

**GROWTH GROUPS**  
**WEEK 4**  
**WEEK OF OCTOBER 6**



**GROWTH GROUP FALL 2019**  
**STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND: FINDING HOPE IN 1ST PETER**  
**WEEK 4 – OCTOBER 6, 2019 - 1 PETER 2:4-10**

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

Images of rock and stone are often used in the Old Testament. In Matthew 21:42 Jesus applies the image of the living “stone” to himself when he says, “Didn’t you ever read this in the Scriptures? The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous to see.” It should also be noted that carpenters in the days of Jesus worked with both wood and stone and it is quite likely that Jesus would have been well acquainted with cornerstones and masonry images.

In the Old Testament the temple was the dwelling place of God. However, in the New Testament this idea of “temple” takes on a new idea. In 2 Corinthians 6:16 the apostle Paul writes that, “we are the temple of the living God and that God walks amongst us and that God will be our God and we will be God’s people.” This changes everything. We now have direct access to God. We don’t have to go to the temple and make sacrifices. We don’t need a priest to pray for us. We can serve God personally and approach God directly because we are a holy priesthood.

The cornerstone is the stone that is laid for the foundation at the place where two walls come together. It is of the utmost importance for the stability of the whole structure. One could say the church is established on the prophets and apostles and is held together by Jesus Christ who is the chief cornerstone.

Followers of Jesus have been set apart for a purpose. Our calling is to declare the praises of God. Because we have been called out of darkness and into the light we are to bear witness to the saving work of Jesus Christ. We have been called by God, in order that we might be sent out into the world to do God’s work.

In verse 10, Peter utilizes a passage from Hosea 2:23. We are not just a people. Rather, we are God’s people. At one point we did not have a name and did not feel loved. But because of God’s mercy we have been called by God, and given an identity. Everyone who follows Jesus is part of God’s chosen people. Regardless of where we are from, or what we have done, we celebrate in knowing that we belong to God and are part of a royal priesthood and holy nation.



# EXPLORING THE TEXT

## Read 1 Peter 2:4-10

*4 You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. 5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. 6 As the Scriptures say, "I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." 7 Yes, you who trust him recognize the honor God has given him. But for those who reject him, "The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone." 8 And, "He is the stone that makes people stumble, the rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they do not obey God's word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them. 9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. 10 "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy."*

- 1) Have you ever worked on a construction project? If so, share about that, or if you have ever helped with masonry work, talk about the importance of a solid foundation.
- 2) A cornerstone helps to determine the design and orientation of a building. We are told in 1 Peter that Jesus is the cornerstone. Was there a spiritual cornerstone in the home where you grew up? If so, was it a certain place in your home, or perhaps it was certain teachings or Scriptures that your family said were important. Is there a current cornerstone in your home that helps orient you toward the goodness of God?
- 3) Peter talks about offering spiritual sacrifices that please God, in verse 5. What do you think he means by that? Is this similar to what the apostle Paul was talking about in Romans 12:1 when he wrote, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him." Or is it something more?
- 4) Verse 6 tells us that those who trust in Jesus will not be put to shame or disgraced. This quote comes from Isaiah 28:16 where we are told that the one who believes in the "foundation stone" will "never be shaken." The Greek translation of the Old Testament – the Septuagint - that Peter followed - said will never be "put to shame or disgraced." Is there any significance to the word being changed from "shaken", to "disgraced", or "put to shame"?
- 5) Why do people stumble and fall because of a message of hope? God offers us this incredible privilege of being a part of his family, but some refuse that message. Could it be that some people stumble because there is also a responsibility connected with this privilege? Can responsibility be a stumbling block? Does something else cause people to stumble?
- 6) Verse 9 says that we are chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. Does one of those ideas resonate with you more than the others? Why?
- 7) Peter says our calling is to declare the praises, or goodness of God. What does that look like? What keeps us from declaring God's praises?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) Peter says we are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What sort of "building" do you think God is trying to construct in your life? Where do you sense God at work in your life?