

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

Peter's Lord

This lesson is designed to help you gain a better understanding of the relationship between Peter (also called Simon) and Jesus. You will read a number of passages in chronological order from Peter's time with Jesus. You don't need to answer all the questions for each passage or be concerned about getting the "right" answer; just let the questions serve as a catalyst to get you thinking.

Read each of the passages listed below (in chronological order) and do the following:

1. Briefly identify the situation.
2. Ask yourself:
 - a. What do you observe about Peter?
 - b. How does Jesus respond to Peter?
 - c. What does Peter learn about Jesus in the passage?

1. Luke 5:1-11

2. Matthew 14:22-33

3. Matthew 16:13-20

4. Matthew 16:21-23

5. Mark 9:2-10

6. John 13:1-17

7. Luke 22:24-34

8. Matthew 26:36-46

9. John 18:1-11 (see also Luke 22:49-51)

10. Luke 22:54-62

What do you learn about Jesus in these passages?

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Peter's Transformation

Peter spent three years as an intimate follower and friend of Jesus. And yet at the most crucial time in Jesus' life, Peter denied that he even knew him. Review this lowest point in Peter's life by reading Luke 22:54-62 before taking a look at how his life and heart changed following Jesus' death and resurrection.

Peter Is Returned to the Fold

Read John 21:1-8, 14-19.

1. What is significant about the number of times Jesus questions Peter? (Hint: Remember Peter's denials.)
2. What instruction does Jesus give Peter each time he answers the question? (vv. 15c, 16c, 17c; * Lk. 22:31-32)

What does this suggest about Peter's future ministry?

3. What command does Jesus give Peter at the end of their conversation? (v. 19b)

This is the same command Jesus gave when he first called Peter (Mt. 4:18-20). Why do you think he says it again here?

4. What encouragement can you draw from the way Jesus purposefully gives Peter a new start?

Pentecost

Read Acts 2:1-41.

5. Focus on verses 1-4. What do the believers, including Peter,
 - hear? (v. 2)
 - see? (v. 3)
 - experience? (v. 4)
 - do? (v. 4)
6. The heart of Peter's Pentecost message is Jesus. What facts does Peter want the crowd to know about Jesus? (vv. 22, 23b, 24 and 31-32, 33a, 33b, 36)

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

7. Peter had previously rebuked Jesus for predicting his suffering, death and resurrection (Mt. 16:21-23). Peter's speech at Pentecost shows that he's gained a whole new understanding of what Jesus came to do. Now who does Peter confidently proclaim is behind each of these events in Jesus' life? (vv. 22, 23a, 24a, 32a, 33, 36b)
8. What does Peter say this faithful God promises to those who repent? (v. 38)

How have you experienced the fulfillment of these promises in your life?

After the Coming of the Holy Spirit

9. What miracles is the Apostle Peter able to perform once the Holy Spirit has been poured out on him? (Acts 3:1-8; 9:32-42;  * 5:12-16)
10. Before the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter was so afraid of what the authorities could do to him that he swore he didn't even know Jesus. How does the Holy Spirit change him? (Acts 4:5-13, 18-20; 5:27-32, 41-42;  * Mt. 10:17-20)
11. What connection do you think Peter would have seen between the miracles he performed and the message he preached? (Consider Acts 2:22.)
12. Through the Holy Spirit, the very fallible Peter becomes bolder and more powerful, but he is not suddenly perfect. With what sin does Peter continue to struggle? (Gal. 2:11-14)

Peter and Cornelius

Read Acts 10:1-48. ( * Acts 11:1-18; 15:5-21)

13. Who is Cornelius and what kind of person is he? (vv. 1-2, 22)
14. Describe the vision Peter sees. (vv. 11-14) How does this vision turn Peter's worldview upside down? (v. 28)
15. What happens to confirm that the Gentiles are part of God's plan? (vv. 44-46)
16. Peter will later write to believers scattered around the Gentile provinces of Asia Minor. Look back over this week's lesson and note a few ways God prepared Peter for this wider ministry.

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Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

1 Peter 1:1-2

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect..." 1 Peter 1:1 (NIV)

Read the epistle of 1 Peter out loud in one sitting or have someone read it to you (since that was the way Peter's audience would have received it).

1. What ideas do you hear repeated in the letter?
2. What do you think Peter's purpose(s) in writing this letter might have been?
3. What did you find encouraging?
4. What did you find challenging?

Read 1 Peter 1:1-2.

5. People often find their identity and seek to impress others with their education, experience and accomplishments. How does Peter identify himself?
6. Peter's readers lived in what is now modern-day Turkey. The list of regions in verse 1 may have been the circular route the "mailman" took when he delivered Peter's letter. On the map below, connect the regions listed in verse 1 to see the size of the territory to which Peter's letter was addressed.



http://www.bible-history.com/geography/maps/map_asia.html

7. What phrases does Peter use to describe his readers?
8. What does it mean to be God's elect (v. 1a)? (2 Thess. 2:13-14)
9. What does it mean to be a stranger (or alien) in the world? (Heb. 11:13-16)

Why would Peter choose this phrase to describe his readers? (see also 2:9-11)

Peter begins his letter by reminding his readers that they have been saved SOLELY through the work of their Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and not through any effort of their own.

10. What is God the Father's role in saving the believer (v. 2a)?
11. What was God's purpose(s) for those He foreknew and chose/elected? (v. 2c; 2:9; Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:3-6)
(Note: Foreknowledge is not God looking ahead to see future events and then taking what will happen and calling that his plan, but rather it is his ability to use circumstances and the actions of people to bring about the purposes he determined in eternity past.)
12. The Spirit sanctifies us by setting us apart for God and making us holy. How does he do this?

John 14:26

John 16:13-15

1 Cor. 2:12-13
13. What is the significance of being sprinkled with the blood of Jesus for the believer? (Heb. 9:11-14)
14. As we will learn in the coming weeks, Peter is writing to believers who are in the midst of difficulty and suffering. Why would using the terms grace and peace be meaningful and relevant to Peter's readers?

Grace (2 Cor. 9:8; 12:9; 1 Pet. 5:10)

Peace (Phil. 4:7; Jn. 14:27)
15. Pray and ask the Lord to help you understand more deeply the grace of God and to experience his peace as we study Peter's epistles this year.

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Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

1 Peter 1:3-9

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (NIV)

1. Read through this week's passage to get a sense of Peter's message. Now re-read it and underline what Peter says about God.
2. Peter says, “[God] has given us new birth.” What is this new birth? (Jn. 1:12-13; 1 Jn. 5:1)
3. Why do you think Peter makes the point that the new birth is rooted in God’s great mercy? (Titus 3:3-5)
4. Why is this new birth necessary? (Jn. 3:1-3; Eph. 2:1-5)
5. What are the benefits of the new birth?
 - v. 3
 - v. 4
 - v. 5a
6. Why do you think it is important that our new birth and hope are tied to the resurrection (v. 3c)? (1 Cor. 15:17-20)
7. The children of Israel were given a portion of the Promised Land as their inheritance. What inheritance is allotted to those who have been given new birth? (Rev. 21:1-7)
8. Why do you think bringing up their future inheritance would be important to the readers of Peter’s letter then and now? (📖* 2 Cor. 4:16-18)

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

9. Peter encourages his readers that they are shielded by God's power. What images come to mind when you think of this?

10. List the various trials Peter mentions in this letter that are causing the readers grief:

2:11-12		4:4	
2:18-20		4:8	
3:1		4:14	
3:16-17		5:8	

11. In spite of their grief, the Christians are also greatly rejoicing.

a. Why do you think they are able to experience both emotions at the same time? (v. 3-9, 13; 4:12-16; 5:10)

b. Peter repeatedly emphasizes that believers can rejoice in the midst of their suffering. How can you apply (or have you applied) this truth in your life?

12. What are the divine purposes behind the trials the believers are facing? (v. 7)

13. Peter states that our faith is more valuable and enduring than the purest gold.

a. What is faith? (v. 8; Heb. 11:1)

b. What is the goal of our faith? (v. 9; Rom. 6:22)

14. Unlike Peter, his readers (then and now) have never physically seen Jesus. What can we look forward to? (v. 7b; 1 Thess. 4:16-18)

15. You can probably understand better now why Peter begins his letter with praise. Take a moment to do one of the following:

a. Ask God to show you your need for new birth.

b. Ask God to give you this new birth.

c. Celebrate what God has done for you.

4. How is this description of God's plan of salvation meant to encourage these isolated and suffering Gentile believers? (v. 12; 1 Pet. 2:9-10; * Eph. 3:2-6)
5. Peter uses the word “revealed” five times in chapter 1. Why is Jesus the central focus of all the revelation given in the past? (vv. 12, 20)

What is to be revealed in the future that the believers have to look forward to? (vv. 5, 7, 13; 1 Pet. 4:13, 5:4; * Rom. 8:18-23)

6. Read verses 1-12. What have you learned about God's plan of salvation that you can praise him for right now?
7. In response to what Peter says in verses 1-12, what five practical things does he command us to do or not do? (vv. 13-16)

To “be holy” is not an abstract concept but it means to be “set apart” as special and different. How will living this way “set you apart” from the world and the way you used to live (v. 14)?

8. What relationship do believers now have with God that motivates them to be holy? (vv. 14, 17a)
9. What was our thinking like before we became Christians? (v. 14; Eph. 4:17-19)

What are we called to do now? (v. 13; Eph. 4:22-24)

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Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

1 Peter 1:17-25

1. Peter's desire is to encourage believers to stand in the "true grace of God" (1 Pet. 5:12) by reminding them who they are and who God is. Read through this week's passage and pull out one thing he says about each that encourages you.

2. Having made the case that our salvation is secure (vv. 3-9), Peter now says we will be judged by God.
 - a. For what will we be judged? (v. 17; *1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10)

 - b. Even though God is our Father, our works will still be judged. What will characterize God's judgment? (v. 17a)

 - c. How is he able to do this? (1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:13)

 - d. How does this practically influence the way you live your life now?

3. Peter instructs the believers to "live [their] lives as strangers here" (v. 17). Why do you think he says this? (Phil. 3:20; 1 Jn. 2:15-17)

4. The "reverent fear" (v. 17) Peter encourages is not a fear of punishment. Instead it is "that desire above all, to honor the One who has saved us. It is a fear born out of gratitude, reverence, and awe."¹ What fruit should this reverent fear yield in the life of a believer? (1:14-15; 2 Cor. 7:1)

¹Ruvolo, Carol, *Grace to Stand Firm, Grace to Grow*, p. 52.

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

6. As a “holy priesthood,” what kind of “spiritual sacrifices” (v. 5) are we to offer? (v. 9; Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 13:15-16)

7. In contrast to Jesus’ rejection by humanity, what does God say about him? (📖*Acts 3:13-15)

8. In verses 4-8 Peter makes the distinction between those who believe and those who do not believe in Jesus. Describe the differences between these two groups.

9. What phrases does Peter use to describe the community of people who have chosen to believe in Jesus? (v. 9a)

To whom was this language originally applied? (Isa. 41:8-9; Ex. 19:3-6)

What is the significance of this language written to an audience that included many Gentiles? (v. 10, Eph. 2:11-22)

Select one of these phrases and describe how it challenges the way you see yourself.

11. When a person puts their trust in Jesus, everything changes – their status, priorities, values, etc.
 - a. What three differences does Peter highlight in verses 9b-10?

Before	After

- b. How have you experienced these differences personally?

11. In her commentary on 1 Peter, Karen Jobes says “The Christian life cannot be lived authentically in isolation.”¹ How does this passage show the importance of community?

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 123.

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1 Peter 2:11-17

Read 1 Peter 2:11-17.

1. Peter addresses his readers as “dear friends.” What other two terms does he use for believers in verse 11?
2. Look back at verses 9 and 10. What is the connection between the status of believers as described in those two verses and the status of believers as “aliens and strangers in the world” (v. 11)?
3. Commentator Karen Jobes remarks, “[Peter] reminds his readers that they stand in a long tradition of people who were chosen by God and called to be aliens and strangers in the places where they lived.”¹ See how many men and women of the Bible you can think of who lived as sojourners. (📖* Gen. 23:4; Ps. 39:12)

Share your list with your group to see just how significant this experience has been throughout the history of God's chosen people.

4. What does Peter exhort his readers to do in verse 11?
5. Peter says that sinful desires are dangerous because they war against our souls. What do you think that means?
6. What does Peter exhort believers to do in verse 12? (📖* Mt. 5:16; 1 Thess. 4:11-12)

Why?

7. As you go through your day, how mindful are you that non-believers are observing the way you live?

In what concrete ways can you apply Peter's exhortation in verse 12 to your life?

¹Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 168.

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

8. In verses 13 and following, Peter discusses one specific way Christians should lead good lives. What is it that they are to do?
9. Given the special status of believers as described in verses 9 and 10, what attitude do you think some of Peter's original readers might have been tempted to have toward their pagan rulers?
10. Human rulers might not in and of themselves inspire great respect. For whose sake are believers to submit to earthly authorities?
11. In submitting to our leaders today, what should our attitudes and actions be? (You may wish to consider Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Titus 3:1.)

In what ways do you find this challenging?

12. Verse 16 sounds like a paradox: "Live as free men [and women]...; live as servants [or 'slaves'] of God." How do you think these two things fit together?
13. Peter gives four short commands in verse 17.

What do believers owe to all people?

To brothers and sisters in Christ? (📖* Jn. 13:34-35; 1 Pet. 1:22)

To the king?

To God? (📖* Lk. 12:4-5)

Which of these four commands do you find most challenging. Why?

14. Look back over this week's passage, and note how at every step fear (deep reverence) for God is the motivation.

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1 Peter 2:18-25

1. Make a list of all the things that come to mind when you think of the lifestyle and limitations of being a slave.
2. Reread 1 Peter 1 and 2. What would a slave who has just become a Christian learn about her new status and identity from these chapters?

Read 1 Peter 2:18-25.

3. What does Peter command slaves regarding both their behavior and attitude? (v. 18)
4. In what ways would a slave have to change her thinking and behavior in order to show *respect* for a *harsh* master? (1 Peter 2:1; 3:9; 3:15a; 4:19; 5:6-7; Col. 3:23-24; * Rom. 12:17-21; Titus 2:9-10)
5. Describe the differences between the two types of suffering that Peter discusses here. (vv. 19-20)
6. Peter talks about “bearing up” and “enduring” suffering (vv. 19-20). What do these terms suggest to you about the nature of suffering and our response to it?
7. What do you think it means to be “conscious of God” in the midst of suffering (v. 19)? (* Ps. 46:1-3; Lk. 22:39-44; Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:16-18)
8. Peter suggests that we should not be surprised when we “suffer for doing good” (v. 20). Why? (v.21)

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

9. Why are Jesus' trial and crucifixion the ultimate example of "unjust suffering" (v. 19)? (v. 22; Is. 53:8-9)

10. What was Jesus' response as he endured terrible suffering? (v. 23a; Mt. 27:12-14; Is. 53:4-7)

11. Jesus was outwardly silent as he suffered, but he was not being passive. What was he actively doing and most likely thinking about? (v. 23b; Ps. 22:1-21; Luke 23:46)

12. In what area of suffering or struggle do you need to "close your mouth" and trust God?

13. Jesus suffered in a way we will never suffer. In verse 24, Peter is describing a "great exchange": Jesus was sinless, but he was punished for our sins. We are sinful, but we receive blessings. What are these blessings? (v. 24; 2 Cor. 5:21)

14. How does Jesus' death free us from slavery and make us slaves again? (vv. 16, 24; Rom. 6:6-7, 19-23)

15. Why would this reminder that Jesus is the Shepherd be a comfort to Peter's readers? (v. 25; Is. 40:10-11; 53:6; Ps. 23; Jn. 10:11-15)

How is this comforting to you? Why?

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1 Peter 3:1-7

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7.

1. What is your initial reaction when you read the words “wives...be submissive to your husbands” (v. 1)? What experiences or examples inform your thinking?
2. Peter is instructing wives and husbands to relate to one another “in the same way” (vv. 1, 7) as citizens to rulers and slaves to masters. Look back at 1 Peter 2:13-20. What similarities should there be in motive and attitude in these relationships? (2:13, 17-18)
3. What motivation does Peter give in verse 1 for a wife to be submissive toward her husband?
4. How could a woman’s wordless witness win her unbelieving husband to Christ?
5. What does Peter say are the characteristics of a submissive wife? (vv. 2-4)
6. How did Jesus model submission? (Matt. 20:25-28; John 10:17-18; 13:3-17; Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Pet. 2:21-24)
7. Why do women struggle with submitting to their husbands?

How does looking to Jesus help women in this struggle?

8. What does Peter say is the adornment that makes a godly woman beautiful? (v. 4)

How does a woman develop such a spirit? (vv. 5-6)

What should be her primary motivation for developing inner beauty? (v. 4b)

9. The biblical view of inner beauty stands in stark contrast with our culture's obsession with external beauty. What are the disadvantages of valuing external beauty?

What are the advantages of valuing inner beauty?

10. This passage does not teach that a woman's outward appearance is unimportant, only that inner beauty is more valuable. Consider the time, effort and energy you spend on your outer and your inner beauty. What adjustments do you need to make?

11. How does Peter instruct husbands to live with their wives?

How are husbands to view their wives?

What serious consequence will result if they disobey these instructions?

12. Peter ends this passage by reminding husbands that their wives are "heirs with [them] of the gracious gift of life" (v. 7). Why is this significant for both wives and husbands to remember? (Gal. 3:26-29)

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1 Peter 3:8–12

Read 1 Peter 3:8–12.

1. Who is Peter addressing in this passage when he writes “all of you”?

2. Peter gives five commands in verse 8. List them in the chart below. Then briefly write how Jesus taught and lived them out and how we are called to follow his example.

Command	Jesus' Teaching and Example	Our Calling
	Jn. 17:20–23	Phil. 2:2
	Heb. 4:15	1 Cor. 12:12, 21–26
	1 Jn. 3:16a	1 Jn. 3:16b–18
	Matt. 9:36	Eph. 4:32
	Phil. 2:5–8	Phil. 2:3–4

3. Which of these commands is the most difficult for you to follow as you relate to others?

Why?

4. What has God provided to help us in our struggle to follow Jesus' example? (Rom. 8:26; 2 Cor. 12:7–10; 2 Pet. 1:3)

5. In verse 9 what does Peter instruct us not to do?

What does he instruct us to do instead?

Why?

6. What did Jesus teach and model about repaying evil with good? (Lk. 6:27–36, 23:32–34)

Why do we need to imitate him? (v. 9; 2:21–23; 2:12)

7. Jesus' giving his life for those who hated him is the ultimate example of blessing your adversaries. As you consider those who have hurt, wronged or insulted you, what does “blessing” (v. 9) them look like?

8. Peter now reinforces his point by quoting from Psalm 34. What should the person do who “would love life and see good days” (v. 10)?

9. Why is it so important to keep “[your] tongue from evil and [your] lips from deceitful speech” (v. 10)? (Prov. 10:19, 13:3; James 3:3–12) (Consider verses 8 and 9.)

10. What benefit (“blessing,” v. 9) do the righteous enjoy? (v. 12) In contrast, what does the Psalmist say is the consequence evildoers will suffer?

11. Pick a phrase from 1 Peter 3:10–12 that expresses a desire of your heart. Write a brief prayer asking the Lord to help you in that area of life.

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1 Peter 3:13–22

Read 1 Peter 3:13–22. Then focus on verses 13–18a.

1. What kinds of trouble have Peter's readers faced from unbelievers around them? (2:12; 3:9, 16)
2. Despite the fact that "suffer[ing] for what is right" (v. 14) brings pain, Peter states that believers are blessed in the midst of their trials. In what ways are they blessed? (v. 12; 1:6–9; 2:9–10)
3. In verse 14 Peter exhorts his readers, "Do not fear what they fear," or perhaps better, "Do not fear their threats" (NIV footnote). What should they do instead? (v. 15a)
4. Commentator Peter H. Davids writes that setting apart Christ as Lord means "to treat him as holy, to set him apart above all human authority. ...Jesus is to be honored, revered, and obeyed as Lord."¹ Write down some practical ways you can develop this kind of reverence for Jesus.
5. What instruction does Peter give his readers in the second part of verse 15?
6. What is the hope we have? (1:3–5, 13)
7. If a non-believer were to ask you what reason you have for your hope in Jesus, how would you answer? (Remember: He or she may not be familiar with the Bible or common Christian terms.)
8. What is our attitude to be as we defend our hope? (v. 15c)

Why?

¹Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 131.

9. What does it mean to have a “clear conscience” (v. 16) as we bear witness to Christ? (2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Jn. 1:6–9; 2:5b–6; * Rom. 2:21–24)

10. To what does Peter connect the believers' suffering? (Note the word “For” at the beginning of verse 18, and look back at 2:21.)

Reread 1 Peter 3:18–22.

11. Verse 18a is jam-packed with details concerning the purpose and significance of Christ’s death. Why are these details very important?

a. “for sins” (Heb. 10:1–7, 10):

b. “once for all” (Heb. 9:24–28):

c. “the righteous for the unrighteous” (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26–27):

d. “to bring you to God” (Eph. 2:11–13):

12. One common interpretation of verses 19 and 20 is that after his resurrection, Jesus proclaimed to evil spirits who had been on earth before the flood that he had risen victorious and that they were condemned to punishment (*Compare v. 22 and Col. 2:15.).

What is one thing such a victory means for those who are in Christ? (Rom. 8:38–39)

13. Like Peter's readers, Noah sought to live a righteous life in the midst of a wicked generation. Why would this reminder of Noah be encouraging to the believers to whom Peter is writing? (vv. 20b–21; 2 Pet. 2:5, 9; * Gen. 7:1, 7, 23)

14. Peter states that the water of the flood, through which God safely delivered Noah and his family, symbolizes Christian baptism. What does baptism itself signify? (Rom. 6:3–5)

15. Earlier Peter exhorted his readers not to fear the sometimes hostile unbelievers surrounding them. In the second half of this week’s passage, Peter mentions Jesus’ resurrection twice (vv. 18b, 21b) and then his exaltation to God’s right hand, a position of unmatched power and authority (v. 22). How do you think this emphasis on Christ’s victory over death and evil would have helped Peter’s readers not to fear?

How can keeping Christ’s victory at the forefront of your own mind help you cope with whatever fear you are facing right now?

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

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Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

1 Peter 4:1–11

Read 1 Peter 4:1–11. Reread 1 Peter 4:1–3.

1. Why does Peter exhort his readers to adopt Christ's attitude toward suffering? (v. 1; 2:20–23; 3:14a, 17)

2. What changes does understanding Christ's suffering bring about in the believer's life? (vv. 1–2; 1:17–19; 2:24; Phil. 3:10–12)

3. The end of verse 1 says, "he who has suffered in his body is done with sin." This statement refers to the spiritual state of a believer who has chosen to experience suffering rather than sin. As a result, the believer has decisively broken with a life dominated by sin. This doesn't mean that he is no longer sinful or never sins (1 Jn. 1:8–10), but that his old life, ruled by the power of sin, has ended.
 - a. What characterized Peter's readers before they made a break with their sinful lifestyle? (vv. 2, 3; 1:14, 18)

 - b. What does being "done with sin" look like in the believer's post conversion lifestyle? (1:15, 2:1–2, 11–12, 17)

Read 1 Peter 4:4–6.

4. Now that these believers have stopped participating in their previous sinful behaviors, how are their former friends responding?

5. It might appear that the pagans' sinful activities are without consequence, but what is the truth? (v. 5; 2 Cor. 5:10)

Who will be the judge of "the living and the dead" (v. 5)? (Acts 10:37–42;  * 2 Tim. 4:1)

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

6. First-century Christians expected Jesus to return within their lifetime. They were concerned that the death of their believing friends meant they would have no part in the glory of Christ's second coming. How does the Bible reassure these Christians that death is not the final word? (v. 6b; 1 Thess. 4:13–18)

Read 1 Peter 4:7–11.

7. Why would the coming “end of all things” (v. 7) be a strong motivation for what Peter calls his readers to do? (2 Cor. 5:8–10; 2 Pet. 3:11–14)
8. In contrast to being ruled by passion, drunkenness and idolatry as they used to be, what should characterize Peter’s readers now? (v. 7)

Why?

9. What is one of the main results of loving others deeply?

What does this look like in practice? (Prov. 17:9; 1 Cor. 13:4–7; Col. 3:12–14)

Describe a time when you have experienced this.

Read 1 Peter 4:8–11.

10. Fill in the chart below to better understand the practical ways Peter calls believers to love one another.

Reference	What we are to do	How we are to do it
v. 9		
v. 11a		
v. 11b		

How would the Lord have you live these things out in the present circumstances of your life?

11. Peter has given a number of motivations for his readers to pursue godliness and love one another, but what motivation outweighs the others? (v. 11b)

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

1 Peter 4:12–19

Read 1 Peter 4:12–19.

1. How are Christians to respond to their sufferings? (vv. 13, 16, 19b, 19c)

How are they not to respond? (vv. 12, 16)

2. What tends to be your normal reaction to suffering? Why?

3. We experience suffering as a result of many different kinds of circumstances in our lives, sometimes as a result of our choices but often through no fault of our own.

Look at the causes of suffering in the first column and check the appropriate source(s) in the other columns.

Causes of suffering	A result of the curse	A result of our choices	A result of others sinning against us	A result of following Jesus
death				
poverty				
natural disasters				
meddling				
disease				
discrimination				
persecution				
murder				
broken relationships				

4. How have you suffered? Add your experiences to the chart above.

5. What kind of suffering can we avoid? (v. 15)

6. How would you define “meddling”? How could being a meddler end up causing you suffering?

7. What kind of suffering is Peter specifically talking about in this passage? (vv.14, 16)

8. Why should we “not be surprised” or think that this kind of suffering is “something strange” (v. 12)? (2:21; John 15:18–21)

9. What are the positive things that come from suffering “according to God's will” (v.19)?
 - v. 13

 - v. 14

 - v. 16

10. How does our present earthly suffering relate to our heavenly future? (v. 13; Matt. 5:11–12; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16–18; Jas. 1:12)

11. When we are cursed and insulted by people who despise and reject Jesus, we are simultaneously receiving a blessing.
 - a. What is that blessing? (v. 14)

 - b. What is the significance of this blessing? (Is. 11:2; John 14:25–26; Rom. 8:16–17, 26–27)

12. Have you ever been tempted to walk away from Jesus because circumstances were too difficult? Describe what happened. How did God show his faithfulness (v. 19) to you during that time?

13. Why do you think these Christians were feeling ashamed about their suffering? Why shouldn't they feel this way? (v.16)

14. Peter says that God's judgment time is beginning. He is starting with his own family (v. 17) but, for His children this is not the judgment of condemnation or punishment. What is God's purpose in allowing his children to suffer? (1:6–7; 4:1–2; Heb. 10:32–39)

15. So the bottom line is that we need to “continue to do good” (v. 19) even though we are suffering for being Christians. What does that look like? (Matt. 5:43–48; Rom. 12:17–21)

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

1 Peter 5:1–5

Read 1 Peter 5:1-5.

1. Peter, having addressed various groups in the church, now turns his attention to the elders. What is an elder? (v. 2; 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:6–9)

2. In what three ways does Peter identify himself in verse 1?

3. Why do you think Peter mentions being “a witness of Christ’s sufferings” (v. 1)? (Consider the wider context, especially 2:21, 4:13 and 5:10.)

4. Moving from suffering to glory is a major theme in 1 Peter. What hope does Peter himself have for the future? (v. 1; Jn. 21:18–19)

5. God has used the image of a shepherd with his flock throughout the Bible. Why do you think this picture is so powerful and instructive? (You may want to consider Ps. 23; Ezek. 34:11–16.)

6. Why might this calling to shepherd God’s flock have been especially dear to Peter’s heart? (Jn. 21:15–17)

7. In verses 2 and 3 Peter warns the elders against three sinful motivations for serving and contrasts them with right motivations. List them in the chart below:

Sinful motivations	Right motivations

8. How do these sinful motivations in an elder undermine the health of the church?

How do the right motivations build up the church?

9. Shepherding God's people is a costly sacrifice. Consider how you might show gratitude to one or more of the elders in your life, and then take time to follow through.
10. Having instructed the undershepherds, Peter now refers to Jesus as the "Chief Shepherd" (v. 4). What has the Chief Shepherd done for the sheep? (2:24–25; Jn. 10:11–16)
11. What sign of honor awaits the faithful shepherds of God's flock? (v. 4)

Why is this better than any earthly reward?

12. The word translated "older" in verse 5 is the same word that is used in verse 1 for "elder." What attitude should the young men have toward the elders?

Why? (Eph. 5:21; Heb. 13:17)

13. What does Peter say should characterize the people of God in verse 5b?

14. Contrast God's responses to the proud and to the humble. (v. 5)

15. Living as followers of Jesus is counter-cultural. We are called to embrace suffering now, knowing that glory is coming; we are to look for opportunities to serve instead of demanding our rights; we are to live humbly, submitting to one another instead of being proud. In which of these areas has Peter challenged you? Commit this to God in prayer, asking him to help you "follow in [Jesus'] steps" (2:21).

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

1 Peter 5:6–14

Read 1 Peter 5:6–14. Then look again at 5:6–7.

1. In verse 6 Peter commands us to humble ourselves. The “therefore” points back to the reason we should do this. What is the reason? (v. 5b)

2. Peter writes that we are to humble ourselves “under God’s mighty hand” (v. 6). In the Old Testament, the phrase “mighty hand” is frequently used to describe God’s deliverance of his people from slavery in Egypt (* Ex. 13:14–16).
 - a. What does the exodus tell us about God, the One before whom we are to humble ourselves? (Deut. 4:34)

 - b. What is the promised result of humility before God? (v. 6b)

3. Another translation of verses 6–7 is, “**Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, **casting all your anxieties on him...**” (ESV; emphasis added). So casting our anxiety on God is actually a way of humbling ourselves before him.
 - a. What does casting our anxiety on God show we believe about him?

 - b. What does hanging onto our anxiety show we believe about ourselves?

4. What reassurance do we have as we bring our concerns to God? (v. 7b; Phil. 4:6–7)

5. Some of our worries and concerns are very obvious. But others are subtle, a kind of background noise in our lives. Take a moment to consider what you are worried about. Confess your worries and lay your concerns before the Lord, thanking him for his care for you.

Now focus on verses 8–9.

6. In verse 8 Peter warns us that “the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”
 - a. What are some ways the devil seeks to “devour” believers? (* Mt. 26:41; Acts 20:29–30)

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

- b. In light of this, what are we to do? (vv. 8a, 9a; * Jas. 4:7)
- c. What have we been given to help us stand firm? (Eph. 6:10–18; 2 Thess. 2:15)

7. Why are Peter's words at the end of verse 9 encouraging?

Reread 1 Peter 5:6–14. Then look again at verses 10–11.

- 8. Earlier the phrase “God’s mighty hand” (v. 6) evoked God’s power.
 - a. What characteristic of God does Peter highlight at the beginning of verse 10?
 - b. What has this gracious God already done for us? (v. 10b)
 - c. And what will he do for us? (v. 10c)
- 9. What contrast does Peter make between the suffering that believers experience now and the glory that they will experience in the future?¹ (v. 10; compare 2 Cor. 4:17)
- 10. Regarding verse 11, Peter H. Davids writes, “Having spoken of God’s plans for [believers], it is no accident that [Peter] underlines God’s power.... The one who has planned and promised is also the one to whom belongs the power to fulfill.”²
Take a moment to praise God for his power, which he uses on behalf of his people.

Now focus on verses 12–14.

- 11. Who is Silas (or Silvanus), the man who probably delivered Peter’s letter and may have had a hand in writing it? (v. 12; Acts 15:22, 32)
- 12. What two purposes did Peter have in writing this letter? (v. 12)
- 13. Scan back through the letter and jot down some of the exhortations, encouragements or truths Peter has given that you want to remember.

¹ Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 194.
² Davids, 196.

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 1:1–4

Second Peter was written to Christians whose faith was being threatened by the heresies of false teachers. Read the epistle to see how Peter addresses this vital issue.

Read 2 Peter 1:1–4.

1. After Peter identifies himself to his readers, he uses two titles to describe who he is.
 - a. What does the title “servant” of Jesus Christ tell Peter's readers about how he sees himself? (Jn. 13:1–5, 12–16)
 - b. The title “apostle” gives Peter’s message authority and credibility. In light of the situation Peter is addressing, why is this important?
2. Why does Peter describe the faith he shares with his readers as “precious”? (1 Pet. 1:7, 18–21)

How do we receive this precious faith? (v. 1; Eph. 2:8–9)

3. In what ways does God demonstrate his righteousness (v. 1) when he brings us to faith? (Titus 3:3–7)
4. What is the experience of God’s peace and grace dependent upon? (v. 2)
5. In our Christian lives knowing about God and knowing God personally are both vital, but they are not the same.
 - a. What steps can you take to know about God? (2 Tim. 3:14–17)
 - b. What steps can you take to know God personally? (Ps. 46:10; Eph. 1:17; Phil. 1:9, 3:8)

6. Verse 3 makes an amazing promise.
 - a. Rewrite the promise in your own words.

 - b. God's divine power lies behind this promise. What difference does this make?

 - c. Choose one area in your life that is difficult. How would reliance on this promise affect how you handle this problem?

7. How do believers access the power of God to live godly lives? (v. 3)

8. How have we come to receive God's promises? (vv. 3b–4a)

9. Verse 4 says God has freely given us "his very great and precious promises." What promises have you believed that have made a difference in your life?

10. As a result of believing in God's promises, we participate in the divine nature. This does not mean believers are "absorbed into deity nor do they become divine."¹ So, what does it mean? (Rom. 8:9–17, 29; 2 Cor. 3:17–18)

11. Another result of believing God's promises is that we "escape the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires" (v. 4). How are we able to do this? (v. 3; Rom. 6:11–14; 1 Cor. 10:13; Titus 2:11–14)

12. Think of a situation in which you have trouble resisting your evil desires. Write an escape plan. What truths from this lesson will you tell yourself? What will you do?

1 *Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 2027.

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 1:5–11

Read 2 Peter 1:1–11.

1. What is the foundational gift that we have been given by God? (vv. 1b, 5a)

2. In verses 5–7 Peter gives a list of virtues that believers need to add to their faith.
 - a. What are they?

 - b. What is the reason that Peter gives for doing this? (v. 4)

 - c. Why do we have to “add” to our faith? (Phil. 2:12–13; Col. 1:10–11)

3. Read verses 5–7. Commentator Michael Green says that Peter “selected a list of virtues which should be found in a healthy Christian life.”¹ Stop and take inventory of your spiritual health. Which virtue strikes you as the most challenging at this point in your spiritual journey? Why?

4. How would you define goodness?

Why is this a foundational virtue of the Christian life? (Ps. 100:5; Lk. 6:43–45)

5. Peter is concerned that these believers not be seduced by the teachings of false prophets who believed in an extra secret knowledge that they claimed was necessary for salvation. What kind of knowledge does Peter say we need to grow in? (1:8, 3:18; * 1 Cor. 2:1–5; Phil.3:8–10)

6. Self-control is “controlling [your] passions rather than being controlled by them.”² Perseverance is enduring difficult circumstances rather than being overcome by them. To grow in these two virtues, how does our attitude have to be different from the “if it feels good, do it” attitude of the world? (2 Cor. 4:18; Col. 3:1–5)

¹ Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1987), 75.

² Green, 77.

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

7. The next two virtues—godliness (or reverence for God) and brotherly kindness—are relational. They relate to how we behave towards God and our neighbor. How are they connected to each other? (1 Jn. 4:19—5:2)

8. What are some concrete ways that you can practice sisterly kindness? (Rom. 12:9–13)

9. What gift has God given us so we are able to grow in all these virtues? (v. 3; Eph. 3:14–19)

10. The list ends with the virtue of love. Read how Paul describes this love in 1 Corinthians 13. Think of a time when you have been able to love in this unconditional way. Write a brief prayer of thanks to Jesus for giving you “his divine power” (v.3) in that situation.

11. What will result as we possess these virtues in increasing measure? (v. 8)

12. Peter says that someone who claims to be a Christian but who is not growing in these virtues is “nearsighted and blind” (v.9). Green says, “such a man is blind because he blinks or willfully closes his eyes to the light.”³ What else has this person done? (v. 9b)

13. How does remembering that Jesus has cleansed us from our past sins motivate us to pursue these virtues? (1 Pet. 1:18–19, 2:24)

14. What are the other two gifts that God has given us? (v. 10)

What is God's purpose for doing this? (Rom. 8:28–30; 1 Pet. 1:1–2, 15)

15. In verses 10–11, Peter is picturing our spiritual lives as a long journey toward a grand destination. How do you think these virtues can prevent us from stumbling and falling on the way?

16. What wonderful things do we have to look forward to? (v. 11; * Heb. 11:10; 12:22–24)

3 Green, 82.

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 1:12–19

Read 2 Peter 1:1–19.

1. In verse 12 Peter tells his readers that he is reminding them of “these things.” What are these things?
2. Reread verses 12–19 and note different ways Peter talks about remembering. (vv. 12, 13, 15, 19)
3. How does Peter describe the maturity of these believers? (v. 12)
4. Peter passionately reminds these mature believers about the truth. What does this tell us about the tendency of their (and our) hearts?
5. What is fueling Peter’s passion? (vv. 14–15)
6. Jesus told Peter that he would die a martyr's death (Jn. 21:18–19). In light of this, what is surprising about the way Peter describes his death (vv. 13–15)?
7. Peter refers to his body as a tent (v. 13). How does Paul explain this metaphor? (2 Cor. 5:1–10)
8. How does this perspective on death encourage you or challenge your thinking?

Read Luke 9:28–35 and 2 Peter 1:16–19.

9. List what Peter teaches about Jesus in verses 16–17.

10. To what event does Peter refer in verses 17–18?

Who is Peter referring to when he says “we” in verses 16 and 18?

11. How is what Peter teaches different from the false teachings of others? (vv. 16, 18; see also 1 John 1:1–3)

12. How has the “word of the prophets [been] made more certain” (v. 19)? (Heb. 1:1–2)

13. What does Peter say Scripture (“the word of the prophets”) is like? (v. 19)

14. What do you think Peter is looking ahead to when he talks about the day dawning and the morning star rising? (📖* Luke 21:27–28; Rom. 13:11–12; Rev. 22:16)

15. Peter’s tone in this passage is urgent; he does not want the believers to forget these things. What can you do to actively remember these truths? (📖* 3:1–2; 1 Cor. 11:23–26; Heb. 10:24–25)

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 1:20–2:3

Read 2 Peter 1:20–2:3. Reread 1:20–21.

1. Why does Peter emphasize that “above all” (v. 20) the readers must understand the origin of Scripture? (2:1; 2 Tim. 4:3–4)
2. Where does Scripture originate? (v. 21; 2 Tim. 3:16)
3. Man played an important part in the production of Scripture. God used the specific skills, backgrounds and situations of the authors to transmit his words. Peter wants to make it clear that in this process, certain things did not happen. What are they? (vv. 16, 20–21)
4. In verse 21 Peter uses the language of sailing to describe how the prophets were “carried along by the Holy Spirit” in the same way that a ship may be carried along by the wind. How is this imagery helpful in understanding the cooperation between the human and divine authors of Scripture?
5. The Bible is “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). How does studying it help us to draw closer to God?
6. Why do you think the Holy Spirit is so helpful in the understanding of Scripture? (v. 21; 1 Cor. 2:6–14)

Reread 2 Peter 2:1–3.

7. What two groups of people is Peter contrasting by using the word “but” in verse 1?

8. Peter tells his readers that there were false prophets among the Israelites, and that there will be false teachers in their midst, too. What do the warnings God gave the Israelites concerning false prophets tell us about his attitude toward them? (Deut. 13:1–5)
9. According to 2:1, what denial lies at the heart of the heresies of false teachers?
10. How do these false teachers seek to influence the church? (v. 1)
11. What did Jesus say would distinguish a prophet as false? (Matt. 7:15–23)
12. What is this “fruit” that marks a false teacher? (vv. 2–3; Jude 4, 8, 16)
13. What destructive effect can false teachers have on the reputation of the church? (v. 2)
14. In contrast to the origin of Scripture, what is the source of the false teachers’ message? (v. 3a)
15. What is the certain outcome of their denial of the truth? (vv. 1, 3)
16. The best way to spot a counterfeit is knowing the “real thing” intimately. How can you guard yourself against the false messages you may hear? (Ps. 119:11; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15)

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 2:4–9

Read 2 Peter 2:1–9. Reread verses 4–9.

1. In light of the dangers Peter warns his readers about in verses 1–3, what point do you think he's trying to make?

2. List the three groups that God punishes in this passage and describe how they are punished.

Group	Punishment

3. Peter uses two individuals to demonstrate God's desire and ability to rescue the godly.
 - a. Who does God rescue and protect in this passage? (vv. 5b, 7)

 - b. What does he rescue them from? (vv. 5, 6)

 - c. How does he rescue them? (Gen. 7:21–23, 19:15–16)

4. What qualities of God do these rescue stories show?

How does that encourage you?

5. Considering God's treatment of the godly and the ungodly, what two conclusions does Peter draw about God? (v. 9)

Scan through Genesis 6:5—7:24.

6. In light of this passage, why do you think Peter describes Noah as "a preacher of righteousness" (v. 5)?
( * Heb. 11:7)

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

Read Genesis 19:1–29.

7. Jot down ways that Lot behaves righteously.

8. How does Peter describe the culture in which Lot lives? (vv. 7, 8)

9. According to Peter, how does Lot react to the culture around him?

10. What does God’s rescue of Noah and Lot reveal about his character?

11. What does God's judgment of the ungodly reveal about his character?

12. The Bible says “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Considering this, how do we escape God's judgment and become “godly” (v. 9)? (Rom. 5:6–11; Eph. 2:8–9)

13. How can Peter's teaching about judgment help you when others sin against you? (v. 9; * Rom. 12:17–19)

14. In what practical ways have you experienced God's rescue and protection in your life?

15. Read Psalm 91 aloud as a prayer of thanks and praise to God.

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 2:10–22

Read 2 Peter 2:10–22.

1. What is Peter's tone and why do you think he is speaking this way?

2. Make a list of how Peter says these false teachers are behaving. (vv. 10–15, 18–19)

3. How we behave is directly linked to what we believe.
 - a. Look back over your list from the previous question. What must these false teachers believe? (Hint: Rom. 6:1)

 - b. What does Peter clearly say about what they believe? (2:1; Jude 4)

4. What sort of creatures might Peter be referring to when he talks about "celestial beings" (v. 10b)? (Psalm 103:20–21; Luke 1:8–13, 18–20; Eph. 6:11–12; Rev. 12:7–9)

The false teachers seem to be speaking disrespectfully of this powerful but unseen spiritual world. Why is their slander an act of arrogance and ignorance? (vv. 10–12; Jude 8–9)

5. Peter condemns these false teachers for despising authority. However, who will have the final word and what will the outcome be? (vv. 9–10a, 13a; Jude 14–15)

6. If it is so plain that judgment awaits these false teachers, why does anyone follow them? (vv. 2–3a, 14, 18–19)

7. How are these blasphemous false teachers like "brute beasts" (v. 12)? (vv. 10a, 12, 22; Eph. 4:18–19; Jude 10)

Read verses 14–16.

8. Peter compares these false teachers to the Old Testament prophet Balaam, who was willing to curse Israel for financial gain. (📖* Numbers 22–24)
Why are greed and the love of money so destructive in the life of the church? (vv. 3a, 14–15; Luke 16:13; I Tim. 6:10)

9. In the Old Testament story, Balaam becomes so insanely angry that God has to resort to something very unusual to get Balaam’s attention.
a. What is it? (v. 16; Num. 22:26–34)

- b. What do you think Peter is implying about the false teachers when he refers to the story of Balaam and his donkey? (v. 16)

10. What word pictures are used to describe the lives of these false teachers? (v. 17; Jude 12b–13)

What do these pictures imply about the lives and beliefs of the false teachers?

11. What kinds of “freedom” (v. 19) might the false teachers be offering?

Why are these “freedom[s]” actually forms of slavery? (vv. 19–20)

12. What have you pursued that you thought would bring you freedom but actually ended up enslaving you?

13. What did the false teachers know? (vv. 20–21)

14. Despite what they knew, the false teachers chose to reject the “way of righteousness” and “turn[ed] their backs on the sacred command” (vv. 21–22). What must always go hand in hand with a knowledge of Jesus that will prevent us from being entangled again by the corruption of the world? (1:3–8; John 15:9–17; Rom. 6:16–19)

15. Think about the ways that you are tempted to become entangled again in your old way of life.
What practical steps can you take to prevent this from happening? (Use the passages listed in Question 14 as a guide.)

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 3:1–7

Read 2 Peter 3:1–7.

1. In this chapter Peter moves from condemning the scoffers to exhorting the believers.
 - a. What phrase does he use when addressing the believers? (vv. 1, 8, 14, 17)

 - b. What comes to mind when you think of being addressed in this way?

2. Peter again returns to reminding the believers of the truth. Why do you think this is so important to him? (vv. 1–3; 1:12–15; 2:1)

3. In contrast to what the false teachers have been promoting (2:18–19), Peter wants to stimulate his readers to “wholesome thinking” (v. 1).
 - a. What is “wholesome thinking”? (Consider Phil. 4:8.)

 - b. How do you think Peter’s letters might stimulate such thinking?

4. In verse 2, Peter instructs believers to recall God’s revelation given in both the Old and New Testaments.
 - a. How can you put this instruction into practice?

 - b. If someone asked, how would you describe the benefits of reading and meditating on God’s word?

 - c. Give an example of when you have experienced these benefits.

5. For a second time in this letter Peter uses the emphatic phrase “you must understand” (1:20; 3:3).
 - a. In this chapter, what does he say is vitally important to understand? (v. 3)

 - b. What characterizes scoffers? (v. 3; Acts 20:29–30; Jude 17-19; * Isa. 28:14–22)

 - c. Carefully read over verses 3–4. What is the point of the scoffers’ teaching?

 - d. Why do you think it was so important for Peter’s readers to be aware of scoffers and their message?

6. How might the scoffers’ teaching be discouraging to the believers?

7. What two examples does Peter use to refute the false teachings of the scoffers? (vv. 5–6)

What do these examples reveal about God?

How might this be encouraging to the believers as they await Christ’s return?

8. This section concludes on a somber note. Contrast the end that scoffers face with the hope Peter offers to those who follow Christ. (v. 7; 1:11)

Take a moment to thank God for rescuing you from certain destruction.

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 3:8–13

Review 2 Peter 3:1–7. Then read 2 Peter 3:8–13.

1. What are these “dear friends” not to forget (v. 8)?

2. Commentator Michael Green writes that since for God, “a thousand years are like a day” (v. 8), he “sees time with a *perspective* we lack.”¹ What do you think this means?

Similarly, since for God “a day is like a thousand years” (v. 8), he “sees time with an *intensity* we lack.”² What do you think this means?

3. How would appreciating God’s perspective change the way we view people, events, and things around us?

4. The “scoffers” (v. 3) think that because Jesus has not come yet, he’s not coming at all. How is this faulty thinking addressed by Peter’s reminder that for God, a thousand years are like a day?

5. Why is God waiting before he returns? (v. 9; see also Ezek. 33:11; Lk. 13:6–9)

Reread 1 Peter 3:8–11.

6. Peter has just explained God’s reasons for delaying his coming, but now in verse 10 he assures his readers in strong terms that the end will indeed come.
 - a. To what does he compare the Lord’s coming? (📖* See also Jesus’ words in Mt. 24:43–44.)

 - b. What does this image convey about Jesus’ return?

¹ Michael Green, *2 Peter & Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1987), 146.

² Ibid.

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

7. What terrifying events will accompany the Lord's return? (vv. 10b, 12b; Lk. 21:25–27)
8. What else will happen when Jesus returns? (3:7; Isa. 13:9–13)
9. That day *will* come—but it has not come yet. How are we to live, knowing that the end may come at any time? (v. 11; 1 Thess. 5:1–9; Rev. 3:3; 📖* Mk. 13:32–37)

Reread 1 Peter 3:11–13.

10. What are some ways we can “look forward to the day of God and speed its coming” (v. 12)? (Mt. 6:9–10a; 24:14; 28:19)
11. In verse 12b, Peter again describes the events that the day of the Lord will bring. But what does verse 13 say will follow that terrible day?
12. What will we experience in the new heaven and the new earth? (v. 13b)

What won't we experience? (Rev. 21:1–4, 8, 27)

Consider the impact these things have had on you, on those you love and on society. Then contemplate a life without them.

13. Why can we be confident that this glorious new heaven and new earth will come to pass? (v. 13a; Ps. 145:13b; 2 Cor. 1:20a)

Standing in the True Grace of God

Peter's Life, Letters and Lord

2 Peter 3:14–18

Read 2 Peter 3. Reread 2 Peter 3:14–18.

1. What will take place when Jesus Christ comes again?

v. 10

v. 13

2. How does Peter describe the lifestyle of believers who are conscious of the second coming? (vv. 11, 14)

How do we put this into practice? (Col. 1:9–12; 1 Peter 4:7–11)

3. How should your answers to question 1 serve as powerful motivators for holy living?

4. The false teachers claimed that the delay of Christ's return was evidence that he was not coming back (v. 4).
 - a. What does Peter say is the cause for the "delay"? (vv. 9, 15a)

 - b. God's patience is evidence of his desire that "everyone ... come to repentance" (v. 9) and salvation (v.15). How can you participate in what God is doing in these last days? (Col. 4:2–6; 1 Pet. 3:15)

5. Peter links his writings with all of Paul's letters, and Paul's letters with the "other Scriptures" (v. 16).
 - a. In making these connections, what source of authority is Peter claiming for both his and Paul's writings? (1:21; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16)

 - b. Why would this connection be important for Peter's readers to know? (Consider the concerns Peter has addressed in this letter.)

6. By Peter's own admission, some of Paul's writings are difficult to understand.
 - a. How were "ignorant and unstable people" (v. 16) handling these and other difficult passages in the Scriptures? (v. 16)

 - b. How are believers to handle difficult passages of scripture? (Jn. 16:13–15; Acts 2:42; 17:11; Jas. 1:5)

7. What awaits those who distort the truth of God's word? (v. 16)

8. Peter ends his epistle with final instructions for his readers.
 - a. What is his exhortation in verse 17a?

 - b. What are the dangers for those who do not heed this exhortation? (v. 17b; Heb. 2:1; 3:12)

 - c. What positive steps can believers take to avert the dangers mentioned in verse 17? (v. 18; Heb. 3:13–15)

9. Why is the combination of grace and knowledge Peter talks about in verse 18 so vital for growth in the Christian's life? Hint: consider the potential dangers of one without the other.

10. What aspect of your study of 1 & 2 Peter has had the most impact on your life? Memorize your favorite verse.