

1 PETER

Following Jesus in a fragmented world

WEEK 4

A Meeting Plan

Step 1 : Open by praying together.

Step 2: Get someone to read the passage aloud

Don't read in a rush, take your time. Pause at the full stops.

When the reading is done, sit still for a minute before the next step

Step 3 Questions and Phrases

If a word or phrase stood out to you when the passage was being read-share the word or phrase (but don't explain).

If you have a question that has come up, share that question. As people share their questions get someone to note them down, but don't answer them yet.

Step 4 : Get someone to read the passage again.

Step 5 : Discussion

Start a discussion of what you think you understand the passage to be saying and what you would love to know (the questions). Make sure everyone has a say and that you are actively listening to what other people are saying. Explore the questions and phrases, but you don't have to answer all of them.

If as a group you run out , there is a page of comments and questions for each passage on the next page.

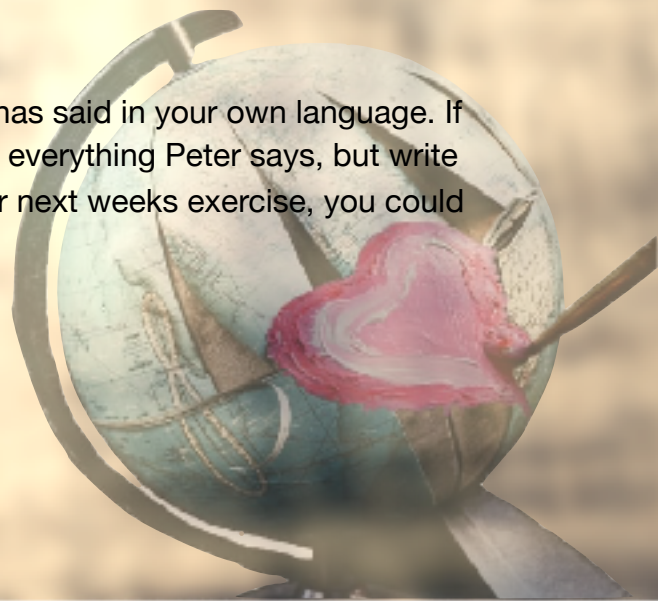
Step 5 : What connections does this make to your life ?

Now consider the week that has been, and the week that is to come. Does anything look different in the light of what you have talked about and read Can you see any connections ? Is there anything you think you might be being prompted to do ?

Step 6 : Pray for each other.

Step 7: Entirely Optional Homework

A really worthwhile exercise is to try writing what Paul has said in your own language. If you have time do this during the week. Don't try to say everything Peter says, but write what you would say in your own words. If you did it for next weeks exercise, you could share it together.



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1 Peter 3:13- 4:11

Discussion Notes

Paul has explained how we are to live: as people who show respect to those around us, even to those who disrespect us, mock us, or make us feel on the outside. That is who we actually are -those on the outside. We are the people who no longer participate in the way that the world lives. We are the strange ones (4:4) that live by a different standard. Have you felt on the 'outside'?

The New York columnist, David Brooks, says that we live within a culture of the 'Big Me'. This is characterised by statements like: Follow your passion... Don't accept limits... Chart your own course... Live your Dream... It is easy to hook into this mindset. Why is that?

Peter describes a model that is so different from the Big Me culture. We are to do good no matter what. And when we suffer for what is right, we are blessed (3:14). It sounds a bit like Jesus when he gave us the beatitudes ("Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" Matt. 5:10).

The Gospel culture turns everything on its head - the first will be last... the greatest will be the servant of all... the weak are strong... - and it calls us to walk towards suffering just as Jesus did (4:1). What does this mean for us on a day by day basis?

Jesus is our example, but he is more than that because only he could do what he did. Jesus, the righteous one, died for the unrighteous (3:18). That's us! And all before us and after us. It is the resurrection of Jesus, symbolised by baptism that saves us. Jesus won the victory! He gave us his righteousness. "And now Christians, ... share in the security of belonging to Christ, whose suffering ended in glory" (Thompson).

