

## **PART I: THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE**

1 PETER 1:1–2:12

Our newsfeeds fill with stories of humanity’s depravity. Then our friends share how their spouses and loved ones have wounded them. Once again, our church seems to be going down the wrong path. What can one person do about all of this mess? “I can’t even get my own head clear,” we think, “so how can I help anyone else?”

First Peter has answers. Writing to persecuted Christians (perhaps around the early AD 60s), Peter says that there is hope. By the great mercy of God our Father—and by the power of Jesus Christ, our Lord—we can pull out of this, even if “this” involves violence against us. Peter explains that we’re made to change our world. We can take action—action that starts with Christ changing us. We then have to work out the steps toward our transformation as we cling to him—finding Jesus in the pain as he provides the strength to overcome.

What if the war we feel inside is really caused by us—as individuals, as churches, as humanity? And what if it could be overcome by the power of Christ? Peter says it’s possible, and then he shows us the way. Let’s take a closer look at his hopeful message.

### **LESSON 1: BORN TO LIVE**

- ❖ *Pray that God will give you wisdom as you study 1 Peter.*
- ❖ *Read the entire letter of 1 Peter aloud in one sitting.*

First Peter was written to a group of churches. The letter would have been circulated to different communities and read aloud. Reading the letter aloud will help you experience it in a similar way to the people who first received it.

Underline each time Peter says “*Therefore*,” “*Now*,” “*Dear Friends*,” or “*In the same way*.” These are key transition words that typically mark the beginning of a new thought. They help us quickly identify the transitions from one section to the next.

What are the primary issues that Peter addresses in this letter? Try to list at least three.

## *REAL TALK FROM THE WORD*

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Within the framework that Peter sets up, how would you describe Jesus' message? What is Jesus' work on earth all about—and how does it continue in people who believe in him today?

At what points in Peter's letter did you feel he was speaking directly to you? What do you need to change about your life—or perspective—in response?