

1 Peter 2:4-12

Week 3 - Built On A Firm Foundation

Learning Objectives

- To understand the importance of having a firm foundation in our faith.
- To understand that the way we live our lives reflects Christ and provides the opportunity to speak of Him to our unbelieving family and friends.

Pray for your time together today.

? Talk about a few of the non-negotiable (“foundational”) items for some of your life decisions (dating/marrying someone, purchasing a house, determining a vacation destination, etc.). Why are these items important?

Optional Transition: The passage today talks about the importance of being built on a firm foundation as believers.

Read Out Loud: 1 Peter 2:4-12 (NIV)

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—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. 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.”

This passage quotes Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22, and Isaiah 8:14 while talking about the cornerstone.

What is a cornerstone? A cornerstone is often the first stone set in a structure. It is important because it acts as the foundation and determines the stability and orientation of the whole structure. All other stones are set in reference to that stone. *Sources:* <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cornerstone> and <http://www.marybakerredlibrary.org/research/laying-the-cornerstone-let-t-his-ceremony-be-simple-prayerful-devout/>

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and,

“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his

wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

? Why is it significant that Jesus is the cornerstone Peter is talking about in this passage? Why would Peter take time in the beginning of this chapter to talk about cornerstones and highlight Old Testament passages?

Possible Answers: He's the foundation of our faith, and the one on whom we rest and depend. He determines how we fit together and our stability as believers. As Christians, how we see and respond to life should be set in reference to Him. Peter pulls in past references to draw attention to how foundational Jesus is to the faith and to remind believers that this isn't something new or unexpected.

? How does having Jesus as the cornerstone of your life impact your decisions, habits, lifestyle, language, etc.?

Leader's Note: Share from your own life to encourage group sharing.

Possible Answers: I choose to remain faithful to my spouse, to approach sticky situations with grace, to treat my neighbors and coworkers with grace, even though their cornerstone is different than mine. I pray. I attend corporate worship on Sunday to be encouraged and encourage others. I choose to follow God and my conscience rather than something that would benefit me overtly in relationships or in my career, choosing to do the right thing even when it makes things harder for me.

In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus tells a parable about having a solid foundation, and wise and foolish builders. It's a nice parallel to the analogy Peter is using here.

? What does it mean to be built in unity together with Christ? How can we foster unity with other believers?

Possible Answers: As people with our own inclinations, gifts, skills, and tastes, it's easy to want to go our own way. But we are not simply individuals acting alone; we are all believers together, and we fit together to do what God calls us to do. If we are built in unity with Jesus, it's our gift and our responsibility to coordinate with other believers and serve God and others, despite what is easiest for us individually. We all are unique in our gifts and abilities, but we work together as a body of believers. We can foster unity by sharing our work and loving each other, and respecting each other's skills, knowledge, abilities, and discernment from God.

Leader's Note: Encourage concrete examples about your own individual group in discussion as appropriate.

? How does the way we, as Christians, interact with Christ differ from how nonbelievers interact with Christ? Why does Peter say they “stumble” and “fall” (vs. 8)?

Possible Answers: Jesus is precious to us who believe in Him—He gives us hope, grace, peace, and the fruit of the Spirit. But to those who don’t believe, faith can be a stumbling block; they disobey the message of the Gospel. They stumble and fall because they refuse to acknowledge a basic, immovable fact: that Jesus Christ is Lord.

? What is our “before” and “after” as followers of Christ (vs. 10)? How do we show this as we daily live out our faith?

Possible Answers: In our “before”, we were not a people (we were isolated/alone), and we had not received mercy (we were under judgment). In our “after”, we are now a people (unified and supporting one another); we have now received mercy (forgiven). Supporting one another and unified means that we have community, and while we receive good things from the community, we are responsible to build into and help others as well. Living as forgiven people means we are no longer paralyzed by shame and guilt, but must live out our faith humbly and in a holy way, acknowledging when we fall and sin, but also rejoicing in how God has freed us.

? What encouragement would the recipients of this letter hear? What encouragement do you hear? (vv. 5, 9, 10)

Possible Answers: We, as believers are chosen, royal, God’s special possession; we are in His wonderful light. These kinds of words are typically reserved for treasures, prized possessions, and/or extreme valuables.

? Peter gives a surprisingly gently worded command in verse 11, urging believers to abstain from sinful desires. Why?

Possible Answers: Peter tells believers to abstain from sinful desires because they wage war against our souls. All of us struggle with temptation and sin in some form.

? How can you constructively abstain from sinful desires? How can we support one another in keeping from sinning?

Possible Answers: There are many ways to resist temptation: telling other believers of our struggle and getting help through prayer and accountability; removing yourself from tempting situations or preventing the situation from arising by avoiding areas of weakness; keeping our hearts and minds focused on Christ through prayer and reading the Bible.

Leader’s Note: This would be a good chance to highlight the goal of accountability time: to support one another in prayer and talk about deep heart issues like struggling with sin.

? Optional: What sins or patterns (vs. 9, “darkness”) existed in your life before coming to Christ that had to change when you put your faith in Him? In what areas of your life are you struggling with the darkness?

Leader’s Note: This is a great question for groups to go deeper. Please decide whether or not this question will be helpful and constructive based on your group dynamics. Don’t get stuck here. You may wish to lead by sharing your own story first.

? What light has entered your life since coming to belief in Christ? Are there specifics in your daily life that reflect this light (vs. 9)?

Possible Answers: The fruit of the spirit; seeing that God has given me power over sin; forgiveness for others when they hurt me; hope for the future; knowing God has a plan and isn’t surprised by anything. I try to reflect this by living a life that expresses the fruit of the spirit to other people, talking about how God freed me from my sin and guilt, forgiving openly and freely and verbally so it isn’t hidden, and living a life of trust and peace despite adverse circumstances because I know God is taking care of it.

? In verse 11, Peter references “pagans,” but another translation (NLT) says, “unbelieving neighbors.”

Who are the unbelieving neighbors in your life? Does the way you live serve as a stumbling block for them to experience Christ, or does it point to Him?

Optional: Have you ever directly shared your faith with these unbelieving neighbors? In what ways are you (or can you) look for opportunities to do so?

Possible Answers: Sharing that our belief is core to who we are is crucial, and can make an eternal impact on those who hear the message! Take time to reflect on this question personally even if you don’t have time to discuss it exhaustively in your group.

In the NLT translation, “good deeds” (v. 12) is translated “honorable behavior.” Peter isn’t calling us to perform good deeds to prove our faith, but to live honorably, that it may speak to unbelievers of how Christ has changed our lives.

Optional Section: Daniel’s Example

Optional Transition: Being visible while following God can be a powerful thing! This is seen not only as a command in the New Testament, but can be seen throughout the Old Testament. Daniel is a perfect example of this.

Read Out Loud: Daniel 6:1-5 (NIV)

¹It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, ² with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. ³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his

exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. ⁵ Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.”

Background

Daniel was honorable and good in all his behavior and did what he did to serve a foreign king, who stole him from his homeland. This was so apparent that those who looked to undermine him or find something against him gave up and declared that the only “fault” that could be found in him was his obedience and following of God. God used Daniel powerfully and protected him supernaturally, and several pagan kings gave glory to God through how God used Daniel’s obedience and purity.

? How does Daniel’s life mirror what we saw in 1 Peter 2:11-12?

? In what ways can you be a “Daniel” in your own life—at home, at work, in your daily interactions?

For Discussion And Accountability

? Is Jesus the cornerstone in your life, or is He just another brick in your house? What would it look like for Jesus to be the cornerstone of your life this week?

? In what ways does verse 12 ring true in your own life? How are you doing this well? How could you be doing it better?