

# LifeGroup

## Leader Guide



### CONFIDENCE IN GOD

**BIG IDEA:** God's power shapes character and confidence as believers grow in their faith.

**DATE:** Wednesday, May 20, 2026

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Peter 1:3-11

### OPENING QUESTION

How important is confidence in the following scenarios:

*A job interview*  
*A first date*

*A basketball game*  
*A public presentation*

Which one of these would be the hardest for you to have confidence in? From what sources do people draw their confidence?

There are few situations we face in which there's a 100% provision of what's needed and where success is guaranteed. How different our lives would be if there were more certain things in our future.

As Peter wrote his second letter, he began on a remarkably confident note. He wanted his readers to move forward in their lives with absolute assurance God had provided everything they needed to succeed in living godly lives. As we will see, for Peter, success was not about winning or losing a game or getting a job, but about building true character.

### THE SETTING

In his first letter, Peter emphasized suffering and the role it was playing in the lives of believers. In his second letter, Peter emphasized practical Christian living. Second Peter emphasizes faith and godly living and warns against tolerating false teachers who are leading people away from the truth. The letter ends with the certainty of Christ's return and the impact it has on believers in creating a desire for holy living. Writing toward the end of his life, Peter reminded his readers of the return of Christ and urged them to combat false teaching that may have grown even stronger after his death. He wrote pastorally to his recipients out of concern for the church.

### STUDY THE BIBLE

#### 2 Peter 1:3-11 (CSB)

<sup>3</sup>His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup>By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. <sup>5</sup>For this very

reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. <sup>11</sup> For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### STAND ON GOD'S COMPLETE PROVISION

Peter reminded his readers that God provided everything they needed to live godly lives.

> Read 2 Peter 1:3-4

° What tools or resources do you see available to Christians, according to these verses?

We share in divinity. We have the indwelling Spirit of God living in us, and He provides wisdom and guidance for our lives. Understanding that we are vessels of divinity should be an empowering, emboldening experience. We can rise above the limits of humanity to live much bigger, nobler, dramatically God-inspired lives because we are indwelt by God's Spirit. God's promises through Scripture are rich materials for day-to-day living. We can cling to God's promises, found in His Word, for hope, inspiration, wisdom, and practical advice. Knowing and applying God's promises can be the difference between success and failure in any situation.

° How does knowing Jesus already provides all we need give us confidence?

Those who never embrace the resources God provides may fail to live victoriously or fully embrace God's purposes for them. Instead of living victoriously, they live defeated lives, and for believers that is never necessary. While we have all the resources required, God expects us to contribute to the project of Christian living. We must build into ourselves in order to build into others. Conversely, as we build into others, we also build into ourselves. If we never pick up and use the tools that God has provided we cannot perform up to His expectations.

- What promises of God are most precious to you? How do they help you?

Be prepared to share as a leader which of God's promises are most meaningful to you and how they have practically helped you.

### CULTIVATE YOUR CHARACTER

Peter encouraged his readers to build godly character, knowing that doing so makes them useful in God's kingdom.

> Read 2 Peter 1:5-9

° If God has already given us everything (as it said in the previous verses), how do we make an effort to add these things to our faith? What is our part and what is God's part? How do they work together? *The Christian life is a paradoxical balance of trusting God (as we*

surrender our abilities, fears, and pride to align our lives with His will) and following God (as we must actually make the effort to do the things God empowers us to do).

° Out of this list, which attribute do you need the most help with? Goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, or love?

Powerful Christian living starts with faith. Faith allows a believer to build a life with goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, and brotherly affection that looks and acts like God, who *is* love. Keep in mind that such a structure is not just a façade but composed of inner strength. Faith must be executed. Yet the divine nature of Jesus Christ provides the strength for all of these to stand. We do not rest upon our faith, but on Jesus Christ our faith rests.

In the Commentary below is a great list and explanation of these qualities that you may want to refer to here.

° How does God develop these qualities in us?

By giving us opportunities to practice or display these qualities, they are developed in us. So, he puts us in situations that require perseverance or mutual affection. Also, by spending time with Jesus, we develop His qualities—so if we want goodness and godliness, we pattern our lives after Christ.

## LIVE WITH ASSURANCE

Peter commanded his readers to confirm their salvation through godly living, knowing that they would not be left behind and would be welcomed into heaven.

> Read 2 Peter 1:10-11

° What is the benefit of building up our character as Christians when we know that, despite our flaws, our salvation is secure?

A lack of desire to become more Christlike reveals the failure to fully appreciate being forgiven of sin. If we stumble as Christians and fall into sin, even though our eternal destiny is secure, we are not insulated from the consequences of our sin. Working on our Christian character is a testament that we have saving faith. It is not that virtue saves, but virtue symbolizes our salvation. Our Christian character is a living witness to Jesus Christ.

## RESPONSE

Believers can be thankful that God provides complete salvation through faith in Christ. Believers can live with confidence in the promise of salvation.

° Reread 2 Peter 1:3-4.

*Personal Challenge:* What will you do this week to develop and display one of the character qualities we discussed today? What is God's part in this development and what will your part be?

*Pray:* Thank God for all He has given us and His precious promises that we can build our lives upon.

## COMMENTARY

### STAND ON GOD'S COMPLETE PROVISION (2 PETER 1:3-4)

#### VERSE 3

Peter's beginning point is the divine power that God has extended to His people. We are not dependent on our own meager strength to live as Christians. Rather, everything we need already has been lavished upon us. Note that right away the apostle emphasized that it isn't merely life, but rather a godly life that we pursue. Godliness is a synonym for "holiness" or "sanctification" found several times in 2 Peter (2 Pet. 1:3,6,7; 3:11).

Everything needed is already available to all believers; it doesn't take esoteric knowledge or specialized theological education to experience the Christian life as God means us to enjoy it. There are no super-secrets that can be revealed to only a select group of super-saints. It simply takes knowledge of him, that is, relationship knowledge rather than merely knowledge about Him. The apostle emphasized three particular aspects of the Person we know:

- He called us. Salvation did not originate with us but rather is based on God's initiative.
- He is characterized by his own glory. The glory of the Father and the Son is the splendor of God's identity: who He is.
- He is characterized by goodness. This term refers to God's virtue or excellence in everything that He does.

#### VERSE 4

From God's power and Person flow His promises. In the Old Testament, the God of Israel made many promises to His covenant people. The Lord Jesus has made very great and precious promises to His new covenant people. The apostle provided a striking contrast. On one hand, because of the promises of God, we now participate in the divine nature. Peter did not mean that we are somehow absorbed into God, losing our individual identity. Rather, we have been born again and made part of God's family (1 Pet. 1:3), or, to use a phrase familiar from Paul, we are united to Christ, that is, we are "in Him" (Eph. 1:3-11).

The other side of the coin is that we have now escaped the corruption in the world. Peter understood that the world—thought of as life apart from God—is no friend of Christians. If someone insists on following the ways of the world, the inevitable end is decay and death. At the same time, we cannot entirely blame the world. It is the personal evil desires of individuals that lead them to make choices in favor of the world and in opposition to God.

Note the contrasting ideas that verses 3-4 have presented: life and godliness versus corruption; knowledge of him versus evil desires. We began to experience amazing positive blessings when we first trusted Christ, and we can be assured God will bring them to completion. In the next verses, Peter wrote about our responsibility as we continue this journey.

**List two or three specific promises of God that you rely on. What connection do you see between God's promises and living a life of godliness, sharing in the divine nature?**

## CULTIVATE YOUR CHARACTER (2 PETER 1:5-9)

### VERSES 5-7

For this very reason, that is, because of God's power, Person, and promises, we cannot sit back and "just let God do it." God's grace puts us to work. When we understand the gospel, we make every effort to cultivate the new life implanted when we were born again. Peter was not creating some legalistic form of works righteousness; rather, he was showing how gospel transformation works. He noted eight virtues, or character qualities, which result in a balanced and fruitful Christian life. He began with faith and culminated with love. We may picture these as being successive rungs on a ladder—or steps up to a platform. Certainly, faith is the wellspring of the Christian life, and love is greatest virtue of all (1 Cor. 13). We should not suppose Peter had in mind a rigid relationship among these virtues. Thus, it's not as if we can't start developing goodness until we've become mature in faith, and so on. The relationship among these eight qualities is organic; they overlap with each other (like the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23).

1. **Faith.** By faith we were born again. We live by faith, and living by faith is not passive but active. Thus, we Christians are called on to add to our faith. The verb add to is unusual in the New Testament, implying vigorous and generous cooperation in a particular endeavor.
2. **Goodness.** This is the same quality that Peter attributed to God Himself in 1:3. Because God is characterized by excellence or virtue, He expects those in His family to become like Him in this regard. True human goodness is not defined by cultural norms but by the goodness that our Lord exhibited during His earthly lifetime. Such moral excellence is one of the qualities that Paul urged the Philippians to "think about" (Phil. 4:8).
3. **Knowledge.** Factual knowledge of truth is an important facet of the Christian life. No believer needs to fear growing in knowledge. There is no super-secret knowledge open only to certain super-Christians. The word Peter used here is similar to the word he used in 1:3. Yet here, surely, Peter had in mind the practical exercise of wisdom so that we make right choices. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge simply instills arrogance (1 Cor. 8:1).
4. **Self-control.** This virtue refers to controlling one's passions—fleshly desires, including food and drink and sex—instead of being controlled by them. Several Greek philosophers before Christ had held up this virtue as desirable but unattainable. For Christians, the means to self-control is not willpower but submission to the power of the indwelling Spirit. Sadly, in the history of Christianity, some have argued for a libertine approach to morals, supposing that Christian liberty means we are free to live according to our human passions (see 3:3 for an example in this epistle).
5. **Perseverance.** If Peter's readers were the same as those addressed in his first epistle, then he may very well have had in mind patience while suffering persecution for Christ's sake. Later in this letter, he noted that some false teachers were scoffing at the truth of Christ's return (3:3-4). The apostle may have endured this kind of hostility in mind as well. We may face any number of life situations that tempt us to turn away from Christ. If we have intentionally developed the quality of endurance, we will not be thrown by these difficulties.
6. **Godliness.** In 1:3, Peter had written that we have already received everything necessary for life and godliness. Here, he noted that we are to be intentional about developing this quality. Striving toward Christlikeness or personal holiness is not optional for believers.
7. **Mutual affection.** In 1 Peter 1:22, the apostle had commended this virtue. Family members are expected to express warmth and to care for one another. In many human families, this is natural; sometimes we find it easy to be kind to our sisters and brothers in God's family.

Yet people can be difficult. Christians can rub each other the wrong way. Thus, Peter applauded this virtue as a quality we are to make every effort to attain.

8. **Love.** This is the same term (agape) Paul used in 1 Corinthians 13, which ended with the climactic exclamation, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

**Review the eight virtues in verses 5-7. Circle the virtue in which you have experienced good growth during the past year. Underline the virtue for which you need to experience the most growth during the year ahead. What steps will you take to "make every effort" to grow in this area of your life?**

## **VERSE 8**

In verse 8, Peter showed the positive outcome of growing in character. He expected a lifelong pattern of spiritual growth for Jesus' followers. As long as we are on our earthly journey of faith, we need to keep growing. We recognize that the seeds of these traits were God's gift to us when we were born again; our responsibility is to cultivate them so that they are measurably increasing. Further, as we grow, our character will inevitably overflow in good works. We won't just sit by idly, ineffective and unproductive. Instead, we'll be useful and fruitful, just as the fruit of the Spirit is meant to result in good works. (See Paul's exhortations in Gal. 6 following his list of the fruit of the Spirit.)

Sometimes, people claim that they have knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but their lives do not show growth in holiness, and they appear to be useless in God's kingdom. It's no stretch to see that Peter's point is that such a claim is false. How tragic it is for people to suppose that merely gaining factual knowledge of Scripture or of the Lord is all there is to the Christian life.

## **VERSE 9**

The apostle showed the negative result of not growing in the Christian virtues. Peter used the image of physical blindness to describe those who have made no effort to grow in godliness. He also used the term nearsighted. How can a blind person also be nearsighted? The idea may be that the people he described were spiritually blind because they had willfully closed their eyes (just as nearsighted persons often squint).

Who are the ones who have forgotten that they have been cleansed from their past sins—and is therefore useless and unfruitful (v. 8)? Peter might have had in mind people whose "cleansing" was only superficial. They were not truly born again and had not received new life in Christ. (The reference to cleansing may suggest they had been baptized; see 1 John 2:19 for an example of those whose Christianity was superficial.) On the other hand, the apostle might be referring to genuine Christians who had backslidden and fallen into serious error in their understanding of the Christian life. If some of Peter's original readers fell into this category, his words were meant to startle them back into spiritual sight. Ultimately God alone knows a person's heart (see 2 Tim. 2:19).

## **LIVE WITH ASSURANCE (2 PETER 1:10-11)**

### **VERSE 10**

Therefore, that is, in light of what was written in verses 3-9, the apostle set before his readers a challenge. He believed they were genuine Christians, referring to them as brothers and sisters. The challenge was to make every effort (a phrase using similar vocabulary to 1:5). This endeavor would result in a personal confirmation, that is, making something firm in their

personal experience. He skillfully noted both God's initiative in salvation as well as our human responsibility. On one hand is God's calling and election of persons. God has done everything necessary to secure our salvation. He elects us, and in the course of time He calls us to a relationship with Himself. (See Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 17:14 for other passages in which God's choosing and calling are both noted.) On the other hand, is our human responsibility to believe the gospel—and to continue to cling to Christ and to do these things which Peter had just exhorted. We are to "live a life worthy of the calling" to which we have responded (Eph. 4:1).

Two results follow in the lives of those who confirm God's calling by living a godly life. First, you will never stumble. Peter did not mean that we will be sinless; in fact, we still falter from time to time. Peter meant that such believers will not experience spiritual disaster. God will see to it that authentic Christians persevere until the end. Good works are evidence of salvation and contribute to our assurance (1 John 2:3); they are never the basis for salvation.

## **VERSE 11**

The second result to those who live lives of faith and character growth and good works happens at the end of life's journey. The apostle piled up language that stirs our hearts so that we long to experience our final destination. He noted that our true home is the eternal kingdom of our Lord. This world as it now stands will disappear (2 Pet. 3:10). In some places in the New Testament "the kingdom of God" is recognized as truly arriving—if only in seed form—with the first coming of Jesus (Matt. 12:28). Here, Peter was thinking entirely of the future fulfillment of the kingdom (Matt. 25:46). The apostle here used wonderful word combinations that fill our hearts with expectation:

- Eternal kingdom is a phrase found here only in the New Testament.
- Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a New Testament phrase found only here and in 2 Peter 2:20; 3:18.

Those with a personal relationship with Jesus are the ones assured of this promise. Peter assured his readers they would receive a rich welcome by God into the eternal kingdom. The term rich could be translated "lavish"; it is related to the term for "wealth" or "riches" and is the opposite of scanty or skimpy. Just as we are to cooperate vigorously and generously in the endeavor of growing in Christian virtues (1:5), so now we see that God has promised to supply vigorously and generously and richly all the joys associated with our entrance into Christ's heavenly kingdom.

**How might you explain to a new believer what it means to "confirm" one's salvation? Does this concept encourage you or cause you anxiety? How do you confirm your own salvation?**