

2 Peter - Peter says remember to grow in Jesus to please Him

The year is 64 AD – Against the backdrop of the church persecution in Nero’s time, Christians are facing difficulties, at least in Rome. Peter is captured and thrown into prison in Rome, as scapegoat for Emperor Nero’s own selfish action of burning the city of Rome. (Great Fire of Rome) Where is Jesus? This whole story is narrated in a lively way for about 5 minutes.

But Peter knows the end of his life is coming, and Jesus has not broken his promise even so – he will still return soon.

Children learn that in this letter:

Theory / Cognitive

- Peter says farewell 2 Peter 1:13-15
- We belong to the eternal kingdom of Jesus, we’ll enter this kingdom. 1:10-11
- Even though the worldly Roman kingdom or empire is harsh
- Jesus will make sure we get there 1:16 (Jesus’ power makes us believe that Jesus will not break his promise)
- The false teachers may be winning now 2:1-3
- But God will punish them in the end 2:1-3
- Peter asks them to remember these: 1:12-15
 - Reading through 2 Peter 1:3-15
 - Highlight verses
 - “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,” 2 Peter 1:3
 - “Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these [new creation of heaven and earth], be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ... grow in the grace and [in the] knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” 2 Peter 3:14, 18
- Explanation of the above verses is below

Feelings / Affective

Children learn a virtuous circle:

- a. To please Jesus, we do our best to add growth to our character
- b. To add growth to our character, we do our best to know Jesus more.
- c. Knowing Jesus more makes us want to please Jesus

It is also emphasized verbally that this virtuous circle must keep being pursued so that it sounds like:

- a. To please Jesus, *[never be satisfied until]* we do our best to add growth to our character
- b. To add growth to our character, *[never be satisfied until]* we do our best to know Jesus more.

- c. Knowing Jesus more makes us want to please Jesus

Practice / Psychomotoric

In addition to the above virtuous circle as a principle to be learned,

children learn to imitate a selection of qualities of Jesus (Jesus' character) which Peter learned from throughout his life with Jesus, through an extended, sharply summarized retelling of these events (10-15 minutes) :

- (i) Peter accepts Jesus' call to follow him
- (ii) Peter learned to know Jesus more (Peter's walk with Jesus and other disciples for 3 years)
- (iii) Peter still doesn't want to risk his life (after confessing that Jesus is Messiah)
- (iv) Peter denies Jesus three times
- (v) "Peter, do you love me?" (Resurrection appearance)
- (vi) Peter became brave (Start of Book of Acts, and from then on)

Quiz : (given over Zoom)

Note: These answers are not expected to be given by the students nor will they be explained as much as the written answers below do, but will be summarized and delivered in simpler form.

- Until what level should we try our best to grow our character to be like Jesus?
 - At least better than non-Christians
 - Never be satisfied with our current character
 - Until Pak Tong's level
 - There's a certain level required for each age, like, different for 11 year olds and for 12 year olds

The answer is to never be satisfied. According to Peter's language in chapter 1: 3-11, according to John Piper the original language doesn't only mean "add to [faith, goodness, add to ...]" but really, squeeze in more goodness into faith, squeeze in more understanding into goodness, .. squeeze in more love into brotherly love. We need to keep pressing on, even if we reach Pak Tong's level. There is no rigid leveling scheme but as the Holy Spirit guides each person so it shall be. (The first answer is not wrong in itself because we need to show non-Christians that our faith produces much fruit, but we cannot stop at the minimum of "at least")

Caution needs to be taken so that children are not discouraged when progress of growth of character is slow. 'Never be satisfied' is not to be taken extremely but only in hindsight and as part of long-term growth.

- Who is/are the main character(s) in this letter?
 - God
 - Peter
 - The churches
 - We / Us

Without being clear about the meaning of “main character”, the preferred answer is:

God is the real main character. It may be tempting to say “us” because we need to add growth to our character, so we are called to action, but we are told that all goodness is granted by God suited for godliness (2 Peter 1:3), and so we are called to grow in view of Jesus, “through knowledge of God and Jesus Christ”, where Jesus is the main model and vision for growth. Furthermore the letter is addressed to the churches, not directly to us. The same reasoning as above applied for “The churches” answer. It also might seem obvious that Peter is the main character of 2 Peter, but in fact he is simply the human writer of 2 Peter. God is still the main divine author. However, the point is not authorship, but instead it is the person to whom Peter credits all things. God is the one who will crush the false teachers and the enemies, and also God in Jesus is the center of Peter’s testimony of The Transfiguration, and also God in Jesus is the one to return soon at his coming, expecting to find the church blameless and holy at his coming.