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Hey small group leaders! We hope you are enjoying our series about 1 Peter, “Different”, which wraps up next week! Peter offered hope to persecuted Christians for following Jesus, allowing them to demonstrate the generosity and love of Jesus, fueled by the hope of His return. This series is reminding US that we are called to be different and bear witness to God's love everywhere!

A new series called “Red Letter Challenge” is starting soon! (September 8) This will be an important season in the life of our church. If you missed the announcement, you can watch it [HERE!](#)

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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**“As we release control to our Lord Jesus Christ,
He releases us to rest in His rich assurance.”**

[Unknown]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
 - Verses 1 and 19 tell the readers that through resolve (“arming the mind” in some translations) and entrusting the soul to God that we are taken care of, eternally blessed, and able to live for Him. Jesus followers are to have a different mindset that must be maintained through effort and cooperation with God’s grace. Peter is showing his readers that their work, effort, and energy is to go towards present tense believing (i.e. trusting, resting) in God, and therefore, not into certain other things.
- **1 Peter Overview & Ch. 4 Commentary**
 - Use this summary video and commentary for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Faithful Suffering**
 - This would be an encouraging resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.

What is typically the last thing you think about before going to bed? How about the first thing you typically think about when you wake up in the morning? Why do you think that is?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“Lord my God, you have done many things — your wondrous works and your plans for us; none can compare with you. If I were to report and speak of them, they are more than can be told.”

[Psalm 40:5]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note *Read this aloud so your group knows what the theme of today’s discussion is.*

Don’t live “in control” — live entrusted to the One who died for you.

PASSAGE || Leader Note *Have a couple of people read portions of the passage aloud slowly.*

- 1 Peter 4:1-19

DISCUSSION || Leader Note *Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!*

1. In the sermon we heard, *“Fear and anxiety are often connected to beliefs about control.”* How have you seen this to be true in your own life? What things are you trying to “control” that God hasn’t asked you to control? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
2. What does it mean to "arm yourselves with the same understanding" as Christ in suffering? *This means to adopt Christ's mindset towards suffering. Jesus embraced suffering as part of God's will for Him, knowing it would lead to victory over sin. For us, accepting that suffering is inevitable in the Christian life allows it to be a tool to show our commitment to God over worldly desires.*
3. What is significant about Peter contrasting living for human passions with living for the will of God? *Peter emphasizes that a believer's life should reflect a transformation from following sinful human desires to pursuing God's will. This contrast highlights the radical change that occurs in a believer's life, where worldly pursuits no longer dominate and pleasing God becomes the central focus.*
4. In the sermon we heard, *“Christ-followers are different because they spend their best energy to decisively and functionally trust God.”* As you consider the weight of this statement, in what area of your life are you NOT spending your best energy decisively and functionally trusting God?
5. What does it mean for you to be "alert and sober-minded for prayer"? *Being alert and sober-minded means maintaining a clear and disciplined mind, free from distractions and sinful influences. This is important for effective prayer, as it enables believers to pray with focus, sincerity, and alignment with God's will, rather than being driven by fleeting emotions or worldly desires.*
6. Why does Peter emphasize "above all, maintain constant love for one another"? *Peter underscores the importance of love because it is the foundation of Christian community and relationships. Love "covers a multitude of sins," meaning it allows us to forgive and overlook offenses, promoting unity and harmony within the body of Christ. Without earnest love, conflicts and divisions can arise, weakening the church's witness.*
7. What does it mean to be "good stewards of the varied grace of God" in the context of spiritual gifts? *Being a good steward of God's grace involves recognizing that spiritual gifts are given by God for the purpose of serving others and building up the church. We are called to use our gifts faithfully and effectively, acknowledging that these gifts are entrusted to us by God and should be used in a way that*

honors Him and benefits others. How might you be a better steward of your spiritual gifts?

8. How does Peter describe the purpose of enduring trials and suffering? *Peter describes trials as a way for us to share in Christ's sufferings, which leads to greater joy when His glory is revealed. Enduring trials serves to purify our faith, make us more like Christ, and deepen our relationship with Him. It's a refining process that prepares us for the future glory we will experience with Christ.*
9. What is the "spirit of glory and of God" resting on those who suffer for Christ's name? How does that encourage you today? *The "spirit of glory and of God" refers to the special presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit that rests upon believers when they suffer for Christ. It signifies God's approval and blessing, affirming that their suffering is honorable and that God is with them, providing strength, comfort, and encouragement.*
10. How should the knowledge that judgment begins with God's household influence how we live? *Knowing that judgment begins with God's people should lead us to live in a manner that is pleasing to God, pursuing holiness and righteousness. It serves as a reminder to take our faith seriously, repent of sin, and live obediently, recognizing that we will be held accountable by God before the world is judged.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

The typical question we ask ourselves in difficult moments is: How can I get what I WANT from/in this? What if, as Christ followers, we asked a **DIFFERENT** question instead: *How am I TRUSTING God with/in this?* Based on the Holy Spirit's prompting, what is a step of obedience that you can take? Here are a few invitations to consider how you can be different ...

- How can you live alive to God now and forever as His son or daughter?
 - No more energy seeking validation or approval from people!
- How can you encourage and support the people around?
 - No more energy "fixing" others and complaining about life!
- How can you live from God's grace to do as much good as possible?
 - No more energy on self-promotion or self-exaltation!
- How can you rejoice in the ordeals of life?
 - No more energy being irresponsible or sinful!

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompt below!*

Trusting God With Outcomes

- Father, it's easy to get caught up in our plans, worries, and the uncertainties of the future. Yet, you invite us to surrender our concerns to you, knowing that you are sovereign and good.
- Let's pray for our hearts to fully trust God, regardless of the circumstances that we face. Let's also pray for one another, that as we walk through various seasons of life, we'd be reminded that our ultimate joy is found in Christ alone, and that His presence is our greatest treasure.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE || Leader Note *We include a monthly spiritual practice that can be shared with your group after you gather. Our hope is for this to enhance what we're learning and discussing together, so share about your experience with the practice at the beginning of your gatherings or throughout the week!*

This practice helps us wake up to God's continual presence through conversation and attendance. We do this not just in a series of prayers but through a slow transformation into a life that becomes a prayer itself. May we become more and more aware of God's presence and His kingdom!

- [Practicing the Presence](#) or rockbridge.cc/practicing-the-presence