



LC STUDY GUIDE

“True Belonging: Home Edition”

The Passage: 1 Peter 4:1-11

March 4 – March 17

How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

As we conclude “True Belonging: Home Edition,” we want to talk about the role that hospitality and mission serve in the theme of belonging.

In this theological yet practical passage of Scripture, we can see a trajectory of faithful Christian witness that is ultimately rooted in Christ, reminding us to sacrifice for one another, and moving us to serve with compassion and generosity.

May this conversation you have today move us all toward being a deeper community of true belonging.

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. **2** As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. **3** For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. **4** They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. **5** But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. **6** For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. **8** Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **9** Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. **10** Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. **11** If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:1-11

O – This is one of those passages to read slowly and thoughtfully. Identify one spiritual principal that captures your attention and identify one action that speaks to you.

I – It’s important not to misunderstand what Peter is saying in verse 1. When he says, “whoever suffers in the body is done with sin,” it does not mean that one no longer commits a sin. Instead it’s more about not living a life under the control of sin. What are the distinctions between the two? Why is it important not to misunderstand what Peter is really saying?

(For one, we are all sinners and it is impossible to never commit an act of sin again. But we can live a life pursuing the will of God that is repentant of sin, and under the control of the Holy Spirit.

It’s important to understand the difference because one could be overwhelmed by guilt and risk going mad if they try to live a life never sinning again. It’s also unbiblical New Testament theology.)

O/I – Peter makes a striking statement when he writes that the end of all things is near.

- One possibility of this would be an apocalyptic end of the entire world.
- Another possibility is the idea that Jerusalem is about to be destroyed by the Romans (which happens in 70 AD). Many conservative scholars believe this letter was written in the late 60's. Early Church tradition tells us that Peter died under the reign of Nero which ended in 68, and that Peter was crucified upside down, telling his persecutors that he was not worthy to be crucified in the same manner as his true Lord.
- A third possibility is that this is a figure of speech to create a sense of urgency that the end is near to all of us because our lives are short-lived and fragile. And so, we have to live ready to be judged and received by our Savior Jesus.

Whichever view you favor, identify the reason why Peter is saying this.

O – “Be of sober mind” (verse 7): This is the third time in the letter that Peter uses this expression. The original Greek word translates more into the idea of “self-control.” Certainly, one cannot be self-controlled while intoxicated by alcohol, but the real point Peter is making goes beyond that. Re-read verse 7 and consider what practices and virtues might come for the Christ-follower after pursuing a mindset of being alert and self-controlled.

I – A verse often quoted is “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins” (verse 8). It’s a paraphrase from Proverbs 10:12 which does not mean that our love “covers and atones for sin” but more that love does not “stir up” or “broadcast” sin, thus the next verse that teaches to avoid grumbling and being at peace with one another. What else could we understand and put into practice about love covering a multitude of sins (ours and the sins of others)?

A – One of the best ways to learn hospitality (verses 9-11) is by first considering how hospitality has been shown to you. What moments and experiences come to mind when you have received hospitality? What feelings and thoughts did they raise within you?

And lastly, what are some ways we can grow in the practice of hospitality and belonging? Think big and think small and consider what this might look like throughout different seasons of life.

- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.