

GET REAL

Philippians 3:12–16

BIG IDEA: Because Christ has made us His own, we must honestly evaluate our spiritual condition, deliberately pursue spiritual growth, and steadfastly continue in the truth we have received.

KEY VERSE: “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” (Philippians 3:12, ESV)

INTRODUCTION: BE REAL

- The BeReal app challenged people to stop managing appearances and show life as it really was.
- We can manage our spiritual appearance too—highlighting accomplishments while hiding weaknesses.

Paul refuses to pretend that he has _____; he honestly admits that Christ still has work to do in him.

1. HONEST REFLECTION — Philippians 3:12

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already _____...”

- Christian maturity does not make us less honest about remaining sin; it makes us more honest because our identity is secure in Christ.
- Paul does not admit imperfection to earn Christ’s acceptance. He admits it because Christ has already made him His own.

KEY TRUTH: The mature Christian is not the person who claims to have arrived, but the person who honestly admits how much further Christ must take him.

ILLUSTRATION — John Newton: Near the end of his life, the author of “Amazing Grace” described himself on his memorial as one who had been “preserved, restored, pardoned.” He faced his past honestly while resting gratefully in Christ’s mercy.

REFLECT:

- ☐ Where am I pretending to be more spiritually mature than I really am?
- ☐ What sin, weakness, attitude, or habit have I been reluctant to acknowledge before God?
- ☐ Am I comparing myself with others instead of comparing my life with the character of Christ?

2. DELIBERATE ACTION — Philippians 3:13–14

“But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and _____ forward to what lies ahead...”

- Forgetting does not mean losing all memory of the past. It means refusing to let past failures or past successes control today.
- Paul’s pursuit is active: “one thing I do,” “straining forward,” and “I press on.”

KEY TRUTH: You cannot change yesterday, but by God’s grace, you can decide what direction you will run today.

ILLUSTRATION — Jordan Rassas: After a reported spider bite led to a medical crisis, Rassas says he heard the question, “What are you doing with your life?” The interruption forced him to confront addiction, anger, violence, and the direction of his life.

PERSONAL RESPONSE:

- ☐ Is a past failure still defining or paralyzing me?
- ☐ Has a past accomplishment made me spiritually comfortable or complacent?
- ☐ What habit must I begin, eliminate, or restructure to pursue Christ intentionally?

GET REAL

Pressing On Toward Spiritual Maturity

3. STEADFAST DETERMINATION — Philippians 3:15–16

“Only let us hold true to what we have _____.”

- Spiritual maturity changes the way we think.
- Mature believers remain teachable, allowing God to reveal where their thinking still needs correction.
- We must not abandon what God has already taught us while waiting for additional direction.

KEY TRUTH: Maturity is demonstrated not merely by accomplishing more, but by becoming humble enough to recognize how much we owe to God and others.

ILLUSTRATION — Diana Nyad: When Nyad completed her Cuba-to-Florida swim at age 64, she said maturity had changed her understanding of success. As a younger athlete she had been more self-focused; later she understood how dependent she was on the team surrounding her.

EVIDENCES OF MATURITY:

- ☐ I am becoming more grateful.
- ☐ I am becoming more teachable.
- ☐ I am more willing to receive help and share credit.
- ☐ I am less concerned about being noticed and more concerned about being faithful.

MOVEMENT	MY RESPONSE
Honest Reflection	I will admit where I am.
Deliberate Action	I will pursue where Christ is leading.
Steadfast Determination	I will continue in what Christ has taught me.

FINAL APPLICATION

What is one area of my life where I need to get real with God?

What must I leave behind so that I can move forward?

What specific step of obedience will I take this week?

What truth has God already shown me that I need to keep practicing?

GOSPEL FOCUS

- Have I truly been made Christ's own?
- Is my confidence resting in my religious performance or in the righteousness of Jesus Christ?
- Am I pressing on to earn Christ's acceptance—or because Christ has graciously made me His own?

FINAL APPEAL

Paul does not say, “I have arrived.”

He says, “Christ has made me His own.”

Because Christ has made you His own, are you still pressing on?

Who Is Jordan B. Peterson?

Psychologist, author, lecturer, and podcast host

Overview

Jordan B. Peterson is a Canadian psychologist, author, online educator, and professor emeritus at the University of Toronto. He previously taught at Harvard University and worked for many years as a clinical psychologist. He became internationally known through university lectures, public debates, books, interviews, and online discussions concerning personality, responsibility, meaning, mythology, religion, culture, and personal development.

Many listeners describe Peterson as a mentor or life coach because he frequently encourages people to accept responsibility, tell the truth, develop discipline, strengthen their families, and pursue a meaningful life. However, his professional training is in psychology; “mentor” and “life coach” are descriptions of the influence some people believe he has had, rather than his primary academic credentials.

Major Themes in His Teaching

- Accept personal responsibility rather than blaming others for every difficulty.
- Develop habits, discipline, competence, and a sense of purpose.
- Pursue meaning rather than making comfort or happiness the highest goal.
- Speak truthfully and act with integrity.
- Strengthen families, relationships, and communities.
- Examine biblical stories, myths, and literature for psychological and cultural meaning.

Books Written by Jordan B. Peterson

Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief (1999)

An academic work that combines psychology, neuroscience, mythology, religion, and political belief to explore how people construct meaning and respond to order and chaos.

12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos (2018)

A bestselling book presenting twelve principles concerning responsibility, discipline, relationships, truth, meaning, and the challenges of life.

Beyond Order: 12 More Rules for Life (2021)

A companion to 12 Rules for Life that emphasizes balancing stability and order with creativity, change, and the need to confront uncertainty.

We Who Wrestle with God: Perceptions of the Divine (2024)

An examination of major biblical narratives, including themes of rebellion, sacrifice, suffering, faith, transformation, and humanity’s relationship to God, approached largely through psychological, literary, and cultural analysis.

Podcasts and Audio/Video Programs

The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast is his primary podcast. It features long-form interviews, lectures, conversations, and discussions about psychology, philosophy, religion, culture, politics, science, relationships, and personal responsibility. Guests have included scholars, authors, physicians, religious leaders, political figures, business leaders, and other public personalities.

Answer the Call is a recurring call-in format presented within The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast. In these episodes, Peterson—sometimes joined by his daughter, Mikhaila Peterson—responds to callers seeking guidance about marriage, family, grief, anxiety, work, relationships, responsibility, and other personal challenges.

His podcast material is distributed through major podcast platforms, YouTube, and DailyWire+. Some lectures, interviews, and special series are available only through subscription services.

Important Christian and Theological Disclaimer

Jordan Peterson is a psychologist, not a trained theologian or pastor.

Although Peterson frequently discusses the Bible, Christianity, God, morality, sacrifice, and faith, he commonly interprets these subjects through psychological, symbolic, literary, and cultural frameworks. His observations can be thoughtful and may encourage people to take Scripture and moral responsibility seriously, but they should not automatically be treated as sound biblical interpretation or historic Christian doctrine.

Christians should evaluate his claims by Scripture and distinguish helpful psychological insights from biblical teaching. Peterson's books, lectures, and podcasts should not replace the Bible, membership in a faithful local church, pastoral counsel, or instruction from qualified Christian theologians. In particular, listeners should carefully compare his explanations of God, Christ, sin, faith, salvation, and the authority of Scripture with the clear teaching of the Bible.

Balanced Assessment

Jordan Peterson has helped many people think seriously about responsibility, meaning, truth, suffering, family, and moral choices. His psychological observations and practical counsel can be useful when evaluated carefully. At the same time, readers and listeners should recognize the limits of his expertise and avoid confusing psychological commentary about biblical stories with Christian theology or a clear presentation of the gospel.

Selected Sources

- Jordan B. Peterson official website: About, Books, and Podcast pages.
- Penguin Random House author page for Jordan B. Peterson and publisher pages for his books.
- The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast listings on DailyWire+, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and YouTube.