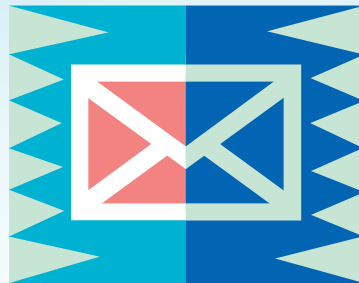


New Testament Survey

Encouragement and Warnings

Studying 1 Peter,
2 Timothy & 2 Peter



For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13



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Encouragement and Warnings

1 Peter, 2 Timothy & 2 Peter

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
- II. Holy Living
 - A. Exploring 1 Peter
 - B. Establishing the Historical Perspective
 - 1. Authorship and Audience
 - 2. Date
 - C. Examining the Content
 - 1. Theme
 - 2. Key Verse
 - 3. Topics and Teachings
 - 4. 1 Peter: Jesus Christ, Precious Cornerstone of Our Faith
 - D. Concluding Thoughts
- III. Keep the Faith/Preach the Word
 - A. Exploring 2 Timothy
 - B. Establishing the Historical Perspective
 - 1. Authorship and Audience
 - 2. Date
 - 3. General Background
 - C. Examining the Content
 - 1. Theme
 - 2. Key Verse
 - 3. Topics and Teachings
 - 4. 2 Timothy: Jesus Christ, Our Example
- IV. Warnings against Ungodly “Christians”
 - A. Exploring 2 Peter
 - B. Establishing the Historical Perspective

1. Authorship and Audience
2. Date
- C. Examining the Content
 1. Theme
 2. Key Verse
 3. Topics and teachings
 4. 2 Peter: Jesus Christ, Our Strength

V. Conclusion

Self Test

Appendix 1. Let's Look At 1 Peter

Appendix 2. Let's Look At 2 Timothy

Appendix 3. Let's Look At 2 Peter

LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson you should:

1. Know the author, audience, basic outline, theme, key verse, and primary teaching of 1 and 2 Peter and 2 Timothy.
2. Have a list of the practical instructions for Christian life that these books give.
3. Be making changes in your life based on these practical instructions.
4. Encourage others in your community through your preaching or teaching to make godly changes in their lives.

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Complete the lesson.
2. Read 1 and 2 Peter and 2 Timothy as you complete the lesson.
3. Read the 3 appendices, excerpts from *A Look at the New Testament* by Dr. Henrietta Mears.

WORD STUDY

Apostasy — Desertion or departure from one's faith or principles

I. Introduction

This lesson covers three epistles by two different authors. Paul is very familiar to you by now, but we will also be looking at what the Apostle Peter wrote for us. As you begin to work on it, it may seem a little out of order because 2 Timothy is placed between 1 and 2 Peter. However if you remember we are taking these books in chronological order. So, take the challenge!

The lesson consists of questions, exercises and assignments that will help you to dig into these epistles, opening up your understanding to the context in which they were written, and helping you to interact with God's Word. There are answers in the workbook to help you if you get stuck. In addition there is a self test included so that you can review what you have learned.

You need to have a Bible or New Testament which you will feel free to mark up as you will be required to make many markings. When you read, always keep a pen beside you so that you can

mark whenever you find something particularly important to you. You will also need a personal notebook for written assignments. In addition there is a supplement, *New Testament Geography and Chronology*, which you must have to complete some of the exercises. If you did not receive one, please ask your leader.

You can do this study on your own, but it will be much more beneficial if you meet with a group and discuss what you are learning and discovering. We are meant to help and encourage and share with each other. It gives all of us more insights and greater joy. And then there is the issue of accountability. So often we have good intentions, but... Life is full and we easily lay aside a study, and then it gets buried. We need to spur each other on! Knowing that you are going to meet with a group often provides that extra incentive to dig in and learn. And every moment spent in the Word of God will build truth into your life.

II. Holy Living

A. Exploring 1 Peter

We are now moving on to a new author. Be alert to any differences you observe in style or message.



Exercise 1

Read and mark 1 Peter. As you read through 1 Peter mark the following words. Try to do the reading in one sitting.

Red -- "Suffer", all forms of

Purple -- "Love"

Yellow -- "Holy"

Now that you have a feel for a few key words, look over the following outline and notice that the emphasis is on holy living even though suffering is mentioned many times. It is important to realize that some concepts are not summarized in just one word. Even though the word *suffer* is very prominent, the overall content is on holy living which is valid regardless of whether we are suffering or not, and will definitely strengthen us when we do suffer for the sake of Christ.

OUTLINE OF 1 PETER		
	Greeting	1:1-2
I.	Holy living as obedient children	1:3-2:10
II.	Holy living in relationships	2:11-3:12
III.	Holy living in suffering	3:13-4:19
IV.	Holy living in the church	5:1-11
	Conclusion	5:12-14

B. Establishing the Historical Perspective

1. Authorship and Audience



Question 1 In what verse do we see who authored this epistle and how does he identify himself?

Food for Thought

There are modern scholars who question the authorship of every book of the Bible. However all of the books in the New Testament were accepted historically by the church. This is important to keep in mind when you come across this type of questioning scholarship.



Question 2 How does he identify himself in 5:1?



Question 3 What do you recall about Peter when Christ was living on earth?

There are many details you could remember about him, but we are going to turn our focus to his life after Christ returned to heaven. You will remember how he waited with the other disciples in the upper room for the promised Holy Spirit, and what a different person he was after that. He became the rock that Christ had called him (John 1:42). He spoke with authority (note Acts 4:13). He seemed to spend a great deal of time with the Apostle John in the early days in Jerusalem. And we know he went on at least two missionary journeys.



Question 4 Where was his first journey—Acts 8:14-25?



Question 5 Look up Acts 9:31-32, 38-39; 10:23-38 and after you have written the places on the blanks below locate them on Map 2 in the supplement. What other places do we know that Peter traveled to?



Question 6 To whom is 1 Peter addressed?

If you look at the maps in the supplement you will discover that all of these places are located in what is now Turkey.

We do not know all the places Peter traveled to, but he seemed to be well acquainted with these people he is writing to, and we have an interesting note in 1 Corinthians 9:5 indicating that his wife traveled with him.

Every letter that is written has an audience with specific needs. Read 3:14, 16; 4:12, 19; 5:9, 10.



Question 7 Describe what these people were experiencing according to these verses.

2. Date

In 1 Peter 1:6 Peter refers to a time of trials. Due to this reference a number of Bible scholars believe that the epistle was written around A.D. 64 when Nero began persecuting Christians. This would have been within a few years before Peter's own death which is believed to have been under Nero. So he is definitely in his last years.



Exercise 2

Note the date of 1 Peter. Turn to the supplement now and write the date of the writing of 1 Peter in the appropriate blank in the chronology section.

C. Examining the Content

1. Theme

There are various themes that run throughout these five chapters of 1 Peter. You have seen from Exercise 1 that suffering is frequently mentioned, and often suffering is used as the theme. But the greater issue is how a believer should be living all of the time, including during suffering.

Live holy and be holy in your Christian life exhibiting love in all your relationships.

Sometimes we think of “holy” people as stern and forbidding, legalistic actually. But our standard is God Himself, and as He has made us pure, He desires us to live a life that is pure and like Him, not like the world around us. But a sign and a key to that holiness is love. Look at the verses where you have marked the word *love*.

2. Key Verse

The key verse is 1 Peter 1:15.



Question 8 Write that verse out here.

It is always good to look at the context of a verse. You will see that verse 14 admonishes us to leave the old life behind and Peter goes on in verse 16 to tell us as a direct command from God again to be holy—as God is holy. These words are taken from Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7. So we are to both *be* holy and also *act* holy. It is obvious that the result of who we are is seen in our actions—but sometimes we forget that.

3. Topics and Teachings

Suffering

This whole letter is an encouragement to endure through persecution and trials. Let's look at some specific teachings on this topic.

(1) *God is pleased when we suffer for doing good, not evil.*

We are reminded that there is suffering for what we have done wrong, as opposed to suffering for the sake of righteousness. In 1 Peter 2:20 we are told that what is special, what is “godly”, is when we are treated badly for **good** behavior and endure it patiently. And this is related to a specific example of a servant being punished for good.

(2) *Christ is our example in suffering.*

As we read again 1 Peter 2:21-23 we are reminded that our supreme example is Christ who suffered totally unjustly without speaking a word because He trusted the Righteous Judge. We have another court of appeal!

(3) *We can witness during our suffering.*

Suffering for the sake of righteousness can give us an opportunity to speak up about the hope we have in Christ Jesus (3:15). Most people do not listen to someone who has an easy life. But when they see injustice or suffering in someone's life, they are willing to listen to those people. People who are suffering can make an impact.

Relationships

Peter addresses a number of relationships in which we need to practice our holy living. So the "theoretical" moves to the "practical".



Question 9 Fill out the empty spaces in the following chart referring to the Scripture references as listed.

Verses	People Addressed	Relationship	Problem	Holy living
2:11-12	Believers	Believer — worldly	Slander	Doing good
2:13-17	Citizens	Citizen — authorities	Non-Christian government	Obey law Honor authority
2:18-25			Unreasonable boss	
3:1-6		Marriage	Non-Christian husbands	
3:7			Husbands	
3:8-12	All believers			
5:1-4		Shepherd — flock		
5:5a	Younger men		Rejecting authority	
5:5b	All of you		Pride (by inference)	

4. 1 Peter: Jesus Christ, Precious Cornerstone of Our Faith

Take time now to read Appendix 1, *A Look at the New Testament* Chapter 21. Complete the following questions and exercises as you read.

Privileges of the Christian



Exercise 3

Mark verses in your Bible. Choose two colors of pen or pencil. Mark in your Bible the verses Mears mentions on the seven precious things in one color. Using the second color mark in your Bible all the verses in Mears' list of what we have received in addition to Jesus. See if you can find any more of either of these types of verses to mark in your Bible.



Question 10 How do we put away all wickedness?

Dr. Mears comments that "sometimes even good things keep us from God's best."¹ Others have said that "good" is the worst enemy of "best."

Food for Thought

Think over the last week. How many times has something good stopped you from choosing God's best? What!? You can't think of anything? What about your quiet times? How often were they interrupted by someone with a need that you could help? Were you too busy to develop your prayer life this week? Too busy doing "good" things for God? How guilty we all are of this! The devil loves to distract us from God's best by introducing something "good." Think over your week again. Scrutinize it. Recall the decisions that you have made. Now, where have you chosen "good" over God's best?



Question 11 How can you make sure that you are a good witness?



Question 12 How are Christians like priests?

Duties of the Christian



Question 13 What three things does a pilgrim invest in Christ Jesus' plan for his life?



Question 14 What is the secret to walking in newness of life?



Question 15 What is one of the worst barriers for prayer? 1 Peter 3:7.



Question 16 What is the best way to keep this life happy and prosperous? 1 Peter 3:10-12.

¹ Henrietta Mears, *A Look at the New Testament* (Glendale, California: G/L Publications, 1966), 224.

Food for Thought

Mears writes, “A Christian life must claim attention to itself by its very difference from the world-governed life around it.” How do you propose to do this in your life? Is simply dressing like a “Christian,” going to church and not to bars, abstaining from sex outside of marriage and other such acts enough to make the world wonder why you are so different? Or is something more needed? What about your heart attitudes? Do you have outbursts of temper around your family, or do your thoughts lust after someone who is not your spouse, do you tend to have a frown on your face? Not all of these things are outwardly visible, but unbelievers often sense them anyway. What is most important in showing that you have a different life from the world? What five things can you begin doing today?

Trials of the Christian



Question 17 Who is the Christian’s enemy and how is he pictured in 1 Peter?

We need to remember that our defense is to resist and stand firm in our faith.

D. Concluding Thoughts

Peter ends the body of his letter in verse 10 with these encouraging words: “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”

In the name of the God of all grace; the God who is the most merciful and the most compassionate, who is an exuberant Fountain of love and compassion to all his intelligent offspring.

Who hath called us — *By the preaching of the Gospel.*

Unto His eternal glory — *To the infinite felicity of the heavenly state.*

By Christ Jesus — *Through the merit of his passion and death, by the influence of his Holy Spirit, by the precepts of his Gospel, and by the splendor of his own example.*

After that ye have suffered a while — *Ολιγον παθοντας* “Having suffered a little time; that is, while ye are enduring these persecutions, God will cause all to work together for your good.

Make you perfect — *Καταρτισει, στηριξει, σθενωσει, θεμελιωσει* “All these words are read in the future tense by the best MSS and versions.

He will make you perfect — *Καταρτισει* “Put you in complete joint as the timbers of a building.

Stablish — *Στηριξει* “Make you firm in every part; adapt you strongly to each other, so that you may be mutual supports, the whole building being one in the Lord.

Strengthen — *Σθενωσει* “Cramp and bind every part, so that there shall be no danger of warping, splitting, or falling.

Settle — *Θεμελιωσει* “Cause all to rest so evenly and firmly upon the best and surest foundation, that ye may grow together to a holy temple in the Lord: in a word, that ye may be complete in all the mind that was in Christ; supported in all your trials and difficulties; strengthened to resist and overcome all your enemies; and after all abide, firmly founded, in the truth of grace. All these phrases are architectural; and the apostle has again in view the fine image which he produced in 2:5.²

² This is from Adam Clarke’s Commentary.

And so we can leave 1 Peter with this image of Christ the Cornerstone and us the living stones with which He is building His church.

III. Keep the Faith/Preach the Word

A. Exploring 2 Timothy

Find a quiet spot and make sure you will not be disturbed for at least 20 minutes. Sit down, take a few minutes to pray and then read 2 Timothy out loud from start to finish. As you read think of how these words impacted Timothy. Paul is lonely, imprisoned, abandoned by many, and not holding out hope that he will be on this earth much longer. Timothy has sat at the feet of this great man for many years, traveled with him, watched him, learned from him. It is not an easy time with false teachings infiltrating the church and the persecution from those who hate truth. What will Timothy do without this great man of God? What **MUST** he do?



Exercise 4

Observation. As you read through 2 Timothy mark the following words:

Purple -- "Faith"

Red -- "Suffer/suffering"

Green -- "Word/Gospel"

After your reading answer the following questions in your notebook: What is the tone or atmosphere of this letter? What stood out to you the most in your reading?

Now that you are familiar with the text, look at the following outline. These outlines are kept simple so that you can remember some of the basic sections and themes in each book. As you go on with your own Bible study and research after this course you will find it helpful to develop your own outline for each book.

Outline of 2 Timothy	
Salutation	1:1–2
I. Encouragement	1:3 – 2:25
A. To be Faithful	(1:3–18)
B. To Endure and be Strong	(2:1–14)
C. To Diligence and Purity	(2:15–25)
II. Apostasy of the Last Days	3:1–13
III. Study and Preach the Word	3:14 – 4:5
Personal Conclusion	4:6–22

B. Establishing the Historical Perspective

1. Authorship and Audience



Question 18 How does Paul identify himself in this letter as he begins?



Question 19 What does he call Timothy?

It is most likely that even though Paul addressed this letter to Timothy he expected it to be read in whole or in parts to the whole church to remind them of Timothy's authority and instruct them in godly living.

2. Date

Second Timothy was most likely written by Paul during his second imprisonment in Rome, shortly before he was executed by Nero in A.D. 67. We learned in the last lesson that 1 Timothy and Titus were most likely written in A.D. 62, which helps us to know that 2 Timothy could not have been written before that time. And since Paul states that he is in prison most scholastic authorities assume that 2 Timothy was written shortly before his death.



Question 20 What verses in 2 Timothy make it apparent that Paul was a prisoner and that he knew of his upcoming death?

Based on all of the above information the approximate date for 2 Timothy is A.D. 66 or 67.

3. General Background

We know from our studies in the lesson covering 1 Timothy (Lesson 8) that Timothy was stationed in Ephesus tending the church there. We have already studied the general background of the church in Ephesus in previous lessons so we will devote this section to learning more about Paul and Timothy's relationship. Second Timothy is a very personal letter and it will be helpful to understand the deep relationship that laid the foundation for this, the last of Paul's letters.



Question 21 What basic information do we learn about Timothy in the first few verses of Acts 16?

Timothy is mentioned at least once in each chapter from Acts 16-20. These chapters cover much of Paul's second and third journeys and cover approximately a six or seven year time period.



Question 22 Look up each verse listed below and summarize it *in your own words* focusing on Timothy's role. You may need to read contextual verses to give an accurate summary.

Acts 17:14 _____

Acts 17:15 _____

Acts 18:5 _____

Acts 19:22 _____

Acts 20:4 _____

Paul also mentions Timothy in a number of his epistles.



Question 23 Look up each verse listed below and note how Paul refers to Timothy or describes him. You may quote directly or summarize in your own words.

Romans 16:21 _____

1 Corinthians 4:17 _____

1 Corinthians 16:10 _____

2 Corinthians 1:1 _____

Philippians 1:1 _____

Philippians 2:22 _____

1 Thessalonians 3:2 _____

There are many more verses similar to these and especially in 1 Timothy we see Paul addressing Timothy as “my child” or “my dear child.”



Question 24 Based on the Scriptures above describe Paul and Timothy’s relationship.

Food for Thought

Timothy was raised in a mixed household. His mother was a Jew, but his father was not. Nevertheless, he was trained up to be a godly man by his mother and his grandmother. What are you doing to raise your children or grandchildren up to be servants of Christ?

If you know that you need to work on this area of your life, why don’t you take a few minutes to pray about it and ask God for just one or two ideas that you can begin putting into practice right now. Write your ideas down and commit to exert a godly influence in your home.

Some of you, no doubt, have a spouse who is not a Christian and who may resist you. Bring that before the Lord and ask a few other people to pray for that specific area as well. There are many creative ways to introduce spiritual teaching. Even simple songs or Bible stories can be the beginning of a spiritual presence in your home.



Question 25 Why do **you** think Paul wrote 2 Timothy? Base your answer on the Scriptures above and on your readings of 2 Timothy.

C. Examining the Content

1. Theme

Paul is encouraging Timothy to stay strong and keep his faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He also exhorts Timothy to continue diligently in his evangelizing, teaching and preaching. So the central theme of 2 Timothy is:

Be strong and courageous in the faith and ministry that God has called you to.

Even though Paul was writing this to Timothy, it is true for each and every believer. You may want to look through the book and underline the verses that speak to you and will help you as you seek to grow in your faith and be faithful in your ministry.

Food for Thought

You may want to consider memorizing the key verses of each book of the New Testament. It sounds overwhelming at first, but doing so will immediately give you a good simple reminder of what the main theme of the book is. Then as you memorize and meditate on the verses you will also be able to examine your own ministry and deal accurately with the truth as you pass it on to others.

2. Key Verse

There are many worthwhile individual verses in this little book that you can memorize and would be of great encouragement. There are also a number that could be appropriate for the theme of the book. Second Timothy 2:15 gives us the focus of being faithful because it is God that we are serving and answer to, as well as the ongoing emphasis of passing on truth.



Question 26 Write out the key verse of 2 Timothy.

3. Topics and Teachings

Second Timothy is crammed full of good teaching and exhortations to stay true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and remain strong in ministry. It also contains some important ideas about discipleship, what it means to be a leader and instructions on living in the last days.

Discipleship

This letter from Paul to his son in the faith is an example of discipling leaders, and Paul is directing Timothy in how he must disciple further. Second Timothy 2:2 is a critical verse on which the ministry of Church Based Leadership Training is based.



Question 27 Write that verse out here.

Food for Thought

Try examining your discipleship habits: How are you going to pass on what you have learned? Are you involved in leading a group? Have you taken other courses? What are you doing with that with which you have been entrusted? Can you do more than you are now—or more effectively?

This course itself is being entrusted to you so that you will be able to teach others. The whole life of the church is based on “faithful” men passing on to others.

Not all of Paul’s companions and disciples turned out as well as Timothy however. Demas, who was mentioned in Colossians as a fellow worker of Paul’s, deserted Paul (2 Timothy 4:10).

This is a good reminder for all of us, that while we need to prove ourselves faithful in our discipleship habits, the Holy Spirit is still the One who completes the process.

Suffering

There is a strong discussion of suffering in this book, not a comfortable topic in any age or culture. Look in your Bible where you have marked the word *suffer* in 2 Timothy.



Question 28 Now write down each reference and a brief word of what Paul says about it

Paul consistently suffered for His Lord and Savior and was persecuted everywhere he went. Second Timothy 3:12 “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Any Christian who is seeking God with all his heart will suffer persecution at some time or another. But we need to also remember that Paul rejoiced because it was all for Christ. And we certainly cannot argue with the impact he made in the world.

Apostasy

In chapter 3 we have a list of what people will be like in the last days (vss. 2-5). All of you can witness to the fact that we see these kinds of people all around us. What is alarming in this passage is the last phrase, “holding a form of godliness”. That means that these kinds of people will enter the church in one form or another claiming “religion”.



Question 29 For each one of these terms, write what the opposite would be; in other words what would be the godly character trait rather than the ungodly.

- a) lovers of self _____
- b) lovers of money _____
- c) boastful _____
- d) arrogant _____
- e) revilers _____
- f) disobedient to parents _____
- g) ungrateful _____
- h) unholy _____
- i) unloving _____
- j) irreconcilable _____
- k) malicious gossips _____

- l) without self-control _____
- m) brutal _____
- n) haters of good _____
- o) treacherous _____
- p) reckless _____
- q) conceited _____
- r) lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God _____
- _____
- s) holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power _____
- _____

4. 2 Timothy: Jesus Christ, Our Example

As you read through Appendix 2 answer the following questions.

Endure in the Home



Question 30 Whom have you believed?

Endure in the Field



Question 31 What is the best argument for Christ?

Endure in the Fight



Question 32 What will keep the church safe in this day and age?

Paul's Valedictory



Question 33 Copy 2 Timothy 4:7-8 here. Can you say this of yourself?



Question 34 If Jesus spent a day with you right now, would you be able to rejoice in that time or would you be ashamed of yourself?

IV. Warnings against Ungodly “Christians”

A. Exploring 2 Peter

Sit down and read through 2 Peter in one sitting. This should not take you more than 15 or 20 minutes. Try not to look at the details of the book, but focus on getting the big picture and imagine that it is written directly to you.



Exercise 5

Observation: 2 Peter. As you read through 2 Peter take note of the following words and mark them in color in your Bible.

Yellow -- “Righteous(ness)”; “right”; “unrighteous(ness)”

Brown -- “Prophet”, in all forms

Red -- “Knowledge”; you may also choose to mark other forms of the word “know”

Look over this simple outline.

Outline of 2 Peter	
Greeting	1:1–2
I. Christian Growth	1:3–14
II. Biblical Authority	1:15–21
III. Beware False Teachers	2:1–22
IV. The Last Days and Christ’s Return	3:1–18

Take a moment to look at the following verses:

1:4–7

1:21

3:10

Do you see how they relate to the outline titles?

B. Establishing the Historical Perspective

1. Authorship and Audience



Question 35 How does Peter identify himself in 1:1?



Question 36 What is unique about whom he addresses this letter in comparison to the audiences we have talked about for all of the letters we have studied thus far?

2. Date

We know from church tradition that Peter was martyred around A.D. 67. Through this information and certain passages in 2 Peter we can deduce that 2 Peter was written shortly before that time.



Question 37 Write out the verse that shows us that 2 Peter was written shortly before Peter’s death.

It is quite possible that like many of Paul's letters 1 and 2 Peter were written while Peter was in prison in Rome.

C. Examining the Content

1. Theme

In some sense Peter continues his theme of holy living from his first letter, but obviously his major concern is the error that is creeping into the church and is so dangerous to all. If you will look in your Bible where you have marked the word *knowledge*, you will see the importance Peter placed on the knowledge of Christ and His truths. This is the only way we can know what is false, by immersing ourselves in the truth. So our theme for 2 Peter is:

Be on your guard against false teaching and grow in the truth.

2. Key Verse

Based on the theme above we will take 2 Peter 3:17, 18 as our key verses.



Question 38 Look these verses up and write them out.

These verses reflect the theme of this book. We should never assume that we are safe from Satan's lies. He is constantly trying to infiltrate the church, and often these false teachers bring in what appeals to us, and we can be easily blinded. Instead we need to press on in growth in our Christian lives as outlined in the first chapter. We have all of eternity to enjoy the results of our diligence!

3. Topics and teachings

False Teachers

This has been an ongoing problem down through the ages. In the Old Testament we have both warnings and examples of false prophets. Jesus confronted hypocritical teachers who burdened and misled people. In the early church false teachers seemed to abound. And what about today? Do you know of any false religious teachers?

Who were these people as Peter described them?

- (1) People who have forsaken the way of truth 2:15.
- (2) Escapees from the sin of the world through Jesus Christ who have returned to the filth of the world and are entangled with it.
- (3) People who knew the way of righteousness and turned their backs on it.



Question 39 List at least five characteristics of false teachers as found in chapter 2.



Question 40 Now look specifically in 2:1 to see what these people are teaching and write down what you have learned.

Notice that they will do this secretly, slyly, planting doubts here and there, giving little suggestions that appeal to human nature and oppose God's nature.

And who is in danger from their false doctrines?

- (1) **Many** will follow them (2:2)
- (2) Unstable or vulnerable people (2:14)
- (3) Those who have recently left the world to follow Christ (2:18)

The danger is severe and real. Leaders need to be both undergirding their people with truth as well as watching to keep the “wolves” away from the flock, especially those who are weak or young in the faith.

The Second Coming

Chapter three of 2 Peter describes future events which are related to the second coming of Christ. It will be a time of judgment for the world.

- 1) There will be people who scoff at the promise of Christ's coming (3:3-5).
- 2) No one knows the time of the end—it will come like a thief (3:10).
- 3) The world will be destroyed by fire (3:7, 10).
- 4) We need to be ready (3:12-14).

The first three points are information, but it is the last one that is important as we think of the temporary nature of this world and what is in it.



Question 41 Summarize 2 Peter 3:11-18 on the lines below. What is the key message and application in this passage? State it in specifics, using “I” and “me” rather than “we” and “us”.

4. 2 Peter: Jesus Christ, Our Strength

As you complete the following section read Appendix 3.

Christian Virtues



Question 42 What are the seven things that we should add to our faith?



Question 43 How can we get to know Jesus Christ better?

Christless Teachers



Question 44 Of what are we forewarned in 2 Peter 2?



Question 45 What is one of the main heresies that false teachers try to bring into the church?



Question 46 Do you know of any religions or cults who are willing to agree that Jesus was a good man or a prophet, but who will not acknowledge Him as God?

Food for Thought

In both *Basic Christian Life* and *Practical Evangelism* you developed a testimony to use when witnessing. It is important to review your testimony and update it. Does your testimony make it clear that you believe Jesus is God?



Question 47 Despite the multitude of false teachers, of what can we be certain?

Christ's Coming



Question 48 In regards to Jesus' Second Coming what do we have to rejoice about?



Question 49 What reason does Mears suggest for the delay in the return of Jesus?



Question 50 What is the remedy against falling away from the faith?



Question 51 On the lines below list the areas in which you are growing spiritually right now.

V. Conclusion

This has been a full lesson with lots of information and assignments. We have covered three books by two different authors. Interestingly, all three of these epistles were probably written from Rome. Not only that but they were written by two pillars of the early church who were imprisoned for their faith in Jesus Christ. Both Peter and Paul were executed shortly after these letters were written. It is amazing to think that even though these men were suffering for Christ they were still reaching out to others and discipling them through whatever means they could.

The letters that Peter and Paul sent in their last days dealt with a range of subjects from persecution to the second coming of Christ to encouragement for believers and for church leaders. First and Second Peter and 2 Timothy are not very long, but we can be certain that they impacted their readers greatly. As we begin to practice the teaching in these books their impact will be carried through our lives as well.

We encourage you to continue your studies. If you have been working through the whole series step by step then you only have 3 more lessons to complete. These lessons do not necessarily need to be done in order but you will be blessed as you pursue your study of the scriptures both in personal spiritual growth and in being prepared to help others.

Other lessons are:

Lesson 1—James and Galatians — *The Truth about Faith*

Lesson 2—1 and 2 Thessalonians — *Standing Firm in Persecution*

Lesson 3—1 Corinthians — *Problems of the Church*

Lesson 4—2 Corinthians — *Ministry Defended*

Lesson 5— Romans — *Righteousness by Faith*

Lesson 6— Colossians and Ephesians — *Christ and His Church*

Lesson 7— Philemon and Philippians — *Joy and Forgiveness*

Lesson 8—1 Timothy and Titus — *Church Leadership*

Lesson 10— Hebrews — *The New Covenant*

Lesson 11—Jude, 1, 2 & 3 John — *Love in Action*

Lesson 12—The Revelation — *Climax of the Ages*

Self Test

Score:___/99

Matching (3.5 points each, ___/63)

- a. 1 Peter
- b. 2 Peter
- c. 2 Timothy

1. ___ A.D. 66 or 67
2. ___ Be on your guard against false teaching and grow in the truth.
3. ___ Key word: "faith"
4. ___ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
5. ___ Peter
6. ___ Paul
7. ___ "To everyone who has received faith in Jesus Christ."
8. ___ Key topic: "Relationships"
9. ___ A.D. 64
10. ___ But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behaviour.
11. ___ Key topic: "apostasy"
12. ___ Key word: "holy"
13. ___ Be strong and courageous in the faith and ministry that God has called you to.
14. ___ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.
15. ___ A.D. 67
16. ___ Key word: "prophets"
17. ___ Live holy and be holy in your Christian life exhibiting love in all your relationships.
18. ___ Key topic: "discipleship"

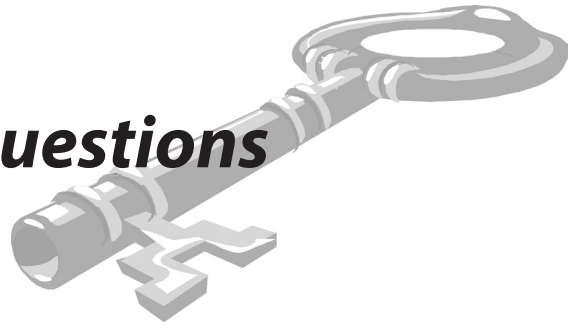
Fill in the Blanks (3 points each blank, ___/36)

Outline of 2 (1) _____		
	(2) _____	1:1–2
I.	Encouragement	1:3 – 3) _____
	A. To be Faithful	(1:3–18)
	B. To Endure and be Strong	(2:1–14)
	C. To Diligence and Purity	(2:15–25)
II.	(4) _____ of the Last Days	3:1–13
III.	Study and preach the (5) _____	3:14 – 4:5
	Personal Conclusion	4:6–22

Outline of 1 Peter		
	Greeting	1:1–2
I.	Holy Living as (6) _____ Children	1:3 – 2:10
II.	Holy Living in Relationships	2:11 – 3:12
III.	Holy Living in (7) _____	3:13 – 4:19
IV.	Holy Living in the Church	5:1–11
	(8) _____	5:12–14

Outline of 2 (9) _____		
	Greeting	1:1–2
I.	Christian Growth	1:3–14
II.	Biblical (10) _____	1:15–21
III.	Beware (11) _____ teachers	2:1–22
IV.	The Last Days and Christ's Return	(12) _____:1–18

Answers to Questions



Question 1

1 Peter 1:1 tells us that Peter is the author of the epistle and he calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Question 2

Peter says he is a fellow elder, a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed.

Question 3

Your answer. He was a fisherman. He was very outspoken. He betrayed Christ. He was one of the 3 closest to Christ, etc.

Question 4

To Samaria.

Question 5

Judea, Galilee and Samaria, including Lydda and then Joppa, and then to Caesarea.

We also know that Peter traveled to Antioch (Gal. 2:11) and Rome (according to church tradition he was crucified there).

Question 6

First Peter is addressed “to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen” (1 Peter 1:1).

Question 7

They seem to have been enduring a lot of suffering for the sake of Christ, including slander (3:16).

Question 8

See 1 Peter 1:15 in your Bible.

Question 9

You may have used different wording. We have chosen to transfer the meaning of the passages to a contemporary context, rather than what was literally written. There may also be some difference between what is directly said and what is inferred.

Answers in italics:

Verses	People Addressed	Relationship	Problem	Holy living
2:11-12	Believers	Believer -worldly	Slander	Doing good
2:13-17	Citizens	Citizen — authorities	Non-Christian government	Obey law Honor authority

2:18-25	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Employer — employee</i>	Unreasonable boss	<i>Obey Show respect</i>
3:1-6	<i>Wives</i>	Marriage	Non-Christian husbands	<i>Exhibit beauty of holy character Be respectful</i>
3:7	<i>Husbands</i>	<i>Marriage</i>	Husbands	<i>Be understanding Give honor</i>
3:8-12	All believers	<i>Person to person</i>	<i>Lack of love Seeking vengeance</i>	<i>Seek unity Show love Give blessing</i>
5:1-4	<i>Elders</i>	Shepherd-flock	<i>Unwillingness Seeking gain and power</i>	<i>Serve voluntarily and eagerly Lead by example</i>
5:5a	Younger men	<i>Younger — older</i>	Rejecting authority	<i>Respect and submit</i>
5:5b	All of you	<i>Believer — believer</i>	Pride (by inference)	<i>Be humble</i>

Question 10

We can put away all wickedness only by trusting that God by His grace can do it. It is NOT by self effort! We need God's power.

Question 11

I can be a good witness if I make sure there is no difference between what I claim to believe and the way I act.

Question 12

Priests represented God to men and men to God. We are a holy priesthood and need to show people who God is, and then intercede for them before God.

Question 13

A pilgrim invests time, thought and money into Jesus' plan for His life.

Question 14

The secret is to remember Jesus Christ and to rest in His strength.

Question 15

Friction in the home causes a terrible barrier for prayers.

Question 16

To lead a happy and prosperous life, keep from speaking evil and slandering; always be ready to overcome evil with good.

Question 17

Our enemy is the devil and Peter calls him a roaring lion looking for somebody to eat.

Question 18

An apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus.

Question 19

My beloved son.

Question 20

2 Timothy 1:8, 12, 16-17; 4:6-18.

Question 21

From Acts 16 we know that Timothy was half Jewish and his mother was a Christian. He was also well spoken of by the local believers. It seems that Paul took an immediate liking to Timothy and after circumcising him took Timothy with him on his (Paul's) second missionary journey.

Question 22

Acts 17:14: Timothy and Silas remain in Berea while Paul flees.

Acts 17:15: Paul sends for Timothy to join him in Athens.

Acts 18:5: Silas and Timothy catch up with Paul in Corinth.

Acts 19:22: Paul sends Timothy and Erastus ahead into Macedonia.

Acts 20:4: Timothy accompanies Paul from Greece to Troas.

Question 23

Romans 16:21: "my fellow worker"

1 Corinthians 4:17: "my beloved and faithful child in the Lord"

1 Corinthians 16:10: "doing the Lord's work"

2 Corinthians 1:1: "our brother"

Philippians 1:1: "bondservant of Christ Jesus"

Philippians 2:22: Paul describes Timothy as having proven his worth while serving with Paul as a son would serve his father.

1 Thessalonians 3:2: "our brother and God's fellow worker"

Question 24

Paul and Timothy were very close; Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy as well as a coworker and friend.

Question 25

Your answer. Paul was in prison and knew that he would probably die soon (2 Timothy 2:9; 4:6). He wrote with dual purposes. The more urgent was to ask Timothy to come to him (4:9, 21) and the more important was to encourage Timothy to stand firm in what he had been taught and continue in the ministry to which God had called him.(1:5-8; 2:1-3; 3:14-15; 4:5).

Question 26

See 2 Timothy 2:15 in your Bible.

Question 27

See 2 Timothy 2:2 in your Bible.

Question 28

The references are as follows:

1:8 Join in my suffering for the gospel.

1:12 Don't be ashamed to suffer for Christ.

2:3 Suffer (with me) like a good soldier of Christ.

2:9 Paul suffered even imprisonment as a criminal for the sake of Christ—but God's Word isn't imprisoned.

3:11 Timothy shared in Paul's suffering and the Lord rescued Paul from all his difficulties.

Question 29

- a) lovers of others
- b) lovers of the spiritual or of God
- c) modest
- d) humble
- e) speaking kindly
- f) obedient to parents
- g) grateful
- h) holy, godly
- i) loving
- j) forgiving
- k) always speaking good of others
- l) self-controlled
- m) compassionate
- n) lovers of good
- o) faithful
- p) thoughtful, careful
- q) meek
- r) lovers of God rather than pleasure
- s) having godliness originating from the power of God within them

Question 30

Your answer should be Jesus Christ!

Question 31

The best argument for Christ is the victorious life.

Question 32

A study of the Word of God will help to keep the church safe.

Question 33

See 2 Timothy 4:7-8 in your Bible. Your answer.

Question 34

Your answer.

Question 35

Peter refers to himself as Simon Peter and both a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.

Question 36

This epistle is addressed to everyone who has received faith in Jesus Christ. There are no other letters in the New Testament which are so broadly addressed.

Question 37

You should have 2 Peter 1:14 written out on the blanks.

Question 38

See 2 Peter 3:17-18 in your Bible.

Question 39

You should have at least five of the following listed in your workbook, however your wording may differ.

1. Secretive (2:1)
2. Deny Jesus (2:1)
3. Given to sensuality (2:2)
4. Greedy (2:3)
5. Indulge in corrupt desires (2:10)
6. Despise authority (2:10)
7. Revel and carouse in the daytime (2:13)
8. Eyes full of adultery (2:14)
9. Arrogant (2:18)
10. Corrupt (2:19)

Question 40

Destructive false doctrines, and a denial of the Lord.

Question 41

Your answer may look like this: Knowing that this universe will pass away and looking forward to a new universe I need to make every effort to be obedient to the Lord's commands and to grow in holiness every day so that I will be prepared for the Second Coming.

Question 42

We should add virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love to our faith.

Question 43

We can get to know Jesus Christ better by developing the eight qualities listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7.

Question 44

We are warned that there will be hard times, strong temptations and powerful opposition.

Question 45

One of the main heresies and certainly the most devastating is that Jesus is not actually God.

Question 46

A few prominent cults and religions include the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Muslims. There is no cult or world religion which will acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only God.

Question 47

God has promised to deliver His people!

Question 48

We can rejoice because it draws closer every day.

Question 49

She suggests that it is because God is long-suffering and just wants to give every last man, woman and child a chance to turn to Him. See 2 Peter 3:9.

Question 50

The remedy is growth.

Question 51

Your answers.

Answers to Exercises



Exercise 1

“Suffer”, in all its forms, occurs 16 times.

“Love” occurs eight times.

“Holy” occurs six times.

Exercise 2

Your answer.

Exercise 3

Your answer.

Exercise 4

“Faith” occurs eight times in 2 Timothy

“Suffer/suffering” occurs five times.

“Word” occurs three times and “Gospel” three times.

Your answer.

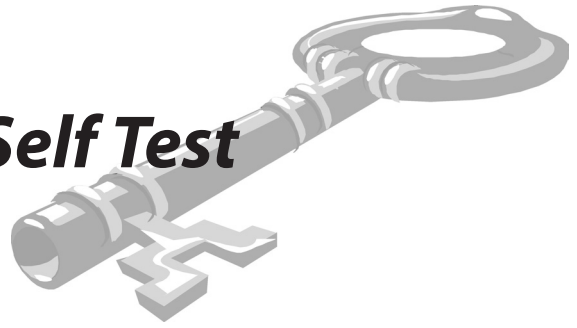
Exercise 5

“Righteous(ness)” occurs seven times, “right” occurs twice and “unrighteous(ness)” also occurs twice.

“Prophet” occurs four times.

“Knowledge” occurs eight times; “know”, in all the various forms, nine times.

Answers to Self Test



Matching

1. c.
2. b.
3. c.
4. b.
5. a., b.
6. c.
7. b.
8. a.
9. a.
10. a.
11. b.
12. a.
13. c.
14. c.
15. b.
16. b.
17. a.
18. c.

Fill in the Blanks

1. Timothy
2. Salutation
3. 2:25
4. Apostasy
5. Word
6. obedient
7. suffering
8. Conclusion
9. Peter
10. authority
11. false
12. 3

Let's Look At 1 Peter

1 Peter Portrays Jesus Christ, Precious Cornerstone Of Our Faith

Chapter 21 from *A Look at the New Testament* by Henrietta Mears³

Seven Precious Things

Precious trial of faith	1:7
Precious blood	1:19
Precious Cornerstone.....	2:4,6
Precious Christ	2:7
Precious spirit	3:4
Precious promises	2 Peter 1:4
Precious faith	2 Peter 1:1

Mark these in your Bible.

Peter realized that in Christ he possessed a chest of precious gems. He spreads them out before us and tells us their value.

The picture of Peter in the Gospels is amazingly different from that found in his own writings. In the Gospels we see Peter, the impulsive, restless soul, sometimes fearless but again a coward, even going so far as to deny his Lord with a curse! In his own epistles, we see him patient, restful, and loving, with a courage purified and strengthened by the indwelling Spirit. This is a wonderful illustration of the transforming work of God in a human life.

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Privileges Of The Christian

(Read 1Peter 1:1-2:10)

What are our privileges as Christians? First, we are *redeemed by the precious blood of Christ*. This is our position in Christ (1:18, 19). Because of this relationship to Christ, we have everything in Him which God desires us to possess. If God has given us His Son, *will He not freely with Him give us all things*? If a young man gives a young lady a beautiful diamond ring, will he not be willing to give her the box in which it comes? So God has given us all things in Christ. Peter tells us of these in this letter.

All This And Heaven Too!

- We have been begotten by Jesus Christ into a lively hope.. 1:3
- We have in reserve an incorruptible inheritance 1:4,5,10
- We are kept by the power of God..... 1:5
- We are being purified to fit us to stand with Christ 1:7
- We have salvation for our souls 1:9
- We have a Gospel the angels desire to look into 1:12
- We have a great hope 1:13
- We have redemption through His blood..... 1:18,19
- We shall not be confounded (ashamed) 2:6
- We are born again by His Word..... 1:23
- We are built up a spiritual house 2:5
- We are a chosen people 2:9
- We shall have a crown of glory..... 5:4

The secret of the life of a lovely young girl who was always beautiful in a home where none of her family knew Christ, was discovered when she died. Around her neck she had always worn a locket, which she said contained her lover's picture. Friends had often wished that they might see what was in it. When they opened it, there was no picture there but these words, *Whom having not seen, we love*. Let 1 Peter 1:8 be the secret of your life and its constant inspiration!

Peter gives good plain advice on how we ought to live. Here he says, *Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end* (1:13). Fashion your life after the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't live your life after the old pattern. *Be ye holy; for I am holy*. Love one another (1:22). Seeing you are "born again" (1:23), live like it. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus.

How can anyone *put away all wickedness*, as Peter commands (Chapter 2)? Not by effort! Not by trying! Not by practice! Not by setting our will-power against sin! But by trusting that God by His grace can do it. The only person who can "put away" sin, is the one who, having received Christ as Saviour, knows that Christ has "put away" his sin.

First, we must "lay aside." Peter summons us to abandon some ugly things—wickedness, guile, hypocrisy, envies, evil speaking (2:1). From the root of wickedness all these noxious weeds spring. These must go from our hearts if we would grow. Weeds always choke out the plant, if we allow them to spread. All that challenges the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ must go, whether it be our sin or our righteousness. Sometimes even good things keep us from God's best. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you* (Matthew 6:33). We must be careful of this. The choices you must make are not always between bad and good, right and wrong, but between the good and the best. *As for God, his way is perfect* (Psalm 18:30).

One of the great works of Christ is the cleaning up of our lives. We are told that as Christians we should lay *aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings* (1 Peter 2:1). Our lives are to be clean inside and out. We are cleansed from sin within; we are to be cleansed from these evil fruits of sin. In order for us to be good witnesses of our Christianity there can be no difference between what we claim to believe and the way in which we act. Our behavior should be as orthodox as our belief. The words are still true: “What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.” Let us live our Christianity in everything that we do. Let Christ live in us.

“Word” in 2:2 might be spelled with a capital “W,” meaning Christ as well as His Word, for in the third verse we read that if you have once tasted of the Lord you will find He is gracious. He is the nourishment of our souls.

Peter says that when we become *children of God* (John 1:12) we are like newborn babies (1 Peter 2:2). We need food to make us grow. This is just what God has provided in His Word. Desire the Word as newborn babes, and eating it, grow thereby. You will find that it tastes good. Christ will become real and gracious to you (1 Peter 1:23; 2:2, 3). You can never grow as a Christian without food. Feed on the milk of His Word daily. Cultivate a desire for it!

Right here Peter turned to another figure and called Christ a “stone,” rejected by men, but *precious in God’s sight* (2:4). Everyone in this world has to do something with this “Stone,” Christ Jesus. He is in every man’s path. We can lift Him up and put Him in as the chief Cornerstone of our lives, which is God’s will. But if we do not, we must stumble headlong over Him, tragically, to our death. To the Jews He was a stumbling-block and a rock of offense. To many today He is just that. What have you done with this precious “Cornerstone?” Is He in His rightful place in your life?

Dr. Robert Speer asked a young man one day after a conference, if he knew what 1 Peter 2:5 meant. He did not. Do you? *Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house.* This was the great man’s answer. Some time ago they were tearing down an old wall over in that Eastern country, and as the stones fell away a human skeleton was exposed. This man had apparently been built up into the wall when alive. Investigation disclosed that this had been a common practice, and no doubt known to Peter and his audience. The living soul built into the wall was supposed to make it invulnerable and everlasting. Today, we put power into wires and run them through the walls of our buildings. Christians should be power-lines, life-lines, in the walls of their churches. Christ’s life is the strength of the church and “ye also, as living stones, built up a spiritual house.” (See Eph. 2:21.) Be a “live-wire” for Christ in your church!

We are not only “living stones” in a spiritual temple but each of us is a priest in this temple. Priests represent God to men, and men to God. Christians are a “holy priesthood” (2:5). Are you representing God to men by your life, and men to God by your intercessory prayer? As priests we do not offer lambs and goats today, but Paul tells us to offer ourselves a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1)

Duties Of The Christian

(Read 1 Peter 2:11-4:11)

Peter offers a simple program. Anyone can follow it. Any earnest seeker can find the way that Peter commands. His first suggestion is that we remember that we are “pilgrims.” We are not settled here, but we are on our way to an eternal city. It is important that we keep this in mind, otherwise we will be tying our lives to stakes that will be shaken loose someday.

But with the Christian who has followed Peter’s plan, all is different. He has invested time and thought and money in the pursuit of Christ’s plan for his life. He finds life “sweeter as the years go by,” and the end is the best of all!

The greatest satisfaction that can come to a Christian is to realize that he is pleasing His Lord and Saviour. In the power of the Lord, live for Christ in all phases of your life. Do not shut Him out of even the most insignificant parts. It will not be easy; the Devil will see to that. He will use every weapon against you. But Christ has won the victory over him and that victory may be yours for the asking.

Christians are not at home in this world. They are away from home, *as sojourners and pilgrims* (1 Peter 2:11), for our “citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20). We are in the world, but, as Christians, we are not of it. (John 17:11, 14)

We are to influence others by what we say and do. *Having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles* (2:12). People are not reading much religious literature on paper, but they are doing a lot of reading in religious (or anti-religious) works by those professing Christ. It seems trite to say, but it is true that more are won to Christ by the true Christian life of the believer than by any other means. If it is true that what you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say, then it is equally true that your deeds speak so loudly that I cannot help but believe what you say. A Christian life must claim attention to itself by its very difference from the world-governed life around it.

Today some of you are subjected to severe tests. There are many things your companions do, both in business and recreation, that you cannot do as a Christian. Your action will be misunderstood and misrepresented. You will be called “narrow” and a “killjoy” or a “wet blanket.” The best way to meet all such criticisms is not to assume an air of superiority or “holier than thou” attitude. Don’t regard yourself as a martyr but accept the position with a smile and try to be helpful to those who are finding fault with you. Nothing cools opposition like a gentle laugh of love. “Bless them that curse you, do good to them who despitely use you,” are Christ’s words.

Squaring Your Life

Put one of these in each of the corners of your life.

- Honor all men!
Try it and behold, men will honor you.
- Love the brotherhood.
Every social problem would be solved.
- Fear God.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
- Honor the King.
Whether you voted for him or not (1 Peter 2:17).

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness (2:16). There is an amusing story of the early days of the Russian Revolution. After the Czar had abdicated, a stout old woman was seen walking leisurely down the middle of one of the busiest streets in St. Petersburg, at no small peril to herself and to the great confusion of traffic. A policeman pointed out to her that there was a walk for pedestrians, and that the street was for wagons, automobiles and horse men. But she was not to be convinced. “I am going to walk just where I like,” she said. “We’ve got liberty now.” When we assert to “do as we like,” we are as thoughtless and foolish as the old woman. Freedom is not a question of doing as we like. It is rather a question of doing as we ought. Do not let your liberty become license. The Christian is free from all that he may be the servant of all.

Behind a desk in a convention hall was a sign inviting everyone to refer any difficulties to Mr. Smith, and clearly displayed beneath these directions were the words, “Blessed is the man who can take the blame.” Are you that kind? Can you patiently take blame you do not deserve? Can you smile cheerfully when somebody pitches into you for failure, when you did your level best? It is

easy enough to feel that we deserve blame when we have consciously done wrong. Can we say, in the light of this lesson, that we understand Christian living when we are not willing to suffer for well-doing? We shall not have much to say about our undeserved suffering when we think of our Saviour. Our healing came by “His bruise” (Isaiah 53).

Patience in undeserved punishment is one way of testifying for Christ. A wicked crowd in his regiment took a violent dislike to one Christian soldier because he wouldn’t swear or gamble or travel a loose life with them. His days were made miserable. But he never lost his temper nor gave in nor tried to pay them back, and in the end he led one of the worst of the fellows to Christ.

Christ lived the kind of life described in this letter of Peter’s. And *he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked* (1 John 2:6). The secret of walking *in newness of life* (Romans 6:4) is to *remember Jesus Christ* (2 Tim. 2:8), and to rest in His strength.

The Christian

- A babe (2:2), desiring the milk of the Word.
- Living stone (2:5), built into the temple of life.
- Priest—offering spiritual sacrifices.
- Stranger—to keep himself unspotted from the world.
- Pilgrim—do good deeds by the way.
- Citizen—render obedience to rulers.
- Man—honor all men, in the fear of God.
- Servant—subject unto Christ.
- Sufferer—to be patient, committing all to Christ.
- Steward (4:10).
- Oracles (4:11).

Christ also suffered for us (2:21). A lady was visiting in a hospital. She went up to a bed on which lay a wounded soldier, and said gently, “Thank you for being wounded for me.” The young man’s face brightened. That was a new thought to him. It made the pain more bearable to look upon it in that light. Do you realize that many years ago One was wounded for you? And that “One” was the Son of God Himself? Yes, He was wounded for my transgressions, by His stripes I am healed (2:24).

We find in chapters 2 and 3 some instructions for the various relationships of our lives. First, there are some personal instructions (2:1-12). Next we find our social relationships. Servants should obey their masters with respect, not only those who are good and considerate, but also those who are arbitrary. In 3:1-7 our home relationships are mentioned. Naturally the home begins with the marriage relationship. *Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands*. This means unselfish devotion, so as to win his love and admiration. This might sound unreasonable if we did not hear the injunction to husbands (3:7) that they *dwell with their wives according to knowledge*. This makes a wife subject to love which acts in knowledge and not according to selfish desires. It is manly for one to be tender toward his wife.

God’s plan is that the love of husband and wife should be a mutual thing. Each one shall consider the other. The result of all this will be a marriage relationship in which prayers are not hindered (3:7). Prayer is the surest secret of success in any married life. Nothing extinguishes the flame of prayer like friction in a home.

Peter gives the way to be happy in a world that is wretched. *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil* (3:10-12). He

quotes Psalm 34:12-14. This is a remedy that works today as well as it worked in David's time. The best way of making this life happy and prosperous is to keep from speaking evil and from slander and to be always ready to overcome evil with good.

Another important command is given in 3:15. This is for every one of us. *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.* Have you an intelligent answer to give to others of your trust in Christ? If not, stop right here and get one ready. What does Christ mean to you?

Be careful not to follow the world, *the will of the Gentiles* (4:3). The desire of the world is to get the Christian to do what they do.

A successful competitor in some college sports won a loving cup and on accepting it said, "Gentlemen, I have won this cup by the use of my legs. I trust I may never lose the use of my legs by the use of this cup."

Physiologists say a man's body contains chemicals whose total value is \$1.50. And the gross total isn't raised any when he adds chemicals valued at, say, \$25.00 a quart!

Trials Of The Christian

(Read 1 Peter 4:12-5:14)

Nero was subjecting the Church to awful persecutions. Trials resulting from loyalty to Christ are inevitable. Christ sits as a refiner before the fire. It is with the most precious metals that the assayer takes the most pains, as he subjects them to the heat. Such fires melt the metal, and only the molten mass releases the alloy or takes its new form in the mold. Christ allows us to be subjected to the heat until all the dross is burned out and as the assayer sees his face in the molten mass and knows it is pure, so Christ can see His own face reflected in our life. The fires are always watched by our Saviour Himself. He never leaves the crucible. He will let nothing harm His own.

Don't be surprised when you are tried in the fire, as if some strange things were happening to you (See 4:12). Don't think that Christ has promised that we, as Christians, shall be spared from pain, or misfortunes, or death. In fact Christ says, *In this world ye shall suffer persecution.* This means no doubt that men will persecute the real Christian, because the world hates Christ and anything called by His name.

Peter exhorts the leaders of the Church to care for the flock. He tells them not *to lord it over them*, (5:3), but to serve them. Jesus had told Peter to *feed my sheep* (John 21). Under-shepherds are to receive their directions and rewards from the Chief Shepherd when He shall appear (5:4). His crown of glory shall be fadeless.

The Christian life is like a jungle battle. Peter tells us who our enemy is. He is the Devil. His work is opposed to all that is good in this world. He is pictured as a roaring lion, seeking his prey (5:8). This adversary is cagey, appearing sometimes as an angel of light, at another time as a serpent, coiled for the strike. He is always *seeking whom he may devour*. He is watching for the vulnerable spot, for the unguarded door to our hearts. Paul tells us what armor we should wear in Ephesians 6. But we need not be afraid, for *the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you* (5:10).

Let's Look At 2 Timothy

2 Timothy Portrays Jesus Christ, Our Example

Chapter 17 from *A Look at the New Testament* by Henrietta Mears⁴

Endure In The Home

(Read 2 Timothy 1)

We must first guard our testimony in the home, which is the training center of the Christian life. This is the hardest place to begin. So many young people today do not have a strong Christian influence in their homes. The Bible is not read. The family altar has never been erected.

Timothy had been reared in a sweet Christian home, with his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. Paul mentions these wonderful Christian women and commends Timothy for having had early training at a consecrated hearth, *that from a child thou hast known the scripture* (3:15).

Paul calls Timothy his *son in the faith*. It seems clear that the youth was led to confess Christ by Paul during his first missionary journey. He was a Christian from childhood.

Timothy possessed fine qualities, but he had excellent training as well. He had a splendid reputation in his own church. He was the constant companion of the great Apostle Paul. He knew the Word of God and made use of it in his life and teachings (3:14-16). He manifested a splendid spirit of unselfishness in his service. He was given great responsibilities by Paul. All this was instrumental in a large degree in his training (2 Tim. 1:3; 3:15; 4:6-12).

Timothy is addressed, "Man of God." What does that mean? Godliness comes from the Word and prayer. God speaking to us and our speaking to God. Manliness includes truth in the mind, love in the heart, and righteousness in the life. Manliness is due to godliness. The grace of God makes a man godly, and then proceeds to make him manly.

⁴ Used by permission.

The key verse is 2 Timothy 1:13. *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Paul's life was characterized by an unceasing effort to guard in its purity the priceless treasure of the Christian faith. He wanted it kept untarnished. We live in a day when it is being said that deeds not doctrine count, but Paul's teaching was that conduct must be based on creed.

As a man thinketh . . . so is he. Wrong thinking makes for wrong acting. World War 2 was brought about by three men possessed with wrong creeds. These creeds soon became conduct, and thousands died to correct it.

How easy it is for us not to make use of our gifts and natural endowments. How many lose all initiative. In the first letter (4:14) Paul says, *Neglect not the gift that is in thee*, and in the second letter (1:6), Paul writes, *Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee!* How about our gift? Have we ever let God tell us what it is? Cultivate whatever God has given. Remember everyone has some talent. To be sure, some have five talents, others two and others only one. But stir up the gift you have.

We find in this first scene one of the apostle's "I know's". It is a verse which gives us great assurance. *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day* (1:12). What is your persuasion? Will your answer come swift and strong as Paul's, *I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day?* Make it very personal. Don't say, "I know in whom," as the verse is so often quoted, but "I know WHOM I have believed."

Endure In The Field

(Read 2 Timothy 2)

We must *endure hardness, as a good soldier* away from home, in the school, in the office, in the place of business. This is our field of service and discipline. Here we are to stand the test as one who *needeth not to be ashamed*. It is easy to let down when we get away from those who know us and expect much of us.

A Christian Is Likened To	
A faithful steward	2:2
A hardy soldier	2:3,4
An athlete	2:5
A farmer	2:6

Paul says as a faithful steward entrust the truths you have learned from him to reliable men who in turn will teach others. As a brave soldier endure hardships. A soldier does not become entangled with ordinary affairs, but is under the authority of his superior officer. He leaves his business and friends to serve in the army. Let that be our attitude. The athlete, too, must observe this if he will gain the wreath of victory. As the farmer is the first to enjoy the fruit of his harvest, so will it be with you. Avoid business entanglements that will keep you from rendering the best service. Watch, too, lest the comforts of life and the common enjoyments make us to love ease too well. We become weak instead of strong as those who endure hardness.

Paul urged the people to keep away from foolish discussion, for these only breed quarrels and a Christian should not quarrel (v. 24). Do not argue about the Christian life. Live it! Outlive the

world—live better than they do—and they will soon listen to what you have to say. The best argument for Christ is a victorious life.

Approved Unto God

Have you the degree A.U.G.? It is one of high honor. As one of God's workmen, do your utmost to gain God's approval.

Can you wear the "A.U.G." of "approved unto God"?

God gives us a "sure foundation" upon which to build our lives—the foundation laid of God (2:19). *It standeth sure*, for that Rock is Christ. All who build on it are sealed for Him. This is the inscription: *The Lord knoweth them that are His*. It is wonderful to know that we are known personally by Him. This is not true of any other religion under heaven. In Christianity we are God's children and He knows every one of us. *The very hairs of your head are all numbered*. He calleth us by name.

Endure In The Fight

(Read 2 Timothy 3)

There is one way to be strengthened against all the vices today. We find it in verses 14 through 17. The Scripture will make us wise unto salvation (3:15). Jesus met His temptation by the Word of God. We can do no better.

Catalogue Of 20Th Century Vices (2 Tim. 3:1-9)

Lovers of themselves more than of God.

Covetous—men will do anything to gain possession of what they want.

Proud and boastful—pride fills the heart.

Blasphemers—taking God's name in vain.

Disobedient to parents—no respect today.

Unthankful—no gratitude.

Unholy men—caring not for God.

Without natural affection—mothers taking children's lives.

Truce-breakers—promises mean nothing.

Lovers of pleasure—pleasure-mad.

Having a form of godliness but no power—only source of power is the Gospel.

Two Mongol Tartar chiefs were engaged by a missionary to assist him in translating the Gospels into the language of their country. They had to study the subject intently. When the work was completed the book was closed on the table before them. They both sat serious and silent. At last the missionary asked them what was the matter. Surprised and delighted was he to hear both of them declare that they were ready to accept Christ. "We studied the sacred writings of the Chinese and the more we read the more obscure was the sense. But the longer we have read the Gospel, the more simple and intelligible it became, until at last it seemed as if Jesus were talking with us." Yes, the Scripture will make you wise unto salvation!

Have you ever heard anyone say, "I was a drunkard, a disgrace to my family, a nuisance to the world, until I began to study mathematics and learned the multiplication table, but since then I have been

happy as the day is long. I feel like singing all the time, for my heart is at peace!” Have you ever heard a person ascribing his salvation from drunkenness and sin to the multiplication table or to science? Of course you haven’t. But thousands have said, “I was unhappy and heartbroken. I had no reason for living until I heard God speak to me through His Word, and now I know a living Saviour.”

The Word of God is the only thing that will keep the Church in this terrible day. The Church of Rome put aside the Word and the Dark Ages was the result. The Protestants brought it back into circulation, but Christians everywhere are neglecting it. The ignorance of the Word today is appalling.

Endure To Death

(Read 2 Timothy 4)

To endure to the end and look back over a hard and bitter fight and say, “I have won!”—that is enduring as a good soldier. Life’s last hours for Paul were full of glory. He forgot that the lions in the arena, or the flames at the stake, or a cruel cross might end his earthly life at any moment. His good fight was ended, his long hard race was run, and now only the memories of a noble life gave him great peace.

One day a dispatch rider brought a long verbal message to the headquarters of an army at the front. He had to run the gauntlet of a heavy fire and on account of great risks he had to commit this message to memory. It took over half an hour to deliver, for it was as long as a lecture. At the end the officer taking it down said, “Now, is there anything else?” “Yes, sir,” was the quiet answer, as though it didn’t matter, “I think I’ve been hit.” He was taken to a hospital but died on the way. Paul was as faithful to his calling.

The Athlete Enthusiast Of Tarsus

The Wrestler

I have fought a good fight. This refers not to the soldier, but to the wrestler; not so much to actual warfare as to the athlete’s contest in the arena, and the word “good” means “beautiful” or outwardly attractive. Paul had what athletes would call “good form.”

The Runner

I have finished my course. Right to the very end Paul made progress, and we see from this the thoroughness needed for true Christian service.

The Trustee

I have kept the faith. This is another illustration and shows the fidelity of the great apostle.

Strenuous—thorough—faithful. This is the kind of life a servant of God should live. This is what is needed today.

The Victor’s Garland

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. Paul anticipated an honor greater than those of the conqueror in the Olympic Games. That victor would receive only the fading wreath of laurel or ivy. For a few short days his home town would celebrate but the shouting would soon die away. Christ’s athlete was more to be envied. His victory meant a new door of service and fellowship with the Lord Himself.

He closes this letter with a solemn farewell charge to Timothy, before God and Christ, who will judge him and who soon will appear to spread the Gospel everywhere. *Preach the Word; be instant in season*, for a time is coming when men will not listen to sound teaching.

Paul's Valedictory

In chapter four, verses 7-8 we have the grandest utterance of the grandest mortal who ever lived. Where can we match Paul's words which he wrote from his dungeon to Timothy, his own true son in the faith? Let us picture the old battle-scarred hero of the cross, standing in the gloomy dungeon, loaded with chains, and looking up through the one opening in the roof of his cell through which only a tiny shaft of light could enter, but which reveals his countenance with the expression of perfect peace. His lips are moving, and we hear him say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing* (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

Soon the executioner's axe would sever that noble head from that scarred body, and his soul would be borne away into the very bosom of his beloved Lord and Saviour. What a welcome he would have in heaven! No returning conqueror in Rome would ever have so triumphal a procession.

This day he looks back over a long hard struggle. His words speak of the athlete's struggle. Paul loved these metaphors, drawn from the games of the Greeks— games which were so swift, so strenuous, so exacting and severe.

The crown is for Paul, but it is also for us—for *all them that love His appearing*. You and I, whose achievements are so much less than Paul's, may yet be partakers of Paul's heaven. Wasn't it fine that the Apostle remembered you and me in those last words— or was it you he referred to as one of *them that love His appearing*? Jesus Christ is coming again to the world. He Himself has said it, therefore it is true. He has warned us to watch for His coming. Do you expect Him? Would you like to see Him come? Could He drop in upon you at any moment and find you glad to see Him? Are your habits of thought and action such that you would be pleased? Could He point to something you are doing and say, *Well done, good and faithful servant*? or would you have to hide your face in shame. Do you *love His appearing*?

Surely the "crown" which gleams before us should spur us on to a new diligence in service. Do we love His appearing?

Some people were discussing the question of death when one old lady said, "I am not looking for the undertaker but for the Uptaker."

The last verses of this letter give us a glimpse of the loneliness of this great wrestler and runner. Many were leaving him, under the stress of persecution. But *the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known*. This is the secret of Paul's success. This is why he could fight a good fight and finish the course. His greatest opportunity seemed to be reserved for the end. He stood in Nero's courthouse, face to face with the "lion," as he designated him (4:17). He was alone, as far as human help was concerned. The great basilica was crowded, and every eye was fastened on the forsaken old man at the bar. Did he quail? Was he afraid? No, indeed! He leaped to the height of the momentous occasion. He was not content in defending himself. That he did, but much more. To the multitude, curious and hostile, he told out clearly the Gospel of Christ, and all the Gentiles heard.

When in October 1879 Edison produced his incandescent lamp and it was talked about in the New York Herald, the president of Stevens Institute of Technology (at that time the leading technical college in the United States) said, "Mr. Edison's so-called invention is a failure, and I pity him when I think of how the Herald has ruined his reputation with such absurd talk." Who was that president? I don't know, do you? But the "failures" brilliantly light the room in which I am writing!

Let's Look At 2 Peter

2 Peter Portrays Jesus Christ, Our Strength

Chapter 22 from *A Look at the New Testament* by Henrietta Mears⁵

Christian Virtues

(Read 2 Peter 1:1-21)

Do the days seem dark to you and does sin seem to abound everywhere? That is the way the world looked to the young Christians of Peter's day. So that they would not be discouraged by this outlook he showed them how to escape *the corruption that is in the world through lust* (1:4). Here it is, God has *given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness* (1:3).

Look at a poor man condemned to be hanged. Suppose a messenger comes to him and says: "The governor has taken your case into consideration, and I have brought you a purse of a thousand dollars." The poor man will say, "What good will it do me? I am to be hanged tomorrow." "Well, I have another message. He has considered your case and sent you the deed to a million dollar estate." The condemned man despairingly shakes his head and says, "What can I do with that? I must be hanged tomorrow." But the messenger goes on. "Stop! I have another offer to make. I have brought you the governor's own inauguration robe for you to wear with special favor." The condemned man burst into tears, as he says, "Do you intend to mock me? How would I appear ascending the steps of the gallows, wearing the governor's own robe?" Then the messenger says, "Wait, I have one more message. The governor has sent you a pardon. What do you say to that?" The poor man looks at him and says he doesn't believe it. But the messenger hands him the pardon, signed by the governor, with the official stamp upon it. Then the man leaps for joy, while tears of gratitude run down his face. Then the messenger says, "I am not through yet. I have brought you the pardon, the purse of gold, the deed, and the royal robe which are yours in addition." These are "all things" God has given us in Christ. His Son. With these nothing can defeat the young Christian.

⁵ Used by permission.

The great evangelist, Moody, once said that men often fail because they try to do too large a business with too small a capital. So with Christians. But God has grace enough and capital enough. What would you think of a man who had a million dollars in the bank and drew out a penny a day? Remember, God's promises are exceedingly great and precious.

Do others know that you are a Christian by the way you look and act? You remember that night by the fire, when a smart young girl recalled that Peter had been with Jesus, Peter gave her some of the choice language of the Galilee fishing trade to prove he was not that kind. The crowd picked him out by his accent (Mark 14:66-71). He gave himself away by a word. Later, the ruler picked him out as a companion of Jesus by his appearance and talk. The world recognizes us in exactly the same way. There is something about a person's whole bearing that proclaims him as a companion of Jesus Christ. As soon as we hear a man speak about Christ, we can tell what he is. He may stammer and stutter and make mistakes of grammar, but you know he is a Christian.

The Bible's Math Chapter

- × Multiplication—"Grace and peace be multiplied" (1:2)
- + Addition—"Add to your faith" (1:5)
- Subtraction—"Purged from his sins" (1:9)

There are seven steps going up from faith, and the last one is love. These steps are the Christian virtues that every Christian should have. Let's climb slowly and thoughtfully up this flight of stairs, and see how far we have gone. Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love (1:5-7).

The fuller the measure of these virtues, the greater will be our knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Know Christ, for to know Him is life eternal, and in none other is there salvation (See Acts 4:12). A man recently gave directions to another who stopped to ask him the way to a certain street. "That's the best way, is it?" asked the inquirer, a little doubtfully. "It is the only way," was the quick response. "The other road will land you back where you started." It is only in Christ that we find progress. He is the Way to Heaven and Life.

Someone has said this is a seven-story-and-basement building. Add story to story, but be sure to put faith at the foundation. If you try to build without the proper base the building will become top-heavy. To be sure, faith is the foundation grace. But a foundation is of little use if no building follows. During the days of the depression it was a common sight to see the framework of a great building standing stark and gaunt, with weeds growing around it, abandoned by the men who had begun a good work but for some reason ceased before it was finished. The foundation was substantial and adequate, but for years was entirely useless because nothing was added.

Peter, like Paul, warns Christians from standing still. Don't remain babes in Christ, being tripped over by every new teaching, but grow strong in the Lord.

But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off (1:9). Near-sighted Christians we will be "unfit" for enlistment in God's army, if we do not have these virtues. Be sure of your position in Christ. Don't ever doubt your calling in Him. Spare no effort to put God's call and choice beyond all doubt. Spare no effort in prayer, in study and in talking with Christians.

A Christian's ambition should be to have a full life. Peter wants you to have an abundant entrance into the Haven of Rest, Christ's eternal kingdom (1:11). Enter in with sails unfurled, bearing a precious cargo of passengers and loaded with "good works" that your reward may be great to the glory of God.

Peter, like Paul, was conscious of his approaching death. He has a beautiful name for death, *the putting off of my tabernacle* (1:14). Moffatt says, "The folding up of my tent." Because he knew he

was about to leave them, he wanted to stir them up by putting them in remembrance of what he so well knew. His memory pictured before him the great transfiguration scene. There he had witnessed the glory of Christ. Any doubt as to His reality or of His coming again in power was forever banished from his mind. God Himself had borne testimony of His glory and honor, and a Voice said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. He heard the Voice from above. This is the testimony of Deity. Now Peter knew. He was sure. He wanted them to know that he was not telling them fairy stories when he told them of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he was an eye-witness of His majesty. He says, “I was there. It is true.”

Christless Teachers

(Read 2 Peter 2:1-22)

Are the times in which we live hard, and temptations strong, and opposition powerful? Expect it and rise above it. We are warned that it shall be so. The world always has been and always will be full of antagonism to the truth, and to those who speak it. But God will bring it to naught. In the meantime, *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations* (2:9). Let us be strong and steady.

Peter tells of the coming, the influence, and the doom of the false teachers, in this dark and appalling chapter. We need not be surprised at their coming, for Christ warned us of that in Matt. 7:15; 24:11,24, and we have listened to Paul’s words about them to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9).

What a black list is this account which Peter gives us of their deeds. There is no softening of the shade from one end to the other. It is a black picture indeed. Read it! No wonder Peter warned the Church of false prophets!

1. False Propaganda

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

The false teachers of today do just what is told here. First, they *privily bring in damnable heresies*. They do it subtly. They don’t believe in the deity of Christ—that Jesus, who was born of a virgin, was very God. If they said this, people would hesitate to follow them. Peter describes the “damnable heresy” they bring in. This is it—“denying the Lord that bought them.” It does not say that they deny the Lord that taught them. Practically every false religion acknowledges Christ as a great teacher, but they will not accept Him as Saviour, the One who “bought” us with His own precious blood. They deny the blood atonement.

2. Blood Test

This is the mark by which to test and reject the false teacher. Ask for credentials of teachers who are abroad today. When any teacher does not put the cross at the center of his teaching, beware! Turn from him. Our redemption is in the blood. Jesus bought us with His blood.

3. Popularity Test

These teachers are popular. *Many shall follow their pernicious ways* (2:2). Don’t think it strange that Christian Science, Theosophy, Unity, and a score of others can procure a large following. Pe-

ter told us they would. Men do not want to be told that they need a Saviour. That makes them admit that they are sinners. They only want to be taught, not “bought.” *The way of truth shall be evil spoken of* (2:2). All of these false teachings talk about “truth” but they forget that Christ said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6). He is not just a part of truth—He IS truth. He is not a “way-shower”—He is THE WAY. He does not come to show us how to live. He is LIFE. It is easy to distort truth.

4. Vocabulary Test

With feigned words make merchandise of you (2:3). Words mean so little in many of these false religions. There is a new meaning given to so many words. They say they believe in everything but when we ask them what they mean, it is far from what the Scripture says. They keep the form of words, but the meaning is pumped out. It is like an Easter egg. We put holes in either end and then blow out all the inside. The form of the egg is there, but the real meat is gone. Christ said that men would even say, *Lord, Lord*, but He would say, *Depart from me; I never knew you*. Words mean nothing unless there is heart in their meaning.

5. Punishment!

There is only one thing God can do with this kind of men, and that is to destroy them. *Light that is trifled with becomes lightning*. Peter declares with no uncertain sound that that shall be the end of false teachers who cover themselves with the cloak of the Church (2:3-9). They shall certainly be punished. God did not even spare the angels who sinned! He sent a flood upon a godless world in Noah’s day. Sodom and Gomorrah were reduced to ashes. All of these were as a warning to the godless of every generation of what God has in store for him. One thing we can be sure of, no matter how severe the judgment for the false teacher may be, the deliverance of God’s people is promised. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver*. Leave the punishment of the Wicked with God.

Christ’s Coming

(Read 2 Peter 3:1-18)

False teaching about Christ, which denies His Deity and power, issues in false thinking. The first question it raises is about the coming of Christ. To help the Church in this, Peter reminds them of the things Jesus had said. Men misunderstood Him and thought His return might be in that generation. Peter tells them that time is nothing with God—*a thousand years with Him is but a day*. He will keep this promise as He has kept all of His promises, but according to His own time.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, [he is not] *willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance* (3:9). The last days are to be sad days, for scoffers shall make fun, and say, “Ha ha, where is the promise of Christ’s coming? As far as we can see, everything is going on just as it has from the beginning. Nature goes along in the even tenor of her way. There have been no signs of any radical change. The promise of His coming has failed.” These scoffers were evil men, but the sad truth today is that good men scoff at the promise of His coming. They make sport of the great hope of the Church. How illogical was their reasoning about Christ’s not coming. Here they are! He had not yet come, hence He was not coming. Nothing different had happened, hence nothing unusual was going to happen. Because our Lord has not come as yet, shall we give up hope? No, indeed. Rather, rejoice in the fact that His coming draws nearer every day.

Peter reminds these skeptics that a mighty flood did drown the world once, and Christ likened His coming to the flood in Matthew 24:37, 38. No doubt Peter heard Him say it. But next time God will destroy the earth by fire. Will it be literal fire? Was the flood literal? Stored within the earth

are oils and gases and fire enough to burn it up. Volcanoes are the release of these elements. Scientists tell us we are sitting on a crust of earth only thirty miles in depth. Beneath this is a mass of molten matter. At a word, God could release a spout which would bury the earth in literal fire, or our earth may collide with some other heavenly body.

We know that, when God's clock strikes the hour, the earth will melt with a fervent heat. The earth shall be burned up and in the great explosion the heavens will pass away. Then *new heavens and a new earth* will emerge (3:13). We are living today in the age of atomic and hydrogen bombs. Their description can almost be found in these verses written nearly 2000 years ago.

What effect should all this have on our lives? Peter answers in verse 14. We will be diligent in our service, striving always to be peaceable, spotless and blameless in character. Don't grow careless because He is delaying, for one day the Lord will come suddenly. Be patient while He delays, knowing that He does it because He is long-suffering and would give the last man, woman and child a chance to accept Him.

What lives we ought to live while we wait for His coming! We may hasten it by our holy living. Faith in the return of our Lord must lead to this. Then we may hasten it by a holy conversation. Watch your speech. Don't forget to look forward with an eager gaze. Then be diligent that you be "found of Him" (3:14). Are you looking forward to His coming? What effect has this hope upon your life and conversation?

Peter's last word of warning is "Beware!" This is a note of caution. *Beware lest ye also are influenced by these skeptics and fall away from your steadfast faith.*

The remedy against falling back is to "grow"—make progress. *Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Are you growing in your knowledge? Christian knowledge is an effective weapon against heresy. Christianity without a creed cannot stand against the attacks of the critics. A growing Christian becomes conscious of his sin. In a room full of loathsome things, if one ray of light is admitted, we will see some, but when more light comes in we see more of the horrors. So the more we allow Christ to come into our hearts, the more of our sinfulness we will see. Then when we have dealt with the sin in our lives, we can begin to do something to make progress. Pray much. Be dependent on the Holy Spirit. Sit at Jesus' feet and learn of Him through His holy Word, and give yourself unreservedly to Him.

