



**The Summit**  
Green Campus of Canton Baptist Temple

# **Resources for Your Life**

The Books of 1 and 2 Peter  
16 Sessions

[www.thesummitgreen.com](http://www.thesummitgreen.com)  
[tomhogsed@gmail.com](mailto:tomhogsed@gmail.com)

## Resource Guide

This resource was compiled from the personal Bible study and blog entries created by Tom Hogsed, pastor of the Summit in Green. You can find the original blog entries at [www.tomhogsed.com](http://www.tomhogsed.com).

The **introduction** to this book has been written so the reader has a better understanding of the Biblical author, his purpose in writing, and important points to understand before reading.

Following the introduction, each new page represents a **verse by verse overview** of the Scripture passage. The best way to study is to first read the Scripture verses from your Bible relying on the Holy Spirit to provide understanding and then to support your understanding with the commentary written below.

At the end of each Scripture commentary, there is a short **prayer** written so the reader can personally apply what has been discovered; however, it is suggested that you also pray from your heart in response to God's Word.

Feel free to make your own personal notes in your Bible, on this page, or even in a journal.

If this resource has helped you or you have further questions, please send an e-mail to [tomhogsed@gmail.com](mailto:tomhogsed@gmail.com).

## **Introduction to 1 Peter**

The author of this letter was a fisherman before Andrew, his brother, brought him to meet Christ (John 1:40-42). Peter was the son of Jonah(s) and was also known as Simon (Greek) or Simeon (Hebrew). Jesus changed his name to Cephas (Aramaic), meaning *stone or rock*, which signified how Jesus would use him in the future to establish the church. Some of the details we know about Peter is that he was married, he was an apostle, and seemed to be the leader of the apostles. Most of his ministry is documented in the first twelve chapters of Acts. Peter's life ended in martyrdom when he was crucified upside down (AD 67-68). This first letter of Peter was written a couple years before his death during a time of severe persecution of Christians. The emperor Nero was ruling over Rome (AD 64-65) and he had an uncontrollable desire to build. When he ran out of room, he purposely set fire to the city in order to be able to build again. The Roman citizens were furious as they had lost everything. Nero quickly realized the mess he had created so he blamed the fire on the Christians. Followers of Christ lived in fear each day as the Roman citizens sought revenge upon them. It was under these circumstances which Peter wrote this letter to encourage the Christians to be strong and holy amidst persecution. Themes such as hope and trust in God make their way to the surface as Peter seeks to comfort those who are being persecuted.

*Dear God, provide understanding as I read through 1 Peter. Help me to apply what I read to my own life.*

## **1 Peter 1:1-12**

As Peter begins writing to what he calls "the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1:1) the reader can assume he is addressing those who don't feel like they "fit in" on earth. Have you ever been to a place where you felt out of place...like you didn't belong? This is the way the recipients of this letter felt as Peter is reminding them that they are foreigners in this strange land. Since Peter was writing to primarily Gentiles who had been dispersed as a result of persecution, it is safe to assume that these Christians had also turned their back on all the immoral festivities and idol worship of the culture. At one time they were joining in these drunken parties, but now their lives were changed because of faith in Jesus Christ. Those who lived next door and across the street from these believers criticized and even persecuted them for their new-found "religion." The followers of Christ refused to include themselves in the sinful practices of the city and others took notice. Instead of respecting them, they became antagonistic toward them. If the historical situation with Nero burning the city had already taken place at the time of Peter's writing, this added more persecution for those worshipping Christ. However, Peter did not instruct Christians to overthrow those who were mistreating, but he rather reminded them about what awaited them beyond this life. Peter writes "God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible [does not pass away] and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you..." (1:3-4). The living hope Peter writes about is eternal life where the Christian will experience peace, righteousness, and God's everlasting presence. Although the follower of Christ will face trials on earth, the "end of your faith" results in the "salvation of your souls" (1:9). "The prophets...prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow" (1:10-11). Although the Old Testament prophets did not understand all the details about God's plan to save mankind from sin, they had faith and that alone brought salvation. Now those of us who have lived following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins clearly understand God's plan of redeeming sinners (1:12). These truths should provide hope in the midst of persecution because we know that eternal life awaits those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

*Dear God, sometimes this life is hard but help me to catch a glimpse of the hope of eternal life.*

## **1 Peter 1:13-21**

Since those who evidenced faith in Jesus Christ had the hope of eternal life, Peter told them to "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13). Girding up the loins carried the idea of gathering the loose parts of one's robe in order to avoid hindrances while running or in battle. When Peter commands them to "gird up the loins of your mind" he is telling them to get their thoughts in order. Obviously these believers were facing a lot of physical as well as mental persecution and they needed to step back and gather their thoughts. The main thought which should bring mental peace is the fact that Jesus Christ was returning and would grant them eternal life. Although this fact provided hope for the future, what were Christians supposed to do in the meantime? Should they give up and just "fit in" with the culture around them? No. Peter writes that they should be "obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1:14-15). Holiness means to be separated from sin. God is holy means that He is perfect and has always remained separate from sin. As His followers we are required to live holy in all manner of life - attitudes, actions, and words. God redeemed us through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, releasing us from the power of sin and making those who have faith in Him His children (1:17-21). This truth provides the basis for us to live holy lives before the world. Our actions should reflect the very nature of God, which is holiness. Are you living a life separate from sin?

*Dear God, help me to live a holy life before others. May I look to You for the perfect example of being separated from sin and seek to live the life You lived so that others will see You through me.*

### **1 Peter 1:22-2:3**

With his readers possibly under intense persecution, Peter writes in order to comfort them and challenge them not to quit. Instead of dwelling on their current circumstances, Peter encouraged them to look forward to the time of Christ's return and in the meantime live consistent, holy lives before all people. In the previous few verses (1:18-21) Peter had reminded his readers about the redemption which had taken place through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus' act of taking the punishment for our sin resulted in salvation from the bondage of sin and eternal life spent in the presence of God. But again, what else could help them cope with adversity but also drive them to spiritual growth? In the verses we are examining today, Peter reveals another factor in enduring hardship while sustaining a holy life - the word of God. The Holy Spirit has been given to all those who have faith in Jesus Christ's sufficient sacrifice for sin, but this knowledge came through God's written word. So the Holy Spirit of God together with the word of God has the ability to bring spiritual life to the believer. What is even more amazing about this fact is that the word of God "lives and abides forever" (1:23). This means that Scripture is a stable, unchanging, and permanent force which guides us to follow the ways of God. Quoting from Isaiah 40:6-8 Peter reminds the reader that "the grass withers, and the flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever" (1:25). Spiritual growth takes place when an individual puts away sin (2:1) and feeds on the word of God (2:2). So the question needs to be asked, "Can spiritual growth take place outside of spending time getting to know and understand God's Word?" I believe the answer is "no." Our hearts and minds are being filled each day with the knowledge of that which is earthly and carnal; however, we must seek to combat the world's philosophies by filling our mind with the unchanging word of God. These words carry life because they are the very words of God. Peter gives some very simple advice for believers - put away sin and desire the word of God "that you may grow" (1:2).

*Dear God, may Your word be valuable to me as I search it each day for the "nourishment" I need to live and grow in You.*

## **1 Peter 2:4-10**

Peter has already used the subject of life throughout his letter to refer to Jesus. He called him the living hope (1:3), the living word (1:23), and now he calls him the living stone (2:4). Using a stone to explain Jesus is unique because this particular stone is living and gives life to others. The illustration of a stone seems to indicate a foundation which is found in Him, giving life to those who are dead in sin. Now those who have faith in Jesus Christ become living stones which are "being built up [as] a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices [good works] acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (2:5). Through Jesus we have received life and are now living out the life He has given us before the world around us. Peter then turns his attention to the Old Testament where he cites several scriptures as proof that Jesus Christ is the foundational stone and will save those who believe in Him or destroy those who reject him (2:6-8). Peter then directly addresses his readers with some powerful words about their life in Christ: "you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy" (2:9-10). I would challenge you to go back and read that again. What a wonderful thought that we are God's people and He has chosen us to declare His glory to all people. Peter knew these people were experiencing trials, but He wanted them to trust in Jesus Christ, the Living Stone, who had chosen them to be His people and entrusted them with sharing His goodness and mercy.

*Dear God, I pray that as a part of Your people I will declare Your goodness and glory among all the world.*

## **1 Peter 2:11-3:7**

Peter takes a large portion of his letter to address proper behavior in order to be an example to the unbelieving. In this section Peter specifically focuses on the subject of relationships in several areas: relationship with the world (2:11-12), relationship with government (2:13-17), relationship with your employer (2:18-25), and the relationship between husbands and wives (3:1-7). In essence, Peter was saying that a person's relationships in these areas will either help or hinder an individual's witness before others. First, let's look into our relationship with the world. Peter does remind them that the world is a temporary home for those who have faith in Christ. He calls them "sojourners and pilgrims" (2:11). The instruction is very simple here - practice good behavior so the unbelieving will see your life and their attention will be turned to God's life-changing power (2:12). Secondly, Peter commands his readers to "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake...for this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men..." (2:13-15). Submitting to government carries the idea of willingly placing yourself under their authority. Although government does not always make the right decisions, Christians have a responsibility to obey the authority placed over us. Next, Peter examines the relationship between an employee and his or her employer. In a day when people complain about their boss and slack off at the workplace, Peter challenges followers of Christ to act differently. Whether a boss is good or bad, Peter advises the Christian to endure it and remember the suffering Jesus Christ experienced, even though he was innocent. Fairness is not always characteristic in the workplace so a believer should be prepared to be treated wrongly. Instead of rebelling against your employer, have faith that God will provide the grace which will sustain you through trying times. The last relationship about which Peter writes is the connection between a man and wife. It seems in keeping with the other relationships Peter has addressed, the husband in this marriage is not a follower of Christ (3:1). The wife is commanded to be submissive (willingly place herself under the authority of the man) and remember that "without a word" the husband "may be won by the conduct of their wives when they observe your chaste [purity] conduct accompanied by fear [of God]" (3:2). Peter then urges the wives not to just give attention to the outward appearance, but also the attitude of the heart, which is true beauty (3:3-6). In no way is Peter saying that the husband is superior to or more valuable than the wife, but he is reminding them that God has placed man as the authority over the home. This is God's design. However, Peter quickly turns to the Christian husbands and gives them some important instruction about his relationship with his wife. "Husbands...dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel...that your prayers may not be hindered" (3:7). Although the husband is not called to submit to the authority of his wife, he is commanded to submit himself to her needs and feelings. A husband must make it a priority to understand his wife. When Peter refers to the wife as a "weaker vessel" he is not implying she is less important, but that she is in need of her husband's protection. All of the relationships Peter has mentioned are imperative for the believer to conduct with holiness and submission. The way a follower of Christ handles their relationships has a direct influence on how others view God. How are your relationships?

*Dear God, help me to conduct my relationships in a way which would draw people's attention to Your goodness, grace, and mercy.*

## **1 Peter 3:8-22**

Having been the main theme throughout his writing, Peter again challenges his readers to continue living out their faith even though they were suffering resistance from the culture. Christians are usually persecuted for two reasons: being distinct from the culture and proclaiming Jesus as the only way to God. Since believers now lived their lives according to God's ways they no longer participated in the carnality of the culture. Those outside the church probably wondered why their ways were no longer good enough for those with new found faith in Christ. Also, this new faith in Christ naturally caused them to stand against the worship of false gods and those around them did not like this. Instead of inciting a rebellion amongst Christians against the culture, Peter advised them to let their lives speak louder than their words. For this reason he writes "be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing...love life...refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it" (3:8-11). What would following this code of conduct do? "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers..." (3:12). God listens to those who follow His ways. Peter goes on to remind them that good conduct rarely is returned with evil (3:13), but even if it was they should not be fearful (3:14). Instead of fearing, followers of Christ should always be prepared to explain the reason for the hope inside of them, which is Christ (3:15-17). The salvation from sin and hope of eternal life provided Christians with the patience to suffer wrongdoing on this earth. Peter reminded his readers that even Christ had suffered for doing right, but what others meant for evil brought good (3:18-22). Maybe you are experiencing persecution at the hands of those who do not understand your faith in Jesus Christ. Be strong and faithfully live out God's ways remembering that this life is only temporary. There is hope for you beyond the struggles of this life!

*Dear God, help me to be faithful in obeying Your ways even when things are not going well. May I see beyond the "now" in order to see the hope You have in store for those who love You.*

## **1 Peter 4:1-19**

1 Peter 4 is what I would call a summary chapter. Peter's main theme throughout his writing has been living an obedient Christian life even when things are not going your way. In particular his readers were suffering persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ and the fact that they now lived differently from the culture around them. Already, Peter had reminded them about the sufferings of Christ and how He should serve as the ultimate example of handling opposition with humility as well as obedience to the truth (4:1). He writes that we have "spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles [the world]..." so now we should live our lives obeying the will of God (4:2-3). Yes...those without faith in Jesus Christ will "think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation [evil]" (4:4) but the believers' responsibility is to God (who will judge all men), not to men. Peter then reminded his readers about the certainty of the second coming of Christ which would bring a final end to this persecution and suffering (4:7-11). Peter was giving them hope. So how should a follower of Christ view his present sufferings? Those who obey Christ should not think suffering is "strange" or abnormal, but should "rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings.... If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you" (4:13-14). Peter continues "if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter" (4:16). Peter makes it evident that God can be glorified as a result of the sufferings of His people. Although many use persecution as evil against believers, God can turn it into good. "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God, commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator" (4:19).

*Dear God, use that which is meant for evil to bring glory to You.*

## **1 Peter 5:1-14**

In his final words of his letter Peter leaves some advice for the leaders of the church (5:1-4), the youth of the church (5:5a), and the church in general (5:5b-11). The instruction to the elders (spiritual leaders) dealt with the way they conducted their leadership among the church. Peter writes, "Shepherd [teach] the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion [duty] but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd [Jesus Christ] appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (5:2-4). In brief, Peter commands the elders to willingly accomplish their ministry while not seeking financial gain or practicing harsh leadership methods through manipulating or intimidating. Those who lead well are seeking to please God and will one day be recognized when God judges our works on earth (5:4). Next Peter addresses the youth in the church instructing them to "submit yourselves to your elders" (5:5). This simply implies that those who are under spiritual leadership within the church should honor and respect their leaders with a right heart attitude. Lastly, Peter commands that every church member be characterized by humility which carries the idea of serving one another without selfishness. Humility is thinking more highly of others than yourself knowing that "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble...that He may exalt you in due time" (5:5b-6). At the conclusion of his letter Peter returns to his theme of suffering. He tells believers to allow God to handle all their cares and concerns because He cares about them (5:7). He also reminds them that the devil will try to discourage them so they should "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (5:8). Peter's readers could have confidence that their sufferings would bring strength to their faith and stability to their relationship with God (5:10-11). The application is clear to those of us who read this letter hundreds of years later - don't quit when times are hard. Keep the faith knowing there is hope in Jesus Christ, who will make all things right one day. No matter what hardship you face, know that God will provide the strength to handle it and bring confidence to your faith in Him.

*Dear God, help me to trust You during trials knowing that You are always in control. May I see Your goodness and grace through each experience.*

## **Introduction to 2 Peter**

While Peter's first letter was mainly addressed to suffering Christians, his second letter was written to combat false teaching. Since the time of his first writing, Peter was obviously alarmed by the increase of false doctrine which had made its way into the churches in Asia Minor. As a faithful minister of the gospel, he felt that he had a great responsibility to warn the church about the dangers of accepting erroneous teachings. Peter knew that his time on earth was coming to an end as he wrote this letter from a Roman prison, so this was his way of challenging the church to stay pure in its beliefs. It appears this writing occurred somewhere around AD 67-68, just before Peter's martyrdom by crucifixion. Although he never specifically states to whom this letter is written, we can surmise that he was writing to the same persecuted Christians who received 1 Peter (2 Peter 3:1).

The main theme of 2 Peter is exposing and combating false teaching; however, he never mentions the specific heresy which is being taught. At the heart of all wrong doctrine is misinterpreting and even twisting Scripture, which Peter alludes to in 2 Peter 2. Not only does Peter expose the false teachings, but also the evildoing of the teachers. The New Testament writers often equate false doctrine with evil works. Those who have a wrong belief system will reveal the error of their ways through a sinful lifestyle. Overall, Peter's second letter is doctrinal in nature but is careful to provide practical outlets to defend the authority of Scripture and live a life of faithfulness to God's ways.

*Dear God, give me understanding of Peter's writing. May it challenge me to live a faithful life to Your word and ways.*

## 2 Peter 1:1-11

Peter welcomes his readers as "those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (1:1). Immediately he draws their attention to the fact that their faith and resulting righteousness is only given through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (1:3-4). Jesus Christ has given us the promise of eternal life in His presence and the privilege of being His child. When a person becomes His child, they are immediately given the Holy Spirit and a new, righteous nature (new creation) which enables the believer to overcome the power of sin. Having established the foundation for faith, Peter now reveals the potential for fruitfulness in the Christian life (1:5-8). We must remember that God has already equipped us with every spiritual blessings, but there must be "diligence" on our part to be effective for Him. Peter lists seven things which we must add to our faith so we can "abound" and not be "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:8). Here is the progression which should result from our faith:

Add to faith *virtue* (doing good deeds)

To virtue *knowledge* (understanding and obeying God's truth)

To knowledge *self-control* (controlling our desires)

To self-control *perseverance* (refusing to quit in the face of danger)

To perseverance *godliness* (living out the character of Christ)

To godliness *brotherly kindness* (willingness to sacrifice for someone else)

To brotherly kindness *love* (genuine care for the well-being of another)

These characteristics should be the aim of those who follow Christ and with the help of the Holy Spirit, all believers can reach their potential. The faith given to us by God is meant to grow and we must be diligent in every attitude and action.

*Dear God, help me develop my faith.*

## **2 Peter 1:12-21**

Peter did not want to be "negligent" of reminding his readers about the truth - Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith and the Holy Spirit enables fruitfulness in the Christian life. Although Peter was nearing the end of his life his passion was to challenge the believers in following the truth without compromise. He had penned the words of this letter in order to leave a permanent record and specific reminders to those whom he loved. His greatest fear seemed to be that Christians would abandon their faith through either persecution or false teaching. Peter had been faithful throughout his life and he expected others to do the same (1:12-15).

Peter quickly turns his attention to the main reason he is writing. It appears that the false teachers who had entered the church were now attempting to undermine Peter's authority by claiming that his doctrine was devised of his own will; however, the apostle was quick to defend his teaching. He proclaimed, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (1:16). 2 Peter 1:17-18 reveals that Peter was referring to the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-7), when he was able to see Jesus Christ in all His glory, which all the world will see at His second coming. This event was a preview of what was to come in the future. In essence, Peter was telling his readers that he was not teaching something which came from him, but that which came directly from God. Apparently the false teachers who had infiltrated the church also denied the future glory of Christ. Since Peter had personally witnessed what the future held, he knew these teachers were evil. One thing is very clear in Peter's opening words - that which comes from God is truth and that which is devised by man is false. Peter writes "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (1:20-21). Scripture never originated with man, but with God. The Holy Spirit was the author and men only wrote that which was given to them by God, therefore we can trust every word as truth. Peter wanted to reinforce the importance of believing God's word over the teachings of men. This upfront understanding would help Peter's readers think through the rest of his letter.

*Dear God, may I always evaluate truth based on Scripture. Help me never to accept teachings which may be devised by men and presented as truth. Protect me from accepting that which is false.*

## **2 Peter 2:1-10a**

Considering that Peter's main reason for writing is to combat false teaching, he sternly warns his readers against allowing false teachers to be a part of their church. They have this way of influencing people and drawing them away from the truth. Evil teachers existed in the nation of Israel and they also made their presence known to Peter's readers. Peter writes, "there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord, who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction" (2:1). Not only do these teachers cunningly sneak in their erroneous philosophies, but they are ultimately bringing God's judgment upon themselves. What will follow their deception? "Many will follow their destructive ways" (2:2). Since many of those who have been deceived were once a part of the church, their compromise with that which is untrue will bring reproach upon genuine followers of Christ (2:2b). Peter desires his readers to be vigilant because the false teachers are only out for money (2:3).

Because Peter desires followers of Christ to be faithful to Christ even after he has died, he paints a picture of what has happened to those who chose to disobey God. Using several examples from the Old Testament, Peter reveals the future of those who reject the truth and spread lies. Some of the fallen angels who were deceived by Lucifer (the devil) were immediately cast into hell for their rebellion against God (2:4). All people from the "ancient world" with the exception of Noah and his family were destroyed by a worldwide flood for their wickedness (2:5-6). The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire because of their immorality (2:7-8). These vivid illustrations should have caught the attention of Peter's readers because they were reminded of God's hatred for sin and disobedience. But even in the midst of God's judgment, He spared those who were faithful to Him. Even when everyone else was involving themselves in sin and evil, a certain few stood for truth and were delivered from God's wrath. What was Peter's point? God's judgment will surely fall on those who disobey, but He is gracious to those who faithfully follow His ways (2:9-10a). The false teachers of Peter's day would also be destroyed, but those who were faithful are guaranteed to experience God's goodness.

*Dear God, help me to remember the future of those who disobey You so that I might be faithful to Your ways.*

## **2 Peter 2:10b-22**

Peter continues to warn his readers about the false teachers who had invaded the church and deceived many. Since Peter was near death, his writing of this letter was an effort to preserve doctrinal purity in the church which stretched beyond his lifetime. Although Peter never specifically mentions what erroneous teachings were being taught, he does provide much detail on what their lifestyle looks like. Many of these false teachers probably claimed that their message was from God, but their actions and attitudes demonstrated something much different. Here is how Peter describes them: "having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin...they have a heart trained in covetous practices...they have forsaken the right way and gone astray..." (2:14-15). It seems that many deceptive teachers in early church history (as well as today) claimed to be speaking for God but I am reminded that Jesus told His disciples, "if you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). In my mind, there is no possible way to love God without committing yourself to following His ways. Apparently these false teachers believed otherwise. Peter again warned his readers about the deceptive practices of these teachers, "they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness" (2:18). The reason many are attracted to false doctrine is because they think they can embrace their sinful lifestyle while still accepting some truth; however, they are being deceived. God demands our full obedience to His word. Once a person has experienced the forgiveness of God, why would they again "entangle" themselves with the "pollutions of this world?" (2:20). God has extended forgiveness to us through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross and has provided a once for all sacrifice to relieve us from the guilt of sin. All Christians must carefully guard themselves from those things which are contrary to God's word. Belief in God's word will result in life-change. The false teachers' very lives demonstrated that they did not love God. How about you? Has your supposed faith in God led you to a pursuit of holiness? It should.

*Dear God, change me through Your word. May the knowledge of You led me to a greater demonstration of holiness...not to impress others, but to please You.*

## **2 Peter 3:1-9**

One of the issues that Peter's readers seemed to be confused about was the second coming of Jesus Christ. We do know that Christ made His first visit to earth 2,000 years ago and took on human form in order to die for the sins of mankind. He promised to return again to establish a 1,000 year reign on the earth after which would follow the new heaven and new earth. The false teachers had apparently discouraged Christians and had falsely claimed that Christ would not return to earth. This saddened believers and probably caused them to doubt whether Jesus would ever return for His followers. Peter wrote this last chapter to give proper instruction about the second coming of Jesus Christ. He writes, "Scoffers will come in the last days, walking in their own lusts, and saying 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers [Old Testament patriarchs] fell asleep [died], all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (3:3-4). These teachers must have teaching that God was uninvolved in earthly affairs and therefore would not return for His own nor would He judge the wicked. Peter quickly reminds them about the judgment God sent upon the earth during the time of Noah where He destroyed evildoers with a worldwide flood (3:5-7). Although God promised to never destroy the world by water again, Peter reveals that the earth will one day be burned up by fire (3:7). Peter's readers should not be concerned about the time of Jesus' return because God does not view time in the same way we do (3:8). In essence, Peter was telling them that Christ will return, but maybe on a different timescale than ours. Why does Christ delay His return? Peter answers this with what I believe to be one of the greatest statements of His patience. "The Lord is not slack [delayed] concerning His promise [about the second coming], as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (3:9). Christ delays His return so that more people will have more time to repent of evil ways and find forgiveness in His death, burial, and resurrection for our sins. Most of us want Christ to return so we can escape the current pressures of this life but this is a selfish view. The only reason Jesus delays His return for His followers is because He desires to "see all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4). God could call down judgment upon the wicked at any moment, but he holds out hope for them to turn from their wicked ways. What an amazing God!

*Dear God, thank You for being patient with me and with all mankind. May many people turn to faith in You because of Your patient love for them.*

## **2 Peter 3:10-17**

In closing out his letter, Peter continues to instruct his readers concerning Jesus Christ's promised return and His certain judgment upon the wicked. The church had become increasingly fearful about the delay in Christ's return and the false teachers had taken advantage of the situation by declaring He was not coming back at all. Peter lovingly wrote assuring them of Jesus' soon return and that His delay was due to His patience with those who were still rebelling against the truth (3:9). For the followers of Christ, His return to earth would be a time of joy while those who reject Him will experience final judgment. Peter was obviously referring to the false teachers. He writes, "But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..." (3:10). The "Day of the Lord" Peter referenced probably points to two different judgments. The first will take place midway through the seven-year tribulation period when God pours out His wrath on the wicked of the earth. The second judgment is final and points to the end of the 1,000 year reign of Christ (which follows the tribulation period). Once and for all God will take vengeance on those who have ignored His provision for salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. Peter details what will happen at that judgment, "the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (3:10). Basically, the earth and everything in it will be destroyed in God's final judgment of sin and unrighteousness. After revealing this to his readers, Peter gives some advice about how they should be living life now. "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness..." (3:11). He was challenging them to be faithful to God's way, even in the midst of evil. Although the earth will be destroyed, Peter reminds them that God has promised them a "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (3:13). Enduring the onslaughts of false teachers was difficult for the church, but what awaits believers will more than compensate for earthly struggles. Christians must be diligent to protect against the teachings of those who distort and misuse Scripture. We are called to defend the purity of God's word and practice its teachings in our daily lives. May God help us to be faithful to Him!

*Dear God, help me to have a burning desire for the truth and enable me to defend it at any cost. When others twist and misuse Your word, may I be faithful to stand for what is right.*