

# Lesson 5: Growing Through God's Word

## A Series Thru First Peter

### The Building

Up to this point, Peter introduced the concept of a living hope rooted in the Christian's inheritance in the world to come, what he referred to as a salvation ready to be revealed in the future. Peter then exhorted his readers to personal holiness and keeping God's word, which he referred to as "the living and enduring Word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). It is this "living and enduring Word" that is central to what Peter had to say in our passage for today's lesson (1 Peter 2:1-10). Peter explained that as believers we should be different, setting aside sinful attitudes and speech that are contrary to loving others and we should grow by feeding on God's Word. It is this growth / change concept that leads Peter to explain God's construction projection of a new humanity of whom Jesus is the cornerstone. We are the building, and each of us individually is a stone God is working (shaping) for our particular placement in the structure. This new humanity is a priest-king nation under the New Covenant.

1. **Growth and Change (2:1-3):** Building on his comments in chapter 1 about holiness, love of the brethren, and the enduring and living Word of God, Peter wrote that we must (1) lay aside our attitudes and speech that is contrary to loving others, but (2) crave God's Word that we may grow. Peter added in 2:3, "since you have tasted that the Lord is good," quoting Psalm 34:8. His point is that their prior experience of God's goodness should form an appetite in them for more of God's goodness, i.e. a deep-seated desire / craving for God's Word. (see Psalms 1:2, 119:16, 119:35, 119:47).
2. **God's Building Project (2:4-5):** Having pointed out the relationship between God's Word and growth, Peter turned to explaining in metaphors the growth process and God's role in that process and the uniqueness of God's work in the life of each believer. Jesus is the "living stone" and the word stone (Gr. lithos) is typically used of stones that are worked or shaped for a particular use. Jesus was rejected by the Jewish leadership but highly valued by God. Like Jesus, the living stone with whom we identify by faith, we as Christians are also "living stones." God is the great craftsman shaping each of us for our place in the "spiritual house," which Peter says is a "holy priesthood" fit to offer "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." In the midst of their struggles, Peter wanted his readers to see their privileged position. In contrast to the physical house (the Temple) tended by Levitical priests, this holy priesthood offers spiritual sacrifices — we live and grow and change on the basis of God's Word. (Cf. Heb. 3:1-6)
3. **The Cornerstone (2:6):** Peter quoted Isaiah 28:16 to say that Jesus is the "chosen" and "precious" cornerstone of the building project of which believers are also living stones.
4. **The Cornerstone (and God's Word) Rejected (2:7-8):** Peter wrote that honor comes to those who place faith in Jesus, but quoting from Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14, those who rejected Jesus because they stumbled at God's Word would find shame or dishonor (cf. Isaiah 8:15). Some translations use the word "destined" or "predestined" in 2:8, but this is wrong. The point is not that anyone was destined to reject Jesus, but they were appointed to shame if they rejected him.
5. **A New Nation (2:9-10):** In contrast to those put to shame, those who identify with Jesus (the cornerstone of the building project) by faith are a chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, and people for God's possession. What do these terms mean and what are the implications?