannot represent Christ when we have

sin in our life. **How can we help each other stay away from sinful places and practices?** Encourage discussion.

2. Toward Officials and Leaders (1 Peter 2:13-17)

Peter instructed his readers to submit to governmental authority, being model citizens so they would be praised and not punished.

Ask pupils to list all the kinds of *authority* they face every day. They may list employer (boss), government (national, state, local), parents, police, and others. **How can we be free with so much authority over us?** (Spiritually free.)

The Bible reminds us that God gave this authority to kings and governments for our good. **When is it OK to refuse to obey the government?** (When it is against God's law.) In a democracy we can oppose the government in legal ways, especially through our voting.

Ask the group to find these verses about freedom and sign one verse for the group. Tell who said it. Jesus, John 8:32. Paul, Romans 8:2. Paul, 2 Corinthians 3:17. Paul, Galatians 5:13. Paul, 1 Corinthians 8:9.

Discussion: Because of Christ, we will want to use our freedom only in ways that honor Him and build up His church.

3. In Our Work (1 Peter 2:18-20)

Peter wrote about slaves. **How do we apply that to us today?** (Employees.)

Peter called for slaves to submit with respect to their masters by always doing what is good and by patiently enduring any suffering caused by their godly behavior.

First-century slavery was not the same as modern slavery. Many were “bond servants,” serving someone because they had no other way to earn a living. Today's work situation is not exactly the same as first-century slaves.

Discussion: Does showing respect for an employer mean we must accept their abuse? Encourage discussion about how Christians can handle harassment and abuse on the job.

IN MY CONTEXT

Use the questions in the first part of this section to encourage discussion and application of this Bible study.

Do you have any problem with an employer treating you badly because you are deaf? How do you handle that?

Discussion: Deaf believers demonstrate trust in God by respecting their local government leaders. Even when abused, Deaf believers can demonstrate God's character to those who abuse them.

Session 5

LIVING IN RELATIONSHIPS

1 PETER 3:1-12

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ Find some photos in the newspaper of couples celebrating fifty or more years of marriage. Try to find some where they also have a photo of their wedding. Use this to prompt discussion of what makes for a happy, long marriage. Today's Bible study has some guidelines.
- ☐ Or, if you know of a couple in your church that has been married many years, ask them to come and talk with the group about how they have "survived" together for so many years.
- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** The group may have some strong feelings about the role of the wife. As you teach, help the group understand there is one theme throughout—respect, honor, love for all.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 3:1-12)

1. For the Wife (1 Peter 3:1-6)

Call attention to the first words in verse 1, "In the same way." This refers to 1 Peter 2:18-25 about following Christ's example.

Encourage discussion of the role of women in New Testament times compared with today. Ask if that makes a difference in how we understand these verses. (Biblical principles are always valid and can be applied to our lives today.)

Peter called on wives to submit to their husbands, to focus on inner beauty, and to live godly lives. If her husband is an unbeliever, the goal of the wife is to win him to Christ through these actions.

Clearly explain the following: 1. Submission does not imply inferiority. 2. Submission is given willingly, never forced. 3. Submission does not mean wives are to participate in sinful activities dictated by husbands or to remain in abusive situations.

Paul and John described the church as the bride of Christ. Ask the group to find these verses and ask someone to sign each one: Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21:2.

Discussion: Ask the group to discuss how they feel about this description of the role of the wife. **Do you feel these verses are not fair to wives today?**

2. For the Husband (1 Peter 3:7)

Call attention to the first words in verse 7 about following the example of Christ.

Emphasize that it is equally important for the husband to obey these verses as it is for the wife. Peter demanded that husbands seek to understand their wives and to honor them as fellow believers.

Emphasize how different this idea was during the time and culture when Peter lived. Explain that Jesus and New Testament writers elevated the status of women in society.

Discussion: Discuss the difference between *submit* or *yield* in verse 1 and *respect* in verse 7. **Are these the same basic concept?**

3. For All Believers (1 Peter 3:8-12)

In verses 8-12, Peter wrote about conflicts in the church and relating to people in the church who insult or hurt. The message of verses 8-12 is summarized in verse 8.

Ask the group to find and someone to sign each of these verses that contrast the Old Testament writers with the teachings of Jesus and Paul: Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 20:22; Matthew 5:38-41; Romans 12:17.

Discussion: Encourage discussion of how your church can work to live up to the goal in verse 8.

IN MY CONTEXT

Encourage discussion of the difficulty in following these instructions. **Are they too difficult for us today?**

Discussion: **How can our group encourage each other to live up to these teachings?** Encourage discussion.

Session 6

BE READY

1 PETER 3:13-22

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** There are many opportunities in this lesson to assign reading or discussion to the group. Use these assignments to keep them involved and encourage them to study the lesson more thoroughly.
- ☐ **For Section 3:** Bring three photos of yourself to use with verse 21. Hold up one photo and ask, “Who is this?” (They will probably say, “You,” not “Your photo.”) Do the same with two other photos. Then ask, “How many of me do you see?” (Only one, because the photos are symbols or reminders.) That is the relationship of baptism to salvation. Baptism does not save, but it reminds us of salvation so much it is easy to tie baptism to salvation.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 3:13-22)

1. Explain Our Faith (1 Peter 3:13-17)

Ask someone to sign Isaiah 8:12-15. This is God’s encouragement to Isaiah to stay faithful and not go with the false leadership of the priests. No matter what happens to us, we can live without fear if we focus on our blessings.

What are some blessing you have received recently? Encourage discussion.

Ask the group to explain what the word *conscience* means to them. **Does a clear conscience mean a person lives a perfect life?** (No, but an effort to live like Christ’s example.)

Our *conscience* is what tells us something is right or wrong. It causes us to

feel guilty when we sin. But we should look to Jesus as the standard for our actions.

Ask the group to find, and someone to sign, each of these verses about our conscience: Romans 9:1; 1 Corinthians 8:7-12;;1 John 3:20-21; 1 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15.

Discussion: How can we train our conscience to be true to God's will? (Through Bible study.)

2. Understand Our Faith (1 Peter 3:18-20a)

Peter used picture words to discuss Noah as an example of faith and baptism as a picture of salvation.

Peter explained that Christ suffered to secure our salvation and to bring others to the Father.

Opinions vary about verse 19. Make clear that the dead will not get another opportunity to receive Christ (Hebrews 9:27). The New Testament is clear in tying the passage to verse 17.

Ask the group to find a description of *faith* in Genesis 6-8. **How did the people act?** (Verse 5, they were evil). **What words describe the character of Noah?** (Verse 8, he pleased the Lord. Verse 9, he was a good man, the most innocent man of his time, and he walked with God).

Ask someone to sign Hebrews 11:7 for more about Noah. (He was made right with God through faith.)

Ask the group to find Matthew 24:36-41 and Luke 17:26-27. **How did Jesus compare His return with the time of Noah?** (Jesus said the second coming will be like the time of Noah when everyone was eating and drinking and not prepared.)

Discussion: Do you believe Jesus may come any time soon?
Encourage discussion.

3. Show Our Faith (1 Peter 3:20b-22)

Use the object lesson from *Plan Ahead* to teach that baptism is a symbol of the cleansing and the new life that people receive when they trust in Christ.

Discussion: Encourage discussion of the baptism experiences of the group. If someone has been saved but not yet baptized, encourage them to talk with the pastor.

IN MY CONTEXT

Use questions in the pupil material about worry to summarize and apply this lesson.

Discussion: How do you feel when you think about the return of Jesus? Are you worried, or afraid? Are you at peace? Encourage discussion.

Session 7

How We Live

1 PETER 4:1-11

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** Encourage each one to bring their own Bible. Use the Scripture search suggestions to help them become more familiar with their Bibles.
- ☐ **For Section 3—Group Work:** Plan for a “Bible search” time to use with verses 10-11. Across the top of the board write **1 Corinthians 12:4-9 and Ephesians 4:11-12**. Draw a line to make two columns headed by one of these texts. Divide the group into two small groups and ask each group to go to the board and list the spiritual gifts in their text. After the lists on the board are complete, ask pupils to consider what spiritual gift(s) they or others in the group may have. Encourage discussion. Emphasize that these are examples, not a complete list. Anything we are able to do to honor and serve Christ can be considered a spiritual gift.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goals: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 4:1-11)

1. Live for God (1 Peter 4:1-4)

Believers must live with Christ as their example when facing slander and other trials, realizing that they are following God’s will instead of the will of others.

Discussion: Discuss the items listed in the “Bible Skill: Armor of God.”
How does this apply to us today?

2. Live the Gospel (1 Peter 4:5-6)

The idea of community is introduced in verses 1-2. The word *community*, as used here, should be signed *fellowship or cooperate*, rather than *town*. Community will help the church members to strengthen themselves. The idea is to strengthen (encourage) each other in living the Christian life.

Verse 6 is often misunderstood. It is an example of how we must let the Bible interpret itself. It is possible to understand this verse to mean people have a second chance after death. This idea is against other verses that show there is no second chance (Hebrews 9:27).

Peter reminded his readers that everyone will give an account to the Father, with the slanderers condemned and the believers forgiven.

Discussion: How can we feel we are ready to face God's judgment? (Stay faithful to His teachings.)

3. Show the Gospel (1 Peter 4:7-11)

Ask, "What do you understand about the end of time, when Jesus returns to earth?" Encourage discussion.

Ask the group to find these verses about the end of time: Matthew 25:13 (Need to be ready); 1 Thessalonians 5:6 (Need to be alert and have self-control); Revelation 16:15 (Jesus will come as a thief in the night).

Encourage discussion of the level of hospitality in your church and how to improve it. If appropriate, encourage discussion of accepting refugees into our nation. Ask the group to find these verses and tell how each verse helps us with this: Deuteronomy 23:15-17; Romans 12:13. (In Jesus' time, as in our own nation in pioneer areas a century ago, people always offered a stranger a place to spend the night, out of the cold or wet weather.)

When Deaf believers are unified in service to others, we bring honor to God and demonstrate God's pure love.

Discussion: How can we open our homes to strangers and feel safe today?

IN MY CONTEXT

Deaf believers must look to Christ when facing persecution for our faith, knowing that He has a greater plan. Following our own desires leads to destruction and judgment. Deaf believers honor God by loving each other and serving others out of love.

Discussion: Encourage discussion of spiritual gifts from the "Key Doctrine" text box. **How do your spiritual gifts help your church?**

Session 8

INSULTED

1 PETER 4:12-19

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion—Drama:** Ask two pupils ahead of time to prepare a brief skit demonstrating the right way, and then the wrong way, to handle a situation when a Deaf person is insulted or harassed because of his faith.
- ☐ Reserve discussion of the Second Coming until a later lesson.
- ☐ **For use with verse 17:** Find two or three short stories about how Christians suffer in other nations. You can look in mission magazines in your church library or online. Ask two or three pupils to study one of these stories and summarize it for the group (in ASL!).
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 4:12-19)

1. Expect Insults (1 Peter 4:12-14)

Discuss the meaning and appropriate signs for the concept of *insult* as used in this Bible study.

Suffering for us today is more like the word *insult* in verse 14 than terrible trouble in verse 12. **How can we stand against persecution?** Encourage discussion. (Verse 14, the Holy Spirit is with us. The Holy Spirit gives us strength.)

There are many examples of spiritual testing in the Bible. Ask the group to find these verses and tell who was tested: Acts 16:22-24 (Paul and Silas), Genesis 22:1-18 (Abraham), James 1:2-3 (New Testament Christians).

Deaf believers can expect opposition and insults as a result of our

commitment to Christ. We should not be surprised by this treatment.

Discussion: How would you react if you faced true persecution?

This kind of suffering requires a deep faith.

2. Show Jesus in Our Lives (1 Peter 4:15-16)

Verse 15 gives some wrong reasons to suffer and verse 16 gives some right reasons to suffer. Discuss the idea of a person wearing an employer's uniform with the company name on their shirt. That is the picture word in verse 16.

Peter challenged his readers to live in a way that their life is an example of what Christ can do with one who finds joy when they suffered unjustly for the name of Christ.

Discussion: Use the question at the end of this section in the pupil material to generate discussion.

3. Focus on the Creator (1 Peter 4:17-19)

Ask a pupil to sign Proverbs 11:31. This is the verse quoted in verse 18.

Verse 19 summarizes the discussion in chapter 4.

The Bible is clear that saved people and people who have rejected Christ will all face the judgment of God. The final judgment, often called the "White Throne Judgment," is still in the future. The Bible does not say specifically what the rewards or punishments will be, but Christians will be judged.

Deaf believers must depend upon God even in times of persecution, knowing that the trials will refine our faith.

Discussion: How do you feel when you think of facing God's judgment?

IN MY CONTEXT

Use the questions in the pupil material to summarize and apply this Bible study.

We can trust the Holy Spirit to provide strength when we face insults as Deaf believers. We can faithfully represent God by carrying His name well when facing ridicule. We can face persecution with confidence, knowing God will use our tested faith for His kingdom purposes.

Discussion: Have you faced harassment or insults because of your faith in Jesus? Encourage discussion of how to handle insults or harassment.

Session 9

LIVING AS LEADERS

1 PETER 5:1-11

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** This is a good opportunity to have a guest speaker. Invite a deacon to come at the beginning of the hour and talk about the ministry of deacons in your church. It will be good for the deacon to know that the Deaf group is interested in the whole church. Encourage the group to ask questions.
- ☐ **For use with verse 1:** Secure a list of Bible study teachers, committee members, and other officers in your church. Show this list to your group as an example of all the elders or leaders in your church. Note that most of these leaders act in a humble way as they do their part to lead the church. A shepherd is a role model for church leaders. Leaders must have the right motive – because they want to serve and because they are happy.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (1 PETER 5:1-11)

1. Responsible for Service (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Some churches have an office called *elder*. The responsibilities are similar to *pastor* or *deacon*. The New Testament word is more general and means “leader.”

The word *elder* is often misunderstood. Not many Baptist churches have elders. Other denominations often have elders. The word was used for the leaders in the Jewish community and synagogue. Ask the group to find these verses and tell what happened: Acts 14:23 (Paul and Barnabas appointed elders as spiritual leaders, not rulers); James 5:14-15 (Elders led in praying and ministering); 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (The qualities an elder

should have).

Elders must care for their congregation as shepherds, fulfilling their calling with integrity and respect.

Explain that this passage does not negate the responsibility of local congregations to care for the needs of their pastor and other church leaders.

Discussion: Identify the leaders in your ministry with the Deaf, and in your church. **How can we help our leaders to do their work better?**

2. Trust Our Shepherds (1 Peter 5:5-7)

Ask someone to sign Proverbs 3:34, quoted by Peter in this verse. Discuss the importance, and spiritual responsibility, of each member of the church (and Bible study group) to work together in humility. **What can the Deaf group do when someone does not want to work with others in humility?**

Note the word picture in verse 6. Visualize for the group a Christian serving with God's hand spread overhead, ready to lift him up at the right time! It is a picture of both humility and faith.

The early New Testament churches selected men to serve the church and called them *deacons*. The Greek word, *diakonos*, means "servant." They were servants, not bosses.

Deaf believers need to be humble and depend upon God for their needs.

Discussion: Do you have any Deaf deacons in your church? Do you have anyone qualified to become a deacon?

3. Be Careful (1 Peter 5:8-11)

Note the word picture in verse 8 of the Devil as a roaring lion. Satan seeks to destroy believers. We need to be alert and diligent in our faith. The only protection for Christians is our faith in God.

Discussion: How can we recognize the work of Satan in our church, Deaf group, and in our own life?

IN MY CONTEXT

Leaders in the church need to be humble and demonstrate Christian character in their leadership. Deaf believers need to display humility, realizing that God provides for our needs. We need to resist the Devil with humility.

Discussion: Use the questions at the end of the pupil material for review and application.

Session 10

BE USEFUL

2 PETER 1:3-11

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ Ask _____ to review the introduction to 2 Peter in the pupil material and summarize it for the group.
- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** There are several opportunities in this lesson to make assignments ahead of time. Always encourage pupils to sign it in ASL, rather than reading it and signing in “English.” When they sign Scripture, encourage them to watch it first with the **ASL Bible**.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (2 PETER 1:3-11)

Ask pupils to compare the introduction in 2 Peter 1:1-2 with 1 Peter 1:1-2. Note this was the typical way people wrote letters in New Testament times.

1. Depend on God (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Review the introduction to 2 Peter.

Ask the group to find these verses that list some of the gifts we have from Jesus. Ask the group to name these gifts. Write their responses on the board. John 3:16 and 10:28 (eternal life). Matthew 11:28 (spiritual rest in times of turmoil in our lives). Luke 11:13 (the power of the Holy Spirit to work within us and through us). Revelation 2:10 (a spiritual crown of life). John 14:27 (peace).

Discussion: How can we help each other to develop a godly lifestyle? God has provided everything we need. We must obey Him, and then we can depend on Him to give us the strength and understanding to live a godly life and be useful to Him. We have the tools we need to do God’s

work. Jesus has given us everything we need to live and to serve God.

2. Build Character (2 Peter 1:5-9)

When we build godly character, we become more useful in God's kingdom. Discuss the meaning and appropriate signs for each of the eight items listed in the pupil material. Asking pupils to discuss how to sign a concept will help you, as teacher, know how well they understand the concept.

Patience is not natural for most of us! Share with the group verses that teach patience: Lamentations 3:26 ("wait on the Lord"); Psalm 27:14 ("Be strong and brave, and wait for the Lord's help"); Psalm 130:5-6 ("I wait for the Lord to help me, and I trust His word").

Discussion: How does patience prevent us from acting or speaking in a way that is not Christlike? Encourage discussion of the difficulty of being patient.

3. Be Sure (2 Peter 1:10-11)

Ask someone to sign verses 10-11. We need to work to show we belong to the family of God.

Ask someone else to sign one or two verses from the hymn, "The Family of God."

Discuss the meaning and appropriate signs for the heading of this section, "Be Sure." We show we are sure of our salvation through godly living, knowing that we will not be left behind and will be welcomed into heaven.

Discussion: What does this lesson teach us about how we can be sure of our salvation?

IN MY CONTEXT

Use the questions at the end of the pupil material to review and apply the Bible study.

Deaf believers can be thankful that God provides complete salvation through faith in Christ. God's Word is our best guide to help us build godly character. We can live with confidence in the promise of salvation.

Discussion: How does this Bible study apply to you in your life today?

Session 11

TRUST GOD'S WORD

2 PETER 1:12-21

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion—Drama:** Ask five people to create a drama of the transfiguration from Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; and Luke 9:28-36.
- ☐ **For verse 16:** Find a few unusual tools around your house. Ask if pupils can identify them. What occupation would use each tool? Then, hold up a Bible as the tool for the Christian. In this Bible study, Peter lists many tools for the believer to use in his role as a disciple and witness for Jesus.
- ☐ Use a Bible map to locate Mount Hermon and Mount Tabor.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (2 PETER 1:12-21)

1. Remember (2 Peter 1:12-15)

Each of us has the responsibility to help other Deaf believers remember. Teachers and preachers have more responsibility for this.

Peter explained that even though his readers had heard God's truth before, they still needed to be reminded of that truth often. Peter declared his intention to remind them so that even after his death, the readers would not forget God's truth.

Discussion: How does the Lord's Supper help us remember? Ask _____ to sign 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.

2. Eyewitness Accounts (2 Peter 1:16-18)

Peter reported what he saw when he went up the mountain with Jesus,

James, and John.

If you do not use the drama, ask _____ to study Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; and Luke 9:28-36; and summarize the story for the group, in ASL.

Peter referred to his experience when Jesus was transfigured, or glorified, before them. The Bible does not name the mountain, but many Bible scholars believe it was Mount Hermon or Mount Tabor. Locate these mountains on a New Testament map.

Who was Moses? Moses was the one through whom God gave the Law.

Who was Elijah? Elijah was one of the greatest prophets.

Peter was also with Jesus when Jesus ascended into heaven. He reported what he heard Jesus and the angel say about Jesus' return.

Have you read about someone telling what day Jesus will return? What do you think about that? The emphasis here and in other places in the Bible is not on the date Jesus will return but on our need to be ready.

Ask the group to find these verses. **What does the verse tell us? Who said it?** Matthew 25:13 (Jesus said we must be watchful because we do not know when He will return); 1 Thessalonians 5:6 (Paul said we must be alert and have self-control); Revelation 3:11 (John said we must hold on to what we have).

Discussion: We have not seen Jesus. **How can we be sure he will return?**

3. Written by God (2 Peter 1:19-21)

These verses are Peter's testimony about the inspiration of the Scriptures. God's written Word was the result of God speaking through men.

Ask _____ to sign 2 Timothy 3:16-17 for Paul's words about the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Ask _____ to sign 2 Peter 3:15-16. Peter's Scripture was the Old Testament, but he had some understanding of Paul's writings.

Discussion: A Christian needs to spend time studying God's Word.

How much time do you spend? Do you find it difficult to understand what you read in the Bible? Discuss helps that are available and remind the group that the Holy Spirit will guide them.

IN MY CONTEXT

Use the questions in the pupil material to review and apply the Bible study.

We can affirm the power of the gospel through the demonstrations of that power that we have witnessed. God's Word can be trusted.

Discussion: Do you believe the whole Bible is the true Word of God?

Session 12

BE ON GUARD

2 PETER 2:1-3; JUDE 16-25

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** Ask two from the group to go online and learn about Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, and give a brief report to the group.
- ☐ Ask _____ to review the "Introduction to Jude" in the pupil material and share it with the group.
- ☐ **For 2 Peter 2:1-3:** Bring some books from the church library about cults. Show how much has been written to help Christians know how to identify and deal with cults.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (2 PETER 2:1-3; JUDE 16-25)

1. False Teachers Uncovered (2 Peter 2:1-3; Jude 16)

Peter exposed the motives and end results of false teachers. Jude painted a similar picture of false prophets who teach falsehoods for personal benefit.

False teachers were present when Peter wrote and they are present today. We often call them *cults*. A cult may have many teachings based on the Bible, but they often change what the Bible says or they add to what the Bible says. The most important way to identify a cult is what they teach about Jesus. If a group does not teach Jesus is God's Son who died and was raised again for our salvation, then we know it is a cult.

Discussion: What cults are working with Deaf people in your area? How do you respond when someone from one of these cults comes to your door?

2. Believers Warned (Jude 17-19)

Jude reminded his readers that the apostles had warned them about false teachers and the dangers they posed.

Discussion: Some people say that all churches are the same and that all will go to heaven. **How do you answer them?**

3. Protect Yourself (Jude 20-25)

The emphasis in this Bible study is about false teachers, but you can make the application to those who seek to make trouble for Christians and the church in other ways. Be prepared to discuss any such problems related to your church or another church in your area.

Other troublemakers are those who want to be a leader in the group but they have a sinful lifestyle. Encourage discussion of what a Deaf church or ministry should do if a leader is found to be involved in some obvious sinful lifestyle. Emphasize acting in love, but according to God's Word. A church should not have someone like that in a place of leadership. Ask God to give you wisdom in speaking the truth with love.

Note Jude's caution about dealing with any troublemaker: "Use your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit." In other words, don't depend on your own wisdom, but seek God's wisdom.

Jude emphasized how God has all the strength we need to do His work through us.

If our prayers are our own ideas, we might not be sure God hears us. But if we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, our heart is speaking directly to God's heart. Our will, when God the Holy Spirit influences it, is God's will. If God says in my heart, "Pray for this," I know He will answer.

Ask the group to find these verses and someone tell what the verse tells us about how to pray: Romans 8:26-27 and 1 John 5:14-15 (according to the will of God); Matthew 21:22 (in faith); John 14:13-14 and John 16:24 (in Jesus' name); John 15:7 (while we are in a right fellowship with Christ); and 1 John 3:22 (obedient to God).

Discussion: How can we be strong against false teachers? (By growing in our faith, encouraging other Deaf believers when they have doubts, and demonstrating God's love to false teachers without accepting their teachings and practices.)

IN MY CONTEXT

Use the questions at the end of the pupil material to encourage discussion and emphasize the theme of this Bible study.

Discussion: Whom can you talk with when you have questions about what someone is teaching? (Identify strong believers in your group who can help others find the right answers.)

Session 13

WITH JOYFUL HOPE

2 PETER 3:3-13,17-18

PLAN AHEAD

- ☐ **Teaching Suggestion:** Save some time at the end of this lesson to summarize the basic themes in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude. Refer to the introduction in the pupil material and the Table of Contents to prepare your summary.
- ☐ **For verses 8-9:** Bring a collection of calendars, watches, and clocks. Arrange them on a table with one larger clock on which you have pasted a blank face with the word ETERNITY. Explain that the clocks and calendars are how we count time, but the Bible tells us God's "clock" is different from ours.
- ☐ **Teaching Objective:** What do you hope your group will learn through this Bible study? Mark your teaching goal: ☐ evangelism, ☐ stewardship, ☐ discipleship, ☐ general Bible knowledge, ☐ ministry/missions, ☐ reassurance, ☐ other _____

EXPLORE THE TEXT (2 PETER 3:3-13,17-18)

1. Jesus Will Return (2 Peter 3:3-7)

New Testament Christians expected Christ to return very soon. Encourage discussion of how the group feels about the second coming of Jesus.

The group may have many questions about Christ's return. Try to answer as many as you can, within the time available.

Discussion: Do you often think about the second coming? Do you really believe it will happen? The idea here is to be prepared, but not anxious.

2. The Patient Father (2 Peter 3:8-9)

God's delay in the second coming is because of His grace that gives more time

for people to come to Him in repentance.

Ask the group to find these verses and tell who wrote about God's patience, or God not acting as quickly as people wanted Him to. Habakkuk 1:2 (King Habakkuk). Psalm 13:1-2 (David). John 11:1-27 (Mary, Martha, and the disciples).

Discussion: Find James 5:7-8 for verses that encourage us to wait for God to act in His time.

3. Giving a Warning (2 Peter 3:10)

The *Day of the Lord* (Christ's return) will come. No one should think that God's grace will keep Him from acting.

Discussion: If you knew Jesus was coming again tomorrow, what would you do differently today? Are there people you would want to witness to? Will you try to find an opportunity to witness to them this week?

4. While We Are Waiting (2 Peter 3:11-13, 17-18)

In these verses Peter referred to Paul's writings. The disciples and other leaders were probably very familiar with what each other wrote and said. Peter's warning is to be sure we know the truth and avoid false teachers.

Deaf believers need to practice holy living as we wait for the return of Christ and because of God's future judgment.

Discussion: What can our group do to help others be ready for Christ's second coming?

IN MY CONTEXT

Encourage discussion of the return of Jesus. Ask group members what they understand about this. Help them find answers to their questions.

Encourage group members to prepare for the start of next quarter by beginning to read the first few chapters of the Book of Joshua. We will also study Judges and Ruth next quarter.

Discussion: Ask members of the group to name one thing they have learned this quarter that will help them live a better Christian life. Be prepared to prompt them if they do not respond quickly! Ask the group to look again at the "Introduction to 1 and 2 Peter and Jude," to help them remember the basic themes in these books. Suggest they look back at titles of the lessons to help them remember.

Teachers: Your Help Is Needed!

We would like to hear from you and your group members. Send an e-mail to tell us what you think of this quarterly. Send us your suggestions for improving the lessons. Our e-mail address is ETBDeaf@lifeway.com

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

How do you like this new format? We would like to hear from you and your class members. Send an e-mail to Stephanie Johnson or George Joslin to tell us what you think of it. Our e-mail address is ETBDeaf@lifeway.com. For additional teaching helps visit: www.lifeway.com/ETBDeaf.

PENTECOST AND THE JEWISH DIASPORA


- City with Jewish population
- Mountain peak
- LYCIA
- Other provinces
- Roman Empire

0 100 200 300 400 Miles
0 100 200 300 400 Kilometers

***PENTECOST AND THE
JEWISH DIASPORA***

- City with Jewish population
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LYCIA Other provinces

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1,2 Peter; Jude

For many followers of Christ, living in America today is like living in a strange land.

We feel like aliens who have awakened in a hostile environment toxic to our faith. We need a sure word to help us understand how to survive—or, more than that—how to thrive in the new circumstances confronting us. The problems seem overwhelming—racism, terrorism, family breakdowns, abortion, same-sex marriage, pornography, prostitution, sex trafficking, and on and on. It's easy to think we are facing a situation Christians have never before encountered. But that's not the case. The first Christians faced many of the same issues we are dealing with today. And yet, they found strength to endure and the insight they needed to thrive from various resources—including letters from their leaders. We too can learn much from the Letters of Peter and Jude about living for Christ in a threatening world.



Let the Word dwell in you.