

A Practical Study of 2 PETER:

A Winner's Game Plan

“What It Takes to Break the Tape”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all Grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Study Number Eight – “Here’s the Key to Winning” – 2 Peter 3:11-18

Well we come to the end of our little journey through 2 Peter. Thank you so much for bearing with us through these days and letting Peter teach us.

Here are the Keys to Winning—he saves the best to last—verses 11-18, the end of the chapter.

Our key verses are those last two:

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried away by the

error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness. But be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

The thing I love about that verse is he uses “beloved” again. You know that Greek word is *agapētós*. It means “beloved brethren.”

You use the word *Philadelphia*, would be *phileō adelphos*—“love of the brothers.” This is referring to a person who’s being beloved.

I looked at these verses and I started to remember that old quote. I looked all over to try to find it the other day by Teddy Roosevelt:

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.

(source unknown)

Peter’s going to know victory and he has known defeat, but he’s going out in a blaze of glory.

Charlie Jones is now with the Lord. He’s written a book called *Life is Tremendous* that he’s left part of his legacy. What an enthusiastic guy. This is what he says:

If you're learning to say something positive to everybody about everything all the time, if you're disciplining your mind to see something positive in everything that happens, and if you're learning to see it big and keep it simple, you have a foundation on which to build a steady, expanding life.
(source unknown)

I remember back a number of years ago there was that old song called:

Learning to Lean

Learning to lean, learning to lean,
Learning to lean on Jesus.
Finding more power than I'd ever dreamed,
I'm learning to lean on Jesus.

Sad, broken hearted, so often I've knelt
And I've found God's peace so serene.
And all that he asks is a childlike trust
And a heart that is learning to lean.

There's glorious victory each day now for me.
I have found his peace so serene.
He helps me with each task, if only I'll ask
Every day now I am learning to lean.

(source unknown)

What we have learned is that when we become Christians we

receive everything we need in Jesus. And then we've learned there are certain curriculums of development that have got to become part and parcel of our Christian life.

Paul says exactly the same thing that Peter says in these verses that you've looked at.

Second Corinthians 3:18, when he's writing to the Corinthian church:

2 Corinthians 3:18

We all with unveiled face behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit.

So much of this is missing. So much of what's going on in our churches is a disaster simply because we don't understand the purpose of the church.

The purpose of the church is NOT to preach the gospel to the choir.

The purpose of the church is to be **EQUIPPING** the saints for the work of the ministry. That means a heavy diet of the teaching of the Word, growing in these areas that we've talked about so that we finally reach the stage of puberty.

We're little newborn babes desiring sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby.

We grow to the place where finally we're capable as believers to enter into the process of reproduction. And there's nothing more thrilling for you to have your first experience of leading somebody else to Jesus Christ.

I trust as you sit here, maybe you've had that experience. Or maybe it's in process for you. Just get off of your log and stay after it and be sure that you're making it quite clear what's involved in the decision for receiving Christ.

The other problem with the church, I think, is we're so strong in obstetrics that we forget pediatrics. Our obstetric wards are overflowing with brand new believers but they've not been challenged to go on to the discipline of discipleship and to grow and to mature in Christ.

This is a message that's got to get out because we're going to wear out the guys that have already reached puberty in trying to meet the needs of all of those who are in such desperate need. We need to be more and more people.

I'll always remember back a number of years ago when the coach from Oklahoma, Bud Wilkinson, was asked "is football contributing to the physical fitness of our country?" And he said "Absolutely not. When you've got 50,000 people in the stands who need exercise and 20 men on the field who are desperately in need of rest, that does nothing to contribute to the physical fitness."

And that's the church! We've got 50,000 people sitting in the stands and we've got a few stars that get up there and preach a sermon on Sunday and we feel like we're really growing. And so it's all in numbers. It's how big it can get, how massive it can become, rather than the fruit that is born simply because people in the pew have learned to grow and to mature in Christ.

The battle is tough and Peter has known that. And in those seven things we've looked at:

1. Here's What You Have (1:1-4)
2. Here's What You Do (1:5-11)
3. Here's How I'll Help (1:12-21)
4. Here's What You Are Going to Face (2:1-9)
5. Here's How They Look (2:10-22)
6. Here's What You Need to Remember (3:1-7)
7. Here's What's Going to Happen (3:8-10) in our study this morning.

You know that's a tragedy to me, really. It's because the apostle Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 3, the description of 3 types of people:

1. You've got the NATURAL MAN.
2. You've got the SPIRITUAL MAN—who is God's normal child
3. But you've also got the CARNAL MAN.

And Paul said “I can't talk to you Corinthians because you're still carnal. You're still babes in Christ.”

Wouldn't it be horrible to have to go to heaven with your diapers on? And still eating baby food?

I mean, that ought to motivate you more than anything else. And especially taking anybody with you when you go.

Somebody cared enough for you to share the gospel with you and lead you to Jesus Christ, now it's your turn. You name the Christ but you also have got the responsibility to share the gospel of Christ in every opportunity you get.

Verse 11:

v. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,”

You see, it's not an IF there, it's WHEN. IT is going to be destroyed. It's just a matter of when it's going to take place.

“these things” refers back to the statement that he made this morning about the earth being dissolved and destroyed and will disappear, back in verse 10.

“Since all these things ARE to be destroyed”—there's no question about it, that it's going to happen—“in this way.”

He's resting on the prophetic Word of God.

But he also says that the Lord is not slow in letting that process go on. It's right on schedule. But if you determine any slowness—for instance “a day is like a 1,000 years” with the Lord, you have those feelings inside—just remember that He's giving you one more chance today to begin to grow up, to get your priorities straight, to begin to live as a mature believer glorifying God.

That's compassion, that's not judgment.

His timing is perfect. We just don't know what it is.

We learned this morning that to Him, as an eternal being, “a day is like a 1,000 years and a 1,000 years is like one day.” And since our world is in a terminal situation and on a collision course with destruction, what kind of people ought we to be in view of that? That's his question.

“what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.”

You see, people seem to be more concerned about WHAT THEY DO than WHAT THEY ARE.

Because so many Christians you talk to, you ask them about their growing process, you ask them about their church, you ask them about their religious profession, well man they’ll scatter you with a bunch of shots. “Man, I’m an elder in the church” and “I’m the chairman of the board” and “I do this” and “I do that.”

I say “Who are you? How much have you grown in Christ?”

We fog the issue with service rather than becoming a servant for Christ. And I think that’s what Peter’s feeling.

You know there’s some great verses. Boy they started piling on this afternoon.

1 John 2:28

And now, little children, abide in him, so that if he should appear, we may have confidence and not shrink away from him in shame at his coming.

Embarrassed over where we are and our spiritual condition.

And then you know those famous verses. I love these.

1 John 3:1, 2

Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is

And a lot of times, everybody stops there. But listen to the third verse because the third verse tells you what you do in view of the ultimate transformation that's going to take place when you're with Him. Listen to verse 3:

1 John 3:3

And everyone who is having this hope in him is purifying himself even as he is pure.

There's the responsibility. There's the obligation. You now know the truth. The obligation is to get with it and to begin to exercise daily these very things where stuff is starting to drop off of your life like dead leaves because you realize it doesn't fit the kind of legacy you want to leave or the kind of thing that you want to be remembered for.

That's what purifying means.

Great verse from Paul:

2 Corinthians 7:1

Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Back in chapter 1 and verse 3 when we started this week together:

2 Peter 1:3

Seeing that his divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of him who called us by means of his own glory and virtue.

You've been called. You've got all that you need. Now, grab the book and focus on obedience and be a person who's learning more and more about Jesus and resting in His adequacy, trusting His sovereignty, and being obedient to what He has to say. And watch the blessings start to come.

God blesses the obedient heart.

Verse 12:

v. 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed, and the elements burning up are being melted.

“looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on

account of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed, and the elements burning up are being melted.”

I looked at that and you know that’s exactly what Ahmadinejad is doing. You know I mean, seriously. He believes that when he destroys Israel and the United States that the twelfth Imam—the Mahdi—is going to come. And he’s going to be responsible for it because that’s his call to life.

You say he’s mad and he’s arrogant—that’s true! But everything he says is that. That’s the way he’s living. That’s how the terrorists live, those folks who believe in this destruction of humanity. How is it that you and I are “hastening the coming of the day of God” (which means eternity)? It’s not the day of the Lord like we looked at this morning, which is a time of judgment and the eventual kingdom. This is eternal state.

You’re “hastening it in the coming of the day of God.”

Well, there’s several ways. If every one of you sitting here tonight, along with every other Christian in the world got their act together and started growing in a relationship to the Lord, the Lord wouldn’t have any reason to hang on any longer and let it happen. We’d be home free with Him.

There’s some interesting parallels in scripture with regard to what God does in view of what people do.

Remember when Jonah finally went after that whale of

experience to preach in Nineveh? And there was a revival. And then he got really ticked off because what he had said about the destruction wasn't going to happen because God saw that the sackcloth and the humility and the brokenness, and the whole city turning to God. That city of Nineveh is finally destroyed a 100 years later because they went right back to where they were. But it affected heaven because of it.

When you and I get serious, and we're walking with God as a light and as a passionate lover of Jesus, it is going to make a difference. And that's all Peter is saying here.

“on account of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed, and the elements burning up are being melted.”

Now you're saying, WHY? This old world, this whole universe is cursed by sin. God is going to start all over again. The only difference between this and the flood is He wiped out the population. Now He's going to wipe out the whole mess. There's going to be a brand new heavens and there's going to be a brand new earth.

You almost feel that when you're up here, don't you? For when you walk out here in the daytime the sky is so blue. There's no pollutants to make it gray and dark. And at night you go out there and all the lights of heaven come on. It's gorgeous and spectacular.

It's a simple thing for God to create a new heavens and a new earth. And we believe that this one will ultimately be

destroyed. And that leads to the question, how? And we don't want to mess with that. There's all kinds of ways that God can speak a word, bring it into existence—He did that. Now He can destroy it in the same way because it's His.

You say “Ok Don, how am I supposed to live in view of this?”

1. Be alert and recognize what's going on.
2. Be active in sharing with others, knowing that we're living with a short fuse.
3. Be aware of the condition of people who don't know Christ.

Weep those tears of Dody this morning when Shirley died without a relationship to Christ. Those are the kinds of things that show me that you are passionate about loving and caring and sharing with others who are around you.

Boy I admire William Barclay. You know, there are some commentators that you hit on particular books that happen to be their finest hour. I think out of the 17 volumes of the *Daily Study Bible*, this is Barclay's finest hour when he talks about the hastening of the coming of Christ—or the day of God—and getting all this wrapped up. This is what he says. The question is, how may we hasten it?

1. It may be done by PRAYER. Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth.” The earnest

prayer of the Christian heart hastens the coming of the King. If in no other way, it does so in this, that he who prays, opens his own heart for the coming of the King into it.

2. It may be done by PREACHING. Matthew tells us that Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all the nations, and then shall come the end.”
(source unknown)

Okay, aggressively preach the gospel to the whole world.
We’ve got the potential!

I’m sitting before you preaching around the world every week for 45 minutes on OnePlace.com. It just blows me away to know that there are people in Singapore and Australia, in Europe and other places that we don’t even know and we’ve never been but they’ve heard the message of the gospel.

And then to be in the Philippines five days a week for 30 minutes. These missionaries have started an FM radio station and I’m teaching the Word there and I’m sitting here at TrailWest in the mountains on this occasion.

The technology’s there. We’ve just got to keep going after it and proclaiming the gospel.

[Barclay continued:]

3. It may be done by PENITENCE and obedience. Of all things, this would be nearest to Peter's mind and to Peter's heart. The rabbis had two sayings. It is the sins of the people which prevent the coming of the Messiah. If the Jews would genuinely repent for one day, the Messiah would come.

(source unknown)

I mean, that's built into their theology and they're still waiting for Him to come. And we're waiting for the King to come back because He's already been here and accomplished what only the gospel could accomplish.

I remember chapter 3, verse 9 at this point:

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord of the promise is not delaying, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not desiring for any to perish but for all to make room for repentance.

If everyone came to repentance He wouldn't have any reason for delaying any longer—is another way you can look at it.

“the day of God” is the eternal state.

And I put Revelation 21:1 there:

Revelation 21:1

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away; and there is no longer any sea.

That bothers a lot of people because they love to fish. And there's not going to be any sea up there. Well let me tell you one other thing, there's not going to be any swimming either. And there's not going to be any sex because there's not going to be any marriage either.

Do you have to have all those things to go with you in order to be happy in heaven?

You see how some of the things that are so rich to us down here, they're going to fade into insignificance when we get over on the other side.

Verse 13:

v. 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling,

“But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling,”

That's the FINISH LINE! That's the GOAL! That's what he's looking for and that's what you and I should be looking for.

I went back to chapter 1 and verse 4 and picked it up at this point:

2 Peter 1:4

Through which things he has generously given to us his precious and exceedingly great promises, in order that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the destruction in the world caused by desire.

Look at that!

“But according to His promise”—He’s made a bunch of them. But with regard to the “new heavens and the new earth” in Revelation 21 he says:

Revelation 21:22-27

And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine upon it; for the glory of God has illumined it and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. And in the daytime (for there shall be no night) its gates shall never be closed. ...

And on it goes.

Verse 14:

v. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things, make every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

“Therefore,”—what do you do when you got the **THEREFORE?**

He’s been lecturing you now about heaven, about all of these promises that are going to be fulfilled.

“Therefore”—what’s your next word?

Isn’t that great? There it is again. You’re starting to get the feel for it.

“*agapētós*”—that was the word he couldn’t say back in John 21 and now we’re seeing it over and over again in a form which he’s describing the people around him as “beloved.”

They are “beloved” because I am sacrificing for them. I’m persevering. I’m giving of myself.

That’s the whole story of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Fifteen life-size pictures of what *agapé* love is. And Peter just keeps using it here as he’s wrapping it up. He’s going to use it again because I’ve been reading ahead here.

“Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things,”—[What are you supposed to do?]-“make every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,”

In light of all of these cataclysmic things that are going to happen, you need to be focusing on these three things. But before I get to them, I want you to get the passion of Peter because I'm going back for just a second and I'm going to hit you with about 7 or 8 commands that he's given in this book, that you've marked down, and tell me if he's not just a tad bit passionate:

“make every intense effort,”

“be all the more diligent,”

“be paying attention,”

“to have our sincere minds stirred up,”

and now again:

“make every effort to be found by Him.”

And in a three-fold way, as you're making “every effort” this is what you're supposed to be focusing on. It's wonderful to see what he has to say about these three things.

This takes us back to verse 11:

“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,”

But now he's got three of them here.

1. First of all, "to be found in Him in PEACE."

That "peace" is:

INWARD,

It's OUTWARD and

It's UPWARD.

"The work of righteousness will be peace."

Peace in the Bible is:

PAST,

PRESENT, and

FUTURE.

PAST when you entered into relationship with Christ, you experienced peace for the first time.

By the blood of Christ you have made peace with God. So that's the first time you experience it.

OUTWARDLY it's in your relationships with others.

And you're going to watch Peter here in just a few minutes, he's got to get some homework done before he goes to glory and it has to do with INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. And you and I have the same responsibility as believers to be free of that.

And as far as the FUTURE has come, the Prince of Peace is coming back and your future's going to be guaranteed to be that of peace.

2. Now you're getting a little nervous aren't you? That peace was a little bit easy but now you're getting this "SPOTLESS" stuff and you know we're in trouble.

How do you deal with sin in your life as a Christian? First John 1:9, don't you?

1 John 1:9

If we are confessing...

That's PRESENT TENSE—that means to say the same thing about it that God says about it. Now listen, I don't buy this stuff where you have these public prayers in church where on Sunday morning they say "Well if we've committed any sins this week, God forgive us" and on we go to the sermon. You specifically and I specifically, when we have sinned, must deal with that business daily on a private matter. To be teachable by the Spirit where we have sinned and offended.

Your whole growth cycle is dependent upon that. Why?

Because there're two things you can do that is going to shut down everything in your life as a believer, as far as your growth.

You grieve the Holy Spirit and you quench the Holy Spirit.

Every day you've got to walk out of that time with the Lord, filled with the Spirit, because you're not grieving Him and quenching Him.

Do you know what grieving Him does?

Ephesians 4:30—when you sin, you grieve the Holy Spirit.

When you quench the Holy Spirit you're saying "No" to what He's telling you to do. You're putting out the fire. You're turning off the faucet. You're shutting it down when you grieve and you quench.

So I find myself every morning praying:

Psalm 139:23, 24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; ...

Psalm 26:2, 3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;
for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in your truth.

But I go a step further now. When I'm getting through with my devotional time I say:

“God, I can't afford to waste this day. If I am grieving your Holy Spirit by something that's in my life that's an offense to You and is going to affect this day, please teach me what it is. And God I want to acknowledge it because I want you to create in me a clean heart. And God, if You've got something in mind for me today and I'm kicking up my heels and bowing my neck and I'm backing off from it and shutting off the Spirit of God, forgive me. And O God, make me a person motivated to do exactly what You want done for me and through me today.”

Then I say:

“Ok God, now that I've gotten through that, would You please fill me with Your Spirit afresh today? So that Your words would be on my lips, Your wisdom would be in my thoughts, Your works would be the labor of my hands, and Your ways would be the pathway of my feet. To keep me from evil that it may not grieve You or it may not quench the Spirit of God within me, that people can see Christ in me.”

And then I say:

“Lord, keep me on task, on track and out of Satan’s traps and we’ll be good to go.”

Those are the kinds of things that happen when you’re dealing with a spotless record. It’s God’s responsibility, once we’ve been teachable and we have dealt with it. That’s that whole picture in Psalm 51.

As David is a man after God’s own heart, just pouring out his heart over his sin.

3. And then the third word is “BLAMELESS.”

That focuses on the HORIZONTAL more, I think, than it does on the VERTICAL—although both are there.

Because if you’re “spotless” and you’ve dealt with it, you’ve taken care of the vertical.

“Blameless” has more to do with our everyday life.

Now do you understand why the apostle Paul, when he was bearing witness to the Sanhedrin, he said in:

Acts 24:16

Herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience always void of offense toward God and toward man.

In other words DAILY I'm examining my heart. I'm exercising myself—PRESENT TENSE—to have a conscience void of offense up there and down here in my relationship with others.

And then I just wrote, for your own personal comfort and for mine too, Jude verses 24 and 25. You ready for this?

Jude 24, 25

Now unto him who is able to guard you against stumbling, to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever more.

He never promises anything until—or commands anything—but along with it He also gives you the enablement. And so these are areas that we need to be exercised in if we expect God to use us to bear fruit in the days that are before us.

Woo that was good! That even thrilled my own heart.

v. 15 and be considering the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you,

“and be considering the patience of our Lord to be salvation;”

Back to chapter 3:9, He is not slow. Consider the patience.

Makrothymía—that means “little suffering.” You are suffering a little in the process of waiting.

Now you learned already that you persevere as part of that in the delay. Now you’re learning that when patience is involved, you’re yielding the controls to Him. And you’re in quietness at peace because of that.

“and be considering the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our [*agapētós*] Paul.”

That is a miracle of miracles. Peter and Paul had one of the toughest relationships.

Galatians 2 sets the stage for why Peter and Paul never really got very close.

Peter was called to the Jews. He was more of a legalist. In the pictures where you see him in the book of Acts, he’s concerned about the law. He’s concerned about circumcision. He’s concerned about all those things.

Paul on the other hand is going to the pagan world. And he is going to go and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Well there was one time that Peter brought some of the guys from Jerusalem up to Antioch. That was the church that was the mega church in those days and God was really using

Barnabas and Paul up there in the church along with several others. And listen to what we read:

Galatians 2:11-16

But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned; for prior to the coming of certain men from James, [that's Jerusalem] he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, and with the result that even Barnabas [my buddy] was carried away by his hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of all, [this is a public scorching] "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like the Jews? We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles. Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; since by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Woo! Boy if you'd have gotten something like that, it'd have taken you a long, long time to get that relationship reconciled.

But, when you come to the time of your death, it's amazing the number of reconciliations that take place and the forgiveness.

That was Peter's deal. He's now ready to go be crucified upside down.

The big one was Paul. What about Paul in 2 Timothy 4?

The big one was a kid by the name of John Mark. John Mark went on that first missionary journey and he flicked it in, went back to Jerusalem—we don't know why—but when he got to Pamphylia he turned around and left the apostle Paul and Barnabas and went away.

They finished the journey. When they got back to Antioch, reported to the church, old Barnabas heard Paul singing in the shower with Willie Nelson "On the Road Again" and he knew they were getting ready to go. This was his cousin, John Mark, who had flicked it in. So Barnabas wanted him to go again and Paul just said he did it once, I'm not going to take it twice. It's over my dead body that he's going to go.

It was so heated that they split. Barnabas and John Mark went on their own way. Paul got in touch with a teacher down in Jerusalem by the name of Silas and they went the other direction.

But see, all of that took place. But when you get to 2 Timothy chapter 4 and he's sitting in that Mamertine prison, he's only got a few months left to live he says:

2 Timothy 4:11

bring John Mark with you for he's profitable to me in the ministry.

That tells me that there's got to be some relationship with wrapping up your life, with reconciliation with people that you've been hurt by or you have hurt. And you've let a root of bitterness spring up so it's impossible for you to speak those words and accept the responsibility of making that right.

Would you listen if Jesus told you that? What is the first thing He said when the pole dropped into the ground? His hands and His feet have been attached to the cross? The time of the most excruciating pain, what does He say? "Father be forgiving them for they don't know what they are doing."

So His first words from the Cross have to do with that which could dampen, to affect the effectiveness of the Cross. And He'll have no part of it. Forgive.

But isn't it great? First of all, he makes reference to the fact that Paul is a "beloved brother." That's the healing that takes place when we truly deal with the situations and issues before us.

I just wrote at the top of the page:

How tragic to go to glory with a broken relationship.

I mean there's something we ought to learn out of that.

“according to the wisdom given to him...”

Now Peter’s paying tribute to Paul. That wisdom of course has come from the Lord and there are so many verses that we could attach to that.

But then he goes on to say in verse 16:

v. 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are unlearned and lacking stability are distorting (twisting), as they are also doing with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

“as also in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things,”—that is what we’ve just been talking about—“in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are unlearned and lacking stability are distorting (twisting), as they are also doing with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

He’s saying some of the things that Paul writes are hard to understand.

1 Corinthians 2:14

The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him and he cannot know

them because they are spiritually discerned.

It's not necessarily Paul's writings, it's the capacity of the natural man to receive and understand what the scripture says without having a relationship to Christ.

It is the Spirit's function in the life of the believer to guide us into all truth.

John 16:13

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. He will share things of Me and make them clear.

What are some of the things do you think that he's referring to when he says Paul's stuff is hard?

I think the justification, the doctrine of justification by faith,

the doctrine of identification with the believer and the death, burial and resurrection of Christ,

the doctrine of the flesh and the spirit,

the doctrine is spelled out in Romans 9, 10 and 11, with regard to where Israel is in God's plan,

the subject of spiritual gifts has been murdered by so

many,

the subject of law and grace,

the priesthood of Melchizedek would be another incredible thing that you have to get ahold of.

With all of these things, they “are unlearned and lack stability.”

You see, that’s what happens when you’re not in the Word. You’re “unlearned” and you’re tossed to-and-fro by every wind of doctrine that comes down the pike. (Ephesians 4:14)

And some of these folks that are doing that, they “are distorting (twisting)” what Paul has had to say, taking verses out of context—distorting it to try to prove their own place.

The apostle Paul is so concerned about people who do that. And it’s to the detriment of those because their lives are going to be dooss.

They’re going to overlook all of what the scripture has to say about it.

Verse 17 and 18 are our key verses and I’ll wrap it up.

v. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried

away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,

“You therefore,” [*agapētós*]—there it is again.

Oh that word is just got to really hit him because the Lord used it twice and he had to say he didn’t measure up.

“knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,”

Now it doesn’t say you fell from your own salvation. That’s where we take stuff out of context and get ourselves running down a road of eternal insecurity.

John 10:28

I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone take them out of my hand.

But you can fall from your steadfastness in your passionate determination to follow in obedience, the truth of the word of God.

Paul, when he writes to the Galatians said you have fallen from grace because you’ve gone back to living under the law.

It’s serious. The choices you make determine so many of these things because if you’re living every day grieving and

quenching the Spirit, you're not getting anywhere. You're just spinning your wheels in the mud. You're making a lot of noise but you're not going anywhere.

And that's the picture that's described by those who would live in the flesh.

Peter doesn't want them to live like this. Because if they do, they're going to be vulnerable to these people who twist and turn the scripture to their own personal advantage and to the deception of these believers who are on track and growing.

Don't let them do that! That very word is a word that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15 to them:

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

And then that's a PRESENT TENSE in that last verse by the way. And that verse is the key to the whole book.

v. 18 but be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

“but”—and I’m ok in translating it this way ok because when you have something in the present tense you can also put the word “constantly” by it. It’s an everyday thing.

“but”—COMMAND—PRESENT IMPERATIVE.

If it’s a NEGATIVE present imperative, it says “stop being troubled in your heart.

If it’s POSITIVE, it’s “be constantly doing it.”

This is PRESENT. It’s POSITIVE. It is a command. It’s the last writing of Peter to tell you how to win at the game of life by one who did!

Here it is! You’ve seen it spilled out in this letter over and over again by this man who had a past that he was freed from,

“be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of”—that One who is everything to you in chapter 1:3.

“the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

See how far up-field we’ve gotten? See how unfocused we are? The only agenda that he gives you in this final command is to:

“be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Can I saddle up to your mate, to your kids? Have them tell me

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if they've seen changes in your life? If they know that you're growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

I don't care what's going to happen to the world. Peter is concerned that we would get sidetracked.

I don't care about the false teachers and everything that we've learned in the study from that point of view. I'm going to be focused on Jesus.

Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..

I'll tell you brothers and sisters in Christ, if you're focused on Jesus you won't go. You won't go wrong. You just stay in love and grow greater and greater in love.

Now, that last verse he gets so excited he has to end with the doxology:

“To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.”

What are the TWO KEYS to winning in that last verse?

1. First, be “constantly on your guard”—that's your DEFENSIVE STANCE. You know the terrain now. You

know what you're liable to face. Now you be "constantly on your guard," defensively.

2. Secondly, be "constantly growing"—that's your **OFFENSIVE WEAPON**. You've got your shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God and you're ready to go to war boy! And grow and mature, knowing ahead of time what you're going to get into and stay after it. Be faithful. Stand strong and stable.

Don't be a person who has to hear from the apostle Paul "you WERE running well. What happened to you?" You got distracted. You realized that Satan's like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

"be growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Grace produces:

the humble, broken spirit,

the tender, compassion, contrite heart,

genuine, good, gracious, godly person.

That's what grace does when you're freed to mature in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Satan's still around studying your game-fields, your game

films and all the rest of it, stay focused on the Word—the written word and the living Word. Be constantly on your guard. And whatever you do, stay focused on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Daniel 11:32:

The people who know their God will display strength and to take action.

There are three obligations to every believer that's growing:

to know,

to show, and

to grow.

That's the way you're going to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

One poet put it this way:

We mutter and sputter
We fume and we spurt.
We mumble and grumble,
Our feelings get hurt.

We can't understand things,
Our vision grows dim.

When all that we need
Is just a moment with Him.

—Author unknown

(source unknown)

And it'll get you back on track again and things will be exciting for you to see what He is going to do.

One of my favorite writers is F. B. Meyer. I love his little commentaries. He says:

We may measure our growth in grace by the measure in which we grow in the knowledge of the word of God.

(source unknown)

Boy that's a great statement.

We can measure our growth in grace by the measure in which we grow in the knowledge of the word of God.

Well, in this last lesson I just gave you four lessons this time to wrap it up because I want you to focus on where you are spiritually and whether you are in a position to be growing and to bearing fruit because your Father's going to be glorified by the bearing of much fruit.

LESSON #1: Holy conduct and godliness ought to be top priorities in our lives.

LESSON #2: The present heavens and earth are going to be destroyed by fire.

LESSON #3: We need to be making every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.

LESSON #4: The two keys for winning in the game of life: (1) Be constantly on your guard and (2) Be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. Here's What You Have (1:1-4)
2. Here's What You Do (1:5-11)
3. Here's How I'll Help (1:12-21)
4. Here's What You Are Going to Face (2:1-9)
5. Here's How They Look (2:10-22)
6. Here's What You Need to Remember (3:1-7)
7. Here's What's Going to Happen (3:8-10)
8. Here's the Keys to Winning (3:11-18)

*I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,*

Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.
(source unknown)

Keep on climbing. It's going to be worth it. And every step of the way you've got someone who is there beside you saying "Sic'em man! Stay after it."

Father, I thank You for Your Word and thank You for this wonderful letter, for the things that you've opened up to us by Your Spirit together. And we pray now that it won't be just put aside and forgotten but will be exercised over, will be compared with our lives and our experiences that we might become more conformable to Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Study Number Eight – “Here’s the Key to Winning” – 2

Peter 3:11-18

NOTES

v.11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
v.12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed, and the elements burning up are being melted.
v.13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling,
v.14 Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things, make every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,
v.15 and be considering the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you,
v.16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are unlearned and lacking stability are distorting (twisting), as they are also doing with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.
v.17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,
v.18 but be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Peter 3:11-18 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. In light of total destruction, what does Peter say about us in verse 11?

3. What two things are we to be doing, according to verse 12?

4. What are we looking for, according to verse 13?

5. In light of these events, what are we supposed to do, according to verse 14?

6. How does Peter refer to Paul's writings, according to verse 16?

7. What warning is given in verse 17?

8. What are we commanded to do in verse 18?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Holy conduct and godliness ought to be top priorities in our lives.

LESSON #2: The present heavens and earth are going to be destroyed by fire.

LESSON #3: We need to be making every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.

LESSON #4: The two keys for winning in the game of life: (1) Be constantly on your guard and (2) Be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.