

# BEWARE OF LEAVING THE WAY

GROWING IN FAITH: EXPLORING 2 PETER · 2 PETER 2:10b-22 · NOVEMBER 26, 2023 · PASTOR MATY ERICKSON

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*"They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness" (2 Peter 2:15)*

## **False Guides Pursuing a Crooked Way (2 Peter 2:10b-16)**

These false guides view themselves as above angelic beings but are more like animals (2:10b-12)

These false guides are overcome by sinful passion and love of money (2:13-14)

These false guides are a lot like Balaam (2:15-16; Numbers 22:1-41)

## **False Guides Chasing a Way that is Dark and Doomed (2 Peter 2:17-22)**

Their way offers no nourishment but entices people to desire that leads to darkness (2:17-18)

Their way promises freedom but is another prison which has mastered them (2:19)

Their way departs from the way of righteousness, leading to a worse end (2:20-21)

Their way is like a dog returning to vomit or a clean pig wallowing in the mud (2:22)

## **An Invitation to Jesus' Way of Truth and Righteousness (2 Peter 2:2, 15, 21)**

The way of Jesus (2:2, 15, 21)

Centered on Jesus (1:16-18; 2:1)

Resist false teaching and hold to the truth delivered in Scripture (1:19-21; 2:2, 21)

Resist sin and become more like God revealed in Christ (1:3-11; 2:21)

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Have you ever been led astray by someone? What happened? How did it impact your life?
2. This week we continue our series "Growing in Faith" by looking at 2 Peter 2:1-10a. Whether you are on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you, and then read that passage aloud.
3. Background: There are evidently some false prophets or false teachers who have influenced the disciples receiving the letter of 2 Peter. The author is concerned to steer his readers away from "*cleverly devised stories*" (2 Peter 1:16) in order to bring them back to the heart of the revelation of Jesus Christ.
4. The first three verses of chapter 2 outline the nature and actions of these false teachers. Based on what you read here, how would you describe them in your own words?
5. Would you say we encounter false teachers like this today? How so? (Perhaps consider 2 Peter 2:1-10a along with Jeremiah 23:9-40 and Matthew 7:21-23.)
6. In verses 4-8, Peter uses three examples from the Hebrew Bible to illustrate both the cost of false teaching/living and the rescue for those who hold onto God's truth and live accordingly. What are these examples?
7. How do these examples speak to you about your own life and situation, if at all?
8. Peter closes this section with an encouragement in verses 9-10a. What is Peter's encouragement?
9. What is one specific thing God is speaking to you through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone during the next few days.

## **DIG DEEPER**

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize 2 Peter 2:15 or 2:20-21
- It may be helpful to read further about this section by exploring the following Scripture passages: Matthew 7:15-27; 12:43-45; 1 Corinthians 2:6-4:21; Jude 1. What do these passages tell you about true and false teaching?
- Explore themes of truth, falsehood, and the Jesus way through one of the following books:
  - Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief*
  - Dallas Willard, ed., *A Place for Truth: Leading Thinkers Explore Life's Hardest Questions*
  - Eugene Peterson, *The Jesus Way*