

Resilient

Scripture and Background Information for February 26- March 4.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

1 Peter is written to help Christ-followers thrive in the midst of a world under pressure. They were struggling to navigate a world where they were a spiritual, political, and social minority. They were suffering to the point they had even started to turn on each other at home and at church. Peter wrote to show them how to live with resilience: why we need it, where to find it, what it looks like, and what to do with it when you've got it.

Background for 1 Peter 1:1-12:

In the greeting of this letter (1 Peter 1:1-2) we find out that the recipients of 1 Peter are in a dire time of their life. They are Christians who are suffering unjust persecutions because of their faith, have been pushed out of their homes, and were forcibly spread out in unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people. Their lives have been completely uprooted and their future is uncertain. It is under these circumstances that Peter writes this letter to them as a way to encourage them to persevere and stand firm in their faith no matter what situations they are facing (1 Peter 5:12).

After this brief introduction, Peter begins to discuss the salvation that we have received in Jesus. He praises God for the mercy he has given to His people but recognizes that, even though they are saved, his audience is still experiencing hardship, trials, and persecutions for their faith. But he reminds them as they go through this testing that they should take it as a period of refinement. He says that their faith is precious and compares the testing in their lives to that of gold being put in fire (1 Peter 1:7). Gold is made better when it is put in fire because imperfections within it are removed. Peter wants his audience to have this perspective with their faith because it can help them understand that God is with them and maturing them despite their harsh circumstances.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. Peter calls his readers exiles in the introduction. In what ways does that perspective help us as believers to endure trials or hardship?
2. Why do you think God allows trials in our lives? How can He use testing to develop those who trust in Him?
3. Have you ever felt like there has been a time in your life that has been "tested by fire"? What happened and how did you overcome this test? How have you seen growth and maturity come from that trial?
4. Sometimes it is hard to recognize the purpose of the various trials we go through in life. How can we prepare ourselves so that we remain faithful to God whenever we go through struggles and testing?