

Neither Immigrant, Nor Tourist

1 Peter 1:1-12

Introduction:

This is merely a discussion guide for you and your Life Group, not a deep Bible study. To help situate yourself in the book of 1 Peter, you might consider watching The Bible Project's video at BibleProject.com/explore/video/1-peter/ or consulting The Moody Bible Commentary. When utilizing The Moody Bible Commentary for this passage, you can find the content on pages 1957-1959. - JF

Questions:

Have you ever had an experience where you were a temporary resident in an unfamiliar place? This might be living (or traveling) in a new country or in a context that is widely different than your family of origin. What was your experience like? What was challenging? What was intriguing? What expectations were placed on you as a temporary resident? If you have not had this experience, what do you *THINK* you would find challenging or intriguing? Why does it matter that we are mindful of such experiences and expectations, especially considering today's passage?

In the opening of this first letter from Peter, we see that he uses a Greek word (παρεπίδημος) that pertains to staying for a while in a strange or foreign place. Furthermore, thanks to William Arndt and his *"Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament,"* we learn that this word also has the connotation of sojourning or residing temporarily. In fact, in a quick survey of English Bibles, you will find this word translated as sojourners, strangers, temporary residents, refugees, aliens, exiles, or pilgrims. What is the point of Peter highlighting this reality for his readers? Why is it necessary for these early Christians to understand the concept of being sojourners or exiles? How might that reality impact the way these Christians lived? The language of sojourners or exiles shapes the Christian's identity. How is this reality shaping your identity? How does (or should it) impact how you are currently living? What do you find difficult about living as a sojourner? How does your faith in Jesus cause you to be an outsider in this world (give recent, personal examples)?

According to this passage, what is the hope of our salvation and what does he mean by "living"? (Look to verses 3-5) In addition to hope, there is also joy in our salvation. How does Peter formulate his argument for our joy? (Look to verses 6-9) Why is it important to know the hope and joy in our salvation, especially as sojourners and exiles in this world? What difference does it practically make for the Christian to have hope and joy? Where have you seen yourself experience hope and joy as a Christian? How did that impact those around you who are not Christian? Of the description that Peter gives in this section, what stands out to you and why? What impact does it practically have on your life? Consider another Christian who has suffered and done so with joy and hope. What did their example teach you? Knowing that trials of various kinds will come, how does this passage help you live well in the face of suffering and trials? Why are trials important to the Christian life?

This week we had the honor of hearing Dave Lee, pastor and planter of Icon Church, preach the Sunday service. Is there anything that he mentioned in his message that you would like to discuss? Is there anything else from these first 12 verses of 1 Peter 1 that has made an impact on you that you would like to share and discuss?

Conclusion:

As the group winds down, spend a few moments talking about how this passage has helped (or is helping) you to see your place and role as a citizen of the Kingdom of God rather than a sojourner in a foreign land (the World). Also, identify and share with one another what behaviors/patterns of yours are most like the world that you are sojourning in. What do you need from God to change? What do you need from the group to help encourage you towards change? In order to share, this will require vulnerability and trust, which can be scary. Trusting that God will not put you to shame because of your confession, seek to share openly for your own transformation in Christ and for the good of growth in the group. Finally, pray together, asking God to give you strength to continue living as sojourners and exiles in this world.