

1 PETER 4 & 5

STUDY GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Whether you're using this Study Guide with your family, in a discipleship relationship, or as a Small Group, our hope is that it will help you dive deeper into 1 Peter in the context of community. This guide is designed to be a helpful tool in your study, meditation, and application of God's Word. You don't have to use every part and it's not meant to be a checklist document where you get each section finished for the sake of crossing it off—use what's helpful to you.

WEEKLY STUDY

The text. Each week we've put the text in the book so that you can mark it up with observations or notes. Spend time studying the text and making observations either prior to the sermon that week or at the beginning of your Small Group.

Application & Discussion Questions. These questions are meant to be a tool to help get into God's Word as well as to apply the sermon. Use the ones that fit best with your group's situation and needs.

Questions for Kids. For those with children in your life in some capacity, these questions are designed to help you talk about the sermon with younger children.

Response. Each week there are one or two possible next steps. Whether you use these or find other ways to respond, the key is to intentionally act on and obey what God's Word says.

EXTRAS

10 Things to Know about 1 Peter. As you start 1 Peter, this section helps introduce you to the author, recipients, historical context, and key ideas.

Resources. We've suggested a few books and articles for commentary on 1 Peter or to read more about how to live in exile.

Appendix 1: How to Make Observations. We encourage you to spend time making observations and studying the passage so this appendix provides a short primer on how to make good observations.

Appendix 2: Prayers & Praises. This blank page is a space for writing down prayer requests and praises either for yourself or for those in your community as you walk through 1 Peter.

Appendix 3: Actions, Promises, and Characteristics of God. This blank page offers a space to keep a list of where you see God in action, the promises of God we can cling to, or the attributes and characteristics of God in 1 Peter. This list can be used as a reminder of who God is and what He has done for us to fuel our thoughts and prayers.

10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT 1 PETER

- ▶ Peter, the Apostle, wrote the book and refers to it in his second letter (2 Peter 3:1).
- ▶ The letter was likely written while Peter was in Rome ("Babylon" in 5:13) around AD 62-63.
- ▶ At the time of Peter's writing, the famous Emperor Nero was ruling Rome. Within a couple of years, he would have Peter killed.
- Although persecution at the time of writing was not yet widespread or officially sanctioned by the Empire, it was taking place on a local level.
- Peter wrote to believers scattered throughout Asia-Minor (1:1), now modern-day Turkey.
- ▶ Most likely, the audience primarily consisted of Gentiles (see 1:14, 18; 2:10) who seemed to have been instructed in the Old Testament after their conversion.
- ▶ The word "exile" and themes associated with exiles show up throughout the book. Whether the people were literal exiles or spiritual exiles experiencing hostility from the world, this major theme provides the backdrop to the book.
- ➤ The purpose of the letter is to encourage believers to both endure suffering and pursue holiness in an evil and hostile culture.
- ▶ Another primary theme of the letter is that while we don't belong to this world we do belong to God, who has redeemed us to Himself (1:1-2, 18-19; 2:9-10, 25; 3:18).
- ▶ At the end of the letter we see that Peter was with John Mark. This is the same Mark who participated in ministry with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:25; 13:5, Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11), whose mother hosted a church (Acts 12:12), and who most likely wrote the Gospel of Mark through the direction and influence of Peter.

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WEEK ONE

ARM YOURSELVES WITH CHRISTLIKENESS

1 Peter 4:1-11

¹ Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. ³ For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; ⁵ but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

⁷The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and soberminded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is one observation (not interpretation or application yet) you notice when reading this passage? For instance, do you notice any key words, repetition or parallels, vivid descriptions, connecting thoughts, mentions of God, or important themes?
- 2. What does it mean to arm yourself with the same attitude that Jesus had during His suffering in the body (v. 1)? How do we do this as believers?
- 3. How can we support one another to better arm ourselves in the midst of suffering and in the culture around us?

- 4. In light of verses 3–6, what is the balance between separating from the world and yet befriending lost people in the world to win them to Christ? How does this play out specifically in your life?
- 5. One of Peter's chief commands here is to continue to love one another (v. 8). Why can this be a challenge for believers? What does it look like for love to cover a "multitude of sins"?
- 6. According to this passage, why does God give us gifts? How does this serve as motivation for using our gifts?
- 7. One of the principles in this passage is that *the one who gives the gift gets the glory*. What does it look like to use our gifts for God's glory rather than for our glory?
- 8. What are some ways that we can use this passage in our evangelism and in our discipleship?

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are a couple of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Kid's notes" that will be available each Sunday as another tool to encourage your children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1. How can you help and be friends with the non-Christians in your life?
- 2. What do gifts say about the person who gives them? What do God's gifts say about God? How can you use your gifts to honor God?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we've seen in God's Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God's Word.

Reflect upon how your life would look different if you knew that Jesus would return tomorrow. Identify areas of life that you need to change by God's grace and share these with your small group members.

Develop an action plan to use your gifts to serve others and glorify God this week.

WEEK TWO

DON'T BE SURPRISED BY SUFFERING

1 Peter 4:12-19

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is one observation (not interpretation or application yet) you notice when reading this passage? For instance, do you notice any key words, repetition or parallels, vivid descriptions, connecting thoughts, mentions of God, or important themes?
- 2. What are reasons—from this text and elsewhere in the Bible—that we should not be surprised that suffering or persecution will come our way? What are reasons from this passage for why we can rejoice in suffering?
- 3. Compare this passage to 1 Peter 1:6-9. What are some areas of overlap between these two passages on suffering? What are some differences?
- 4 Why would "sharing in Christ's sufferings" give joy to the Christian? How do you, in your suffering, lean into walking through it with Jesus rather than only getting past it?
- 5. What are some ways or times you've experienced loss, insult, exclusion, or persecution specifically because of your faith in Jesus? How do you find your identity and joy in Christ in those moments?

- 6. How can you allow hardship, suffering, and persecution to refine your faith so that you grow closer to Jesus?
- 7. How do you think we should pray for believers who are suffering? What should you pray for others and for yourself if and when persecuted?
- 8. Is there something this week you are walking through—hardship, suffering, persecution—where we can walk with you through it? How can we pray for you or encourage you?
- 9. In the midst of suffering, how can you practically live out verse 19? What do you need to remember or do to live this out?

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are a couple of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Kid's notes" that will be available each Sunday as another tool to encourage our children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1. If Jesus suffered in similar ways that we suffer, how does that cause you to trust in and love Him all the more? Why can we turn to Jesus when we suffer and know that He understands and is compassionate?
- 2. How can we trust in God when people disagree with us or don't believe what we believe? How do we love people who do not want to love us back?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we've seen in God's Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God's Word.

Pray with your group, family, or individually for other believers who are being persecuted because of their faith in Jesus. Consider praying for some of our church's missionaries and even writing them a letter or email to let them know how you are praying for them.

Read through 1 Peter again and look for other passages tied to suffering. Note the actions of God in those texts (use Appendix 3 if that helps). Also note how we are to respond and what God is doing in us or through us in those times.

WEEK THREE

ELDERS, SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD

1 Peter 5:1-4

¹ So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is one observation (not interpretation or application yet) you notice when reading this passage? For instance, do you notice any key words, repetition or parallels, vivid descriptions, connecting thoughts, mentions of God, or important themes?
- 2. According to this passage, what is the responsibility that elders have? What is the way in which elders are to carry out this responsibility?
- 3. Thinking through this passage and other passages of Scripture, how are elders to know who they are called to shepherd? Why is it important for elders to know who is in their care?
- 4. Peter calls elders to shepherd the flock willingly and without compulsion (v. 2). Why is this important for elders to remember? What are some reasons that elders would shepherd under compulsion and how can they avoid these reasons?
- 5. According to this passage, what should motivate elders to shepherd the flock of God?
- 6. What are some ways that this passage applies to those who are *not* elders?
- 7. What characteristics are true of a person who is eager to be shepherded? How can we cultivate those characteristics in our daily lives?

- 8. Peter says that elders serve as an example to the flock (v. 3). What are some ways that you have seen elders serving as faithful examples? How can you faithfully follow their example?
- 9. How does the promise of "the unfading crown of glory" help elders as they seek to shepherd their flock? How does this promise help us in our daily lives?

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are a couple of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Kid's notes" that will be available each Sunday as another tool to encourage our children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1. What are things that shepherds do for sheep? How does this help us think through what elders do as they shepherd the church?
- 2. Why is it important to obey God willingly and eagerly rather than being forced to obey?

RESPONSE

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Think about ways that you can encourage one of your elders as they seek to shepherd the church. This could look like:

- a. Joining the church in membership.
- b. Sending an email to an elder listed on the website.
- c. Stopping an elder in the hallway and expressing gratitude.

This next week, pray for the elders who are shepherding the flock. Thank God for their ministry and ask God to provide what they need to shepherd the flock well.

WEEK FOUR

BE HUMBLE AND PRAY

1 Peter 5:5-7

- ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is one observation (not interpretation or application yet) you notice when reading this passage? For instance, do you notice any key words, repetition or parallels, vivid descriptions, connecting thoughts, mentions of God, or important themes?
- 2. Peter calls those who are younger to be subject to the elders (v. 5). Why does he specifically mention "those who are younger"? Does this mean that older people are not called to be subject to elders as well? Why or why not?
- 3. What are some things that can keep us from being subject to our elders?
- 4. What does it look like to clothe oneself with humility toward others? How can we do this on a regular basis?
- 5. Peter warns his readers that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." How do promises of blessing and warnings help us to follow after Jesus?
- 6. How can we know whether or not we are being humble or not? What are some indicators that we are either proud or humble?
- 7. According to this passage, what is the relationship between humility and prayer?
- 8. How would you grade your prayer life at this time? What are some of barriers that keep you from giving yourself a higher grade?

9. What are some anxieties or cares that you have that you need to cast upon God in prayer this next week? How can your Small Group members join you in this?

QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are a couple of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Kid's notes" that will be available each Sunday as another tool to encourage our children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1. What are some good reasons why we should obey those who are in authority over us, like parents, teachers, and pastors?
- 2. What are some cares that you have that you can pray to God today?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we've seen in God's Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God's Word.

Memorize this passage of Scripture and use it to fight for humility when you feel tempted towards pride this next week.

Spend time this week to write out a list of all of your cares and anxieties so that you can pray through them.

WEEK FIVE

RESISTING THE DEVIL

1 Peter 5:8-9

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is one observation (not interpretation or application yet) you notice when reading this passage? For instance, do you notice any key words, repetition or parallels, vivid descriptions, connecting thoughts, mentions of God, or important themes?
- 2. What does it mean to be "sober-minded"? According to this passage, why should Christians be sober-minded?
- 3. Peter calls us to be watchful (v. 8). What are some ways that believers can live in a "watchful" way?
- 4. How often do you think about the devil? How should we think about Satan? Should we fear Satan? Why or why not?
- 5. How can we maintain a perspective that accounts for the reality of spiritual warfare throughout the week?
- 6. In addition to this passage, read Ephesians 6:10–18 and James 4:6–8. What are some ways that we can resist the devil?
- 7. Why do you think that Peter mentions that brothers and sisters in Christ experience the same kinds of suffering as we do? How does this help us in our fight against sin?
- 8. How can your fellow Small Group members pray for you especially as it relates to your resistance against the devil?

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are a couple of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Kid's notes" that will be available each Sunday as another tool to encourage our children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1. What does the Bible teach about Satan? Why is it good news that we can resist him?
- 2. How can you pray for persecuted believers around the world?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we've seen in God's Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God's Word.

Meditate upon how the Bible talks about the work of Satan and spiritual warfare. Meditate upon the way that Jesus resisted the devil in Matthew 4:1–11.

Using a tool like *The Voice of the Martyrs*, spend the week praying for your brothers and sisters who are persecuted around the world.

WEEK SIX

AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED

1 Peter 5:10-11

¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is one observation (not interpretation or application yet) you notice when reading this passage? For instance, do you notice any key words, repetition or parallels, vivid descriptions, connecting thoughts, mentions of God, or important themes?
- 2. How does the concept of suffering fit in with what Peter has been talking about in this paragraph? What is the cause of suffering?
- 3. Peter reminds believers that, even in their suffering, God has called them to his eternal glory in Christ. Why is it necessary to remember our eternal calling as we are living as exiles?
- 4. Peter says that God himself will "restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish" believers. What does each one of these words mean? How does God do this for us in our suffering?
- 5. Why do you think this passage ends with a doxology in verse 11—"To him be the dominion forever and ever."? How is this especially relevant in light of the whole chapter?
- 6. One of the beautiful truths that this passage teaches is that God is present with us and works among us in our suffering. What are some ways that you have seen God work in your trials?
- 7. What are some temptations that we face when we are suffering? How do we fight against these temptations?
- 8. Peter calls God "the God of all grace." How would you define "grace"? What does it mean that God is the God of all grace and why is this especially relevant for this passage?

For those of you who are parents or have young children in your life, here are a couple of questions to ask them as you read the Bible together. You can also use the "Kid's notes" that will be available each Sunday as another tool to encourage our children in their growth and discipleship through the Word.

- 1. This passage teaches us that God is present even when we are hurting. Why is it a good thing that God is with us when we hurt?
- 2. What sort of things should we ask God for when we are hurting?

RESPONSE

Here are some possible ways to apply and obey what we've seen in God's Word this week. It is important that we be doers of the Word and not hearers only, so whether you use these or not please obey what God puts on your heart through the reading, preaching, and discussing of God's Word.

Read a book in order to help form a theology of suffering. Some good guides are *How Long, O Lord?* by D. A. Carson, *Suffering in the Sovereignty of God* by John Piper and Justin Taylor, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* by Timothy Keller, and *When God Weeps* by Joni Eareckson Tada and Steve Estes.

Reflect upon who in your sphere of relationships is currently in a trial and map out a plan to come alongside them in love.

WEEK SEVEN

STAND FIRM

1 Peter 5:12-14

¹² By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.
 ¹³ She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. ¹⁴ Greet one another with the kiss of love.
 Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

APPLICATION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is one observation (not interpretation or application yet) you notice when reading this passage? For instance, do you notice any key words, repetition or parallels, vivid descriptions, connecting thoughts, mentions of God, or important themes?
- 2. As we close our study in 1 Peter, reflect back on the lessons from this book. What exhortations and/or encouragements have you found most helpful for your walk with Christ? What parts of this book have you found to be the most challenging?
- 3. Peter describes Silvanus (Silas) as a faithful brother. Why is it important to be around faithful brothers and sisters during times of exile, trial, difficulty, or persecution? Share a way in which you have been impacted by a faithful believer who endured exile, trial, difficulty, or persecution.
- 4. What are some ways in which we can exhort and declare the grace of God to one another as a redemptive community living as exiles in our culture? What should the substance and content of our exhortation be?
- 5. Why do you think it was important for Peter to exhort and declare the truth of the gospel to these believers? As we live as exiles today, what dangers do you think exist that could distract us from living in the grace of God?
- 6. Why would Peter's concluding statement to these exiles be to "stand firm?" Reflecting back on our study in 1 Peter, what areas do you think Peter had in mind when he challenged them to stand firm in the grace of God?

- 7. How does one stand firm in the grace of God? Write down or discuss one or two truths from our study in 1 Peter that will help you stand firm in the grace of God.
- 8. Think of believers in your Small Group, work, family, and other relational contexts who might be in need of exhortation, testifying to the grace of God, or encouragement. What might you do this next week to encourage them in the grace of God?

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- 1. What is encouragement? What could you say to someone to encourage them to follow Jesus more or for the first time?
- 2. What does it mean to stand firm? What is something you could do each day to remind you to stand firm in the grace of God?

RESPONSE

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Look back at our study in 1 Peter. What is one action step that you want to take going forward as you walk with Jesus? Share this with your Small Group or an accountability partner and make a plan to track your progress in this area.

Use a three-step model of recognizing your sin, repenting of it, and then replacing it to process the Biblical truths that you have learned in 1 Peter. Ask God to help you **RECOGNIZE** two or three areas in which you are not standing firm in the grace of God. After recognizing these areas, spend time **REPENT**ing of your lack of trust in the grace of God with these particular areas in mind. Finally, write down two or three ways in which you can **REPLACE** these areas with standing firm in the grace of God. Share this process with your small group or an accountability partner as you ask God to help you stand firm in His grace.

RESOURCES

BOOKS & COMMENTARIES

1 Peter (Tyndale Commentary Series) by Wayne Grudem

1, 2 Peter, & Jude (New American Commentary Series) by Thomas Schreiner

1 Peter for You by Juan Sanchez

The Message of 1 Peter by Edmund Clowney

1 Peter: A Living Hope (Bible Study) by Jen Wilkin

Everyday Church by Tim Chester & Steve Timmis // A book on 1 Peter and the Christian Life

Onward! by Russell Moore

ARTICLES & MESSAGES

The Gospel Coalition 2016 Women's Conference, Plenary Sessions on 1 Peter // Search on thegospelcoalition.org

Are We Exiles? // Search on russellmoore.com Christian Exiles // Search on ligonier.org

In Exile at Babylon U. // Search on theologyofwork.org the Church in a Politicized World // Search on ftc.co

If you have any questions about these resources or any additional resources contact Dustin Crowe at dcrowe@yourchurch.com.

APPENDIX 1: HOW TO MAKE OBSERVATIONS

When reading Scripture on your own or in a group it's natural to quickly jump to ways we can apply the passage to our lives. While this is not a bad instinct, in doing so we often miss the author's main purpose of the text. We need to take time to *observe* what literary devices and emphasis the biblical author has used to communicate to his audience.

Below are some helpful tips to help you and your group make helpful observations that lead to correct interpretation and application our thoughts and prayers.

- Read the passage out loud. Often times when we read the Bible silently, we
 can miss things. The Scriptures were actually meant to be read out loud, and
 if we only read the it silently we can miss some of the emotion and emphasis
 in the text.
- 2. Read the passage both quickly and slowly. There is good reason to read large amounts of Scripture for a season but there is also a good reason to slow down and spend weeks or months in one book. A healthy diet of both types of reading will help to see the grand theme of the Scriptures and to allow truth to ruminate in your soul.
- 3. Keep track of the words or ideas that are repeated. If you're reading a short passage you may not see much repeated but when you study a whole book it's easier to see repetition and ideas that the author continues to address.
- 4. **Highlight transition words/phrases.** The biblical writers often help us track their thought process by using words and phrases like: for, therefore, but, because, in order that, so then, likewise, etc. Especially in the New Testament letters, we are able to track to main points, purposes, results, and reasons by following these literary devices.
- 5. **Pay attention to the verbs.** Pay attention to see if the author is describing a former way of life (past tense), a present commendation or rebuke (present tense), or what promises are awaiting fulfillment (future tense). Also, look to see if the verb is describing something (indicative) or commanding something (imperative).
- 6. Be aware of assuming understanding in familiar texts. When we have read a passage many times before we often fail to see the glorious truths and surprising ways in which God reveals Himself to His people. Careful reading, prayer, and meditation on the text will help fight against the temptations of familiarity.
- 7. **Pray for illumination.** We are dependent upon the Holy Spirit to illumine our minds and hearts to understand and love the texts that we are studying.

APPENDIX 2: PRAYERS AND PRAISES

APPENDIX 3: ACTIONS, PROMISES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD



