

Tapes For Growing Christians

2 PETER Study Guide for

PETER

Growing Christians Ministries
Box 5757, River Forest, IL 60305
growingchristians.org

lesson 1

Believers Are Exhorted to Attain Godliness in This Christian Life, and the Good News Is that God Has Granted Us Everything Necessary to Attain Godliness 2 Peter 1:1-11

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God has granted the believer everything necessary to attain godliness in this life. (2 Peter 1:3)
2. God has commanded the believer to use diligence to attain godliness in this life. (2 Peter 1:5-11)

practical application

1. What kind of entrance do you want into heaven?

questions

1. Approximately when was this epistle written?
2. What was the status of Christianity in Rome at the time of this writing?
3. What was happening within the church at this time?
4. In view of these questions, what was Peter's primary exhortation to Christians?
5. What is the exhortation or lesson for believers today?
6. What is the only basis of the Christian faith?
7. Who is the "us" in 2 Peter 1:3?

answers

1. Most likely it was written shortly before the martyrdom of the apostle Peter in A.D. 67.
2. The pagan Roman Emperor Nero had shifted the blame to the Christians after the fire in Rome in 64 A.D. Now, Christianity was illegal in the Roman Empire and the persecution of Christians increased and continued on until the fourth century.
3. Not only was there the persecution from without the church, but there was also the false teaching from within the church that Christians were facing.
4. Peter exhorted the early Christians to be faithful amidst persecution and false teaching. He exhorted believers to actually grow spiritually during these difficult times.
5. To remain faithful during difficult times, and to grow spiritually during these difficult times.
6. The Christian faith is on the basis of the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.
7. These are fellow believers, who along with the apostle Peter, had the same precious Christian faith.

discuss / consider

1. 2 Peter 1:3-4 assures us that God has given us everything that we need to live a godly life and have a godly lifestyle. Are there times when that seems difficult in your life? The solution is found in these same verses – the key to godliness is to get to know the Lord better, “through the knowledge of Him who called us...” As we know the Lord and become more like Him, and as we walk with the Lord, we will hate doing anything that displeases Him. Furthermore, we have new life in Christ, a life of divine nature (1 Peter 1:4). We have become new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), and this new life does not sin because it is the life of God empowered by the Holy Spirit. But we still sin because we still have our old sinful natures of the flesh. So what happens in the meantime? We are to live by the great and precious promises that God has given us in His word, “that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...” Do you hate displeasing God? Are you aware of the empowering nature of the Holy Spirit? Are you living by the great and precious promises of God?

2. God has commanded the believer to use diligence to attain godliness in this life. We are given seven elements of godliness which we as believers are to add to our faith. Review these seven elements of godliness in 2 Peter 1:5-11. Question: How can we add to our faith these virtues that only the Holy Spirit can produce? Answer: We can't do it, but the Lord can if we let Him. Therefore we need to use all diligence to stay in God's word and walk with the Lord and stop serving ourselves. Are you using all diligence to attain godliness in this life? Are you letting the Holy Spirit produce these virtues in your life?

challenge

1. Every true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ will enter into heaven, but 2 Peter 1:11 indicates that there will be a more abundant entrance into heaven for believers whose lives are characterized by godliness. The worldly believers of 2 Peter 1:9 get into heaven but not with an abundant entrance. What kind of entrance do you want into heaven?

memorize

“To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ; grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”

2 Peter 1:1-2

“...as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3-4

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:10-11

lesson 2

Peter Reminds His Readers that the Christian Faith is not Based on Some Fanciful Fable, but It is Based on the Solid Foundation of the Revealed Word of God 2 Peter 1:12-21

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. The Christian faith is not a cleverly devised fable. (2 Peter 1:16)
2. The Christian faith is not just a man-made religion. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

practical application

1. Remember, a tent is temporary.

questions

1. Peter mentions two events from his own experience with the Lord that support the fact that the apostle Peter is indeed the author of this epistle. Name these two events.
2. What is the tradition of Peter's death?
3. Why did Peter mention the first event?
4. Why did Peter mention the second event?
5. What is particularly significant about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?

answers

1. The first event is when the Lord revealed to Peter that he would be a martyr (2 Peter 1:14). The second that Peter mentions from his experience with the Lord was the mount of transfiguration (2 Peter 1:17-18).
2. According to tradition, Peter was martyred by being crucified upside down.
3. Because he wanted to make sure that his readers were firmly established in the truth before his soon-coming departure. Peter was an eye-witness and would not be with them much longer, but they would have his epistles to remind them.
4. He wanted his readers to know that the Christian faith was not a figment of his imagination. He, along with James and John, saw with their own eyes the majesty of Christ (2 Peter 1:16) and they heard with their own ears the voice of God from heaven (2 Peter 1:17-18). See also Matthew 17:1-5.
5. No other founder of a religion was raised from the dead, save Jesus Christ our Lord.

discuss / consider

1. The Christian faith has a very unique basis and foundation when compared to all other world religions. The Christian faith is based not just on the teachings of Jesus, but it is based on events that took place in history and are documented in history, and there were eye-witnesses. Consider the uniqueness of Christianity when compared to all other world religions. Aren't you thankful to be serving a risen Savior?
2. The Bible is not the word of man about God. It is the word of God to man. The Bible is claiming that both the writers and the writings of scripture were inspired. Consider 2 Peter 1:19, "the prophetic word confirmed." This means that the prophetic scriptures are confirmed when the prophecies are fulfilled. Doesn't this give you heart to believe that what God says He will do? The confirmed word of God in our hearts is like a light shining in a dark place, giving us light in this dark world. Isn't that both a comfort and an encouragement to live and to hope in the prospect of Christ's coming?

challenge

1. Peter refers to his body as a tent (2 Peter 1:13-14). His body, and ours, are tents, temporary dwelling places. As believers, we look forward to our permanent resurrection bodies. In the meantime, remember that your body is a tent, a temporary dwelling place.

memorize

"...as long as I am in this tent, it is right to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease." 2 Peter 1:13-15

"We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty, for He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" 2 Peter 1:16-17

"We have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:19, 21

lesson 3

A Strong Denunciation of the False Teachers Who Were Already Active in the First Century; It is Predicted that They Would Actually Infiltrate the Early Church 2 Peter 2:1-22

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. God honors righteous attitudes. (2 Peter 2:4-9)
2. God hates religious apostasy. (2 Peter 2:10-22)

practical application

1. Try to see it God's way.

questions

1. In Old Testament times there were two kinds of prophets living in the midst of God's people. Name them.
2. What were their messages to the people?
3. What was the relationship between Peter's and Jude's epistles?
4. Refer to 2 Peter 2:1. Were these people once saved, but had lost their salvation?
5. What is meant by the statements:
 - a. "There is unlimited atonement in provision."
 - b. "There is limited atonement in effect."
6. What is the destiny of the persons mentions in 2 Peter 2:3?
7. Is apostasy the same as backsliding?
8. Refer to 2 Peter 2:4-9. List the three examples from the Old Testament that are given to show God's judgment on apostasy.

answers

1. The true prophets of God and the false prophets.
2. The true prophets preached God's word, fiery sermons of judgment. The false prophets proclaimed peace and prosperity.
3. The apostle Peter predicted that there would be false teachers in the church. Jude wrote that these false teachers had already infiltrated the church.
4. No. They were never saved. Notice that this verse does not say they denied the Lord who redeemed them, but they denied the Lord who bought them.
5. The work of Christ on the cross is sufficient for all, but it is only effective for those who believe.
 - a. The Lord Jesus died on the cross for all. He paid the price for all the sins of the world. In that sense, even unbelievers are bought.
 - b. The effects of the atonement are limited, limited only to those who believe.
6. They were on their way to judgment and eternal destruction.
7. No. A backslider is a true believer who is out of fellowship with the Lord. An apostate never was a true believer. An apostate may have made a profession of faith, but he has turned away from the truth.
8. a) a certain group of fallen angels, b) the people who perished in the flood in the time of Noah, and c) the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

discuss / consider

1. In a time of God's judgment on sin, God honors righteous attitudes. Examples given in this section of scripture are Noah and Lot. Maybe you are in a place right now where there is sin and temptation all around you. It may seem like a hopeless situation. If you are a believer, you are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and as one of His, God will give you a way of escape. See 1 Corinthians 10:13.
2. Refer to 2 Peter 2:10-21. Consider the first century false teachers described here. The same is true of the immoral false teachers within the church today. God hates religious apostasy. Turning away from God's truth is serious sin. Recognize the false teachers and avoid them.

challenge

1. Review God's view of apostate false teachers in 2 Peter 2:22. False teachers are seen as a dog and a pig. That's how God sees false teachers in the Christian churches and Christian institutions today. They are polished and published, but they deny the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Why is it that true believers continue to attend their churches and continue to take courses from them in seminaries, seeking credibility by world standards? Read Proverbs 26:11 and read 2 Peter 2:22 again, and try to see it God's way.

memorize

"There were false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them...and many will follow their destructive ways..." 2 Peter 2:1-2

"If God did not spare the angels who sinned...nor the ancient world...nor the cities condemned to destruction...then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations..." 2 Peter 2:4-9

"If (false teachers), after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning." 2 Peter 2:20

lesson 4

Peter Looks On to the Future and to the Return of the Lord 2 Peter 3:1-9

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. The Bible does teach that there was a world wide flood. (2 Peter 3:5-7)
2. The Bible does not teach a day is a thousand years. (2 Peter 3:8-9)

practical application

1. Don't test God's patience.

questions

1. The apostle Peter's purpose in writing his two epistles was to stir up the minds of his readers by reminding them of the great truths of the Christian faith. Why was this especially important?
2. In view of the time of the early believers, why did the apostle want his readers to know the clear teachings of all the scriptures?
3. Read 2 Peter 3:3-4. Were the conditions described here applicable only in the first century?
4. What is the position of the skeptic and unbeliever concerning a coming day of judgment?
5. Did Peter believe in a world wide flood or a global flood?
6. List the three cosmologies (heaven and earth systems) taught in 2 Peter 3:5-7.

answers

1. It was important in view of the opposing heresies of false teachers. Remember, Peter's letters were not just written for believers in the first century, but they are the word of God for believers today.
2. Peter wanted his readers to know that both the Old Testament and the New Testament clearly taught that unbelief would increase in the last days.
3. No. They are true for today's world as well as for the first century.
4. Skeptics and unbelievers are critics of the Bible, believing that immorality goes unjudged, even in the church. They ridicule Christians who speak of the coming day of judgment and of hell for unbelievers in the future. To them, everything will continue just as it always has.
5. He believed in a world wide flood.
6. The three heaven and earth systems: a) There was a heaven and earth situation that God created (see the Genesis 1 account); b) There is a present heavens and earth system that has existed since the time of the flood of Noah's day (this cosmology will be destroyed by fire in the future); and c) There will come a third heaven and earth system (see Revelation 21: 1).

discuss / consider

1. There are critics who oppose Peter's belief in a world wide flood, by saying that the flood of Noah's day was limited to a local flood in the Mesopotamian Valley. Dare we believe less than God's account in Genesis? Dare we believe less than what Peter, an inspired writer, believed? Consider the three cosmologies by listening again to the tape, by reading 2 Peter 3:5-7, and by referring to Q-A #6 in this lesson.
2. The Bible does not teach a day is a thousand years. See 2 Peter 3:8-9 and Psalm 90:4. Note "as" and "are like." There are a number of Christians who take these verses out of context, using them to justify the days of creation in Genesis 1 as geologic periods or ages. This is bad hermeneutics. Be clear in your understanding of what the Bible teaches about this.

challenge

1. Unbelief is ruling the day. Does God not care? God is delaying His judgment of the ungodly because He is longsuffering and patient and does not want anyone to perish. He is not slack concerning His promise. Is it possible that you are still in the category of the unsaved? Have you truly received Jesus Christ as your Savior? God wants you to come to repentance. If you haven't taken that step of faith, do so today. God is longsuffering, but there is a limit to His patience. There will come a time in your life when it's too late. Don't test God's patience.

memorize

"...be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Savior." 2 Peter 3:2

"...scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' ...all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 2 Peter 3:3-4

"...the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3:7

"...beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2 Peter 3:8

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

lesson 5

A Final Exhortation to Believers to Live Godly Lives in View of the Lord's Return in the Future, and to Live Godly Lives in View of the Pitfalls of the Present 2 Peter 3:10-18

background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

doctrinal / teaching points

1. Some scriptures are not easy to understand. (2 Peter 3:14-16)
2. Some wolves are not easy to detect. (2 Peter 3:17-18)

practical application

1. Don't refuse rebukes.

questions

1. When is the day of the Lord? What will happen during the day of the Lord?
2. What is meant by an eschatological chart?
3. List the coming events on God's eschatological chart.
4. On which portion of the day of the Lord does Peter concentrate in 2 Peter 3:10-18?
5. Why does God reveal this information to us about the future?
6. Define hermeneutics and tell why such a study is important.

answers

1. The day of the Lord is in the future when the present heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire and all the ungodly will be judged.
2. It is a graphic depiction, a timetable of future events planned by God.
3. The next event on God's calendar is the rapture of the church (that is, the Lord's return for His church, which could take place at any time), then, in order after the rapture of the church, the seven-year tribulation period, then the millennial kingdom of Christ (the Lord's return to this earth to set up His earthly kingdom, which will last for a thousand years), then the rebellion where Satan will deceive many (but Satan will be defeated and will be consigned to hell forever), then the present heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire and the final judgment of unbelievers will take place at the great white throne judgment), then the day of God, wherein righteousness dwells forever in the new heavens and a new earth.
4. The end time portion of the day of the Lord, when the present heavens and earth will pass away by fire.
5. So believers will be diligent, live godly lives and avoid certain pitfalls in the present time.
6. Hermeneutics is the study of correct interpretation of scripture. Such study is vital in understanding the word of God.

discuss / consider

1. Refer to 2 Peter 3:14. Notice the "therefore," in view of the coming day of the Lord and the importance of these end time events, to be diligent to live godly lives. Use the time remaining wisely and lead others to the saving faith. Remember, God's longsuffering and patience is so that people can come to salvation.
2. Beware the pitfalls while believers wait for the Lord's return. The pitfall of interpreting scriptures that are not easy to understand is that the untaught and unstable people twist them to make them say what they want them to say. It is important for believers to know the principles of interpreting scripture (hermeneutics). How well do you know and practice hermeneutics?
3. Refer to 2 Peter 3:17-18 and Acts 20:28-31. Another pitfall that believers should be aware of is that some wolves are not easy to detect. It is all too easy to be led away by the error of unprincipled or lawless or wicked men. It happens. For example, there are Christians who are sucked in to the "prosperity gospel." False teachers use scripture and a mixture of truth and error so that they are not always easy to detect. The key to protection for us is found in 2 Peter 3:18, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Are you growing daily in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you on a steady diet of the word of God?

challenge

1. Being rebuked by a fellow believer is hard to take. Some rebukes are unfair and unfounded, but some rebukes are right on. Rebukes can help you grow and mature. Accepting rebukes will help you to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and it will bring glory to God.

memorize

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...therefore, consider what manner of persons you ought to be in holy conduct and godliness." 2 Peter 3:10-11

"...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of the God...according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." 2 Peter 3:13

"...consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." 2 Peter 3:15

"...beware lest you fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked." 2 Peter 3:17

"...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever." 2 Peter 3:18