



“God > Me”

1 Peter 3

Small Group Plan

To understand a single verse of scripture it is always best to look at the literary and historical context surrounding it.

The historical setting of Peter’s first letter is the imminent beginning of hardship and suffering for the Christians living in Asia Minor. The Roman emperor at the time (2:13) was the brutal Nero.

*“... now for a little while
you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.”*
— 1:6 —

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action ...”
— 1:13 —

“... they accuse you of doing wrong ...”
— 2:12 —

“... the pain of unjust suffering ...”
— 2:19 —

“... if you suffer for doing good ...”
— 2:20 —

*“Christ suffered for you,
leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”*
— 2:21 —

“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult ...”
— 3:9 —

“... do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering ...”
— 4:12 —

“... if you suffer as a Christian ...”
— 4:16 —

The purpose of Peter's letter is to teach the Asian Minor Christians how to live surrounded by hostility without losing hope or becoming bitter, while at the same time trusting in their Lord and looking for His return. Peter wanted these early Christians to understand that by living obedient, faithful lives under such pressure, they could actually evangelize the hostile world around them.

*“Live such good lives among the pagans that,
though they accuse you of doing wrong,
they may see your good deeds and glorify God ...”*

— 2:12 —

*For it is God's will that by doing good
you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.*

— 2:15 —

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Who do you know who has suffered because of their faith? Briefly describe their situation.
- Have you ever experienced any kind of hardship or suffering because of your faith? Explain.

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

1 Peter 3:13-16

¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

— VOCATION —

“... in your hearts revere Christ as Lord ...”

- Why must faith begin and reside in our “hearts”?
- How would you describe the attitude of “reverence” and how does it differ from the prevailing attitude of our culture?
- How does faith show itself in our lifestyles?
- Is it better to say, “faith is what I do” or “faith is who I am”? Explain the difference.

— LOCATION —

“... always be prepared ...”

- Why must our faith travel with us everywhere?
- What happens when faith becomes more of a Sunday “hobby”?
- How does it change your view of evangelism to know that the great commission — “go and make disciples” — is a participle and more accurately says — “as you are going make disciples” (Matthew 28:19)?

— PROCLAMATION —

“... to give an answer to everyone who asks ...”

- Which of the following proclamation opportunities fits you best? Explain.
 - Praying for the lost.
 - Giving God thanks in public.
 - Inviting friends to church.
 - Serving your community in Jesus’ name.
 - Openly talking about how Jesus has changed your life.
 - Looking for and responding to unexpected doors of opportunity.
- Which of the above would be the most difficult for you? Explain.
- How can we make ourselves ready when the opportunity comes?

— RADIATION —

“... do this with gentleness and respect ...”

- How would you define these two attitudes — gentleness and respect?
- What is their place in evangelism? Why are they important?
- What happens to evangelism when they are absent?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- When have you seen suffering or hardship open the door to ministry?
- Describe the kind of heart that is equipped to see such an open door.
- Who has been an example of patience and trust during hardship? What lessons have you learned from their life?
- Of all the attitudes that have been discussed in this group session, which do you most need? Explain.
- Close by having someone read 1 Peter 3:13-16 aloud, slowly and carefully. Give everyone a moment of quiet to pray out of the thoughts contained in these verses before bringing the prayer to a close.