

Book: 2 Peter
Series: *True Faith vs. False Teaching:
Add To Your Faith, Knowledge*
Lesson 7: *Our Remembered Faith*
Text: 2 Peter 1:12-15
Date: Sunday, October 7, 2012

Colonial Hills
ABE
Baptist Church

Key



= Teacher Information



= Discussion Starter

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TEACHING TIP

This lesson will probably be our simplest and shortest lesson. Enjoy! 😊

Throughout this lesson, we'll make application with each point, but we'll save the significant portion of our application until the end when we seek to drive home practically the overarching idea of engaging in remembering and repetition.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

2 Peter 1:16-21 – *Our Reliable Faith*

INTRODUCTION

It has been said both that “repetition aids learning” and that “familiarity breeds contempt,” and both can be true. In the passage before us, Peter is going to advocate the repetition of truth three times (in four verses). While a deceived or casual Christian may be hardened by the rehearsal of gospel truth, the believer that is committed to “adding to his faith” excellence, knowledge, godliness, and the like, will only be further rooted in the blessed character of Christ by such repetition. In fact, the word “therefore” that starts verse 12 highlights this paragraph's connection with verses 1-11. Peter is saying that because our assurance (vv. 8-11) is based upon Christlikeness (vv. 5-7) which is based upon the knowledge of the truth of Jesus (vv. 1-4), we must regularly be reminded of these things (vv. 12-15).

So, we discover that true faith is not only precious in its quality and productive in its activity, but it is also remembered in its daily routine. This, false teaching fails to do (cf. 2:20-21).

The story is told of a new pastor who preached his first sermon at his new church. The next week, he preached the same sermon, and again on the third and fourth weeks. Finally, the deacons approached him and said, “That is a very good sermon but we would like to hear a new one.” He replied, “When you start living by that one, I’ll preach a new one!”

While this is certainly not the repetition that Peter has in mind or models, that story humorously highlights our need to constantly be reminded of truth in order that we might be grounded and obedient. Indeed, Peter says in a nutshell in verse 13, “Repetition is right!”¹ God wants His people to be a remembering people, active in the ministry of memory.² In our culture, this is certainly not novel, creative, unique, or contemporary, but it is right.

As we study these four verses, we’ll consider four aspects of this memory process, discovering the right motives for remembering along the way.

REMEMBERING AS A WAY OF LIFE (vv. 12a, 15a): URGENCY

Peter was driven by a sense of urgency as he stirred the memories of his readers. In verse 12 he writes, “I will not be negligent [to remind you].” That phrase translates a word that is literally rendered “to be about to/to intend” or “to be inevitable” (BDAG). While we often fully “intend” to do something that ends us remaining undone (e.g., the classic example is going on a diet), this word is used to describe a future event that will certainly happen (cf. Matthew 2:13; Luke 10:1; John 6:15). Peter, then, describes himself as always being on the verge of reminding believers about the gospel truths they had first claimed by faith; then, his intention takes fruition in the expression of paragraphs like this and 3:1-2 and in the form of sermons, letters, and conversations.

Illustration: We often evaluate someone as “being all about” something. That is similar to the idea expressed here. Peter “was all about” reminding believers of truth in order to strengthen their faith.

In this first phrase, Peter expresses his intention “to put you always in remembrance of these things.” That word always, better translated as “continually” or “constantly,”³ further highlights the urgency driving Peter. And in light of what was at stake according to verses 8-11 (i.e., false professions evidenced by the lack of true faith’s production versus true assurance that naturally flows out of the work of faith in one’s life), he was right to be so urgent and to make the repetition of truth his way of life.

Finally, in the first phrase of verse 15, Peter testifies that he “will endeavour” to (lit.) “have you able to make the memory of these things.” The word “endeavor” was used in verse 10 to describe the believer’s earnest diligence to ensure his true standing in Christ (cf. 3:14). Now, Peter seeks to help such believers by adding his own diligence to consistently provide them with the truth they can stand on. This word “endeavor” literally means “to take pains, to be zealous/eager, to make every effort.” Again, we learn of the zeal and urgency with which Peter engaged in the service of the repetition of truth.

Application: This urgency is borne on the wings of love—love that desires the highest good for another, which is nothing short of conformity to and fullness in Jesus Christ. The believer who is “adding to his faith...and love” will urgently bring God’s truth to bear upon the minds of his spiritual family members. In love, he desires their spiritual confidence and effectiveness (vv. 8-11); “therefore,” he stirs up their memory (v. 12) and repeats to them the precious and productive nature of true faith (i.e., “these things,” vv. 9, 10, 12, 15).




Evaluate your love for your ABF class, your spouse, your children, etc. in light of this consideration. Is your profession of love for them authenticated by a practice of remembrance to them?

Transition: Peter urgently remembered and reminded others of the precious and productive nature of faith—it was a way of life for him. Secondly, he was committed to the ministry of memory as long as life, for he was compelled to be faithful.

REMEMBERING AS LONG AS LIFE (v. 13): FAITHFULNESS

According to verse 13, Peter had concluded⁴ that “as long as” he lived, he would “stir [believers] up by putting [them] in remembrance.” Peter wanted to be faithful in life. He completely got it, that life was just a journey, a pilgrimage; he understood fully that he was only a tent-dweller, and thus he spoke of his body as a tabernacle or tent (vv. 14-15); he knew by faith that this world was not his home and that he would be best prepared to go home if he walked by faith and not by sight. So, as long as he lived, he wanted to strengthen his faith and other’s faith by “stirring them up” to action by way of reminders.

The term “stir up” literally means “to rouse or to wake up” (cf. Mark 4:38; Luke 8:24; John 6:18) and Peter uses it again in 3:1. Peter wasn’t content to just write about true faith’s precious and productive nature; he yearned for believers to be provoked to apply those truths (cf. Hebrews 10:24). And, since he knew that God was the One who must initiate and sustain such endeavor, Peter determined to simply constantly remind people of truth through which God could indeed work in their hearts unto active faith. Peter was faithful in the ministry of memory; therefore, I believe he had the joy of watching many disciples living out the excellencies of Jesus Christ.

 **Application:** Do you leave the ministry of memory up to your pastor and church leaders? Was there a time in your life when you were more faithful in personally remembering gospel-truth? A lack of consistency in personal Scripture-repetition will hinder a corporate rehearsal of truth one to another. Are you faithful in being a channel of divine revelation through which God can use that truth about Himself to convict, challenge, break, transform, and save others?

Transition: Repetition is right! It should not only be a way of life and happen as long as life, but it is also necessary to life.


REMEMBERING AS NECESSARY TO LIFE (v. 12b): MISSION

Verse 12 is a bit jarring and goes against the grain of our thinking. Peter acknowledges that his readers “know [these things—vv. 1-11]” and are “established in [that] present truth.” The word “know” is a strong term referring to having information (John 4:32), or knowing personally (Matthew 26:72), or knowing practically (2 Peter 2:9), or knowing well (Mark 4:13), or knowing by memory (1 Corinthians 1:16), or acknowledging with respect (1 Thessalonians 5:12). Peter knows, then, that his readers get it and are even “established” (cf. Luke 16:26; 1 Peter 5:10) in it—they have lives that parallel and picture verses 1-11.

In spite of that (“though” or even though or although), Peter committed to diligently reminding them of “these things.” In this verse, Peter recognizes that these believers had been established in “the present truth.” This phrase is reminiscent of verse 9 in which he uses the same word (Gk. *pareimi*) to describe the believer in whom the Christlike virtues of verses 5-7 are “present” (“be in you,” KJV). So, now in verse 12, he fully considers his readers to be those believers in whom these truths and virtues are indeed “present.” Yes, these Christians “got it” and were established in it as evidenced by their production of Christlike excellence. Nonetheless, Peter asserted, they needed to be reminded! In essence, he says that salvation is not enough for the true believer; it must be complemented by regular and ongoing strengthening through the repetition of Scriptural truth.

Oftentimes, we view someone who knows God’s Word and seems to be established in it, and we move past them to exhort and admonish someone else. Peter refused to do that. His mission, like Paul, was to “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28). Therefore, he also “labored” and “struggled” (Colossians 1:29-2:1) to remind them of gospel-truth so that “their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ” (Colossians 2:2).

This was his mission in life, and it motivated him to be a diligent ambassador for God’s gospel-truth. Since people don’t “arrive” until God glorifies them, people never stop needing to be reminded of the truth that transforms and sanctifies.

 **Application:** Have you judged someone externally and moved past them in your ministry of memory? Since a believer’s responsibility is to daily “add to their faith,” it doesn’t matter if he graduated from a Christian high school, was a leader in a Christian college, and teaches an elementary Sunday School class. Our mission toward each other is not fulfilled “[un]till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Practically, what can we do to fulfill our mission toward one another—even the most established among us—and remind each other of saving truth? *open discussion*

What attitudes are necessary in order for this mutual ministry of memory to be enjoyed? *Humility and a recognition that none of us have arrived; a commitment to Hebrews 10:24; open discussion*

Transition: A final motivation for Peter to continue to remind others of the nature of true faith was in the brevity of life. In other words, Peter wanted to make his life count and to leave a legacy that would be lasting. Therefore, we should help believers remember truth as a legacy of our lives.


REMEMBERING AS A LEGACY OF LIFE (vv. 14, 15b): BREVITY

In light of the need for urgency, the responsibility of faithfulness, and the nature of the mission, Peter now writes in verse 15 (lit.), “So also I will make every effort to have you able, [even] after my departure [Gk. *exodos*, cf. Luke 9:31], to make the memory of these things.” Jesus had explained to him that (lit.) “the removal of my tabernacle [figurative for his body, picturing his death] is coming soon” (v. 14; cf. John 21:18-19), and the very real brevity

of life stirred him in this last letter to once again remind believers to know and grow in Jesus Christ (cf. 3:1-2). Peter wanted nothing else to be his legacy than that until his dying breath (and therefore even after his death) he was a catalyst to people knowing and living their precious faith through Jesus Christ.

Illustration: Michael Jordan will always be known for his incredible basketball abilities—that is his legacy. The legacy of Mother Teresa is her deeds of compassion and humanitarianism. Martin Luther King is remembered by his legacy of fighting for racial equality.

The legacy of this transformed disciple—the apostle Simon Peter—would be enjoyed by these scattered believers for years to come, for whenever they thought about this dear man, he had worked so diligently to guarantee that they would simultaneously think of the reminders that he shared and the truth that he reiterated. This is Peter’s legacy.

 **Application:** Parents and grandchildren, if you were to pass off the scene today, what would your children and grandchildren remember you for? Coaching them in sports is nice, helping them excel in academics is wonderful, involving them in various civic events is helpful; but these are not legacies that are eternally lasting and eternally blessed. Do your children/grandchildren only hear your childhood stories, or do they hear the Jesus story? Do you know the “multi-faceted” nature of God’s wisdom (cf. Ephesians 3:10) so well that you can disciple your family members in the heat of the moment by reminding them of Jesus’ purposes, promises, and Person?

What can you do practically to establish a personal legacy of memory behind? (1) *2 Timothy 2:2 reminds us that we best establish a personal legacy, by entrusting it into the care of others, who will also pass it on—this is more than just speaking truth; it’s pressing it into the hearts, lives, and mission of others;* (2) *open discussion*

CONCLUSION

As we conclude, let's take some time to meditate upon some other helpful application points:

- A ministry of memory should be scheduled. Remembering and repetition go hand in hand; likewise, repetition and habit go hand in hand. You will be poor at remembering truth, unless you've established a habit of personal repetition (i.e., meditation and memory). Furthermore, the local church body must maintain scheduled opportunities to rehearse and learn truth.
- The ministry of memory should be spontaneous. Consider Isaiah 50:4, "The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning; He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple."
- We should avoid evaluating sermons and devotions based on "what we learned." We may not "learn something new" every time we open our Bibles, especially if we've grown up in Bible-centered homes and churches. Those devotions and sermons, then, give us the opportunity to "add to our faith excellence" and submit ourselves again to what we see again to be true.
- We need humility and tenderness when we hear the reminders to recognize that we need the reminders and that we may not be living up to the lesson like we thought. Since "familiarity breeds contempt," it can be easy to coast and assume that the reminders are taking root, when in fact, we're only being hearers and not doers. We must ask God to cultivate the right soil in our hearts to receive the regularly scattered seed!
- In the context, Peter was concerned that his readers regularly remind themselves of "these things" (vv. 9, 10, 12, 15)—that is, the precious nature of faith (vv. 1-4) and their subsequent responsibility to be productive in their

faith (vv. 5-7) so that they might be established in the faith (vv. 8-11). How much of a priority does sanctification have in your daily agenda? Do you daily remember to "add to your faith"?

- In your life context, what truths about the Person, work, and ways of Jesus Christ do you need to remind yourself about in order to develop and display Christ's excellencies (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:5)? What do you need to "know" by way of reminder about Jesus in order for "grace and peace to be multiplied unto you" (v. 2; cf. Romans 15:13)?

ENDNOTES

¹ “I think it meet” (lit., “I consider it right”) is what Peter says. The word “consider” means “to engage in an intellectual process” or to reason through to a conclusion (cf. 2:13; 3:9, 15). Peter has considered the nature of true faith and its struggle versus false teaching, and he has concluded that it is “right” (Gk. same word translated “righteous” throughout Romans)—that such regular reminders are indeed necessary. This is God’s will for His people—they need to actively remember truth!

² While the primary application of this passage might be the need for Christian leaders to remind the church (like Peter to his readers) or for believers to remind other believers, such recall should start individually. Therefore, application can be made throughout this lesson both to our ministry with each other (i.e., we should be helping one another remember truth) and to our own personal growth in “the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Furthermore, we must recognize that Peter’s emphasis is not merely “don’t forget”; rather, it is “actively remember.”

Finally, compare verse 12 with John 14:26. Peter’s ministry of memory to the believers would parallel the Spirit’s ministry to Peter.

³ This word is translated both ways: “always” (2 Corinthians 6:10) and “continually/constantly” (2 Corinthians 4:11). Peter uses it with the sense of “always” in 1 Peter 3:15 to describe the necessary readiness to answer unsaved inquirers; in 2 Peter 1:12, he uses it with the sense of “continually” to describe our ministry of memory one to another. We could perhaps summarize the sense of this word by saying that we should “always” have a mindset to remind each other and “continually” have a ministry of reminding each other.

⁴ See endnote 1 for the meaning of the phrase “I think it meet.”