

## How Should I worship God, part 2?

I Peter 2:4-5

October 25, 2015

### Summary

This passage focuses on the priesthood of believers. It reminds us that we are set apart to enjoy access to the Father. We can hear from God. We can speak with God. We can live set apart for God in our daily lives.

### Getting Started

In this passage, Peter portrays Jesus as the 'living stone' or cornerstone on which the church is built. Individual believers are like living stones used to build up God's new temple or spiritual house. This passage teaches that we have direct access to God, our living stone who gives eternal life to all who believe on Him. We have no need for a human intermediary. Jesus serves as our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16) who gives us access to the Heavenly Father through his death and resurrection. He is our living stone upon which we may build our lives with confidence!

### Understanding the Passage

Read I Peter 2:4-5 and identify 2-3 key words or phrases in this passage.

*Read Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16. How do these OT passages help us understand the imagery Peter uses to describe the person and work of Jesus? Check out the commentary notes on these two verses.*

*Peter here uses the picture of a house to help believers understand their relationship with God and with other believers. Where do individual believers like you and me fit into this picture?*

*What other imagery does the Bible use to help us understand the mystery of our relationship with Christ and with other believers? See I Corinthians 12:27 and Colossians 1:18 as examples.*

*Does the opening phrase in verse 4, 'As you come to Him' refer to our initial response of faith in Christ at the time of our salvation or to our ongoing fellowship with Him? See the commentary note on verse 4.*

*How would cultivating an ongoing relationship with Christ contribute to us being 'built up as a spiritual house' for God?*

*What does Peter mean by describing believers as royal priests who offer spiritual sacrifices?*

*What spiritual sacrifices does God want us to make for Him? How do we know God will accept those sacrifices?*

*What is the spiritual house Peter mentions in verse 5?*

*According to I Peter 2:9, for what purpose has God made us a royal priesthood?*

### **Applying the Passage**

*Have you rejected the living stone or accepted Him as chosen and precious to God? If you have placed your faith in Christ, take some time to share with the group your personal testimony. Let your group leader know if you have any questions about what it means to place your faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.*

*What sacrifices do you believe God is calling you to make this week that would be 'acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'?*

*How can we as holy priests worship the Living Stone who is Jesus Christ?*

### **Share Point**

Read I Peter 2:4-5 and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

### **Consider This!**

In I Peter 2:4-8 the two cornerstone passages (Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16) are quoted (or alluded to) in addition to Isaiah 8:14. Here the appeal to the reader is to come to the living stone (Jesus) the people rejected but precious in God's sight. This is substantiated by a quote from Is. 28:16. There then comes a warning: those who believe consider the stone to be something precious, but those who do not believe are warned that the stone which they have rejected has become the head of the corner (Ps. 118:22) and further, this stone will make them stumble and fall. Believers are encouraged to themselves become living stones like the Living Stone and be built into a spiritual house.

*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary on the word Cornerstone*

### **Prayer**

*Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Living Stone who was rejected by men but accepted in your Father's sight. In you is eternal life and you give that life to those who place the full weight of their trust on you. Cause me to be like the Living Stone and use me in the building of your spiritual house, the church, so others may come to know you. Thank you for making an intimate relationship with the Heavenly Father possible. I come to you by faith and trust you will accept sacrifices you lead me to make for your glory.*

**Commentary Notes** (adapted from the ESV Study Bible)

Psalm 118:22-23 These verses use an image from ancient building practices. The cornerstone is probably the large stone at the corner of the building's foundation, though some think it is the keystone or capstone of an arch (but the very similar expression in Is. 28:16 makes the foundation interpretation more likely). The builders are the wise and knowledgeable and they have rejected some particular stone as unsuited for this purpose. They were wrong in their judgment. The psalm is likening Israel (and perhaps particularly the person who had suffered) to such a stone; the imperial powers had thought little of Israel, but God had chosen his people to be the cornerstone of his great plan for the world. The NT writers use this text to indicate that the powerful figures who rejected Jesus were no wiser than the world powers that thought so little of Israel.

Isaiah 28:16 God has established another foundation for the Zion of his remnant people. That sure foundation, embodied in Jesus Christ, is the good news that God saves as no one else can. Isaiah heaps terms upon terms to emphasize that God's salvation is worth believing in.

I Peter 2:4 As you come to him indicates a daily personal relationship with Christ, beginning at but not limited to the time of conversion. As believers continue in fellowship with Christ, they 'are being built up as a spiritual house.' Just as his followers suffer persecution, Jesus also was rejected by men. Still he is risen from the dead and hence is the living stone – the foundation of God's new temple. He is God's elect one, and as the exalted Lord he is honored above all.

I Peter 2:5 Believers are living stones in God's new temple. Since the components that make up the house are 'living,' the house itself is also growing: you yourselves are being built up. Peter sees that the OT temple anticipated the new temple where God dwells. But believers are not only God's temple but are also a holy priesthood, which offers