

# TAKEAWAY



## BELIEFS MATTER

2 Peter 2:1-21 – Part Four

### INTRODUCTION

Running through Peter's words to early Christians in 2 Peter is the constant emphasis on truth – that what you believe matters because it shapes how you live. In this session, we'll look at Peter's warnings to believers about the dangers of false teachers.

### SHARE

- Who do you go to for advice and guidance?
- How much are we as individuals influenced by the society and culture that surrounds us?
- Much of today's culture encourages us to believe "whatever feels right." Where do you notice that mindset at play? How might this shape your own beliefs?

### READ

#### 2 Peter 2:1-22

The Read 2 Peter chapter 2 together. It might be helpful to read it in two different translations (NIV and the NLT) one after the other before working through the discussion questions below.

### DISCUSS

When you hear the phrase "false teacher," what comes to mind? How does Peter's description challenge or expand that picture? *You may find it helpful to list the characteristics of a false teacher from verses 12-22.*

What kinds of "almost-Christian" ideas do you think are most tempting today? (e.g. self-fulfilment, freedom, success, validation, comfort)

Where do you feel the tension between following Jesus and following cultural expectations and norms most strongly? In what ways can you protect yourselves and others from these expectations and the dangers Peter warns us against in this chapter?

How can Christian community help guard against false teaching—and where can it sometimes fail us?

Throughout his letter to believers, Peter closely links what people believe with how they live. Do you agree that beliefs inevitably shape behaviour? Where have you seen that play out? Can you think of examples where ideas you've absorbed have shaped how you live?

Read out the diagnostic questions (right). Which do you find most helpful? Are there any you tend to neglect to consider?

### DISCERNING FALSE TEACHING & BELIEFS

Practical diagnostic questions to consider and help us discern if christian teaching or content is helpful to us:

1. Is what the person is teaching, or the content I consume focused primarily on Jesus or on something or someone else?
2. Does what they're teaching reflect the overall picture of the Bible?
3. Does the person saying this stand to gain anything from my agreement?
4. Is what they are teaching simply what I want to be true?
5. Is what they are teaching an unusual or minority position on the subject? Why?
6. If you take away the teacher's popularity, eloquence or charisma, what remains?
7. How many different sources do I rely on when it comes to learning about God?
8. If you asked a trusted friend, who has a different personality or temperament to you, what would they say about this?

Where do you see subtle forms of "false teaching" in modern culture — even outside church settings? (Some possible avenues of discussion: social media, wellness, success, identity narratives).

Peter describes false teachers as promising freedom, but delivering slavery. Where do you see that dynamic at work today?

If we experience false teaching, how should we respond and what should Christians do if we begin to see the patterns described in this chapter arise?

Peter's warnings are sandwiched between two chapters full of encouragement and God's promises. Why do you think he does so? What does that suggest about God's character? Why can we be reassured, despite the reality of false teaching, that God will protect us?

You could summarise Peter's underlying message behind the warnings in this chapter, as a strong encouragement to '*Keep it about Jesus*'. What helps you personally stay anchored to Jesus rather than drifting into vague or shallow versions of faith?

What would it look like in practice, to trust God more than your own ability to figure everything out?

## PRAY

## TRY OUT

- Think about the voices and content that most shapes your understanding of God right now? (Friends, books, podcasts, social media, church.) Take some time to consider the diagnostic questions (above) and the voices that influence you: What do your findings suggest? Are there any changes you want to make?
- Try praying through the Nicene Creed every day this week. What stands out to you, what stays in your thoughts? Use the prayer on this handout (copies available from the church hall prayer zone): [maybridge.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/01/MCC\\_Nicene-Creed.pdf](https://maybridge.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/01/MCC_Nicene-Creed.pdf)