

# Sift wk 4 Heart and Hustle

## Intro

Welcome to week four of some very deep digging we are doing in the book of 2 Peter in the New Testament of the Bible.

- We are learning to SIFT together. We are hearing ideas, opinions, media, “facts,” and we are SIFTING them through the filter that is the Bible.
- We are submitting ourselves to the good authority of Jesus, recognizing that He knows how to make the world go round. And we are repenting of words, actions, and beliefs we have subconsciously or consciously adopted into our worldview that run in opposition to the good news of Jesus that is our hope and our salvation.
- All the while, we are still ask questions and wrestle with doubts, yet without fear of judgment because God is not too big for them. And we love others no matter what they believe because all people are made in the image of God.

[Leader Note: Tell a funny story here about a time you had to physically hustle, or a coach told you to hustle. It could be about a time you were late to something, and you had to run to get there, a time in practice where you had to do sprints for something funny someone said, or if you are a parent, a time when you were trying to get your young child out the door but something catastrophic happened—like a blowout diaper. Whatever story you choose, embellish it, and make it funny to draw students in. Transition by saying something like... “in that moment, I had to have HEART & HUSTLE. But as we sift today, I want us to see that a Biblical worldview requires balance. You don’t have to be good enough to matter.]

## 2 Sides of the Track: License & Legalism

You know what we are good at as human beings? Many things...but can I tell you something we are really good at? We are good at falling off both sides of the railroad track. What do I mean?

- The gospel is the train track. It’s the way God created us to live and flourish as His children in this world He made. But because of the fall (see our history in Genesis 3), now we have a sinful nature. Because of sin, our bodies have a disease that has reprogrammed our default settings go to sinful nature, to fall off both sides of the train track.
- On one side of the train track is **license**. It’s a word we seem to talk about in church. By license, I’m not talking about a driver’s license, or a license to practice medicine. We’re using another definition of the word, which is to do whatever it is we want, think, or feel because we know that God has grace for us, that He will forgive. We think we have license to sin because Jesus died on the cross.

And yes! We are forgiven because of what Jesus has done on the cross. We do not have to fear condemnation from God because Jesus is our advocate. If we come to Him directly in repentance, He will never ever cast us out. **But just because that is true doesn’t mean we should go on sinning because that would be living in a way that isn’t very thankful for the huge thing that Jesus did in literally taking our death sentence as His own.**

- And the other side of the train track is **legalism**. And we don't talk about this one quite as much. This side is when you live your life trying to be very religious. You are almost living in a superstitious and hyper-vigilant way because secretly you fear you must "be good" or "try harder to do better" or "be perfect" in order for God to actually love you and save you. We often take good things and twist them to be ultimate things. We make them what the Bible calls an idol, and we forget that God is holding up the world and we are not.

It's so easy for each of us to do this. Since we've been studying the book of 2 Peter together in the New Testament, let's look at it together.

2 Peter 1:5-11 pg. 590

*5 make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

So, it's easy to see here how a Christian could fall off the legalism side of the train track and think, wow—I better get my act together. I better HUSTLE if I want God to grant me entrance into His eternal kingdom. I better STRIVE. I better SELF-IMPROVE. And if I can't live up to whatever the standard is that I'm setting for myself, well, I must not be a Christian and I might as well throw the Bible, Jesus, and God out of my life completely because this is too hard.

But this is a big Bible interpretation lesson for you. Don't be like Thomas Jefferson who literally cut out the verses in the Bible he didn't like. Don't skip parts of the Bible. And always consider other parts of the Bible that bring more clarity to a certain passage. If you don't have a study Bible, they are so great and will do a lot of this for you.

What did we do there? We skipped verses 1 through the first part of 5. You probably didn't notice. Let's go back and read that part and see if it gets us back on the gospel train track.

2 Peter 1:1-5a [Leader Note: feel free to show the contrast of each of these bolded areas to the legalism/striving/hustle mentality with salvation.]

*1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,*

*To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:*

*2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

*3 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, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason,*

- This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.
- He is writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior.
- May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.
- By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.
- And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.
- In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises...

**It's after these verses that the disciple Peter goes into his plea we already read about living a godly life and that list of Christlike characteristics that the HOLY SPIRIT is forming in us as we submit our lives to Him. It's not that WE form them in ourselves as we try harder to do better.**

**I don't live God's way to get Him to love me. God loves me; therefore, I live God's way because I know He is trustworthy.**

Ok, so maybe that was an "aha!" moment for you. Or maybe you feel secure in your salvation. There is another big elephant in the room though when it comes to hustle.

## **2 Sides of the Track: Laziness & Business**

[Leader Note: tell a story here about a cultural figure, TV show, movie, celebrity, or something local that idolizes hustling for the prize.]

Anxiety.

In some of the most recent research surrounding the biggest pressures that 13–17-year-olds face, polling up at the top of the list was to get good grades, look good, fit in socially, be good at sports, and be involved in lots of extracurricular activities.

Honors classes, AP classes, college courses, school teams, travel teams, clubs, leadership teams, National Honor Society mean a ton of responsibility. They take up a ton of time. It's a lot of pressure. It takes a lot of heart & hustle.

And again, with the train tracks. The Bible is clear we shouldn't be lazy.

- We should work hard at whatever we are doing for the glory of God.
- Homework can be worship. Practice can be worship.
- But when we are striving and hustling for earthly rewards that are temporary, we are going to be let down.

And where is the pressure coming from? Maybe it comes from your...

- teachers
- parents
- peers
- maybe most of all from yourself.

And often, this striving for perfect grades or the lead in the school play, or a starting position, or a college scholarship is coming from a place of fear. You fear what will happen if you aren't perfect. Maybe it comes from a place of control. There are a lot of family or friend dynamics or even things going on in your body that you can't control, but to some degree you can control your performance in these different areas.

Or maybe it comes from a deep sense of trying to feel worthy. You don't like yourself and if you can only achieve then you will feel worth something.

Or maybe for you it's simply a sense of power. You like being the top dog and all the attention that brings to your popularity.

But at what cost? Let's sift this idea of hustling to be the best and to fit in through what we read a little bit ago in 2 Peter.

What did God speak through Peter in verse 2? "May God give you more and more grace and peace as you" hustle to get straight As and get a 5 on your 3 AP exams?

No! Did Peter say, "grow in your knowledge of" how to balance your three sports, two clubs, and all your responsibilities at school and home without falling into a pit of depression, while also keeping up with your social life and social media accounts?

**No. He said, "May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord."**

God wants you to experience grace and peace. How does He say you are going to get it? Hustling **NO!** God will GIVE you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your relationship with Him. It's not by doing more things for Him, but by being with Him!

## 2 Sides of the Track: FOMO & JOMO

Finally, I want to address one more way that I think hustle is literally destroying the brain God has given you.

We talk about it so often because you are the first generation in which we can see the detriments of growing up in a world where the internet has always existed. People are researching this like crazy.

Because many and most of you have a smartphone, iPad, and laptop with you at all times, your brain is constantly experiencing stimuli through notifications, texts, and social media. “Your entire school and the entire world is in your back pocket at all hours of the day and night waiting for an answer.”[1]

Any moment that you might need to wait in a line, stop at a stop light, wait for a ride, try to fall asleep, or fill a few minutes of empty space after homework is done, you probably turn to a screen.

**You have no downtime.** And even if you do have downtime, say with friends at a coffee shop, or in a study hall, or after dinner, or before bed, or in the morning before school, **it gets filled. With what? Screens!** And they are created to be addicting. Your brain literally is hit up with dopamine the way an addict does when you click your home button and you see that you have any sort of notification or if there are new posts on your feed. Algorithms are robbing your developing brain of needed downtime.

You need breaks where you can completely rest. No screens. No homework. No planned activities. **Downtime. Rest. Sabbath.**

- Time to do something creative.
- Time to spend with friends laughing.
- Time with your family playing and talking.
- Anecdotally, I see fewer teenagers teaching themselves a new hobby than I did 10 years ago. Why? Teenagers are choosing school and activities or their phone or Netflix when they have a moment of free time.

The Bible gives us direct commands to rest. Jesus himself saw the value of time in complete silence. Spend time in complete solitude, time where you can gain perspective on your life, relationships and time with God without distraction.

Not to mention that if you are not up to date and actively advocating for every cause and care in the world, it sees you as a failure.

- Again, it’s a good thing to care about speaking out against racism, or to seek to change the way we care for the Earth, or to save the rhinos. Time Magazine says, “[you] are the first generation that can’t escape [y]our problems.”[2]

But all these high expectations, hormones, brain development, pressures, and screen addictions are causing the human race to be anxious. Self-harm and eating disorders continue to be a trending problem.

And you guys, I get it!!!! This is a huge struggle for me too! I'm not shaming you. I'm preaching to myself when I say we need to unplug and reset. We need to let the Holy Spirit tell us in this moment that it is safe to rest.

## Landing

### We need to sift our schedule and ask God what needs to change.

- You may need to set up some boundaries or rules surrounding your devices, the number of nights a week or hours a day you can spend doing schoolwork, or how many things a semester you can commit to.
- You probably need to include your parents in this and ask them to say "yes" less often to some of these things, so you can get your mind back on the gospel train track.
- You may need to see a professional Christian counselor who can help for a season.
- You may need to incorporate time in nature and exercise into your daily routine.
- You may need help from your parents to choose healthier foods that are going to support your mental state; a diet with less sugar and fast foods and more veggies and fruit and protein and whole grains.
- You may need to quit a sport or drop an activity or sign up for less college-prep type classes and let yourself be a kid for the next few years you have left.

Let's get on the gospel train and fall off on either side of the track, there is nothing wrong with heart and hustle, but it will destroy you pursuing that to measure up.

Again, the disciple Peter said it, "May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord."

We can't let what is culturally expected and normal steal our grace and peace. We've sifted what is true and now in the power of Jesus, by way of rest, let's take our lives back.

### Psalm 127:2

*It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

- sometimes the most holy thing you could do is take a nap.

Let's pray.

[1] <https://time.com/4547322/american-teens-anxious-depressed-overwhelmed/>

[2] <https://time.com/4547322/american-teens-anxious-depressed-overwhelmed/>

[3] <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20191001-dunbars-number-why-we-can-only-maintain-150-relationships>

# Small Group Questions

**Series Goal:** In this series we want to help students learn to sift through our culture's distorted version of reality to uncover the truth. Addressing commonly held beliefs of our day, we will challenge students to use the Bible as their sieve, as they build their worldview. We do all of this in love, welcoming questions and doubts as they take steps to own their faith. Our heart is to also encourage students to love others well, even as they disagree with their friend's conclusions. This is a worldview, theology, apologetics, and identity series wrapped into one—addressing hard to talk about topics in a way that is both faithful to a high view of Scripture, but also with the winsomeness necessarily to reach the lost.

**Common Worldview:** Heart & Hustle

**Scriptures:** 2 Peter 1:1-11

**Get To Know Your Group:** Have students share highs and lows from the week and any prayer requests they might have. Set a timer if necessary.

## Small Group Questions:

Read 2 Peter 1:2-4 again together.

- In this passage, what did Peter say before anything else, as he addressed this church that was struggling with having a biblical worldview?
- How has hustle worn you down this year?
- What is your relationship with your phone like?
- How many minutes a day would you say you completely rest?
- How has the number of people who have expectations from you contributed to your mind & body being overwhelmed?
- What do you think are the biggest contributing factors to the anxiety that your peers experience?
- In what ways has the pace of life contributed to the anxiety and depression teenagers are facing?
- If anxiety is not a major issue for you, what has helped you to remain at peace even amidst the difficulties of life?
- Since Jesus was fully man and fully God, He was tempted to be anxious just like us. What do you think were some things He did to remain at peace?
- Since you have a mind and body that God has given you, what are some things you need to implement to keep your mind and body healthy?
  - How is praying about something not always the only answer?
- What are the driving forces behind the pressure you experience? Who are they from? What are your fears if you don't perform?
- How have the cares of the world been too heavy for you? In what ways are you too connected to every cause, too many people's struggles, and the inner workings of too many people's lives?
- How can you implement silence and solitude into your life?
- If anxiety is paralyzing to a person, what benefits might there be in seeing a counselor?
- How can those of us who don't struggle with these things, support those of us who do?

- What conversation do you need to have with your parents about your schedule and the expectations you have on yourself?
- If we need to sift even things like our schedule through the sieve of Scripture what other areas of your life have you overlooked letting God have a say in?

Give students 5-10 minutes individually to look up and underline each of these verses about the peace that God gives.

-Philippians 4:6-7

-Psalm 4:8

-2 Thessalonians 3:16

-Galatians 5:22

-Colossians 3:15

-Psalm 29:11

-1 Peter 5:7