

Study Guide for the Week of August 31, 2008

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

This week we will study several passages from 1 Peter. Theologian David L. Bartlett in the New Interpreter's Bible writes about 1 Peter, "Language of exile and alienation is language that distinguishes the Christians who received this letter from the larger culture around them. It is that culture from which they emerged, but now they are a slandered minority, exiled as Israel was exiled to Babylon, strangers in a strange land (all the more strange because it used to be home)." Bartlett goes on to write, "The new life [of a Christian] is life in community, with emphasis on shared responsibility, shared worship and shared identity as a 'chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people' (2:9 NRSV). Those who seem to outsiders to be barely legal immigrants who snuck over the border to stir up trouble, are really citizens in the only country that counts and members of the family that nurtures and endures." This letter has much to teach us today as we consider what it means to build bridges in today's society.

Monday, September 1. Read 1 Peter 1:3-12 in the New Testament. In this passage there is promise for new life in the midst of suffering and division (see 1:6-7). What are the divisions that you see in society around you? In the midst of these divisions, what gives you hope?

Tuesday, September 2. Read 1 Peter 2:1-10 in the New Testament. These verses remind us that we are a people set aside by God to "declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (2:9 TNIV). What do these verses say to you about the role that Christians are to have in the world? Does this make a difference in the way you are living your life?

Wednesday, September 3. Read 1 Peter 3:8-17 in the New Testament. In the first few verses of this passage, we find clear guidance about living in relationship to others. Read verse 9 again. How have you failed to live out this guidance lately? What must you change to live out this guidance well? We also read two verses about the possibility of suffering. Read verse 14 & 17 again. In what ways could you possibly suffer for doing what is good or right? How do these verses make you feel?

Thursday, September 4. Read 1 Peter 4:1-11 in the New Testament. How do the first 4 verses apply to the temptation to accommodate to our society? The final verse in this passage encourages us to live in a way that trusts God for our actions and our speech. How does it feel to be reminded that "If you speak, you should do so as one who speaks the very words of God"? How do your actions and your language speak or not speak for God?

Friday, September 5. Read 1 Peter 5:6-11 in the New Testament. The first few verses remind us that we can be a bridge in our society more easily if we bring ourselves to conversations with humility. Our culture is one that is often full of temptations. What do these verses say about resisting temptation? In what ways can you rely on God?