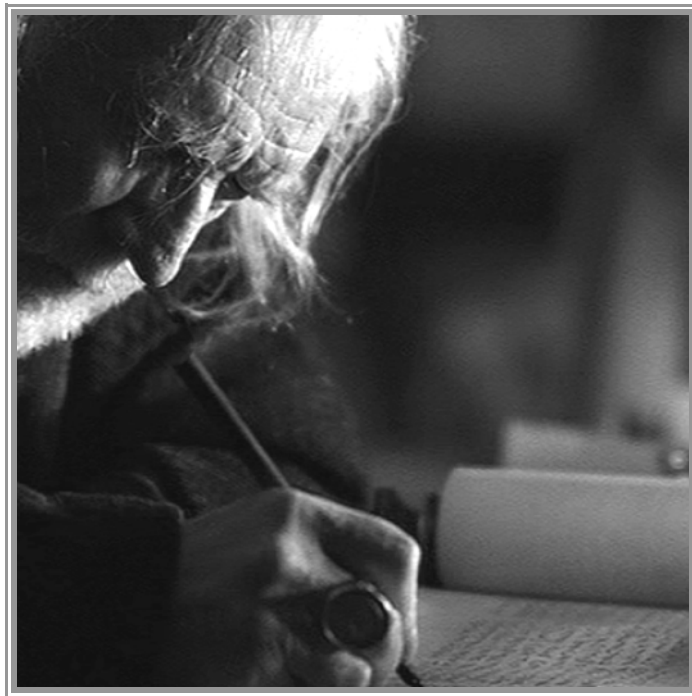


# THE WRITINGS OF PETER



STUDY 2

1 PETER 2

*Sunday Morning* Bible Study

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# THE WRITINGS OF PETER

## STUDY 2 ~ 1 PETER 2

**Introduction** – Last week we began our study of Peter’s writings by hitting some highlights of 1 Peter chapter 1. We spoke of how Peter’s letter to the churches that had taken root in Asia Minor was intended to instruct Christians who were being persecuted.

**To the people 2,000 years ago** that had spread throughout the area of modern day Turkey, they were considered complete strangers. In a geographic sense, they were exiles, having fled the intense abuse they were under in their home towns. In a cultural sense they were foreigners to the lifestyles they were exposed to in Asia Minor. In a spiritual sense, they were nonconformists to the immoral religious practices of the nationals surrounding them. For these Christians, the whole world was against them. *The teaching of the Holy Spirit through Peter to these people was clear:*

### HOLD FAST

**HOLD FAST** to Who They Were in Christ (remember, and think on, the truth of your identity as Christians and who you really are)

**HOLD FAST** to Their Holy Lifestyle in Christ (give no reasons for accusation based on unholy behavior)

**HOLD FAST** to What They Had in Common with Christ (Christ told Christians they would suffer because of Him just as He suffered; yet He ministered to others in spite of opposition and we must also minister in spite of hostility)

**The instruction for us today is the same when we come under fire for practicing our relationship with Christ:**



## **HOLD FAST**

**HOLD FAST** to Who We Are in Christ

**HOLD FAST** to a Holy Lifestyle in Christ

**HOLD FAST** to What We Have in Common with Christ

**Turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 2.**

**While the bulk of chapter 1** focused on the Christian's salvation and who we are in Christ, most of chapter 2 instructs Christians on their behavior and their lifestyle in Christ. How Christians should treat each other and the image they portray to the world in order to not give the world a reason to attack the believer other than for alignment with Jesus Christ. Additionally, God still intends to attract unbelievers to Himself through the love and unity of Christians even in hostile world environments.

**1 Peter 2:1-3**

Therefore laying aside all malice [literally *desire to injure*], and all guile [*craftiness*], and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

**Laying Aside** The Greek word for “laying aside” (*apotithemi*) is the same word that Paul uses in *Ephesians 4:22* and is translated in that verse as “put off” where he speaks of taking off the old man’s behavior and putting on the new man’s behavior like a suit of clothes. Both Paul and Peter were challenging the Christian to match their outer behavior to what had happened to them on the inside the moment they were born again.

### ***Group Questions***

- What is hypocrisy? Acting differently on the outside than your true character on the inside.
- What hypocrisies in our outer actions would Peter be telling us to take off? Anything that doesn’t match our true identity in Christ which is marked by pure holiness.
- What affect does a Christian living a hypocritical life have on unbelievers? Most of us have heard the objection to being involved with Christians before: “I don’t want to have anything to do with those Christians, they’re all a bunch of hypocrites!” While this person may just be using an excuse to avoid Christ, the fact remains that if our words and actions don’t match up to the Holy Spirit who is sealed to our newborn holy soul/spirits, we are not attracting others to Christ.
- What do you tell a fellow Christian who is struggling in their commitment to Christ saying, “I’m not gonna do the church thing ‘cause I’m not gonna be a hypocrite.”? If they understand what Peter was telling them about their identity in Christ in chapter 1, and what has *really* happened to their soul and spirit, they ARE holy on the inside, and so not acting holy on the outside is more of a hypocrisy. Christians can easily be deceived by the left over emotional desires to indulge in the pleasures of the world and misinterpret those former desires for satisfaction as if it were the true them. But as we have seen in the Bible before, we must base our actions on the truth of His Word, and not on our feelings which constantly change. (*Remember*

**1 John 3:20** For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.)


- Why do moms tell their kids they have to have milk with their meal and not soda all the time? Milk helps a kid's body grow.
- Why does Peter tell Christians to desire the Word of God like a newborn baby craves milk? It is THE life sustaining thing in this world. These Christians' lives were in upheaval and they needed the solid, stable truth of God's Word to sustain them.
- Why do most Christians in our country not spend enough time reading and thinking about God's Word? Many of us are finding "counterfeit stability" in other things of this world and we are not under fire because of our faith, so we are comfortable and unmotivated to do anything differently. It's no wonder Christians enduring persecution in other countries today are praying that American Christians would come under fire for their faith so that it would ignite our passion for God.

### **1 Peter 2:4-10**

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed [*rejected*] indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively [*living*] stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

## Group Questions

- What is a priest? One who represented people to God and offered up sacrifices to God.
- Are all Christians priests? Yes. But Peter described Christians as belonging to a royal priesthood in that we have direct access to the Holy God and no longer must rely on a human priest to represent us to God.
- As priests, how should we represent Christ? In a holy way as Christ is and we truly are in our reborn spirits.

 **A Commentary Note on the Priesthood of the Believer** The whole priestly system of the Jews was typical. It was a shadow of which the body is Christ. The priests all prefigured the great Priest who offered "one sacrifice for sins" "once for all" (Heb. 10:10, 12). There is now no human priesthood. (See Hebrews 1:1 and throughout.) The term "priest" is indeed applied to believers (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6), but in these cases it implies no sacerdotal functions. All true believers are now "kings and priests unto God." As priests they have free access into the holiest of all, and offer up the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, and the sacrifices of grateful service from day to day. **Easton's Bible Dictionary** First Copyright © Ellis Enterprises, Inc., 1993 Easton, M. G. Ellis Enterprises

- How would you rate the "holiness" of your priestly behavior on a scale of 1 to 10?
- Does your lifestyle "show forth" your priesthood in Christ or do you look and sound just like someone who doesn't know Christ?

### 1 Peter 2:11-25

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation [*conduct or behavior*] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the

praise of them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. 18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop [*Overseer*] of your souls.

**Fleshly Lusts Which War Against the Soul** The habit patterns still contained on our physical brains actually war against the new found holiness of our born again soul and spirit. Paul also spoke of this struggle in **Galatians 5:16-17** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. At times this struggle between God's way of living life and our way can leave us feeling like spiritual schizophrenics. The key to changing our behavior is to change the way we think. Our thoughts must be saturated with God's truth in order to "reprogram" our thought patterns on our brains and the emotions attached to them.

**For believers "without a friend in the world",** it is imperative that they **HOLD FAST** to their relationship in Christ because even though it is the source of their persecution, it is also the source of their comfort, stability, and hope. If the only

thing unsaved people can complain about is that we are “Jesus freaks,” then Peter says we’re doing good! Because it’s actually part of God’s plan to silence fools who ignorantly reject God, by believers acting kindly, submissively, and in harmony with all others.

### *On the Worksheet*

1. Christians are to lay aside our **UNGODLY BEHAVIOR** just like taking off a coat and setting it aside.
2. When a Christian acts **UNHOLY** they are acting like a **HYPOCRITE** because their actions are not matching the holiness inside them.
3. Many American Christians are **COMFORTABLE** in our world and therefore do not crave **GOD’S WORD** as we should.
4. All Christians are **PRIESTS** before God and as such have direct **ACCESS** to Him and must **REPRESENT** Him well to unbelievers.
5. The Christian’s words and actions should **SILENCE** the opponents of our faith while **DRAWING** others to Christ.

**So for this week**, let’s represent Christ well and not hide our faith in Him. And if we are ridiculed or rejected for our faith, see it as a good thing and remember to:

## **HOLD FAST**

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