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How to Use *Life Design*



LIFE DESIGN: Bible Study Designed for the Life You Live. These Bible study materials are designed to engage adult learners in inductive Bible study and in applying the truths of that study to their daily lives.

As you prepare to teach these lessons, keep these two factors in mind:

- The FOCUS of productive adult Bible learning is the learner. The intent of teaching is not teaching, but learning—the learner's learning.
- The GOAL of productive adult Bible learning is an appropriate life-response to Biblical truth. You do not teach simply to impart information; you teach so that the Holy Spirit of God can use the truths of the Word of God to change the child of God into the image of the Son of God.

The Lesson Plan

Each *Life Design* lesson has three distinct parts. GETTING STARTED is the attention-getter The questions and activities "set the table," as it were, for the Bible study. SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES is the heart of the lesson. A series of inductive Bible study questions leads the teacher and learners through the Biblical text. MAKING IT PERSONAL applies the truth to life.

As is true of any teaching experience, you can adapt the parts of the lesson to fit your particular class. You may choose to alter the beginning activities or change the focus of the application. You will find more material in the Bible study than you can cover in one class session. Ask God to help you as you tailor the lesson for your learners.

The Study Book

This leader's guide is designed to accompany the Bible study book. As the teacher, you will want a copy of the Bible study. Commit to working through the questions before you plan your lesson. We encourage you to distribute Bible study books to your learners. Urge them to complete the study before class. The more your learners have studied on their own, the better the class discussions will be. When a question in the leader's guide is picked up from the Bible study book, you will notice the question number in parentheses. The answers to the questions are usually in the lesson commentary. They are also grouped together in the back of this book.

Other Resources

If you want to use transparencies as you teach, a packet of sixteen full-color transparencies is available. If you prefer to use PowerPoint, the resource CD includes a PowerPoint presentation for each lesson.

Some teachers stay very close to the outline as they teach. If this is true of you, and if you want your learners to capture that outline, reproducible in-class worksheets are included on the CD. The same worksheets may be downloaded from the Web and photocopied for class members. Visit www.regularbaptistpress.org/downloads or www.rbpadultministries.org. Thank you for choosing *Life Design* teaching materials. May God richly bless you and your learners as you study and apply His Word.

Preface

Feeling stress? Welcome to an exciting part of the Bible, 1 Peter. You have the privilege this quarter of leading your learners in a study that meets them right where they (and you) live—facing the difficulties, trials, and even persecutions of life. In this study of 1 Peter you will explore practical truths that provide tremendous help to you and your learners as well as great doctrinal truths. The name of this study guide and the theme of these lessons is *Living in Hostile Territory by the Grace of God.* In some way every lesson answers the question, How can I handle the trials of life by the grace of God?

The cover of this study shows a battlefield laced with landmines. Those landmines represent the trials we face in life. Trials will undo us if we are not careful to see them from God's perspective and rely on His grace to guide us. God will help us successfully navigate through the battlefield of life, overcoming trials and experiencing the joy of growing in Christ. First Peter helps us to fix our eyes on God and avoid the dangers of the trials of life.

Resources for This Course

The transparency packet for this course (RBP0032) includes a transparency on which to record the summary statements from each lesson on 1 Peter. The transparency will help you track and review these lessons. Starting with lesson 1, use transparency 1 at the end of each lesson or at the beginning of the next lesson to record the summary statement for each lesson. You may use the suggestions in this leader's guide or ask your learners to suggest summary statements.

The Resource CD (RBP0033) for this course includes a PowerPoint presentation for each lesson. All of the transparencies are part of the PowerPoint presentation. The transparencies are also included on the CD as printable PDFs. If you would like to make your own transparencies or PowerPoint slides, the CD includes backgrounds ready for your own text.

To help in your promotion of this course, the CD includes a PowerPoint slide, posters, and a flyer. You can add your group's information to all of the promotional material.

The CD also provides in-class worksheets. Each in-class worksheet has a fill-in-the-blank outline that follows the corresponding outline in this leader's guide.

The CD also offers supplemental case studies. Each case study can be used as an in-class review, as material for a midweek Bible study, or as an e-mail attachment to your learners. E-mailing the case studies to your learners will emphasize living out the truth in daily life. You may want to enlist a learner to handle collecting e-mail addresses and e-mailing the case studies each week.

In addition, the CD includes a printable verse card for each lesson's key verse or verses. Blank verse cards are also included so you can enter different or additional verses for your learners to memorize. For your convenience, the verse cards are set for printing on Avery business cards. Use the Avery product number 8869 to avoid cutting apart the verse cards. You can find Avery business cards at avery.com. You could also simply print the verse cards on heavy paper and cut them apart using a paper cutter. Or you could e-mail the verse cards to your learners and have them print and cut their own.

LESSON 1

Comeback

Scripture Focus

1 Peter 1:1, 2

Key Verses

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18, 19).

Overview

This lesson introduces you to the man Peter, to his readers, and to the purpose for his writing this book. Though Peter became a great apostle for the Lord, he first experienced an epic failure. His return from that failure by God's grace provides us with an example of coming back from spiritual failure.

Topic

Spiritual comebacks

Theme

God desires that we come back from spiritual failure in our lives.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will tell the Lord each day that he is making a new start for Him.

Outline

I. The Writer, Peter (1 Pet. 1:1)
   A. His background
   B. His conversion and name change
   C. His denial of Christ
   D. His commission
   E. His apostleship
   F. His ministry
II. The Date and Place of Writing (1 Pet. 5:13)
III. Peter's Readers (1 Pet. 1:1, 2)
   A. Their geographical position
   B. Their spiritual position
IV. Peter's Purpose (1 Pet. 1:7)

Materials

- **RBP transparencies 1, 2, and 3**
- **Lesson 1 case study from resource CD**
- **Matthew 4:18, 19 verse card from resource CD**

Getting Started

Choose one of the following activities to introduce this lesson.

First Peter Passages

To stir learners' thinking about 1 Peter, ask them to look through that book and jot down any favorite or familiar passages. Ask volunteers to share some of these passages.

First Peter contains many familiar and favorite passages. Let's think for a few minutes about the human writer God used to pen these words.

Epic Failure

Ask: Describe a time when you miserably failed at a new venture. How did you respond? Did you eventually become successful in your venture? If so, what made the difference? (Questions 1–3)

Peter was an epic failure spiritually, but Jesus did not let him give up. He challenged him and helped him to become an important part in God's ministry in the early church.

Searching the Scriptures

I. The Writer, Peter (1 Pet. 1:1)

A. His background (Matt. 4:18, 19; 8:14; John 1:40–44; Acts 4:13)

Peter's hometown was Bethsaida (John 1:44). He is identified as the son of Jona (or John; John 1:42) and as having a brother named Andrew (Matt. 4:18). Peter was married (Matt. 8:14), although there is no record of the name of his wife or any children.

Luke spoke of Peter and John as "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). In light of the context, this does not mean illiterate or lacking in intelligence. It probably signifies that they were without formal training in the Scriptures.

Peter was a fisherman by trade, a job he did with his brother (Matt. 4:18). Fishermen weren't known for their intelligence, though they knew how to work patiently and persistently.

ASK: Based on Peter's background, do you think you would have identified him as a person likely to succeed in ministry? Explain. **ASK:** How would persistence and patience help Peter in ministry? **READ:** Acts 4:13. **ASK:** What made the ultimate difference for Peter as he ministered for the Lord? (Questions 4–6)

B. His conversion and name change (John 1:40–42)

Andrew introduced his brother Peter to Jesus (John 1:40–42). Although the

record of Peter meeting Jesus does not make a definite statement that "Peter believed in the Lord," he probably was saved at that time.

At the time of Peter's conversion, Christ gave him a new name. John 1:42 states, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." His name by birth was Simon, "God has heard." Then Christ gave him the Aramaic name Cephas, which means a small stone or rock. The Greek equivalent is *petros*, from which we derive the name Peter.

This new name would show something about Christ's goal for the character of Peter, that Peter would be bold and strong like a rock.

READ: Luke 22:31–34. **ASK:** What three words do you think Peter would use to describe himself at this point in his life? **ASK:** Do you think he would use the words "bold" and "strong" to describe himself? Explain. (Questions 7, 8)

C. His denial of Christ (Matt. 26:30–34, 69–75; Luke 22:31–34, 54–62)

Peter's denial of Christ probably marked the lowest point of his life. When Christ announced that someone would betray Him, Peter fervently declared that he would never do that. At that point the Lord predicted that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster would crow in the morning.

Sadly, like all true prophecy, this came to pass. Peter denied Christ three times. He even swore that his lie was the truth. When all of this happened, Jesus simply looked at Peter. What a look that must have been. Peter, remembering the words of Jesus, went out and wept bitter tears of repentance.

READ: Luke 22:54–62. **ASK:** What three words would you use to describe Peter at this point in his life? **ASK:** Do you think he would use the words "bold" and "strong" to describe himself? Explain. (Questions 9, 10)

D. His commission (Matt. 4:18, 19; John 21:15–22)

Peter's first commission came with the Lord's call: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). He had been a fisher of fish, taking that which was alive from its natural habitat and bringing it into the realm of death. Christ called him to fish for people, taking those who were dead and bringing them into the realm of life in Christ. Jesus commissioned Peter to be a disciple or follower. He later would be chosen as an apostle.

Peter had a profitable three-year course under the Master Teacher, but at the end he experienced failure and finally went back to his fishing (John 21:3). It was at the seashore of Galilee that the Lord recommissioned him (vv 15–22).

Before Peter could fulfill the Lord's design for his life, he needed restoration. For this reason the Lord probed his heart.

READ: John 21:15. **ASK:** What heart-probing question did the Lord ask Peter? (Question 11)

Peter had once boasted that, in spite of the failures of others, he would never deny his Lord. After Peter's failure, the Lord knew that the old self-confidence was gone, and He encouraged Peter by entrusting to him a very important ministry: "Feed my lambs." Two more times the Lord placed His finger on the tender spot in Peter's life, and two more times He expressed His confidence in Peter by commissioning him, "Feed my sheep." Peter still had to learn the lesson of complete obedience and singleness of purpose: "Follow thou me." He still needed to experience the enabling of Pentecost, but he was becoming a great apostle.

ASK: How do you think Peter was affected when Jesus confidently commissioned him to "feed His sheep"? (Question 12)

Peter needed to be challenged and commissioned again by Jesus. But going to our Savior is not always our first reaction when we fail Him.

ASK: How do we as believers sometimes respond when we fail the Lord? (Question 13)

E. His apostleship (1 Pet. 1:1; Mark 3:13–16; 5:37; Luke 8:49–56)

Christ chose twelve of His disciples to be specially "sent ones," or apostles. One of them was Peter, who identified himself as an apostle in the very first verse of his letters. Peter was part of that inner circle of disciples, along with James and John, who were privileged to be with Christ on special occasions.

F. His ministry (Acts 1:15; 2:14–40; 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:1–11; 10:34–48; Gal. 2:7)

The Gospel accounts end soon after Peter's dismal, spiritual failure and Christ's restoration of him. In the book of Acts Peter is an enthusiastic, energetic worker for God.

In Acts 1 he served as chairman at the election of a replacement for Judas (v. 15). He delivered the great sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–40). He acted as the explainer (apologist) for the new faith (Acts 3:12–26; 4:8–12). He was the moderator in resolving the Ananias—Sapphira problem (Acts 5:1–11). He brought the message of salvation to Gentiles (Acts 10:34–48). He was recognized as having the gospel to the circumcision (Jews) committed to him (Gal. 2:7). And, finally, he was the writer of the Biblical books that bear his name.

ASK: Based on Peter's life, how would you respond to the notion that God has no use for people who fail Him? (Question 14)

II. The Date and Place of Writing (1 Pet. 5:13)

Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13), but there is some question about the location of this "Babylon." Was this the literal city of Babylon, in the area now known as Iraq? Or was this a symbolic reference to Rome (as in Rev. 17)? Bible-believing, honest scholars stand on both sides of this question. The usual reading of this passage seems to indicate that the literal Babylon is in view since nothing hints that the name should be interpreted figuratively.

Peter probably wrote this epistle sometime around AD 63. This is determined from the fact that Nero's large-scale persecution of the church came in AD 64, and it seems that the people whom Peter was addressing were beginning to face, but had not fully encountered, that persecution for their faith.

Two persons are mentioned along with Peter in 1 Peter 5:12 and 13. Silvanus (Silas) was probably the messenger who carried the epistle and was perhaps the one who actually wrote down the words that Peter gave as directed by the Holy Spirit. Mark, probably the spiritual son of Peter, sent along his greetings as well since he was near where Peter was living.

III. Peter's Readers (1 Pet. 1:1, 2)

A. Their geographical position (1:1)

READ: 1 Peter 1:1.

Peter spoke of his readers as "strangers scattered" throughout the five provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These areas today form most of Turkey.

TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 2 to show the provinces of Peter's audience.



"Strangers" indicates that they were aliens or temporary residents in the land. Peter was describing Jewish believers who had settled among non-Jewish people.

"Scattered" speaks of Jews living outside Palestine. They may have been in the five provinces by choice because of business opportunities, or they may have been scattered by reason of the persecutions following Pentecost. Jews from some of the very provinces Peter listed had gathered at Jerusalem when Peter preached his sermon and three thousand received his word and were baptized (Acts 2:9–11).

B. Their spiritual position (1:2)

READ: 1 Peter 1:2. **ASK:** What was the readers' spiritual position? (Question 15)

From the human perspective we are well aware that the unsaved must receive Christ and believe on Him in order to be saved. Peter discussed salvation from the divine perspective and listed three facets of personal redemption.

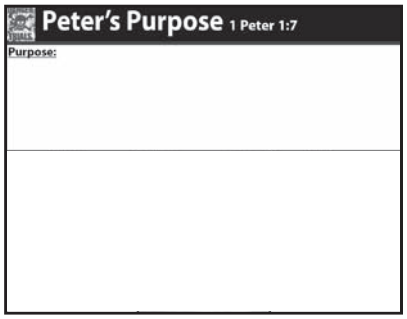
The first facet is the act of God the Father, Who in a deliberative judgment (foreknowledge) chooses us from before the foundation of the world. Our election of God is demonstrated when we come to Jesus Christ in simple faith, for "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

The second facet is the work of the Holy Spirit—"sanctification of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit takes the one chosen of God and sets him apart for conviction of unbelief, repentance toward God, and faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to bring us to faith in Christ.

The third facet is the justification and cleansing which became ours through the blood of Jesus Christ.

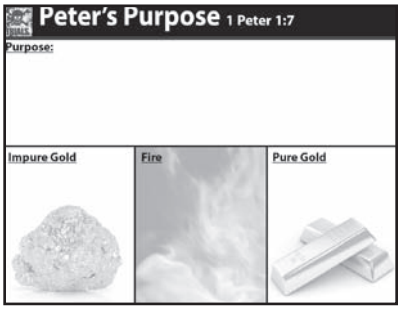
In the mind of God there is an assured goal. In His sovereign election of sinners to become part of the divine family through no merit of their own, He has revealed the thoroughness and completeness of that redemption. Romans 8:29 and 30 mention no break between foreknowledge and glorification. In God's sight it is as though the work were already completed, for He sees us seated in the heavenlies with His Son.

IV. Peter's Purpose (1 Pet. 1:7)



TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 3 with the bottom half covered. **READ:** 1 Peter 1:7. **ASK:** What is the purpose for Peter's letter as found in this verse? Record the answer on the transparency. (Question 16)

Woven throughout this book are several references to suffering and persecution (1:6, 7; 2:19–25; 3:16, 17; 4:12–19). The believers to whom Peter was writing were beginning to face actual persecution for their faith. Their persecution was a result of their living out their faith in hostile, pagan society. The persecution included slander, violent riots, and social rejection. Peter's purpose for this letter was to help those believers correctly handle the persecution and trials they were facing. He used the picture of the purification of gold by fire to help his readers understand the benefits they would realize if they handled persecution and trials correctly.



TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 3. **ASK:** What does the impure gold symbolize in the key verse, 1 Peter 1:7? **ASK:** What does the fire symbolize? **ASK:** To what does the pure gold refer? Record learners' answers on the transparency. (Questions 17–19)

Although many of us have not faced much—if any—actual physical persecution, we all still face trials, difficulties, and opposition. First Peter teaches us how to handle these trials, difficulties, and opposition by the grace of God. This is why this series is titled *Living in Hostile Territory by the Grace of God.*

Peter suffered a miserable spiritual failure, but he came back to have an

effective ministry. He came out as pure gold and ready for God to use him.

We all have spiritual failures, but we, like Peter, do not need to remain in that condition. Christ will welcome us back from failure to serve the Lord effectively in some capacity. Someone has said that today is the first day of the rest of our lives. That statement applies to our spiritual lives as well. We should make a new start each day of our lives.

Probably the best way to make a new start is to keep current in confessing sin and tell the Lord each morning that you want to put the sins behind and make a fresh start for Him. Making a fresh start with the Lord each day could be just what you need to turn your spiritual life around.

DISCUSS: How will making a fresh start each day help us to handle the trials of life? (Question 20)

Making It Personal

Prayer

Have a time of silent prayer, encouraging learners to make a fresh start with the Lord today. If unsaved learners are present, encourage them to make a start with the Lord by accepting Him as their personal Savior. (Question 21)

Use the case study for lesson 1 as desired.

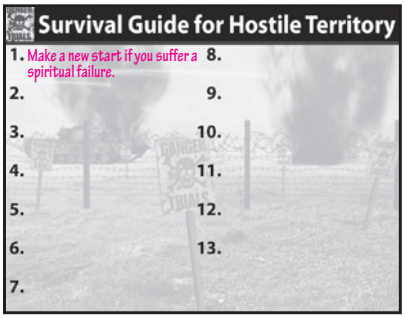
Coming Back

Ask: What are some steps we can take to come back from spiritual failure to effective ministry? (*Regularly confessing our sins; renewing our time in God's Word; evaluating our priorities; learning to depend on God's grace; restoring broken relationships.*)

Encourage your learners to take steps back to God if they have failed Him. (Questions 22, 23)

Review Transparency

Use transparency 1 to review the survival guide entry for this lesson: Make a new start if we suffer a spiritual failure.



Memory Verse

Distribute copies of the Matthew 4:18 and 19 verse card from the resource CD. Encourage the learners to memorize the verse.