



**LIVE AS PEOPLE
WHO ARE FREE,**

not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil,
but living as servants of God.

1 Peter 2:16

Living Stones in a World of Rejection

1 Peter 2:1-12

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Opening Thoughts

The original recipients of Peter's letter came from a secular/pagan culture. Their former lives had been filled with some of the grossest immorality and pagan worship. That all changed when they responded positively to the gospel and believed in Christ. Their newfound faith alienated them from their neighbors. They found themselves strangers in their own communities, facing many hardships.

So far in Peter's letter to the congregations of Asia, Peter has been writing to help us as believers to learn how to live as followers of Christ in a hostile environment. He has reminded them that they have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ ([1 Peter 1:1-2](#)). They were reminded that they have a rich inheritance in eternity through the living Lord ([1 Peter 1:3-9](#)). They were reminded that the gospel that they had received had been spoken of by the prophets' centuries earlier ([1 Peter 1:10-12](#)). Peter challenged them to turn from their former immoral lifestyle and live a one of holiness before God. ([1 Peter 1:13-21](#)). Because they had been redeemed through the gospel of Jesus, they must have love for other Christians. ([1 Peter 1:22-25](#)).

Peter wanted the believers to understand what it meant to live the Christian life while here on earth. Christianity is more than just going to heaven when you die. When we become a member of God's family it begins a lifelong building process. Just as a building under construction changes and improves in its appearance as it gets closer to completion, so, too, should our lives become more like Christ as we move nearer to our eternal reward.

[1 Peter 2:1-12](#) reminds believers that rejection and opposition are part of the Christian journey, but in Christ, we find strength and purpose. Believers are called to stand firm in their faith, shine as lights in a dark world, and find solace in their identity as living stones in a culture that will reject them.

Chosen Stones of Character

[1 Peter 2:1-4](#) ESV

¹ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,

When a builder begins to build one of the first things that he does is clear the land. He removes all the obstacles that will prevent him from completing the project.

Peter is exhorting followers of Christ to remove actions and attitudes that will hinder their spiritual growth. Peter calls them to put away:

- *Malice (kakia)* means doing evil despite the good that has been received; the desire to harm other people. Malice may be hidden behind good actions. Christians should have no part in evil actions toward others (see [Colossians 3:8](#); [James 1:21](#)).
- *Deceit (dolos)* means deliberately tricking or misleading by lying
- *Hypocrisy (hupokrisis)* means that people say one thing but do another; playacting; presenting good motives that mask selfish desire.

- *Envy (phthonos)* means desiring something possessed by someone else. This causes discontent and resentment as believers make unhealthy comparisons to one another. It also makes them unable to be thankful for the good that comes to others.
- *Slander (katalalia)* means destroying another's good reputation by lies, gossip, rumor-spreading, etc.. Malice often manifests itself through slander. We should not treat fellow Christians the way the world treats us.

Not only will these sins hinder an individual's spiritual growth. They will cause strife and dissension among other believers.

Peter compares us as believers as *"Living Stones"* who will be rejected by the culture but are chosen and precious in God's eyes. We are called to be stones of character striving to build up the Kingdom of God.

Thus we are to crave pure spiritual milk like a newborn baby, so that by it we can grow up in our salvation. We are to recognize that our spiritual nourishment comes from reading the Word of God, prayer, and worship.

Unfortunately, many believers are weak and ineffective because they are feasting on the junk food of the world and not the milk of the Word.

That is why is so important to set aside dedicated time each day to feed your soul with Scripture, meditate on its teachings, and engage in meaningful conversations with God through prayer. Allow the truths of the Bible to shape your thoughts, actions, and decisions.

Surround yourself with fellow believers who can encourage and challenge you in your faith. Join a small group or Bible study to deepen your understanding of Scripture and build a community of support. Doing so will make you stronger and more able to fulfill your new identity as a "living stone" in the kingdom of God.

Called to Communal Worship

[1 Peter 2:5-10](#) ESV

⁵ *you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* ⁶ *For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."* ⁷ *So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"* ⁸ *and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.* ⁹ *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* ¹⁰ *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Many years earlier, Peter was given the name "Rock" (*petros* in Greek, from which comes the name Peter). Here in his letter he describes Jesus as a living cornerstone. [Psalm 118:22](#) *"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."* refers to Jesus. The culture has rejected Jesus in large part, but

God chose Him and declared Him valuable. Jesus is the chosen One, and we were chosen because we are in Him, Our entire identity is wrapped up in our coming to Jesus.

Just as stones were used in the building of the great temple of God in Jerusalem, so are we, living stones, are being built into a spiritual house, a temple, to God. Now God dwells in His people, not in a building. ([1 Cor 3:16-17](#); [6:19](#)). Jesus is the cornerstone of this spiritual house.

Peter changed to another word picture and described believers as a royal priesthood who offer spiritual sacrifices. Under the old covenant the priests of Israel sacrificed bulls and goats in the temple. As Christians, we are priests of the new covenant who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. These sacrifices are truly acceptable to God because they are offered through Jesus Christ.

The New Testament identifies spiritual sacrifices as (1) offering our bodies completely to God for His service; (2) the offering of financial gifts; and (3) the serving of others with the love of Christ. We need to understand that spiritual sacrifices will involve our bodies, our money, and our time ([Rom 12:1-2](#)). When we come to Christ we become living stones in the building of the church. We will begin to see real spiritual growth in our lives as we offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

Unfortunately, many believers only see themselves as church members possessing certainty of heaven. They fail to take hold of all that it means to belong to Jesus. As believers in Jesus Christ we have been chosen to be a part of His kingdom, a royal priesthood with direct access to the throne room of heaven, and a holy nation separate from this world and set apart from this culture.

In a world that values conformity, standing out as a chosen race can be challenging. Embrace your uniqueness as a child of God and use your gifts and talents to glorify Him. Seek opportunities to share your faith boldly and authentically. Your authenticity and dedication to Christ can inspire others to seek a deeper relationship with God.

As living stones, you are being built into a spiritual house ([1 Peter 2:5](#)). Embrace the process of growth and transformation in your spiritual walk. Take time each day to study the Bible, pray, and seek God's guidance, allowing Him to shape you into a vessel for His glory.

Conduct Amidst Condemnation

[1 Peter 2:11-12](#) ESV

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

I understand what it means to be a temporary resident. Growing up I moved around a lot due to my father being in the military. As an adult I have moved around for schooling and work. I finally have settled into a city that I plan to call home until I am called home. Yet, in reality, even this location is not my real home. As a believer, I am on a journey to my eternal home that the Lord has prepared for me. My arriving there will be the greatest gift of His grace, which has sustained me through every step of my journey with Him. Until then I will continue to live as a stranger in this secular culture, proclaiming the Word of God.

Peter reminds the church that we are aliens and strangers in this world. This is only our temporary home. This culture that we live in wants to drag us back into our former lifestyle. Peter describes it as a war against our soul. These *fleshly lusts* are not only sinful, they also are self-destructive. Thus we must always be on guard and prepared to fight them.

We are to live such honorable lives that they will refute all the false accusations against us. Our good works will convince our accusers that God was at work in us. To glorify God means both to praise God and to confess that God is always right.

A day of visitation in Scripture usually means a time of divine judgment on evil. Sometimes, though, it means a time of divine deliverance from suffering. Either understanding or even *both* understandings are possible here. Perhaps we should understand Peter thus: *These Christians' lives were to be so good their accusers would be convicted of their false accusations and give God the glory when God came in deliverance of His people and in judgment on unbelievers.*

We live in a day when Christians are accused of all sorts of evil. When we practice New Testament evangelism, we are condemned for trying to destroy other religions and cultures. When we adhere to high moral standards in sex and marriage, we are accused of being judgmental. When we hold to biblical ethics, we frequently are classified as “narrow minded bigots.”

In such an environment we can refute our accusers best by our honorable and pure living. We can demonstrate the superiority of obeying God's Word by the beauty of our chaste lives. We can refute our enemies of the accusation of prejudice by our open, loving, redemptive attitudes. We best defeat our enemies by demonstrating our identity in Christ Jesus.

[1 Peter 2:11-12](#) reminds us that as a Christian, we are called to live a life that reflects God's love and holiness, even in the workplace. It can be challenging to maintain your faith and integrity in a professional environment where dishonesty or unethical practices may be prevalent. To overcome this, make a conscious effort to treat your coworkers with kindness and respect, speak truthfully, and demonstrate integrity in all your dealings. Be intentional about your choices and actions, making sure they align with the values of the Kingdom. Resist the urge to conform to the patterns of this world and instead, let the light of Christ shine through you. Use your words to encourage and uplift others, showing them the hope and love found in Jesus. By doing so, you not only honor God but also show others the transformative power of living out your faith.

Application

In a world that often prioritizes individualism and self-centeredness, you can apply [1 Peter 2:1-12](#) by actively seeking to build a community of believers around you. Instead of isolating yourself in your faith journey, look for opportunities to connect with other believers, serve with them, and grow together in Christ. Focus on living a life that glorifies God rather than chasing after worldly achievements, trusting that true fulfillment comes from serving Him wholeheartedly. Look for ways to support and uplift fellow believers, sharing burdens and joys together in authentic Christian fellowship.

Suggested Resources

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