

1 Peter 2

Read 1 Peter 2:1-3: Peter is encouraging us to shed our attitudes and jaded outlooks. All of the survivalist tactics are no longer to be part of our life. We do not need to follow the dog-eat dog ways of this world. We really do not have to concern ourselves with where things are heading in this world. We are well taken care of; and we have an eternity of blessings before us. To accomplish this, we need to *unlearn* a lot of things.

He is telling us to go back to infancy in our mental constructs... of what is happening around us. Part of dying to the flesh is to stop caring about what people think. As children grow up, they become savvier about how sincere others around them are. We begin to be better at predicting the behavior of others. For convenience, we pigeonhole others.

I believe that one of the spiritual gifts that I have is the gift of spiritual discernment. I can conclude that I do not like somebody at the first encounter. I can be judgmental; and end up judging a book by its cover. This is a sin. It also causes me to treat them unfairly. I believe that our gifts and sins can be like *Siamese Twins*. One is a misuse, and the other is helpful. Peter is suggesting that it really does not matter what our neighbor's hidden agenda is. It's a fallen world, full of broken people. We are just supposed to keep our eye on the ball and watch for opportunities to humble ourselves and serve. Jesus exemplified this with the woman caught in adultery. He was much more focused on getting her on track, than burying her for her bad decisions.

Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, [¶]as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers [¶]of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go [¶]and sin no more.” (John 8: 3-11)

I have had bosses who I judged as abusing their position. I literally ended up hating them for all of the immoral actions they introduced. I was literally acting as their judge. It caused me to carry hatred and perpetuate gossip. The Devil is the Accuser of the brethren, not me. I have

found that if I just dismissed all of my conclusions of others, and focused on my job, and kept my critiques to myself, that I felt much better.

He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.
(Proverbs 17:9)

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10: Part of judging others is the false belief that I can exist as a complete entity on my own. I can only exist as a healthy believer as part of a like-minded group. Those others who I connect with are going to have issues. I have my own issues and faults too. They need me in their life. Peter describes the family of God as a connected building; or *a temple* that houses God. We are compared to stones that have a pulse and a purpose and a desire to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

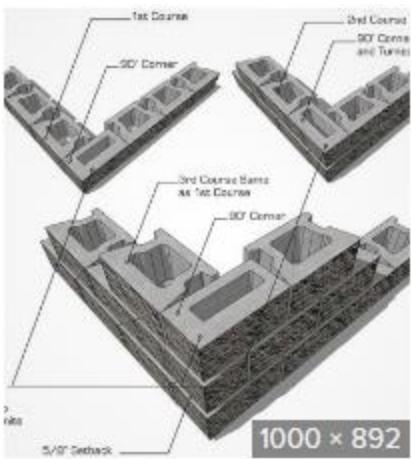
Immanuel is a phrase and a title for Jesus. It means that *God is with us*; and he is intertwined in all aspects of our lives. Immanuel describes to our eternal state; but it is supposed to apply to our current state too. He is with us as our God; and he is also with us by inhabiting our brothers and sisters in Christ. There are blessings and unpleasant things that God pre-filters for our consumption.

If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.... Moreover, the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying “Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.” ... Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (excerpts from Isaiah 7)

The saints are like a masonry building of carved stones. Peter tells us that Jesus is our cornerstone. That means that we have to line up according to the horizontal and vertical controls that he has established (straight walls). He is perfectly plumb (righteous); pointing straight up to heaven. He is completely equitable and righteous and merciful and true in his horizontal direction on earth.

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; (Isaiah 28:16-17)

Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:10-12)



A cornerstone is where two intersecting walls converge and are held together. I can be going in a different alignment than my fellow believers, as long as we intersect in Christ.

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. (Ephesians 2:14-17)

The priesthood of believers with the collective idea of a service building; that houses God. This is a service-based group of priests. It is not just housing. Can I find purpose and place satisfaction in serving others; or does that produce the fear of *losing myself*? It goes against my natural survival instincts to become what someone else needs me to be. It is probably one of those things that has to be *caught* instead of *taught*. In other words, we may begrudgingly serve others in Jesus' name because we are told to do so. Once we do this, we will become inspired to do even more. It's catchy.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you [c]ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:12-14)

Jesus is our foundation and support under us, holding us up...and giving us clear direction. He is immovable. He does not change his position on anything; and we are fickle. We are to help the expansion of the structure and raise the next generation above ourselves. The tiny bit of my life that is out of alignment with the Holy Spirit will have an amplified effect on future generations. Our wall is interconnected; and my course greatly affects others. Our sin affects the whole camp. The children of Israel were defeated in battle by a tiny town, because of one member's sin.

So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people

melted and became like water. Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, “Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?” So the LORD said to Joshua: “Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. (Joshua 7 excerpts)

To the unbeliever, holiness and spiritual life is strange and scary. It's like going fast in a car with no steering wheel. It is not controllable or clear. The natural man is more interested in his individuality than to a collective goodness or purpose.

Read 1 Peter 2: 11-17: We all have lusts that wage war against our soul. It is not all temptation. It includes fear and doubt and hatred and impatience and charging ahead on our own. It includes everything frantic and everything in survival mode. It includes complete disinterest in others.

The fact that we are compared to *travelers* reminds us that we cannot get too connected to anything earthly. We see stuff that is interesting; but it is not for us. God can make that happen by having jobs that change, or with financial realities or health complications, etc... We can feel lost and disconnected and just floating around if we do not put the gospel back into our navigation system. I have been told that once you are saved you are essentially *ruined for this world*. All the old pleasures just seem like vain time wasters. It seems like people all around me are so focused on things that I just don't care about. God has cleared off the competing interests from my calendar. Now I must make better use of this void.

Read 2 Peter 18-25: We have to understand that we work for God. Anyone upstream from us is under God in the org chart. They are God's problem. If something seems wrong towards us it must be serving a purpose. Part of our training is learning restraint. We may have the right to snap back and put someone in their place...but our role is to bring healing, not further inflammation. Part of the feeling the need to snap back stems from feeling that we need to protect ourselves. We just might just be assigned to a *dirty job*. The flesh jumps up during tests and trials. Over time, we can prayerfully turn it over to God with a clear conscience and a peaceful mind.

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. (Romans 13:1-7)