

I P E T E R

How Does God Shape His People?

Trinity Dallas Study Notes

1 Peter: How Does God Shape His People?

Intro to 1 Peter – Part One

Ephesians 2:10 AMP

For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works,...

- Artwork is shaped by the artist

Isaiah 64:8 NLT

Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We are all formed (shaped) by your hand.

- God saves us
- God shapes us

I Peter 1:1-2 NIV

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

*To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:
Grace and peace be yours in abundance.*

Who is Peter?

- The letter, 1 Peter, opens with the **apostle Peter claiming authorship**. Ancient tradition suggests that **Peter was martyred in Rome by Nero in A.D. 64**. Therefore, Peter probably authored I Peter from a Roman prison in the **early 60s of the 1st century**.
- If Peter was between 18 & 22 years old when called by Jesus to be one of the 12 disciples, then he might be about 50 years old when he writes I Peter.
- **Peter was writing to the mostly converted Gentiles** who populated the churches throughout Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey. He has **learned of their trials** and the suffering they were undergoing because of their faith in Christ. Peter understands what is happening to them because he has experienced what they are going through.

How do we learn to understand Peter?

- “In the early church, Peter’s influence was enormous and acknowledged by all. By virtue of his position, he was easily the most powerful figure in the Christian community” writes Ugen Peterson.
- However, Peter’s early days were much different - he was **impulsive and reckless**, he was a leader, but **self-appointed**.
- His M.O. was “**fire, ready, aim,**” and his **personality was bigger than his character**.
- As the early church grew rapidly, Peter's development, his shaping, was equal to the task. The way Peter handled himself as the leader of a fast-going movement is just as impressive as the growth of the church itself.
- **Peter stayed out of the center, intentionally maintaining a subordinate role under Christ as the head of the church.**
- Given his charismatic personality, leadership gifting and his close association with Jesus, he could have taken over. That he didn’t, given the frequency with which so many spiritual leaders do exactly that, is the point of this message.

Peter was shaped. How does God shape His people?

Three Shaping Stories in Peter’s life:

1. Jesus walks on the water - Matthew 14:1-36

Matthew 14:29-31 NIV

“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

- Peter doubts

2. Jesus predicts his Apostles will abandon Him - Matthew 26:31-35

- Perhaps the most controversial event of Peter’s life was during the night and early morning of Jesus’ arrest. The Savior prophesied that all of his Apostles would, in some way, shape, or form, abandon him during his most difficult trials.
- Peter, balked at this suggestion, saying “**Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will**” (Matthew 26:33 NIV).
- **Peter’s ego was so big that he attempted to correct Jesus.** But Jesus had a clear understanding of not only what was to come, but also of ancient scripture foretelling that the Messiah would have to face the pain and degradation alone. He countered Peter’s response with a very detailed prediction, that “**this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times**” (Matthew 26:34 NIV).
 - Peter denies

3. Jesus reinstates Peter - John 21:15-22

- Three times Jesus asked Peter - “Simon, son of John, do you truly love me?”
- Three times Peter says yes
- Three times Jesus says - “Feed my sheep”

- Two times Jesus says - **“Follow me!” John 21:19 & 22**
 - Peter surrenders
 - Peter surrenders to God’s shaping. He surrenders to the master potter. Peter is in the process of learning that he is called to be good clay or good soil.
 - He is not called to be the master potter, he is called to be shapeable. To surrender to the potters' shaping. **To surrender to the reinstating words of Jesus, “follow me.”**

How Does God Shape His People?

- **Shaping reveals doubt** - it doesn’t leave you there
- **Shaping releases denial** - it doesn’t leave you there
- **Shaping requires surrender** - it doesn’t leave you there
- **Shaping regenerates His image** - your shape reflecting His image is the goal

Peter and John before the Sanhedrin - Acts 4:1-22

Acts 4:8-13 MSG

*With that, Peter, **full of the Holy Spirit**, let loose: “Rulers and leaders of the people, if we have been brought to trial today for helping a sick man, put under investigation regarding this healing, I’ll be completely frank with you—we have nothing to hide. By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One you killed on a cross, the One God raised from the dead, by means of his name this man stands before you healthy and whole. **Jesus is ‘the stone you masons threw out, which is now the cornerstone.’** Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one.”*

- They couldn’t take their eyes off them—Peter and John standing there so confident, so sure of themselves! Their fascination deepened when they realized these two were laymen with no training in Scripture or formal education.
- **They recognized them as companions of Jesus.**

Conclusion:

- Peter is one of the few New Testament characters in which we can follow his life from his calling to follow Jesus, to his death in Rome.
- We see his story in the four gospels, we see his ministry in Acts, we encounter him in Paul’s letters, and we know he pastored the Jerusalem church for possibly decades.
- Peter discipled John Mark, and many scholars believe that Mark's gospel is sourced through Peter's preaching and discipleship.
- Then at the end of his life, maybe one to two years before his death, Peter writes a letter to mostly Gentile believers who are suffering because of their faith in Christ.
- Peter was shaped for this task, formed by the master potter for this purpose.

I Peter 2:4-5 NIV

*As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, **are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.***

Discussion Questions:

1. Are you shapeable?
2. Can God shape you like a living stone into His house?
3. What are some examples of how God has shaped you in the past?

Jeremiah 18:6 GNT

“Don't I have the right to do with you people of Israel what the potter did with the clay? You are in my hands just like clay in the potter's hands.”

Devotional Reading:

Commit to reading 1 Peter 1 daily this week & surrender to God's shaping