Growing in Godliness

Four Studies on
**2 Peter**

# Growing in Godliness 2 Peter 1:1-11

*Read 1 Peter 1:1-4.*

What stands out to you from this passage?

How does Peter describe the people he is writing to? (v1) What does this tell us about the value of different people’s faith?

What does God provide for us? How? (v3)

What does Peter mean when he says God’s promises are precious? (v4) Do we think of them this way?

What do these promises enable us to participate in? What do they enable us to escape? (v4)

Do we live as if this escape from evils desires is central to our lives?

*Read 2 Peter 1:5-11.*

What strikes you?

What does Peter now tell us to do because we “participate in the divine nature”? What importance should we give growing in godliness?

Where does Christian growth begin? How does it progress? (v5-6)

How have we seen some of this growth in our lives?

Are there any of these attributes that you find most difficult or are particularly seeking in your life at the moment?

What keeps us from being ineffective and unproductive in knowing Jesus? (v8)

How does Peter describe someone who is not growing in these qualities? Is such a person really a Christian? (v9)

Why should being cleansed from our sins be central to our lives to day? Is it?

How can we grow in confidence about our salvation? (v10)

What hope should drive how we live now? (v11)

In what areas should the hope of welcome into Jesus’ kingdom be more central in our lives?

In what ways are you growing in Christ now? In what areas of your life do you need to grow?

Suggested Prayer Points:

* Thank God that he sent Jesus to cleanse us from our sins and restore relationship with him.
* Give thanks for the Spirits work in our life.
* Pray for each individual in the group for the Spirit to grow them in one or more of the qualities they request.
* Pray for the areas of our life where we need to grow.

# Remember the Good News – 2 Peter 1:12-21

*Read 2 Peter 1:5-21.*

2 Peter 1: 12 says “I will always remind you of these things”. What can you remember about “these things” from the last study?

What is Peter determined to do? (v13-15) What does this show about Peter’s attitude towards life?

Why is it so important for us to remember these things that Peter taught?

How can you remind yourself of these things?

How can we remind each other of these things, as a group? As a church?

How does Peter know his teaching about Jesus is true? (v16-18)

Peter is referring to the transfiguration, when Jesus’ divine glory was revealed to Peter, James and John who were with Him and the Father spoke from heaven, saying these words. (See Mat. 17 for precise quote, Mark 9, and Luke 9 for a description of the transfiguration).

Where do the Father’s words in verse 17 point us to when telling the difference between clever stories and the good news about Jesus? How does this help us tell the difference in our lives?

When Peter says “the prophets”, he includes Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings as well as the books we would traditionally think of as the prophets.

What is the prophet’s role in giving prophecy? What is God’s role? (v20-21)

How does this help us in the way we view the Bible? (v20)

In verse 19, Peter uses the morning star as a symbol for Jesus. This is an image that appears throughout scripture. One place is in the prophecies of Balaam in the book of Numbers. Balaam was not an Israelite; he was a foreign oracle who was paid to curse Israel. But as Balaam told Balak, the king of Moab who hired him, he could only give the message God gave him.

*Read Numbers 24:15-19.*

How does this prophecy describe Jesus?

What enemies of God’s people does Jesus destroy?

The prophecy says “Israel will grow strong.” (Num. 19:18) How does Jesus make us as God’s people strong?

Why do we understand Balaam’s prophecy more than Balaam did?

What does Balaam’s prophecy demonstrate about where prophecy comes from?

How did the Holy Spirit empower the prophets? (2 Peter 1:21)

How does the Spirit help us today?

What does Peter want us to do with the words of the prophets? What is the purpose of listening to scripture? (V19)

How do we pay attention to scripture? In what ways can we pay more attention to it?

Suggested Prayer Points:

* Thank God that he gives us His Word to help us grow in our lives.
* Ask that we would be careful to pay attention to what it says and apply it to our lives
* Ask that the Spirit would write the truths that is speaks on our hearts so that we would live it out

# The Way of the Wicked – 2 Peter 2

*Read 2 Peter 1:19 - 2:22.*

What strikes you from this passage?

What do false prophets and false teachers do? (2:1) How are they different to true prophets? (1:21)

Is the church likely to encounter false teachers? How can we tell if someone is a false teacher? (2:1-3)

What do false teachers do to the church?

What does the church mean when we call something a heresy?

Heresy is a belief or opinion contrary to orthodox Christian doctrine. The belief or opinion does not necessarily have to be religious in origin, but could come from advertising or generally held views in society, as long as it changes our beliefs about God to be contrary to orthodox doctrine.

What are some of the “destructive heresies” (v1) around today?

What light does God judging angels shed on his coming judgment? (v4)

Lot was living in the city of Sodom when two angels came and welcomed them in to his house. However the men from the city came to his house insisting on the angels coming out so they could hve sex with them. Lot tried to refuse this, but was facing threats of them using force when the angels intervened and struck the men with blindness. They told Lot to flee with his family members before God brought His wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah because of such behaviour, which he eventually did before God rained down sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Genesis 19)

How are the stories of Noah and Lot similar? (v5-8) What do these examples show about God? (v9)

What kind of people does Peter single out? (v10)

*Focus on 2:10-22.*

How are unrighteous teachers contrasted with the angels? (v11) What does this suggest about our attitude towards those we think are unrighteous?

This passage is very similar to Jude 1:8-9 where Jude also gives an example of how angels behave in how the archangel Michael speaks to the devil, saying “The Lord rebuke you.”

How are these teachers described? (v12-14)

What will happen to them?

Balaam was an oracle who went to Moab to prophecy against Israel. He was rebuked by his own donkey, and ended up giving oracles that blessed Israel in front of the Moabite king. (Num 22-24) Balaam’s advice to the Moabites led to the Moabite women leading the Israelite men into sacrificing to Moabite gods. This led to God’s wrath against Israel. (Num.25, 31:16) They eventually took revenge and killed Balaam. (Num. 31:8)

 Did the donkey’s rebuke change Balaam? (v16)

How are the false teachers like Balaam?

How do these teachers entice people? (v18-19) Who are their targets?

What do the false teachers return to? What do they seem to value about Jesus? (v20)

Why is leaving the way of righteousness worse to God than never accepting it? What does doing this demonstrate about a person? (v22)

What is slavery? (v19) How does this change the way we understand freedom?

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How do we know we are still following the way of righteousness?

*Read 2 Peter 3:1-2.*

Why is Peter writing this letter? (3:1) Why has Peter taken so much time to tear down false teachers?

How should we respond to the presence of false teaching? (3:2)

What are the false teachers or messages like this that are in your life? How do they affect you?

How can you reduce the affects of these messages on your life?

Suggested Prayer Points:

* Thank God that he has given up his Son to give us freedom.
* Ask that he would protect us from the false messages that are around us today
* Pray that when we face temptation that he would remind us of what Scripture tells us and the freedom Christ brings.

# Know the Lord – 2 Peter 3

*Read 2 Peter 3:1-10.*

What stands out to you?

What does Peter mean by “wholesome thinking”? (v1-2)

How can we help ourselves to engage in “wholesome thinking”?

Who will come in the last days? (v3) What will they do and say? (v3-4)

What does Peter mean by the last days? What should we expect right now?

The last days started with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (see Acts 2:17). They are the days between the Spirit being given to the church and Jesus’ return. While we may find it strange to think of the only days that we know as the last days, we have come after sin and death have been conquered by Jesus, but before Jesus’ return makes this victory apparent to all.

 What do the scoffers forget? (v5-7) By what does means God achieve this?

God prepared a safe place for Noah and his family during the flood, but destroyed all the rest of the people and the earth (Genesis 6:13).

Why does Peter raise this picture of destruction in 2 Pet. 3:6? What does it loo forward to?

How is God’s word of creation and judgement different to the written word of the Bible? How are they the same?

God’s word that creates the world is Jesus, who is distinct from God’s spoken word found in scripture. However, both Jesus coming to show us who God is and scripture exist so that we can get to know the living God through them.

What does Peter say not to forget? (v8) Why does Peter say this?

Have you ever felt that God is slow to keep his promises?

Why hasn’t Jesus returned yet? (v9)

How will Jesus return? (v10) What happens when he returns?

Why do we find it difficult to look forward to Jesus’ return? How can we make the hope of his return more central in our lives?

*Read 2 Peter 3:11-18.*

What instructions does Peter give because of Jesus’ future return? (v11-13)

What is different about the new heavens and new earth? (v13) Why should we look forward to these?

How can we make every effort to be spotless and blameless? (v17) Where do we struggle to do this?

How can we make our efforts to be spotless and blameless enjoyable rather than negative?

Every effort applies to being spotless and blameless and in doing that the passage says that we will find peace with God.

What does it mean to have peace with God?

Does anything make it difficult for you to have this peace?

Why is God patient with the world? (v8, v15)

How does Peter describe Paul’s letters? (v15-16) What does this tell us about scripture?

Who misuses the difficult parts of Paul’s letters? What is the result?

What parts of the Bible do you find hard to understand?

What instructions does Peter give to the church? (v17-18) Who is at the centre of Peter’s instructions?

How can we grow in Christ more and more? How can we use scripture to help us grow?

In what ways should we change our current practises so that we will grow in Christ more?

Suggested Prayer Points:

* Thank God that he created us by His Word and gives us His Word to read and teach and remind us of his truths.
* Ask for the clear reading and preaching of scripture in your church
* That you would understand Scripture more and more and that the Spirit would help you understand the bits you find difficult
* Pray for more and more faith in God’s promises and that this would cause you to live your life looking forward to Christ’s coming

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**Contact** lucas.sharley@gmail.com