



# Peter Warns Against False Teaching

*The apostles prepared the church to contend for the faith.*

## Lesson Focus

Peter wrote to believers to warn them of the false teachers who would secretly bring heresies into the church. He instructed believers to build up their faith by adding godly qualities so they would grow in holiness and stand firm against false teaching. The Apostle John and Jude also warned of the danger of false teachers and gave instructions to keep believers from being tricked by counterfeit ideas.

## Key Passages

2 Peter 1:5–7, 2:1; Jude 1:12–13

## Memory Verse

**Philippians 3:20–21** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

# Prepare to Share

## Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

Since the beginning, false teachers have threatened the truth of God's words. In Deuteronomy 13, God warned Israel against false prophets who would claim to do signs and wonders in the name of other gods. He warned the Israelites not to listen to them. Rather, the Israelites were to walk after the Lord, fear him, and keep his commandments, serving and holding fast to him. But the false prophet was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:1–5). Throughout the Old Testament, we see the truth of that warning as false prophets rose up to speak falsely and to sway the Israelites toward idolatry.

It was on this history that Peter based his warning. Writing to the churches in Asia, Peter told them to watch out for false teachers that would rise among them, secretly introducing destructive heresies, even to the point of denying Jesus as Lord (2 Peter 2:1). Peter didn't tell the believers to put these teachers to death, but he did promise that they brought destruction upon themselves and that they would be condemned (2 Peter 2:3). He then pointed to the work of God as evidence of God's judgment on the unrighteous and his preservation of the righteous (2 Peter 2:4–10).

Peter described false teachers as irrational animals, blots and blemishes, insatiable for sin, and greedy (2 Peter 2:12–16). They are like waterless springs and mists driven by the storm. They boast

and entice by sensual passions, promising freedom but living in captivity to corruption (2 Peter 2:17–19). Jude used very similar descriptions and even quoted Peter's warning. He indicated that the words and lives of the false prophets are empty, as futile as waterless clouds and fruitless trees (Jude 12–13).

But the apostles did not just wish to scare the believers. They intended to prepare the saints to contend for the faith. Jude told his readers to build themselves up in the faith, praying in the Spirit, keeping in the love of God, and hoping in the mercy of Jesus that leads to eternal life (Jude 20–21). Peter charged the saints to be diligent in their pursuit of holiness and to take care not to be carried away by errors but to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 3:14–18). John added that the Christian should not associate with or offer aid or hospitality to a deceiver or antichrist, thereby taking part in his wicked works (2 John 10). Paul charged Timothy to preach the word, share the gospel, expose false teaching, rebuke false teachers, and exhort believers to truth with patience and teaching (2 Timothy 4:1–5).

We face the same dangers as the Israelites, the apostles, the early church, and every generation of believers since. As long as we live in a fallen world, there will be those who reject the truth of God's Word and strive to lure others into their lies. We must learn to identify false doctrine, expose false teachers, and stand for the truth.

## Historical/Apologetics Background

In the Gospels and the first half of Acts, we see a lot about the Apostle Peter. But after the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, we don't hear much about Peter in the Bible. It seems that after his imprisonment and miraculous escape recorded in Acts 12, Peter left Jerusalem under the leadership of James and proceeded to serve elsewhere. There is some indication that he may have served in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:12) and that he and his wife traveled as missionaries (1 Corinthians 9:5). Some scholars believe that Peter ministered in Asia during the time that Paul skirted it on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:7). However, Peter's first epistle was sent to the saints in that area and offers little evidence that he was previously acquainted with them.

Tradition holds that Peter wrote both of his epistles from Rome. In the first letter, he revealed that

he was in Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). This could refer to a Roman outpost in northern Egypt named Babylon, the ancient Babylon of Mesopotamia, or Rome. Because of the obscurity of the Roman outpost and the distance and sparse population of ancient Babylon, as well as evidence from extrabiblical tradition, most scholars agree that Peter used Babylon as an alias for Rome. Clement and Ignatius, early church fathers, both write of Peter's martyrdom. Though they did not specify the location of his execution, the accounts would be consistent with Peter being executed in Rome under Nero's persecution. Near the end of the second century, Dionysius and Irenaeus claimed that Peter and Paul taught together in Italy. Eusebius added that Peter was crucified upside down.

Because of his prominence in the early church, there were many writings that falsely claimed to

be written by Peter, and there are several apocryphal books allegedly connected to the apostle as well. However, it is clear that the biblical epistles were indeed written by Peter. Both letters identify Peter as the author, and the second refers to the eyewitness account of the transfiguration. Some have raised question about the difference in style and the classical Greek that was used in the first epistle, pointing out that Peter was uneducated. But the first letter was written through an amanuensis, Silvanus, who likely aided in grammar and syntax. The

second letter was a warning against false teachers, so it would be unreasonable to expect an imposter to have written it.

Although we don't know much about Peter's later years, we can trust that God continued to use him to advance his kingdom. We can also be confident that God has preserved the narrative and writings we find in the Bible because they are inspired by God and profitable for us as we strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

# Lesson Review Games

These games are written for team play, however, they can easily be adapted for smaller classes.

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart during the games.

## Basket Toss

Students give the correct answer and toss the beanbags. Each basket has greater points.

### Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ One beanbag for each team
- ☐ Three laundry baskets or boxes
- ☐ Masking tape

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a tossing line. Bring in three baskets or boxes. Set the baskets in a line, with each one a little

farther from the tossing line. Label the baskets with 5, 10, and 25 points so the farther away it is the higher the score.

Divide the class into two or more teams depending on size. Have the teams line up at the tossing line. Take turns asking the first students in line from each team a review question. When a student answers correctly, he will have a chance to toss a beanbag into a basket then go to the end of the line. If the beanbag misses, there are no points scored. If someone does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores on the board. Continue until all the questions have been answered. Repeat questions if necessary.

## Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the Finish on the Game Board.

### Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- ☐ Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
- ☐ Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams. Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the end wins.

## Bowling

What do you do with extra water bottles and softballs? Go bowling, of course. Students will answer questions then bowl for points.

### Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Six to ten empty water bottles
- ☐ Softball or other small playground ball
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Dried corn or beans (optional)

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Pour a small amount of dried corn or beans into the bottom of each

water bottle and tighten the lid. Set out the water bottles on one end of the room. Use masking tape to form a "lane."

Divide students into teams. Have students line up. Ask the first student a review question. If he answers correctly, let him roll the ball toward the bottles. Each bottle that is knocked down is worth 1 point. A strike (knocking down all the bottles) is worth 20 points. Take turns asking questions of each team. If a student gives an incorrect answer or does not know the answer, he can ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores.

# Football Frenzy

Who can score the most touchdowns?

## Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Football Cutouts, one per team
- ☐ Tape or poster putty

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Print and cut one Football Cutout for each team. Color them different colors for each team, or have teams choose and write a name on their football. On the board draw 6 vertical lines and label them 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, and End Zone to represent yard lines on a football field. Make the lines long enough so there is room for the footballs to be placed along them with room in between. Divide the class into teams. Place

each team's football at the 50-yard line using tape or poster putty on the back.

Alternate asking review questions to each team. If the answer is correct, move the team's football to the next yard line toward the End Zone. If the answer is incorrect, the team's football stays where it is. If a student is unsure of the answer, he may "pass" the question to a teammate to answer. Only one pass per question is allowed, and this does not affect the order of the questions being asked on the team.

When a team's football reaches the End Zone, they have scored a touchdown worth 6 points, and the team's football is placed back at the 50-yard line on the next turn. Keep track of scores on the board.

Continue asking questions and moving the teams' footballs until all the questions are asked or for a set time. You may repeat questions as necessary. At the end, the team with the most points wins.

# Musical Questions

When the music stops, who will answer the question?

## Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Worship music
- ☐ Different color/style chair, masking tape, colored paper, etc.

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Set up chairs either in a circle or in two rows back to back so students have room

to walk around them. Mark one chair as the "question" chair (use a different color/style chair or mark it with tape, a paper question mark, etc.)

Instruct students to walk in front of the chairs when you play the music. When the music stops, they will race to find a seat. The student in the question chair answers a review question. Continue playing music and having students change seats until all the review questions are answered.

# Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first?

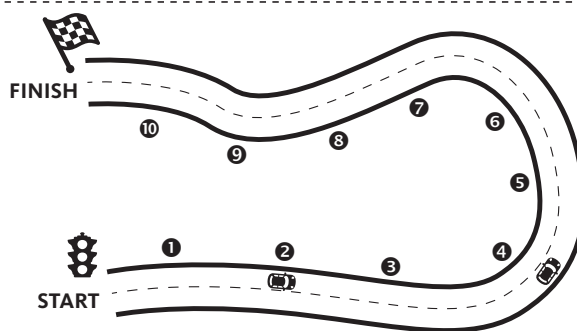
## Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ White board or chalk-board
- ☐ Markers/chalk
- ☐ Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.), tape/poster putty

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each



team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

# Memory Verse Games

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page during the games.

You may want to cover it up after a few weeks for more of a challenge.

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## Echo! Echo!

Do what I do—say what I say! Groups will echo each other as they recite the memory verse together.

### Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

### Instructions

Divide the class into two groups. You will say a word or phrase of the memory verse while doing some sort of action—sit down, stand up, spin in a circle, touch your toes, etc. The groups will take turns “echoing” what you say and do as you recite the verse. Repeat several times. You can whisper, shout, squeak, etc. Switch around and let older students take turns leading.

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## Egg Hunt

Hunt for all the parts of the memory verse hidden in the eggs! This game can be played all year round. The plastic eggs just happen to be great little containers that can be hidden easily.

### Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Strips of paper
- ☐ Plastic Easter eggs

### Instructions

Write the memory verse on strips of paper with one or two words on each strip. Put one strip inside of each plastic Easter egg. Hide all the eggs around the room.

Have the students search for the eggs and bring them back to the table. They will open the eggs and work together to put the verse in the proper order.

For a larger class, prepare more than one set of eggs (sorted by colors for different teams). Students can work in teams to collect and construct the verse.

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## Follow the Leader

Follow the leader around the room. Say the verse and do the motion before moving on.

### Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Follow the Leader Cards
- ☐ Tape

### Instructions

Print and cut out the Follow the Leader Cards. Tape each one to a chair or table and randomly place them around the room. You will lead the students around the room and stop at each card. Read the card and lead the children to do what the card says while reciting the memory verse. Then move around to the next one. You may want to repeat this activity or have students take turns leading.

# Freeze!

Stomp like a dinosaur or spin in circles, but when it's time to freeze, get ready to say the memory verse.

## Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

## Instructions

Students will move around the room in a specified action you give, such as crawling, skipping, turning in circles, galloping, walking in giant steps, etc. Then when you say, "Freeze!" the students will stop and freeze in position. Recite the memory verse, then begin again with a different action. You may need to show them how to freeze and hold a position.

# Funny Voices

Recite the memory verse together using different voices. Be squeaky like a mouse or whisper as quietly as you can. How many voices can you do?

## Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Funny Voice Strips
- ☐ Container

## Instructions

Print and cut out one set of the Funny Voice Strips and put them into a container. Choose a student to draw out a strip and lead the whole class in reciting the memory verse using that kind of voice. Have fun with it and repeat several times choosing a new voice each time!

# Sneaky Stickies

Students will try to be sneaky as they cover up the words and pictures of the memory verse!

## Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Sticky notes

## Instructions

Open the Flip Chart to the Memory Verse Page. Recite the verse together then choose a student to place a sticky note over one word, phrase, or picture on the Flip Chart. Recite the verse again, including the part that is covered up. Continue to choose students to place stickies, one at a time, reciting the whole verse between each turn—including the words/pictures that are covered. When all of the words/pictures are covered up, try to say the whole verse together!

# False or True Switcheroo

## Materials

- ☐ True or False Statements (page 2)
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Worship music
- ☐ Different color/style chair, masking tape, colored paper, etc.

## Instructions

*Print one copy of the True or False Statements. Set up chairs either in a circle or in two rows back to back so students have room to walk around them. Mark one chair as the "question" chair (use a different color/style chair or mark it with tape, a paper question mark, etc.).*

*Instruct students to walk in front of the chairs when you play the music. When the music stops, they will race to find a seat. The student in the question chair will answer whether a statement is true or false. If the statement is true, students stay in their seats until the music begins again. If the answer is false, shout "Switcheroo!" All students must jump up and find a different chair before 10 seconds is up. Count down "10, 9, 8 . . ." as students move to a new chair. Once everyone has found a seat, start the music again.*

*Continue playing music and having students change seats until all the statements are answered.*

## Suggested Discussion

Today we learned about counterfeit money, which is fake money that is made to look like the real thing.

- ?** How is false teaching like counterfeit money? Allow discussion. It can sound close to the real truth; it is meant to trick people into believing it.

Some counterfeit ideas are easy to tell they're false when they are silly or exactly the opposite of what the Bible says. But other teachings are harder to recognize because they might have a little bit of truth mixed in or small changes from the Bible that we might not notice right away. That's why it's so important to read the Bible.

The apostles and church leaders warned the believers, and us today, about those who would try to creep into the church to teach counterfeit ideas. We must know the Bible well so we can spot false teaching and help others who are being tricked into believing the wrong things.



## True or False Statements

1. Everyone will go to heaven. *False*
2. Jesus was just a good teacher and prophet. *False*
3. People are just like animals. *False*
4. Moses was swallowed by a great fish. *False*
5. The universe was formed by a big explosion of matter. *False*
6. The Bible is God's Word. *True*
7. If you follow your heart, you are pleasing God. *False*
8. Both the Old and New Testaments are important because they are God's Word. *True*
9. God created everything in six days. *True*
10. Being a Christian means having an easy life with no troubles. *False*
11. God helps those who help themselves. *False*
12. Jesus will forgive those who turn to him and confess their sins, no matter how bad the sins are. *True*
13. God created people in his image. *True*
14. God is holy and cannot sin. *True*
15. The Bible is God's Word and tells how we can be saved from sin. *True*
16. Adam and Eve were the first man and woman created by God. *True*
17. God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Gethsemane to live. *False*
18. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after he was crucified. *True*
19. It took God millions of years to create the universe. *False*
20. The four Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and James. *False*
21. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. *True*
22. Everyone is a child of God. *False*
23. Peter and Jude warned about false teachers. *True*
24. The book of Revelation tells how God created everything. *False*
25. Elijah was one of Jesus' 12 disciples. *False*
26. Jesus wants me to follow my dreams. *False*
27. God protected Noah and his family on the ark during the worldwide flood. *True*
28. It doesn't really matter how much you sin as long as you ask God's forgiveness. *False*