

Embracing Peter's First Letter - Overview

Class Overview {5 classes, 1 a day, Monday to Friday}

Each 50-minute class will have two 25-minute parts:

Part 1 - Norm

- Introduction
- Chapter reading (ESV)
- Comments on the text

Part 2 - Group

- Work on Your Study and Action Notes questions — individual
- Discuss your work — small groups
- Write discussion highlights in the group's notebook (optional)

Chapter Themes

Chapter 1 - *We have been born again* (v. 3, 23)

A complete & cleansing start before God

Chapter 2 - *You are a royal priesthood* (v. 9, 5)

A privileged status & assignment already given

Chapter 3 - *Likewise you wives ... likewise you husbands* (v. 1, 7)

Core working relationships {cf. servants, elders}

Chapter 4 - *Rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings* (v. 1, 13)

Critical partnership & continuance with Christ

Chapter 5 - *And after you have suffered a little while* (v. 10, 9)

God will himself restore, establish and strengthen you

Embracing Peter's First Letter - Introduction

Approach

A dictionary definition of the verb **embrace** [from the Latin *im-* in + *brachium*, an arm] is 1. to clasp in the arms lovingly; hug 2. to accept readily. 3. to take up, as a profession. 4. to encircle. 5. to include; contain.

Embrace is an excellent word to use when coming together to this Bible School. We are here to read, discuss, accept and apply the content, meaning, purpose and lessons of *The First Letter of Peter*. I will use the definition in the following ways:

- as a believer, *readily accept* Peter's letter as divinely inspired; this *includes clutching* its content and meaning to my heart
- as a Bible student, *take up the task of studying* the letter; this *entails determining how it fits* with his second letter and other Scripture
- as a teacher, *unite us in the joint exercise* of reading and discussing the text; this *includes writing down* your own thoughts and ideas to share.

Writer

Peter was one of the three apostles selected by Jesus to come with him on special occasions. Jesus also picked Peter to be the initial leader of the church in Jerusalem and the one who brought the message of salvation to Gentile Cornelius.

Peter experienced the fierce reaction of the Jewish authorities and knew the fear of being *imprisoned and scheduled for execution the next morning*. So when he wrote about believers *being persecuted for their taking a stand for Christ*, Peter spoke from firsthand participation.

Setting

When he writes to the "*elect exiles*" in Asia, Peter appears to step into the opening left by the death of the apostle Paul. Intensified by emperor Nero in Rome, *Christians are now persecuted by both the Jews and Gentiles*.

As a source of exhortation, Peter can draw from his *personal instruction and encouragement from Jesus the master*. Peter also pulls from the *writings of his fellow apostles* and quotes from foundation passages written by *the OT prophets*.

Building on the their status as born-again believers and a royal priesthood, Peter addresses the working relationships of servants, wives, husbands and elders. All those situations are considered in the context of their being "exiles".

Suffering for the name of Christ "for a little while" is a necessity. Jesus established the example for his disciples to "*follow in his steps*". *By behaving the same way as their Lord*, believers "*die to sin*" and "*live to righteousness*".