



3 | 2 PETER 1:8-15

HOW TO GET UNSTUCK

Sometimes as Christians we are so stuck that we forget the joy of the Lord. We need to be growing in Christ with a big view of God so nothing will keep us stuck again.

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Call to Worship

Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! ²For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord! —Psalm 117:1-2

Songs

Living Hope
Sing We the Song of Emmanuel
O Come O Come Emmanuel
Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me
He Will Hold Me Fast

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

Do you ever feel stuck? There's a **behavior** that you've tried to stop, but you just can't seem to do it. There's a **negative thought-pattern** that you have attempted to move on from, but nothing you try ever works. There's a **relationship that you want to repair**, but despite all your best intentions, nothing seems to make things better. You want to change, but you feel... stuck.¹

No one wants to be stuck. I personally hate the feeling of being trapped in traffic, stalled in long lines at the airport, blocked in a parking space, or stranded in a Chicago snowstorm. Maybe you are like me and start thinking that **the stoplight isn't working because it takes so long before turning green**.

We have clinical words to describe the anxiety and stress that being stuck produces. "**Cleithrophobia**" (great spelling bee material) is the phobia **of being trapped**, locked in, unable to leave, the fear of being stuck. In spite of our strong aversion to being trapped, countless people—maybe you're one of them— find themselves living unhappily in this most detestable of conditions, stuck in life.²

SPIRITUAL NEARSIGHTEDNESS

One of the things that keeps us stuck is when things **of this life become so big**, they take over our vision. It's when people or stuff or circumstances are big and God is small. The only way to get unstuck is to magnify the Lord.

Before I had **cornea transplant surgery** many years ago, there came a time when I was **extremely nearsighted**. Once I had to get out of my car and stop on the corner to see the street sign. It was frightening.

Key thought: Sometimes as Christians we are so stuck that we forget the joy of the Lord. Things in this life appear bigger than they are. We need to be growing in Christ with a big view of God so nothing will keep us stuck again.

Spiritual nearsightedness is when everything in this life becomes so big it paralyzes us. Peter knows about it because he experienced this when he denied the Lord. Today we are talking about how to get unstuck, and first we've got to consider the problem of being stuck.

1. THE PROBLEM OF BEING STUCK (1:8-9)

2 Peter 1:8-9 | 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. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Peter knows about being stuck. He's been there before. At our Lord's greatest moment of need, **Peter, as his chief apostle, denied him three times**. Remember he thought he'd never recover? But Jesus pursued him and asked him three times, "Do you love me?" He decided to leave the apostle thing behind and **go back to fishing** (Jn 21:3). Thankfully, the Lord restored Peter (Jn 21:15-19). He got Peter unstuck, and if you feel stuck, the Lord will restore you. What's the secret to getting unstuck? Let me share a story that gives us the secret.

¹ Timothy S. Lane, *Unstuck: A Nine-Step Journey to Change that Lasts* (Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2019), 2.

² Mark Jobe. *Unstuck: Out of Your Cave, Into Your Call* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 9.

Nicholas White, a thirty-four-year-old production manager, was returning from a break on a Friday evening when the elevator in his New York City office building became stuck between floors. He had no watch, no cellphone, no water, and no food—only a pack of Roloids.

He paced, called for help, banged on the elevator walls, and even tried to climb out through the ceiling. He finally managed to pry open the elevator doors, only to be faced with a brick wall. Nearly two days later, he **reached his breaking point**. White, not a religious man, prayed for help. At four o'clock Sunday afternoon, almost delirious from thirst and by now resigned to his fate, he heard a voice on the intercom asking if anyone was there. Finally, he was rescued by the paramedics. He had been stuck for forty-one hours. White had no lasting physical side effects from his elevator experience, but by his own admission it left him **emotionally troubled**. He never discovered why the elevator stopped. In the weeks following his ordeal White **lost his job** of fifteen years, **lost all contact with former coworkers**, lost his **apartment**, and **spent all his savings**. He later acknowledged, "It wasn't so much the elevator that changed me as **my reaction to it**."³ You may be stuck, but you must **never give up**. You must **respond with hope**, looking to the Lord who promises to help you grow and thrive again.

Listen, we are all going to get stuck from time to time, but how we respond to it is what changes us. Peter tells us how to respond when we are stuck.

THE WAY OUT OF INEFFECTIVENESS

We are all going to have trials and troubles and temptations, but what we do in the midst of those troubles makes all the difference. We have to constantly be in growing mode. If you choose to be distracted by a hurt or a fear, you are going to go on a ride that hurts you. You can become "ineffective and unfruitful" even though you know the Lord Jesus Christ. No matter how you've fallen, you must **determine to get up and keep growing**.

2 Peter 1:8 | 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.

Notice **knowledge alone doesn't guarantee growth**. You have to be **increasing and growing** in the qualities and excellencies of Christ. You can't run away to get yourself unstuck. **Growth alone** keeps you from backsliding and being ineffective.

Getting unstuck does not mean you need to move to another state, change your marital status, find a new job, switch churches, replace a business partner, alter your hair color, shift your major in college, or drown out your pain by binge watching your favorite show. It does mean making a fresh surrender to Christ.

Building on your righteous standing in Christ, knowing you are God's child, pursued by his unrelenting love, you have to make a choice. When trouble comes, you have to add to your faith virtue. **Gaze at the excellencies of Christ. Determine to please God no matter what**. You have to want to please God in all you do, and go on from there: self-control, perseverance, and godliness. Are you learning how to love God in the midst of trials and temptations? Your knowledge of Christ will become unfruitful and ineffective if you allow yourself to be **choked out by fear and bitterness**, depression, and worldliness. Don't allow it! When you see yourself getting choked, you've got to make a choice to get out of that ungodly state of mind.

Nicholas White did not know why his elevator stopped moving, and neither did **Troy Fredrickson** know at first why he was lying on the floor of his house, barely able to crawl to the door. A few years ago, Fredrickson, **chief of a small fire department**, and his wife were awakened by their young daughter who was complaining of feeling sick and vomiting. Fredrickson had a slight headache himself. But he helped wash up his daughter and prepared a clean bed for

³ Nicholas White in Rich McHugh and Jonann Brady, *Man Trapped in Elevator for 41 Hours* (New York: ABC News), abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=4693690, April 21, 2008.

her. A short time later, his slight headache became a splitting headache, worse than any migraine he had ever suffered. Fredrickson was climbing the stairs to get some medication when his firefighter training kicked in. He realized what was wrong. He and his daughter were **suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning**, the result of a **malfunctioning furnace**. He immediately rushed toward the front door, but Fredrickson passed out before he could reach it. **At least he knew the way out!** When he came to, he was barely able to crawl to the door and open it. Once outside, he fought to stay conscious until help arrived. “If I had not had the training I have,” Fredrickson later reflected, “we could have written it off as the flu and gone back to bed. **We would have slept to death.**”⁴ He knew the way out, and it saved his life.

If you are stuck in the Christian life, you need to remember the way out. You are being choked by something more dangerous than carbon monoxide. **Flee sin. Surrender to the mercy of Christ.** You are getting **choked by deep rooted patterns of sin and idolatry in your heart**. Make a choice to get out of that atmosphere of dread and fear. Stop the anger and holding grudges. Stop fantasizing about running and escaping your circumstances and change your heart. Soften your heart to the Lord. Tell someone about your struggles so they can **give you some spiritual oxygen from the word and prayer**. Make a choice to please God instead of ignoring your sin. Or you will find yourself “sleeping to death” like the firefighter who almost died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

A WARNING AGAINST INEFFECTIVENESS

Peter says that we can become so choked by the pressures of what’s right in front of us that we can’t see anything else, and **we become blind—even forgetting that we are Christians**.

2 Peter 1:9 | For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

We all forget things sometimes. It can even be funny, up to a point. But memory loss is often serious, and in the case of one rare form of memory loss - amnesia - sudden. Can you imagine forgetting who you are? I’ve heard of people who get hit on the head and they have amnesia.

SPIRITUAL AMNESIA

The danger of amnesia. One September day in 2001, **a 33-year-old Texas woman named Norene** got into her car to go to work. As she tells it, the next thing she knew,

“There’s a freeway here in Dallas and I began driving up the freeway, and I got as far as Denton, Texas, but I didn’t know where I was.”

The next thing she remembers is waking up in a hotel room in an unknown city, without friends or family. She had no idea why she was where she was. Norene explains,

“When I woke up the next morning, I sat up and I didn’t recognize the room. I didn’t recognize the purse that was sitting on the floor, or the clothes that were lying over the chair. I didn’t recognize myself in the mirror. I didn’t even know my name.”

This type of amnesia is very rare and comes on suddenly. It can last for hours or even months and affects only two-tenths of a percent of the population. What happened with Norene? It **took her more than a year** to recover her memory. She says,

⁴ Troy Fredrickson in Amy Macavinta, “Fireman’s close call underscores danger of carbon monoxide, need for detectors,” HJNews.com, January 8, 2012, http://news.hjnews.com/news/article_0f2b6676-39bd-11e1-9f8a-001871e3ce6c.html?mode=jqm.

“You know, I lost 33 years, and I had to slowly regain that back. And it is precious to me. I’ve done as much as I can and everything I can to build on that.”⁵

Worse than Norene’s story is the case of spiritual amnesia. It may be you. At one time you were **servicing the Lord with gladness**, but now you have forgotten that, and **all you feel is the pain of anxiety** all day, all night, all the time. Or perhaps there was a time when you were growing in Christ, and then something changed—the pressures of your job or marriage or family overtook you. Your health started to slow you down. All the sudden you’ve got spiritual amnesia. You’ve forgotten who you are. You could see so clearly, but now you are blinded. You just can’t feel the Lord’s presence like you used to because you can’t see his hand of grace in your life anymore. You are depressed. It’s hard to get out of bed. You are stuck.

The only way to get **unstuck out of spiritual amnesia** is to **go back to God’s roadmap**. Go back to his word and start applying it to your life.

Psalm 119:18 | Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

SPECIAL GLASSES FOR COLOR BLIND

Have you ever seen the videos of people who are color-blind, and then they are given special glasses, and they can finally see color? Suddenly, they are weeping because now they know what red is or yellow or green or blue is. Perhaps today your world is in black and white. **You’ve forgotten the joy of walking with Christ**.

Peter says, you don’t have to remain blinded. There is so much to see, but you have to see through the Lord’s eyes. What tears of joy you would have if you could be cured of your spiritual myopia. Let God remove your nearsightedness or even blindness and let him open your eyes to the fullness of joy and freedom. Determine to do whatever it takes to get unstuck. **Return to your first love**. Stir up your faith with virtue and knowledge. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Live life with Christ at the center. **Awake out of your spiritual amnesia**. **Open your eyes** and gaze in wonder at the beauty of Christ.

2. THE PRIORITY OF GETTING UNSTUCK (1:10-11)

Getting unstuck will take some Holy Spirit empowered effort. It’s not the kind of fleshly effort, for nothing good can come from our old nature. It’s **not about trying harder** or doing better. That just leads to more discouragement. Peter calls us to be “all the more diligent.” Let’s find out what he’s talking about.

2 Peter 1:10-11 | 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.

You could see so clearly, but now you are blinded. You just **can’t feel the Lord’s presence** like you used to because you **can’t see his hand of grace** in your life anymore. You are depressed. It’s hard to get out of bed. You are stuck.

⁵ Susan Spencer, “An Unforgettable Tale of Amnesia,” *48 Hours* (New York: CBS News. CBS Interactive, May 3, 2009), cbsnews.com/news/an-unforgettable-tale-of-amnesia.

THE ELECT'S ACTIVITY

2 Peter 1:10a | Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.

Plain and simple: **Peter links our divine election to our calling** to holiness. You know who the elect are by watching the pattern of holiness in their lives. Those who are **truly elected are called to a holy life**. The true elect of God will confirm that they truly are the elect of God by following the pathway of holiness Peter prescribed. Add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge and then add the self-control and perseverance, living out a heart of Christlike godliness. Add to that community of brotherly affection and true spiritual maturity, which is love.

Confirming our calling means we diligently follow the pathway Peter prescribed. Peter is saying that we need to **make sure the fruit matches the root**. An apple tree produces apples. A Christian heart produces a Christian life. In other words, the more we see Christian fruit in our lives, our calling and election as God's children will be assured. **All true believers are growing** and changing into Christ's image. Paul tells us that election and our calling to holiness are inextricably linked.

2 Timothy 2:19 | God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

The blazing center of our purpose in life as Christians is growth, growth, growth. Those who live ungodly lives show no evidence that they truly belong to God, that they have genuinely received forgiveness.⁶ God's grace should not lead to moral relaxation but intense effort.⁷ **We make our calling sure by diligently responding to the Lord** by his word and Spirit. If our calling is sure, then so is our election. God's **election occurred before the foundation of the world**. This election is born out in Christians who live lives of holiness, growing into the image of Jesus.

THE ELECT'S COMMUNITY

2 Peter 1:10b | For if you [all] practice these qualities you will never fall.

It's hard to see in our English translation, but Peter is actually saying that this kind of **progress in the Christian life is a group effort**. You all must practice these qualities together. You cannot add to your faith in isolation. You have to grow in your faith in community. That is, your Christian walk is not just vertical, it is also horizontal. You cannot grow without you edifying others around you, and they are edifying you.

Ephesians 4:15-16 | We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

We need each other. We all need connection. I heard the story of a brother in Christ who had visited an orphanage in Mozambique. The director mentioned there was a great shortage of people to hold the babies. The brother asked if he could pick up a baby, about nine months old. He wrote about his story as follows.

⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 304.

⁷ Tord Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1977), 27.

I glanced at the crib in front of me and there she was, Muyena, staring up at me. I asked the nun if I could pick up the little girl and hold her for a minute. She seemed reluctant. With a heavy accent she hesitantly said, “You may go ahead. But just be ready.” When I picked up Muyena she immediately wrapped her little legs around my torso, put her arms around my neck and buried her head in my chest. Occasionally she would peek up at me as she held me tight.

I spoke to her in soft tones, as I had to my own children when they were babies. She obviously did not understand a word of English, but that didn’t bother her one bit. I walked around with her for a few minutes until our tour director gently insisted we needed to move on. When I attempted to pull Muyena’s arms off my neck I realized how strong that little girl was. She clung to me as hard as her little arms and legs could hold her. When I finally placed her back in her crib, she let out a wail that made all the children stop and look. Her mouth was wide open as she cried with all her little lungs could muster, but her eyes were fixed on me. It was hard to walk out of that room knowing those tears were calling out to me. The director looked at me and said, “Everyone wants to be held by someone.”⁸

That orphanage director was absolutely right: “**Everyone wants to be held by someone.**” Orphan babies in Mozambique are not the only ones that long for personal connection. In your city, you can be surrounded by people, competing for parking spaces, crowding into elevators, bumping into strangers on sidewalks, and living with very little space between you and your neighbors yet still feel completely alone.

You can be a stay-at-home-mom with children clinging to your housecoat, a college student with two thousand Twitter followers, a doctor who sees dozens of patients a day, or a bus driver who interacts with hundreds of people every shift and still feel isolated. In fact, the most painful loneliness is the kind we experience when people surround us. Most people living in crowded Chicago suburbs rarely know their next-door neighbors. We sometimes share walls, hallways, elevators, and a common street address but remain strangely isolated from each other. Loneliness is not due to the absence of people but to the lack of authentic connection with people.

That place of connection for the Christian is the church of Jesus Christ. You cannot practice adding virtue and self-control and perseverance to your faith without the help of the body of Christ. **Everyone wants to be held by someone.** First, we need to be **held by Christ**, but that touch often comes through fellowship with our forever family.

THE ELECT’S SECURITY

2 Peter 1:10b | For if you [all] practice these qualities you will never fall.

We are the elect, and as the elect of God with new natures and new hearts, we will live transformed lives. As we live according to our new nature, we will not only confirm our calling, but we will be secured from ever falling away. When Peter says, “if you practice these qualities, you will **never fall**,” he’s talking about **apostasy, rejecting the faith** of Jesus Christ permanently. Now Peter is not saying we won’t disappoint or deny the Savior. He did that. But as a righteous person, we fall seven times and get up again (Pro 24:16). The very one who calls us to salvation will do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 | Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Believers who confirm their call and election by living in a godly manner will not “stumble,” that is, they will not forsake God, abandon him, and commit apostasy.⁹ Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 261;

⁸ Jobe. *Unstuck*, 48-49.

⁹ See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 191; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 49.

Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 309; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 191; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 49; Fuchs and Reymond, *2 Pierre, Jude*, 60.

THE ELECT'S ASSURANCE

2 Peter 1:11 | For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Why is it that **the elect often struggle with the assurance** of salvation, and the most proud hypocrites are offended if you dare suggest they should examine themselves to see if they are truly believers? The elect of God indeed do struggle to have that assurance.

Satan would have every Christian think that there is **no way back to a vibrant relationship with God** once he or she has fallen and failed him. What Peter has told us though is, “That’s not true. Don’t believe it. **I fell, and I am going to finish well.** You can do so too. For God has already given you what you need (1:3–4). Begin walking the road back (1:5–9). Take care to arrive safely (1:10–11).” If Peter could preach to us, I think he would say something like, “I know you’ve fallen. I know you’ve failed Jesus. So did I. I have also experienced those unwanted companions of guilt and shame. They were once at my heels. But in God there is hope and grace. So, on your feet, ascend the path to heaven.”¹⁰

3. THE PATHWAY TO BEING UNSTUCK (1:12-15)

How are you going to bear fruit? Peter makes it clear that we cannot do it alone. We need someone to remind us.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSTANT REMINDER

We so easily forget what we have learned in the Christian life, so we need to be constantly reminded. Peter was willing to be that tool to constantly remind the saints that they need to keep growing every day or they would be backsliding.

2 Peter 1:12-13 | Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder.

How are you going to bear fruit? Peter makes it clear that we cannot do it alone. We need someone to remind us. Peter knows he’s going to die soon (vs 14). Yet he says, “As long as I am alive, I’ll keep reminding you constantly, continually of these vital qualities.”

Remember the story of Norene? Well, she did indeed recover her memory! But the way it worked was through constant reminder. **She had to look over old photos and videos.** She had to get reacquainted with her children. After one year her memory is almost fully restored. For the Christian with spiritual amnesia, you need the constant reminder of the joy of Christ’s love. You need the constant reminder that you are **most blessed when you are most broken.** We forget and we tend toward pride and unbelief. But God says the only way to defeat spiritual amnesia is through constant reminder. And you have to do that every minute, every day, until you die. And then you will end well, like Peter.

¹⁰ David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 199–200.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENDING WELL

Peter had failed, but he never fell away from the faith. Peter knew there was coming a day soon where he would never be stuck again! The battle will one day be over. The war will be won.

2 Peter 1:14 | Since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

Peter did put off his earthly tent and entered into glory in **October 67 A.D.** He submitted to being crucified upside down. Peter has given the example that a Christian may get stuck and may stumble along the way, **but a true believer will not fall away**, but will end well. The word is filled with promises of God's preservation of us and **the perseverance of the saints**. Christ pursued Peter, and he promises to pursue you. His goodness and unrelenting love will follow you all the days of your life (Psa 23:6).

What matters is not where you have failed. We are called to be "forgetting that which is behind" and striving forth for the prize of the high calling of knowing Christ more and more intimately. What matters is not how you start, but that you end well.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HELPING OTHERS

As Peter prepares for his imminent death, he wants to encourage his fellow saints that even a good man or woman can have a serious fall and have a complete recovery. You don't have to stay stuck! **Peter had fallen hard when he denied the Lord three times**. The Lord pursued him. Now he's making every effort to pursue others and help those around him. Indeed, Peter says you need three things to help others: effort, your example, and the education of God's people.

It Takes Effort to Help Others

2 Peter 1:15a | And I will make every effort.

Peter failed, but by the power of God he **dedicated every effort** of the **rest of his days** to preaching the love of Christ, and his power of restoration. He didn't want anyone else to fail like he did, so he dedicated everything to **helping others get unstuck**.

If there's anyone with a testimony of failure, it's Peter. And now **he's at his final departure to glory. It's 67 A.D.**, and he's about to go to his own cross. But he wants us to know that it's possible to get unstuck. Remember he denied the Lord three times. He also almost split the church at Antioch (Gal 2:11-14). If there's anyone that's been stuck, it's Peter. **Peter recovered. Peter was restored.** You can recover. You can be completely restored.

When a person is forgiven much, they love much (Lk 7:47). God's forgiveness and love spurs us on to love. That kind of effort is kindled by the Holy Spirit and driven by the resurrection power of Jesus so that we can say, it's not mere human effort. God uses us when we are most broken, not when we are the strongest. In fact, Paul says, "When I'm weak, then I'm strong." "When I'm at my weakest point, that's when the power of Christ rests upon me in the most manifest way."

It Takes Example to Help Others

2 Peter 1:15b | So that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Peter didn't just give us a book; he lived it out. He went to his death for his faith in Christ. He left us a legacy and a testimony. That's what we are doing when the hard times come, we are leaving a legacy for those who follow after us. Listen to the words of Paul to his son in the faith Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:12 | Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Look at all the good Peter did once he got unstuck! He **preached Pentecost and three thousand people were saved**. Two books in the New Testament. Numerous churches planted. Peter's legacy is to show us that **it's possible to get stuck in horrible ways**, but then for God to get us unstuck! Jesus didn't come to call perfect people. He didn't come to call those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners. Peter qualifies. The Bible says that the righteous person "falls seven times" and then gets up again, and again, and again (Pro 24:17). **God's people do fall, but we get up.**

Peter says, he's going to die soon, but after he departs, **he wants them to remember what he's taught them. Who are you teaching?** Maybe you are one of those who is waiting to be perfect before you teach anyone. Peter would never have been qualified. We do need to be blameless to teach, but that doesn't mean perfect.

What are you leaving behind for people when you are gone? If you live a life that is unstuck, you will likely have even greater fruit after you are gone than when you lived.

It Takes Education to Help Others

2 Peter 1:15b | So that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Peter was not a scholar or professor. He was one of those "**unlearned**" uneducated fishermen from Galilee (Acts 4:13). Galilee was the wrong side of the tracks, the **backward part of Israel**. That's who God uses to educate for the most part. He doesn't call many strong or many wise. **He calls the foolish and the weak** (1 Cor 1:36-39). So Peter didn't use his lack of education and sophistication as an excuse.

The saints of Peter's day needed to recall the things they learned from Peter. Peter gave them a **couple of books in our Bible**, not to mention he was **the source material for John Mark's Gospel**. The point is, we can never truly rely on any apostle or any pastor or elder or teacher. We must rely on God through his word.

Peter's leaving. And one day your elders and pastors will depart in death to glory. **People will be depending on you.** All Christian leaders, as much as we love them, are not guaranteed to be with you at all times. We cannot say that we will never leave you because God may take us home. But there is one that you can rest in: the living God through the **ministry of the Holy Spirit revealed in the word of God.**

Your leaders will help you as much as they can. Your fellow Christians will help you as much as they can. But you must become mature. Some of you younger men are called to be pastors and elders because one day we won't be here. Will you stand in the gap? Will you stand in the valley of decision for those around you?

Conclusion

One day my daughter **Katie got stuck in the elevator** between floors where she had the Dundee Scottish Bag Pipe Band practice when she was in high school. She was riding and got stuck in between floors. She had seen the movies where people get stuck in an elevator and become frantic, banging on the elevator doors, yelling in the hopes that their voices would get someone on the surrounding floors to come to the aid.

Instead of panicking, my daughter opened a little door in the elevator wall and pulled out a telephone. Immediately **she was connected with someone on the outside**. She didn't need to beat on the wall to get their attention. She didn't need to speak loudly in the phone to receive their help. She could have whispered, and they would have heard her.

In this world, we're going to get "stuck" in places we aren't comfortable with. **We can try to rescue ourselves.** We can become frozen with panic and beat against the walls or cry out in dismay. But the way to get unstuck is simple. It **starts with faith**, a complete trust and surrender of your life to the Lord. Call out to him, and even if you whisper, he will hear every word!

If you are stuck, **don't stay paralyzed with fear in the elevator of life.** Don't stay stuck in anger or despair. Pick up that heavenly telephone and entrust your life to the Lord. He may send a team of saints from your "forever family" at your local church to help you, but be sure, help is on the way! Whatever you do, don't stay stuck. God wants you to live in freedom and joy. Call out to him and he will be sure to rescue you. Don't stay stuck! Call out to the Lord, humble yourself right now. **Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you and restore you.**