

connect360

BIBLE TEACHING GUIDE

Find Us Faithful

STANDING FIRM IN OUR FAITH

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

Ed Jordan • Robby Barrett

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

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How to Make the Best Use of This *Teaching Guide*

Leading a class in studying the Bible is a sacred trust. This Teaching Guide has been prepared to help you as you give your best to this important task.

In each lesson, you will find first “Bible Comments” for teachers, to aid you in your study and preparation. The three sections of “Bible Comments” are “Understanding the Context,” “Interpreting the Scriptures,” and “Focusing on the Meaning.” “Understanding the Context” provides a summary overview of the entire background passage that also sets the passage in the context of the Bible book being studied. “Interpreting the Scriptures” provides verse-by-verse comments on the focal passage. “Focusing on the Meaning” offers help with the meaning and application of the focal text.

The second main part of each lesson is “Teaching Plans.” You’ll find two complete teaching plans in this section. The first is called the “Discovery Plan,” which emphasizes discovery learning techniques; and the second is called the “Discussion Plan,” which provides questions and suggestions for dialogue about the Scriptures. Choose the plan that best fits your class and your style of teaching. You may also use and adapt ideas from both. Each plan is intended to be practical, helpful, and immediately useful as you prepare to teach.

The major headings in each teaching plan are intended to help you sequence how you teach so as to follow the flow of how people tend to learn. The first major heading, “Connect with Life,” provides ideas that will help you begin the class session where your class is and draw your class into the study. The second major heading, “Guide Bible Study,” offers suggestions for helping your class engage the Scriptures actively and develop a greater understanding of this portion of the Bible’s message. The third major heading, “Encourage Application,” is meant to help participants focus on how to respond with their lives to this message.

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. You might use one or more of the following methods:

- 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 in their *Study Guide* and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date on which each lesson will be studied.
- If all of 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” tab.
- Develop a sticker with the lesson dates and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.

Here are some steps you can take to help you prepare well to teach each lesson and save time in doing so:

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers meet for lesson overview and preparation, plan to participate. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers don’t have this planning time now, look for ways to begin. You, your fellow teachers, and your church will benefit from this mutual encouragement and preparation.
3. Overview the study in the *Study Guide*. Look at the table of contents and see where this lesson fits in the overall study. Then read or review the study introduction to the book that is being studied.
4. Consider carefully the suggested Main Idea, Question to Explore, and Teaching Aim. These can help you discover the main thrust of this particular lesson.

5. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. Using your Bible in your study and in the class session can provide a positive model to class members to use their own Bibles and give more attention to Bible study themselves. (Each writer of the Bible comments in both the *Teaching Guide* and the *Study Guide* has chosen a favorite translation. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translations chosen, of course.)
6. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the Bible Comments in the *Teaching Guide*. The Bible comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible. Read also the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and you can also use them in the class session itself. Continue your Bible study with the aid of the Bible comments included in this *Teaching Guide*.
7. Review the "Teaching Plans" in this *Teaching Guide*. Consider how these suggestions would help you teach this Bible passage in your class to accomplish the teaching aim.
8. Consider prayerfully the needs of your class and think about how to teach so you can help your class learn best.
9. Develop and follow a lesson plan based on the suggestions in this Teaching Guide, with alterations as needed for your class.
10. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.

Teaching Resource Items. These items are available for download for use in your class. These are available for \$20 at www.gc2press.org. Watch for them in the teaching plans for each lesson. These items are selected from the teaching plans. They are provided online to make lesson preparation easier for handouts and similar items. Permission is granted to download these teaching resource items, print them out, and copy them as needed for all classes within your church.

Premium Commentary. Plan to get the additional in-depth Bible Study comments available online. Visit our website, call 1-866-249-1799, or email gc2press@txb.org to order the Premium Commentary. It is available for \$30 in electronic format (PDF) from our website. Permission is granted to download this commentary, print it, and copy them as needed for all classes within your church.

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Find Us Faithful

Standing Firm in Our Faith

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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?

TEACHING AIM

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



Bible Comments

Understanding the Context

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. In 1 Peter 1:1 Peter identified the recipients of his first letter as: “those who reside as strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who are chosen” by God. (Note: The “Asia” referred to here was a First Century Roman province in proximity to the region that is modern-day Turkey.) Since Peter stated in 2 Peter 3:1 that 2 Peter is his “second letter I am writing to you,” it can be assumed this second letter is sent to basically the same recipients as delineated in 1 Peter.

Peter was among the first three disciples called by Jesus who spent over three years as an eyewitness to all Jesus did and taught. He was among the inner circle and was present at the Transfiguration of Jesus, which changed his life, as he saw God’s glory shining out of Jesus’ body with dazzling light and splendor (Luke 9:28–29).

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 missions work in the Roman region of Asia, before he traveled to Rome, where he was imprisoned AD 64–67, and martyred by the Emperor Nero in Rome in AD 67.

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

Peter wrote to encourage the recipients of his letters to realize the potential God gave to each of them and to us. They were not to be 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.

This is God's plan for each of us as well! In Jesus, via the Holy Spirit living inside each believer, God Himself has come to dwell in us (cf. John 14:23), and to reveal Himself through us. In the Bible, and in Jesus, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life in the midst of a corrupt world. Let's study 2 Peter 1:1–4 to discover four of God's gifts that provide us everything we need for life and godliness.

Interpreting the Scriptures

Gift One: Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior (1:1)

Jesus did everything that He did, so we would believe, be forgiven, cleansed, rescued, salvaged, repurposed, and brought back into peaceful and purposeful relationship with God. Jesus lovingly, sacrificially, and relentlessly pursued us, even while we were still behaving like enemies of God (Romans 5:10). Christ died for us, to make it possible for us to once again live at peace with God (Romans 5:8).

Peter declared that he now belonged to Jesus. He was Jesus' bond-servant, Jesus' property. Peter was no longer his own. He lived to submit to and obey, Jesus His Master. He had been bought with a price and now desired to glorify God every day in every way (1 Corinthians 6:20). He was now an indebted servant of Jesus.

But Peter was not just the bond-servant of Jesus, he was also an apostle of Jesus (1:1). Now that he belonged to Jesus, he was instructed to take the gospel to people who did not know God, who were still alienated from God and needed to hear of the love and saving power of Jesus to transform their lives. The word apostle means "sent out, going outward on a purposeful mission." God does not want us merely spending our lives in holy huddles. Once we know God, He sends us out to reveal God to those who don't know Him.

Gift Two: Grace and Peace Which Continually Multiplies In and Through Us (1:2)

Grace is God's gift, freely given to us. The gift is not earned, nor deserved. God's presence and generosity gives us the forgiveness of our sins, deliverance from sinfulness, and God's indwelling presence to change us from the inside out. He changes our nature, makes us a new creation, a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Grace is one side of the gift; it is also accompanied by peace, which is the result of God's grace being received. By grace we are forgiven and cleansed from all sin. Then by Christ living within us, He helps us recognize sin and gives us the power to say "no" to sin. He changes our will from seeking to do everything for self, to instead doing everything for God. Grace changes us. God's grace brings God's peace with it, so our life is filled with peace, healing, wholeness, and the contentment He gives.

Gift Three: The Knowledge of God and of Jesus Our Lord (1:3)

When humans sinned in the Garden of Eden, our open access to God was repealed. We were guilty, felt naked and vulnerable before God, because God knew we had disobeyed Him. We desired to find a place to hide, or to flee God's presence.

Yet our greatest need is to seek God. Only God can forgive us and remove our guilt. Only God can open our eyes to understand Him and to perceive why doing our own thing is so destructive. Ever since Adam and Eve, God has been trying to woo us back to Him. When we respond, we discover God in a new way.

However, without God's presence living inside us, and empowering us to make the right decisions, we end up repeating destructive things like a scratched record. We can't get past the scarred place on the disk. The disk needs a new start. It needs to be cleaned, repaired and rewritten, so the awesome music of Heaven can once again be heard.

In John 14:23, Jesus was preparing to physically leave the disciples and entrust them to carry on His ministry. He told them (and us) in John 14:23: “If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make *Our* abode with him.” God created us to commune with Him, to know and serve Him. Sin disrupted that, but God made a way to restore our relationship with Him.

When we receive Jesus into our life, then Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit come to make their home inside us. Living inside us, He alerts us to potential damaging decisions before we make them. He guides us into all truth. He changes our attitudes, and values. He wants to shine His glory and love through each one of us and then impact those around us.

God, and His indwelling presence in us, changes everything. Knowing God and constantly interacting with the living God who is now indwelling your life, brings wisdom, life, joy, peace, patience, guidance, perseverance, and meaning to your life.

What will you ever face that God Himself living within you, cannot handle or overcome? Nothing. How can we, as sinful people, ever arrive in God’s glorious presence? God has already taken care of it! He lives inside you, in all His glory, in all His wisdom, in all His mercy, love, and capability.

With Jesus continually living within us, we can escape the corrupting temptations and influences of the world. We can be good because God is good, and He lives within us. He gives us Himself and when you have God, you have everything. We can love, because God is love. We can forgive, because God forgives us.

This is why 1:3 states: “for that 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.” He fills us with everything we need for virtuous qualities, character, thoughts, and activities. God does not just give us outcomes; He gives us Himself, and His qualities and presence, which is far more superlative and lasting than the decaying things of this world.

Gift Four: Precious, Magnificent Promises, Making Us Partakers of Divine Nature (1:4)

What promises was Peter speaking about? Are they all the promises in the Bible? Notice, that Peter stated that they are promises that came from God, or from Jesus. It says, “He has granted to us.” They originate from God. Probably carrying that theme further, they are predominately those promises that Jesus made to the disciples, and thus to us as His disciples.

There are lots of promises God gave us. He has promised His love and care upon our lives. We tend to like the “good” promises, don’t we? We like ones that tell us we are going to win, like the one stating that the gates of hell will not be able to stop us. We like that God will give us our daily bread. Those are great promises and very real.

But Peter was not just talking about the thousands of promises that bless us or get us through tough times. Peter was primarily talking about the promises through which, or by which, God grants to us a partaking of the Divine nature. John 3:16 is one, because as we believe in Jesus, we unite with Him and that relationship imparts His eternal life to us.

The passage in John 14:23, which we looked at in Gift Three, is another one. Those who love Jesus seek to fulfill or do His Word. Love desires to please the loved one and therefore love begets love. Doing God’s will revealed in His Word, opens up our life to be partakers of God’s Divine nature, as Jesus actually comes to live and work in and through us.

John 14:6 is another transformational promise. Knowing Jesus opens up the way, the truth, and the life in which God has designed for us to be continually connected to Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life of God.

Jesus’ teaching on the Vine in John 15:1–11 vividly portrays the continual life-giving connection with God’s Divine nature. As we connect to Jesus, the Vine, His life flows into us, and through us, and we produce much fruit. The life is Jesus, flowing His life into and through us. It is by believing God’s promises that His life flows into us, resides in us, transforms us, and flows out to share God’s reality and life with others.

Focusing on the Meaning

Peter said that God has granted to us many precious and magnificent promises by which, as we embrace them and claim them, we become partakers of God's divine nature and are infused with God's divine nature. As we believe God's Word, and His precious and magnificent promises given to us, we discover that our lives are being changed day by day, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:18. The promises connect us to God, infusing us with God's life, presence and truth. It is God who comes into our inner being and becomes a living part of our lives. This shared life, and these shared experiences, become transformative in our lives.

The Christian life is designed to bring us back into a living relationship with God, in which God Himself comes to live within us, and gives us the desire to do His will. When we say "yes," He fulfills His own will in and through us (see Philippians 2:13). It is the gift of God, both figurative and literally. God is the Giver of the gift, and God is the Gift. God does not just give us something; He gives us Himself! When we have Him, we have everything we need.

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Teaching Plans

DISCOVERY PLAN

Connect With Life

1. Ask, *What is a promise?* Invite the group to share examples of promises. Then ask the following questions and encourage members to share responses aloud:
 - Have you ever made a promise that later you wish you hadn't made?
 - Have you made a promise that you had to sacrifice to fulfill?
 - Have you ever broken a promise? (Be ready to share an example of a broken promise.)
 - How do you feel when someone breaks a promise, he or she made to you?
 - What is the power of a promise?
2. Point out that there are over 7,000 promises that God has made in the Bible. Comment, *In our study today we will see that God has given us everything we need for our future through His wonderful promises!*

Guide the Study

3. Invite a previously enlisted class member to share a brief overview of 2 Peter using the details presented in the Teaching Resource Item 1. (A copy of this assignment is available in "Teaching Resource Items" for this study at www.gc2press.org.) Encourage your volunteer to add elements from the *Study Guide*, a commentary, or other resource.
4. Read the focal passage aloud to the group. Reread verse 4 aloud and then ask several members to share a promise from God that they hold dear.

5. Ask the class to form two groups of several people each, one group to search the Old Testament and one group to search the New Testament. If you have a large class, you may want to form additional groups. Invite groups to use their phones, tablets, or a topical Bible (bring several to class) to discover passages from the Old or New Testament that contain promises made by God. Ask each group to compile a list of 15–20 promises, while identifying the circumstance, meaning, and significance of each promise.
6. Allow each group 10 minutes to share several of the promises they discovered. Encourage group members to share why they chose the specific promises they presented.
7. To follow up group presentations, ask the class to respond to the following true/false statements:
 - God’s promises always reveal His character.
 - God has given Christians all they need to become spiritually mature.
 - God promises His presence in all circumstances.
 - Partaking in divine nature is the same as possessing divine nature.
 - Believers should have an easy time understanding and claiming God’s promises.
8. Call attention to the end of verse 4. Ask, *How does God allow us or equip us to escape corruption and sinful desires? Do you think there is a particular promise Peter had in mind as he wrote this passage?*
9. As time permits, read the focal passage aloud one more time. Then read the main idea for this lesson, *God has given us everything we need through His wonderful promises for our future.* Ask class members to consider and share aloud how the main idea expresses the heart of this passage.

Encourage Application

10. Comment, *It is one thing to comprehend a promise, but it is another thing to appropriate that promise into our lives.* Call attention to question 3 in the Study Guide, *In what ways have you been relying on your own power instead of God's?* Ask class members to identify ways and times they might have missed out on the power of God's promises.
11. Ask the following questions for individual reflection and/or group discussion:
 - Can you think of a promise that we may misinterpret or misread? (Proverbs 22:6 may be a good example)
 - Are there any conditions we must meet to be able to know and apply God's promises?
 - Can we totally trust the promises of God? Why or why not?
12. Share the following comment from Paul David Tripp: *I don't know if you have ever thought of this before, but God's promises are only as good as the extent of His sovereignty.* Invite members to share the meaning and implications of this thought.
13. Close in prayer, thanking God for His powerful promises that supply all we need for the future.

DISCUSSION PLAN

Connect With Life

1. Invite members to brainstorm responses to the question, *What do we need in order to live?* Enlist a member to write responses on a marker-board. Class members will probably list necessities such as air, water, food, shelter, clothing, etc. Depending upon how the class interprets the word "live," some might even suggest security, employment, friend-

ship, respect, freedom, and other elements commonly listed in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

2. Next ask the class to list some of the things that people might think we need to live, but are, in fact, extras. This list might include various types of entertainment, personal belongings, and certain relationships. Then ask, *How does God fit into our list of what we need to live?*
3. Point out that today's study will help us understand that God has given us everything we need according to His promises for our future.

Guide the Study

4. Read 2 Peter 2:1–4 aloud. To give some basics about our study for the quarter, share a previous prepared summary of 2 Peter answering the following questions:
 - Who was Peter and what do we know about him in Scripture?
 - To whom was Peter writing?
 - What was the theme and purpose of his letter?
5. Call attention to the sidebar “The History and Teaching of the Gentiles Being Welcomed Into the Faith” in the *Study Guide*, noting that Peter wrote his letter to the Gentile believers of his day. Ask, *Which of these statements speaks most personally to you? Why?* Allow time for response and discussion.
6. Examine the focal passage by calling attention to the following phrases found within the passage. You may want to enlist various class members to research and prepare a brief overview or explanation of these phrases ahead of time. Consider listing the phrases on a markerboard or make copies of them to handout to students. (A copy of this assignment is available in “Teaching Resource Items” for this study at www.gc2press.org.) Allow 2–3 minutes to present and discuss each phrase.

Additional resources for this activity could include commentaries, a Bible dictionary, online resources, and more.

- Bond-servant
 - Apostle of Jesus Christ
 - A faith of the same kind as ours
 - Righteousness of our God and Savior
 - Grace and peace
 - Knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord
 - Everything pertaining to life and godliness
 - True knowledge of Him
 - Called us by His own glory and excellence
 - Precious and magnificent promises
 - Partakers of *the* divine nature
 - Escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust
7. Ask, *Considering the phrases we have explored, what is Peter saying in these verses? What is the central truth of the passage?* Allow time for discussion. Then ask members to look at the phrases one more time to notice how positively they are presented. Share that this passage is Peter's reflection of the blessing that comes from God's promises!
8. Direct class members to the beginning of verse 3 to consider the phrase, "His divine power." Share the following questions for discussion:
- What is divine power?
 - Who/what is the source of divine power?
 - Who can have divine power?
 - Are all of God's great promises dependent upon divine power? Why or why not?

Encourage Application

9. Ask, *Which of the above phrases we explored means the most to you in this moment? Why?*
10. Call attention to the second question in the *Study Guide*. Invite members to share how they think, or have experienced, that life can be different when we ask God, rather than someone else, for help.
11. Direct participants to verse 4 and ask, *What is the difference between partaking of the divine nature and possessing a divine nature?*
12. Invite members to share examples from their lives that prove God's promises and presence provide all we need.
13. Close in a prayer of gratitude for God's good promises.