



Part 6 – Look Out! Look In! Heed the Warning against False Teaching

2 Peter 2:17-22

Here in Second Peter, we have a warning about false teachers. It is a warning we need to heed because we are all susceptible to going astray into false teaching. The false teachers' messages often align with the false narratives in our own hearts. This is why we need to be on guard lest we be taken in.

The nature of a warning

A warning means there is danger.

- Why do we follow lies? The attractiveness of sin – sex and greed. Lies do something for us. They justify us. They make us feel better – or at least we hope they don't make us feel worse. They are motivation. They cover over things that we don't want to see or talk about. They "make life easier."
- Look out for false teachers! Look in for the temptations that seduce you! (Jeremiah 17:9)

1) The warning (vv. 17-22)

Warning against an illusion (v. 17)

- A waterless spring was a disaster. It was the promise of life, but it gives death for those who would be counting on it. (Jeremiah 2:13)
- "The false teachers' words, while superficially attractive, cannot produce the spiritual fulfillment that they promise."¹
- "In place of the momentary darkness which they now cast, there is prepared for them a much thicker and eternal one."²

Warning against enticement (vv. 18-19)

- They prey upon those who are new to the faith or weak in their faith.
 - *Loud boasts of folly*,
 - Loudness entices those who believe that they are failures and that they are small. Those seeking to find their voice will often follow the loudest voice.
 - *Sensual passions*,
 - These passions have always enticed people. You only need to look at our advertising to realize that sensuality sells.
 - It also reinforces us in our sin. If my leader can do it, so can I. This is the way of death.
 - *The promise of freedom*,
 - They promise that freedom means you can do whatever you want.
 - "Let your heart be your guide." "Let love lead you." "Follow your truth." "Love is love." "You can be whatever you dream." (Jeremiah 17:9)
 - They deny that sin is sin
 - "Freedom from any moral constraints also fits nicely with the notion that there was no future judgment."³
- "In their quest for self-expression, they fell into bondage to self."⁴
- "They keep chattering about liberty when all the time they themselves have been (and still are) in the prison house of lust."⁵
- Have you ever met someone who was pursuing sin – sex, lust, money, greed, power – and was free?
 - No! They are a rat on a wheel. There's no rest and no freedom.
- "This depravity or corruption is, since the Fall, endemic in human beings. It is that tendency to "be curved in on ourselves," as the theologians used to put it, to make as our goal in life the satisfaction

¹ Moo, Douglass, *NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 142

² Calvin, *Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter*, 355 quoted by Douglass Moo in the *NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 141

³ Schreiner, Thomas R., *The new American Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude*, 359

⁴ Green, Micheal, *TNTC 2 Peter and Jude*, 139

⁵ Green, Micheal, *TNTC 2 Peter and Jude*, 140

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with self, rules people, determining their ways of thinking and their actions, In the gospel, God provides the only escape from this servitude of self: servitude of Jesus the Lord.”⁶

- “Though not a Christian, the Roman moralist Seneca put it well, “To be enslaved to oneself is the heaviest of all servitudes.” “The indulgence of the flesh leads inexorably to the enslavement to the flesh.”⁷
- Do you feel overcome by sin? Do you feel you cannot escape from it?
 - If you do, you are believing lies. (1 Corinthians 10:13, John 8:34-36)

Warning against the cycle of sin (vv. 20-22)

- Look out, this is the cycle (Matthew 12:43-45):
 - They hear about God. They hear the gospel. - They attend church. - They take the “truths” that they hear and rework them into a teaching that allows for error, sin and lack of repentance. This justifies them in their sin so that when they sin, or rather when they are caught in their sin, they exhibit worldly sorrow. (2 Corinthians 7:10). But because their false teaching justifies sin, they are not truly repentant. Their repentance at best leaves a loophole for sin.
- Let’s look at this cycle within ourselves as a diagnostic. Look in! (Hebrews 10:26-27, Hebrews 6:4-8)
- “The dog, which has got rid of the corruption inside it by vomiting it up cannot leave well alone; it goes sniffing round the vomit again. The pig, which has got rid of the corruption outside it by means of scrubbing, cannot resist rolling in the mud. ‘The gospel is a medicine that purges us as a wholesome emetic, but there are many dogs who swallow again what they have brought up, to their own ruin. Likewise the gospel is a basin which cleanses us from all our dirt and stains, but there are many pigs who, immediately after they have washed, roll back again into the mud. Thus the godly are warned to beware of both dangers if they do not want to be included in the ranks of dogs and pigs’ (Calvin).”⁸
- “They may have washed up on the outside and appeared to be different, but fundamentally they were dogs and pigs. In other words, they were always unclean; they only seemed to have changed.”⁹
- Doing the same thing over and over again does not show repentance.

2) Responding to the warning

Heed the warning

- “From the beginning of the Bible to its end, God makes it clear that there are only two ways for us to follow through this life: his way and the way of the world – but only one leads to heaven. Jesus leaves us in no doubt about this when he says unequivocally, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’ (John 14:6). It is not enough to pay lip service to Christ in claiming to be his followers; we need to demonstrate it by actually following where he leads.”¹⁰
- A word for those who wonder if they are part of the invisible church; (2 Peter 1:10, John 6:67-69, 2 Chronicles 20:12b)

Responding by breaking the cycle of sin

- Pray daily against sin and towards holiness
- Don’t think that you’ve mastered sin
- Be constant in vigilance

Responding with the ordinary means over the fantastic and loud (2 Peter 1:3-11)

- “God continues today to do his work through people and institutions that are not always the most impressive from the outside. His power is often “made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).”¹¹
- Keep your 5th vow: “Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?”

Responding with truth over illusion (John 4:14)

⁶ Moo, Douglass, *NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 158

⁷ Moo, Douglass, *NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 158

⁸ Green, Micheal, *TNTC 2 Peter and Jude*, 143

⁹ Schreiner, Thomas R., *The new American Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude*, 365

¹⁰ Johnston, Mark, *Let’s Study 2 Peter and Jude*, 47.

¹¹ Moo, Douglass, *NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 159