



1 & 2 PETER DEVOTIONAL

By Pastor Phil Emerson

NAME: _____

OUR DISCIPLESHIP FLOW

At Emmanuel Church, we are passionate about living out the call to be disciples of Jesus Christ, and make it our goal to see His Kingdom come in our lives and the world in which we live. We recognise that in Biblical times, a disciple was someone who followed a teacher or rabbi, not simply to gain head knowledge to pass an examination, but to be fully immersed in the life of the rabbi, and *learn his ways*, so that they in turn could replicate this to the world around them. As Christians, we are now those who have been invited to ‘follow’ Jesus and all of His ways, and we therefore call ourselves His disciples.

“This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.” 1 John 2:5,6

We therefore want to take seriously the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 to make disciples and also commit to an ongoing journey of teaching and discipleship together.

We all have differing personalities and learning styles. At Emmanuel, we recognise this diversity within the church body and therefore desire to support and journey together as we relate with God and each other in some of the following environments:

- **Public (20+)**

In the Bible, we see Jesus seeking to make disciples as He engaged with larger numbers of people, e.g., His interaction with the crowds (Matthew 4:25; Luke 14:25), and the 72 (Luke 10:1-24).

At Emmanuel, we want to use each of our **larger gathered environments** as an opportunity to make disciples, e.g., **Sunday services, Friday Youth/Kids’** environments, **men’s/women’s** gatherings.

- **Social (10-15)**

Jesus demonstrated the necessity for **smaller accountable relationships** as an essential part of the life of a disciple. He did this by teaching and doing life with his twelve disciples (e.g., Matthew 10).

At Emmanuel, small accountable relationships are offered through:

Lifegroup 12s

These are **gatherings of 10-15 people** who meet bi-weekly in homes or around specific interests, e.g., crafts, football.

- **Personal (2-5)**

As well as having smaller accountable relationships amongst His twelve friends, Jesus also seemed to go to even deeper levels of trust with three in particular – Peter, James and John (Matthew 17; Mark 9). At Emmanuel, we seek to do this through:

Lifegroup 3s

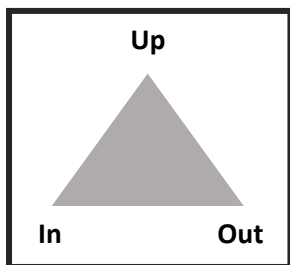
These are smaller **gatherings of 2-5 people** who are committed to transparent and accountable relationships in order to grow together in following Jesus. The aim for these groups is that after 1-2 years, each person in the group would be able to lead a smaller number of people themselves and replicate the process... **disciples making disciples!**

- **Intimate (1-1)**

Jesus regularly withdrew to spend time alone with the Father. This is the ultimate goal of discipleship, that each member of our church family would increasingly spend time alone with the Father and grow in devotion and desire to see the Kingdom come.

A TOOL TO USE

As stated previously, 1 John 2:6 makes it clear that for those of us who call ourselves disciples of Jesus, our goal should be to daily walk in the ways of Jesus, our Rabbi. As we examine the New Testament we see that Jesus lived His life based on three relationships: **Up** – with His Father; **In** – with His chosen followers; **Out** – with the hurting world around Him. This is illustrated in the following triangle:



Jesus taught and modelled out to His disciples how to live into each of these areas in life.

Up

Jesus frequently left the disciples to spend personal time with the Father (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). He taught them the significance of prayer, and how to pray and communicate with the Father (Luke 11:1-13). When comparisons with one another or insecurities presented themselves, He spoke into it in love and challenged them into a greater depth of living (Mark 9:33-37; Matthew 18:1-5).

In

Jesus had significant relationships with others in which He intentionally invested (12s and 3s). When He went to engage with the Father He brought the three with Him (Matthew 17:1). He taught them and modelled out the significance of Sabbath and rhythms of rest (Mark 6:31). He demonstrated with His life the significance of generosity and sacrificial love for others (John 13:1-17).

Out

Jesus personally lived a life that engaged with the crowds and the broken world around Him. He healed the sick (Matthew 8:1-4), fed the poor (Mark 6:30-44), and cast out demons (Matthew 8:28-34). But with the people who were closest to Him, He challenged them to do the same (Mark 6:37), and when they took risks themselves He critiqued and gave honest feedback to call out more for them (Luke 10:17-20).

As we spend time alone or together in this devotional, we want to help and encourage you to engage in each of these ways – UP, IN, and OUT.

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

First

If you haven't already done so, please take a second to fill in your name on the inside of the front cover. There'll be a lot of identical books floating around, and we don't want yours to get lost.

Prepare

Get ready for each session by spending some time to invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you. The Bible is a written word (logos), which becomes a living word (rhema) as the Holy Spirit breathes upon it and speaks directly to our lives through it.

Commit

Commit to the journey. Discipleship is not a commitment to a moment, but to a lifetime journey. As you personally commit to journeying with God daily, commit to others by sharing what you are learning (possibly in Lifegroup 12s or 3s), and in this way encouraging one another in what God is saying.

Reflect & Respond

Each day, as you spend personal time with God, we encourage you to ask the following two questions:

- 1) What is God saying to me?
- 2) What am I going to do about it?

This is how we become doers and not just hearers of what God is saying.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 + 2 PETER

Peter's name signifies a stone or a rock. Its Aramaic equivalent is *Cephas* but the name *Peter* was given to Simon by the Lord Himself in anticipation of the hard, staunch, unyielding, "rock-like" character Christ knew this man would come to possess.

Although 1 Peter is a short letter, it touches on various doctrines and has much to say about Christian life and duties. It is not surprising that different readers have found it to have different principal themes. For example, it has been characterised as a letter of separation, of suffering and persecution, of glory, of hope, of pilgrimage, of courage, and as a letter dealing with the true grace of God.

The even shorter second letter of Peter brings much to stir us considering where we are in the economy of God's kingdom at present. We are warned of false teaching and the imminent return of our King. It's great stuff, so let's get going. Bible, journal, pen, and brew ready, and off we go.

Love you all,
Phil

Read

1 Peter 1

Live

Peter begins his first epistle to Christians in Asia Minor by acknowledging their election according to God's foreknowledge. The word *elect* in Greek is *eklektos*, meaning picked out, chosen, selected, or, as we would say, hand-picked. The obvious reference here is to Christians, those whom God has chosen to obtain salvation through Christ and to be the special recipients of His favour. This has got to bless and encourage you today.

Peter then praises God for their living hope, incorruptible inheritance, and glorious salvation. Despite grievous trials, the power of God and their genuine faith protect them and give them inexpressible joy. He mentions how the angels long to look at this, which I find just amazing.

In view of this salvation, Peter prescribes conduct becoming to the people of God. They are to focus their minds and hope on the grace that will be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, they should conduct themselves in holiness and fear, imitating their Father who judges without partiality, and remaining ever mindful that they have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. They are to love one another fervently with pure hearts since they have purified their souls for that very purpose and have been born again by the incorruptible Word of God.

It's both settling and centring to begin this book of Peter with the assurance of Father God's acceptance. God knows everything about us, and still we are fully accepted by Him. He knows our failures, fickleness, foolishness, faithlessness; and yet, He accepts us. When we confess our sins, we don't inform Him of anything He doesn't already know. We all have our ups and downs, yet God has continued to accept and embrace us. He gives us grace upon grace. And, just as He has accepted us, He is calling us to accept others.

Pray

Father, I need a bigger heart and more wisdom if I'm going to make headway in this calling. Please help me show kindness without compromising my convictions. Let me remember that Your promise to complete the good work You began in *me* also applies to each of Your children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Live

Peter challenges us to lay aside every trace of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. That's a pretty exhaustive list which he says should be replaced by our desire for the Word of God. I love this! He depicts Jesus as a living stone and us also as living stones being built into a spiritual house. Jesus is the chief cornerstone that is precious to those who believe but a stone of stumbling to those who are disobedient. Christians are called on to proclaim the praises of God as they are now a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people who have obtained mercy. Wow, how cool is that! As the people of God, we are to be foreigners and pilgrims in this world. Our job involves waging war on the soul abstaining from fleshly lusts, and keeping our conduct honourable to glorify God. Household slaves are told to submit to their masters even when they are harsh. Peter reveals that such submission is commendable before God and follows the example of Jesus whose own suffering delivered us from sin.

The fact that God is jealous for our love is as humbling as it is astonishing. What greater compliment could He possibly pay us? To know that God actually misses my affection both thrills and convicts me. That He ever made us a part of His bride in the first place moves me to cry out, *“Lord, I believe — help my unbelief!”* How often I need to confess and repent. It would be one thing if He were a harsh, disengaged, demanding bridegroom, but He loves us as no one else could ever love us. He lived and died to make us His own forever. He has robed us in the bridal gown of His own righteousness. He cares for our hearts and carries our burdens. He never stops praying and advocating for us before our Father. He enjoys us, delights in us, and rejoices over us with loud singing. Ponder that!

Pray

Father, restore to me the joy of Your salvation and the love I had for You at first. I have no power to change me, but You have all power. I love You now only because You first loved me. I love You with all my heart and I know there is coming a day when I will love You fully. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Read

1 Peter 3

Live

Peter speaks wisdom into the marriage home. While Paul speaks in Ephesians 5 of ‘responsibilities’ and in 1 Corinthians 7 about ‘realities’, Peter speaks to the ‘roles’ of marriage. Wives are to be submissive to their husbands and to focus their adornment on the development of a meek and quiet spirit, like the holy women in the past, such as Sarah, who trusted in God. I love how he says that women are able to influence their husbands without a word; this is so true and powerful. Husbands are then instructed to live with their wives in an understanding way, honouring them as the weaker vessel (a physical reference only) as fellow heirs of the grace of life. Such treatment would make sure their prayers were not hindered. This is a powerful statement. How I treat my wife is a thermometer of my prayer life! Duties toward others are also spoken about, stressing unity, compassion, love, kindness, and simple courtesy. When mistreated by anyone, the proper response is to extend a blessing that we might inherit a blessing.

As I read the rest of the chapter, I sense one word, *freedom*. To be set free by God is to be “*free indeed*”, according to John 8:36; free from the guilt of our sin because Jesus took our place on the cross, exhausting the judgment we deserve; free from the power of sin for He has broken sin’s dominion in our lives; free from the fear of death for He has removed its sting and robbed the grave of its victory; free from the fear of life for “*to live is Christ and to die is gain*.” By Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, we have been given freedom to come boldly to the throne of grace. Repentance is now a joyful and liberating experience, for Jesus has borne our shame. We don’t have to pretend or pose anymore. We have been set free to risk new things, for life is no longer about performance or the fear of failure, but about God’s praise and glory. Oh, the difference the gospel makes!

Pray

Father, by the power of the gospel, I will seek to stand firm in these and the many more freedoms You have won for me. I never want to fall back into the old ways of legalism and moralism, grace-less performance and fearful living. In Jesus’ strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Read

1 Peter 4

Live

In my Bible, the title over this chapter is, 'Living for God'. I like that a lot as it implies that if Christ suffered for us, we too should be prepared to suffer for Him. Peter pushes further into a life of holiness and calls us to give up sins like lewdness, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, etc. He reminds us that we are living in the end times and admonishes all believers to be serious and watchful in their prayers, strong in their love for one another, and hospitable to one another without grumbling. We are to make use of our gifts as good stewards of God's grace, whether it is in speaking or serving. We should do all to bring glory to God.

I love how Peter tells us to not think suffering for Christ a strange thing, but rather an occasion to rejoice. I must say though, I haven't met many who do, and I certainly have never heard anyone pray for it. Peter is introducing a God who is gentle, whose heart is simply irresistible to us. His easy yoke and light burden beckon us. His promise of soul-rest has never been timelier or more needed, for we are all restless in the day in which we live.

We need to thank God for being so welcoming, understanding, and kind. Sometimes the burden and confusion we are feeling are connected to old wounds; fresh hurts then become like a magnifying glass or a microphone by which God reminds us of unfinished business in our souls. Like a broken bone that wasn't set properly, broken hearts that weren't healed the first time are susceptible to reoccurring pain. But what a Father we have who does not turn away from our tears, our brokenness or our weaknesses. I love how He fills our hearts with His peace, and kisses our souls with the assurance that He is more than enough. What's not to love about this God, who works all things for our good and for His glory ... which will all be revealed one day!

Pray

Father, as usual, this isn't about me but about Your glory. Help me walk today as a person of faith, hope, and love. Give me the wisdom and power You promise. Bring much glory to Yourself. Write stories of repentance and restoration by the grace and truth of the gospel. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Read

1 Peter 5

Live

The final chapter of the first book of Peter contains charges to elders and their respective flocks. As a fellow elder, Peter commands them to shepherd the flock of God among them, serving as overseers. The younger members of the flock are commanded to submit to their elders and to one another with humility. Peter tells his readers to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and cast their cares upon Him, trusting that He will exalt them in due time because He cares for them. Since their adversary the devil walks about like a lion seeking to devour them, they are to be sober and vigilant, resisting him steadfast in the faith. They can take courage in knowing that other people are suffering as well. Please note it says to humble yourselves. I hear some people pray, "Lord, please humble me." I usually tell them that they really don't want that to happen. If the Lord has to humble us, it is going to hurt; we need to do it ourselves.

The first letter draws to a close with a prayer that God will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us. I'm sure, like me, you have felt the pain of realising something that worked in the past is not working in the present moment, the confusion of not knowing what to do next, the helplessness of being out of control, being in a place of knowing that if God doesn't show up, you are goosed! I have found in those times all I can do is abandon myself to the God who alone can part Red Seas, overthrow whole Midianite armies with 300 gun-less soldiers, take down Goliaths with a pebble, and feed multitudes with a few fish and pieces of bread. There is no other balm sufficient for the pain. There is no other rest sufficient for the exhaustion. There is no other hope sufficient for the multiple issues in front of us. Only Jesus!

Pray

Father, I abandon myself to You today for Jesus is that dead man who now lives. He is the One who is redeeming His bride and making all things new. It is Your unfailing love that I can, and must, hope in. There is no other supply sufficient to the need. There is no other strength sufficient for the task. I will trust in You and in Your unfailing love. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Read

2 Peter 1

Live

Figuring out the timing of these epistles of Peter becomes a little clearer in this second letter as he makes reference in verse 14 to his imminent death. It is generally accepted that Peter died during the reign of Nero and since Nero committed suicide in 68AD, the epistle must be dated before then. It was probably written during 67AD. The place of writing is uncertain, though if written while imprisoned shortly before his death, it would have been in Rome.

I love how Peter reminds us that God's divine power is the source of all things that pertain to life and godliness, even to the point of being partakers of the divine nature. We are reminded of the beauties and depth in following hard after the things of God. This is an amazing passage and warrants an in-depth study. In light of his impending death, Peter wants to stir up the believers and make sure they will be mindful of these things after he is gone. Remember, this man was an eyewitness to the glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.

It is easy to forget that we are living in a fallen world among a people with fragile hearts. When our fellowship with God gets broken, we are all capable of acting out in very harmful ways, losing perspective, and loving poorly. That God would tolerate us in those times of disconnect is extraordinary. That God still treasures us when we lose touch with gospel truth is astonishing. When we complain about a stony, silent heaven, He is actively, quietly guiding our every footstep. When we try to ignore, spite, or run away from Him, He is just as resolved to see us through to the end of our journey. The gospel really is *this* big and *this* good because our God is a huge God who loves us with *agape* love. Such love melts icy hearts, gentles rigid souls, and calms racing thoughts.

Pray

Father, the older I've become, the more I've come to appreciate the many characters and voices You have recorded for me in Your Word. There's no moment or scenario I'll experience in life that You haven't anticipated, such is the reach and riches of the Scriptures. All I really need is Jesus, plus what You choose to give me. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Live

The title in my Bible over this chapter reveals Peter's theme: 'False Teachers and Their Destructions'. Just as there were false prophets in Old Testament times, so there would be false teachers in the church. Peter takes a shot at describing how destructive these false teachers are. By denying the Lord, they will secretly introduce destructive heresies. The worst thing is that many will follow them and the way of truth will be blasphemed. How sad this is. Peter gives a pretty graphic description of the coming judgment illustrating the doom of false teachers, reminding his readers of what happened to the angels who sinned, of the ancient world destroyed by the flood, and of the fiery end of Sodom and Gomorrah. Surely God knows how to reserve the wicked for the day of punishment. The example of Lot shows that He also knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

This is an incredible passage of God's credibility and capability. In arrogance, these false teachers revile against authority, all the while wallowing in pleasure and lusts as they circulate among the Christians they seek to influence. Like the prophet Balaam, they are motivated by the wages of unrighteousness and have forsaken the right way. Peter likens them to a dog returning to its own vomit and a sow to wallow in its own mire.

I love how God is always ahead of the enemy. He never has to scratch His head in confusion, cover His face in embarrassment, or have to resort to 'plan B'. God perfectly executes His sovereign will, from naming the stars to numbering our hairs. Our Champion Jesus holds the keys of death and hell and everything else. We don't have to be afraid to die or to live because He has robbed the grave of its victory, removed the sting of death, and defeated the devil and all the powers of darkness.

Pray

Father, because You are the First and the Last, we don't have to be afraid of anything in between. You are God, and we are not. You'll never leave me or release Your grip on me or regret saving me. Free me even more fully from my fears that I might live more fully to the praise of Your glory. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Live

'The Day of the Lord' is the title in my Bible for this final chapter. Peter seeks to stir up his readers by reminding them to heed the words of the prophets and apostles of the Lord, especially in regard to the promise of His coming. In the last days scoffers will come who will conveniently forget that the Word which tells of the judgment day by fire is the same Word which brought about the destruction of the world by flood. Any delay is not to be construed as slackness on the Lord's part, for time means nothing to the Lord. Rather, delay is an indication of the Lord's longsuffering. He does not want any to perish but for all to repent. When the day of the Lord does come, it will be unexpected, like a thief in the night. A mighty roar will dissolve the heavens and the earth with all its works. In light of all this, we are exhorted to live holy and blameless lives, and we should view the longsuffering of the Lord as an opportunity to proclaim with urgency the message of salvation to our family, friends, and neighbours.

With a final exhortation to beware lest we fall, and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, Peter brings his second epistle to a close with a beautiful doxology to Christ: *"To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."* I love how God adopted us to be His beloved sons and daughters, and by His grace He is growing us to become like Jesus. Charles Surgeon said, "The purest minds need stirring at times. It would be a great pity to stir up impure minds. That would only be to do mischief; but pure minds may be stirred up as much as you please, and the more the better." My hope and prayer is that these letters from our friend Peter will stir up not just your mind to consider the return of the Lord, but also your passion to serve and love Him even more fervently as we live in these last days.

Pray

Father, help me today to consider what failures I need to own. And what grace do I need to extend? While there's no condemnation, there's plenty of room for conviction. Be pleased to do well beyond all I can ask or imagine. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?



REFLECT

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