

connect 360

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Find Us Faithful

STANDING FIRM IN OUR FAITH

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

Courtney Gilmore

Robby Barrett

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Mike Green

Chris Curran



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Find Us Faithful: Standing Firm in Our Faith
Connect 360 Bible Study Guide

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How to Make the Best Use of This Issue

Whether you're the teacher or a student—

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. Overview the study. Review the table of contents and read the study introduction. Try to see how each lesson relates to the overall study.
3. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. (You'll see that each writer has chosen a favorite translation for the lessons in this issue. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translation chosen for that unit, of course.)
4. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the writer's comments. The comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible.
5. Read the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application.
6. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and they can also be used in the class session itself.

If you're the teacher—

Do all the things just mentioned, of course. As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. Here are some suggestions to guide your lesson preparation:

- A. In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents on pages 12–13 and on the first page of each lesson.
 - Make and post a chart that indicates the date each lesson will be studied.
 - If all your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
 - Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.gc2press.org under the “Teacher Helps” menu.
 - Develop a sticker with the lesson dates and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.
- B. Get a copy of the *Teaching Guide*, a companion piece to this *Study Guide*. The *Teaching Guide* contains additional Bible comments plus two teaching plans. The teaching plans in the *Teaching Guide* are intended to provide practical, easy-to-use teaching suggestions that will work in your class.

- C. After you've studied the Bible passage, the lesson comments, and other material, use the teaching suggestions in the *Teaching Guide* to help you develop your plan for leading your class in studying each lesson.
- D. Premium Commentary is now available for \$30 at www.gc2press.org. This in-depth commentary is a great resource for teachers.
- E. Teaching resource items for use as handouts are available for \$20 at www.gc2press.org. under the "Teacher Helps" tab.
- F. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.
- G. You can receive the lesson preview each week by signing up for the *Baptist Standard* weekly newsletter at no cost. Sign up here: (www.baptiststandard.com/subscription/email).

Writer for This Study Guide

Courtney Gilmore wrote lessons one, two, and four. Courtney grew up in a rural town in central Texas. When she graduated from high school, she and Don got married and had two children. When Erica and Hayden graduated, they moved to the Texas Hill Country where they now reside. Courtney has been teaching and writing Bible studies for the past thirty years. She started before her children were born, then they taught every age along the way. Today she teaches through the Bible on Podcast and YouTube and publishes weekly lessons and devotionals on Substack.

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Introducing

Find Us Faithful *Standing Firm in Our Faith*

A Study of 2 Peter

Background

Second Peter is the second of two letters that Peter wrote to Christians living in a pagan world, which was filled with lust and with the excesses of a still powerful Roman Empire.

Peter was among the first three disciples called by Jesus who spent over three years watching all Jesus taught and did. He was among the inner circle who were present at the Transfiguration of Jesus. That pivotal event changed his life, as he saw God's glory shining out of Jesus' body with dazzling light and splendor (Luke 9:28–36).

Ironically, some years earlier God had called Peter to become a missionary to some Romans gathered in the home of the Roman Centurion Cornelius. Peter went in to share the gospel with Cornelius and his guests (Acts 10:1–11:18). Many received Christ. Later Peter did mission work in the Roman region of Asia, before he traveled to Rome where he was imprisoned (AD 64) and martyred by the Emperor Nero in AD 67.

The recipients of the second letter lived under the culture, influence, and coercion of Nero, whose empire was filled with brazen immorality and debauchery. Prior to the Roman influence, this area had also been influenced by Greek culture and language. Peter possibly wrote this letter between AD 65 and AD 67 while imprisoned in Rome.

Peter wrote this letter to encourage the recipients to realize the potential, which God gave to each of them and to us. They were not assimilated by corruption, but instead to emulate the attributes of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. They were to allow God to so permeate their lives from the inside out, that His majesty, goodness, and glory would shine in and through their lives.

Ed Jordan

Standing Firm in Our Faith

Persecution was a given for first-century Christians. These early followers were often harassed, beaten, slandered, and ostracized for their faith. Peter, who was no stranger to suffering, sent two letters of encouragement. He likely wrote these letters while in a Roman prison just before he was martyred.

The apostle Peter could be energetic, daring, and courageous. But, like most of us, Peter also had plenty of rough edges. There were times before Christ's ascension that Peter was weak, impulsive, and cowardly. We are drawn to Peter because we can identify with him. He was so typically human in every way.

It is this Peter whose name is attached to two New Testament letters that have as much to say to us today as they did to their

first recipients nearly two thousand years ago. The original readers of 2 Peter had come under the influence of false and immoral teachings, and this letter was written to help them. It was also intended to help us to keep ***Standing Firm in Our Faith***.

Second Peter includes serious warnings but also a deep hope in Christ. As we lift our eyes from our present suffering to our eternal inheritance in Christ, may we find the strength to endure trials, and rejoice in Him.

May God continually ***Find Us Faithful***.

Suggested Resources for the Study of 2 Peter¹

Blackaby, Henry. *1 and 2 Peter: A Blackaby Bible Study Series (Encounters with God)*. Nashville, TN: HarperChristianResources, 2008.

Henry, Matthew. *1 & 2 Peter (Matthew Henry's Commentary)*.

Jeremiah, David. *1 & 2 Peter: The Way to Endure Through Trials (The Jeremiah Bible Study Series)*. Nashville, TN: HarperChristian Resources, 2022.

Lucado, Max. *Life Lessons From 1 & 2 Peter*. Nashville, TN: HarperChristian Resources, 2018.

McGee, J. Vernon. *The Epistles (2 Peter). Thru the Bible Vol. 55*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996.

Sproul, R.C. *1–2 Peter: Be All The More Diligent to Make Your Calling and Election Sure*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

Spurgeon, Charles. *Commentary on 1 & 2 Peter and Jude (Spurgeon Commentary Series)*. New Zealand: Titus Books, 2014.

Swindoll, Charles R. *1 & 2 Peter (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 13)*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2014.

Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Alert (2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude): Beware of Religious Imposters*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook; 2nd edition, 2010.

Wright, N.T. *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: 9 Studies for Individuals and Groups*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP; Study Guide Edition, 2012.

NOTE

¹ Listing a book does not imply full agreement by the writer or GC2 Press with all its comments.

Find Us Faithful

Standing Firm in Our Faith

A Study of 2 Peter

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lesson 1

Everything We Need

MAIN IDEA

God has given us everything we need through His wonderful promises for our future.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Do I claim the promises of God?

STUDY AIM

To understand that if we stand on the promises of God, we will never be disappointed

QUICK READ

God's promises are certain, and they reveal His character. There are over 7,000 promises God has made to you in the Bible. God has offered these precious promises to you, but they are worthless unless you claim them.

Introduction

Who do you turn to when you need something? It probably depends on what you need, right? If you need money, you ask someone to lend you some or give you a job. If you have an ailment, you go to a healthcare provider. If you are lonely, you seek a companion. If you need advice, you find someone with wisdom or experience. No one can meet every need or be trusted to provide all they claim. Some have no intention of keeping their promises, while others plan to, but either forget or do not follow through. Then, some just do not have the capability despite their desire. Inevitably, if you put all your faith in people, you will be disappointed.

But God will never let you down because He has everything you need and the power to provide. Numbers 23:19 says, “God is not a man, that He would lie, nor a son of man, that He would change His mind; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” God delivers on all His promises.

2 Peter 1:1–4

¹ Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ Through these He has granted to us

His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust.

The Greeting (1:1–2)

Second Peter is a letter that begins with a greeting. Though it may seem like an insignificant formality, Peter revealed some important information here.

First, this letter was written by Simon Peter. Though his readers probably knew who that was, he continued by saying he was a bondservant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. A bondservant was a person who willingly continued serving their master after they had been offered their freedom. This person chose permanent servitude over their independence. So, as a bondservant, Peter willingly submitted to the authority of Jesus. But as Christ's ambassador, he had his own authority to bring the following message.

After Peter introduced himself, he said he was writing primarily to a Gentile (non-Jewish) audience. We know this because the letter was written to "those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours" (1:1). He was contrasting the people he was speaking to with those who were like him, namely the Jews.

This was significant because Peter initially thought his faith was exclusive to Abraham's descendants. But the Lord came to him one day in a vision and revealed that anyone from any nation who feared Him, did what was right and believed in Jesus, would receive forgiveness (see Acts 10). So, by stating that their faith was "of the same kind as ours" (1:1), Peter was breaking down

the barrier that previously existed between them. He welcomed them into his faith, saying he considered them equally valuable in the eyes of God.

But there was an even deeper meaning that we could easily miss today. “The same kind as” literally meant “like precious” or “of equal value.” This phrase was often used to describe strangers or foreigners who were given equal citizenship. As Gentiles, they were foreigners to Israel, which was the nation of the Jews. So, they would have understood this to mean that they were being given equal citizenship with the Jews in God’s kingdom.

Paul explained this further in Ephesians 2:12–19 when he told the Gentiles to

“remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the people of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were previously far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, which is the Law composed of commandments expressed in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, in this way establishing peace; and that He might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the hostility. And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers or

foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household."

The History and Teaching of the Gentiles Being Welcomed Into the Faith

- God told Peter in a vision to welcome the Gentiles into the faith (Acts 10).
- Peter told the rest of the Jews about God's new command (Acts 11:1–18).
- Paul and Barnabas would focus their ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44–52).
- An argument ensued over whether the Gentiles must be circumcised like the Jews as an outward demonstration of their faith (Acts 14:26–15:31).
- Paul confirmed there was no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles (Romans 3:21–31).
- God did not reject the Jews when he welcomed the Gentiles. He was using them to draw the Jews back to Him (Romans 11).
- Paul told the Jews and the Gentiles to accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ (Romans 15:7–27).
- Explanation of salvation through faith, not lineage (Galatians 3:6–18).
- Paul explained his mission regarding the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1–11; Colossians 1:25–27).

So, Peter began by stating who he was and who he was writing to. Then, he said Jesus is righteous and called Him God, Savior,

Christ (Messiah), and Lord. They needed to know Jesus as the One chosen by God and foretold by the prophets, their Deliverer and ultimate authority, because the better they knew Him, the greater they would experience His grace and peace.

Though Peter wrote this letter specifically to the Gentiles of his day, it applies to all who read it and share his faith in Jesus. So, he is also telling us that we are equally valuable to God and have equal access to His promises, through Jesus who gives us equal citizenship in His kingdom.

Our Power Source (1:3)

God is our power source. He gives us everything we need to live a life that is pleasing to Him. We cannot please Him in our own power, and it is a great burden for us to try. But God does not ask us to do the impossible. It would be cruel for Him to require something He knows we are incapable of. So, God made a way for us to please Him through His Son, Jesus, and He enables us through His Spirit.

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” God took the burden of living a righteous and godly life away from us and placed it on Jesus, the only one who can carry the burden of perfection. Matthew 11:28–30 says, “Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS**. For my yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light.”

So, we can rest assured and rely on Him to give us everything we need to live godly lives. By remaining connected to our Power Source, we produce the fruit of His Spirit. In John 15:4–5 Jesus said, “Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you remain in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” So, without Him, we have no power to do what is good or right, “and those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). But He is “able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Ephesians 3:20).

If you have ever tried to be everything God wants you to be, you know how discouraging and useless our efforts are. Years ago, I read about the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23 and thought they sounded like important qualities for me to acquire. So, I wrote “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” on a piece of paper and put it on my refrigerator. I began to work diligently on being loving. I’m sure there were times when I was more loving than before, but it was hard, and I was discouraged. So, I decided to skip that one and come back to it later. I thought being joyful had to be easier than being loving all the time. But soon, I realized that was too hard for me, also.

I am not sure how far down I got on my list before I went back and read the passage. But when I did, I realized that the works of the flesh were listed above the fruit of the Spirit. Then I understood. The *works of the flesh* are what I could *do* on my own, and none of these were good. The *fruit of the Spirit* were what God *pro-*

duced in me. It was Him working through me. God was the source of any power I had to be a better person. Understanding that gave me such relief and took the focus off me and put it on Him. Then, instead of trying to be something I could not, I began to feed and nourish my relationship with the Lord.

Remaining Connected to Your Power Source

- Practice talking to Him throughout the day about anything and everything. Act like He is there with you (because He is).
- The next time you need something, ask God instead of a person. Wait and watch for His response.
- List what you know about Him. Example: What are His names? Who is He to you?
- List experiences you, those you know, or people in the Bible had with Him. Where have you seen His power at work?
- Read your lists when you need a reminder of His power.

As His Children (1:4)

When we know Jesus as Christ, Savior, and Lord, we receive all His precious promises. As we grow in our knowledge of Him, we will begin to look more like Him and less like the world. John 1:12–13 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,

nor of the will of a man, but of God.” As His children, we share His characteristics and have escaped the world’s corruption, which is caused by our sinful nature.

Children share traits with their parents. Some are a product of nature because we are born with them. Physically we could look like them, or we may share certain personality traits. Then, other characteristics come through a growing and nurturing relationship. As we spend time with our parents, watching and listening to them, we begin walking, talking, and doing things the way they do.

As God’s children, we partake in His divine nature. But the more time we spend with Him, listening and following Him, the less we will look like the world and the more we will be like Him. “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Ephesians 5:1), and receive the gifts the Father longs to give His children. First Corinthians 2:12 says, “Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.” So, take hold of His precious promises.

Implications and Actions

We gave our children gift cards in their Christmas stockings this year. The girls spent their cards quickly, but the boys could not decide and ended up walking out of the store with the cards in their pockets and nothing in their hands. All four thankfully received their cards, but until they actually purchased something with them, our gift was wasted. We paid the price for nothing.

Receiving Jesus is no different. He paid for the sins of every person in the world. Your life has already been bought. So, what will you do with His purchase? Will you live for the One who died for you? Will you claim the promises He has for those who call Jesus their Savior? He is offering you everything pertaining to life and godliness. Will you take it and use it for His good pleasure?

Questions

1. How well are you trusting God to meet your needs?
2. Where have you seen God's power working in your life?
3. In what ways have you been relying on your own power instead of God's?
4. How can you be more connected to your Power Source?