

THE
GRACE
BIBLE

1 PETER 2

SAMPLE CHAPTER

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What is The Grace Bible?

My only aim is to complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. (Acts 20:24)

The good news of God’s grace declares that God is not mad at you, he’s mad about you. The One who sits on a throne of grace blesses you, not because you are good, but because he is good and he longs to be good to you.

Grace declares that God is for us and with us, and he freely gives us everything we need for life and godliness. Grace invites you to come in from the cold, rest from your labors, and feast at the table of his abundance. Grace is what makes the new covenant new and the good news *good news*.

If you have ever asked, “How do I read this scripture through a new covenant lens?” *The Grace Bible* is for you.

This book is not a law Bible with rules to follow, nor is it a works Bible that tells you what to do. It is not a judgment Bible to fear, or a guilt Bible to make you feel bad. It is a *grace* Bible that reveals the good news found on every page of scripture.

In this study Bible, you will find no guilt or condemnation and none of the usual calls for blood, sweat, and tears. Our focus will be on Jesus Christ—who he is, what he has done, and what you can do because of what he has done.

The Grace Bible is for the weary and those tired of pretending. It’s for the burned out, the fed up, and the knocked down. It’s for those who are in distress, or debt, or are discontented.

It’s for all of us who need grace.

1 Peter 2

1 Peter 2:1–3

¹ Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

2:1 **Therefore.** Because you have been born again of imperishable seed (1 Pet. 1:23), you can partake in the divine nature of Christ (2 Pet. 1:4).

Putting aside. Lay aside the old life and put on the new self.

Many believers are trying to reform their old selves. They think that if they tried a little harder, they could make themselves good and holy. Peter demolishes that dead-end thinking. “You have been born again (1 Pet. 1:3, 23). You are a royal priesthood and a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9).” If Peter was an old covenant law preacher he would say, “Thou shalt not be malicious, deceitful, or hypocritical lest the hand of the Lord smite thee for thy disobedience.” But Peter is a new covenant grace preacher who reminds us who we are (chosen, born again, holy, royal) and then shows us how to experience the new life that is already ours in Christ.

Malice, deceit, hypocrisy. Peter’s list of fleshly deeds is similar to Paul’s lists (Gal. 5:19–21, Eph. 4:31, Col. 3:8). All these things proceed from a selfish heart and corrupt us (Mark 7:20–23).

2:2 **Newborn babies** are known for their hunger and rapid growth. If we want to grow, we need to feed on the Bread of Life (John 6:51) and consume the pure milk of the Living Word.

Long for. The operative verb in this passage indicates we are to crave or earnestly desire the word. This does not mean we need to study the Bible for hours every day. It means we grow by feeding on Jesus the Living Word (see also 2 Pet. 3:18).

The pure milk of the word is the Living Word of God. It is the Lord himself (1 Pet. 1:23).

May grow. Growth is a natural process that can be hindered by malnutrition and poor diet (e.g., the cares of the world that choke the word (Matt. 13:22)).

Salvation. Growing in respect to salvation means growing into who you are in Christ. You are a child of God, so act like it. You are holy, so be holy (1 Pet. 1:15). Be who you truly are. This is Peter’s version of “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Php. 2:12).

2:3 **If you have tasted** or “if you are a believer.” Peter is speaking to “you who believe” (1 Pet. 2:7).

Two kinds of people tasted the kindness of the Lord. There are those who have heard the gospel, but they have not allowed it to take root in their heart and grow (Jas. 1:21). They’ve had a taste but spat it out. Then there are those who have received the word with thanksgiving and faith and have been born again (1 Pet. 1:23). Peter is talking to the second group here. He is saying, “If you have tasted that the Lord is good, then taste some more. Crave the pure milk of his word and grow. Feast on his goodness and be satisfied.”

Tasted. Peter is riffing on Psalm 34:8: “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” The Hebrew word for good in this psalm is an expansive word that means beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease,

favour, fine, glad, joyful, kindly, loving, merry, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare. The Lord is the very definition of good.

Some Bibles translate Peter's words as "if you have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*." The kindness or graciousness of God was demonstrated on the cross (Tit. 3:4), and it is his kindness that leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). God reveals his grace and kindness to us today, tomorrow and forever more (1 Cor. 2:9, Eph. 2:7).

1 Peter 2:4-5

⁴ And coming to him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

2:4 **A living stone.** Jesus is the living stone not cut with human hands (Dan. 2:34). Peter, whose name meant rock, liked rocky metaphors. He referred to Jesus as the cornerstone, the stumbling stone, a choice stone, and the rock of offense; see 1 Pet. 2:8.

Rejected by men. The Messiah was rejected by the nation he came to save and by his own disciples. Indeed, he was rejected three times by Peter himself (Matt. 26:34).

Choice or chosen by God; see 1 Pet. 2:6.

Precious. The One who was rejected by men is highly valued by God. The Living Stone became the cornerstone and foundation of his spiritual habitation.

2:5 **Living stones.** In union with Christ the Living Stone, we are the living stones of God's holy habitation.

Being built up. We are being built *up* not built *into*. We are already God's holy habitation.

Peter uses a number of corporate words to describe the church. We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9). We are the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17) and the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2). Here the church is described as a spiritual house or sanctuary that is being built up or built together one stone (or believer) at a time (Eph. 2:22).

A spiritual house. We are the house or temple of God and his Spirit dwells within us (1 Cor. 3:16). In the New Testament, believers are often referred to as the family or household of God (Matt. 12:50, Mark 3:35, John 11:52, 2 Cor. 6:18, Eph. 2:19, Gal. 3:26, 6:10, 1 Pet. 4:17).

A holy priesthood. In Christ you are holy.

You were sanctified by God the Father (Jude 1:1, KJV), God the Son (Heb. 2:11, 10:10, 14, 13:12), and God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16, 2 Th. 2:13, 1 Pet. 1:2). You are well and truly sanctified.

Priesthood. In the old covenant, only certain people could serve as priests, but in the new covenant, every believer is a priest or minister offering spiritual sacrifices to the Lord. Indeed, you are not just a priest, but a king-priest and a royal priesthood; see 1 Pet. 2:9.

Spiritual sacrifices. In the old covenant, the priests brought animal sacrifices that could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4), but in the new covenant we bring "sacrifices" of praise and thanksgiving to

the One who carried all our sins (Heb. 13:15). We present our bodies as holy and living sacrifices in a spiritual act of worship (Rom. 12:1). We don't do this out of a sense of obligation, but in response to God's great love.

God is for us and with us and he wants the best for us. He treasures us and adopts us into his family. He watches over us and gives us everything we need. Why wouldn't we worship such a good God?

1 Peter 2:6–8

⁶ For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed.”⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone,”⁸ and, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

2:6 **In Scripture.** Peter is quoting Isaiah 28:16, a prophecy which he heard from the Lord (see Matt. 21:42).

Zion is another name for the city of God. It is the place God dwells, which in the new covenant is the body of Christ (Heb. 12:22).

A choice stone. The original word for choice (*eklektos*) is the same word which is sometimes translated as chosen (e.g., Luke 23:35). Jesus is both the choice stone and the Chosen of God.

Cornerstone. The cornerstone is the first stone laid in a new structure. As such, it sets a mark for the rest of the building. Jesus is the cornerstone on which God's house is being built (Eph. 2:20).

He who believes in him. The chief takeaway of the new covenant is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Will not be disappointed. You will never regret putting your faith in the Lord.

In his original prophecy, Isaiah said, “He who believes in it (the costly cornerstone) will not be disturbed” or panicked or be in haste. Peter interprets this as “not be disappointed” or disgraced or put to shame. (Paul draws a similar conclusion in Romans 9:33.) Put your faith in imperfect people and you will be disappointed, but the Lord will never let you down. His love never fails (1 Cor. 13:8).

2:7 **Precious value.** Unlike those who reject Jesus, believers honor Jesus as the cornerstone of God's habitation, and the foundation of his redemptive purposes.

The original word for precious value (*time*) is the same word that is translated elsewhere as honor (1 Pet. 1:7, 3:7, 2 Pet. 1:17). Believers honor Jesus Christ as the Son sent to save us, the high priest who represents us, and the Lord whose Name is above all.

The stone which the builders rejected. Peter starts with a prophecy (see previous verse), then segues into a psalm (Ps. 118:22). This psalm must have been one of his favorites for he included it in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 4:11). Perhaps he was inspired by the Lord who also quoted this psalm (see Matt. 21:42).

The builders. The Jews were so proud of the temple they had built that they bragged to Jesus about its magnificent stones (Mark 13:1). In their minds, they had created something that would impress God himself. Yet when the Son of God and the Living Stone showed up, they didn't want to know him. Those who are trying to impress the Lord with their works and sacrifices are dishonoring the Lord and his sacrifice.

2:8 **A stone of stumbling.** Jesus is the cornerstone (Ps. 118:22, Is. 28:16, Zech. 10:4, Eph. 2:20), the top stone (Zech. 4:7), and the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4) who is in the path of every person. Either we will fall on the stone and be broken in repentance (Matt. 21:44), or we will stumble over the stone offended. The unbelieving Jews were in the second group.

A rock of offense. Those who have invested their lives in works of righteousness are offended by the message of grace. They do not care to hear that their good works count for nothing in the economy of grace.

They stumble. By rejecting God's Son, the Jews stumbled or fell from their privileged position as God's chosen people (Rom. 9:31–32).

Disobedient to the word. The original word for disobedient (*apeitheo*) means to disbelieve. Those who are disobedient, such as the religious Jews who rejected the cornerstone, disobey Christ's call to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).

This doom they were also appointed. Those who trust in themselves and their works will fall, and this was foreseen by the prophets (e.g., Is. 8:14–15).

1 Peter 2:9–10

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

2:9 **But you.** Believers (1 Pet. 1:8). Those who see Jesus as the precious cornerstone (1 Pet. 2:6–7).

A chosen race. Believers are God's tribe, his kin and household. Once upon a time, we were part of Adam's family. But then we were chosen and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8:15).

A royal priesthood. Like Melchizedek, who was a king and a priest (Heb. 7:1), Christians are king-priests or priest-kings (Rev. 1:6, 5:10).

If we are to rule and reign in the Name of the Servant-king, we need to understand our dual vocation as kings and priests. If you get the priestly part but not the kingly part, you'll be servant-minded instead of servant-hearted. And if you get the kingly aspect but not the priestly part, you'll be a tyrant. As kingly-priests we minister with power and authority. As priestly kings we rule as servant-hearted ministers.

A holy nation. We are a holy priesthood, a holy house, and a holy nation. You are not primarily an American, Australian, or Argentinian. You are a Christian, a citizen of a heavenly kingdom and a holy nation belonging to God.

This wonderful promise was originally given to the nation of Israel (Ex. 19:5–6), but the Jews broke the covenant and cut themselves off from God through unbelief. Now the blessings promised to the children of Abraham are for all who share Abraham’s faith (Gal. 3:9).

God’s own possession. You have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23, Tit. 2:14). Since you belong to God, your welfare is his concern. You can be sure that the One who paid such a high price for you can be trusted to keep you safe and secure to the end (1 Cor. 1:8–9).

In the old covenant, the Israelites were told they would be a treasured possession if they kept the law (Ex. 19:5–6). But the new covenant reveals that you are a treasured possession because God loves and treasures you. You are the pearl of great price. Jesus happily gave everything he had to purchase you.

So that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you. To proclaim (*exaggello*) is to publish or show forth. The original word is related to the word for messenger (*aggellos*). As believers, we have been called to proclaim the message of God’s salvation. That doesn’t mean we will all be preachers behind a pulpit, but we are all called to shine with the gifts that God has given us (1 Pet. 4:10).

The excellencies or praises (*arete*) of God refer to his manly attributes in rescuing us from the kingdom of darkness. Although God’s nature has feminine and nurturing characteristics (e.g., Is. 49:15, 66:13, Luke 13:34), his mighty deliverance is portrayed here in masculine terms.

Who has called you. God did not negotiate with the powers of darkness to secure your release. Nor did he engage in some kind of prisoner exchange. When God called you, you came because the word of the king has power (Ecc. 8:4).

Out of darkness. Darkness is a metaphor for evil and sin and anything untouched by the God-who-is-light. Any place the good news of Jesus is not heard or received remains in darkness.

His marvelous light. The light of God’s love is revealed in Jesus Christ, the light of life and the light of the world (John 8:12).

2:10 **Not a people.** Once upon a time, we were nobodies.

The people of God. But now we are somebodies, the dearly-loved children of God (1 John 3:1).

In context, Peter is speaking to believers in churches across five Roman provinces (1 Pet. 1:1). These churches probably contained mixed audiences of Jewish and Gentile believers.

Received mercy. Every believer has received God’s grace and mercy.

Mercy is one facet of God’s grace (Heb. 4:16). *Mercy is God’s compassion for those in need.* Just as we are saved by grace (Eph. 2:5), we are saved by mercy (Tit. 3:5). And just as we are forgiven by grace (Eph. 1:7), we are forgiven by mercy (Heb. 8:12). Just as we receive grace (Rom. 5:17), we receive mercy (2 Cor. 4:1).

Some people beg God for mercy as though God were harsh and aloof, but the gospel declares God’s mercy has been freely given and all we need to do is receive it. The mercy we need is found at the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16).

1 Peter 2:11–12

- ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.
¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.
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2:11 **Beloved.** The original word (*agapetos*) means dearly loved, esteemed, favorite and worthy of love. It is closely related to a verb (*agapao*) that means to be well pleased or fond of or contented. This word captures God’s heart for you. Your heavenly Father is fond of you. You are his esteemed favorite and he is well pleased with you. He looks at you with a feeling of deep contentment knowing that you are his dearly loved child.

I urge you. If Peter was preaching old covenant law he would say, “I command you...” But since he is preaching new covenant grace, he urges, implores, and exhorts us to make the life-giving choice.

Aliens and strangers. Since you are a citizen of a heavenly kingdom (Php. 3:20), don’t act as though you belong to the fallen kingdoms of this world.

Abstain. A preacher of works twists these words into a fitness test. “You have to abstain and avoid sin to purify your soul and make yourself pleasing and acceptable to God.” But that is not how Peter does it. Having established your secure identity (you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood and a holy nature; see 1 Pet. 2:9), he begins to address your behavior, and he does this in a most gracious way. “I urge you.” In the new covenant, behavior always follows identity.

Fleshly lusts are natural desires as opposed to spiritual desires. Some examples of destructive desires are listed in 1 Peter 2:1 and 4:3.

Wage war. When we feed our flesh, but neglect our spirits, our souls wither.

The desires of the self-life are inherently destructive. Just as the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), the fruit of the flesh is corruption (Gal. 6:8). A mind focused on the preservation of self can never fully experience the abundant life that God offers through his Spirit (Rom. 8:6).

Against the soul. The lusts of the flesh wage war against our purified souls (1 Pet. 1:22).

Your born-again soul does not want to sin (1 John 3:9). When you were born again, you were given a new nature with new desires to please the Lord. This is why the former lusts of the flesh wage war against you. They are not on your side. The devil would love for you to reclaim ownership of those old habits, but a better response is to die to sin and live for righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24).

2:12 **Your behavior.** Live in such a way that others see your good works and praise your Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Peter contrasts the good behavior or holy conduct of believers (1 Pet. 1:15, 17, 2:12, 3:1, 8, 16, 2 Pet. 3:11) with the lawless and sensual deeds of the ungodly (1 Pet. 4:3, 2 Pet. 2:7–8, 13–14, 18).

The Gentiles. Unbelievers.

Technically a Gentile was a non-Jew or foreigner. But since Peter’s letter was sent to churches that had Gentile believers in them (1 Pet. 1:1), he is referring to those outside the church.

Slander. False accusations may seem relatively benign, but historically they have been used by the enemies of the church to great effect. In New Testament times religious Jews falsely accused Christians of being opposed to Caesar. “They’re godless heretics who stir up trouble all over the

world” (see Acts 17:6–7, 21:28). By spreading slander, they hoped to stir up civil unrest and provoke the Romans into taking action against Christians.

In Corinth, the Jews brought Paul into the Roman courts on the charge of persuading men to worship God in ways contrary to Jewish law (Acts 18:12–13). On that occasion the Roman proconsul did not take the bait. But there were times when the Jews played the Romans like fiddles (e.g., Acts 21:27ff).

Your good deeds are the things you do when you have been apprehended by the goodness of God.

Since the time of Christ, Christians have been at the forefront of the arts and sciences. Christian trailblazers promoted education, built hospitals, created industries, freed slaves, and defended the rights of women and children. Every year, millions of Christians volunteer to feed the poor, visit the sick and imprisoned, and help refugees. Although Christians can be recognized by their good deeds, we are not defined by our good deeds. We are defined by the love of Christ. The good deeds we do are a response to his great love. See also 1 Peter 3:16.

Glorify God. Those unbelievers who are slandering you may yet be won over by your witness and join you in worshipping the Lord when he returns (*cf.* 1 Pet. 4:16).

Visitation. The original word (*episkope*) means inspection. It is the same word that is used to describe the Lord’s first coming to Israel in Luke 19:44. In context, “the day of visitation” implies the Lord’s final coming or the day of the Lord; see 2 Pet. 3:10.

1 Peter 2:13–15

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

2:13 **Submit yourselves.** To submit means to yield, defer, and respect. It’s something we choose to do in honor of the Lord.

Christians are good neighbors and model citizens. When we disagree with those in authority, we disagree respectfully. When we protest, we protest lawfully.

For the Lord’s sake. Jesus was no rebel and nor are his followers (Rom. 13:1–2).

Every human institution includes your government, your local council, your workplace, your church, and your school board. Peter is not calling for blind obedience (1 Pet. 2:19), but a respectful and humble attitude.

King or emperor or president or prime minister, etc.

2:14 **Governors.** If we are to honor the king (1 Pet. 2:17), we must respect those who have been sent in his name. The apostle Paul, when unjustly brought before Roman governors, typically spoke with courtesy and respect (e.g., Acts 24:10).

2:15 **The will of God** is one of Peter’s favorite phrases (1 Pet. 2:15, 4:2, 6, 19, 5:2). It is God’s will for you to honor and pray for those in authority and bear up patiently under unjust suffering (1 Pet. 2:12–14, 20). It is not God’s will for you to shoot your mouth off, to rebel, and to act unlike Christ.

Doing right is another one of Peter's favorite phrases (see 1 Pet. 2:20, 3:6, 17, 4:19). In the old covenant, doing right meant keeping the rules, but in the new covenant doing right is what we do when we're living in right relationship with the Creator (1 Pet. 2:24, 4:19).

Silence. We do not silence our enemies by engaging in fruitless debates, but by doing good and by praying for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44, Rom. 12:18).

The ignorance of foolish men. Those who slander and falsely accuse the body of Christ (see 1 Pet. 2:12).

1 Peter 2:16–17

¹⁶ Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

2:16 **Act as free men** because in Christ you are free. Let your life be a witness of God's liberating grace. When you submit to your spouse, boss or the king (1 Pet. 2:17, 18, 3:1, 7), do it out of love as a free child of God.

Freedom as a covering for evil. The message of grace has set many people free, but if we use our freedom to rebel or put others down, we've missed the point of grace. Jesus did not set us free from darkness so that we might win arguments or get puffed up with pride. He did it so that we might proclaim the goodness of God and draw others into the Father's loving embrace.

Bondslaves of God. Along with Paul (Rom. 1:1), James (Jas 1:1), and Jude (Jud 1:1), Peter saw himself as a bondservant of God (2 Pet 1:1). This can lead to confusion. You may wonder, am I a son or servant of God? You are a son who serves.

Jesus, the Son of God, took on the form of a bondservant (Php. 2:7). He was not confused about his identity – he was God's Son – but he was servant-hearted (Mark 10:45). Jesus was the Son who served.

In the same way, the apostles identified themselves as servants of Christ. They were saying, "We are the sons of God who serve in the manner in which Christ served." Meaning, they served others (2 Cor. 4:5). They did not serve to curry favor with God, but to reveal the Servant-king and win people to Christ. As Paul said, "I have made myself a servant to all, so that I may win more" (1 Cor. 9:19).

It's the same with us. Although we are free in Christ, we willingly serve in the name of Christ so that the orphans and slaves of this world might come to know their Father who loves them. Like Christ, we are the sons who serve.

2:17 **Honor all people.** The world judges people according to their appearance, pedigree, and performance, but we regard no one from a worldly point of view (2 Cor. 5:16). If Jesus died for them, they matter. Everyone is precious to God.

Love the brotherhood. We honor all people, but we show heartfelt and intentional love to our brothers and sisters in the Lord (1 Pet. 1:22). We love one another by clothing ourselves with humility and preferring one another (Rom. 12:10, 1 Pet. 5:5).

Fear God. Worship the Lord, giving him the reverence and honor due his name.

In the old covenant, you were commanded to, “Fear the Lord your God, and serve him only” (Deu. 6:13). But when Jesus quoted this command to the devil, he changed the word *fear* to *worship* (see Matt. 4:10). To fear the Lord in a new covenant sense is to worship him. This sort of fear has nothing to do with pain and punishment but is a proper response to a God who is holy, righteous, awesome, and good.

Honor the king. We respect those in authority regardless of their political persuasions or character flaws.

Some context will help us grasp the significance of these words. Peter lived most of his life under the rule of tyrants. As a Jew, he was governed by the same ruling council (the Sanhedrin) that tried to murder Jesus and which persecuted the early church. As a Galilean who frequently visited Judea, he was subject to the oppressive rule of the Herodians and Roman governors. And as an apostle, he attracted the hostile attention of the emperor Nero, one of history’s most wicked rulers.

1 Peter 2:18–21

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. ²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps,

2:18 **Servants... masters.** Respect your boss, even if he’s a jerk.

It’s easy to serve a boss who is good and gentle; it’s not so easy if they are unreasonable and demanding. Respect them anyway, says Peter. Serve them as though you were serving the Lord (Eph. 6:7). Pray for them, and in your actions reveal the love of Christ to them.

2:19 **For this finds favor.** Bearing up under unjust treatment is commendable because it shows you are entrusting yourself to the One who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:23).

The sake of conscience toward God. Sometimes you have to choose between obeying God and human authority.

So far Peter has been encouraging us to submit to kings, unreasonable bosses, and every human institution. But that does not mean we should do things that violate our consciences. When Peter and John were commanded by the Sanhedrin to never teach or even speak about Jesus, they refused (see Acts 4:18–20).

We submit to every human authority as an act of obedience to the Lord. But if those authorities ask us to disobey the Lord and do things that violate our conscience, we respectfully refuse, even if it leads to unjust suffering.

Bears up under sorrows. You patiently endure persecution or unjust suffering (see next verse).

Suffering unjustly. Sometimes obeying God leads to unjust treatment from the very authorities you have been treating with respect.

When the Sanhedrin judged Paul to be a troublemaker, he looked them in the eye and said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day” (Acts 23:1). This sort of behavior is commendable, but it can lead to suffering. Paul was beaten, imprisoned, and ultimately executed for refusing to heed those who tried to silence him.

2:20 **When you sin.** There is nothing commendable about bearing up under punishment that is justly deserved.

Do what is right. Doing what is right means living in right relationship with Jesus the Righteous One. It means you are a believer; see 1 Pet. 2:15.

Suffer. “Suffer for doing what is right” can be read as suffering for the sake of righteousness (1 Pet. 3:14) or suffering for being a Christian (1 Pet. 4:16). It’s being persecuted for your faith in Christ.

Patiently endure it. When we are unjustly treated, the flesh reacts with indignation. But Christ, when he was slandered and persecuted, remained silent. He trusted God to work things out (1 Pet. 2:23). When we respond to persecution in the same manner as Christ, our behavior is a witness to others (1 Pet. 3:15–16).

Finds favor with God. The word for *find* should be in italics as it is not in the original text and has been added by translators. Since the word for favor (*charis*) can be translated as grace, a literal reading of this verse is as follows: if you patiently endure, (this is) grace from God. Alternatively, God will give you the grace to patiently endure.

The early Christians were unjustly treated on account of their faith in Christ. They were flogged, imprisoned, and some, including Peter, were martyred. They did not endure because of their intestinal fortitude; they endured because God was with them. In the same way, you will endure your trials when you realize that God is with you and he holds you securely in his hand.

2:21 **Called for this purpose.** This is the life to which we have been called – the life of Christ. It’s a blessed life of doing what is good and right and occasionally suffering for it. As strangers in this world and citizens of another kingdom, we swim against the current.

Leaving you an example. Christ’s reaction to hostility inspires us. He did not fight back or call down heavenly fire on his enemies, but he laid down his life to show us how much he loves us.

Follow in his steps. Jesus wins people to himself when we reveal his sacrificial love to others.

In this me-first world, there is nothing special about defending your views or attacking those who disagree with you. But when you surrender your rights, love your enemies, and entrust yourself to God, you present the world with a picture of a superior reality, one based on love, forgiveness, and peace.

1 Peter 2:22–23

²² “Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth”; ²³ and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously;

2:22 **No sin.** Jesus is the sinless Man from heaven, not born of Adam's line, and the only human who did not grasp, claw, or fight for his rights. He showed us another way to live and then he laid down his sinless life so that we might be free. Because he was without sin, he was able to ransom our lives from sin's captivity.

Deceit. Jesus never said a word he did not mean (the quote is from Is. 53:9). If he had, the Pharisees would have brayed about it and the law teachers would have hung him for it.

We marvel at the Lord's ability to bridle his tongue, as though he was able to refrain from saying what he was thinking. But the Lord's pure speech reflected his pure heart. When you are abiding in the love of the Father, you do not need to watch your words. When you have made God your Source, everything you do and say will be good.

2:23 **Reviled... suffering.** Jesus face hatred and violence and this was not the hatred of social media trolls, but the vitriol of the most powerful men in Israel and their fanatical followers. Jesus was often slandered (e.g., Matt. 11:19) and on several occasions people tried to murder him (Luke 4:29, 13:31, John 5:18, 7:1).

He uttered no threats. The Lord's silence in the face of injustice speaks volumes (Is. 53:7).

When we are unjustly treated, our flesh reacts with indignation. It cries out in self-defence. But Jesus denied himself and put his faith in his Father.

Entrusting himself. In his darkest hour, Jesus put his life in his Father's hands. As the Son of God, he could have called down fire from heaven or summoned angel armies to slaughter those who were trying to kill him. With a word he could have split the planet. But he stayed silent, like a lamb to the slaughter, because he trusted his Father would make things right. In doing this he set an example for us to follow (1 Pet. 2:21).

1 Peter 2:24–25

²⁴ and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were healed. ²⁵ For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

2:24 **Bore our sins.** Jesus is the Lamb of God who carried away the sins of the whole world (John 1:29). He took responsibility for all our sins so that we might be free from that unbearable burden and be reconciled to God.

Die to sin. So that we might be done with sin once and for all.

Jesus broke the prison of sin and secured your freedom. So be free and have nothing to do with your old master sin. Stop acting like the prisoner you once were and enjoy the righteous life that Christ has given you. Reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11).

Live to righteousness. To live to righteousness is to live in right relationship with God. It's living out of your union with the Lord and experiencing life as it was meant to be. It is knowing and being

known; loving and being loved. It is being holy because you are holy. It is seeing the touch of God in everything you do and in everyone you meet.

By his wounds you were healed. Our healing is described in the past tense because all the grace we need to live healed and whole was provided at the cross.

When we pray for healing, we do not need to ask God to provide. Rather, we receive what he has made available to us through his Son. We don't pray like beggars asking God to do what he has done; we pray like commanders resisting the devil and all his filthy diseases. To pray with faith means thanking Jesus for the cross and for the healing that is ours in his Name.

2:25 **Straying like sheep.** At one time we were restless wanderers in need of a shepherd. Like sheep, we had all gone astray (Is. 53:6).

The Shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who calls his sheep by name, watches over them, and lays down his life for them (John 10:11, Heb. 13:20). You can be confident that the Good Shepherd will bring you safely to his heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18).

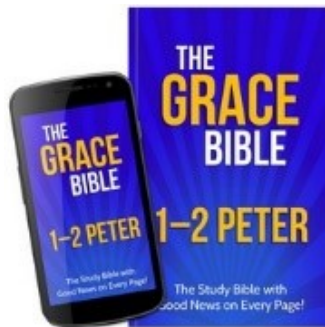
The original word for shepherd (*poimen*) can be translated as pastor (Eph. 4:11). Jesus is not just a pastor, he is *the* Pastor, and what a wonderful pastor he is!

Guardian. The Good Shepherd lovingly watches over your soul. He who saves you, keeps you and protects you through the power of God (Ps. 121:5, 145:20).

The original word for guardian (*episkopos*) is translated elsewhere as bishop or overseer (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim. 3:2), which is why some translations say Jesus is the Bishop or Overseer of your souls.

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