

The Books of 1 and 2 Peter, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 10: Confirm Your Calling and Election

2 Peter 1:1-21

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Second Peter 1 is one of the most important chapters in the New Testament for the doctrine of assurance, and it must be handled with care because it cuts directly against two errors common in our day. Against a passive, 'once saved, always saved' presumption, Peter teaches that we must 'be all the more diligent to confirm' our 'calling and election,' and that the promise of never falling is explicitly tied to the ongoing practice of Christian qualities, 'if you practice these qualities you will never fall.' Against an anxious, works-righteousness fear, Peter grounds everything in God's prior gift: a faith granted to us, His divine power that 'has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,' and His 'precious and very great promises.' Present this as our heritage has always understood it: salvation is by grace, received and preserved through a living, growing, obedient faith. Election is real but conditional, confirmed by faithfulness, not an unconditional decree that renders our diligence unnecessary. The genuine possibility of falling away is assumed throughout (it is why diligence is commanded), even as real assurance is offered to the diligent.

This chapter also contains a foundational text on the inspiration and authority of Scripture (vv. 19-21): 'no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation... men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.' Be ready to teach the divine origin and full authority of the Bible, joined here to the eyewitness reliability of the apostolic testimony (Peter saw the Transfiguration). This guards the church against the modern temptations to treat Scripture as merely human, to claim new revelation beyond it, or to set personal experience above the written Word. The completed Scriptures are our sure and sufficient authority.

Pastorally, the chapter is a deathbed charge from an apostle who knows his end is near and wants his children to be sure, growing, and grounded after he is gone. Help students feel both the security of God's lavish provision and the urgency of diligent growth. The aim is assurance without presumption and effort without anxiety: confident heirs who keep climbing the ladder of Christlike character, making their calling sure, standing on a Word that will never fail. The disciple we are forming neither coasts on a past decision nor strives in fearful uncertainty, but diligently confirms his calling by a faith that is visibly growing.

Question 1

Student Question:

Peter writes to those who have "obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ," who has given us "all things that pertain to life

and godliness” and “his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature” (vv. 1–4). What do these opening verses teach about what God has provided for the Christian and about who Jesus Christ is?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open with the staggering provision Peter describes. To ordinary believers he says they have ‘obtained a faith of equal standing with ours,’ the same precious faith as the apostles; that God’s ‘divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness’; and that we have been given ‘his precious and very great promises.’ The Christian is not spiritually under-resourced. Everything needed for a godly life has already been supplied in Christ.

Note the high Christology in verse 1. Peter speaks of ‘our God and Savior Jesus Christ,’ a phrase that, in the Greek, identifies Jesus as both God and Savior. This is one of the New Testament’s clear affirmations of the full deity of Christ. The Savior in whom these believers trust is no mere man; He is God, and that is why His righteousness can grant them a faith of equal standing.

Unpack ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (v. 4) carefully. Peter does not mean we become gods or are absorbed into God’s essence. He means that through God’s promises we genuinely share in God’s moral character and life, escaping ‘the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire’ and being transformed into the likeness of Christ. It is the language of real transformation, becoming holy as He is holy, not of blurring the line between Creator and creature.

Apply the foundation Peter is laying. Everything that follows, the ladder of virtues, the call to diligence, rests on this prior gift. We do not climb in order to earn God’s favor; we climb because God has already granted us His power, His promises, and a share in His nature. Grace comes first; effort is the response.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The full deity of Christ: ‘our God and Savior Jesus Christ’ (Titus 2:13; John 1:1)
- God’s provision of ‘all things that pertain to life and godliness’ in Christ
- The precious and very great promises as the basis of the Christian life
- ‘Partakers of the divine nature’ as real moral transformation, not deification
- Grace as the prior gift on which all Christian effort rests

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that you have ‘everything pertaining to life and godliness’?
- How does verse 1 affirm that Jesus is both God and Savior?
- What does it mean to share in the divine nature without becoming God?

Question 2

Student Question:

Peter says we have everything we need for “life and godliness,” yet many of us live as though we are spiritually empty-handed. Where in your life are you living as though you lack what God says you already have in Christ, and how would believing His provision change that?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the gap between our position and our practice. Peter says we have everything we need, yet many believers live as if they are spiritually bankrupt, defeated by the same sins, anxious, joyless, powerless. The problem is rarely a lack of provision; it is a failure to draw on what we have.

Help students name where they live as paupers despite their wealth. One feels perpetually unforgiven though fully cleansed; another battles a sin alone though given divine power; another lives anxiously though heir to great promises. Naming the specific area exposes the lie that we lack what God says we possess.

Move toward appropriating the provision. Belief is the bridge between having and living. Ask each student where they most need to start believing and acting on what God has already given, and what one step of living from their riches, rather than their feelings, would look like this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gap between our position in Christ and our daily practice
- Spiritual poverty as a failure to appropriate God’s provision
- Faith as the bridge between having and living from our riches
- Living from God’s promises rather than from our feelings

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you live as though you lack what God says you already have?
- What lie keeps you feeling spiritually empty-handed?
- What would living from your riches in Christ look like this week?

Question 3**Student Question:**

Peter urges us to “make every effort” to supplement our faith with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love (vv. 5–7). What does this list teach about the nature of Christian growth, and why does Peter present these qualities as something we actively add rather than passively wait to receive?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Walk through the ladder Peter builds: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love. Each quality grows out of the one before and reaches toward the one after, culminating in love. This is a portrait of Christian maturity as a connected, cumulative growth, not a random collection of traits.

Stress the active language: 'make every effort to supplement your faith.' The Christian life is not a passive wait for God to zap us with maturity. Peter pairs God's lavish provision (vv. 3–4) with our strenuous effort (v. 5) in the same breath, the same balance Paul strikes in 'work out your own salvation... for it is God who works in you' (Philippians 2:12–13). Grace empowers effort; it does not replace it.

Guard the relationship between grace and effort. These qualities are not the cause of our salvation, as if we earn grace by virtue; they are the fruit and confirmation of it, the growth a living faith produces. A faith that adds nothing, that produces no virtue, no self-control, no love, is by that very barrenness shown to be dead (James 2:17). Real faith climbs.

Apply it to expectations of growth. Maturity comes the way a building rises, course by course, not in a single leap. Ask students to see their growth as a deliberate, lifelong climb in which they cooperate with God's grace, adding quality to quality rather than waiting passively to feel different.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christian growth as cumulative, connected maturity culminating in love
- The active call to 'make every effort,' not passive waiting (Philippians 2:12–13)
- Christlike qualities as the fruit and confirmation of faith, not the purchase of grace
- A barren faith exposed as dead (James 2:17)
- Maturity as a deliberate, lifelong climb cooperating with grace

Discussion Prompts

- What does the ladder of qualities teach about how growth actually happens?
- Why does Peter call us to 'make every effort' rather than wait passively?
- How are these qualities the fruit of faith rather than the purchase of grace?

Question 4

Student Question:

Peter says that whoever lacks these qualities "is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins" (v. 9). When have you found yourself spiritually "nearsighted," losing sight of the bigger picture of your salvation? What helps you remember what God has done for you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter diagnoses the believer who lacks these growing qualities: he is 'so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.' Spiritual nearsightedness is losing sight of the big picture, becoming so absorbed in the near and immediate that we forget where we came from and where we are going.

Explore the specific forgetting Peter names: forgetting 'that he was cleansed from his former sins.' A Christian who forgets the magnitude of his own forgiveness loses his gratitude, his motivation, and his joy, and stops growing. Much spiritual stagnation traces back to a faded memory of the mercy we received.

Help students recognize and remedy their own nearsightedness. Ask when they have lost the big picture, swallowed by daily pressures, drifting from the wonder of their salvation, and what helps them remember: the Lord's Supper, return to the Word, recalling their baptism, giving thanks. Remembering what God has done reignites the growth that forgetting kills.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Spiritual nearsightedness as losing the big picture of salvation
- Forgetting our cleansing as a root of stagnation and joylessness
- Remembrance as a means of renewed gratitude and growth
- The Lord's Supper and the Word as aids to remembering (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)

Discussion Prompts

- When have you found yourself spiritually nearsighted?
- How does forgetting your forgiveness affect your growth and joy?
- What helps you remember what God has done for you?

Question 5

Student Question:

Peter says, "Be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall" (v. 10). What does it mean to "confirm" our calling and election, and how does this verse teach assurance of salvation through faithful, ongoing practice rather than through a one-time decision that guarantees we can never fall away?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal heart of the lesson, so handle it with precision and care. Peter commands, 'Be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.' First, election and calling are real; God has called and chosen His people. But Peter says they are to be 'confirmed,' literally made firm, made certain, by the believer's diligent practice. Election is not an unconditional, secret decree that operates regardless of how we live; it is confirmed and made sure by a growing, obedient faith.

Second, mark the conditional structure carefully: 'if you practice these qualities you will never fall.' The promise of never falling is explicitly tied to ongoing practice. This is the very opposite of 'once saved, always saved,' which promises that one can never fall regardless of how one lives. Peter says the security is real but conditional, and the condition is a diligent, persevering faith. He would not urge diligence 'so that' we do not fall if falling were impossible. The genuine possibility of falling away is assumed in the command itself.

Third, hold assurance and warning together as Peter does. This verse does offer assurance, real, solid assurance, but it is the assurance of the diligent, not the presumption of the idle. The diligent Christian can be confident; the coasting Christian is presuming. Against Calvinism's unconditional election and the perseverance of the saints as an automatic guarantee, Peter grounds assurance in a faith that is actively growing. Against an anxious legalism, he grounds it in God's prior provision and sure promises. The believer who keeps climbing the ladder can know he will never stumble into ruin.

Apply it pastorally and honestly. To the fearful believer who keeps adding these qualities: take heart, Peter promises you will never fall. To the complacent believer resting on a decision made years ago while his life bears no growing fruit: hear the warning, your calling is confirmed by practice, not presumed by a past profession. Assurance is for the diligent. Invite students to examine whether their lives are confirming their calling.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Election and calling as real but confirmed through diligent practice, not unconditional decree (against unconditional election)
- The conditional promise: 'if you practice these qualities you will never fall'
- Assurance of salvation grounded in a living, growing faith, not a one-time decision
- The genuine possibility of falling away, assumed in the very command to be diligent (against 'once saved, always saved')
- Assurance for the diligent versus presumption for the idle

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to 'confirm' your calling and election?
- Why does the promise of never falling depend on 'if you practice these qualities'?
- How does this verse give real assurance while ruling out presumption?

Question 6

Student Question:

Peter ties never falling to the active "practice" of these qualities (v. 10). Where might spiritual passivity or coasting be putting you at risk, and what would it look like to be "diligent" rather than coasting in your walk with Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns Peter's 'practice' into a personal warning against coasting. The danger Peter addresses is not only gross sin but quiet passivity, the believer who has stopped growing, stopped making effort, and is simply drifting on momentum from years past.

Help students see the peril of spiritual coasting. A coasting car is slowing down even when it feels like it is still moving; a coasting Christian is in decline even if outward routines continue. Peter ties never falling to active practice precisely because passivity is the road to falling, not a safe plateau.

Move toward diligence in a specific area. Ask each student where they are coasting, prayer that has gone formulaic, a sin tolerated, a quality untended, and what one diligent step would look like there. Diligence does not mean frantic effort; it means deliberate, consistent attention to growth where they have been neglecting it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Spiritual passivity and coasting as a real danger (Hebrews 2:1)
- The difference between resting in grace and drifting in neglect
- Diligence as deliberate, consistent attention to growth
- Never falling as tied to active practice, not passive momentum

Discussion Prompts

- Where might coasting or passivity be putting you at risk?
- What is the difference between resting in grace and merely drifting?
- What one diligent step would replace coasting in that area?

Question 7

Student Question:

Peter says that practicing these qualities leads to a rich welcome "into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v. 11). What does it teach us that entrance into the kingdom is described as something richly provided to the faithful, and how does this shape the way we run the Christian race?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter promises that the diligent will be granted 'a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' The kingdom here is the 'eternal' kingdom, the consummated reign of Christ in glory, and entrance into it is described not as a bare admission but as a rich, abundant welcome. The faithful do not slip in barely; they are welcomed home generously.

Note again the title 'our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' and the reality of His eternal kingdom. The kingdom is Christ's, He reigns now and forever, and the believer's hope is to enter fully into that reign at His appearing. There is nothing here of a future earthly political reign; the kingdom is Christ's eternal, spiritual reign into which the faithful are richly welcomed.

Apply it to how we run the race. The promise of a rich welcome motivates wholehearted, persevering effort. Just as an athlete trains harder knowing the prize, the Christian presses on knowing the abundant entrance that awaits the faithful. Ask students how living toward that rich welcome would change the intensity and joy of their daily discipleship.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The eternal kingdom of Christ as the believer's consummated hope
- A 'rich entrance' as the abundant welcome of the faithful
- Christ's eternal reign, not a future earthly political kingdom
- The promised reward as motivation for persevering effort (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that entrance into the kingdom is a 'rich' welcome?
- How does the hope of that welcome shape the way you run the race?
- How is Christ's eternal kingdom different from a future earthly reign?

Question 8

Student Question:

Peter, knowing his death is near, says he will keep reminding them of these truths so that "after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things" (vv. 12-15). Why do mature Christians still need constant reminders of basic truths, and what truths do you most need to be reminded of regularly?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter, aware that his death is near ('the putting off of my body will be soon'), explains his strategy: to keep reminding them of truths they already know, so that after his departure they can recall them at any time. Mature believers, he assumes, do not outgrow their need for reminders of basic truth; they need them all the more.

Explain why reminders matter. We do not drift toward faithfulness; we drift away from it. The basic truths, our forgiveness, our calling, the qualities we must grow in, the sureness of God's Word, fade not because they become false but because we are forgetful. Peter models the ministry of reminding, which is much of what teaching, preaching, and the Lord's Supper are for.

Apply it personally. Ask students which truths they most need to be reminded of regularly, the truths they 'know' but keep forgetting to live by, and how they might build reminders into their

lives: regular worship, the Supper, time in the Word, fellowship. The point is not new information but the steady re-anchoring of the heart in truth already known.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The lifelong need for reminders of basic truth (2 Peter 3:1; Romans 15:15)
- Drift as the default direction of the forgetful heart
- The ministry of reminding through teaching, worship, and the Supper
- Re-anchoring the heart in known truth rather than chasing novelty

Discussion Prompts

- Why do even mature Christians need constant reminders?
- Which basic truths do you most need to be reminded of?
- How could you build regular reminders into your life?

Question 9

Student Question:

Peter grounds his message in two unshakable foundations: he was an eyewitness of Christ's majesty on the holy mountain (vv. 16–18), and the prophetic word, "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (vv. 19–21). What do these verses teach about the trustworthiness of the apostolic witness and the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture, and why does this matter for how we treat the Bible today?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the second doctrinal summit of the lesson: the trustworthiness of the apostolic witness and the inspiration of Scripture. Peter first grounds his message in eyewitness testimony: 'we did not follow cleverly devised myths... but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.' He was on the mount of Transfiguration; he saw the glory and heard the Father's voice, 'This is my beloved Son.' The Christian faith rests not on legends but on what real men saw, heard, and touched (1 John 1:1–3).

Then Peter turns to the written Word: 'we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.' Even more sure than his own experience, Peter says, is the prophetic word of Scripture. Experience can be doubted; the God-breathed Word stands. This is a striking ordering: Peter subordinates even his mountaintop vision to the abiding authority of Scripture.

Teach verses 20–21 as a foundational statement on inspiration. 'No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.' Scripture is not human opinion dressed up as religion; its ultimate source is God. Human authors really wrote, in their

own styles, yet they were 'carried along' by the Spirit so that what they wrote is the word of God. This grounds the full divine authority and reliability of the Bible.

Apply it to how we treat the Bible today. Because Scripture is God-breathed, it is our sure and sufficient authority, the lamp for the dark place until the day dawns. This guards us against three modern errors: treating the Bible as merely human and negotiable, claiming new revelations that go beyond or against it, and exalting personal experience above the written Word. The completed Scriptures are enough; we submit our experiences and opinions to them, not the reverse (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Send students out trusting and obeying the Word as the very voice of God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The apostolic faith founded on eyewitness testimony, not myth (1 John 1:1–3)
- The Transfiguration as Peter's firsthand witness to Christ's majesty and the Father's testimony
- Scripture's divine origin: men carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16)
- The full authority and reliability of the God-breathed Word
- Scripture above private experience and against claims of new revelation
- The sufficiency of the completed Scriptures as our lamp and authority

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Peter stress that he was an eyewitness and not a myth-maker?
- What do verses 20–21 teach about where Scripture comes from?
- How should the inspiration of Scripture shape the way you treat the Bible?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole passage. Peter moves from God's rich provision, to the qualities we must add, to confirming our calling, to the sure word of Scripture. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through these verses. What single truth from 2 Peter 1:1–21 do you most need to carry into this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Gather the threads. Peter has moved from God's lavish provision, to the ladder of growth, to the call to confirm our calling and election, to the ministry of reminding, to the sure foundations of eyewitness testimony and inspired Scripture. The chapter is a charge to be sure, growing, and grounded.

Press for one concrete point of formation. Ask each student to name the single truth they most need and one place it will land this week, whether growing in a specific quality, replacing coasting with diligence, or treating the Word with new trust and obedience.

Close on the chapter's confidence. Peter, near death, leaves his children rich heirs with everything they need, a ladder to climb, a calling to confirm, and a Word that will never fail. Send students out as diligent, assured, growing disciples standing on the sure word of God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The integration of God's provision, our diligence, and assurance
- Salvation preserved through a living, growing, obedient faith
- The inspired Word as the sure foundation of the Christian life

Discussion Prompts

- Which single truth from this passage do you most need this week?
- Where do you sense Jesus forming you through 2 Peter 1:1-21?
- What is one way you will 'make every effort' to grow this week?