

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*Focus Your Life*  
1 Peter 1:13—2:3

**Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.**

## **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

- 1. The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
- 2. The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
- 3. The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the Worship Time that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

Ask an adult to read the Scripture passage for today's study.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

You may want to have copies for each participant of the list of scriptures found on the final page of this session. These scriptures contain various lists of sins that compliment, add to, and can be compared to the list that you will study in 1 Peter 2:1 as you lead the

Bible study.

Be sure each person has a copy of a Bible or the portion of Scripture to be studied.

Have a white board or large piece of paper available for the study.

**Worship Time Leader:**

**Music Sources:**

**Here I Am to Worship**, *The Worship Hymnal* #130; CCLI #3266032

**Step by Step**, *The Worship Hymnal* #480; CCLI #696994

**Sanctuary**, *The Worship Hymnal* #588; CCLI #24140

**Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal* #413; CCLI #15960 Public Domain

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***Focus Your Life***

### **Focal Text**

1 Peter 1:13—2:3

### **Background**

1 Peter 1:13—2:3

### **Main Idea**

Genuine Christian living calls for focusing our lives so that we live in faithfulness to God, show love to others, and seek to grow in salvation.

### **Question to Explore**

Where is your life focused—or is it?

### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to evaluate the extent to which their lives are focused on the qualities and actions called for in the Scripture passage.

### **Gathering together:**

Sing **Here I Am to Worship**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 130; CCLI # 3266032

Ask a young person to read the following Scripture. ***“Start with God---the first step in learning is bowing down to God; only fools thumb their noses at such wisdom and learning”*** (Proverbs 1:7, The Message).

### **First thoughts:**

## **Focus Your Life**

Our theme, “Focus your life”, means to concentrate or have a focal point, or a goal to aim toward. The lesson and thought for today will help each of us make the aim of our lives that of following God.

## **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Pray that each one will be able to stay alert and focus upon the lesson. Pray that the Holy Spirit will touch the heart of each one.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *Focus Your Life*

#### **Focal Text**

1 Peter 1:13—2:3

#### **Background**

1 Peter 1:13—2:3

#### **Main Idea**

Genuine Christian living calls for focusing our lives so that we live in faithfulness to God, show love to others, and seek to grow in salvation.

#### **Question to Explore**

Where is your life focused—or is it?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to evaluate the extent to which their lives are focused on the qualities and actions called for in the Scripture passage.

#### **Introduction to your personal study:**

Peter speaks to the very practical reality of living the Christian life. In today’s passage he addresses the importance of love for other Christians. He tells us to put aside all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. We don’t always consider these sins to compare with the big sins like theft, adultery, addiction, pornography, and murder. But they are the sins which often cause hurt in the body of Christ and impact our witness in the world. As you prepare to lead the study, ask yourself how these negative character traits are still an issue in your own life. Ask the Lord to help you address them.

#### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

J. Vernon McGee wrote that chapters 2-4 deal with the suffering of God’s children. They also let us know about the suffering of the Lord Jesus. In chapter 2, suffering produces separation. Suffering produces Christian conduct in chapter 3 and it produces obedience to the will of God in chapter 4.<sup>1</sup>

A church cannot live with its head in the clouds and its feet off the ground. Jesus sent His church into the world to make a difference. The churches were living in a hostile environment. They were like troops fighting behind enemy lines. They were surrounded by a sinful world which needed the Gospel.

Peter, in his letter, sets the scene for believers by turning their attention first to their perspective on the Christian life. Now he turns his attention to practical things that the church must do if it is to present an effective witness for Christ. He begins to deal with the responsibilities of the Christian walk.

Jesus taught in his parable of the faithful servant that of whomever was given much, much would be expected (Luke 12:48). The greatest gift given is forgiveness and salvation through Christ. Nothing could demand a greater response than this.

We shall look at the obligations and responsibilities that receiving salvation places on the believer.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### **1 Peter 1:13-2:3**

**1. Focus Your Life. Practice holiness in conduct, which means disciplined living (vs. 13-16).**

***“Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming”.***

Therefore, refers to what has been written before. Now that you have your perspective on the future instead of the tribulations of the past, set your sights on the second coming of Christ.

Peter goes from the theological to the practical. ***“With minds that are alert and fully sober”.*** “Fully sober” means to preserve a sound, solid, balanced judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee, “Thru the Bible”, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, pg. 688.

Some translations have **“gird up the loins of your minds”**. The Revised Standard Version states **“prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled”**. The idea here is to get ready for running the race. Before a man in Peter’s day could do much running or physical work he had to tuck in his skirt from his robe. He did this by tucking it into his belt. It would be akin to rolling up your sleeves. Fishermen, carpenters, farmers, and all others involved in the dusty or wet work at hand, almost without thought, always “tucked up” their robes before they began. It was an automatic, natural gesture. Mental preparation for the following of Jesus each day should be, for each of us, male and female alike, an automatic, natural gesture.

**“Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed”** (verse 13). Because the believer can live in hope he can endure the struggles of the present.<sup>2</sup>

"Therefore" (verse 13) ties in with everything Peter had explained thus far (vv. 3-12). He said in effect, Now that you have focused your thinking positively you need to roll up your sleeves mentally, pull yourselves together, and adopt some attitudes that will affect your activities.

". . . the thought is: 'Make up your mind decisively!'"

"The English phrase 'pull yourself together' would express the meaning."

The main duty, however, is to become conscious of the culmination of our hope when Christ returns (cf. v. 7; 4:3; Titus 2:10-13). When we do this, present trials will not deflect us from obeying God faithfully now. In other words, Peter urged his readers to face their daily trials with a specific attitude clearly and constantly in mind. We should remember that what God will give us soon as a reward for our faithful commitment to Him is worth any sacrifice now (cf. Rom. 8:18).<sup>3</sup> That is where you place your hope.

Hope is one of the three supreme virtues of the Christian life. The others are faith and love. “Believers owe their hope exclusively to God’s graciousness and faithfulness”. It is the grace to be brought to each believer by Jesus Christ<sup>4</sup>.

Now, since we have the perspective right, let’s look at how we are to live in the present. Our lives should reflect the holiness of Christ. Our lives should reflect the hope we have in Him.

**“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.”**

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<sup>2</sup> William Barclay, “The Letters of James and Peter, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, , pg. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1<sup>st</sup> Peter”, 2012 Ed., pg. 15.

<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, “The MacArthur New Testament Commentary”, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2004, pg. 64.



Obedience is a mark of love. Obedient children do what is asked by the parent. As children of God, do not align your life with your past behavior. You did not know better. Now you do.

Barclay translates this verse: **“Do not continue to live a life which matches the desires of the days of your former ignorance...”**. The verb indicates that this is to be an ongoing lifestyle. James wrote in chapter 1, verse 22, **“be ye doers of the word and not hearers only”** (King James Version).

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . .** (Romans 8:29, King James Version). **“Be not conformed to this world”** (Romans 12:2, King James Version).

What you are to be conformed to is the image of Christ. You are to look and act like Him. That is why early believers at Antioch were called Christians.

**“Be holy because I am holy”** (Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). The context of this verse is the Exodus. God brought the Hebrews out of Egypt and made them a “different” people. They had laws that made a difference between them and the Gentiles. There were laws concerning what was clean and unclean, holy and unholy. The idea is brought forth into the New Testament and expounded upon by Peter (1 Peter 2:9).

**“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy because I am holy”**.

If God is holy then His children are holy. One cannot have a holy God’s presence within and not be holy. The idea is to be holy in all our behaviour.

“Holiness is to the spiritual life what health is to the physical life.”<sup>5</sup> The idea of a people being separate from their surroundings is found in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “holy” means different and carries the idea of being separate. God is different in all He does. You are to be different from the world in all you do.

Jesus is holy. His holiness may be defined in Hebrews 7:26 (King James Version). **“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners....”**. His holiness is defined by what he is not or does not do. He was harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Therefore, for a believer to be holy as He is holy, he must be harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He must be the opposite of what is going on in the world at any given time.

As Jesus was set apart from that which was sinful in order that He might save that which was sinful—so man must not be a part of the world’s sinfulness. Living in and

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<sup>5</sup> J. Vernon McGee, pg. 684.

among the world and sin does not mean one must take part in the sinfulness. Our challenge is how to live this separate life in a way that is loving, kind and nonjudgmental.

The idea of being a witness to the rest of the world was never understood by the Jews. They took their holiness to mean complete separateness from the Gentiles.

We will see in the New Testament that Christians are to take the Gospel into the world without being tainted by the sin of the world. Jesus said He was sending His disciples out as sheep among wolves (Matthew 10:16). He was not only referring to physical danger. He also meant spiritual danger.

We find in the Old Testament the dominant, compelling reason for God's people to live in holiness was their relationship with God: ***“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy’”*** (Leviticus 19:1)<sup>6</sup>

**2. Focus Your Life. Live in "reverent fear" because of what God has done in Christ (1:17-21).**

***“Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defeat. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believed in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.”***

First, you should have a reverent fear because you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. They, like us, were not redeemed by perishable idols made with silver and gold. Christ was chosen to be sacrificial “lamb without blemish or defeat” before the creation of the world. Remember from chapter 1:2 that every believer is chosen from before time began. The believers are reminded again that their salvation is not an afterthought.

Since Peter’s message is given by God for us as much as for those early Christians, let’s place the teachings into the present. Our relationship has been restored to God because we believe in him. We do that because God raised Jesus from the dead and glorified him. Therefore, our faith and hope are in God who can perform such miracles.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Just as the believer is not an afterthought so the suffering on the cross was not an afterthought. Before time began God knew man would sin and need a redeemer. He would send His Son to be that redeemer.

The lost will be judged and condemned because their works will not secure their salvation. Good works are not for salvation, they are for God's glory. The lost do not have works for God's glory, only for their own benefit.

The believer is redeemed not with works or things, but with the "precious blood of Christ". Christ's death on the cross was not an afterthought of God the Father. It was not until these "last times" in which we live that He was revealed.

Your belief is in God who raised Christ from the dead and set Him down at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Your faith is in God. It is not in works.

### **3. Focus Your Life. Have "genuine mutual love," based on being "born anew" through the "good news" (1:22-25).**

***Vs. 22-23. "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that have love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For . . ."***

***"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"*** (Matthew 5:8, King James Version)

Pure means unmixed or unadulterated. Peter uses words that tell us a believer who has obeyed "the truth" and found salvation is pure. It is more than human work, it is a divine work. (See 1 Peter 1:2.)

In this case obedience is a synonym for faith.

Peter is encouraging the church to stand together in love. The sincere love is translated from *philadelphia* which means brotherly love. There has always been a sense in which the church is against the world and vice versa. *Agape* is the deep love from the heart that each is to have for the other. It is the same love that God has for each believer. Love for one another is a test of a true disciple (John 13:25).

Who is the church to love? The church members are to love one another. How are they to love? They are to love "deeply, from the heart". They are to be sincere. Why are they to love? They are to love because they have been born again. All this is a natural working out of the imperishable, living, and enduring word of God.

**Vs. 24-25. 'All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word that was preached to you.**

Peter defines again how important the Word is to salvation. He contrasts mortal life of man with the immortality of God and His Word. Remember that Christ is the Living Word. A believer's faith is in Him who is eternal. It was through the preaching of the Word that one is saved. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

**IV. Focus Your Life. Rid oneself of harmful practices, especially those that destroy community (2:1).**

***"Therefore, rid yourselves of all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind."***

Once again note the word "therefore". It refers to what has gone before in vs. 23-25.. Believers have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb. They have become holy because God is holy. They accepted the eternal Word of God preached to them, therefore, their lives should reflect a change.

He gives characteristics and traits that should be abandoned. Believers are to "strip off" or rid themselves of traits which they might have had as unbelievers. These are traits that are contrary to love which they are to have for each other.

Deceit denotes dishonesty, falsehood, and treachery.

Hypocrisy is behavior that is not genuine.

Envy is to resent others' prosperity.

Slander is tattling and backbiting behind someone's back. It includes innuendo as well as outright untruth.

Malice is anything that would hinder one's testimony and access to God.<sup>7</sup>

**V. Focus Your Life. Seek the "pure, spiritual milk," the spiritual resources for growth in and to salvation (2:2-3).**

***"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."***

After doing what Peter has written before go on to maturity. No man can get maturity without help. Everyone needs the Word of God.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”*** (Matthew 5:6, King James Version).

Newborn babies desire milk. It is the first thing they want. A mother’s milk contains all the nutrients a baby needs. New Christians are babies in Christ. The Word of God contains all spiritual nutrients a believer needs. It is by reading and assimilating it into one’s life that a believer grows to maturity. Once a believer gets a taste of salvation he will want to grow.

A growing salvation is one that is more and more characterized by traits of Christ evidenced in the believer. Salvation is once and for all assured at new birth. But, just as a child grows to maturity and usefulness to society, so does a Christian mature in service for the kingdom of God.

The scriptures that the churches had at this time were the Old Testament and the letters of the Apostles and church leaders.

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

To lead the church to evaluate the extent to which their lives are focused on the qualities and actions called for in the Scripture passage. This passage contains admonitions about character traits which must be addressed in the Christian life. That will be a life-long process for most Christians. Today should be a call to once more ask how these things – deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander are hindering spiritual growth in the body of Christ meeting together today.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Focus Your Life***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

1 Peter 1:13—2:3

#### **Background**

1 Peter 1:13—2:3

#### **Main Idea**

Genuine Christian living calls for focusing our lives so that we live in faithfulness to God, show love to others, and seek to grow in salvation.

#### **Question to Explore**

Where is your life focused—or is it?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to evaluate the extent to which their lives are focused on the qualities and actions called for in the Scripture passage.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Inform the group with this: In our first session we studied the perspective we should have in life. Peter now begins to explain practical ways in which a believer lives out his/her testimony.

Tell the group to consider what is really important to them. What a person does for the majority of his/her time is what is his/her number one priority. If Jesus is priority then more time will be spent learning about being a disciple and following Him. If something else is more important that priority will get the most attention.

## Guide the Study:

Begin the study by writing the following on a board or a large piece of paper.

*Focus your life on: Conduct; Reverence, Love, and Harmful Practices.*

Tell the class to keep these in mind as the lesson proceeds.

### **1. Focus Your Life. Practice holiness in conduct, which means disciplined living (1:13-16).**

Read: Thomas a Kempis wrote: Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace. The readers will not get to holiness and disciplined living without obedience.

Tell the class that each section will have a word to help focus the lesson. **Conduct** will be the first one. The first point of this section is holy conduct.

Ask a member to read vs. 13-16.

Ask someone in the class to define holiness.

Discuss the definition. After the discussion be sure you tell them that the basic meaning is holy means different.

Tell them: others see one's holiness in one's conduct. Holiness is revealed when there is a contrast with un-holiness.

Ask: Are there actions in your conduct that do not reveal holiness?

Say: How do you think a person should deal with unholy lifestyles?

Remind the group: Peter's advice is practical. You have your minds alert and be fully sober. Fully sober means one is to "preserve a sound, solid, and balanced judgment".

Add: Peter tells each reader to pull yourself together, and adopt attitudes that will affect your activities.

Tell the group: the main point for being holy is to be ready when Christ returns.

Continue with this: Let us consider the second point under conduct which is obedience. Obedience is a mark of love.

Ask the class: How do holiness and obedience relate to one's conduct? (Peter says the believers are to be "obedient" children and not to conform to the lifestyle they had when they lived in ignorance, that is, before they believed in the Gospel.)

Here is additional Scripture to illustrate the point. James wrote "be ye doers of the and not hearers only" (1:22, King James Version). Paul wrote "Be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:1, King James Version).

Say, It was obedience and holiness that was revealed to believers in Antioch. It was the basis of their being called Christians.

## **2. Focus Your Life. Live in "reverent fear" because of what God has done in Christ (1:17-21).**

Ask someone to read vs. 17-21.

Say: Reverence is the second word we will consider to help us focus our lives.

Explain to the group that reverence will be considered from two standpoints. (1) We will look at the believer's redemption through the precious blood of Christ. (2) We will see a difference in the outcomes of judgment for both saints and sinners.

Ask: Why is it important for us to reverence God? (Discuss what Christ did at Calvary).

Tell the group reverence is a believer's response to the redemption Christ supplied.

Ask: Why did Christ choose to die that a person might have eternal life? (Discuss the fact that the Cross was foreordained by God before the world was made).

Guide the group to note the word "precious" and see how Peter uses it. Then ask: Why do you think Peter used this word to describe Christ's blood?

***"And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished" (Romans 3:24-25 Revised Standard Version)***

Say: Peter writes that we should live in reverent fear because God judges each one impartially. Reverent fear is a healthy fear of the power of God. There will be a judgment for the saved as well as the unsaved. The saved will not be judged on their sin because that is already settled (2 Timothy 1:8). They will be judged on what they do for God to receive their rewards. Sinners will be judged on their deeds which will not be enough for entrance into eternal bliss (Revelation 20:11-12).



***“And I saw a great white throne. . . and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”*** (Revelation 20:11-12, King James Version).

Ask: What part does works play regarding salvation? (Works are not for salvation, works demonstrate salvation.)

### **3. Focus Your Life. Have "genuine mutual love," based on being "born anew" through the "good news" (1:22-25).**

Love is the third word for consideration as we focus our lives.

Ask: Who is Peter asking them to love?

Continue: Why is this so important for a congregation?

Ask the class to consider the underlying reason or reasons for this sharing love? (They are obedient. Christ said it was a mark of a Christian. Each one is born again by the living word.)

Ask: What adjectives does Peter use to describe the love they are to have? (Note these two: deeply, and from the heart.)

Tell this illustration: A coach was once asked what it took to make a great team. “The difference between mediocrity and greatness,” he said that night, “is the feeling these players have for each other.”

Now say: Let’s apply this to a church. In a healthy church, each Christian learns to care for others. As we take seriously Jesus’ command to love another, we contribute to a winning team.

Ask: Is that kind of feeling and commitment found within our fellowship?

### **4. Focus Your Life. Rid oneself of harmful practices, especially those that destroy community (2:1).**

Class: What harmful practices does Peter use to illustrate this point? (deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander, malice)

Deceit denotes dishonesty, falsehood, and treachery.

Hypocrisy is behavior that is not genuine.

Envy is to resent others’ prosperity.

Slander is tattling and backbiting behind someone’s back.

Malice is anything that would hinder one's testimony and access to God.<sup>8</sup>

Remind the class: These are characteristics that will destroy a fellowship.

**5. Focus Your Life. Seek the "pure, spiritual milk," the spiritual resources for growth in and to salvation (2:2-3).**

State firmly: Without a sincere desire for the Word of God there will be little or no growth to spiritual maturity. The Bible is all about Jesus. The Old Testament predicts His coming. The Gospels reveals who He is. Acts preaches His Gospel. The epistles explain who He is. Revelation is about expecting His return.

Ask: Are you contented with your spiritual life?

Relate this to the group. John MacArthur wrote "Peter's exhortation for believers to **grow** through the Word strongly implies the necessity of discontent with the present condition of spiritual development."<sup>9</sup>

Share with the class. The idea in the lesson is to focus one's life so one lives in faithfulness to God. Peter calls the believer to have a reverence for God that is demonstrated in a born again life without the characteristics of an unbeliever. It is to be a life of obedience to the Word of God leading to maturity and mutual love of each other.

**Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Have you experienced being born again?

Do you have a thirst for the Word of God?

Have you a genuine love for other believers?

Is there evidence of holiness in your life?

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pg. 100.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Focus Your Life*** **James 1:22-24**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

As the leader, take a mirror and pass it around the group. Ask each one to describe what they see in it.

As the leader for the group, read the following: A lady of society was gazing upon an image she had never seen before in the city's art museum. "My dear fellow," she said condescendingly to the Curator, "I have never seen this painting before. I find the image shallow and rather crude in appearance. What do you call this?" The curator answered without giving the slightest expression, "That madam, is a mirror." The lady's vision was not very focused.

Losing focus on the Jesus of Scripture blurs our own view—not only of Christ—but of ourselves, as well. The Bible is also a great mirror. We may go to it to observe its content with a critical eye, but in the end, we are under its criticism.

Read to the group: **"Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like."** (James 1:22-24, The Message).

Remember: If you want your life to turn out in a way that pleases God you will have to focus your attention and make the changes necessary.

# 3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

## Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

### ***Focus Your Life*** **Peter 1:13—2:3**

#### **Beginning the Service:**

Sing one or more of the following:

**Step by Step**, *The Worship Hymnal* #480; CCLI #696994

**Sanctuary**, *The Worship Hymnal* #588; CCLI #24140

**Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal* #413; CCLI #15960 Public Domain

#### **Offering:**

Lord, we acknowledge all you have given to us. We come to give a portion back for the work of the ministry. You, who are capable of all things, see that it is used for your glory. We bless you who has blessed us. Amen.

#### **Praying for the World:**

What world event or local event occurred this week that calls for prayer? Ask the group to share what they heard that needs group prayer.

#### **Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**

### **GOD'S TEAM**

Hebrews 12:1-2

#### Introduction

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***Focus Your Life* – 24-51-02-en**

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Spring is the season of the year for school and community “track and field” sports. On weekends around the world, stadiums fill with teams, fans, coaches, and helpers. All prepare for the competitions and races. The excitement and preparation is the same in every nation.

In any team sport, before the game begins, a roster of players and competitors will be compiled by the coaches of those who will participate. Who gets their name on the roster? In a school situation, it will be those who have made good grades, practiced, and shown they are ready and willing to compete. They have made a commitment to do their best.

In any school there are many students. They are a part of the school body. But, not every student gets to run or compete. Only those who have their names on the team roster will participate.

Did you know that God has a team? There are many people who have been born or who live today. But, not everyone is on God’s team. Did you know that God has a team roster too? It is called the Lamb’s Book of Life. “The idea of a divine ledger (*or record*) is first mentioned in the Old Testament in Exodus 32:32-33 where Moses prays that if God will not forgive the sin of his people, he wishes to be blotted out ‘of the book which God has written’ (cf. Ps. 69:28,; Dan 12:1). Thus in the OT, the book of life was a register of all those who held citizenship in the theocratic (God-governed) community of Israel” Mounce, T. H. **The New International Commentary on the New Testament. The Book of Revelation.** Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1977, page 113.

References to the Lamb’s Book of Life abound in the book of Revelation in which John speaks to believers in poetic language. In this book are the names of everyone who will be in heaven. It contains everyone who has prepared and made the commitment to be spiritually victorious. To be in the Lamb’s Book of Life is dependent upon an individual and personal acceptance of Christ as Saviour.

It is most important that your name be in that book. That is the list where you want to be sure to be included when you step out into eternity.

There are various considerations to being a part of a team. These include

- (1) Be prepared.
- (2) Run the complete race.
- (3) Stay focused.

## **1. PEOPLE ON GOD’S TEAM GET RID OF SIN (Hebrews 12:1). *Be prepared!***

***“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles”.***

If you want to be on the Lord’s team, you need to “be all that you can be”. You cannot do what needs to be done to finish the race if there is sin in your life. That sin will weigh you down. You want to be ready to focus on the goal.

The writer of this session uses the analogy of a great stadium, much like the one which many have attended or seen on television. The crowd is there to see you run a race. You cannot do what needs to be done unless you get rid of any extra items that you brought with you. You cannot run your best while holding onto your sport bag or carry a towel, or even wear a watch. You cannot run the spiritual race unless you get rid of your sin. Getting rid of the weight of sin is preparation for heaven.

You get rid of sin by asking God to forgive you. Sin is everything that prevents you from being what God intended you to be. 1 John 1:9 gives us a simple truth that helps us rid ourselves of sin. ***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (Revised Standard Version).***

God has a plan for you. Included in that plan is Heaven. Heaven is a place that is sinless. You cannot go there with sin in your life. You have to rid yourself of sin to be in the Lamb’s Book of Life which is God’s team roster. ***No one who lives in sin keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*** 1John 3:6.

## **2. PEOPLE ON GOD’S TEAM RUN THE RACE WITH PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE**

Hebrews 12:1 urges each of us to not quit before the finish line! ***“And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”.***

The word for patience means *steadfast endurance*. It means that you need to keep on keeping on. It means that no matter what happens you will not stop being faithful to God. Our love for God is demonstrated by our obedience. ***But if anyone obeys his Word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did*** (1 John 2:5-6).

There was an eleven year old boy who ran the 400 metre race. He was very slow. In one race he was still halfway back around the track when those with whom he was competing crossed the finish line. But, he did not quit. He kept running. He crossed the finish line last, but he finished. He kept on running. He did not quit though it was humiliating for him. But, his humiliation was gone when the crowd stood and cheered him as he crossed the finish line.

There are those who are watching every Christian’s life. Consistent Godly living is a

witness to the world. The book of Colossians speaks to the need for faithful living. Paul says **...we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience** (Colossians 1:10-11).

Colossians continues the theme of perseverance in Chapter 2, verses 6-7. **So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.**

Paul encourages believers in 1 Corinthians 1:7-9 **Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who as called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.**

Our ability to endure the race depends not on our strength, but on God's faithfulness. We pledge ourselves to faithfulness; we deliberately choose right behaviour rather than sin and we depend on God to sustain us through temptation.

### **3. PEOPLE ON GOD'S TEAM STAY FOCUSED** (Hebrews 12:2).

**“... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith”.**

Here is the key to finishing the race. You have to keep your eyes upon the Lord – **eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.** Jesus is like a player coach. If you take your eyes off Him you will miss the signals and you will falter and you will fall. There are many temptations or sins that easily beset us. If you keep your eyes on Jesus you will keep your eyes off sin. Stay focused.

Marvin was a preacher. He told this story about himself. In high school he participated in track. He loved to run. When he raced, his dad always stood beyond the finish line just outside the fence. When Marvin would come around that last turn he could look up and see his dad. His dad would be calling and motioning and encouraging Marvin to make that final effort. He wanted Marvin to see him and stay focused right up to the end.

God wants us to stay focused right up to the end. He wants us to be victorious and effective in our Christian life. He wants to welcome us right into heaven.

Paul said to Timothy: **“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”** (2 Timothy 4:7, King James Version).

## **Conclusion:**

Are you focused in your Christian life? Is your life hidden in Christ? As one who is written in God's Book of Life then it is important you stay focused. The key to you being in God's Lamb's Book of Life, God's team roster, is your relationship with Jesus. There are various considerations to being a part of a team. These include (1) Be prepared. (2) Run the complete race. (3) Stay focused.

## **Call to Commitment:**

***Pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience*** (Colossians 1:10-11).

## **Concluding the Service:**

Prayerfully sing: **Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal* #413; CCLI #15960 Public Domain



## Some scriptures that relate to Peter's list of sins in 1 Peter 2:1

### 2 Corinthians 12:20-21

<sup>20</sup> For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. <sup>21</sup> I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

### Galatians 5:19-21

<sup>19</sup> The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### Ephesians 5:3-4

<sup>3</sup> But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

### Colossians 3:5-9

<sup>5</sup> Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup> But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

Footnotes:

[Colossians 3:6](#) Some early manuscripts *coming on those who are disobedient*

### 1 Timothy 1:8-11

<sup>8</sup> We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. <sup>9</sup> We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine <sup>11</sup> that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

### Revelation 9:20-21

<sup>20</sup> The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. <sup>21</sup> Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.