

INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

HOPE BEYOND FAILURE: THE BROKEN MAN BEHIND THE BOOK

1 PETER



The Heart of the Matter

Without a doubt, Peter is the best known among Jesus's original band of disciples. Bold, brash, impetuous, impulsive Peter; quick to speak, strongly opinionated, well-meaning, and fiercely loyal . . . yet altogether human and given to emotional extremes. We cannot help but smile at him, especially as we see ourselves mirrored in his actions and words. Let's get better acquainted with the man himself and the first letter he wrote. In doing so, we shall not only become more familiar with him; we will learn the overall theme of the letter he wrote to the Christians who were scattered and living as aliens in a hostile and hateful world.



Discovering the Way

1. Brief Sketch of Peter's Life

Peter has a rich history recorded alongside Jesus in the Gospels. From his call to follow Christ and his role among the apostles to his devastating denial and eventual leadership in the church, Peter revealed a human face among the first followers of our Lord.

2. General Survey of Peter's Letter

Whenever we approach a letter, it's helpful to keep several questions in mind: who was Peter writing to? What's the theme of Peter's letter? And for what purpose did Peter pen this epistle?

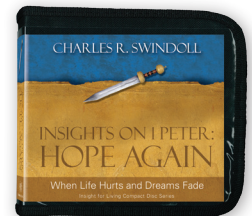


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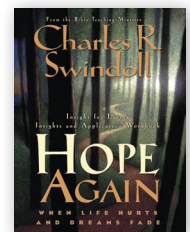
We can glean three lessons from Peter's life. First, failure in the past does not nullify purpose in the future. Second, a broken heart is great preparation for healing fractured lives. And third, one letter of hope brings more encouragement than a thousand thoughts never expressed.



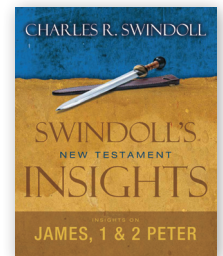
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HOPE BEYOND SUFFERING: HOW WE CAN SMILE THROUGH SUFFERING

1 PETER 1:1-12



The Heart of the Matter

Life has its mysteries. Few people, if any, are able to explain most of them. One great mystery has to do with suffering. Why is there so much of it? Who can make sense of it, especially the suffering of the godly, while so many of the ungodly seem to live out their years virtually free of struggle? God's Word, known for its timeless wisdom, does not dodge the subject. On numerous occasions, the issue of suffering resurfaces in Scripture. The first letter Peter wrote, in fact, addresses various aspects of this knotty problem none can escape, not even those who walk closely with the Lord. Like the patriarch Job, believers have been led through this dark and mysterious valley, often without understanding why. Let's embrace a perspective that is rare among sufferers: joy in the midst of pain.



Discovering the Way

1. A Brief Reminder (1 Peter 1:1-2)

Peter wrote to displaced believers who were being singed by the flames of persecution.

2. Regarding Suffering: Why Christians Can Rejoice (1 Peter 1:3-9)

Why can Christians rejoice? We have a living hope, a permanent inheritance, divine protection, developing faith, an unseen Savior, and a guaranteed deliverance.

3. Regarding Salvation: Why Prophets Were Curious (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Prophets were curious about the Messiah because they did not have a clear picture of God's complete plan, and they did not have the Holy Spirit living within and empowering them like we do today.

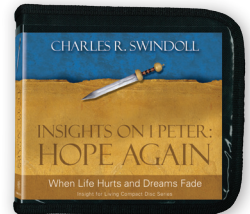


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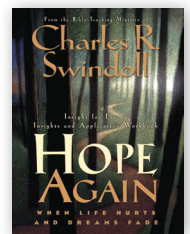
A word to the two types of people who may be listening to this study: to those who suffer, only Christ's perspective can replace your resentment with rejoicing and your hardness with humility. And to those who seek, only Christ's salvation can change you from a spectator to a participant.



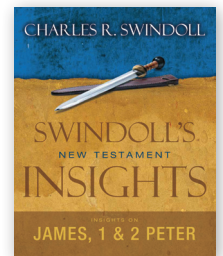
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HOPE BEYOND TEMPTATION: STAYING CLEAN IN A CORRUPT SOCIETY

1 PETER 1:13–21



The Heart of the Matter

Peter began his letter emphasizing hope. Hope to go on in spite of suffering. Hope that grows stronger as we focus on the ultimate glory and relief we'll enjoy in our heavenly home. Peter emphasized holiness—remaining pure even though the world around us is morally and ethically polluted. Hope and holiness belong together, for “everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He [Christ] is pure” (1 John 3:3). Let's pay close attention to God's counsel on this all-important subject. There are few things more deserving of our attention than staying clean in a corrupt society.



Discovering the Way

1. A Brief Analysis of Our World

The philosophy of the world values reason over faith, science over the miraculous, modern ideas over traditional beliefs, and humanity over God. Because of these values, the world motivates us by appealing to our pride.

2. A Strong Challenge to be Different (1 Peter 1:13–21)

Peter outlined three ways Christians can be different in the world: we can live our lives in holiness, conduct our walk in fear, and focus our minds on Christ.

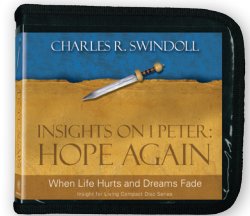


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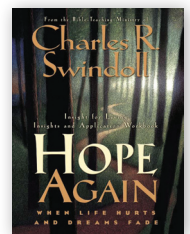
A few techniques can help you stay clean in a corrupt society: pay closer attention to what you look at, give greater thought to the consequences of sin rather than to its pleasures, start each day by renewing your sense of reverence for God, and periodically focus fully on Christ.



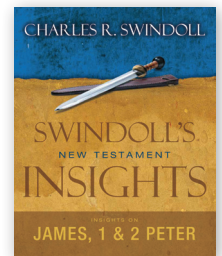
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HOPE BEYOND DIVISION: REASONS FOR PULLING TOGETHER

1 PETER 1:22-2:3



The Heart of the Matter

Regrettably, we Christians are not known for our support of one another. Instead of being loyal and fiercely committed to each other, we tend to look for ways to pick at one another, to put down rather than defend. How strange! The early church was not like that. Though scattered by persecution and attacked on all fronts, they pulled together and found strength in one another's presence. Theirs was a circle that refused to be broken or weakened from within. In our day of "brother bashing" and "sister smashing," we all need reminders about the importance of pulling together. These verses give several.



Discovering the Way

1. Unity: An Almost-Forgotten Virtue

Believers are supposed to exhibit unity, diversity, and humility in their relationships with each other like Jesus Christ did in His relationship with the Father. Likewise, Paul commanded unity for all believers so they might be conformed to Christ.

2. Love: A Never-to-Be-Forgotten Command (1 Peter 1:22)

Obedience to the truth, purity of soul, and sincerity that lacks hypocrisy make possible true love and unity among believers.

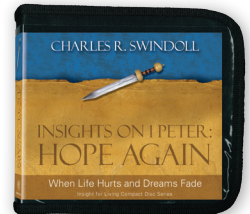


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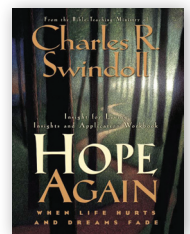
The following four reminders from 1 Peter 1:23-2:3 can help us avoid conflict and remain unified. Remember that we are children of the same Father, that we take our instruction from the same source, that we have our struggles in the same realm, and that we focus our attention on the same objective.



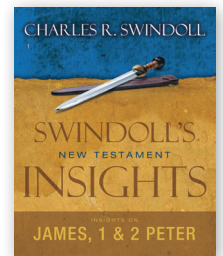
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HOPE BEYOND GUILT: BECOMING LIVING STONES

1 PETER 2:4–12



The Heart of the Matter

Peter's first letter addresses issues that are as relevant as those in today's newspaper. Peter's words speak to those who have been homeless, those who are going through times of undeserved suffering, those who are being tempted to "chuck it all" and return to a lifestyle of unrestrained sinfulness, and those who need to realize they're not alone. What relevance! This message provides a series of pen portraits—pictures of believers through the ages who endured whatever the world or the Adversary threw at them. Each portrait speaks of another dimension of the Christian life.



Discovering the Way

1. A Reminder of God's Appraisal of Us

Both the Old and New Testaments reveal encouraging things about our relationship with God, about His paternal care and concern for us as His children.

2. Some Specific Titles God Gives to Us (1 Peter 2:4–12)

Peter used six titles that reflect God's affirming evaluation of us: we are living stones in a spiritual house, priests in the same temple, a chosen race, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, and God's people who have received mercy.

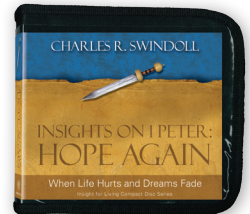


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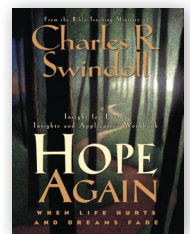
How can we respond to the Lord in light of how He sees us? We can live a clean life, leave no room for slander, do good deeds among unbelievers, and never forget that we are being watched.



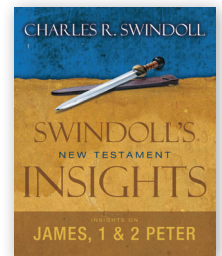
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HOPE BEYOND UNFAIRNESS: PRESSING ON EVEN THOUGH RIPPED OFF

1 PETER 2:13–25



The Heart of the Matter

Few dilemmas are more difficult to cope with than being done wrong after having done right. Our natural tendency is to resent such treatment, retaliate, and then hold a grudge. Strange as it may seem, God offers rare and wise counsel: instead of getting even . . . *submit*. In this section of Peter's letter, believers are exhorted to follow in the footsteps of their Lord. What an unusual reaction! In a day when most sue or slug it out, submitting seems out of the question. Nevertheless, God's ways are always best. His instructions may not come naturally or easily, but they are effective. Nothing is more disarming to our enemies. As Christ modeled so beautifully, submission to the Father leads to remarkable results.



Discovering the Way

1. Common and Natural Reactions to Unfair Treatment

When we're treated unfairly, three common, knee-jerk reactions come naturally. First, we may adopt the aggressive pattern of blaming others. Second, we may embrace a pattern of feeling sorry for ourselves. And third, we may gravitate toward the holding pattern of postponing feelings.

2. An Alternative That Honors God (1 Peter 2:13–17)

How can we live honorably in the face of unfair treatment? Peter wrote that we are to submit.

3. An Example and *the* Example (1 Peter 2:18–24)

Suffering unjustly is part and parcel of our calling as Christians because we follow Jesus Christ, who also suffered unjustly.

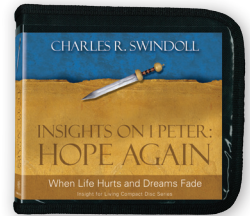


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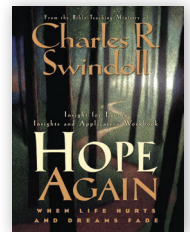
Submission is such an important response to unjust suffering because, as 1 Peter 2:25 makes clear, it forces us to turn our attention to Christ.



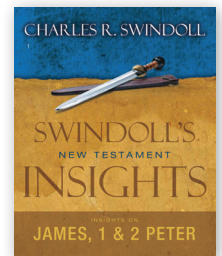
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HOPE BEYOND "I DO": THE GIVE-AND-TAKE OF DOMESTIC HARMONY

1 PETER 3:1-7



The Heart of the Matter

All marriages are happy—it's the living together afterward that's tough! We smile, knowing how true such a statement really is. After the flowers, the candles, the music, and the vows, there inevitably follows the day-to-day reality of living as partners: the stress of financial deadlines, the demands brought on by occupational hassles, the breakdown of communication, the misunderstandings that grow from sexual disharmony, and the lingering offenses not dealt with. The list seems endless. Peter was a married man. He understood the importance of domestic harmony. Under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, he wrote words of wise and workable counsel for all to heed. In spite of the centuries that separate us from Peter's day, these principles are still appropriate. They work; so let's listen!



Discovering the Way

1. A Few Words of Review

Just prior to 1 Peter 3, the apostle discussed the importance of submission in the Christian life, a significant context for Peter's discussion of marriage in this passage.

2. Wise Counsel to Wives (1 Peter 3:1–6)

Peter offered four specific guidelines to wives: analyze your actions, watch your adornment, check your attitude, and evaluate your attention.

3. Strong Commands to Husbands (1 Peter 3:7)

Peter presented three strong commands to husbands: live with your wife, know your wife, and honor your wife.

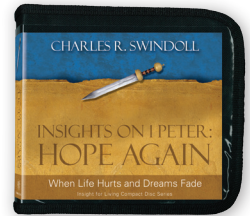


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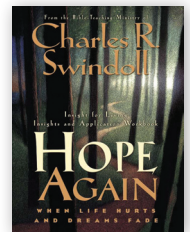
Harmonious relationships with the most important people God has placed in our lives—our spouses—will make our prayer lives and spiritual lives that much more potent.



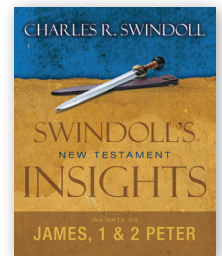
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HOPE BEYOND IMMATURITY: MATURITY CHECKPOINTS

1 PETER 3:8–12



The Heart of the Matter

Haven't you ever wondered why God left you on earth once He saved you? Why didn't He simply remove you from the toils and troubles of earth and take you home to be with Him forever? The most obvious answer is so that we might be His ambassadors, His personal witnesses. No one is better qualified to tell the lost how to be found and forgiven than those who were once lost themselves. There is another reason, however. God has left us here that He might shape us into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ . . . to change us from what we are to what He is. This process leads us toward maturity. Because this is true, setting aside the constant demands of everyday living and evaluating our growth is helpful. Peter's words provide us with some "maturity checkpoints" along the way. Let's see how we're doing.



Discovering the Way

1. A Stated Goal for All God's Children

Peter advised the Christians to leave behind elementary teachings and press on to maturity, rather than continue in immature ways.

2. A Series of Checkpoints to Determine Progress (1 Peter 3:8–12)

Peter set forth eight marks of maturity for Christians: unity, mutual interest, friendship and affection, compassion, humility, forgiveness, a controlled tongue, and purity and peace.

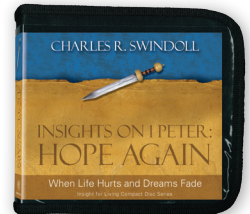


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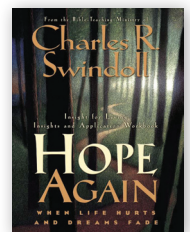
What can you do to move away from infancy and toward adulthood at each checkpoint of maturity? Enrich your spiritual growth through the reading of God's Word, through fellowship with others, and through disciplines that increase your intimacy with God (1 Timothy 4:7–8).



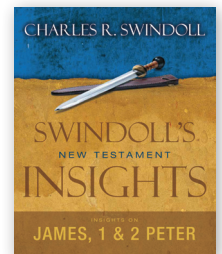
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HOPE BEYOND BITTERNESS: WHEN LIFE "JUST AIN'T FAIR"

1 PETER 3:13–17



The Heart of the Matter

Being creatures of equity, we like things to be fair. In theory, we have little patience with preferential treatment or unjust reactions. Sides are to be balanced. Right should lead to pleasant rewards and wrong to painful consequences. We should take turns. The "little guy" deserves a break. Bullies ought not be allowed to push around others. Those who work hard and commit themselves to a job well done deserve more than those who are lazy and take advantage of the boss. If one gets a break today, another should have the same break tomorrow. "It's only fair," we say. That's fine . . . so long as life cooperates with that game plan. The problem is, however, that fair play doesn't always prevail. Right isn't always rewarded, and wrong isn't always punished. On the contrary, many times those who are unethical, dishonest, and cruel seem to come out as winners. These few verses from Peter's pen will help us endure such times of inequity.



Discovering the Way

1. Two Different and Distinct Perspectives

The human perspective on unfairness says that because life isn't fair, we're going to do whatever it takes to get our share. However, the divine perspective is on a longer timeline: in the end, God will demonstrate His justice for all.

2. Some Helpful and Insightful Techniques (1 Peter 3:13–16)

How can we deal with life's unfairness in a Christian manner? Peter offered five responses. First, consider yourself uniquely blessed by God. Second, don't panic and don't worry. Third, acknowledge Christ as Lord even after this event. Fourth, be ready to give a witness. And fifth, keep a good conscience.

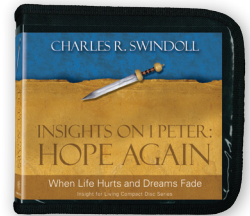


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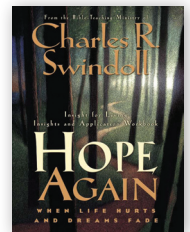
1 Peter 3:17 reminds us of a useful, overarching principle: unjust suffering is always better than deserved punishment.



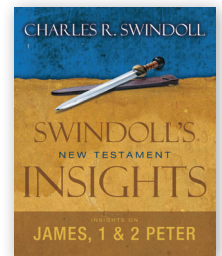
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HOPE BEYOND THE CREEDS: FOCUSING FULLY ON JESUS CHRIST

1 PETER 3:18–22



The Heart of the Matter

Little did Peter realize when he wrote this portion of his letter that it would one day be considered the most difficult section of his writings . . . perhaps of the whole New Testament. Qualified and capable interpreters have wrestled with the correct meaning of this paragraph for centuries. At first glance, it may not seem all that significant, but in reality, it represents one of the knottiest problem passages in Scripture. To unravel the difficulties, we must maintain an understanding of the context and a careful grasp of the meaning of the terms Peter used. Without that, we'll miss the point he was attempting to convey.



Discovering the Way

1. General Observations of the Paragraph

Peter illustrated the principle that blessings follow suffering by reminding us of the experience of Jesus Christ—His crucifixion, proclamation, resurrection, and exaltation.

2. Central Theme of the Passage (1 Peter 3:18, 22)

The central theme of this passage is Jesus Christ—His atoning work on the cross and His continued intercession on our behalf.

3. Critical Analysis of the Problems (1 Peter 3:19–21)

If we hope to gain from this passage a greater understanding of Christ's work, we must unravel two problems: the identity of the spirits in prison and the true nature of baptism.

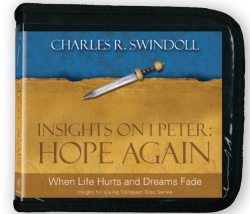


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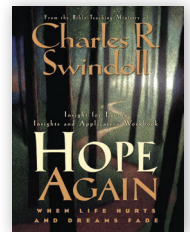
Two pragmatic principles emerge from this text. First, when unjust suffering seems unbearable, remember the cross. And second, when the fear of death steals your peace, remember the resurrection.



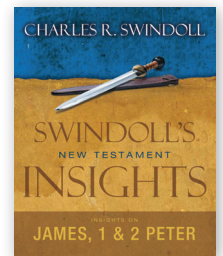
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INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

HOPE BEYOND THE CULTURE: HOW TO SHOCK THE PAGAN CROWD

1 PETER 4:1–6



The Heart of the Matter

Throughout the New Testament, we read of the changed life that follows genuine conversion. When the sins of our lives before Christ are freely and fully forgiven, when the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account, when the Spirit of God takes up residence within our hearts, when old things pass away and all things become new, a transformation begins! This radical series of changes results in a new direction, an alteration of our habits and pursuits as well as our choice of close friends. Interestingly, as far back as the first century, Peter wrote of all these things. Though we are separated by more than nineteen centuries, there isn't a Christian today who cannot identify with the apostle's words. They still speak with incredible relevance . . . especially his comments regarding the reactions of those who do not know the Lord. Let's look closely at these six verses and discover what causes unbelievers to be so surprised (and angry) at us.



Discovering the Way

1. Provision: Dynamic Power of Christ's Death (1 Peter 4:1)

Since Christ suffered on our behalf, we need to arm ourselves for spiritual conflict and get ready to suffer as He did.

2. Transformation: Remarkable Difference in the Christian Life (1 Peter 4:1–3)

Our new life in Christ liberates us from the sinful lusts of our former lives.

3. Reaction: Angry Astonishment from the Unsaved World (1 Peter 4:4–5)

Prepare yourself for negative reactions from the world as you seek to live faithfully for Christ.

4. Summation: Gospel Preached to the Physically Dead (1 Peter 4:6)

Many Christians throughout history have faced the ultimate act of hate — martyrdom: judged as men in the flesh but alive with God for all eternity.

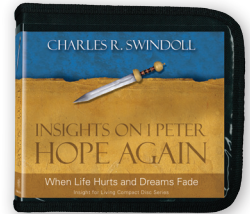


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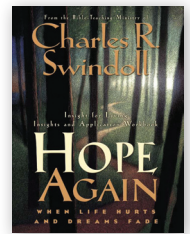
With persecution at the hands of the world to be expected, Christians should continue living for Christ, expect to be misunderstood, and keep their eyes fixed on Christ.



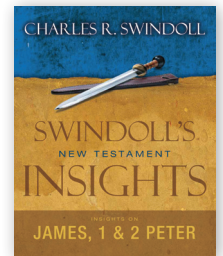
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INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

— HOPE BEYOND EXTREMISM: MARCHING ORDERS FOR SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS —

1 PETER 4:7–11



The Heart of the Matter

Peter was a practical, realistic man. Being married helped. So did his background as a fisherman. Prior to his leaving the familiarity of his work on the lake, his life consisted of very real and very practical things: boats, nets, fish, making a living, hard work, competition, and a host of other tangible realities. We should not be surprised, therefore, to discover that both his personality and his writing style follow suit. Being neither scholarly nor sophisticated, Peter had little interest in theoretical discussions. Life was meant to be lived, not talked about. If there was a cause worth fighting for, then fight . . . don't philosophize! So when Peter took up his pen to write about suffering saints, he didn't mess around; he got down to basics. And when he addressed the reality of the end times, he summed up a game plan in one-two-three-four fashion rather than dumping a pile of options and possible choices.



Discovering the Way

1. A Few Reminders about the End Times

Both Jesus and Paul made specific predictions of the types of events that will occur in the end times.

2. Marching Orders for Soldiers of the Cross (1 Peter 4:7–11)

Peter gave his readers four commands to obey and one goal to pursue. He commanded them to use good judgment and stay calm with a spirit of prayer, to stay fervent in love for one another, to be hospitable toward one another, and to keep serving one another. And he told them to pursue the goal: in all things, God gets the glory.



Starting Your Journey

Want to make all this a reality in your life? It's simple. Remember that the end of all things is near.

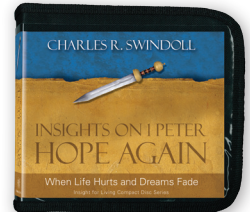


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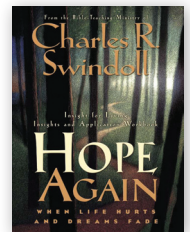
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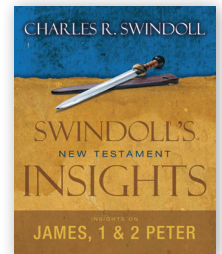
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INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

HOPE BEYOND OUR TRIALS: "WHEN THROUGH FIERY TRIALS . . ."

1 PETER 4:12-19



The Heart of the Matter

One of our greatest old hymns, "How Firm a Foundation," includes a verse that begins, "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, / My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply." The line finds its origin in this passage from Peter. Beautiful lyrics, yet much more than that . . . true words that are frequently forgotten when the blast furnace of suffering becomes our lot. Peter's instruction came from a broad base of understanding. Not only was he personally experienced in the crucible, he lived in an era when Christians paid a price for their faith. This, therefore, is no theoretical treatise based on pious platitudes but very real truth designed to help believers get through the fire of affliction.



Discovering the Way

1. Practical Truth about Trials

It's important to understand four key truths about trials. First, trials are common in the lives of Christians. Second, trials come in various categories. Third, trials put our faith to the test. And fourth, without trials, there would be no maturity.

2. Biblical Strength for Fiery Ordeals (1 Peter 4:12-19)

Christians' reactions to trials should include rejoicing. And in the midst of that rejoicing, we should remember that trials provide opportunity to draw on maximum power, that sometimes our suffering is deserved and shameful, that most suffering should not cause us to feel shame, that suffering is usually timely and necessary, and finally, that there is no comparison between what we are suffering now and what the unrighteous will suffer later.



Starting Your Journey

In the midst of trials, God is faithful. You can rely on Him. When trials linger for a time, take refuge in Him.

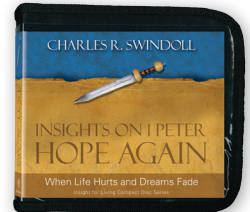


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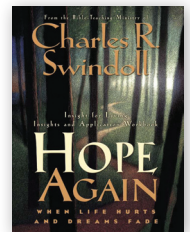
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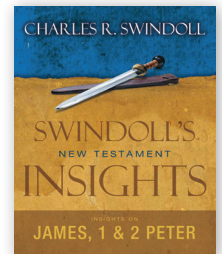
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INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

HOPE BEYOND RELIGION: A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR SHEPHERDS

1 PETER 5:1-4



The Heart of the Matter

Most folks in the business world are well-acquainted with the importance of a job description. It spells out in precise detail what is expected of anyone in the company. Without these written lists of expectations and objectives, ambiguity and frustration abound. But when they are present, employees know what is required, and employers have criterion upon which to base evaluations of employees' competence and/or qualifications. In ministry, little is said regarding a minister's specific responsibilities. Even though this is true, most people being ministered to have numerous expectations. This is the "perfect setup" for conflicts, which may explain why so many ministries are notorious for their conflicts and struggles. How helpful it is to find in Scripture some specific guidelines by which to form our expectations! Such sections are rare, yet they always assist us in our desire to be fair, realistic, and objective with those who serve in vocational Christian service.



Discovering the Way

1. Practical Words of Exhortation Regarding Expectations

The shepherd must remember the value of clear-thinking realism and the importance of two-way tolerance.

2. Biblical Guidelines for All Who Minister (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Two effective principles regarding ministry shine forth from 1 Peter 5: pride of position must be absent, and the heart of the Shepherd must be present. Every minister should foster three essential attitudes: willingness, eagerness, and meekness. Shepherds will ultimately receive an imperishable reward from the Good Shepherd Himself.



Starting Your Journey

To those who lead, keep a healthy balance. To those who are led, be a reason for rejoicing.

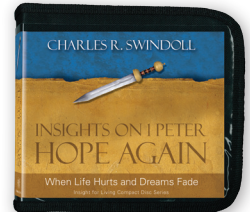


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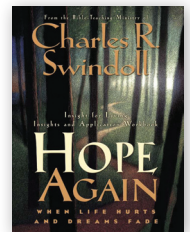
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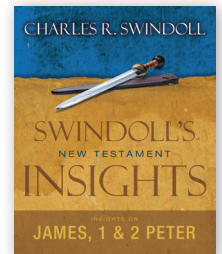
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INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

HOPE BEYOND DISSATISFACTION: A FORMULA THAT BRINGS RELIEF

1 PETER 5:5-7



The Heart of the Matter

In an age like ours, where such a heavy emphasis is placed on self-promotion and polishing one's own public image, messages such as this one are neither popular nor appreciated. At a time when looking good is considered more important than being good . . . when an impression makes a bigger splash than integrity . . . who has time for things like submission and humility, dependence and trust? Furthermore, who these days would choose grace over power or prayer over taking charge? And yet, if it is true satisfaction we want and lasting relief we crave, there is a "formula" in the New Testament that will make it happen. The formula is not complicated nor is it restricted to a few. And yet, strangely, not many choose to live their lives by this God-given game plan. Those who do never regret it.



Discovering the Way

1. Today's Major Messages Promising "Success"

Messengers today promise success through one of four key ways: fortune, fame, power, or pleasure.

2. God's Ancient Plan Bringing Relief (1 Peter 5:5-7)

Peter offered three strategies for success in this world: submit to authority, humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, and cast all our anxiety on Him.

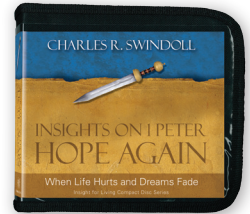


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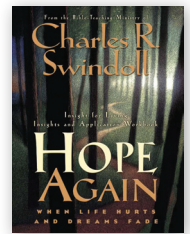
What do we need in order to achieve God's kind of success? We need direction so we know to whom we can submit. We need discipline so we can restrain our hellish pride. And we need discernment so we can spot the beginning of anxiety.



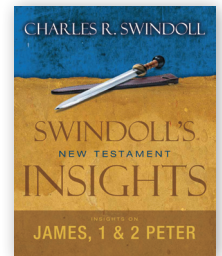
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INSIGHTS ON 1 PETER: HOPE AGAIN: WHEN LIFE HURTS AND DREAMS FADE

— HOPE BEYOND THE BATTLE: STANDING NOSE-TO-NOSE WITH THE ADVERSARY —

1 PETER 5:8–11



The Heart of the Matter

A great deal of information about our adversary, the Devil, is being communicated these days. Much of it is erroneous, some of it is “spooky” and superstitious, and a little of it is reliable. Few subjects arouse the public’s curiosity more than this one, which creates an atmosphere of gullibility. Nothing could please the enemy of our souls more! Without question, his presence and strategy, purpose and destiny are clouded by so much misinformation that he operates without much resistance at all. God never intended for His people to live in ignorance or fear of Satan . . . yet many do. This explains why we are so grateful for passages such as this one, where the aging apostle Peter wrote words of truth for all to read. Because they have to do with our age-old adversary, the Devil, we would do well to hear and heed the counsel.



Discovering the Way

1. A Quick Review of 1 Peter 5

1 Peter 5 is a chapter of commands and wise advice, as Peter sought to direct Christians in godly living.

2. Sober Instructions on Battle Tactics (1 Peter 5:8–11)

As we seek to understand Satan, we must realize that every fiber of his being is bent on defaming and defeating us. Our response should be to keep on the lookout for the predator. And we should expect our resistance to Satan to be both painful and rewarding.

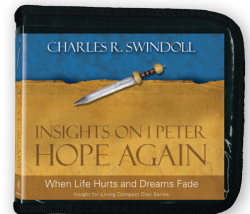


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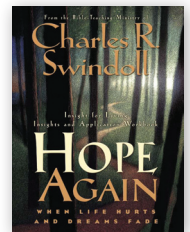
Two practical reminders are worth keeping in mind. First, never confuse confidence in Christ with cockiness in the flesh. Second, always remember that suffering is temporal, and its rewards are eternal.



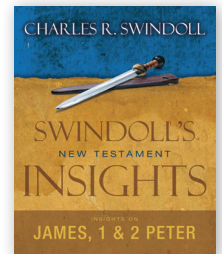
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HOPE BEYOND MISERY: LASTING LESSONS

1 PETER 1-5



The Heart of the Matter

As we come to the final verses of this letter, let's take a step back and look at the letter as a whole. Let's remind ourselves of the things the apostle seemed most concerned that his readers understand. By looking one more time at the ancient reflections in Peter's ink, we shall find relevant courage to press on through life's difficult struggles.



Discovering the Way

1. Five General Observations

When we look at this letter from a distance, we see several broad-stroked observations that stand out in relief. First, Peter wrote the letter. Second, hurting people received the letter. Third, this letter came through Silas. Fourth, the letter concludes with a greeting from a woman. Fifth, the letter's final command is one of intimate affection.

2. Three Major Messages

Peter focused his attention on three major messages: a living hope and how to claim it, the pilgrim life and how to live it, and the fiery trial and how to endure it.

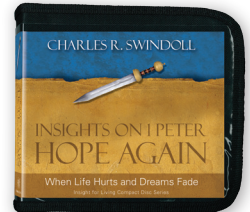


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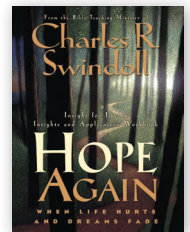
The letter of 1 Peter offers us four lasting lessons. First, when our faith is weak, joy strengthens us. Second, when our good is mistreated, endurance stabilizes us. Third, when our confidence is shaken, love supports us. And fourth, when our adversary attacks, resistance shields us.



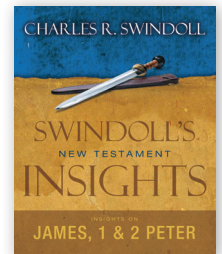
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