

Leader's Guide

Session 2: 1 Peter 2:1–12

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what we want to walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: As a result of God crafting through Christ a new kind of people who declare his glory to the world, we should rid ourselves of whatever distract us from doing so.

Head Change: To understand that there are things in our lives we must clean out in order to truly pursue obedience to God.

Heart Change: To feel an honest desire to please God rather than simply a begrudging obedience.

Life Change: To remove whatever distracts us from holy lives that declare God’s glory to those around us.

OPEN

Think back to a time when you cleaned out your home—maybe to obey parents, to impress a visitor, or simply spring cleaning. **How did you feel after you finished cleaning? What was it like getting rid of junk you no longer needed?**

Like our homes, our spiritual lives also require times of spring cleaning. For the sake of holiness, there are items in our hearts that must be thrown out to make room for new desires and habits that pursue Christ.

READ

Read 1 Peter 2:1–12.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Kyle's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to the following questions.

How does Kyle define the term "malice"?

What are the two aspects required for a holy life?

What are the two responsibilities of every Christian because of our new identity?

Show Session 2: 1 Peter 2:1-12 (12 minutes)

DISCUSS

As we saw last week, Peter is writing his letter to a community of Christ followers suffering under persecution. Believers were being ostracized, imprisoned, and martyred for their faith in Christ. So, Peter reminds them of their identity in order to fuel their perseverance. Based on his first chapter, Christians have transferred their citizenship. This world is not our home, which means our circumstances—no matter how painful—are temporary. So we should set our hope on eternity with Christ and pursue holiness until then.

Beginning in chapter 2, Peter begins to offer a practical glimpse into what a holy life looks like.

Someone read 1 Peter 2:1–12.

Most Bibles translate the first word of verse 1 as “therefore” (or “so”). **Briefly describe how what Peter says in the following verses connects to the content of chapter 1. In other words, what is the “therefore” there for?** (It refers back to the truth that we have been begotten by God, which is the foundation for our obedience.)

Based on what we studied in the previous session, how should our identity in Christ motivate us to pursue holiness and persevere in suffering?

Like Kyle said, the list Peter gives in verse 1 isn’t exhaustive, but it certainly applies to behavior today. **What are some examples of sinful behaviors from this list that you’ve witnessed in others? What about in your own life? What effect do they have, specifically on relationships with others?**

When we consider this list a little more carefully, it becomes clear that it focuses on sin that tears at the social fabric of relationships. Each is inherently divisive and finds its root in an ill will (or “malice”) toward others. Obviously, this is a destructive trait in general, but especially in terms of relationships among believers. It divides when the gospel is about unifying the body of Christ. So, we need to be serious about cleaning out our junk drawer.

Horizontal lines for writing.

As you reflect on Peter’s charge in verse one, what do you need to “rid yourself” of? Make note of anything the Holy Spirit is convicting you to clean out of your junk drawer?

How would your relationships change if you were to do so?

As Kyle pointed out in the session, Peter begins this portion of his letter by explaining what to get rid of for the sake of a holy life. But there’s another side to holiness—what we should crave for a holy life. Kyle described it as “an appetite for godliness.” Pursuing holiness is not merely about changing behavior. It requires an internal change in terms of our desires—the things we love and hate.

According to verse 3, what does Peter describe as our motivation for holiness? (The fact that we have “tasted that the Lord is good.”)

Why would verses 1–2 be ineffective motivation for holiness without verse 3? (Because it isn’t grounded in our identity in Christ. Like Kyle said, non-Christians are uninterested in the dos and don’ts of Christianity because they do not know Christ.)

What does this component of holiness—the requirement of an internal change—teach us about a true pursuit of godliness? (That it requires more than simply a change in behavior. We desperately need the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts, which is possibly only through faith in Jesus Christ.)

How have your “appetites” changed since coming to know Christ? What do you desire now that you would never have desired previously?

So, holiness is not simply about what you avoid or flee. It’s also about what you pursue. And Peter makes it clear that Christians ought to crave “pure spiritual milk” in the same way that newborn children depend on their own sustenance.

To some degree, we've seen how our identity in Christ brings us a new responsibility at the same time. Beginning in verse 4, Peter returns to a discussion of identity in order to flesh out exactly who we are in order to understand how we ought to live as a result.

What stands out to you about the descriptions of our identity in Christ in verses 5 and 9–10? What about the description of Jesus in verses 6–8?

We could list plenty of observations about these verses, but two points are important to consider here. First, the experience of Jesus is a model for our experience as his people. Peter describes him as “rejected” by the world but “precious” to those who believe.

If our Savior was not exempt from suffering, we should expect the same. But more importantly, all of Peter's descriptions of believers in Christ—chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation—are plural. This is an important emphasis because we were made for community as we participate in God's redemptive work. That's why belonging to a body of believers is so crucial—so that each of us can serve with our God-given gifts for the sake of his kingdom.

When you think about the idea of pursuing holiness, are you tempted to view it as something you have to do on your own? How would your spiritual life change if you were to invite other believers into your life in a deeper way?

Before moving on from verse 9, Peter makes a final point about our identity. He says that we have been transformed into a new people for a specific purpose: to declare “the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

What are some practical ways that we can live out this purpose?

One of the points Kyle emphasized is that Peter isn't commanding us to argue unbelievers into the kingdom. As we've seen already, that's impossible. True salvation requires the miraculous work of God in our hearts.

What are some examples of ways you've seen people “declare” their beliefs in a harmful way? How have you seen them declared in a helpful way?

Horizontal lines for writing.

GO DEEPER

Read more about how Paul declares the praises of God in the following verses: Acts 17:22–34; Rom. 1:18–32

How would you describe Paul’s tone in Romans 1:18–32 while describing those who commit unrighteousness?

How would you describe his tone in Acts 17:22–31 when speaking to those who commit unrighteousness?

How did his listeners respond, according to Acts 17:32–34?

What can you take from Paul’s model and apply to the way you “declare” God to those around you?

Like Kyle said, this isn’t a “You’re wrong; I’m right” situation. God doesn’t command us to argue without love. Rather, we are called to share what he has done in our lives and let that transformation be the basis for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Horizontal lines for writing.

Earlier, we talked about some of the ways God has changed your desires through Christ. **What are some of the other differences he has made in your life? What could you do to be intentional about sharing your story with someone this week?**

Through Christ, we have received the mercy of God such that he has brought us into his family and given us the opportunity to participate in the expansion of his kingdom. In addition to declaring the praise of our God, Peter includes one final responsibility before moving on to the next section: we are to live righteous lives such that unbelievers have no ground on which to accuse us of wrongdoing. Kyle summed it up by saying that the world should see a difference in the way we live. Our actions ought to refute their prejudices about Christians.

Where do you have opportunities to live out your faith in a way that sets you apart from the way unbelievers live?

Peter specifically mentions in verse 12 that unbelievers may unjustly accuse Christians of doing wrong. **What are some examples of ways you have seen this in your own life? Or that of other Christians? What would it look like to respond in a way “that they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (v. 12)?**

LAST WORD

Compared to those who do not know Christ, our lives should look different because we have a new identity. Yet that should not be a difference we display arrogantly. Rather, our new identity should be lived out in a way that reflects the love God has shown to us. As he is patient, so we should be patient. As he is gracious and merciful, so we should extend grace and mercy to those who do not embrace his truth.

Through Christ, we have been called into the greatest story the world has ever known, that of God’s redemptive work. Don’t take that lightly but remember that it does not depend on you either. God is looking for the faithful, not the perfect, and he is drawing you into spiritual maturity through his Holy Spirit.

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Ask the Lord to help you see the areas of your life that need to be cleaned out and be intentional about following his direction as he does so.

Speak: If the Holy Spirit convicted you of your need to share the good news of Jesus with someone, be bold in doing so this week trusting that he will supply you with the words.

Accountability: Reach out to 2–3 trusted believers who know you well and invite them to help you stay accountable in pursuing the areas of holiness you most need to grow in.
