

connect360

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Hunger for Holiness

LIVING PURE IN AN IMPURE WORLD

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Tom Howe

Dustin Slaton

Jonathan Sullivan

Ed Jordan



GC2
PRESS

Dallas, Texas

Hunger for Holiness: Living Pure in An Impure World
Connect 360 Bible Study Guide

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How to Make the Best Use of This Issue

Whether you're the teacher or a student—

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. Overview the study. Review the table of contents and read the study introduction. Try to see how each lesson relates to the overall study.
3. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. (You'll see that each writer has chosen a favorite translation for the lessons in this issue. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translation chosen for that unit, of course.)
4. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the writer's comments. The comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible.
5. Read the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application.
6. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and they can also be used in the class session itself.

If you're the teacher—

Do all the things just mentioned, of course. As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. Here are some suggestions to guide your lesson preparation:

- A. In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents on pages 11-12 and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date each lesson will be studied.
 - If all your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
 - Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.gc2press.org under the “Teacher Helps” menu.
 - Develop a sticker with the lesson dates and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.
- B. Get a copy of the *Teaching Guide*, a companion piece to this *Study Guide*. The *Teaching Guide* contains additional Bible comments plus two teaching plans. The teaching plans in the *Teaching Guide* are intended to provide practical, easy-to-use teaching suggestions that will work in your class.
- C. After you’ve studied the Bible passage, the lesson comments, and other material, use the teaching suggestions in the *Teaching Guide* to help you develop your plan for leading your class in studying each lesson.
- D. Premium Commentary is now available for \$20 at www.gc2press.org. This in-depth commentary is a great resource for teachers.
- E. Teaching resource items for use as handouts are available for \$10 at www.gc2press.org. under the “Teacher Helps” tab.
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- G. You can receive the lesson preview each week by signing up for the *Baptist Standard* weekly newsletter at no cost. Sign up here. (www.baptiststandard.com/subscription/email).

Do you use a Kindle?

This Connect *360 Bible Study Guide*, along with several other studies, is available in a Kindle edition. The easiest way to find these materials is to search for "GC2 Press" and/or "BaptistWay" on your Kindle or go to www.amazon.com/kindle and do a search for "BaptistWay." The Kindle edition can be studied not only on a Kindle but also on your smartphone or tablet using the Kindle app available free from amazon.com/kindle.

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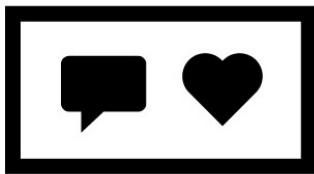
Introduction to GC2 Press

We've Changed Our Name!

BWP has now become **GC2 Press**. The name change reflects the alignment with our state convention's (BGCT) recently updated mission statement. **GC2** is a movement of God's people to share Christ and show love. Our driving passion is to follow the Lord's call to fulfill the Great Commission "to share Christ" and the Great Commandment "to show love." The Great Commission and the Great Commandment form the two "GCs," or GC2.

GC2 Press will continue to publish the undated **CONNECT 360** quarterly Bible study curriculum. **Connect 360** has gained a reputation for solid biblical teaching and will continue to be published as an undated quarterly study available in book form and/or digital downloads. **Connect 360** is currently being distributed in 38 states and 16 countries and has been translated into seven different languages.

For more information, please go to our website at www.gc2press.org.



GC2
PRESS

Introducing

Hunger for Holiness *Living Pure in An Impure World*

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

Background of 1 Peter

God formed a new community of people through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These people formed local communities in the geographical location of where they dwelled. Living out their faith constantly caused friction within the secular culture of the Roman Empire in the first century. When the church gathered, they were always asking pertinent questions. How do we live as people of God in a culture that is foreign to God's ways? What is our response during trials and tribulations?

First Peter is a letter written by one of the twelve disciples. Peter wrote this letter toward the end of his life. In 5:13, Peter indicated that he penned the letter in Babylon. There is much debate of the exact location. The letter was written toward the end of Peter's life, and it is believed Peter spent his last days in Rome; therefore, many choose Rome as the place the letter was written (in Revelation, Rome is referred to as Babylon). Peter wrote this letter to a collection of churches in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The letter encouraged this new community of Christ-followers to endure suffering, trials, and tribulations, because the salvation of God through Jesus Christ guarantees their future. Peter desired for the church to know that any suffering in this life is temporary. Therefore, a person should live a life of hope grounded in a past event that promises a future reality.

Dr. Chris Curran

Holiness in Our Day

The word “holy” is one of the most common words in the Bible, and yet is one of the most misunderstood words in our language. God has called us to be holy, but how many people want to be described that way?

There are many Bible words that describe the character and nature of God. We read that:

God is Light...God is Love...God is Merciful...God is our Shepherd...God is our Provider...God is our Healer...God is the Almighty One...And many more.

And then there is one word that describes the character and nature of God more than any other in the Bible:

God is HOLY.

Holiness is the primary attribute of God.

Holiness is conforming to the Character of God.

Holiness is essential for living as a stranger in a strange land.

Holiness is the absolute key to living *Pure in an Impure World*.

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Lesson 2	The Pursuit of Holiness	1 Peter 1:10-17
Lesson 3	The World’s Greatest Quartet	1 Peter 1:18-25
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Lesson 6	The Ministry of Suffering	1 Peter 2:18-25
Lesson 7	Marriage Made in Heaven	1 Peter 3:1-7
Lesson 8	Hope When Life is Unfair	1 Peter 3:8-17
Lesson 9	The Just for the Unjust	1 Peter 3:18-22
Lesson 10	Love Covers It All	1 Peter 4:1-11
Lesson 11	Rejoice in Suffering	1 Peter 4:12-19
Lesson 12	Dress for Success	1 Peter 5:1-6
Lesson 13	Standing Firm in the Faith	1 Peter 5:7-14

Additional Resources for the Study of 1 Peter¹

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NOTES

¹ Listing a book does not imply full agreement by the writer or GC2 Press with all its comments.

Hunger for Holiness

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lesson 1

Hope That Lives

MAIN IDEA

Because of Jesus we have help for today and hope for tomorrow.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Is my faith the real thing?

STUDY AIM

To understand that when the Bible uses the word hope, it is speaking of a certainty, not a possibility

QUICK READ

We have hope because God has allowed us to start over with a new birth, an inheritance of Heaven, and salvation that is secure and shielded by God.



Introduction

I officiated the funeral of a dear friend. His wife was one of the key church leaders and had been a faithful member for decades. Just before stepping out into the church, newly widowed, she grabbed my arm, turned to me, and asked, “is this real?” I misunderstood her question and nod and whispered, “yes, he is really gone.” She corrected me, “I know that; that is not what I mean. Is everything we believe real? Is faith real? Is there a Heaven and will there be a resurrection?” I was startled but replied, “yes” with a subtle nod. We did not have time for much else. Satisfied, she affirmed, “good, I thought so.” Sometimes, we need to have an examined faith to see if it is indeed real, and if it is based on the real thing. Peter wrote a general letter to the church to emphasize that we have a real hope based on a real Lord in all times, especially in difficult days.

Peter was writing to a church under increased persecution. The most severe persecution was still to come, but they were already being identified and marginalized as of the writing of 1 Peter. Peter, himself, was already in Rome where he and Paul would later be executed for the cause of Christ. In face of such persecution, Peter reminded his readers that God has a bigger purpose. This is not the world God created, it is tainted by sin. This is not the world God has waiting for His people. We are hopeful and anticipatory for what God will do. There will be a new Heaven and new earth. And even in this world, we can experience a newness of life when we put our hope in Christ.

1 Peter 1:1-9

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ²who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through

faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

A Permanent Hope (1:1-2)

We are strangers in this world. There are two terms in Greek for a non-resident. One means a temporary resident, traveler, or in a modern sense, a vacationer, usually translated “stranger.” The second means a permanent resident or an immigrant usually translated “alien” or “sojourner.” Peter used both terms through his letter: “strangers” in 1:1, “aliens” in 1:17, and “aliens and strangers” in 2:11. He used the terms to describe the very temporary life we have in this world compared to eternity. We are citizens of another world, God's Kingdom. Yet, if we are not careful, we can make the comforts of this world the priority over His Kingdom work in our lives and the world around us. In 2 Corinthians 5:1-2, the Apostle Paul also wrote of the temporariness of this world when he compared our earthly bodies as tents next to our heavenly bodies as eternal houses. Aliens and strangers do not have any power or privilege in a foreign land and never completely feel at home. Peter reminded Christians not to feel too “at home” in this world. We belong to a permanent world.

As strangers in this world, and holding onto a permanent hope, we walk in obedience to Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to continue doing a sanctifying work in us. There are three aspects of our salvation: past, present, and future. The three can be defined as our justification, our sanctification, and our glorification. We were justified in the past, are being sanctified in the present, and will be glorified in the future at the return of Christ. In the past, we were saved from the penalty of sin. In the present, we are being saved

from the power of sin. In the future, we will be saved for the mere presence of sin. Peter used a trinitarian concept of our being sanctified in this world in preparation for the world to come. We are chosen by God the Father, sanctified through the Holy Spirit for obedience to the Son.

First Peter 1:1 also indirectly gives a glimpse into God's plan to reach people when we see closed doors. Paul was kept from traveling through Asia, Bithynia, and Mysia. He had planned to go through that region, but the Holy Spirit would not let him and instead sent Paul to Macedonia to initiate the early church's European missions. Even though the book of Acts does not report who reached these areas, we know God had a plan to reach them. Peter addressed the churches in these areas, mentioning three by name: Galatia, Asia, and Bithynia. A glance at the maps in the back of your Bible would show that God indeed reached the churches Paul had planned to. God did it His way. We can have a permanent hope that God has a plan for us as well.

Aliens

There are more than a dozen verses in the Old Testament that give rules on how aliens, sojourners, immigrants, and foreigners are to be treated. Five notable verses are Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34; Numbers 15:15; and Deuteronomy 24:17-22. These are important verses because they are found in the part of the Bible that talks about when the Israelites were coming out of mistreatment in a foreign land (Egypt) and were sojourners as they wandered the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. They were told how to treat the aliens in their midst: do not mistreat them, treat them as native born, love them, and provide for them. They were also told why the aliens were to be treated this way: because Israel had once been aliens and they knew what it was like to be aliens. They were to be empathetic. Likewise, we should be empathetic to those around us who need Christ. Considering this lesson, we may know some around us that have no hope (for many reasons), can we have empathy for them in whatever they are going through?

A Living Hope (1:3)

Living Hope comes from two Greek words, *elpida zosan*. *Elpida* comes from *elpis*, which is the word for hope. It does not mean hope in the sense of some wishful option or uncertain possibility. Hope in a biblical understanding is a concrete certainty or an expectation of good, a confidence and trust in God's work and will. The greatest understanding of a Christian Hope is the expectation of eternal salvation. It is not "hoping we might receive a windfall of cash," instead, it is confidence in the hope that the sun will come up tomorrow, no matter what.

Zosan comes from the verb *zoa* which is to be made alive. *Zoa* is the same root word of the noun *zoe* (life). As a verb, it means to be living, animated, breathing, active, and vibrant; not lifeless or dead. Combined with hope, we have a living, breathing confidence in the work of God, not a dead, stagnant faith. We have an active, vibrant faith that leads to spiritual growth and action. The object of our faith, Jesus, is alive and is active in our world through the Holy Spirit.

We have a hope that is alive and that has an eternal reward and inheritance. It is fixed on a living Savior who loves us and will return for us. Let us flesh out a living hope regularly.

A Secured Hope (1:4-5)

People put their hope in power, beauty, fame, money, people, political causes, or a pursuit of pleasure or happiness. None of these will last beyond this temporary life. These "hopes" either fade or disappoint. Our hope provides an inheritance that will never perish, spoil, or fade. It is imperishable. We live in a perishable, fragile world, but our hope is indestructible. It will not spoil. It will not decay and crumble. It is unfading. It will always keep its pristine luster and beauty.

Our hope is secured and shielded by the power of God. Peter listed two ways God protects our hope. God secures it (holds it). We can imagine His firm grip securing it for us. There is no assurance, insurance, or guarantee on earth as secure as our hope in an eternal life. It is sealed by the Holy Spirit within us (Ephesians 4:30). The second action Peter mentioned is that God

is shielding our faith. He doubles the effort to demonstrate His care for us, by holding us and then covering us with His shield. No father on earth has held, protected, or secured his child as much as our Heavenly Father does. His power is the ultimate power. Nothing can wrestle us from His grasp and care. We can have a great confidence in what God has in store for us because He, Himself, is holding it for us despite the storms that swirl around us.

An Enduring Hope (1:6-9)

There is a term used in military, business, and even educational circles. We live in a VUCA world. VUCA stands for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous. The world is full of constant change that is hard or even impossible to understand at times. We may never fully comprehend the complexity of why things happen the way they do, or how we can anticipate what will happen next. There are too many causes of these changes to analyze and too many potential outcomes that can come from the many algorithms of the many change factors pressing on us and our surrounding. Yet, we can find one constant, Jesus Christ and place our enduring hope in Him. As the VUCA tempest storms around us, we have an anchor of truth in the One who is the Truth, the Way, and the Life. Our hope in Him can be permanent, living, and secured.

Even though we have this permanent, living, and secured hope, we may still suffer in this life. Christianity is not a problem-free guarantee, we are still aliens in this world after all. Suffering is a part of this world because we live in a sin-tainted creation. Peter would not do well on the prosperity-preacher circuit. He dealt with the painful but truthful reality that we may suffer trials. Jesus suffered and died for us; and it is unbiblical to suggest that as His followers, we would be given a cosmic magical charm to ward off all negativity, problems, or difficulties. Jesus said, “whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

Peter wrote that suffering adds to our faith. In fact, suffering is a crucible for faith. Suffering strengthens faith like growing muscles that have been worked and exercised. Suffering also will prove the genuineness of our faith, more precious than gold. The natural inclination is to avoid suffering, to run from it or flee it. In doing so, one may flee what God uses to grow us. Faith

in suffering develops and demonstrates endurance, perseverance, patience, and commitment. Faltering faith in the face of suffering can lead to any or all of the following: discouragement, sloth, apathy, anger, rage, selfishness, or emotional death, which leaves us vulnerable to Satan's tricks, temptation, and snares. Let us continue to grow and strengthen our faith and develop an enduring hope through all things in life.

Our faith is focused on the One we believe in, yet He is unseen. We trust Him and His purpose and plan for us. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (ESV). Paul adds, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). We are assured and confident of the one who is the object of our faith in all the suffering and difficult times. Verse 8 says though we have not seen Him, we believe in Him. One day, we will see Him, stand up and shout, "I believe in Him!" as we point to our returning Savior, "That's the one I have known all along." We are aliens, travelers, and sojourners in this world, just passing through the seen until the unseen is revealed. Hope and faith will be actualized and realized for us in the One whom we have believed!

Faith Greater Than Gold

Who do you think of when you hear the phrase, "faith greater than gold" (from verse 7)? Is there a godly saint in your church now? Or do you recall the face of a dear church or family member who demonstrated great faith in years gone by? Those spiritual giants and their faith provide so much hope for many Christians who watched their witness. Likewise, we all have the eyes of many looking at us. Let us also have a faith greater than gold so we too may inspire those in our lives.

Implications and Actions

Living in a VUCA world, we can lose focus on what truly matters and what is of the utmost importance. Let us put our full hope and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, even more so as the world around us becomes more challenging and frustrating or as we may experience marginalization as Christians or perhaps

even suffering. There are many things vying for our attention and even our hope: money, power, influence, beauty, fame, popularity, likes or subscribers in social media, but for Christians, our hope is built on Jesus and His eternal power. We must anchor ourselves to the One who provides eternal hope.

Questions

1. Do you ever feel like a stranger in this world? How do we live well in this world (considering we are pilgrims), while also focusing on eternal life?
2. Do you think of salvation more as a past experience or an ongoing reality or a future event? Discuss with others the differences.
3. In terms of having a living hope, what does it mean for your hope or faith to be animated, active, or vibrant?
4. God secures our hope. What are the most secured things in our lives? How are they secured? How does that compare to how God secures our salvation?

5. Take a little time and think. Can you think of and describe something that has been unseen and then come into reality? What was it? How did you feel after finally seeing the unseen? Our salvation is not fully realized yet. Discuss what it might be like to fully see all God has done for us.

6. Which aspect of hope is the most meaningful to you right now: 1. a permanent hope in a temporary world; 2. a living hope in a stagnant world; 3. a secured hope in a fragile world; or 4. an enduring hope through suffering and trials?