



HONOR CODE

Small Group Discussion Guide
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PREPARATION

■ STUDY

Spend the week studying 1 Peter 2:13–25. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

■ DETERMINE

Which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group.

■ PRAY

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

■ LANDING POINT

I am a powerful witness for Jesus when I honor God and others.



GROUP DISCUSSION

■ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

■ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

■ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

■ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

FOCUS ON THE PRINCIPLE

Last week your group discussed the Honor 360 Principle, which shows how God calls you to honor those:

- *Above* you (government, parents, employers, church leaders)
- *Beside* you (friends, coworkers, family members, teammates)
- *Below* you (employees, younger siblings, children, anyone you lead)

In 1 Peter 2:17, the apostle Peter calls his readers to “honor everyone.” He doesn’t leave much room for exceptions here, does he? We have no excuse to withhold honor, even from those we deem unworthy of it. If the Bible calls us to honor everyone, there must be a way we can honor those who oppose us or those with whom we disagree.

And there is a way. Following Jesus means following His example. If He submitted Himself to the Father and sought to honor others, so can you. This week, your group will discuss how God changes you and others when you put the Honor 360 Principle into practice.

🗣️: *How has God changed your view of honor so far in this series?*

🗣️: *What excuses can someone make for withholding honor from others?*



LEARN

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

FAITH UNDER FIRE

Peter wrote his first epistle to believers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Suffering and persecution had put their faith under threat. Like many Christians around the world today, they lived in constant danger. Some were persecuted verbally, disowned by friends and family, or cast out of their community.

Others were thrown in jail, beaten, or even put to death.

These believers needed hope. They needed some encouragement to stay faithful. In response, Peter doesn't give them some sentimental pick-me-up speech or Christian platitudes like "all things work for good." He gives them the straight story. He tells them to keep living godly lives, submit to the governing authorities over them, and honor everyone, even those who were persecuting them.

READ: *Read 1 Peter 2:13-25. How does living as a servant of God give you freedom?*

Q: *How would you encourage someone who was suffering or being persecuted to be faithful? What would you tell them?*

A SERVANT LIKE JESUS

Following Jesus means suffering for Him, and these Christians were confronted with this truth on a daily basis. That's why Peter pointed them to Jesus as an example of remaining faithful through suffering. It was his way of comforting them. Jesus was a servant who endured suffering without sinning. He didn't seek revenge on those who persecuted Him. Nor was He hateful or embittered towards those who mocked Him and nailed Him to a cross. Even in the face of great suffering, Jesus remained honorable, both to the Father and to others.

Q: *Why do we avoid suffering? What can suffering teach us?*

Q: *Who is someone you know who suffers well? How do they remain honorable?*



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

FREE TO LIVE

Jesus modeled the Honor 360 Principle as a servant. He put His life into the Father's hands and refused to retaliate, despite being insulted, wounded, and put to death.

Maybe some of you are thinking, "Sure, that was easy for Jesus. He was the Son of God. You know, perfect and sinless." But that misses the point. Jesus is our example of what a life lived in complete submission to the Father is supposed to look like. He lived the life we were meant to live.

Jesus' mission was to make it possible for us to live life as it was meant to be lived. That's what it means to live in God's kingdom. Jesus brings us back into relationship with the Father and frees us to live in submission to God and others. Through Him our hearts are changed to see how we can honor anyone at any time.

Q: *What would be different about you if you lived the life God meant for you to live?*

Q: *Write a short statement or prayer that helps you remember to submit to God and honor others.*

BEING A WITNESS

It's easier to show honor to those you respect. It's a different story when you're called to honor someone you don't respect or someone you judge "unworthy." The gospel changes us to live more like Jesus and seek to be fully submitted to the Father. That means obeying Him when He calls us to honor everyone.

The gospel calls us to live by a different code. When you live out the Honor 360 Principle, you become a witness to a greater Power at work in you. Living this way makes you radical; you seek to honor God and others no matter what.

Q: *In what area of life do you need to be more fully submitted to the Father?*

Q: *What's one thing you can do this week to start living out the Honor 360 Principle?*



LEAD

Select 1 question from this section to ask your group.

7 WAYS TO LIVE OUT THE HONOR 360 PRINCIPLE

Is it really possible to honor everyone? Yes, it is. Let's look at seven ways you can live out the Honor 360 Principle with anyone at any time:

1. *Be a guard.* Pay close attention to your words and attitude towards others. Do they communicate honor or dishonor?
2. *Submit.* A servant's heart always seeks to honorably submit.
3. *Put others first.* Give preference to the needs and desires of others above your own.
4. *Love without strings attached.* Love in a way that doesn't expect your love to be returned. True love simply loves, without conditions or qualifications.
5. *Help others succeed.* Support others in a way that helps them succeed.
6. *Choose God's way.* At all times, ask God, "What are you doing right now? How can I choose you in this situation?"
7. *Affirm and believe the best.* Celebrate the good in others and assume the best of them.

Q: Look at the list above. Which would be easiest for you to apply? Which would be most difficult?

Q: How can you, as a group, challenge and encourage one another to live out the Honor 360 Principle? Think practically.



PRAY

Pray with the Honor 360 Principle in mind. Think of someone above you, beside you, and below you. Pray for each person and ask God to give you a heart to submit and honor them like Jesus.



FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- Read Romans 13:1–7 and consider how Paul’s exhortations to believers in Rome relate to Peter’s exhortations.
- Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their lives.



COMMENTARY

GOD’S JUSTICE Jesus entrusted Himself and those who persecuted Him to God. He believed God is just and will make things right in the end. We can follow Jesus’s example by forgiving others and entrusting any judgment or vengeance to God. In the end, every wrong done against us is either covered by Christ’s blood or will be repaid at the final judgment.¹

SLAVES TO GOD “In general, all Christian believers in the Greco-Roman world lost social status because of their faith in Christ, and so slaves, since they had the least social status and power of all, were fitting models for all. Even the most socially prominent believer must live as a slave to God, obeying him in every aspect of life, even at the risk of lost social standing.”²

THE SUFFERING SERVANT By addressing slaves and recalling Christ’s example, Peter links to Isaiah 53 and its portrait of the Suffering Servant with Jesus as an example to follow.

DO WE ALWAYS SUBMIT AND OBEY? Peter’s command is a general rule, meaning believers should obey and submit to rulers in most situations. However, believers should not obey any authority that commands or compels evil or requires a believer to do something that violates God’s law and the commands found in His Word.

ENDNOTES:

1. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2409.

2. Douglas J. Moo, “The Letters and Revelation,” in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2543.