



Timeless

Leader's Guide

Timeless

The Living and Enduring Word of God

Leader's Guide

Introduction

Thank you so much for joining me on this exhilarating journey into the life and writing of Peter. I believe as you lead this study, your life will be enriched beyond measure, and you will fall in love with the Word of God all over again. Know that as you lead others, the Holy Spirit is leading you.

Before we begin to prepare for “Timeless,” would you allow me to pray for you?

“Lord Jesus, we love You so much. I thank for this precious leader who is offering her time, her heart, and her Godly wisdom for those she will be leading. I pray that the Holy Spirit would give her even greater revelation into the Word of God than this study presents. Father God, we thank You for the Bible and for the eternal truth contained therein. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.”

Now – let’s begin!

Preparation for the Journey

As you prepare to lead your group, these suggestions may help you to present each session with wisdom and enthusiasm:

- Pray daily for those in your group. Pray that the Holy Spirit would speak to each woman under your watch and that the Word of God would come alive in her heart. I often write each participant's name on a 3 x 5 card along with specific prayer requests she might have.
- Watch the video teaching before the session so you are fully prepared to answer questions and to lead the discussion in a meaningful and thorough manner.
- Don't be afraid to say "*I don't know*" or "*I don't have that answer*" to the questions that are posed by the women in your group. Assure them, however, that you will try to find an answer to any heartfelt and sincere questions. Also, please feel free to e-mail me if you are unable to find an answer. My e-mail is carol@carolmcleodministries.com.
- Begin and close every class with prayer. As you get to know the women, ask one of them to pray at appropriate times. Most women love to stay involved and participate in some manner.
- Assure the women that the group is a confidential group and they are safe to share what is on their hearts. This is especially important as we study the section on marriage and submission. More about that later.
- Not everyone will feel comfortable sharing answers or personal information. One of the most important jobs for you, as the group leader, is to allow each woman a zone of complete comfort and understanding. Remind the women often they are welcome to share with you personally. Give them your e-mail address so they can reach out to you.
- Come to every session prepared with a box or two of tissues! Women are emotional beings and often the Holy Spirit is at work cleansing hearts and the process may be a tearful one. This is yet another one to include group members to participate in the group – assign different ones the job of being "tissue chairwoman" each week.
- I have found it is often helpful to ask a very general question before doing a deep dive into the questions in the lesson. Some of these more general questions might be:
 - What are you thankful for this week?
 - Have you ever experienced a miracle? Tell us about it.
 - What is your favorite worship song or hymn?
 - What woman has impacted your life most greatly?
 - What do you love the most about serving the Lord?
 - Do you have a favorite Bible verse?

- My suggestion for the agenda of your class time is this:
 - Welcome the women and pray. (2-3 minutes)
 - Share a short, personal illustration. (2 minutes)
 - Go over a few questions from the prior week. This, of course, won't begin until your second class. (10 minutes)
 - Watch the video. (30 minutes)
 - Discuss the video as a class. Have a few questions prepared for the class. (10-15 minutes)
 - Introduce them to what they will be reading the following week. (5 minutes)
 - Have someone close in prayer. (2 minutes)
 - Be sure that you are available after class to talk individually to the women.
- As you read through the book and ponder the daily questions, it is a beneficial practice for you, as the leader, to write out or highlight the questions that highly resonate with you in your personal study of I Peter. You can use these influential questions in the group discussion.
- It is important for you to lead by example, so make sure that you are memorizing the weekly treasure verse. As I often say, "Memorizing scripture is not just for Fifth Graders!" You will be amazed at the difference scripture memorization will make in your life.
- I have also included notes for each video teaching which may enhance your group's understanding of the study. These are certainly optional, but you may want to copy them and hand them out either in totality at the beginning of the Bible Study or before each individual session.
- And finally, although you should not do all the talking in a group session, do be vulnerable. Share your strengths as well as your weaknesses.

Important Note

Several times during this Bible Study, I am careful to tell women not to stay in an abusive marriage. As you will quickly realize, Peter, with the help of the Holy Spirit, tackles some complicated relationship issues. You, as the leader, should offer yourself as a safe listener for the women in the class. If you are not comfortable with this role, ask the Pastor or his wife for a recommendation of someone who could come to the aid of a woman who is in an abusive marriage, is married to a man with unhealthy addictions, or is cruel to her. Be prepared also to have phone numbers of local shelters or counselors for the women who might need additional help or counseling.

"Focus on the Family" houses a database of Christian counselors across the nation.
<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/counseling-services-and-referrals/>
The National Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24 hours a day: 800-799-7233.

Session 1: Follow Me!

SHORT - BUT VITAL - INTRODUCTION

Every week's introductory session will be important but none more so than this first week. Make sure that you welcome everyone by name, have a short question for each woman to answer and look them in their eyes as you warmly greet them.

If your group is too large for the above activity, have them share the answer to the question with 2-3 others around them. One of the greatest benefits of a women's Bible Study is the friendships that develop; you must be the one who sets the atmosphere in which these friendships are cultivated.

You might want to comment that a large part of Carol's teaching this week focuses on Peter, the ordinary fisherman who wrote this timeless book in the Bible. These are some appropriate questions that reflect the focus that Carol places on the personhood of Peter:

1. What were Peter's strengths and what were his weaknesses?
2. Can you relate to Peter in anyway like Carol can?
3. What are the prerequisites that the Lord might look for before He uses a person?
4. Who is your favorite disciple?

VIDEO DISCUSSION

- After you watch the video as a group, perhaps you could have the women share what they believe to be the theme of this first video.
- Peter identifies the reader as "chosen" and as an "alien". These two words are a rich part of your identity in Christ. How can you apply these two words, and their meanings, to the manner in which you live for Christ?
- I Peter 1:2 presents the job descriptions of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it also presents the job description of the believer. What is our assignment?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to obey the principles and instructions in Scripture?
- What has been the most difficult instruction found in the Bible for you to obey?
- What Biblical instructions have been easy for you to obey?

- What is your definition of the word “obedience”?
- How do you respond to Carol’s teaching of this principle, “What God deems as sin will never change through the ages of humanity. God’s no is not a soft no—it is a definitive absolutely not.”
- What will be your one take-away from today’s video teaching?

GROUP DYNAMICS

Group dynamics can be so challenging at times, can’t they? In each week’s Leader’s Guide, I will offer a coaching tip on how to handle some of the challenges that might appear in your group.

There will always be people who talk too much and those who never talk. From the very first session, set some healthy boundaries for the discussion.

- Remember there are a lot of us, and it is important that not one person dominates the conversation. Leave time for others to share. Please don’t be offended if I gently interrupt you so that others have a change to share their insight.
- Some of you are “Chatty Cathy’s” while others might be more introverted. However, we really would like everyone to have a chance to share over the next 9 weeks. Sometimes the richest insight comes from the most reticent among us. If you absolutely do not want to be called upon to share, that is fine. Just let me know. However, I am praying that you each will have the courage to share with the group what the Lord is teaching you.
- One more healthy boundary – let’s not be negative. Certainly there will be lessons in this Bible Study that we might not understand or have a different point of view concerning, but let’s save those comments for private conversations with me, as the leader. It’s fine to ask questions and to wonder out loud, but let’s not critique or criticize.

CLOSING THE SESSION

It’s always important to “lighten things up” during the closing moments of the weekly discussion. We deeply desire for the women to leave Bible Study certainly thoughtful and challenged but also encouraged with the hope of scripture.

In today’s closing comments, remind the women of the sweetness and power of the words, “charis” which means grace and “eirene” translated as hope. Review what these two words mean and how these words are able to change each of our lives. God is the best gift-Giver of all time

and therefore He knew exactly what we would need to travel through life as an alien – we need charis and we need eirene!

This is also a perfect time to discuss exactly what it means to be born again (I Peter 1:3-4). You might want to lead the group in a salvation prayer or encourage them to be praying for others in their lives who need to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Encourage the women to memorize the weekly scripture and to share it with someone this week.

CLOSING PRAYER

Encourage the women to read over the daily prayers from the week. Choose one of the women to read one of the prayers out loud in closing. As the women leave, be available at the door to encourage each one to return the following week, to bring a friend and to stay in touch. Have trusted leaders engaging the women in conversation and praying as needed.

Session 1: Follow Me!

Peter the Man:

Matthew 4:18-20

Walked on water

Matthew 16:22

John 18:10

Matthew 26:69-75

Background:

I Peter 1:1

Chosen – "eklektos"

“ek” and “lego”

Alien – "paroikos"

I Peter 1:2

3 Job descriptions:

What is my job description?

Grace – "charis"

Peace – "eirene"

I Peter 1:3-4

Worship

Born again

Living Hope – "zao"

I Peter 1:5

Protected

Session 2: Inexpressible Joy!

INTRODUCTION

Have worship music playing as the women enter this time of Bible Study. I always love to set an atmosphere of worship, friendship, and warmth. Introduce women to one another and make each woman feel like a valuable member of this community. If the group is too large for you to greet each woman, ask others to help you with this task.

You might begin by asking the women what they learned about Peter in the first week's reading material. Encourage them to share some adjectives that might describe Peter before he experienced the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Then, discuss the man Peter became after the Resurrection and Pentecost. Share some adjectives that describe the "new" Peter.

This discussion should encourage everyone that change is possible in all our lives and in the lives of those we love. Perhaps spend a minute or two in silent prayer as you pray for that change to be a reality in the lives of the women in this Bible Study and in the lives of those they care about.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

As soon as the video is completed, read I Peter 1:6-9 out loud.

"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

Some possible discussion questions for these anchor verses might be:

1. What is your definition of the word "joy"?
2. What is your definition of the word "rejoice"?
3. Why does Peter command us to rejoice in the distress of trials? Is this even possible?
4. Discuss the Greek word "agalliao" and the places it is used in Scripture.
5. Why is rejoicing a faith issue?
6. Is there another verse in scripture that references this same practice of rejoicing in a trial?

This week's video is so filled with truth and with unique lessons that it will be challenging to choose a certain theme for the week. Perhaps you could ask the women to share what their main take-away from today's teaching might be. Some of these themes are:

- Joy and rejoicing in a trial.
- Choosing to rejoice is a faith issue.
- Sharing our faith for the generations to come.
- Angels gasp in amazement as you and I tell the story of Jesus.
- Girding your minds for action.

Perhaps a good way to close the discussion is to talk about girding one's mind for action and asking the women to share Bible verses that address a particular mental challenge they might face.

GROUP DYNAMICS

If a group member is talking too much or monopolizing the discussion time, you must gently interrupt her or perhaps talk to her after class. If you do talk to her after class, let her know how much you have enjoyed her insight and enthusiasm but that as the leader of the group, you must make a space for everyone to have the opportunity to share. Then, encourage her to help you greet people as they come in or as they leave. All small groups need extroverts!

Conversely, if there is a woman who never speaks up, talk to her after class or give her a call during the week. Ask her if she would be comfortable for you to call upon her during the class time to pray or to share a response to a question. If she is not comfortable, that is fine but see if she would be willing to help in other ways. Perhaps she would bring snacks, help set up or help to clean up or bring the tissues one week.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask the women to share their favorite hymn or worship song with the group. Encourage them to default to worship this week as they encounter various challenges. Let them know you will be praying for each of them to have the courage to share their faith with someone in their family this week.

“Lord Jesus, we love You so much and we thank You for the truth that You have written in this wonderful portion of Scripture. Father God, I pray that You will stir up the song in our hearts this week and that we will rejoice even during days of deep pain and trials. I also pray that You will give these sweet women – my sisters in Christ – the boldness to share the Gospel story with those that they love. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.”

Session 2: Inexpressible Joy!

I Peter 1:6-7 "agalliao"

Mary – Luke 1:47

Jesus – Matthew 5:11 – 12

James 1:2-3

I Peter 1:8

“aneklaetos” – Inexpressible or Unspeakable

Full of glory!

I Peter 1:10 – 12

Prophets

David – Psalm 22:1, 16-18

Isaiah – Isaiah 53:5,9

Angels

“parakypso” – stooping down and intently studying

I Peter 1:13

Therefore ...

Gird up the loins of your minds for action ...

Philippians 4:6

Philippians 1:3-4

“Keep sober” – “nepho” – to be calm and collected in spirit

Will I embrace hope or will I give in to despair?

Will I worship or will I worry?

Will I tell the story of Jesus or will I focus on my own pain?

Will I gird up my mind or will I allow it to run wild?

Will I stay sober or will I panic?

Session 3: Imperishable Love!

INTRODUCTION

As you begin this week's session, be prepared to share of a time when you obeyed the Lord even though it was difficult. It is important as a leader to show your vulnerability. Maybe you could share what some of your weaknesses have been through the years and how your love for Jesus has trumped those passions and desires.

Before you watch the video, share a scripture or two that talks about holiness. Ask the women what their definition of the word "holiness" is. Reference some hymns or worship choruses that use the word "holy" and remind them of the holy nature of our God.

You might want to say this before you watch the video today, "*One of the interesting themes of today's lesson is holiness. Carol states in her teaching, "Holiness is the architectural plan upon which God is building His temple." What do you think about that statement? What are some other foundational characteristics that God is working in you – because you are His temple.*"

VIDEO DISCUSSION

One of the aspects that I deeply desire for the women to understand is that holiness is not legalism. Discuss the difference between these two words and how we can become holy without also becoming legalistic.

Another word that Carol spent time discussing in this video is the word "fear". What does it mean in a practical sense to fear God? Remind the women that the verse that references fear is I Peter 1:17. Discuss the difference between healthy fear and paralyzing fear. What are some of the benefits of having a healthy fear of the Lord?

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth. (1 Peter 1:17)

The third word discussed in this lesson is the word "redeemed" as found in I Peter 1:18-19.

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Have the women discuss what the word "redeemed" means and why it is important to understand the power of redemption in our lives. What were we redeemed from? What were we redeemed to?

Carol stated in her teaching today that, “Jesus was always the plan.” Isn’t that a wonderful and comforting truth to think about? She used this phrase in reference to I Peter 1:20.

*For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world,
but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you. (1 Peter 1:20)*

What does it mean to know that Jesus came “for the sake of you”? As women, we do so many things “for the sake of others”, but Jesus came to earth just for you.

Carol ends today’s teaching with the anchor verse for this Bible Study.

*For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is,
through the living and enduring word of God. For, all flesh is like grass, and all its glory
like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off,
but the word of the Lord endures forever.
And this is the word which was preached to you. (1 Peter 1:23-25)*

Now would be an appropriate time to address the importance of believing that the Bible is God’s inspired Word and that it never changes. Discuss the adjectives in the above verses that describe the Word of God: imperishable, living, enduring.

GROUP DYNAMICS

It’s always a challenge for me when group members change the topic, go on an extensive rabbit trail, or even say something inappropriate. As the leader of the group, you must be bold enough – yet also kind enough – to tackle these awkward conversational issues.

Perhaps today would be a good day to remind your beloved group members that during the discussion, it is your goal, to only talk about the verses from this week and how we can apply them in a practical sense to our lives. All other conversations should take place before or after Bible Study.

I always try to have the women laugh at me rather than feel targeted in anyway. So, you might say something like this, “Oh my! How I love rabbit trails ... just ask my husband, my mom, my best friend, and my children! I am an expert at traveling down rabbit trails.” And then let the women know you will do everything possible – short of denying the guilty ones their daily coffee – to keep the discussion focused.

One of my sayings in life is, “Leaders lead.” My friend ... you are the leader so lead lovingly yet courageously.

CLOSING PRAYER

Before you pray, read this quote to the women:

“When God comes streaming into our lives in the power of His Word, all He asks is that we be stunned and surprised, let our mouths hang open, and begin to breathe deeply.” – The Rabbi’s Heartbeat

I love to pray the Word of God over my life and over the situations I encounter. Choose a scripture or two to pray out loud over the women today. Encourage the women to search for scriptures in the Bible that give them strength and hope and add these scriptures to their prayer time.

Session 3: Imperishable Love!

Holiness

John 14:21

I Peter 1:14

I Peter 1:15

"gadosh" – apartness, holiness, sacredness

"hagios" – to live a life without sin, to be blameless, separated from anything unclean

Fear

I Peter 1:17

Proverbs 16:6

Redeemed

I Peter 1:18-19

I Peter 1:20

For the sake of you ...

I Peter 1:21

Love

I Peter 1:22

Romans 5:8

John 13:34-35

Babies!

I Peter 1:23 – 25

*I declare today and every day the Word of God will win in my life.
I will lay down my temporary agenda for the enduring cause of Jesus Christ.*

Session 4: Pure Milk of the Word

INTRODUCTION

This week we will talk about the trash that accumulates in our hearts and the smell that it produces. If you have the budget to do so, why don't you give away a fragrant candle this week to someone in the group who has a birthday or anniversary?

It's easy to look at what some might consider the "big" sins of life such as murder, grand larceny, arson, or adultery, and believe that our "smaller" sins are not so bad. But Peter addresses those internal, less obvious sins in this week's lesson and call us to put them aside.

Another creative way to make this lesson come alive would be to come to class with an obviously dirty shirt on or wearing muddy shoes. You can then illustrate the importance of putting aside these garments and living a sincere life for Christ.

You might also want to have a very large rock or stone sitting at the front of the class as a visual for our discussion on "living stones".

VIDEO DISCUSSION

Spend some time in this week's lesson talking specifically about the power of the Word of God in an ordinary life. Have some of the women share a favorite scripture or a time when the Bible gave them wisdom or comfort. You can never talk too much about the Word of God!

You also might want to reference the objects, people or events that are precious in our lives. Define the word "precious" and talk about the relationship that Jesus the Son has with God the Father. Then, move on to the conversation about exactly what a "living stone" might be. List the 4 characteristics of a living stone and discuss each one.

- A living stone is a miracle!
- A living stone is a rock of abundance.
- A living stone provides water in the wilderness of life.
- A living stone cries out in worship to the Lord

A major discussion in this lesson should focus on what it means to be a "royal priesthood" and the offerings we are to bring to the Lord.

- Bring your life to the Lord.
- Love others even when it is difficult.
- Financial sacrifices
- A sacrifice of praise

GROUP DYNAMICS

Every small group has a “climate” by which it is known. Group climate refers to the relatively enduring tone and quality of group interaction that is experienced similarly by group members. Climate has also been defined as “group morale”.

You, as the leader, are largely responsible for ensuring the group has a positive, encouraging, and unified climate. Here are some ways you can create a healthy and hopeful group climate:

- Participation. Group members experience personal value when they are included in discussion.
- Encouragement. Encourage those who share with a positive word of affirmation either in class or with a text or e-mail later in the week.
- Equity. This is perhaps the most difficult one of all. Group members also like to feel as if participation is managed equally within the group and that appropriate turn taking is used.
- Clear and accepted roles. Group members like to know who is in charge and who is helping the one in charge lead the group.
- Motivation. Make sure that you lead the group in a timely, positive manner. Members will stay motivated to attend if they feel connected and if they feel safe.

What type of climate do you want to create in your group? Work hard at creating it, pray for the Holy Spirit to help you create it and enlist a few leaders within the group to help you work toward your desired end.

CLOSING PRAYER

Before you pray this week, read this quote out loud:

*“Prayer lays hold of God's plan and becomes the link
between his will and its accomplishment on earth.
Amazing things happen, and we are given the privilege
of being the channels of the Holy Spirit's prayer.” — Elisabeth Elliot*

Have 3x5 cards available for the group on which to write a prayer request to exchange with a prayer partner this week.

Choose someone in the group to close in prayer.

Session 4: Pure Milk of the Word

Trash

I Peter 2:1

Malice

Deceit

Hypocrisy

Envy

Babies

I Peter 2:2-3

Psalm 34:8

Stones

I Peter 2:4

Precious – “entimos” – held in honor, prized, precious

I Peter 2:5

1 – A Living Stone is a miracle!

2 – A Living Stone is a rock of abundance

Numbers 20:11

3 – A Living Stone provides water in the wilderness.

Isaiah 48:21

4 – A Living Stone worships the Lord.

I Peter 2:6 – 8

II Peter 3:9

Who YOU are...

I Peter 2:9

The Sacrifices of the Royal Priesthood:

Your life – Romans 12:1

Love for others – Ephesians 5:1-2

Finances – Philippians 4:17-18

Worship – Hebrews 13:15

Session 5: Winning the Battle

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, we continue to discover what the Bible has to say about our identity. For an ice-breaker, to begin the lesson and to facilitate discussion, have the women make a list of all the ways they are known by others. Some ideas might be:

- Mother
- Wife
- Grandmother
- Teacher
- Aunt
- Sister
- Daughter
- Friend
- Encourager
- Servant
- Widow
- Single

After each woman makes her list, assure them that their true identity comes from the One who created them. We discover who we are on the sacred pages of scripture.

Also remind the participants that with each term of identity, we are also assigned a job that matches the identity. Have them evaluate what the specific job assignment is for each identity they have written down.

Then, also remind your sisters in the Lord that we discover our true job description in the Bible as well.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

Begin the group discussion by asking them what they thought of the quote by Charles Spurgeon which states, “Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.”

You could ask the participants these questions concerning this quote:

- Do you agree with it?
- Which one are you?
- There are different ways of being a missionary. How are you fulfilling the role of being a missionary?

You could also share this quote with your group as they discuss their role in world Missions:

“There are only three kinds of Christians when it comes to world missions: zealous goers, zealous senders and the disobedient.” – John Piper

Now turn the discussion to the Greek word, “exangello” which means “to make known by praising, proclaiming or celebrating”. It can also mean “to make much of”. Some follow up questions concerning this powerful word might be:

- How have you made Christ known by your daily example?
- How have you made Christ known with your words?
- What does it mean to “make much of” Jesus Christ?

I Peter 2:11 is a pivotal verse in today’s lesson so be sure to spend some time discussing its implications. Here are some possible questions:

- Why does Peter call the people to whom he is writing, “beloved”?
- What does it mean to be a “stranger” or an “alien”? Why is it important to realize that this identification is vital for us to know?
- Why did Peter use the word “urge” or “beseech” in this verse?
- What is a “fleshly lust”? Perhaps have the women privately identify any fleshly lusts with which they deal.
- Why is it important to know that fleshly lusts wage war against one’s soul?

GROUP DYNAMICS

Most experts in group dynamics understand that there are some personalities that will inevitably become a burden rather than a blessing in a small group setting. These personalities are identified as:

- **The aggressor:** this person often disagrees with others, or is inappropriately outspoken.
- **The negator:** this group member is often critical of others' ideas.
- **The withdrawer:** this person doesn't participate in the discussion.
- **The recognition seeker:** this group member is boastful, or dominates the session.
- **The joker:** this person introduces humor at inappropriate times.

You, as the leader, need to have a Godly and wise strategy to deal with each challenging personality. I have re-listed the negative personality traits below, and I would like you to prayerfully consider your strategy for dealing with each one. Write your strategy beside the personality trait.

- The aggressor –
- The negator –
- The withdrawer –
- The recognition seeker –
- The joker –

CLOSING PRAYER

As you close today, pray for our country and for our leaders. Assign different members of the group to pray for someone in governmental authority this week. Perhaps someone in your group can come prepared with the names of state senators, state congressmen and women, your mayor, governor, national senators, congressmen and women, the vice president and the president.

Session 5: Winning the Battle

I Peter 2:9

A Holy Nation

A People for God's Own Possession

Proclaim

"exangelo" – to tell out or forth

"exangelo" – to declare abroad, divulge, publish

"exangelo" – to make known by praising or proclaiming, to celebrate
To celebrate – to make much of!

I Peter 2:11 – 12

Beloved

Urge or beseech

Aliens and strangers

Abstain from fleshly lusts

Wage war against the soul

Soul – "psyche" or "psuche"

I Peter 2:13 – 16

Act as free men

I Peter 2:17

Romans 2:4

John 13:35

"Honor the king"

I Peter 2:18-20

Submissive

Session 6: Purpose & Calling

INTRODUCTION

Begin today's lesson by talking about heroes, heroines and role models. Have each woman share the name of one of the people in her life that she deeply respects and admires. This person could be a Biblical example, a well-known person or even a family member or personal friend. What is it about this person that she respects?

As believers in Christ, we are always called to follow the example of Jesus Christ. Read I Peter 2:21 and have each group member share one characteristic of the life of Jesus that she admires.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

After showing the video, lead a discussion centered on I Peter 1:21 – 25. Perhaps you could have others read scripture verses that reference the power of one's tongue. Some possible verses are:

- Proverbs 15:4
- Proverbs 18:21
- James 3:5–8
- I Peter 3:10

Jesus never fought back verbally when He was being persecuted. Ask the group members why we feel we must defend ourselves when being attacked or fight back verbally. What is it in human nature that makes us believe we need to have the last word?

As we now begin the study on the word “submission”, especially as it applies to marriage, ask the women in your Bible Study group to prayerfully answer the following questions:

- Do you believe the Word of God is true for every generation?
- Do you believe the Bible is applicable to your life today?
- Do you believe the Word of God presents a life of freedom rather than legalism?
- Do you believe that when you obey the principles in scripture your life will become more abundant and joyful?
- Do you believe the Word of God is timeless?

According to Carol's teaching, reference some of the ways women were treated before Jesus came to revolutionize society. Remind the group members that women were the first commissioned to go and tell others that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Also, discuss what submission is as well as what it is not. How does the word “yield” apply to submission?

Be very sensitive to the women in your group as you discuss submission and let them know you are a safe place for them. Again, have resources ready for those who are in an abusive marriage or are married to an angry man. (See “Important Note” in the Introductory section to this Leaders’ Guide.)

You are the leader of this group and you must be committed not to gossip but to be a loving support to women in your group who need your help. This is likely to be an intense discussion today so maybe it would be a good idea to end the discussion on a lighter note. Ask the women in the group who is the most beautiful woman they have ever known and then ask what was at the foundation of her beauty.

GROUP DYNAMICS

One of the healthiest ways to promote friendship and community within the small group setting is by communication and encouragement. Depending upon how large your group is, you might want to ask several other, trustworthy women to help you with this.

Send notes to everyone in your group throughout the course of the Bible Study. These notes can be handwritten and mailed, a text or an e-mail. Let each group member know how you are excited to get to know them better and to grow closer to the Lord with her.

Also, make sure that there is personal interaction in each session. Look women in the eye, let them know you are praying for their specific prayer requests, smile at each woman and sincerely welcome her. Remember something personal about each woman and ask her about that detail.

Remember this verse as you endeavor to lead your group:

“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” – Hebrews 3:13

One of your chief callings as a leader in the Body of Christ is to be an encourager to those in your group.

CLOSING PRAYER

This would be a good time to assign prayer partners in your group. You can either assign them, have them choose each other, or simply pull their names out of a cup! Encourage them to share a prayer request with each other and then be committed to prayer for each other every day. They could also check in on each other once throughout the week.

I always love to close a small group meeting by playing “The Doxology” on the piano, on my phone or on YouTube on my computer. As the women raise their voices in song with this majestic, short hymn of the faith, their hearts will certainly be joined in unity.

Session 6: Purpose & Calling

Follow the Leader ... the Word of God ... Women

I Peter 2:21

I Peter 2:21 – 25

Jesus stayed quiet.

Consider the words you speak.

“ ... kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously ...”

2 Choices:

1. Become angry and bitter.
2. Trust the Father.

Do you believe the Bible is applicable to your life today?

Do you believe the Word of God presents a life of freedom and not legalism?

Do you believe that when you obey the Word your life becomes more abundant and therefore more joyful?

Do you believe the Word of God is timeless?

Jesus and Women:

Matthew 28:5-10

I Peter 3:1-2

Submission:

Matthew 23:11-12

Yield

Which is more important ... your head or your heart?

Ephesians 5:21

Hebrews 3:13

James 1:19-20

I Peter 3:3-5

“kosmos” – adorn – to ready, to prepare, to embellish with honor, to gain honor.

A gentle and quiet spirit –

Imperishable

I Peter 3:7

Session 7: Living the Life

INTRODUCTION

Carol begins this lesson by referencing the fact that Peter was an expert at preparing people for the journey of life and in producing healthy human relationships. Ask the group participants to share what they consider themselves to be an expert at. Peter makes a list of character traits that are beneficial and vital to human relationships.

*“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted and humble in spirit.”
I Peter 3:8*

Challenge the group to come up with a list of character traits they believe are vital to healthy human relationships.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

Carol states in this teaching, “It takes two to fight and a Christian should never enter into a war of words.” One of the compelling lessons this week is that as Christians, we are not allowed to treat others in the same manner they have treated us. Discuss the other scriptures that confirm this type of theology. (I Peter 3:9, Romans 12:14, Romans 12:17, I Corinthians 4:12, I Thessalonians 5:15)

The Bible leads us to retaliate in a different manner completely – with a blessing. Encourage the women to think about the difficult people in each of their lives and ask them to prayerfully consider a way to bless or encourage these difficult ones.

Why is blessing an offensive person so difficult?

Why is it hard to control our thought lives and our tongues when emotions are high?

Again, remind the women that we are not talking about abusive situations. If a woman is being abused she needs to get out of that relationship immediately.

Now read I Peter 3:10-12 out loud to your group.

Make a list of the ways in which Peter encourages the early church to love the life they have been given. Ask your group members how they are intentionally enjoying life even when their circumstances are less than desirable.

GROUP DYNAMICS

There will be times when problems arise in your small group that you are not equipped or expected to handle on your own. These challenges are truly outside the expertise of small-group leader responsibilities.

Some of these difficult issues may include:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Repeated offensive activity in the group
- Repeated divisiveness
- Suicidal tendencies and/or threats
- Eating disorders
- Divorce
- Mental and emotional instability
- Abuse in marriage
- Pornography

Here are some suggested action steps:

- Prayer. Pray for the situation, and for the people involved. Also enlist others to pray for you.
- Notify your leader and/or pastor immediately.
- Follow up. Your leader or pastor will work with you to develop an appropriate plan of action and care.

Working with people is incredibly challenging because most people are broken. Always lean on your coaches and pastors to help you navigate these issues.

CLOSING PRAYER

Today would be an appropriate time to pray for marriages, prodigals, wanderers, children and grandchildren and other family members. I always love to gather my group in a circle and hold hands as we pray for those we love the most.

Session 7: Living the Life

I Peter 3:8

Harmonious
Sympathetic
Brotherly
Kindhearted
Humble in spirit

I Peter 3:9

Romans 12:14
Romans 12:17
I Corinthians 4:12
I Thessalonians 5:15

I Peter 3:10-12

“Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.”
“Seek peace and pursue it.”
Seek – "zeteo" – to earnestly seek, to passionately go after, to earnestly inquire
Romans 8:31

I Peter 3:13 – 14

I Peter 3:15

I Peter 3:16

And now ... we wrestle ...

I Peter 3:17 – 18

What is the will of God?
Galatians 6:7-8
Psalm 119:9
Matthew 5:11-12

I Peter 3:19-20

I Peter 3:21 – 22

Session 8: The Benefit Package

INTRODUCTION

When a person begins to work for a new company or employer, one of the most important aspects of the job is the benefit package. What are some of the items that are important in a benefit package in the workplace?

What are some of the benefits that we are given when we become a believer in Jesus Christ? As you compile this list with the help of the women in your Bible Study, read each benefit aloud and have everyone cheer and clap for each benefit. Some things are just worth celebrating, aren't they?

VIDEO DISCUSSION

What are some of the benefits of suffering? Based upon Carol's teaching and these verses in I Peter, encourage the group to make a list of these benefits.

This lesson also addresses the importance of prayer in the life of a believer in Jesus Christ. Ask the group to volunteer some of the greatest answers to prayer they have ever experienced. It might also be a good idea to have a healthy discussion concerning why some prayers are answered and others seem to be unanswered.

Yet another focus of this week's lesson is the call to hospitality in the Body of Christ. Lead a discussion concerning what hospitality is and what it is not. Remind your group that hospitality is not a "have to" but a "get to". Encourage the group to show hospitality to one another this week with an invitation to coffee or brunch. Also, discuss how you can serve your pastor and his family in a warm, hospitable manner.

And finally, end this week's discussion by talking about the gifts they have been given by their good, good Father. Everyone has a gift – no one has been left out. Allow each group member to share something they are good at, something they love to do or something they would love to learn more about.

GROUP DYNAMICS

One of the most important aspect of a small group is the relationships that are fostered. More than imparting information to the participants, it is the support that is mutually shared that will last beyond the Bible Study. We don't just want to offer head knowledge to the group but also heart knowledge. It is the heart knowledge that will fan the flame of healthy relationships within

the group.

You, as the leader, must encourage the group to give more than superficial answers. In order to foster this, you will have to model it. Your answers and your responses must be genuine, sincere, and vulnerable. As you share in this manner, your group will follow your lead.

When someone is sharing within the group, give them your undivided attention. Let the group know that you will quickly stop side conversations.

Another important element to remember is that as the leader, you are not there to “fix” their problems. Giving advice is not wise and may backfire on you. Listen to the person and follow up with a question or two that will help them unpack their situation. One thing I often say to people who are going through trauma or tragedy is simply, “I am so sorry you are walking through this.”

CLOSING PRAYER

This week, choose someone to begin the closing prayer and then allow others to pray out loud as well. When you feel that everyone who desires to do so has prayed, you can close with a final prayer.

Session 8: The Benefit Package

The benefit of suffering
Romans 8:28 & 29

I Peter 4:1-2

I Peter 4:3-4

I Peter 4:5-6

I Peter 4:7
Matthew 26:41

I Peter 4:8
Mark 12:30-31
Luke 6:35
I John 4:8
I Corinthians 13:7

I Peter 4:7-9
Hospitality – “philoxenos” – to be fond of guests, to be a lover of hospitality
Matthew 25:35-40

I Peter 4:10
Romans 12:6-8

I Peter 4:11

Session 9: Keep on Rejoicing

INTRODUCTION

Well ... this is the final week of the study so be sure and make it extra celebratory in some way. Perhaps you could all go out to lunch afterward or even have a potluck together.

I always like to give “word gifts” at these events and let each woman know how essential she was to the group. You can either write these in a note, speak them verbally, or just give her a 3x5 card with a pertinent scripture on it.

One of the dominant themes in this lesson is the theme of suffering, so bring a box of tissues to pass around as women share their heart pain.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

After watching the video, ask the women to share what the most difficult experience of their life has been. If the group is large, have them share it with just one sister in the Lord.

Read the list of Bible characters listed who all walked through days of deep, dark pain. You might want to ask if their suffering was caused by sin, by righteousness or just as a result of living in a fallen world:

- **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** spent time in the fiery furnace.
- **Esther's** entire race was threatened with annihilation.
- **Moses** faced the Egyptians, the Red Sea, and the wilderness.
- **Noah** knew the entire population of the planet, other than his family, would be killed by a great flood.
- **Ruth's** husband died, she moved to a foreign country with her mother-in-law, and lived in poverty.
- **Daniel** spent the night in a lions' den with large, ravenous felines.
- **Jonah** spent three days in the belly of a great fish.
- **Sarah** and **Hannah** dealt with decades of infertility.
- **David** faced a giant.
- **Paul** and **Silas** spent time in a Roman jail.

Also read the following quote by Peter Marshall:

*God will not permit any troubles to come upon us,
unless He has a specific plan by which great blessing can come out of the difficulty.*

Ask the women to share what blessing has come because of the suffering that they have walked through. We must have a healthy, holy theology on suffering. Peter helps us with this theology in I Peter 4:13. What does Peter advise that a believer in Jesus Christ choose to do during a time of suffering?

Why do you suppose that I Peter 4:13 – 16 are among Carol’s favorite verse in the New Testament? Now, read the following list that Carol presents in her teaching:

How to Suffer Well

- Rejoice loudly
- Refuse to complain or panic
- Count it all joy
- Walk by faith and not by sight
- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His divine power
- Refuse to be afraid
- Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ
- Live righteously—don’t give in to moral compromise
- Continue to tithe and serve others
- Stay in the Word of God
- Pray continually
- Keep your eyes and heart set on Jesus not on the suffering

Ask the women if this list is complete or if there are some options they might add to the list.

One of the most beautiful verses in all of scripture is found in this final teaching. As you might have guessed, it is this one, *“Cast all your cares upon Him because He cares for you.”* – I Peter 5:7

How do you treat a person whom you care about deeply? How do you speak to that person? Assure each women in the group that we serve a God who cares fully, completely and eternally! And finally, close the discussion with this powerful and comforting verse:

“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.” – I Peter 5:10

As a class, define these four words:

- Perfect
- Confirm
- Strengthen
- Establish

GROUP DYNAMICS

Commit to do a follow-up with each woman who has been in this Bible Study with you. If the group is too large for you to do it personally, enlist the help of others to send notes, to make a phone call or a sweet text message. As we have learned over the course of this study, one of the highest priorities of a small group is the relationships that are developed.

Give each woman a warm hug as they leave, look them in the eye and say something unique to her concerning a prayer request or a thoughtful response she shared over the course of the 9-week study.

When you, as the leader, close the door on this study and have some time to personally reflect on the dynamics of this group, make a list of the things you know that you succeeded at as well as the actions you might do differently next time.

CLOSING PRAYER

In closing, pray this prayer over the women whom you have fallen in love with and served over the past nine weeks:

*“And then, after your brief suffering, the God of all loving grace,
who has called you to share in his eternal glory in Christ,
will personally and powerfully restore you and make you stronger than ever.
Yes, He will set you firmly in place and build you up. Amen and amen!”*

Session 9: Keep on Rejoicing

Surprised ... Suffering ... and Sheep
John 16:33

I Peter 4:12

I Peter 4:13

I Peter 4:14-16

I Peter 4:17-18

I Peter 4:19

How to Suffer Well

- Rejoice loudly.
- Refuse to complain or panic.
- Count it all joy.
- Walk by faith and not by sight.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His divine power.
- Refuse to be afraid.
- Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
- Live righteously—don't give in to moral compromise.
- Continue to tithe and serve others.
- Stay in the Word of God.
- Pray continually.
- Keep your eyes and heart set on Jesus not on the suffering.

Entrust

Isaiah 26:3

I Peter 5:1

I Peter 5:2-3

Shepherd – “poimaino” – to shepherd, tend, to take care of, to pastor

John 21:15-17

“poimaino” – oversight that produces nourishment

I Peter 5:4

I Peter 5:5-6

I Peter 5:7

Casting – “epiripto” – to violently throw or to fling something with great force
Luke 19:35

Cares – “merimna” – anxiety, emotional affliction, difficulty or hardship
He cares for you ...

I Peter 5:8

Job 1:7

II Chronicles 16:9

I Peter 5:9

I Peter 5:10

I Peter 5:11

I Peter 5:12-14

His grace changes everything!