

W@W1Peter1

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GOD SENDS ENCOURAGEMENT

1 Peter 1:1 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Peter had been a failure, but Jesus made him into a pastoral leader. First he was called to be a disciple, which means 'learner' or 'pupil' (no Christian ever stops learning in this life). Then Jesus appointed him as an apostle, which means 'sent out with authority'. Although he had been the spokesman for the disciples, he sometimes said the wrong thing (cf [Matt 16:21-23](#)), and even denied that he knew Jesus (cf [Matt 26:69-75](#)). But, after the resurrection, Jesus recommissioned him ([John 21:15-19](#)) to feed the church with truth.

In this letter, Peter writes to Christians who needed encouragement. Many were scattered because of persecution; away from home and family, like refugees, and adjusting to a different culture in (what is now) Northern Turkey. Peter knew that they would only keep going with Jesus if they continued to believe the truth. So Peter starts by explaining that they can trust what he says - because he is an accredited apostle of Jesus Christ. [Please note: the apostles have the special responsibility to show how Jesus is the focus of all God's purposes, and how all of the Scriptures point to Him.] And we need the apostles too. Without their help we might easily misinterpret the Old Testament, and misunderstand the gospel of what Jesus said and did.

Unlike Old Testament religion, Christianity is not just a set of rules, a religious or social pattern. It is believing the truth about Jesus Christ, knowing how to have a personal relationship with Him, and then learning (as a disciple) how to live a new life with Him. While family tradition and church cultures may be helpful, it is essential for every generation to check what they believe against the Apostles' teaching. A hunger to do this indicates spiritual health (like a baby who eagerly drinks its milk). That is especially true when working away from home, feeling alone or experiencing opposition because you love Jesus. You may feel distant, but like Peter's original letters, God has carefully arranged for His Word to reach you where you are. By trusting what He says, you can stay close to Him.

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. Thank you for appointing Apostles with the authority to tell me what is true about Jesus. Please give me a renewed hunger to be a good disciple of Jesus by eagerly learning what you have to teach me; and so grow in confidence as a Christian, even if others reject You. For Christ's sake, Amen.*

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W@W1Peter2

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FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND FULL OF PEACE

1 Peter 1:1-2 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

However much Christians may feel they are 'strangers in the world'; each believer is very well known to God. He not only knows where and how they are; but he also knew, ages ago, that He had chosen them to belong to Him. We may not be able to get our minds around the twin Scriptural truths that God chooses us and that we choose Him - but it is wonderfully reassuring to know that He longs for us to receive His grace, and be filled with His peace. And He has provided all that is necessary to make it happen.

The way that we come to God is to let Him clean us from our sins, because Jesus shed his blood as a sacrifice for us. In verse 2, 'sprinkling' does not refer to baptism but to [Exodus 24:3-8](#); where Moses sprinkled the blood of the sacrificed animals onto the people, to seal their promise to obey the Lord. Of course, our promise to obey the Lord is never strong enough by itself. We need the blood of Jesus Christ to make us right with God - and then the work of the Holy Spirit to help us to live rightly with God.

The prospect of submitting to God's grace may be daunting for some. But there is no other way to be at peace with Him except to welcome His call to be a part of His family, by believing in Jesus. God's grace to cover our sins, and His peace to sooth our troubled consciences, are unlimited. He wants us to receive both with thanksgiving. As we do, so a new confidence will form in our lives ... and our colleagues at work will notice. As they notice, they may ask why we are different. That is the time to explain that cooperating with Jesus has made all the difference to you, and that can be true for them too!

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. Thank you that I have never been out of Your sight, and that You have waited for me to respond to You. I am glad that You do not expect me to be better by myself, but that you have paid for my sins and given your Holy Spirit to all who welcome Jesus. May I keep on receiving your grace and peace; and have the courage to explain Your kindness - to my friends and colleagues. For Christ's sake, Amen.*

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FROM FEAR TO FULFILLMENT

1 Peter 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

What a relief to be free! For the released prisoner, it brings hope of a new future; for the guilty conscience, forgiveness lifts the shame and the fearful shadow of punishment. Peter was writing from personal experience. He had disowned his relationship with Jesus, cursing and swearing that he did not even know Jesus (cf [Mark 14:66-72](#)). But Peter knew that Jesus died to cover his sins as well as ours. And after the resurrection the Lord showed mercy to Peter, trusting him again to work for God's kingdom (cf [John 21:15-22](#)).

God's mercy does not come because he thinks our sins are insignificant: He is merciful because our sins, which were such a problem, can be totally forgiven because Jesus has been punished instead of us. Everybody who admits their sins and trusts in the sacrifice of Jesus for them - will receive God's mercy along with His forgiveness, pardon and release from a guilty conscience (cf [Heb 10:22](#)). Although most Christians know what they have been saved from (God's wrath and hell to come), many do not know what they have been saved to. Peter explains that there is a whole new life to be lived and future to be won.

Christ's resurrection is God's guarantee of a new tomorrow. Jesus conquered death, so death can no longer have the last word. Jesus' new life assures us that those who are born again have already started their eternal life with Him. The 'hope' of the Christian is not just a vague wistfulness that things might get better - but a confidence that every day we are secure in Jesus, until we meet Him and He rewards our faithfulness. Your friends and colleagues, who do not know Christ, cannot enjoy this freedom from guilty fear or the glorious prospect of all that heaven holds. As we give thanks for God's mercy to us, we need to pray for our friends at work - that they will also welcome God's invitation to receive His mercy.

Prayer: *Dear Father God. Thank you for releasing me from a guilty conscience as I trust in Christ's sacrifice for me. Help me to leave the past behind and to look forward to enjoying my life with You today, and every day, forever. Please fill me with Your joy which puts the little worries into perspective; and give me a prayerful heart to see Your mercy welcomed by my friends too. For Christ's sake, Amen.*

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W@W1Peter4

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CONFIDENT OF THE FUTURE

1 Peter 1:4-5 ... he has given us new birth ... into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (NIV)

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Troubles make us worried. Yet the anxiety is not so much about being able to cope today, but the fear of not being able to handle all the tomorrows. Peter was writing to Christians who were isolated and under threat of persecution. They faced the temptation of, "Shall I give up on Jesus today so that I will not have trouble tomorrow?" Peter does not deal with that by simply encouraging them to keep going (although that is often good short-term advice); instead, he shows them what the long term future will really look like, if they keep trusting Jesus.

The future for the Christian is not measured in days or even years, it stretches far beyond the grave. In the perspective of eternity, this life is microscopic. Although it may seem everything to us, it is only the first tiny part of the eternity that God has planned for us to enjoy with Him. In this world nothing lasts and everything will spoil and fade - but in heaven there is not the slightest hint of corruption, ever. The New Birth, which starts the Christian's life with God, is just the introduction to our eternal life with Him.

Our inheritance (the pleasure of entering into all that Christ has won for us), is personally reserved for us; and there is no risk of it being devalued in any way . It will be enjoyed by those who keep on trusting Jesus for everything, accepting God's power to protect them from fear, which leads to the temptation to give up before we meet Jesus. When He comes again, what joy we will have in welcoming Him as He welcomes us into His home. On that day, all our earthly trials will seem insignificant. That is Peter's message to troubled Christians 2000 years ago: it is still God's message to us today. So don't give up, remember all that is waiting for you! And in that confidence, be a rejoicing person at work and not a grumbler!

Prayer: *Dear Lord. I find it difficult to start to imagine the wonders that will be revealed for me when Jesus comes again. But I need to keep remembering that this life is far from the whole story. Help me to work and wait patiently, enduring troubles so that I will not be a disappointment to you when You return. And give me a fresh confidence that you will keep me protected by Your power, until that day. For Your Name's sake, Amen.*

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THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF JOY AND GRIEF

1 Peter 1:6-7 *In this [salvation] you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Most people would like grief to go away, so that they can 'get on with the rest of their life'. However, it is our reaction to unwanted grief which shapes much of our character and conditions the rest of our lives. The Christian's starting point in trouble should be joyful gratitude for God's mercy and grace in salvation; and for His promise not to withhold what is good (cf [Ps 84:11](#); [Rom 8:32](#)). When praise sets the scene, difficulties become God's tools. (cf [2 Chron 20:20-22](#)).

Christians are not immune to grief. It will come. But it only comes with Father God's permission, so that his greater glory may be seen. Although faith might seem easy in church, the times of testing show how genuine it is - when comforting fellowship is somewhere else, or fearful thoughts displace prayer, or planning 'how to cope' replaces Bible reading. Mature faith, however, knows the comfort of the Holy Spirit, keeps praying and looks to God's Word first - especially when the difficulties bring grief. Learning how to deal with distress in a Godly way is God's way of refining us so that our faith will grow and his Glory will glow!

Have you noticed that the further you go in the school of faith, the examinations get harder? The purpose of exams is not to disable the student, but to demonstrate what has been learned. It is just the same with our Christian faith. Our flesh likes to think that we can succeed by ourselves. But we cannot! Every day we need Jesus to save us from sin, to guide, protect, comfort, heal and strengthen us to serve Him. So, each trouble, trial, test (with their accompanying grief) is designed to reveal how much we have learned to trust in Jesus. The final exam is when He comes back and asks us about everything, face to face. But for today, each difficulty at work or home is a preparation for that great day.

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. I do not like the difficulties which come to disturb my self-confidence; but I know that You have allowed them so that I may learn to trust in you. Help me to start each day with joyful praise and a willingness to allow You to guide and provide, and to help me in times of trouble. For Your Glory's sake, Amen.*

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W@W1Pet6

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ENJOYING WITHOUT SEEING

1 Peter 1:8-9 *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

We all know that love does not depend on seeing our loved one: indeed, as the English expression says, 'absence makes the heart grow fonder'. But without a personal encounter of some kind, true love can never start. One kind of false love is infatuation - a one-way desire for someone (who may not even know who you are!). Some people think about God like that. They admire His awesome majesty and immense power, but do not believe they can be known by Him. But the truth is: when we believe the Good News about Jesus, repenting of our sins and desiring His rule in our lives; His Holy Spirit says, "I love you too!"

We have never seen Jesus, but all born-again Christians are certain that He knows us personally. Indeed, our love for Him is a response to knowing that He first loved us ([1 John 4:19](#)). Jesus said that there is a special blessing to those who believe and love without seeing ([John 20:29](#)). And we know that this love is two-way because He gives us a growing confidence that we are known and loved - which is the reason for our joy. It is like reading emails from a loved one far away, we joyfully look forward to our reunion. So it is with Jesus. Every time we read the Bible and the Holy Spirit reminds us of our relationship with Jesus, we should have peace and joy which anticipates the day when we will see Him face to face.

Heaven, with Jesus, is the glorious 'hope' (confident expectation) of every Christian. But that is not the whole story. While we wait, we should want to show our love for Him by obeying His Word; and then experience the joy of His pleasure. Such a Christian should be a joy to work with! He/she knows that they are saved, loved by God and forgiven; this should fill us with joy. But, alas, many of the problems we encounter at work are not always the fault of others. We take our own problems to work with us and inflict the emotional fall-out on our colleagues (cf [Prov 29:6](#)) ... no wonder they are miserable with us too! Christians, loved by God should go to work differently, and make a joyful difference to others.

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. Thank you for the joy that comes from believing in Jesus, Please help me to keep alert to all the privileges I have in Christ and not inflict my problems on my colleagues when I would do better to pray about my problems and my fellow workers. I do pray for those who make life difficult for me, and ask you to refill me with Your joy, so that I will not be a hindrance to them. For Your Glory's sake, Amen.*

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THE UNSEEN AUTHOR

1 Peter 1:10-12 *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Peter is writing to encourage Christians in trouble. The danger of persecution and sense of isolation made them vulnerable; they might be tempted to abandon their faith. Peter has urged them to keep obeying Jesus, reminding them of their future inheritance ([1 Pet 1:3-5](#)) and their present joy as they experience Christ's love ([1 Pet 1:8-9](#)). Now he presents the Old Testament as a major encouragement for Christians. Of course, the prophets did not know Jesus, but as they wrote, the Spirit of Christ was within them - enabling them to write accurately about His death and resurrection.

Even when our confidence in the future is dimmed and our present experience is clouded by trouble, the Bible is always God's reliable Word to us. The prophets knew that they were writing about things outside of their human knowledge; and as hard as they tried, they could not work it out. But they knew that God was urging them to record His Word, which, later, would make a lot of sense to Christians like us. Their words serve not only to inform us about God's grace through Jesus, but also to reassure us that His suffering was no accident. It was all planned by God so that we might share His future glory. Even the angels were amazed as they saw the plan for our salvation unfold!

Many of the prophets saw suffering, but although they wrote about the fullness of God's glory, none of them saw it. Both they and us are waiting for Jesus to come back ([Heb 11:39-40](#)). In the meantime, there is no reason why we should be unconfident about God's salvation and love for us, because the Holy Spirit is still speaking the same message through gospel preachers. We now also have historical evidence that all God's plan for Jesus is true - and so we really can trust God's Word even when life is tough. And we can also be certain that the untidy suffering of faith will be followed by glory: the Bible shows us how the prophets predicted it, Jesus proved it and therefore we can be confident of sharing His glory one day ([2 Thess 2:13-15](#)).

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. Thank you for giving me a greater privilege than the Old Testament prophets, who did not have the evidence of the death and resurrection of Jesus. As they trusted Your Word, help me to do the same. Even when life is hard and the future uncertain, I know that my obedient faith will be rewarded when Jesus comes again. So please help me to keep trusting and keep obeying today. For Your glory's sake. Amen.*

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ACTIVE SELF-CONTROL

1 Peter 1:13 *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Christians should have active minds. God does not intend us to be passive or indifferent to Him or to our human circumstances. If we take the preceding verses seriously ([1 Peter 1:3-12](#)), we know that we should live each day joyfully waiting for Jesus Christ to come back, and trusting God's written Word. Yet in times of suffering, troubles and persecution, some are tempted to give up the struggle against sin, the world, the flesh and the devil. They put their minds into neutral gear, ignoring God's commands, hoping for the battles to go away.

But this verse says that we should prepare our minds for action (cf [Rom 12:2](#)). This is not to invent solutions to our discomfort, but rather to be determined to keep on living for Jesus, whatever the cost. That involves an active consideration that there is no other option. The Jesus who saves us, will sustain us. The God who has prepared an inheritance for us, will enable us to receive it. The Holy Spirit who gives us joy will also give us self-control (both are fruits of His presence within each believer ([Galatians 5:22-23](#))).

So, every day, we need to think carefully about how we can honour the Lord, pressing forwards in our love and trust and obedience. This is not, necessarily, because it makes life easier for us now (it may make life much harder): but because we know that we will be accountable to Jesus when he returns. Passive minds do not care: but those who do care what Jesus thinks will set their minds on getting ready for His arrival. If our working day requires us to think carefully about management, processes, profit and quality; how much more should we be concerned to have focussed minds which think through how best to please the Lord. And you can assess how much this matters to you, by reflecting on how much you pray that God will help you to be self-controlled for His sake.

Prayer: *Gracious Lord. Please help me to appreciate all Your encouragement to keep pressing forwards as a Christian. Forgive me when I am too lazy or careless to pray for self-control, because I know that I am designed to please You and not myself. Forgive me when I want to give up the struggle against all that urges me to sin. Please help me today to take care to think how I may please you, to the best of my ability, with Your amazing help. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet9

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT MOULD

1 Peter 1:14 *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

By nature, we tend to become like the people around us. It is as though they set the shape into which we pour our lives. Moulding technology is commonly used for reproducing anything from car parts to toys, in metal or plastic, and even chocolates. Once the mould has been designed, whatever goes into it will come out with the same shape and characteristics. The same is true with the 'factory' of our hearts. Our desires provide the mould which produces behaviour (cf [James 1:14-15](#)). Sinful desires lead to sin.

Before we knew Christ, we simply conformed to the society around us. We did not know any better. But when we became children of God, He placed His truth in our hearts (cf [Jer 31:33](#)) to displace ignorant lies. He gave us new desires, and a new heart (cf [Ezek 36:26](#)) that is capable of pleasing Him. But we are not robots in a production process, automatically filled with holiness: we have the responsibility to stop pouring ourselves into the old sinful mould, and to choose to obey the Lord (cf [Rom 12:1-2](#)).

God's children should want to please Him because they love Him. As Christians, we grow closer in relationship with him, as His Word sets the pattern for our lives. Then our desires, choices and character should become shaped by what we know will honour Him. That happens through our daily decisions in the workplace and at home. God's heart for integrity, merciful justice and humility (cf [Micah 6:8](#)) should be expressed in time sheets, expenses claims and appraisal forms. Dishonest trading and exploitation do not come from God, neither do slander or rage (cf [Eph 4:31](#)). Peter urges us to be active in rejecting those old lifestyles and choose to be obedient children of God.

Prayer: *Holy God. Thank you that I do not have to live with corrupt values any more, because you have set me free from that mould. Please help me to reject the possibility of going back to those old ways. Help me to grow closer to You and to be hungry for Your Word shall shape my desires and behaviour at home and work today. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet10

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HOLINESS IS FOR EVERYTHING

1 Peter 1:15-16 *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Some people think that 'holy' is dull, boring, restricting and without excitement. They are wrong. Holiness is an essential characteristic of God; and the Bible shows that He is life-giving, mind-stretching, and liberating. More than that, He is truly awesome, in the glory of His majesty and in His unlimited power. For God to be holy means to be uniquely special, different and separate from everything that He has made (including the angels). God's holiness is the sort of cleanness that cannot tolerate anything dirty or corrupt; or that refuses to bow to His authority.

In the same way that the healthy human body rejects everything that is not of itself (that is how we fight disease - by identifying bacteria and viruses as not-ourselves, and destroying them), God cannot tolerate sin. And if sinners are too proud to receive His mercy and grace to deal with their sin, they are rejected from His presence. However, when we do agree to being saved on God's terms, He expects us to live like he does. Of course, like a trainee at work, we do not get everything right: but it is vital that we know what is right, and ask our Master to help us to be like him. The willingness to confess every error and to practice serving Him obediently, are indicators that we desire to be holy. He then helps us to develop a character like His.

Christians learn to develop holiness by knowing what is right (from the Bible), and doing it; and by choosing not to say, think or do what is wrong. This may not be easy at work, but it is important not to have different standards in church and at work - that is not holiness. Holy lives are consistent all the way through, like well baked bread. It may be that lies and injustice are part of your work culture, but they do not have to be part of you. You can dare to be different for the right reasons. Later in this letter, Peter will give some brilliant tips on how to live as a Christian with a difficult boss. But until we reach those verses: remember that living a holy life is top of God's priorities for you.

Prayer: *Gracious Father. I am so glad that you are uniquely right and holy in every way. Thank you for being the unchanging God to whom everything must submit or else be rejected. I am very grateful for Your salvation, and I want to be holy so that I can please you. But I am still far from your perfect standard: so please help me to reject what is not from You, and practice obeying You in everything, today and every day. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet11

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TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

1 Peter 1:17 *Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Human beings like to be settled. Even travelling communities want to meet up with like-minded people so that they can preserve a sense of identity, and feel that they 'belong'. Naturally we are drawn to those who are like ourselves; but we also become like the people we associate with. Father God sees all the people we meet; who we want to be like, and who is influencing us - more than we might choose. He has called us to a holy life, and so He watches to see how we deal with the worldly people we live amongst. One day, His observation will be the basis of His assessment of our lives.

Peter is writing to Christians who have been physically scattered by fear of persecution. Yet they still have to earn a living in communities which might be hostile to Jesus. The easiest thing would be for them to 'settle down' and become like everybody else around. So this verse is an instruction to Christians everywhere about how we should see ourselves; not as migrants acclimatising to a new culture, but as aliens, foreigners and travellers. This world is not 'home' for the Christian, we are only temporary residents. We have a heavenly 'passport' when, through faith in Jesus, we become children of God and citizens of heaven. And so our time on earth is temporary, but it is an important preparation for our eternity with Christ.

Our work on earth is not permanent either. Even the largest business empire will mean nothing when Jesus returns. That is not to say that our work is unimportant, but God will judge how much we saw it as a way of serving Him, rather than ourselves. Those who invest their energies in earthly things will get earth's reward: those who invest their life in heaven's kingdom, will receive Christ's reward. To be 'at home' with a sinful world is to be an alien to heaven; but true Christians must hold lightly onto this world (with its riches, power and pleasures) because they know that their citizenship is in heaven (cf [Phil 3:20-21](#)).

Prayer: *Father God. Thank You for watching over my life to protect and guide me. But I am also glad to know that, every day, You are assessing the holiness of my walk with you. I know it is more important to please You than anybody else. So please help me to live and work as a temporary resident on earth: give me the confident expectation that You will reward my trust in You. Help me to seek Your rule in my life as a matter of top importance and to do what is right, while I wait for my inheritance in Your eternal kingdom. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet12

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HIGHLY VALUED

1 Peter 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Peter previously encouraged us to think and live like temporary residents on earth (cf [1 Peter 1:17-18](#)). We are in training for heaven and so need to live according to God's values, rather than the world's. Today's verses give another reason for dedicating ourselves to the Lord each day - He has purchased us. We did not become children of God because we could pay with our wealth, intelligence, social skills or hard work; it was only because Jesus was punished to pay for all our bad thoughts, words and actions which would have kept us far from God. He chose to be the complete and sufficient sacrifice for our sins: but it cost Him everything, as he gave up His life for us.

Like the sin offering of the Old Testament, the Lamb of God was perfect in every way; not only to pay for our sins, but also to buy us back from the slavery of sin and Satan. His blood was the 'price of our redemption'. We were also redeemed from the bondage of the spiritual emptiness that can be found in family, tribal and national cultures. Although these appear to be useful in helping to bond people together, if we are not bound to Jesus Christ, our lives have no value for eternity. If we have accepted his payment for all our sins, we now belong to Him. He owns us because He has paid for us.

Therefore we have a moral obligation to serve Him whole-heartedly, and to deny ourselves (cf [1 Cor 6:19-20](#)). Our time at work is both a test of our faith, and an opportunity to show the transformation of personal values that comes through Jesus. When some workplace practices or social traditions are clearly a waste of spiritual time, remember that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ has given us the right (and obligation) not to be bound by them any longer. Indeed, we must not waste our new life, which Jesus paid for at such a high cost!

Prayer: *Dear Lord. I am so grateful that you paid such a high price for my sins, and to win my freedom from the emptiness of life without You. Help me to value the privilege of being purchased at the expense of Your precious blood; and help me to live and work today in the liberty that you have given me. For Your praise and glory. Amen.*

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PERSONALLY PRIVILEGED

1 Peter 1:20-21 *He [Jesus] was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

When sin made an ugly mess of God's perfect world, it did not take Him by surprise. The Divine rescue for humanity, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, was not an afterthought; it was all in the original plan. Even before the world was created in all its beauty, God knew that the first man and woman would spoil everything. But even before anything went wrong, God had planned for Jesus to be the way for everything to be made new again (cf [Rev 21:5](#)). His death was not an accident, but an appointment which had been made ages before.

The death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus were for your sake. As well as being for God's glory, He intended us to benefit personally. Without His intervention we would still be lost, far away from God and unable to have any relationship with Him. If Christ had not come to us, we could not trust God for anything: our lives would have remained without meaning or hope for this life, or the eternity to come (cf [Eph 2:12](#)). It is true that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world; but Peter makes it even more personal, "*for your sake ... so that your hope and faith are in God*".

So, if you have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, please don't accept the lie that God does not know or care about you. Do not live today as if heaven has forgotten you and hell is about to swallow you up - that is cruelly untrue. As you go to work today, or do your business and attend to family at home, remember that Jesus Christ came to earth for you. Be thankful that He suffered because He loved you and wanted you to become a part of Father God's family. And don't forget [Romans 8:32](#) which says, "*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*"

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. Please forgive my slowness to be grateful for all that you have done for me personally. How easily I forget Your love and the willing sacrifice of Jesus, which was planned even before You made the world. Help me to trust Your Word to me today, so that I may grow in confidence of Your love towards me. Help me to believe that you will personally provide for all my needs, and help me to live as a citizen of heaven. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet14

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THE REAL THING

1 Peter 1:22-23 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

In 1969, an international soft drinks manufacturer used a new slogan, "The real thing". This catch-phrase featured in a TV advert which has been declared the best of all time. Its appeal was simple: the authenticity of satisfied thirst. Of course, that can only be a pale illustration of the satisfaction that Jesus Christ brings to every one who believes in him. Although Christ's blood cleanses us from all sin (cf [1 John 1:7](#)), if we honour our new relationship with Him, we will want to be active in rooting out the impurity from which we have been rescued. True belief should lead to real lifestyle change.

That old impure life is seen in disobedience, hatred, hypocrisy and self-centredness. Peter says that our life should change when we become children of God; and this should be evident in our relationships within the family of God. He does not advocate nice, syrupy words to get others to think well of you, but obedience to God's Word. He is not interested in manipulating people or 'spinning' a good story, but in genuine love. He throws out the idea of superficial 'fellowship' and replaces it with the need for deep, heart-felt, sacrificial love.

We first knew about God's work of saving us when we heard the authentic gospel. That Word remains true always and there is nothing deceitful about it. It does not change with time or decay in power. Its message is the only way to find the real Saviour. But, having found Him, how can we be two-faced with other believers, or use them for our own purposes, or relate in falsehood and hypocrisy? Honesty, purity, integrity and genuine love are etched into the cross of Christ ... they should also be seen in every interaction between Christians too. So, plan how to put this into action in your workplace, as well as your church.

Prayer: *Loving Saviour. Thank you for Your love which bound You to the cross for my sake, and for every other person who welcomes your grace by faith. Help me at work, as well as in the church, to relate with fellow believers in a way that reflects the purity and integrity of Your love to us. For Your glory's sake. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet15

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LIVING AND LASTING

1 Peter 1:24-25 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands for ever." And this is the word that was preached to you. (NIV)

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Commercialism encourages us to live for today, to seize the moment and clinch the deal. We admire the successful, who win the wealth which others lose. Human knowledge, intelligence, business and management skills are valued in order to win a strategic advantage. But such gains are as fragile as we are. The truth is that none of us is here for very long, and few will remember us after we are gone. Much of what we work for will disintegrate, and whatever does remain will become the property of others. Although this is not the sort of thing that appears on company reports, it is as true as today's verse!

However God's Word remains fresh, vital, active, powerful, and (while used to benefit many) never loses its potency. The ministry of churches and missions investing the Word of God into people's hearts may be carried forwards by a succession of Godly people, but it is God's Word which has the cutting edge (cf [Heb 4:12](#)) and does the work. Even when the Word is ignored for years, it still changes lives to God's glory, when people listen. God's Word is not for human beings to build their own empires; but for God to build His own kingdom.

However foolish the gospel may appear, those who receive it are transformed by the power of God. Preaching the gospel in churches and missions will bring people to Christ. So will the one-to-one conversations where a believer explains how Jesus has changed their life. Do your friends and colleagues know the authentic Gospel? Why not arrange to read and discuss it together, or with a group of others at work. If you are unsure of how to explain it, click onto www.crosscheck.org.uk or download [CrossCheck](#) to a laptop/PDA and share it with others. Seize the moment; God's Word is giving people new life all over the world.

Prayer: *Almighty God. It is wonderful to know that You still speak through the Bible to convict sinners and bring them into Your kingdom. Help me to respect your Word and to expect that You will work in people's lives as I share it with them. But in whatever way I work with You, may I never take the glory for what You are doing in building Your kingdom. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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THE UNCHANGING WORD DEMANDS CHANGE

1 Peter 1:25-2:1 ... the word of the Lord stands for ever. And this is the word that was preached to you. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. (NIV)

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

Without standards to determine the weight of a gram, the length of a kilometre and the volume of a millilitre - we would all be in a mess. Without standards, fair trading would be impossible; medicines would be either dangerous or ineffective; and constructions would fail. Every profession needs standards which enable us to trust engineers, teachers, dentists and accountants. So it is a great blessing that we can know where we stand with the Lord. God's Word is His written standard against which we are all judged, and by which His kingdom operates in mutual trust.

In the same way that it is the responsibility of quality controllers to reject every substandard product; each Christian is responsible to remove evil and twisted thinking, false behaviour and speaking from their life. Although salvation is by God's grace alone, we still need to exercise faith if we are to receive it. Likewise, our sanctification is by God's power alone, but we need to cooperate actively. So Christians must learn to identify and reject all malice (wanting bad things to happen to others), deceit (planning how others will believe lies), hypocrisy (lying to others about yourself), envy (resenting others who have got what you want), and slander (spreading lies about others).

Where these bad qualities have made their homes in our character, it is because we gave them permission to stay. So we must also recognise that it is our fault they have stayed so long. We must repent of all such sins and decide that they must go. This process of demolishing the habits of a lifetime can only start when we agree that God's standards are right and ours are wrong. Rejecting sinful habits is impossible without repentance, but once we repent, we can identify and reject the temptation the next time it comes. Others may think you are strange not sinning with the crowd (cf [1 Peter 4:4](#)), but remember you are not being measured by their values of the world, but by God's unchanging Word.

Prayer: Dear Lord God. Thank You for revealing the true standards of Your kingdom. Give me the courage to examine my life so that I can see where I do not meet Your standards. Then help me to repent and to reject sinful habits. May I know that I am accountable to Your Word and not to the shifting values of the world around me. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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FOOD FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1 Peter 2:2-3 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and many other languages*

Babies cannot look after themselves. Without care and food they will not survive. Milk is a part of God's provision; designed to arrive as the new born gets hungry. Certainly a good drink of pure milk helps the infant to learn relationship, be contented and to sleep well; but its main purpose is to supply calories and the raw materials for building a healthy body. Peter uses this analogy for Christians who are 'born again' into God's family (cf [John 3:3-18](#)). All believers in Jesus Christ need regular spiritual food from the Bible, if they are to grow and stay healthy.

In the same way that a cry for milk is a sign of a healthy baby, the newborn Christian should be hungry to receive truth from God. So, an appetite for reading the Bible, and having it explained, is a very good sign of growing as a Christian. As we get the taste for His truth, and put it into practice; we should get hungry for more of His Word (cf [Ps 34:8](#)). Although it would be nice to think that all Christians are keen to explore the deep truths of the Scripture, the worldly believer has little appetite for that (cf [1 Cor 3:1-2](#)). Apathy towards reading the Bible is a sign of spiritual sickness, or spiritual anorexia.

What could cause such a sickness? Either we have wandered away from Jesus and have forgotten the taste of truth; or we have refused to obey the truth we have received; or we are more concerned to create an image for ourselves, than to accept the privilege of growing into the image of Christ. Or we have not been born into God's family at all (and are still locked into our sins). The remedy is to come to Jesus in repentance and faith (click onto www.crosscheck.org.uk if you are not sure what this means), choose to obey the truth you already know, and get back to regular spiritual meals as you read God's Word. Hopefully, Word@Work is already stirring your hunger to grow up more into Christ. Share this with one or two work colleagues; it may be just what they need.

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father. Thank You for providing me with all I need to grow up in Your family. Forgive me when I have valued my own ideas more than Your Word. I know that I can only grow up properly as a child of God if I accept and obey your Word. So please give me a renewed appetite for the purity of the Bible, and its ability to show me how to become like Jesus. For His Name's sake. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet18

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REJECTED AND YET CHOSEN

1 Peter 2:4 *As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him ... (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

The Lord Jesus Christ is a very significant person. Even 2000 years since He was physically seen, He is still spoken about all over the world. Of course His Name may just be a swear word, and many do not understand that He is God the Son. Some may think He was a teacher, a guru, or a prophet: but we can know Him personally when we welcome Him as Saviour, Messiah, and the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (cf [John 1:29](#)). All others, despite the respect they may show for His wise teaching, actually reject Him and His claim to be the Lord of all. He is not one among many equals; not a historical figure to be analysed, but the Chief Executive of all creation (cf [Heb 1:1-2](#)) to be loved, worshipped and obeyed.

Jesus is God's choice of Saviour for the world. Nobody else can take away sins by paying for the rebellion and corruption in every heart. Nobody else can bring us into a close and personal relationship with God. Yet, while on earth Jesus predicted His rejection, "*He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again*" ([Mark 8:31](#)). But he also used the words of [Ps 118:22-23](#) to say, "*Haven't you read this scripture: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"*" ([Mark 12:10-11](#)). These words made a big impression on Peter (whose name means 'stone'), and he repeats them in this letter.

When we unite with Jesus, we share His rejection; but only in the eyes of those who reject Him. When we choose Jesus, we unite with Father God who chose Jesus to be the Saviour of the world - even before He created it (cf [1 Peter 1:20](#))! So the Lord Jesus Christ is very precious to Father God, and to all those who love Him. Although many may have heard of Jesus, lots of them have never understood what He has done, and why He is so precious. (If you are not sure about this, then click onto www.crosscheck.org.uk.) If you are sure that He is your Rock, then do not be discouraged if other people at work or home reject you; remember that Father God has chosen to accept you because you trust in Jesus.

Prayer: *Father God. I am so grateful that You chose Jesus Christ to be my Saviour; and that His death was the only perfect and sufficient sacrifice for my sins, and for the sins of the whole world. Thank You for opening my eyes to see who Jesus is, and for allowing me to welcome Him into my life. Help me, when others reject me because I love Jesus; and reassure me that You have chosen me as Your own precious child. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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W@W1Pet19

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INCORPORATED

1 Peter 2:5 ... you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

When a business is called 'Incorporated' or 'Inc.' for short, it means that the organisation is bigger than any individual; it has an identity and legal structure of its own; as if it has its own body and all the people become part of that body. Employees and even directors may come and go, but the 'corporation/body' will continue as long as it is solvent. When people believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, it is as if they are incorporated into the body of Christ. In business terms, they gladly accept a 'take over' by Jesus. They choose to invest their life in the Company/Kingdom of Heaven.

This verse comes in the middle of a passage where Jesus is described as the corner (or key/foundation) stone of a building (cf [1 Peter 2:4-10](#)). Here, Christians are likened to all the other stones which form the building - a temple where God is worshipped. God is in the midst of His people. And not only are we the temple, but also the priests! Yes, every believer has the right to come to God directly through Jesus Christ (cf [Heb 10:19-20](#)). Of course, He alone is the great High Priest (cf [Heb 4:14-16](#)) and the perfect sacrifice for all sins; but we can offer the sacrifice of praise (cf [Heb 13:15](#)), the willingness of our bodies to serve Him (cf [Rom 12:2](#)), and the sacrifice of money and gifts (cf [Phil 4:18](#)).

Please note that we are 'built together'. We are not intended to be isolated worshippers, but those who delight in the corporate identity of Christ rather than ourselves. That is why [Hebrews 10:25](#) urges us not to be solo-Christians; "*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*" That is why worship, prayer and Bible study in workplace Christian groups is so important. We are not designed to operate alone, but in company with others who love the Lord. And His Temple building will not be completed until Jesus comes again. So, perhaps some of your friends and colleagues will also respond to the call to be 'incorporated into Christ' - and you can issue an invitation.

Prayer: Holy Father. I do not feel worthy of being a part of Your great company; but I accept that I am welcomed and included through trusting in the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. Help me to honour You by being an active part of Your body where I live and work. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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FOUNDATIONS FOR ETERNITY

1 Peter 2:6 *For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (NIV)*

You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and many other languages

This verse describes how important Jesus is. It is repeated in [Matt 21:42](#), [Mark 12:10](#), [Luke 20:17](#) and [Acts 4:11](#) - as well as by Peter here. But it first appears in [Isaiah 28:16-17](#), where God's Messiah (Jesus) is predicted as being the point from which God's kingdom arises, and from justice and righteousness is measured. Jesus is the judge of all people. All those who reject Him, will be rejected by Him when He returns: all those who trust in Him will be accepted by Him on that great day, and therefore will not be put to shame.

Jesus is the foundation. Everything that is built on Him will last for ever, and everything else will collapse (cf [Matt 7:24-29](#) and [1 Cor 3:10-13](#)). It is God who has planned it that way. He laid Jesus as the foundation stone of the church, and has decided that there is no other way for people to worship Him acceptably (cf [1 Peter 2:5](#)). Although the world suggests that there are many ways to worship God, Jesus Himself said that no one can come to Father God except through Him (cf [Jn 14:6](#)). That is because only Jesus can release people from the shame of their guilty past (there is more explanation at www.crosscheck.org.uk).

So, however much others may ridicule or abuse Christians for their faith, God is not ashamed of us (cf [Rom 8:1](#)). That fact alone should give a new confidence as we go to work or labour at home. As we build our lives on the Lord Jesus Christ as our foundation, our life is secure for all eternity and there is no reason to be downcast. Although our faith may be tested in our workplace, it will be greatly rewarded in heaven. If we will be thrilled and unashamed in the presence of Jesus, when we can see Him; why should be ashamed in His presence now? Even though we cannot see Him, He sees us and is not ashamed to call us His brothers (cf [Heb 2:11](#)).

Prayer: *Dear Lord God. I am so grateful that Jesus is my chosen foundation for life and all eternity. Thank You for his perfect knowledge and justice and righteousness, and for His sacrifice that makes me clean to be accepted into Your family. Help me to go into each day with the confidence that You are not ashamed of me as I trust in You. For Your glory's sake. Amen.*

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