

## 2nd Peter Chapter 1- John Karmelich

1. If you were on your deathbed with your loved ones around you, what would you want to tell them as your final words? Let's say you had an hour as opposed to say, ten seconds. ☺ Let's also say you couldn't talk about yourself but wanted to teach about life.
  - a) Now let's widen the scope and say you were a bible teacher. Let's say you spent years with a specific group, leading them, and you knew this was your final speech. What things about God and life would you want to communicate?
  - b) Peter's "answers" of those questions, is this letter. Peter focuses on some fundamental principals for living the Christian life. Most of the letter deals with warnings about false teachers. It is Peter saying to other Christians, "My time is short, here is what God desires of you in a nutshell, and beware of those who want to do you harm." (That is 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter in one sentence. ☺)
2. Let me give you the "who, what, when and where's" of Second Peter:
  - a) The "who" is Peter. It is stated in the first verse.
    - i) The authenticity of Peter's second letter was more controversial than 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. When the bible was canonized in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, its legitimacy was questioned.
    - ii) The original Greek language of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter is a little more "clumsy" than the first letter. That is because Silas was a co-author on Peter's first letter and probably edited Peter's thoughts. In the second letter, it was just Peter.
    - iii) Eventually, this second letter was accepted as authentic. One of the reasons it was accepted is that there is nothing contradictory to Christian fundamental principals. In other words, if the letter was a fake, the purpose would be to draw one away from the Christian fundamentals. There are no deviations from those issues.
  - b) The "when" is right before Peter's death. Most scholars place the letter right around 67AD, give or take a year. Early church tradition is that Peter was captured by the Romans as Christianity was illegal. He was then crucified upside-down at Peter's request as Peter believed he didn't deserve the same "honor" as dying the same way as Jesus.
  - c) The "where" is not stated. Early church historians say Peter was captured, taken to Rome and crucified during the time of Nero's persecutions. Most suspect this was written just prior to Peter's capture. Peter's first letter implied he was in Babylon, which is part of modern-Iraq. There is a classic debate whether or not Peter meant literal-Babylon, which was still a thriving city at Peter's time, or maybe Babylon was a code word for Rome.
  - d) The "what" is stated in Verses 1-2 of Chapter 3. As a teacher, I love when a bible writer states their purpose for writing that book or letter. It makes my job a lot easier. ☺
    - i) "Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I (Peter) have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles." (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, Chapter 3, Verses 1-2, NIV)
    - ii) Peter is saying that the purpose of both letters is to "stimulate you to wholesome thinking". This is about understanding God's purposes for our lives. This is about clinging close to God so that we can handle whatever life throws at us. This is about maturing in our faith toward God by allowing God to work in our lives.
    - iii) Given that, what is 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter all about?
      - a) The first part of chapter 1 focuses on our relationship with God.
        - (1) Peter goes over some "fundamentals" to understand our relationship with God and what is our purpose for living life.

- b) The middle part of Chapter 1 gives some instructions on how to stick-close to God and not “stumble”. It lays out a nice little formula for us to follow to help us grow in our relationship with God.
  - c) Most of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, beginning in the last part of Chapter 1, deals either directly or indirectly with the issue of false teachers.
  - d) It is interesting to note that every New Testament author deals with the issue of false-teachers at some point in their epistles. Part of the job of “shepherding” those under you is to protect them from outsiders. In this case, outsiders were those who wanted to teach false-doctrines. Peter combats those issues and we’ll deal with them later in this chapter.
3. Chapter 1, Verse 1: Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
- a) This is the first half of Verse 1. It states who wrote the letter.
    - i) When you read a business letter, the writer will often state his or her position right after their name. For example, you might get a letter from John Smith, president of the really big, multi-national corporation. That tag line after his name, states what is his or her authority to write that letter.
    - ii) The same applies to Peter. Peter states his authority and rank in this sentence.
  - b) First, Peter calls himself “Simon Peter”. That was not his given name.
    - i) Peter was born with the name “Simon, son of Jonah.” (Ref.: Matthew 16:17 et.al.)
    - ii) Peter means “little stone”. It was a nickname given to him by Jesus. (Matt. 16:18).
    - iii) Occasionally in the New Testament, you will see the word “Cephas” used for Peter. That is simply the Hebrew-transliteration name for Simon.
    - iv) OK, so why is it significant that Peter uses both names?
      - a) Many speculate that Peter never forgot “who he was” as well as “who he is”. In the same way, we as Christians are a “new creation in God” (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:17), but at the same time, until we die, we still struggle with our old human nature. (See Romans 7:24-25.)
  - c) Next, the text says, Peter is 1) a servant and 2) an apostle of Jesus Christ.
    - i) The word “servant” really does not do the original Greek word justice. The better word is “bond-slave”. It describes someone who willingly agrees to become a slave to someone out of their own free will.
    - ii) The word “apostle” simply means, “sent one”. If I send an employee out to do a specific task for me, in that task alone, that person is an apostle.
    - iii) Notice the order. Peter is a servant of God first, then called as an apostle! You cannot fulfill whatever role God has called for you until you are His servant first!
    - iv) When you study the Gospels carefully, Jesus had lots of people who followed him, not just the “12”. There were 12 people specifically called by Jesus to go forth and spread the Gospel message. Those “12” became the foundation of the collective group of all Christians. Therefore, Peter is using this “dual-title” to remind people that he is just a servant of God, no better than anyone else, but at the same time he was specifically called by Jesus to preach the Gospel.
      - a) In this letter, Peter is urging us to do specific things. Therefore, it is necessary for Peter to state his title (authority) in the opening sentence. Peter balances the fact that he is an apostle with the fact he is also a lowly-servant who is no more special than any other Christian believer.
4. Verse 1, part 2: To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:
- a) When Peter wrote his first letter, it was addressed to specific churches that are located in what-is-today “Turkey”. Peter’s second letter is addressed to all believers.

- b) The last phrase is important: “received a faith as precious as ours”.
    - i) Peter is saying, “My faith in God is special to me. It is precious. To all people who treasure that relationship with God as much as me, read on.”
    - ii) You can read that and say, “Well, Peter is on a higher level than me. That applies to all those really really religious people.” ☺ No it isn’t. One must read this verse and realize it applies to all Christians. Peter is saying the special gift of being chosen by God belongs to all who put their trust in Jesus.
    - iii) Peter is saying all believers have received a faith in God that should be as precious (special) to them as it is to Peter.
      - a) Supposed you have a bunch of old coins in your desk drawer than was given to you by your grandparents. One day, you do some research and discover those coins are actually very rare and worth a fortune. You are rich, but never knew it until now. This is the same concept of our relationship with God. We are “rich” in blessings and eternal life through God. All we have to do is “realize” what we have. (See Ephesians 1:3)
  - c) By the way, the original Greek structure of this sentence applies the equality of God the Father and God the Son. It was written in a way that Peter is saying both are God.
5. Verse 2: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
- a) Peter starts Verse 1 with the description of who he is, and then states the description of who the letter is written to. To review, the focus of Peter is that is he is “nothing special” and “something special” at the same time. At the same time, Peter addresses this letter to all believers. Peter wants them (and us!) to understand we are “something special” once they (and we) comprehend how much God loves them.
  - b) With all of that understood, (at least on a surface level ☺), Peter can now say, “Grace and peace by yours”.
    - i) Grace is to have unmerited (or unearned) special blessings.
    - ii) Peace is to have an inner tranquility despite whatever situation you are in.
  - c) How do we have this grace and peace? Read the rest of the verse:
    - i) First of all, it says we can have it in abundance. Again, how?
      - a) The answer is, “through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”
      - b) OK, how do we get this knowledge? That is what reading your bible systematically and thoroughly is all about.
      - c) Suppose you knew you were going to a dinner party and a famous author was going to be there. You might read up on his or her books so you know what questions to ask. Well, you’re going to meet Peter one day. If you don’t know what to say, you might say, “Hey, I’ve read your book!” ☺
      - d) Now with God, our motivation is a little higher. We are to learn about God in order to have this grace and peace in our lives. That alone is a good motivation to know God better.
    - ii) This might be a good time to explain the difference between “intelligence, knowledge and wisdom”. Let me use an illustration of hunger and food:
      - a) “Knowledge” is to see a plate of food in front of you and you know you will no longer be hungry if you eat the food.
      - b) “Intelligence” is the time frame needed to figure out that eating that food will take away your hunger.
      - c) “Wisdom” is actually eating the food. If you know that eating the food will make you better, you may be knowledgeable and intelligent, but not wise.

- d) God encourages wisdom. In order to have wisdom, we need knowledge first. We must have knowledge about God in order to apply it to our lives. Reading and studying the bible is getting knowledge about God. The “trick” is then to apply it. That is wisdom. Meanwhile, back to Peter. ☺
6. Verse 3: His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
- a) Supposed I hand you a book and say, “This book is all you need to figure out life”.  
 i) Does that mean if you just read the book and do nothing else, you won’t be hungry? Of course not. The book is about how to apply knowledge to our lives. Unless we actually go out and live our lives, the book is useless.
- b) With that in mind, now look at Verse 3. Notice the phrase, “everything we need”.  
 i) Peter is saying God has provided everything we need for life...”  
 ii) That doesn’t mean you can lie in bed all day and angels will deliver you food. ☺  
 a) It means that God provides the knowledge we need to live our life.
- c) This verse is a good one to use when you are feeling down and out. Let me give you a sample prayer: “Lord, right now I’m depressed. The situation at hand is horrible and I don’t know what to do. Your Word promises me that You, God, have provided everything I need for life. Well, I need to trust in that promise right now. God, I’m putting Your reputation on the line right now and I’m going to keep moving forward knowing that somehow, someway, You are going to work this out. I’m tired of worrying about it. It’s now your problem! Give me the discernment, the strength, the courage, the boldness and the peace to handle whatever is coming. Amen”
- d) By the way, the verse says the bible gives us everything we need for “life and godliness”.  
 i) Godliness means to be god-like. It does not mean to be like God in the sense of His power, but to be how God wants us to live. It is God saying, “The bible is my set of instructions for your life. Go study them, apply them, and live your life!”
- e) The last phrase has the word “called”.  
 i) To be a Christian, one must accept both the idea that we freely choose God and at the same time, God, in His perfect knowledge choose us. You cannot reconcile those two facts, but both are taught in the bible. I see Christians who lean too much toward one of those two facts. In my personal opinion, one must have a good balance and accept both concepts although they can’t be reconciled.  
 a) To use one of my favorite quotes, “The river of life runs between the banks of the two extreme’s”.  
 ii) With that stated, try to grasp what “called” (or chosen) by God means. It means that God loves us so much He was willing to especially pick you and me for salvation. It means that God loves us so much as an individual, that He wants to spend eternity with us. God does not see as we are, but sees as our “potential” to mature in the way God wants us to be. (How do I know if God picked me, accept Jesus as payment for your sins and you’ll know God choose you! ☺ )  
 iii) Here’s a great way to look at life: God loves you and picked you. I don’t why he picked you, but He did. ☺ Therefore, God must see something special in the way you’re going to be, as opposed to the way you are right now. God gave you special gifts that you can use to glorify Him. Well, if that’s our purpose in life, and that’s why we’re born, let us get at it and grow in our relationship with Him! ☺

7. Verse 4: Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.
- a) We are still continuing on the idea of being “called”. To paraphrase Peter some more, “Hey folks, God picked you out. This is God who created heavens and earth and has more power than we can comprehend. This is the God who has given us all sorts of special power and blessing. If you can comprehend those facts, then you can also understand that God has given you the power to “escape” the corruption caused by evil.
  - b) This might be a good time to talk about “evil desires”.
    - i) We tend to think of evil as mass-murder or torturing someone. Our culture has taken the word evil and only used for it extremely horrible situations.
    - ii) The bible’s use of “evil” is much broader. It is essentially the opposite of what is “good”. If only God is good, then all other things (including us) evil?
    - iii) Jesus said, “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11 NIV)
      - a) Jesus is saying that mankind is inherently evil. It is the sin-disease that has spread through all of mankind that causes evil. Christianity as well as Judaism looks at man as “evil capable of doing good”.
    - iv) Does this mean everything I do is evil? No. ☺
    - v) This goes back to the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, they deliberately choose to disobey God. It wasn’t the fruit itself that gave them special power, it was the free-will choice to turn away from God. That knowledge of free will has corrupted mankind ever since. In a sense, the purpose of history is to show mankind how bad that choice is. What God wants us to learn from life is any choice, other than following His desire for our life is wrong.
    - vi) What the New Testament teaches is that Jesus is needed to remove the “sin disease” on a permanent basis. The only way of living the life that God desires for us to “stick close” to God. That means getting “knowledge” as I’ve stated earlier and asking God’s help to apply that knowledge.
      - a) Then why do we still sin? If God has taken away our sins? Why do we still struggle with our old habits? Good question. One reason is that God wants to show us over our lifetime just how bad those habits are. God allows those habits to stay inside us in order to keep us close to God.
      - b) When you send your kids off to college, do you give them all the money they need up front, or a little at time? The answer is the latter. That way, they stay in touch. ☺ In a sense, God does the same thing. He allows our old sinful nature to stay with us, so we have to stay close to God in order to deal with our faults.
  - c) OK John, that’s neat. What does any of that have to do with Verse 4 of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter?
    - i) Time to read it again: “Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”
    - ii) Peter is about to lay out a methodology to avoid the corruption of sin. Those steps are laid out in Verses 5-7. It begins with the realization that we are chosen by God. If we are chosen, then we must realize that God loves us and wants the best for us. God has given us the power and the ability to overcome evil desires.

8. Verse 5: For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;<sup>6</sup> and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;<sup>7</sup> and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.
- a) If you just read Verses 1-4 and stopped there, you might ask, "OK, I understand that God has given me the power to overcome my old nature here on earth. However, I need specific's. What steps do I go through to overcome those desires? The answer is Verses 5-7.
  - b) Peter is writing this letter like a coach about to send his team out unto the field. It is Peter saying, "OK, team, here's the fundamentals. Focus on those, and you'll be ok out there."
    - i) Most of Peter's letter focuses on false teachers. Before one can get to dealing with what is "false", Peter must first state what is "true". It is necessary to focus on one's own behavior as a Christian before one can judge "false" Christian behavior.
  - c) Now we can get into the list itself. It is best to read this list like a business flow-chart. If you've ever taken a business class, then you have probably seen "flow charts". They usually start with a box. From that box is a line leading to another box. There is another line leads from the second box to a third box. This goes on to a final box.
    - i) It is to say, "You need "A" accomplished" before you get to "B". Once you get "B" accomplished, you can move on to "C". That is the style of Verses 5-7. With that said, here is the actual flow chart:
  - d) Here is the list itself as a "flow-chart": Faith --> goodness --> knowledge--> self-control--> perseverance --> godliness --> brotherly kindness --> love.
    - i) Let's talk a little about what this list is not:
      - a) It does not mean you can't show love to others because you haven't successfully accomplished "perseverance and godliness" yet. ☺
      - b) It does not mean that if you have "godliness" down pat, then you must have already mastered faith, goodness and perseverance.
      - c) It does not mean you can only love if you've accomplished "a,b,c" first".
      - d) This list is meant as a continuing cycle of concepts to work upon.
    - ii) Let me use another illustration. Talk to any accomplished musician, and they will tell you how they never stop working on the "fundamentals". The same applies to great athlete's. They never stop practicing the fundamentals in preparation for their competition. Great athletes and great musicians prepare hard and prepare long. There are no short cuts.
      - a) The same applies to Peter's list. These are our maturity "fundamentals".
    - iii) This does not mean these verses are the most important in the bible. I take the view that the bible must be studied as a whole, and no part is greater than the whole. Peter's flow-chart is simply one model one can choose to live a good life that God desires for us. These principals are taught throughout the bible.
  - e) OK, onto the list itself: Let's define each one.
    - i) "Faith" is defined in Hebrews: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1 NIV)
      - a) I like the illustration of the elevator. You may say, "I believe that elevator will hold my weight. True faith is getting in the elevator".
    - ii) Next is "goodness". Goodness is the idea of "walking away" your sins. It is the realization of some specific sin in our lives and we want to change for the better. It is about confession of some wrong aspect of our life. It is about changing for the better and asking God to change us for the better. Remember to "repent" means to "turn around" in the sense of changing the way we think and act.

- a) “Goodness” follows faith is that once we believe the bible is the Word of God (i.e., “faith in God”) we act on that faith. That is also “goodness”.
  - iii) Next is “knowledge”. I’ve defined it earlier in this lesson. The important concept is that knowledge is the actual comprehension of facts as truth.
    - a) Notice knowledge comes after “goodness”. Let me give an illustration: Suppose you are really angry at someone. You can’t focus on reading your bible because you can’t let go of that anger. We can’t learn “knowledge” if our heads are blocked up with emotions displeasing to God.
      - (1) This illustration does not mean we have to be perfect in order to read our bible. It is about acknowledging and “letting go” of confessed sins, so our minds can then work on knowledge.
  - iv) Next is “self-control”. This is where self-discipline does come in. For example, once we learn (“knowledge”) of a bible concept, then we actually have to apply it. The secret is to pray to God for His strength to work through us to have this self-control as opposed to trying to accomplish something by our own strength.
  - v) Next is “perseverance”. This is idea of “hanging in there”.
    - a) There are two main categories that get people to turn away from God: One is persecution and the other is temptation. In persecution, one lives in fear and therefore is too afraid to be a good witness for Jesus. Temptation is when one turns from God especially when that person knows it is biblically wrong. Perseverance is about hanging in there despite the risks of persecution and temptations.
    - b) If we turn our lives over to God, and start applying God’s word, we now become a threat to Satan. Satan wants to draw us away from God and His two favorite methods are persecution and temptation. This is why perseverance is necessary.
  - vi) Next is “godliness”. This does not mean to be “god-like”. It means to act the way God wants us to act.
    - a) If we are praying and studying God’s word and spending time with other Christians, and applying self-control, then “godliness” will happen. In other words, you don’t have to force godliness to happen. This means that our efforts as outlined do become pleasing to God.
  - vii) Next is “brotherly kindness”. This simply means you are helpful, compassionate and serving fellow Christians.
    - a) This trait is a “natural output” in the same way “godliness” is a natural output. If we are filled with God’s love and God’s truth, then we need an “output”. It is like breathing. If we keep inhaling and inhaling, sooner or later we need to let it out! People become like what they worship. That the idea of godliness. If God shows love to Christians, then the “natural output” of living the Christian life will have a ripple effect.
  - viii) Finally, we have “love”. Love is the idea of putting other’s needs in front of your own. It is broader in scope than “brotherly kindness” as it includes all people.
    - a) This does not mean one kills themselves ignoring their own needs in order to help everyone who asks. There is a balance. My point here is that love for others is a “natural output” of following this “flow chart”.
- f) Jesus says that people will know we are Christians by our love for one another (John 13:35). Therefore, the goal is for us to have love for one another. This “flow chart” is a (not “the”, but “a”) nice model on how to achieve that love.

9. Verse 8: For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- a) Christianity is meant to be a growth process. The mistake many people make is they commit their life once to Jesus and then essentially, forget about it.
    - i) God wants us to grow in our relationship with him. God wants us to be an effective witness for Jesus. God wants us to sin less and less as we trust Him more and more. Does that mean God expects perfection? Of course not. At the same time, God expects us to mature and trust Him more.
  - b) With all that said, now re-read Verse 8. Peter is saying if you use this “flow chart”, you can be an effective and productive witness for Jesus.
    - i) To commit your life to Jesus is not just to trust Him as payment for your sins. That is “step one”. To be Jesus’ disciple is to do what He commands. Jesus commands is that we love one another (See John 13:34). A good way to reach that goal is to occasionally check our personality traits and pray through Peter’s “flow chart”.
10. Verse 9: But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.
- a) Verse 9 is the negative side of failing to live by the “flow chart”. Peter calls such people “nearsighted and blind”. They have forgotten what God has done for us.
  - b) Let me paraphrase Peter: “If any of you Christians just want to sit on your behind and ignore the “flow chart”, you are a bunch of ungrateful bums. ☺ Jesus died for your sins and all you want to do is sit there? If you are grateful for what Jesus did for you, then show it! Live a life that is pleasing to God. Work toward the goal of being loving to others. There are no short-cut folks. It requires confession, knowledge, perseverance, etc.”
11. Verse 10: Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, <sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- a) In Verses 10 and 11, Peter is giving us motivation for working on the “flow chart”.
  - b) Let me ask you a question: Are you saved? Are you sure? If you want to be “more sure”, then do the things listed on the flow-chart. That is exactly what Peter is saying here.
  - c) Let’s suppose that is not enough motivation for you. Let’s suppose that you are confident that you are going to heaven, and gratitude for what Jesus did is not motivation enough to regularly work on this “list”. Verse 11 gives you another motivation: “rewards”.
    - i) Me, personally, I’m a greedy bastard for heavenly rewards. ☺ Yes, I’m motivated out of gratitude, but I also realize that I’m going to live a lot longer in heaven than I am on earth. I want a wonderful, happy eternal life. Peter is reminding us that our eternal rewards are based on our behavior here on earth.
    - ii) Ever heard the expression, “You can’t take it with you?” I’m here to tell you that expression is not “biblical”. You can take it with you! The secret is to send it up ahead of time! What I mean is that if we live the type of life that God desires for us, then we do get great rewards in heaven.
    - iii) Just what exactly are those rewards? The bible is vague about what our daily life in heaven will be like. That is God telling us, “Hey, you just worry about your behavior in this life. That is enough to deal with. Let Me take care of the specific’s of the next life. If you trust in the fact that I (God) love you and want the best for you, trust in Me for the specific rewards in heaven.”



12. Verse 12: So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.
- a) I gave the illustration that 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter can read like a sport coach giving the final instructions before his players take the field. Verse 12 is Peter saying in effect, "I've already spent a lot of time teaching you these things. I know that you already understand and practice them. Let me state the fundamentals again before you take the field".
  - b) Peter is ending his mini-sermon with "So I will always remind you of those things".
    - i) Peter is saying that what he has taught so far in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter is not new teaching. What is new is Peter's way of phrasing those principals. The concepts of how to live the Christian life are taught all through the New Testament.
13. Verse 13: I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,
- a) My favorite word in this verse is "tent". Peter compares his body to a tent.
    - i) A tent is a temporary structure as compared to a building that is much more "permanent". Then and now, "tents" are associated with traveling. It is meant as a temporary place to live. A tent is portable and can be picked up and moved.
    - ii) Our "home" is in heaven. Peter will make that point in Chapter 3, Verse 13. We are "temporarily" living on earth. When one thinks about how long our life is here on earth as compared to eternity, then earth is a temporary home.
  - b) Now that we've established that our life on earth is temporary like a tent and let's assume that all people who comprehend this are Christians, now what?
    - i) The most important job of all believers is to help mature other Christians.
    - ii) Some do that by teaching, others by praying, others by service and support, etc. Some focus on bringing in new believers. We each have special gifts that God wants us to use to help mature other believers. Some have more than one job.
    - iii) The "flow chart" is our "nutritional sources" to live the Christian life. The final box on the flow chart is to have Christian love. In order to love one another, we have to rely upon God's strength to do so. The "flow chart" lists knowledge, self-control, perseverance, etc. We need to do those things in order to have love for one another.
      - a) That's Peter's point. Peter is a teacher. As a teacher, Peter is using his "dying breath" to remind us of the fundamentals as a Christians so we can "go on" in life and live a life that is pleasing to God.
14. Verse 14: because I know that I will soon put it (my body, "the tent") aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.
- a) Over thirty years prior to 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, Jesus gave Peter a prediction. It is as follows:
    - i) "But when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. (John 21:18b-19a NIV)
    - ii) Jesus predicted that when Peter was old, that somehow Peter would be killed for being a disciple. Peter did not know the "where or when" but Peter literally believed this prediction to come true.
    - iii) Now it is over thirty years later. Peter is now "old". He knew it would come soon. Peter saw that the Roman government was persecuting Christians, and was logically speculating that Jesus' prediction would come true soon enough.
    - iv) Now re-read Verse 14. It makes sense in light of this prediction.
15. Verse 15: And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.
- a) Notice what Peter is not saying, "Well, I'm about to die soon as Jesus predicted. It's time to work on my obituary and state all my great accomplishments in life!" ☺

- b) Peter is using his last days on earth to focus on Jesus and not himself.
    - i) Peter is using his last days on earth to teach future Christians how to properly behave and how we can live a life that is pleasing to God.
    - ii) That should be our goal too! To live the Christian life is not only to individually and collectively live for God, but also to help train up future Christians to do the same.
16. Verse 16: We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
- a) Verses 16-21 change topics. These verses are a good introduction to Chapters 2.
    - i) The main focus of the next two chapters is on false teachers.
    - ii) Peter is saying, "OK, I've taught you how to live for Jesus. I've gone over the fundamentals ("the flow chart") to grow as believers. Last, I want to remind you that there are people within your midst who want to lead you astray."
    - iii) In Mark Chapter 1, Jesus casts a demon out of a man. This takes place inside of a synagogue (Verses 21-26). My thought was, "Demons can go in synagogues?" You would think the last place they would want to be is in a place that worshipped God! If they can go in synagogues, can they go in churches too?"
    - iv) My point is that Satan is not afraid to use people inside churches to make churches ineffective for God. Therefore, we have to be on the lookout for false teachers.
  - b) Now that I've discussed Verse 16 in context of the whole letter, lets go to Verse 16 itself:
  - c) Peter is saying in this verse that "We did not follow cleverly invented stories".
    - i) One of the arguments false-teachers use against Christianity is that the Gospels were "made up" by the disciples. The argument goes that they did this to seek glory or fame by elevating Jesus to a higher level.
      - a) First of all, every false claim that critics can think of is answered somewhere in the bible. Here is Peter directly taking on this question.
    - ii) Let me paraphrase Peter. "Look folks, Jesus death and resurrection is not something I made up or my fellow apostles made up. When Jesus healed people, I was there! When Jesus was raised from the dead, I saw it with my own two eyes!"
    - iii) History records that Peter was crucified. History also records that almost all of apostles died a horrible death for their belief in Jesus. (There are a few apostles where the historians don't know their fate.) Would you be willing to "die for a lie?" Many people are willing to die for what they believe is truth. If you knew something was a lie, would you be willing to be painfully killed to support that lie? No one would do that and that's my point. The apostles were willing to suffer their painful fate as they knew Jesus death and resurrection was truth.
17. Verse 17: For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.
- a) Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9 all tell the story of the "transfiguration. This is where Jesus just took Peter, James and John up to a mountain. Jesus somehow became bright white. Then, all of a sudden, Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. Peter then made a statement that put all three on an equal basis. God the Father spoke (essentially) to rebuke Peter and put Jesus on a higher level than Moses and Elijah.
    - i) That story is full of unanswered questions. For example, how did the disciples know it was Moses and Elijah? How did they know who was who? How exactly did they know God the Father was speaking? How was Jesus made so white?

- ii) We are not privileged to know those answers. The main point of the story was that God the Father rebuked Peter for making Jesus equal with Moses and Elijah.
  - iii) Now it is more than 30 years later. Peter is recalling that event here in this letter.
18. Verse 19: And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.
- a) Let's recap the last couple of verse and tie them together:
    - i) In Verse 16, Peter just stated that he was an eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus and it was not fiction. In Verses 17-18, Peter states to the fact that he was an eyewitness to the living God and mentions the one time he saw Jesus "transfigured" all white.
  - b) Now we read in Verse 19 "We have the word of the prophets made more certain".
    - i) Let me paraphrase: "Yes, I Peter am a living witness of Jesus. I saw him rise from the dead, and I saw him physically change right in front of my eyes". If you don't believe me, you have something even better than my word on it. You have the word of the prophets. In other words, the Old Testament writings and predictions about Jesus are better evidence than Peter's own testimony.
  - c) OK, John, what does that mean? Why are the "words of the (Old Testament) prophets" better than Peter's own testimony?
    - i) One answer is Peter is just one witness. The Old Testament has hundreds of predictions by lots of prophets that tie to either Jesus First or Second Coming.
    - ii) Commentators have found over 300 predictions in the Old Testament that tie to Jesus First Coming. These were made by many different prophets. Everything from "born in Bethlehem" (Micah 5:2), to "born of a virgin" (Isaiah 7:14) to being a direct descendant of David (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:14) to details of his crucifixion (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53) are described and predicted in the Old Testament hundreds of years before the events actually took place.
    - iii) Of course, religious Jews will pick apart every one of those predictions and say each one is about someone else. After awhile, the odds start piling up against those arguments. ☺ This also shows that one cannot be born-again by "logic". There has to be a Spiritual aspect to it as well.
  - d) Now let's go back to Peter's comment about seeing Jesus as "glowing white" and put it in context of the surrounding verses:
    - i) Peter said in Verse 16 how he did not follow "cleverly designed fables".
    - ii) Verses 17-18 are Peter's statement of seeing Jesus glowing white, and that we have the Words of the Prophet "made more certain" than Peter's eyewitness.
    - iii) Peter is saying that even though he saw many miracles, that is not enough. It is better to be a student of the Word of God to convince you of who Jesus is. Peter is saying his personal testimony is less impressive than the collective work of the entire word of God. Multiple witnesses are better than one witness.
    - iv) This leads to another point: "Miracles are not enough". It is very rare where a person receives a miracle and then permanently changes their life for God. The problem with miracles is that people always want more. It is not eternally satisfying. That is the problem with preaching ministries that are essentially based on miracles. People won't care about the message, they are just going to want to see more miracles. That was the problem Jesus had on earth. In the end, many refused to follow Him. They were impressed by the miracles, but didn't believe the message.

- v) I'm convinced the best way to lead others to Jesus is to teach them about sin and God's requirements for salvation. In other words, people have to accept they are a sinner before they want a remedy to remove sin. I'm personally convinced Satan's greatest lie is that people think they are going to heaven because they are "generally good people" or "their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds".
- vi) This reminds me of the classic joke of a pastor arriving late to a conference. The pastor sees an empty chair and asks, "Is this seat saved?" The man sitting next to the empty seat replies, "I don't think that seat is under conviction!" ☺ (That mean the "seat" has to be convicted of its sins before it wants to be saved.)
- e) Meanwhile, back to Verse 19. Peter tells us to pay attention to those Old Testament prophets. Peter is speaking to believers. Peter is talking to people who are already committed to following Jesus. That verse is a good support for Christians studying the Old Testament as well as the new.
  - i) Peter wants to do two things in this letter: He wants Christians to mature in their faith and be aware of false teachers. That "flow chart" list can be learned from Old Testament principals and word-pictures as well as Peter's more blunt list.
  - ii) Remember that "knowledge" is "early" on that flow-chart list. It comes after being born-again and after confessing so our mind is clear when we read it. From that knowledge comes the attributes of the Christian life. Peter's point is to apply it!
- 19. Verse 20: Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
  - a) Peter's point in Verse 20 is that no Scripture (The Bible) is a "private interpretation". It is best to explain this with an illustration: Suppose a preacher says, "God gave me a special interpretation of a bible verse that has never been revealed to anyone else before, and here it is!" That is biblically wrong and Peter says so here.
  - b) All Scripture is teaching truths that everyone can understand.
    - i) Let me give you another example. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, stated he was given "special glasses" to see things in the bible that no one else can see. Much of Mormonism comes from Joseph Smith's "special" interpretation of Scripture. Well, folks, Peter is arguing here that we don't need special glasses. The plain truth of the Scriptures is for everyone to see and you don't need Joseph Smith, or yours truly, or anyone else to interpret them for you.
    - ii) You do have to read your bible in context of the surrounding text. You do have to read your bible prayerfully. You do have compare Scripture with Scripture for better understanding. What you do not need is anyone telling you that he or she has a special revelation that isn't there if one reads the bible for themselves!
  - c) Jesus said, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26 NIV, emphasis added). I emphasized the word "all".
    - i) The reason we read our bibles prayfully is we want the Holy Spirit to teach us what it means. This verse in John 14 can be tested. We can pray, "Father, I don't understand this Verse. You promised the Holy Spirit would teach me all things and I'm confused. Help, Amen." I find that God answers those prayers. It may require some "footsteps" on our part, but those prayers do get answered.
    - ii) This leads us back to Peter. Peter's point is that prophecy, or Scripture in general is not for one's private interpretation. It was written for all our learning. The Holy Spirit is there to help us understand what it means.

- d) Time to wrap this up. The last four verses of this chapter are a “lead in” to Chapter 2.
    - i) Chapter 2 deals with false teachers. Peter is stating that in order to recognize what is “false”, we first have to know what is “true” and how to recognize it. Further, any Christian can recognize the truth in Scripture and we don’t need any special person to interpret this for us.
    - ii) Further, we can’t begin to get into the whole discussion of dealing with false teachers unless we are “prepared first”. I’ve stated repeatedly that Peter is like a coach preparing his team to go out and “battle” the competition. You can’t go into battle into you practice and prepare first. That is what the flow chart” was all about in Verses 5-7. Once you have prepared, once you understand the concepts of Christianity, you are now ready to “watch out” for false teachers.
20. Let’s pray: Father, We thank you for choosing Us. We don’t know why You picked us, but we are glad You did. Since You want to spend eternity with us, help us to grow in our relationship with You. Help us to stick close to you, to learn of you, to change from ways that are not pleasing to You, to show love to other Christians and love to all around us. Guide as we live our lives to glorify You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.