

# 1 P E T E R

## A VERSE BY VERSE STUDY THROUGH PETER'S EPISTLE

### **SESSION OBJECTIVE: 1 PETER 1:13**

To understand the importance of taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

## **Where Is My Mind?**

Our culture has been quite obsessed for sometime with self-help. It's not always a bad thing, but as is the case with anything, the wrong advice will always yield the wrong results. One of the most fundamental voices of the modern self-help movement is Napoleon Hill. There is not enough time here (nor is this appropriate study) to critique Hill, but let me say up front, the critique would be well-earned. Hill is very problematic in more ways than one. Nonetheless, he has grown quite famous, most notably for a line in his 1937 magnum opus, *Think And Grow Rich*: "Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve." Of course, this is provably not true, but self-help proponents will cite the numerous sources that indicate that a positive mindset yields generally positive results.

It's an oversimplification, and a lot of harm has been done through Hill's work, but the point does stand that, at least in the Christian worldview, the mind is important. Proverbs 23:7 states, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is." This isn't to say that a man can use his mind to create his own well-being, but on the contrary, the mind reflects who a man truly is. The prophet Isaiah said, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you" (Is. 26:3), unlike the double-minded man who is unstable in all of his ways (Js. 1:8). The mind is where God chooses to do His most important, sanctifying work in our lives (Rom. 12:2). For that reason, Peter turns our focus to the importance of our thoughts as well. In this week's passage, we will examine what we should do with our thoughts to yield the Godliness we desire.

## Your Mind Matters

In light of what God has done for us through His Son Jesus Christ, we are then exhorted by Peter to get our minds right. Below is a breakdown of some key words and ideas.

### **WHAT ARE WE TO DO?**

There is only one imperative (command) in the opening verses of this passage, and that is to, “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13). As believers, we are to focus our hope not on worldly things that will ultimately fail us, but on the grace of the Lord Jesus. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 6:19-20, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Paul reminds us that our hope is strengthened by reading the Old Testament, and by extension, the New Testament as well (Rom. 15:4). Hope was especially important to the believer in Peter’s day. They lived under the constant threat of persecution and death. It would have been easy to grow weary and lose hope, and so believers were often reminded of the grace of Jesus to redeem them, and that reminder would spark hope anew.

However, it is not enough for Peter to simply command us *what* to do, but he also tells us *how* to do it. In our English translations, we don’t readily see the grammar that Peter is using, but in the Greek it is more telling. The two phrases, “preparing your minds for action,” and, “being sober minded,” are actually participles in the original language. In this case, they function as instrumental participles, meaning they explain how the main verb is carried out. So you could rightly translate this, “Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ *by* preparing your minds for action and being sober minded.”

### **HOW ARE WE TO DO IT?**

How do we set our minds on the hope of Christ? Peter gives two ways:

#### *1. “Preparing your minds for action”*

The verb here for “preparing” is the Greek word ἀναζώννυμι (anazōnnymi) which means literally, “to gird with a belt.” It’s a war term that describes what a warrior would do with his coverings to prepare for battle. He would take his tunic, which would hang near his feet, and tie it up around his waist and tighten his belt so that it wouldn’t be a hindrance to his movement in battle. It allowed the warrior to move freely in both defensive and offensive maneuvers. We see it used in 1 Kings 18:46, where the prophet Elijah girds himself and is able to outrun Ahab to Jezreel. We also see it in Exodus 12:11, where the Israelites are told to eat the Passover with their, “loins girded,” and sandals on their feet, ready to move the moment God calls them to leave Egypt.

The term here is applied, however, to our mind. In other words, we are to be on the alert towards anything that would seek to take our thoughts captive or slow us down, spiritually speaking. Our minds should be unencumbered. Paul tells us to, “take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). By doing this, we are allowing our minds to freely move in both defensive and offensive maneuvers against, “principalities and powers” (Eph. 3:10).

#### *2. “Being sober minded”*

The second phase that Peter gives is, “being sober minded.” The participle here is νήφω (nēphō), and it casts a range of meaning for us. It is a word that would be used for the limiting of alcohol, but it certainly also means more than that. The idea of sober-mindedness is avoiding any lifestyle or decision that anesthetizes

and dulls the mind to the things of God. Our minds are to be *unrestrained* by outside influence. This can come as the result of any number of things, and so applications won't be given here. Instead, allow the Holy Spirit to apply this where He desires in your life.

## Putting It Into Action

Practically speaking, one way to prepare your mind for battle is to equip your mind for battle. One of the most rewarding spiritual disciplines that is often disregarded in today's culture is that of *Scripture memory*. We are told in numerous places in Scripture the importance of storing up God's Word in our hearts (Ps. 119:11). We are told to, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16). David writes, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2). The Lord Jesus said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God,'" and that was specifically in response to the temptation of Satan himself (Matt. 4:4). The point is clear - memorizing Scripture is a powerful way to gird up the mind, keep it sober, and thus be ready for any temptation that comes our way.

Imagine that your mind is a weapons vault, and that every Scripture verse is a weapon that the Holy Spirit can access during spiritual warfare. The more weapons you put into the vault, the more weapons you have at your disposal. The fewer weapons you put into the vault, the fewer weapons you will have to do war against the enemy. There are a variety of options out there, both digitally and in print, to help you with this. This is a great practice and one that I highly recommend. God's people will have a much better time not only defending themselves in moments of temptation, but will also be more equipped to share the Word with others.

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read 1 Peter 1:13. What does the word, "therefore" refer to?

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2. Read 1 Peter 1:13. What is the primary command of this passage? (Hint: See above notes)

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### Day Two

1. Read 1 Peter 1:13. What does it mean to prepare your mind for action?

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2. Read 1 Peter 1:13. What range of meaning applies to, "being sober-minded?"

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### Day Three

1. Read Joshua 1:8. What are the effects of keeping the word on your mouth regularly, according to this verse?

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2. Read Colossians 3:16. What does it mean to let, “the word of Christ dwell in you richly?” Practically, how does one accomplish this?

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### Day Four

1. Read Psalm 1:1-2. What does the blessed man *not* do? What does he do that leads him to blessing?

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2. Read 1 Peter 1:13. What does Peter mean when he says, “the revelation of Jesus Christ?” Is this talking about His first revealing, or the His second coming?

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## Week 5 Discussion: Memorizing Scripture

We don't talk enough about the spiritual disciplines that the Bible lays out, either explicitly or implicitly, and yet these disciplines are valuable for strengthening your walk with Jesus. In 1 Peter 1:13, we are commanded to, “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” How do we do that? By, “preparing your minds for action,” and, “being sober-minded.” One of the recommended methods to accomplish this is to fill your mind with God's Word. Talk as a group about the benefits and also challenges of this practice, and how you can encourage one another to be committed to this awesome practice.

1. Icebreaker: Have you ever memorized Scripture? If so, which Scripture? How did you do it and what was the effect it had on you?
2. Do you believe that Scripture memory is a good thing? Why or why not?
3. Is memorizing Scripture hard for you? Is memorizing other things (phone numbers, words to a song, sports stats, etc.) hard for you?
4. How has Scripture memory blessed you?
5. How do you think memorizing God's Word would most benefit you specifically? Why?
6. Read Matthew 4:4, 7, and 10. Did Jesus have Scripture memorized? Why do you think He did?

## Takeaways:

1. We set our hope on God's grace by preparing our minds for action and remaining sober-minded.
2. One of the ways we can win the battle of the mind is by filling it with God's Word.

### PRAYER REQUESTS: