# DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE



#### TEXT SUMMARY

In this week's text, <u>2 Peter 2:1-10a</u>, Peter begins his examination of the sordid character and dangerous messaging of the false teachers who plagued the early church.

#### INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

- 1. Verse 1 opens with "But," indicating a contrast. What is there in 2:1 that contrasts with the last paragraph of ch. 1:
- 2. Peter uses two participial phrases (beginning with "denying" and "bringing") to describe the false teachers.
  - What do the false teachers deny?
  - What do they bring?
- 3. Verses 4-10a are one long sentence, built on a string of "if…then" phrases.
  - What Old Testament stories does Peter refer to?
  - What is the main point about God that Peter wants to make with those stories? (See v. 9-10).

### **DISCUSSION** (INTERPRETATION):

The most terrifying thing about the false teachers is that they appear to be part of the Christian fellowship! Peter describes them as "even denying the Master who bought them" (v. 1).

- How can someone who knows Jesus become so confused and so wicked as to play the role of a false teacher in the fellowship?
- 2. What kind of "destruction" (v. 1) and "condemnation" (v. 4 can such a false teacher expect from God?

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#### SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

Since Patterson Park is a non-denominational fellowship, we don't have a denominational statement of faith to govern our doctrine. As a result, there are finer doctrinal distinctives not addressed in our own statement of faith. Some with our statement of faith would be more precise, while others are glad we give room for disagreement on minor issues.

To monitor and guard our own doctrine, we practice a kind of theological triage: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." It is vital that we make clear and sound distinctions between essentials (on which there can be no compromise) and non-essentials (where we give liberty to one another).

That distinction is sound and workable, but it can be complicated to put into practice.

- 1. How do we make that distinction? What makes a doctrinal matter "essential"?
- 2. If we become aware of one of our pastors or teachers teaching false doctrine in an essential matter...
  - ...what should the leadership do?
  - ...what should the congregation do?
- 3. What should we do if some in the fellowship see the teaching of that pastor/teacher as an essential and others see that teaching as a non-essential?
- 4. What should congregants do when they learn that their brothers and sisters are following false teaching brought by leaders outside our fellowship (radio/TV, social media)?

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