

I. Intro

A. Story:

1. Dad teaching me about rifle calibers. Told me how to load the gun (always check the caliber!) AND he told me how to aim and fire.
2. Handed me the cartridge, watched me load it and as I brought it up to aim, slapped my face, "Bang!" He had purposely handed me the wrong caliber. I'll never forget that lesson.
3. My dad explained and warned. It was my job to listen and obey.

B Verses 1-9: Peter describes false teachers in more general terms, Verses 10-22 He gets VERY specific. Warns us of the motives and actions that will give them away and how it will damage the church and individuals.

C. Peter's job was to warn. OUR job is to heed the warning in two ways:

1. Be careful who you allow to lead you. Watch their doctrine AND their life.
2. Be careful who YOU'RE becoming.
  - a. Here's why: The only threat that a false teacher poses to you is if you allow them to mislead you OR you become one.
  - b. Watch YOUR doctrine and life with even MORE precision than you watch others.
  - c. Be VERY aware of what you believe (is it biblical?) and who you're becoming (am I Christlike?)
  - d. Read and know your Bible: McCheyne Reading Program (posted on socials)
  - e. Join a group. We are the worst judges of our own character. We need community so that we have a mirror to see ourselves clearly.
3. To equip you to do this, today we're going to work through the passage verse by verse and make a list of Peter's warnings.

*and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.*

*Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, (2 Peter 2:10)*

II. Warnings

**A. False teachers are rebellious and immoral.**

1. Their king: SELF. Their desires, impulses and own will in exchange for God
2. "Glorious ones"= divine beings
  - a. "I am my own master here in the physical realm. I will do what I want, and I don't fear any consequence that may come from any spiritual being." (like angels or demons or even God Himself)
  - b. Peter's opponents: no divine judgment after death. "So I do what I want."
  - c. Rebellious, arrogant people who won't listen to anyone but themselves.
3. Their lifestyle: material and physical lust and excess. "Morality is for suckers."
  - a. It is true that morality can in itself become a god.

- b. And while we must reject legalism, we need to embrace the relationship between God's grace for us and God's kingship over us.
- c. In our current culture, even in the church, it's very easy to brush off our sin patterns, to make light of the ways we fall into unrighteous behavior. But those decisions, ignoring God's commands, show contempt for His kingship in our lives.
  - 1) His commands aren't there to be ignored and treated as another opportunity for God to forgive me. The heart of a true follower of Jesus is to obey.
  - 2) Perfect? NO! But what is the inclination of your heart? To be ruled by your evil desires or be to be ruled by your King Who died for you?
- d. So false teachers are rebellious and immoral, but ...

**B. The way of Jesus is to surrender and be holy.** So Peter has shown the heart and actions of the false teacher—what about their mouth?

*whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. (2 Peter 2:11-13a)*

**C. False teachers use their mouths to slander.**

- 1. If you want to SEE the condition of someone's heart, LISTEN to the words of their mouth (Matthew 12:34: out of the abundance of the heart ... mouth speaks)
- 2. False teachers are slanderers. Even the angels won't bring a slanderous accusation against another being. But a false teacher can't resist. They will slander ANYONE who gets in between them and their ambitions.
- 3. In ignorance, they mock what they don't understand. If you want to know the content of someone's character, take notice of how they treat others, especially those they disagree with.

**D. The way of Jesus is to build up.**

- 1. False teachers' mouths are full of slander. (James 3:9) Jesus' brother warns us of using our mouths to curse people who are made in God's image.
  - a. Peter tells us that this destructive behavior will bring destruction on the one who perpetrates it: "suffering wrong as the WAGE for their wrongdoing."
  - b. In other words, the work that these false teachers do is destruction and so their paycheck (wage) will be the same: destruction.
  - c. NOT Karma. They will suffer the consequences of what they do, but the consequences are intentionally driven by God (2 Peter 2:3,9)
- 2. Christians must speak honestly and sometimes very directly. Jesus did!
  - a. But as we do, we must remember we're speaking to an imager of God. (harm or heal?)
  - b. This takes GREAT humility. False teachers are not humble.

**E. False teachers are prideful**

1. In all the verses we've read so far, there is this overarching sense of arrogance. "I follow my own lead, I do what I want, I speak about others as I see fit"—all saturated in ignorant arrogance.
2. This is NOT the way of Jesus. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

**F. The way of Jesus is humility.**

1. I find it SO incredibly compelling that the God of all the universe—Jesus—stooped down and washed His disciples' feet. And in the Gospel of John=cross
2. Humility is ALWAYS the posture of love.
3. So sadly, love is the farthest thing from the heart of a false teacher:

**G. False teachers are greedy.** (pick up part way through verse 13)

*They count it pleasure to revel [indulge, party] in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!*  
(2 Peter 2:13b-14)

1. Instead of working hard to earn an honest wage, they would rather party all day, and indulge in luxury, freeloading from the people they are claiming to shepherd.
2. Remember, you are not a family to them. You are a business.
3. Beware of a greedy, stingy leader—someone who cuts corners, pays under the table, shows up to receive but absent when it's time to give.
4. False teachers are TAKERS. Genuine followers of Jesus are GIVERS.

**H. The way of Jesus is generosity.**

1. Jesus and His people seek to give, even past the point of sacrifice.
2. But a false teacher will call you to sacrifice for them, all the while LYING to you to get what they want out of you.

**I. False teachers love their lies.**

1. Feast with you: Early church had feasts (agapes). Everyone, poor or rich, was fed. They culminated in celebrating Communion (Lord's Supper) together.
2. The way Peter writes this sentence about feasting seems to be an ironic picture and wordplay. The implication of what he writes is: "While the true believers celebrate the Lord Jesus and what He gave at these feasts, the false teachers celebrate their own deceitfulness, surrounded by suckers who believed them." False teachers love their own lying because it serves their greed.

**J. The way of Jesus is to love the truth.**

1. Not only do false teachers have their eyes on your money and your stuff, they actually have eyes that are prowling for people they can use
2. "Eyes full of adultery" (Greek literal): "Eyes full of an adulteress"
  - a. Look at every woman, considering them as a potential candidate for adultery
  - b. People are objects to be used for their sinful desires. You see:

**K. False teachers use people.**

1. "Entice unsteady souls"— False teachers look for those who are vulnerable or new to the faith, picking them off to serve their lust and greed.

2. "Hearts trained in greed"—"trained" (gymnadzo—"gymnasium"). They plan, rehearse, and practice their skills of seduction and exploitation.
3. If this is you, you look at the church as a place to prowl, take and use. I pray that God grants you repentance. There is unfathomable grace and forgiveness in Jesus. And it is free—a gift.
  - a. But if this is you and you won't repent:
  - b. CURSED! If you do not heed the call to repent and continue in your path of disbelief—prowling, taking and using—your "condemnation ... is not idle, and [your] destruction is not asleep." You have been warned.
4. The way of Jesus is not to use people.

**L. The way of Jesus is to serve people.**

1. Peter illustrates the character of these false teachers, drawing upon an Old Testament story of a prophet named Balaam from Numbers 22:

*Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. (2 Peter 2:15-16)*

2. Balaam was a prophet for hire. A king named Balak needed a prophet to curse the people of Israel who were moving his way to inhabit the part of their promised land he was ruling in.
  - a. Balaam played the part of a righteous prophet by denying him a few times. Eventually he goes with the intention of cursing Israel in return for money.
  - b. Irony: Balaam's donkey (summarize) This animal has more sense than a human being who is overtaken by greed.

*These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. [what use is a waterless well? Empty. And a mist clouds sight, brings confusion]. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. (2 Peter 2:17-19)*

**M. False Teachers use Boastful Rebellious Speech and Indulgent Freedom to lure you away**

1. They will confidently tell you that their sin and yours is "no big deal."
2. They will promise you freedom from all of that stuck up "morality" your preachers are teaching you.
3. They want to make you what they are: SLAVES.

**N. Rebellion and Indulgence is NOT freedom. It is slavery.**

1. We are enslaved by what we cannot, or will not, say "no" to.
2. Will we be a servant of SELF or a servant of CHRIST?
3. Signs you are being lured away:
  - a. Rejecting the authority of God and those God placed in authority over you.

- b. Indulging in sin rather than fighting it.

**O. And here is the final stark warning:**

*For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22)*

1. I don't believe this is a warning about someone "losing salvation." I believe this is a warning to those who never had it and yet will put themselves in a position where it will be even harder to attain it. Let me explain:
  2. These false teachers have been in the church, exposed enough to the knowledge of Jesus to be aware that He is the true way.
    - a. But they never surrendered to Him in faith. They have the knowledge but haven't surrendered. And instead head back to a life of rebellion
    - b. I wonder if, in writing this, Peter was thinking about Judas.
    - c. Peter says that rejecting the truth (Jesus) after having such close proximity to Him makes their state worse than if they had never heard the truth or been in community with the church.
    - d. Why is it worse? Very unlikely to ever return to it again, to truly surrender in faith for salvation. "Been there, done that."
  3. And so like a dog or a pig running back to the filth they left, a false teacher, having used and abused the church runs back home to the filth and slavery of a hard heart. The path they have chosen has done near-irreparable damage to their soul.
  4. What a bleak and disturbing truth we've heard today.
    - a. But what a shame it would be for us to leave it there. God's Word, no matter how grim or bleak some of its truth can be, ALWAYS leads back to JESUS.
    - b. This passage is the pitch-black backdrop of night against which the brilliance of the Son can shine!
      - 1) Yes, there are evil, greedy, false shepherds in this world.
      - 2) But there is also the GOOD SHEPHERD (I invite you to stand for what you're about to hear because this is our response of WORSHIP.)
- III. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is everything that false shepherds are not. (Philippians 2)
- A. Where they are rebels, HE is King.
  - B. Where they are immoral, HE is Holy.
  - C. Where they slander, HE builds up.
  - D. Where they are prideful, HE is humble.
  - E. Where they take in their greed, HE gives in His sacrifice.
  - F. Where they blind with lies, HE gives sight with truth.
  - G. Where they use the broken, HE serves the broken.

H. AND, where they boast in their slavery, HE BLEEDS for our freedom.

I. This is our Savior!

*who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (2 Peter 2:6-11)*

“Jesus Christ is Lord, Glory to our Father!”

1. **Invitation:** Have you surrendered your life to Jesus by trusting Him alone to save you? Or have you been hoping that you'd somehow be a good enough person to earn it? That's not how it works. It is a gift, given to hands stretched out in faith.
2. Have you heard the truth enough to have proximity, but never walk through the door into the house?
3. Today, His invitation stands. Come and believe. If you want to give yourself to Jesus this morning, either quietly or out loud, pray after me ...



## WOLVES & THE GOOD SHEPHERD

2 PETER 2:10-22

SEPTEMBER 6, 2020 | PASTOR TRAVIS EDGERTON



### GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

**1** What does it feel like to be lied to and know that you are being lied to, even as the lie is spoken? What does it feel like to discover that something you believed to be true is actually false?

In chapter 2 of this letter, Peter targets the false teachers of his day and makes a stand for truth against heresy, providing us with an example of standing up for truth in a relative society. Travis did a great job on Sunday of contrasting false teachers with Jesus and showing how we can spot false teachers by knowing the truth of who Jesus is and who He calls us to become.

### QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

### DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

**1** Someone read **2 Peter 2:10-16**.

*<sup>10</sup> and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, <sup>11</sup> whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. <sup>12</sup> But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, <sup>13</sup> suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. <sup>14</sup> They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! <sup>15</sup> Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, <sup>16</sup> but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.*

**What indications do we have in these verses that false prophets lived and taught the lie that "it doesn't matter how we live?"**

**Are there any subtle ways in which we believe this lie today?**

**Why do you think false teachers are labeled as greedy so often? How does the illustration of Balaam reaffirm this?**

These false teachers had trained themselves well. They had become experts in "greed," which simply means "a desire to have more." An Old Testament story illustrates this. Balaam, who was supposed to be a prophet of God, loved money more than God. He was willing to pursue fame and fortune instead of obeying God. He also taught immorality. As a result, he was

rebuked by God through a donkey. For a donkey to rebuke the prophet's madness reflects not only on the foolishness of Balaam but also the foolishness of all false teachers.

## 2 Someone read **2 Peter 2:17-22**.

<sup>17</sup>These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. <sup>18</sup>For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup>They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. <sup>20</sup>For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. <sup>21</sup>For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. <sup>22</sup>What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

**Which of the spiritual errors given in these verses are present today?**

**Why might new Christians be more prone to believing the lies of false teachers?**

The empty, boastful words of these false teachers were enticing enough for some believers to be ensnared by them. This was particularly true of new Christians who were just emerging from the clutches of sexual license practiced in the non-Christian culture. The false teachers, aware of this, twisted the concept of Christian freedom into something it was not.

## **LIVE IT OUT** (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

- 1** Travis reminded us that the false teachers are rebellious, immoral, slanderous, prideful, greedy, they love their lies and use people. He also reminded us that the way of Jesus is to surrender, be holy, build others up, live with humility, be generous, to love the truth and to serve people. **Looking at this contrasting list of values, where have you seen growth these past 6 months in the areas of becoming more like Jesus? What are some areas of growth that is still needed in you?**
- 2** **Where are you most likely to be tempted to blur the lines of a sinful lifestyle or even believe a dangerous lie that redefines sin as something other than sin? How can you respond to that tendency in light of what we discussed in our group?**
- 3** **What does it look like to affirm one another in following Christ with our lives?**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Close your time in prayer with your group.

## **NEXT WEEK**

**2 PETER 3:1-10** Read this passage before Sunday and your home group. Remember to take good notes so you are ready to add to the discussion your home group will have!

## **PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS** (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

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### **How to Use this Discussion Guide**

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit [cpmodesto.org/groupleaders](http://cpmodesto.org/groupleaders) to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit [cpmodesto.org/homegroups](http://cpmodesto.org/homegroups) and use the Home Group Finder!

## **COMMENTARY**

### **2 PETER 2:10-22**

**2:10-22.** Peter further described the false teachers. They were rash, arrogant, and, in contrast to the behavior of the more powerful angels, slanderously insolent. They were brute-like and irrational in their understanding, blasphemous, and ruled by lust and greed. Peter compared the false teachers to Balaam (Num 22-24). Like Balaam, these false teachers had abandoned the straight path, were consumed by greed, and would receive the wages of their unrighteousness; Balaam's donkey showed more moral sense than Balaam did. The false teachers are described as springs without water and mists driven by a whirlwind. In other words, they were unsatisfactory and unstable. As punishment, the gloom of darkness was reserved for them. With their empty boastful words, and despite their promises of freedom to others, these false teachers led their hearers into the same spiritual slavery and corruption to which they themselves were enslaved. Although these heretics had once claimed to know Christ and even experienced some freedom from sin, they returned to their old practices and became entangled again. They were worse off in the end with their rejection of Christ than they were at the beginning when in a state of ignorance; indeed, it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness. Just as a dog returns to its own vomit and a pig returns to wallow in the mud, so also these false teachers reverted to the immoral lifestyles they preferred by nature. The immoral behavior of the false teachers shows that they had never been genuinely converted.