

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE®

ADULTS

Daily Discipleship Guide

SUMMER 2020 | CSB

STUDY 1:

*Living with Hope
in a Broken World*

STUDY 2:

*Why Do I Need
the Church?*



LifeWay | Adults

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COMMENTARY

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FAMILY CONNECTION

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Lynn H. Pryor
Team Leader

Amber Vaden
Content Editor

Ken Braddy
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

Brandon Hiltibidal
Director, Groups Ministry

Send questions/comments to: Content Editor by email at amber.vaden@lifeway.com; mail to Content Editor for Bible Studies for Life: Daily Discipleship Guide, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234; or make comments on the web at BibleStudiesforLife.com.

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

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Bible Studies for Life: Daily Discipleship Guide often lists websites that may be helpful to our readers. Our staff verifies each site's usefulness and appropriateness prior to publication. However, website content changes quickly so we encourage you to approach all websites with caution. Make sure sites are still appropriate before sharing them with students, friends, and family.

USING THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Your *Daily Discipleship Guide* is full of tools to help you grow as a disciple. But like any tool, you have to use it to get the benefit.

GROUP TIME

Use these pages when studying with a group. The **Group Time** pages help the group leader introduce a Bible passage and move you toward acting on the truths discovered.

DAILY STUDY

Use the **Daily Study** pages to go deeper into God's Word, building on your group's study experience. Engage in daily Bible study, record your thoughts, reflect on the questions, and take action.

TALK IT OUT

Use the **Talk It Out** section at the end of each session to hold yourself and others accountable by meeting in a smaller group of same-sex individuals. Share with the smaller group what God has been teaching you through the group time and your personal daily Bible study.

Use this resource every week, even when you're unable to attend your group's Bible study. Missing a group Bible study doesn't excuse you from being engaged daily with God through His Word. Use the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to move forward in your spiritual growth.

Want this resource on your phone or tablet for when you are on the go? Purchase an eBook in the *Bible Studies for Life App* (available through iOS App Store and the Google Play Store) or at LifeWay.com.



STUDY INTRODUCTIONS

LIVING WITH HOPE IN A BROKEN WORLD

We place hope in a lot of things: investments, financial planning, diets, and even people. While we might feel a sense of confidence that our hope is rightly placed, such hope is never certain. People disappoint. Circumstances change. Christ, however, is faithful and unchanging. Through the Book of 1 Peter, we see that, when we trust Him, we gain a hope like no other.

Dr. Michael Catt has been the senior pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia, since 1989. He and his wife, Terri, have two daughters. Michael blogs about ministry, revival, and the church at michaelcatt.com.

How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan (see page 178): Live Unashamed. Because believers' hope rests in Christ, they can approach the challenges of life with confidence.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO POLITICS?

The United States is divided over important issues. God calls His people to respond not based on emotion but with actions that honor the government and its leaders. A love for Christ and a love for others is to permeate every way we engage in and express ourselves in the political arena.

Mark Croston is the National Director of Black Church Partnerships for LifeWay Christian Resources. He also serves as the general editor for *YOU!*

WHY DO I NEED THE CHURCH?

Spirituality is not declining in America, but church affiliation or a connection with “organized religion” is. Even those whose spirituality is grounded in the tenets of Christianity may question the value of the church. The Book of Ephesians gives us great insight into the purpose of the church and shows us the benefits and opportunities that come from connecting with other believers. We do need the church—and the church needs us.

Chris James lives in the Boston area where he pastors and ministers to college students at UMASS Lowell. He is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He coauthored the study *Commit: Releasing the Hold of Reluctance*.

How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan (see page 178): Serve God and Others. As we deepen our understanding of God's call to the church we discover we aren't alone. Our service is enhanced—even multiplied—as we walk alongside and support one another.

1 | The Basis for Our Hope



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Florence Chadwick was a champion long-distance swimmer. She swam the twenty-one miles across the English Channel in 1950, and she did it faster than any other woman in history.

In 1952, she set her sights on a loftier goal: the twenty-six-mile route between Catalina Island and the California mainland. Through an oil leak, nausea, and fatigue she swam for more than fifteen hours. A heavy fog set in on the coastline, temperatures began to change, and Florence's breathing became labored. Since she couldn't see the shore, she feared she was swimming in circles and lost hope. The skilled athlete did something she had never done before: Florence gave up and asked to be pulled from the water.

She learned she had stopped half a mile short of her goal.

Like Florence, we too can lose hope. But the apostle Peter pointed to the sure hope we have in Christ. We may become weary and discouraged, but victory is much closer than we realize. It's all because of our hope in Christ.

GROUP TIME

THE POINT: Only _____ in Christ is sure and certain.

Peter had become one of the main leaders of the church after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension. His ministry was primarily to the Jews (Galatians 2:7-8), and Jesus had charged him to tend the flock by feeding and nurturing them (John 21:15-17). Peter's letter reflects his care for God's people. Peter loved these Christ-followers and wrote to encourage them not to give up, lose hope, or grow weary.

1 Peter 1:1-3 ¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...

Our hope is based on the death and _____ of Christ.

As we read through 1 Peter, it becomes clear these believers were facing opposition and suffering. Life wasn't all sunshine and rainbows for those who followed Christ. Nero was the Roman emperor at this time, and while he was known for his cruelty, Peter may have been writing before Nero's brutal opposition against Christians fully entered into the picture. Peter recognized that opposition would continue to intensify (1 Peter 4:12), and he wanted these men and women to be ready, holding fast to their hope in Christ.

Peter's message was a simple one: Christians have "a living hope" (1:3) because we place our hope in God. This "living hope" has been secured for us by Christ's finished work on the cross. It's not based on a positive mind-set, wishful thinking, or our striving to make things work. Living hope is rooted in the living Word (see 1:23), and it's ours because we've been chosen by God, saved by the death and resurrection of His Son, and set apart by His Spirit.

1 Peter 1:4-5 ⁴ ... and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵ You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Our hope is secure for _____.

Jesus' death and resurrection has secured for us a living hope now and forever. In verse 4, Peter described the inheritance that awaits each Christ-follower.

- ▶ **Imperishable.** The term *imperishable* describes a territory so secure that no invading force can destroy it. Israel had been overrun as a nation numerous times, but Peter assured these believers that would never happen to their salvation and inheritance.
- ▶ **Undeified.** This word relates to the purity of our inheritance. Our inheritance is thoroughly fire-resistant and in every respect unstained by the world. It is completely and wholly pure.
- ▶ **Unfading.** Our inheritance will never lose its glory. Other treasures may diminish in their appearance or value over time, but our inheritance in Christ will never grow dull, never become dim, never be destroyed, never fade.

THE SOURCE OF MY STRENGTH

What kinds of things apart from Jesus are you tempted to place your hope in? Circle your responses below.

Financial stability

My own ability to make wise choices

Good health

My job and future career advancement

My spouse and family

Other: _____

What words or phrases would you use to describe a hope placed in Jesus?

1 Peter 1:6-9 ⁶ You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials ⁷ so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Our hope is displayed through _____.

For the believers Peter was addressing, their present faith helped them endure the suffering they currently were facing, and their faith in the future. Their hope kept their hearts fixed on where Christ is seated in heaven with an everlasting inheritance for His saints.

DAY 1: Our hope is tied to our identity; we belong to God.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-3.

Peter's letter carried a message of hope. So why did these people need hope? The opening verses tell us. The Christ-followers were living as exiles, scattered all throughout the Roman Empire in northern Asia Minor (which is modern-day Turkey). Exile was often a form of punishment, but that wasn't the case for these believers. They were exiles and strangers because this world wasn't their home. For all of us who have placed our trust in Christ, this world isn't our permanent residence. We live as strangers and exiles because "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). We're headed for a better world than the one we now know.

The early Christians were facing religious persecution and suffering. In light of these trials, some of the believers perhaps wondered if they had fallen out of favor with God. Was the Christ-life worth it, and could they persevere in the midst of difficulty and strife? In answer to these questions, Peter reminded them of their identity: God had chosen them. They had been chosen by the Father and had experienced "the sanctifying work of the Spirit" (v. 2). God doesn't just call us to salvation, but He also gives us His Holy Spirit so that we might be sanctified—set apart to become more and more like Jesus. Understanding this identity would be crucial for Peter's initial readers as they lived out their faith in hostile environments.

Make a list of ways God has been faithful in the past. Place the list in a location where you are likely to see it in times of difficulty (e.g., computer screen, dashboard of car, and so on).

"Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful."

HEBREWS 10:23

DAY 2: Our hope is tied to the inheritance we anticipate.

Read 1 Peter 1:4.

After reminding his readers of their identity and purpose, Peter elevated their viewpoint and lifted their eyes to see that this living hope is kept in heaven. Our hope is secure for eternity. Nothing can diminish it, corrupt it, divert it, or destroy it. John Huss was a Bohemian priest who held to the truth of Scripture as his final authority. Before being burned at the stake for his beliefs in 1415 he wrote, “Our inheritance will never lose anything through age or sickness on our part, or any damage to itself; it will never be marred by impurity; and it will never lessen in its delight for having been enjoyed long.”¹

David wrote that the Lord Himself is our inheritance: “LORD, you are my portion and my cup of blessing; you hold my future. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance” (Psalm 16:5-6). He is the Living Word and our Living Hope, our inheritance reserved in heaven. As believers, we can look forward with anticipation to what God has in store for us.

In your Bible, underline the phrase “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” as a reminder of what we have to look forward to.



DAY 3: Our hope is tied to God's power.

Read 1 Peter 1:5.

Our hope is tied to the resurrection, and our security is tied to the power of God. Peter reminded believers that we are “guarded by God’s power through faith” (v. 5). This paints the picture of a fortress that has been built beyond any and all danger, constantly shielded and garrisoned by God. This same power protected the three young men in Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace (Daniel 3:16-30), guarded Daniel in the den of lions (6:10-23), and shielded Paul through shipwrecks, beatings, hunger, and imprisonment (2 Corinthians 11:24-28).

God’s power would keep the recipients of Peter’s letter during oppression and persecution—and it’ll keep us no matter what we face. These verses weren’t idle words from Peter; his hope was secure and he wrote from that firm conviction grounded in truth. We can rest in these same truths and stand firmly on the hope of Christ even when circumstances may tempt us to believe otherwise.

Find a few minutes today to embrace Sabbath rest. Take this opportunity to live out the truth that Christ’s work is complete.

DAY 4: Our hope enables us to persevere through trials.

Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.

At least fifteen times in this letter, Peter referred to godly people and their suffering. However, based on God’s power and our hope in Him, the righteous can rejoice even in the midst of whatever trials or suffering we are facing. In these verses, we see several characteristics of trials.

- ▶ **Trials vary in nature.** Trials come in all shapes and sizes.
- ▶ **Trials are temporary.** God allows us to go through the furnace, but as the refiner He controls the thermostat. Our trials are limited in the face of eternity.
- ▶ **Trials are difficult.** The phrase “you suffer grief” (v. 6) carries the idea of heaviness. The verb means to experience pain, grief, or distress. Trials are taxing, and they can drain us physically, emotionally, mentally, and relationally. Let’s face it: trials are tough!

As believers, we will face trials. Peter’s words ring clear with one message: we have a hope that’s greater than any trial we face.

Memorize 1 Peter 1:6-7 as a reminder of how God works in us during times of trial and suffering.

DAY 5: Our trials can forge in us a deeper faith.

Read 1 Peter 1:8-9.

Peter left his readers with two final reminders. First, trials have a purpose. Gold is refined by extreme heat in order to remove impurities and thus increase its value. A Christian is refined by God to be a reflection of His glory. God's refining process is intended to remove those things that keep us from being like Jesus, and this often occurs through the fires of suffering. If our faith can't be tested, then it can't be trusted, and trials forge in us a stronger faith.

Second, trials should result in rejoicing. The consummate glorious reality of our trials is the revelation of Jesus. One day we will see Him and know Him fully. We may not see Him in our trials, or we may think He is distant, but He is there. It will be worth it all when we see Him. Paul reminded the Corinthian believers, "our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17). And the same is true for us today!

Re-read 1 Peter 1, taking note of all the reasons you have to rejoice. Record these in the space below and praise God for these things.

*"Live in today's present
in light of tomorrow's promises."*

KELLY MINTER