

CCF Study Notes
Tuesday 7 AM Study
21 November 2006
1 Peter 2

Before beginning to read from 1 Peter, let us spend time in prayer, considering how we ought to live in these trying times. Let us ask God to help us do the following:

1. **Give** us a thirst to know and obey God's word,
2. **Build** our lives upon the chief cornerstone – Jesus Christ,
3. **Know and live up to** what we are in Christ,
4. **Live** as sojourners and pilgrims, glorifying God before all men by our lives,
5. **Submit** to every authority that God has instituted,
6. **Be submissive** as employees or public servants even when persecuted unfairly, and
7. **Consider** the example that Jesus set for us when tempted to rebel, revile or threaten.

Having considered our future hope and salvation and our response to it, we now turn to our present place in Christ and the consequences for our behavior. Who are we? What are we to do?

(2:1-3) In light of who we are and what God has done for us, we need to do several things. We need to lay aside all malice, not seeking to do evil to anybody. Ill will has no place in the life of a believer. Deceit has no place in our lives. We should not do or say anything in the attempt to mislead other people. Hypocrisy is like yeast that expands to fill our whole life if we give place to it. Envy is a green-eyed monster that brings all kinds of evil into our lives – if we indulge it. Evil speaking causes no end of trouble for us and for others. Instead, we need a constant appetite for God's word, so that we grow out of these childish evils. Why should we leave these evils behind us? Why should we devour God's word? We do these things because we have experienced God's grace!

(2:4-8) By means of God's word, our lives are built upon the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ. We must never allow this precious stone to be lost or misplaced. We see what we are becoming in Christ: living stones, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices. This stands in opposition to what we once were. We must not miss the point that all of this happens only as we are "in Christ". All scripture is ultimately about Jesus Christ. When we are disobedient to God's word it is because we have not understood what it tells us about Jesus.

(2:9-10) What are we? We are a chosen generation, living in the light of the gospel. We are a royal priesthood, bringing acceptable offerings to the King of kings. We are a holy nation, set apart from the world by the work of Jesus Christ. We are a special people, standing in right relationship with God. What are we to do? We are to proclaim His praises. We must leave darkness behind, living in the light of His word. Once we were not a people. We had nothing in common. We were just like everybody else. Now we are the people of God, sharing a common inheritance. Once objects of God's wrath, now we are objects of God's mercy.

(2:11-12) Peter speaks to "the beloved", those loved by God and by every true child of God. The plea is urgent: "I beg you!" What are we in this world? We are sojourners and pilgrims. We can never be at home in this world. We are strangers here. We are just passing through. We must abstain from fleshly lusts! Why? Fleshly lusts war against our soul. Why do so many believers have emotional difficulties? There is war in the seat of our emotions – in the soul. Fleshly passions are in conflict with all that we are in Christ. Our conduct is to be honorable among the Gentiles. We are to bring honor to God through all that we do so that the false accusations are without merit. Sinners glorify God at the judgment seat, forced to admit that God placed believers beside them to demonstrate God's grace and love in Christ.

(2:13-17) Peter moves from preaching to meddling! We are to submit to every law! Civil disobedience is not the Christian way, but submission. We submit to earthly rulers for the Lord's sake. Earthly rulers are put in place to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good. It is strange how often rulers undertake this work even against their own will. God's will overrules the will of men when our good deeds silence the ignorant words of sinful men. We are free. Yet our liberty is not to be a cover for vice or sin. Rather, our liberty makes us willing slaves to God's will on earth. The summary is simple, yet instructive: Honor all people. We are not dishonor anybody. We speak out against sin, not against sinners. We are to love the brotherhood. We are to love and respect our brothers and sisters. We do not know who God has called into this brotherhood. So we honor all people. Thus the fear of God governs our actions. We are to honor the ruling authorities, since they also may be brothers.

(2:18-20) What about authorities that do not deserve our respect? Authority also exists in the workplace as a means to provide order and efficiency. We must submit to our bosses in the fear of God, whether those bosses be good and gentle or very harsh. It is a commendable thing to suffer wrongfully or endure grief for the sake of a good conscience toward God. The world tells us exactly the opposite of this. The world tells us that we need to stick up for ourselves. Sometimes we suffer because of our own faults. This is not what Peter is praising. Peter is praising those who endure unjustified suffering. Whether we suffer because we deserve it or not, we are simply to submit to the authorities. The more unjustified our suffering, the more commendable to God is our submission in that suffering. Have you ever heard such radical teaching?

(2:21-25) Peter goes further in speaking of this whole issue of submission to authority. Such submission is not an optional extra. God calls us to lives of submission to authority, even as Jesus obediently came to suffer and to die for our sin. Jesus modeled what it is to suffer for righteousness' sake. He submitted to the will of the Father in all things. We are like lost sheep that need to return to following our Shepherd and Overseer.

P.S. Recordings and notes for these studies are available at <http://www.jstoker.name> . A podcast is available at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast> .