



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N38 September 22, 2024

PEOPLE GET READY

“Don’t Get Carried Away”

2 Peter 3:17-18

THIS WEEK’S CORE COMPETENCY

Faithfulness

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

Proverbs 3:3-4



Q?

What is the message of 2 Peter?



Faithfulness has a number of dictionary definitions, all of which point to *loyalty* as a defining trait. When used with respect to faithfulness *to others* it means, “lasting loyalty and trustworthiness in relationships.” When used with respect to faithfulness *to the truth*, it means “the quality of adhering to fact, a standard, or an original” (www.dictionary.com).

While the Creed for the Core Competency Faithfulness describes the term with respect to relationships, in the closing verses of his second epistle, Peter challenges his readers to remain faithful *to the truth*. On the one hand, they are to avoid being led astray by false teachers. On the other hand, they are to mature in the knowledge of the Lord and the experience of his grace. *And that maturity comes through a steadfast commitment to the truth.*

Peter opens his epistle by telling his readers they have been given everything they need to live godly lives (1:3), and so they ought to “confirm [their] calling and election” (v. 10) by adding seven vital virtues to their faith in Jesus (vv. 5-9). He continues by noting that they are positioned to grow spiritually because they are rooted in *the truth*. He writes: “I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are *firmly established in the truth you now have*” (v. 12). And then he goes on to assure them that the truth they possess has been confirmed by the testimony of eyewitnesses to Jesus’ majesty at the transfiguration (v. 16) and confirmed by the infallible prophetic message regarding his future coming.

In chapter 2, Peter identifies the threat to *the truth* posed by false teachers—unscrupulous characters “who introduce destructive heresies,” (2:1), and whose followers “bring the way of truth into disrepute” (v. 2). They “fabricate stories” (v. 3) to “exploit” their hearers (v. 3). They’re nasty characters lacking any virtue whatsoever, who “never stop sinning” (v. 14). Governed by Balaam’s greed (vv. 15-16), they themselves are enslaved to depravity, but ironically, they promise freedom from moral constraint to naïve converts “just escaping from those who live in error” (v. 19). Believers who fall victim

to the error of these teachers—for whom “blackest darkness is reserved” (v. 17)—are worse off in the end than they were in the beginning, that is, when they were first led astray (v. 20).

In chapter 3, Peter returns to the danger posed by false teachers, noting that their appearance should come as no surprise, since the last days will bring scoffers with their scoffing, denying the return of Jesus (3:3-4)—something they deny because his return will bring judgment, and they want to continue following their own evil desires (v. 3). They argue he isn’t coming because he hasn’t come yet. “Everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation,” they claim (v. 4). But Peter debunks their argument by giving examples of God’s involvement in the world as *creator* (v. 5) and *judge* (v. 6), and by explaining that God “is not slow keeping his promise” but is patient “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (v. 9).

He goes on to declare that the day of the Lord is coming in which the earth as we know it will be renewed—made into a new earth in which “righteousness dwells” (and unrighteousness doesn’t), an earth free of evil (v. 13). At this point, Peter returns to his opening theme, namely, godly living. “So then, dear friends,” he writes, “make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him” (v. 14), a theme Paul himself writes about in all of his letters correctly interpreted. Unfortunately, “ignorant and unstable” false teachers shamefully twist Paul’s words to mean *not* what *he meant them to mean*, but instead to mean what *they want them to mean* in order to excuse their licentious lifestyle.

Peter brings the two themes of godly living and faithfulness to the truth together in his closing remarks (vv. 17-18). Referring to faithfulness to the truth, he writes: “Be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.” Referring to godly living, he writes: “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.”



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 2 Peter 3:17-18

17 Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen

Read in other translations

17 Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard that you do not get led astray by the error of these unprincipled men and fall from your firm grasp on the truth. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the honor both now and on that eternal day. (NET)

17 You already know these things, dear friends. So be on guard; then you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. 18 Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen. (NLT)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "Therefore" indicating *result* in v. 17.
- Circle "forewarned" in v. 17.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v.17.
- Circle "carried away" in v. 17.
- Circle "lawless" in v. 17.
- Circle "fall" in v. 17.
- Circle "secure position" in v. 17.
- Box "But" indicating contrast in v. 18.
- Circle "grow" in v. 18.
- Bracket "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" in v. 18.
- Underline "now and forever" in v. 18.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Describe Peter's relationship to his readers based on how he addresses them in verse 17 (cf. 3:1, 8, 14).
 2. Peter's readers "have been forewarned" (v. 17). How so?
 3. Peter's readers "have been forewarned" (v. 17). As a *result* (cf. "therefore"), *what* are they to do?
 4. And for what *purpose* (cf. "so that") are they to do it?
 5. To *whom* does "the lawless" refer?
 6. And why is "lawless" a fitting description of them? (Cf. 2:10b-19; 3:3)
 7. Explain the meaning of "fall from your secure position."
 8. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 18.
 9. Doxologies are usually reserved for God. Explain why *praise* to Jesus is appropriate.
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about whether you think Peter's primary concern is that his readers *not be like* the false teachers he describes or *not follow* them.
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Commentary On The Text

On the closing verses of 2 Peter, one commentator writes: “With an affectionate reference to his readers—‘Therefore, dear friends’ (*hymeis oun agapētoi*; lit., ‘You, therefore, beloved’)—Peter begins his conclusion. These two verses touch on the main themes of the letter and summarize its contents. First, there is the reminder for his readers to watch out lest the false teachers lead them astray. Second, there is the exhortation to grow in Christ” (Edwin A. Blum, “2 Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, 289). Put differently: “The negative exhortation in verse 17 reflects the warnings about false teachers in chapter 2, while the positive exhortation in verse 18a reiterates a key idea from chapter 1” (Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter and Jude*, 213). In other words, the two themes involve faithfulness to the truth and faithfulness to Christ.

Verses 17-18a contain a *warning* (v. 17) followed by a contrasting *exhortation* (v. 18a). Verse 17 begins appropriately with the word “therefore” indicating *result*, connecting the warning in verse 17 to that in verse 16. Furthermore, Peter has repeatedly warned his readers against following the false teachers, whom he describes as “bold and arrogant” men, who “heap abuse on celestial beings” (2:10b) and who twist the truth of the Scriptures to suit their taste (3:16), and warned against living the licentious lifestyles that they live. Verse 17 begins appropriately with the word “therefore” as well because as an additional commentator observes: “The concluding exhortation (vv 17-18a), while it connects immediately with v 16 . . . also serves to conclude the whole letter, since it summarizes the overall message of the letter” (Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 50, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 336).

Given what he has written about them, Peter’s readers have been “forewarned,” that is, they already know the danger false teachers pose; therefore, they are to “be on guard,” or to look out for them. Note, the present tense of the imperative in Greek suggests a *constant state of watchfulness*. Peter goes on to explain the purpose (cf. “so that”) behind his command. He doesn’t want to see his readers “swept away.” *The Message* expresses the meaning of verse 17 nicely in the following paraphrase: “Be on guard lest you lose your footing and get swept off your feet by these lawless and loose-talking teachers.” Their “error” is both *theological* and *ethical*. On the one hand, they deny “the sovereign Lord who bought them” (2:1, cf. 3:3-4), and on the other, they engage in “depraved conduct” (2:2, 10b-19). It is because of their “depraved conduct” that

Peter calls them “lawless” (v. 17). On the word translated “error,” another commentator writes:

“‘Error’ (*plane*) can also be translated ‘wander,’ and it is not clear whether Peter is thinking of the false teachers’ own ‘wandering’ from the faith or to their causing others to ‘wander’ from their faith. Perhaps we need not choose; certainly both have been prominent in the letter. The danger in any such ‘wandering’ is that it may cause a believer to ‘fall from’ his or her ‘secure position’” (Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 213). Peter’s allusion to falling from a “secure position” is not a reference to losing one’s salvation, but instead to losing one’s footing and thereby undermining one’s sanctification.

While the false teachers about whom Peter warns have died long ago, tragically, false teachers of their same ilk still walk among us—ignorant deceivers, who distort the meaning of the Scriptures, and hypocrites, who don’t walk what they talk. “They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done” (2:13). James got it right when he wrote: “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (3:1).

Verse 18 opens with a *contrasting exhortation*. Rather than fall from their “secure position” by following the false teachers, Peter tells his readers to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” The meaning of “the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” is ambiguous. While the “grace of our Lord” means the grace that he bestows on us, the knowledge of our Lord likely means our personal, relational knowledge of him (see 1:2-3, 8). In the first case, he is the *source* of our grace; in the second, he is the *object* of our knowledge (see note).

Verse 18 concludes with a doxology, which is unusual. Ascriptions of glory at the end of a letter is unusual—found only here, Romans 16:25-27, Philippians 4:20, and Jude 24-25. What’s more, this is a doxology to Christ; normally, glory is ascribed to God. Only here and in 2 Timothy 4:18 and Revelation 1:5-6 are doxologies to Christ found. Perhaps the fact that Jesus Christ is identified as “Lord,” LORD God of the Old Testament, explains this. And finally, glory is normally ascribed to God “forever and ever.” Here Peter uses a somewhat different expression that might be translated “now and on that eternal day” (NET), which would allude eschatologically to the day of Christ’s return to reign.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 17 *forewarned* Cf. “knowing this beforehand” (ESV). “They *know this*, i.e. that false teachers are to be expected. And to be forewarned is to be forearmed” (Michael Green, *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*, TNTC, 162).

v. 17 *carried away* “The remarkable compound, *sunapachthentes*, *carried away by* (used in connection with Barnabas’s defection in Gal. 2:13) suggests that if they keep too close company with such people they will be led away from Christ” (Green, 162). “The sense of danger that Peter warns against is that of ‘being swept along with the crowd’ away from the true Christian way of life” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 226).

v. 17 *lawless* Cf. “unscrupulous” (NASB); “unprincipled” (NASB1995, NET); “wicked” (NLT). The word “characterizes the false teachers as people who ignore all moral constraints” (Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 50, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 337).

v. 17 *fall* “Peter’s mental picture was of a torrent of false teaching, knocking believers off their feet and sweeping them away (‘carried away’). The possibility of loss of salvation is not in view, but loss of steadfastness is (cf. Heb. 2:1-4)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 2 Peter,” 2024 ed., 78, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2peter.pdf).

v. 17 *secure position* “The author thinks of experienced and well-instructed Christians as firmly established in a fixed position from which they ought not to be swayed” (Bauckham, 337). “Conversion to Christ provides a solid foundation, a security, for spiritual vitality in this life and glory in the next. The word Peter uses implies that Christians can have confidence in this foundation” (Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 213). “Secure position (*stērigmos*): is a rare word (only here in the NT, although the corresponding verb occurs in 1:12 and in 1 Pet. 5:10). But the term contrasts nicely with the character of the false teachers and their dupes, whom Peter calls *astēriktos*, unstable (2:14; 3:16)” (Hillyer, 226).

v. 18 *grow* Grow (*auxanete*, present imperative: ‘keep on growing’): ‘Not only do not fall from your own steadfastness, but be so firmly rooted as to throw out branches and yield increase’ (Alford); cf. Ps. 1:2-3” (Hillyer, 326). “If we are to

find a single ‘key verse’ for all of 2 Peter this would probably be it. Here Peter summarizes his root concern: that his readers, resisting the heresy of the false teachers, continue to grow spiritually, becoming more and more like the Christ whom they confess” (Moo, 214). “The Christian life, it has been said, is like riding a bicycle. Unless you keep moving, you fall off!” (Green, 163).

v. 18 *grace and knowledge* “The NIV takes both ‘grace’ and ‘knowledge’ to depend on ‘our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’ (they signal this by using a single article before ‘grace’). In this case, the ‘grace of Jesus Christ’ will mean the grace that he bestows on us. But ‘knowledge of Jesus Christ’ can mean either the knowledge that Jesus Christ gives us (see 1:5-6), or our knowledge of, our relationship to, Jesus Christ (see 1:2-3, 8). While the Greek word Peter uses here can point to the former interpretation, the sweeping nature of the exhortation and the relationship to chapter 1 suggest that the second is correct. This would mean, however, that ‘of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’ relates to the words ‘grace’ and ‘knowledge’ in different ways—describing the source of the former and the object of the latter. This is not impossible; but it may be easier to sever the word ‘grace’ from ‘of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’ (e.g., see the REB rendering: ‘Grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’)” (Moo, 214).

v. 18 *now and forever* Cf. “now and on that eternal day” (NET). “New Testament authors usually ascribe to God glory ‘forever and ever’ (Greek *eis tous aionas*; see e.g., Jude 25). The NIV takes this as a way of referring both to the present and the future: ‘now and forever’ (see also KJV, REB, TEV). But this is certainly not the most natural way to interpret the Greek. Better, in light of Peter’s focus on this subject in chapter 3, is to give ‘day’ an eschatological meaning: the ‘day of the Lord/of God.’ Christ’s coming will inaugurate the eschatological age—a ‘day’ that will last forever. We glorify Christ, looking to this day and earnestly waiting for it” (Moo, 215).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Remain faithful to the truth, so you may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ—to whom be glory both now and on the day of his coming to reign.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

There are two things on which a parent must diligently focus — protection and preparation. We protect our kids from the dangers of this world when we hold hands to cross the street or limit screen access to sites our kids have no business visiting. We prepare our kids by sharing a foundation for biblical intimacy or guiding them to choose friends wisely. Much in the same way, Peter ends his second letter with final words of protection and preparation for his readers then and today. He encourages readers to be on guard, to protect themselves so they don't get carried away by the influence of others or enticed by sinful behavior. He prepares readers to be steadfast in the faith as they "...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) As disciple makers, we have the privilege and responsibility to lead our kids toward Christ with these spiritual principles in mind. One helpful hint I want to offer today is to talk *with* your kids, not *at* them. Think about it. If you were to offer protection or preparation to a friend veering off the path or someone needing your hard-earned wisdom, you wouldn't yell or lecture them. You'd ask lots of questions and gently guide them back on track. Show this same gentleness and respect to the people you have the most influence over. If your kids are being knuckleheads, don't point the big bony finger and lecture. Instead, with love, get at the heart of the matter. Share with them the same grace and mercy that the Lord extends to you. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 2 Peter 3:17-18

1. What does Peter tell readers to be?
2. Why should they be on their guard??
3. Rather than be carried away and fall, what should we do?

What Do You Think?

What does it mean to grow in grace and knowledge? What are steps you need to take to grow in this way?

What Do You Do?

Now is the perfect time to plant fall flowers or vegetables. With your family plant seeds (pumpkin, squash or okra) and watch them grow over the next few weeks.

CORE COMPETENCY: Faithfulness

I am loyal to God and others, so they know they can count on me.

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 5:3-4

"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Fort Worth, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org

OUR MISSION

Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.