

4G Coverage

2 Peter 3:14-18 April 26, 2026

Sometimes an outgoing executive will leave the company with recommendations for the future. A multi-step roadmap, a five point plan. Jack Welch shared ten “foundation points for the next launch of GE” during his final address.¹ On his way out, Starbucks founder Howard Schultz delivered a five point “reinvention” strategy with “multiple plans for long-term growth.”²

Jeff Bezos stepped down as CEO of Amazon back in 2021. In his final letter to shareholders, he mapped out the goals he believed were necessary for the future of Amazon. One of those goals was, “[Be] earth’s safest place to work.”³ Unfortunately as of December 2024, Amazon workers were nearly twice as likely to be injured as workers in the rest of the industry.⁴

We understand why these leaders cared about their company’s future. They gave decades of life to the mission. It’s natural that on their way out, they would offer advice on what should come next. But if their vision is only material, economic, temporal - if their principles are not backed by eternal power, their outgoing instructions amount to little more than vain hope. Castles in the air.

This morning we hear the last words of the last message given during the last days of the Apostle Peter’s life on earth. On his way out, Peter leaves us with a four-point plan, both encouraging and practical. They’re not just suggestions. Peter stacks these final sentences with *imperative* verbs. He means to challenge the attitude and the conduct of anyone who reads this letter.⁵

If you’re a note-taker, each imperative begins with the letter G. Peter’s guidance to us is to gauge, to glean, to guard, and to grow.

2 Peter 3:14 - 14 Therefore, dear friends, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found without spot or blemish in his sight, at peace.

Therefore is a culmination word. If you recall back to how the letter started - Peter explained all we’ve received by the grace, through faith. The lavish supplies of salvation. *All we need* for life and Godliness. Then he warned us of false teachers. How they seek to rob you and ruin you. Then he reminded us of the sure coming of Christ. In the previous text, Peter started to put it all together and said, “Since this is what’s been done for you and what *will* be done in the future, it’s *obvious* what sort of people you should be.” And now he provides clear directives. *Therefore*. Time for us as readers to move from instruction to application.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARabEV3rLjY&ct>

² <https://investor.starbucks.com/news/financial-releases/news-details/2023/Starbucks-Announces-Triple-Shot-Reinvention-Strategy-with-Multiple-Paths-for-Long-Term-Growth/default.aspx>

³ <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/company-news/2020-letter-to-shareholders>

⁴ https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/amazon_investigation.pdf

⁵ D. Edmond Hiebert *Second Peter And Jude*

Therefore we should be people who *gauge* our spiritual health. Peter says, "Examine. Take stock. Make sure you're life is becoming more spotless, more blemish-free." What does he mean?

Contextually, he's making a direct comparison between us and the false teachers. Back in chapter 2, he referred to them as "spots and blemishes."⁶ And we saw what characterized their lives. Selfishness. Immorality. Denial of Biblical truth. Sin of all sorts.

A Christian must gauge their life for spots and blemishes. Righteousness matters. Holiness matters. Go through the Bible and you find being spotless and blemish free is a *requirement* for salvation.⁷

Oh, but Lord, I am *not* spotless! I can't complete a single day without sinning in some aspect. How can I live up to Christ's command, "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect?"⁸

We *can't*. We *will* have sin in this life.⁹ So what are we to do? First, we remember that we cannot work our way to spotlessness. But the answer is not to give up. The answer is to be *in* Christ. Peter explained in his *first* letter that Christians are redeemed by the blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.¹⁰ And in Him, there is no condemnation.

But it is my responsibility to gauge whether I am becoming *more* Christlike or not. Because Christians *are* empowered to be like Christ. As Christians, we *are* dead to sin.¹¹ Meaning that we do not have to sin. We're *going* to, because we are imperfect, but as we live we should make *every* effort to live out our Christianity and *be* Christlike. If we *don't*, can we say we are abiding in Jesus?

"Make every effort" is one of Peter's favorite words.¹² He's used it multiple times in this letter to remind us that we have a part to play. We have responsibility to be faithful. Not to just be cultural Christians. Not to just be philosophical Christians, but animated and active in our following.

2 Peter 3:15a - ¹⁵ Also, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation...

Now, if you're discouraged by the previous verse and how short we fall in holiness and in walking worthy, Peter *wants* you to be encouraged as he opens verse 15. He reminds us of God's gracious *patience*. His patience is not to be used as a delay so we can mess around. We should understand that God's patience is for *us* to continually turn to Him, trust Him, and walk with Him.

Maybe you messed up yesterday. Maybe you dishonored God or gave into temptation. But here you are today. And *today* God's mercies are made new. Today you can worship God and honor God and demonstrate your love for God by obeying Him. Today you can abide in Christ.

⁶ 2 Peter 2:13

⁷ Thomas Schreiner *The New American Commentary, Volume 37: 1, 2 Peter, Jude*

⁸ Matthew 5:48

⁹ 1 John 1:8-10

¹⁰ 1 Peter 1:18-19

¹¹ Romans 6:11

¹² Edwin Blum *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 12: Hebrews Through Revelation*

2 Peter 3:15b-16 - ...just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him.¹⁶ He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some things hard to understand in them. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures.

After *gauging* our spiritual lives, the second imperative is to *glean* from the word of God.

When we do not know God's word or when we do not properly interpret God's word, we fall into traps. That's when we become unstable and are led astray. God's word brings stability to life.

Christians should be stable people. It's not that we don't struggle or that we don't grieve or that we don't have questions or fears or concerns. But God has sent His word to give us comfort, to give us perspective, to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, to thoroughly equip us for all of life.

These verses are an interesting New Testament moment. Peter directly comments on other epistles. Not his own, but Paul's. He again defends the authority the apostles had to speak *for* God.

As he comments, we get some significant insights about the Bible. First, *both* Testaments are authoritative and both are necessary. Peter categorizes them all the same. *All* the books of the Bible are for all of us. Just because the letter to the Romans was written to Romans in the first century doesn't mean it's not for us. Peter indicates that the letters of Paul could be read by people outside the original recipients *and* be applied.

Second, the message of the Bible is a *unified* message. It all agrees. Peter says, "The truth I'm sharing with you, Paul *also* teaches."

At the founding of our nation, there were serious divides in philosophy. One was the divide between Federalists and Antifederalists. You've got Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, and others dedicated to Federalism, and then there's Hancock, George Mason, Patrick Henry, and others on the other side. They worked it out through compromise, but *very* different ideas and teachings.

But the Bible is a unit. Because the Author is actually God the Holy Spirit. The Bible is God breathed - a message sent through inspired, human authors, but one harmonious revelation.

Third, *Peter studied Paul's letters!* Even though he was an apostle, even though he was also a writer of Scripture, *he* studied Paul's writings. And Peter admits that there were difficult passages. This verse makes me feel better whenever it's time to read Romans. But the Bible is profound. We keep studying personally and corporately because we'll never run out of things to glean from it.

These verses are also sweet because they reveal that, at the end of his life, Peter held no grudge against Paul.¹³ A number of years before Peter wrote this letter, Paul had to rebuke him publicly. But Peter here saw Paul as a faithful servant, a dear brother. Beloved.

¹³ Hiebert

We need to glean from God's word so we *know* the truth. Life is going to be *full* of people and ideas that distort the truth. It's not just a few false teachers in Peter's time. Consider what Paul faced: People teaching the resurrection had already happened. People teaching that you had to follow the Law of Moses. People teaching it was a sin to get married. People teaching unbiblical things about the gifts of the Spirit. You need to know the truth so that you can spot the lies.

2 Peter 3:17 - ¹⁷ Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stable position.

So first we *gauge*, second we *glean*, third we *guard*. It's a term that means to be aware. To watch. To preserve. To avoid.¹⁴ Even the strongest Christian can stumble and fall into error. And Peter *knows* it because it happened to *him*.

Remember how I said Paul had to rebuke Peter? Here's what happened: a few years before this, Peter went to Antioch. Antioch was Paul's home base when he wasn't out on the mission field.

Peter came and things were great. But then some guys came from Jerusalem who erroneously taught that Christians *had* to keep the Law to be right with God. When they came, Peter fell from the true doctrine of grace into a hypocritical doctrine of legalism. He stopped eating with Gentiles.

Paul explains in Galatians that he had to rebuke Peter publicly. And it wasn't just Peter. Paul says, "Even Barnabas was *led astray* by their hypocrisy."¹⁵

And now Peter uses the *same* term here: *Led astray*. It can happen to us if we're not on guard. Now listen - this is *not* referring to losing your salvation.¹⁶ But it is referring to losing progress, getting tripped up, missing out on fruit in our lives. Costly spiritual missteps.

If we're not *actively* living out our walk with the Lord, following Him, then we *will* wander. So, Peter says, "Be on guard." And remember: This is not a rebuke, it's a reminder.

Thomas Schreiner gives a vivid illustration: "Experienced mountain climbers ensure their safety by studying their climb, taking necessary precautions, and knowing their climbing partners."¹⁷

So be on guard. For example: Examine who you're listening to. What is their doctrine? What is their character? What is the fruit in their lives? "But I feel good when I hear them." So did people hearing the scoffers in Peter's day. Don't drink falsehoods. And don't drink in *partial* truths. It's deadly.

¹⁴ James Strong *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible*

¹⁵ Galatians 2:11-14

¹⁶ Craig Keener *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Second Edition)*

¹⁷ Schreiner

2 Peter 3:18 - ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.

So we gauge, we glean, we guard, and finally we *grow*. We can *grow* in our faith every single day.

You know, our human bodies grow a lot at the beginning of life. But when it comes to muscle mass and height, by the mid-twenties, we're all done. And once you hit 40, you start *shrinking*.¹⁸

There are some organisms that keep growing their whole life. It's called indeterminate growth. One example is the Giant Barrel Sponge. Water is continually pumped into them and as a result they just keep growing. Some 2% a year, some 400% a year!¹⁹

How much do we want to grow in our spiritual lives? It's God accomplishing the work, but we must cooperate. It's like my relationship with math. I grew in my knowledge of math to a certain point. And then, after algebra 2 I decided I was done. I had other interests, other pursuits.

But this is the final imperative: *Grow*. How? Page back to chapter 1, verses 5 through 10 to see how we grow in grace. Page through the the Bible to grow in your knowledge of the Lord. But remember: It's not *only* academic knowledge, but also relational knowledge. It's *personal* knowledge, as you commune with your Savior and are led by Him. Remember what Job said at the end of his book? "I had heard reports about You, but now my eyes have seen You."²⁰

This closing text has been a lot about *our* part to play, but as Peter puts down the pen he reminds us of the most important thing: Christ is the source of all truth, of all we need, of life itself. To *Him* be all the glory. Once again, Peter proclaims that Jesus is God Himself. The Lord declared in Isaiah 42, "I am the LORD, that is My name, and I will not give My glory to another."²¹

All glory to Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity. He *doesn't* give His glory to another. But He *does* give His grace. He extends it out to you and me. We have everything, *everything* we need for life and Godliness. We have all the power, all the equipment, all the leading, all the markers and directions necessary to experience life as *God* intends it for us. A life of peace and stability and confidence and hope. It's ours to receive by faith - but a *living* faith that *moves* and *grows*.

Jeff Bezos got a lot of things wrong in his farewell letter. But there's one idea that had some wisdom. It had been decades since the company was founded, but he ended with this phrase: "It remains Day 1."

Christians, today is the day that the Lord has made. And His plan continues. We can rejoice, we can be glad, we can bring our worship, our devotion, our lives to Him to be filled up with His exceedingly great and precious promises, His power, His provision. It's time for us to *grow*.

¹⁸ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthy-aging-and-longevity/why-do-i-shrink-in-height-as-i-age>

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_barrel_sponge

²⁰ Job 42:5

²¹ Isaiah 42:8