

“Knowing and Growing”
“Growing in Spiritual Knowledge” Part 1
2 Peter 1:1-11

1. The Christian life begins with faith.

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 2 Peter 1:1-2

I want you to see the way Peter recognizes his place alongside other believers. He identifies himself first and foremost as a servant. He sees his place just as every other believer, he is a servant of Christ and other believers, not just the person in authority. While he recognizes the important place God has given him as an Apostle, that position does not make him above the rest of the church. He like those to whom he writes is first and foremost a servant. **True leaders are servants!** A leader must never forget the purpose of his leadership, leadership is service! Years ago we used to sing a chorus, Make Me A Servant: Lord let me lift up those who are weak. Jesus the head of the church, did not come to be served, but to serve. Those who follow Christ are called as we learned last week, as leaders we do not lord it over those we lead, but they are eager to serve.

Peter writes to those who through the righteousness of God and Savior Jesus Christ, have received a like precious faith. It is not a faith different than Peter's who walked with Christ and saw Christ, it is the same kind of faith for those who have never seen Christ yet believe. As believers we share a common faith. It is a faith based on the person of Jesus Christ and His work on our behalf. It is a faith based on Christ death for our sins! It is a faith based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ who has the power over life and death, because He was God in the flesh.

Peter ends his opening greeting by praying for Grace and Peace to his readers in abundance and then tells how that grace and peace are ours in abundance. Grace is the favor of God to the undeserving, and the result of God's grace is peace. It is through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord that we receive this grace and resultant peace. The word knowledge, is not just an intellectual knowledge, it is a personal, intimate knowledge. It is not about a textual knowledge of Jesus, it is a personal relationship with Jesus that each believer has. Our faith is in a person, Jesus the who is also God. God and Savior are not two different persons, they describe one Person Jesus Christ. He is the God who makes Himself known to us personally.

Transition: The Christian life begins with faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. Without faith in Jesus Christ there is no relationship with God. Without faith in Jesus Christ the Apostle Paul says we are actually enemies of Christ. There are two types of people in this world, those who have faith in the person of Jesus Christ, they are friends of God, and those who do not believe in Jesus Christ and they are enemies of God. Friends, no one stands in the undecided middle!

*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies
Colossians 1:21*

The Christian life begins with faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as a Christian apart from faith in the Person of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Where do you stand today, friend, or enemy?

2. Faith involves both God's power and promises.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2 Peter 1:3-4

When you know Jesus Christ personally, you experience God's power. God's power produces life and godliness. The person who does not have faith in Christ is spiritually dead.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time... Eph 2:1-3

Saving faith produces life and godliness. The old is gone the new has come. Transformation! When you are born into the family of God by faith in Christ, you were born complete. God gives you everything you need for life, and godliness. Nothing has to be added. In other words, the transformational DNA is there, all you need to do is grow up in Christ. The exciting thing is He is committed to your process of growth. God has placed His Holy Spirit in each person who has accepted Him by faith. Now in our character and conduct we should reveal Christ's beauty and grace. The incredible thing is, it actually happens as we allow the Spirit of God control.

God has not only given us His power, but also His promises. God has given us His Word to enable us to develop this life and godliness. God's promises lead us

to God. God's Word is filled with His promises. **Nature determines appetite!** Pigs want slop, sheep want green pastures. Godliness is the result of cultivating that new nature and taking in the very promises of God found in His Word.

Transition: Because we have God's power and promises, true faith results in growth. Growth is natural when we have God's life in us. Where there is life, there must be growth! Peter now lists seven characteristics of a godly life. We must not think of them as seven stages, these characteristics relate to each other in the same way that branches relate to a tree. Just like the fruit of the Spirit these qualities grow out of our vital relationship with Christ.

3. Faith results in spiritual growth.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

2 Peter 1:5-9

Let's define each character.

Goodness—carries the idea of fulfilling our purpose. Land that produces crops is good land. Remember in 1 Peter, the Apostle says, let us live such good lives that, even though people accuse us, they may be drawn to Christ. A tool used correctly is an excellent tool, because it is doing what the tool was made to do. Goodness can be defined as moral excellence.

Knowledge—that is growing. The word suggests practical knowledge or discernment. It refers to the ability to handle life successfully. This knowledge comes from obedience to Christ.

Self-control—discipline. Paul's illustration of an athlete. One who brings his body under submission and in this case to Christ.

Perseverance—patience. Self-control has to do with handling the pleasures of life, perseverance has to do with handling the pressures of life. Self-control has to do with saying NO, while perseverance has to do with saying yes. Yes Jesus, I trust you!. Without trials we could never learn patience or perseverance.

Godliness—God likeness. The original word meant to worship well. It described a person in right relationship to God and to other people. Godliness is seen in the person who seeks to do the will of God and seeks the welfare of others.

Brotherly kindness—If we love Jesus we must love others also. One of the evidences of true faith is that we love our brothers and sister in Christ.

By this will all men know you are my disciples, that you love one another.

Love—unconditional love. Also known as agape love. When we show brotherly love we love out of likeness to others, but when we show agape love, we love in spite of the differences we have.

It is impossible for fallen human beings to manufacture these seven qualities of Christian character. They must be produced by the indwelling Spirit of God. Because we have the life of God in us, we can grow spiritually and develop this kind of Christian character. This character comes through the power and promises of God.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...

Romans 8:28-29

Listen to the promise and warning! Top of previous pg.

4. Are you certain about your salvation?

Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:10-11

It is not profession of faith that guarantees that we are saved, it is our progression in the faith that gives us assurance. The person who claims to be a child of God, but whose lifestyle gives no evidence of it is deceiving himself.

Calling and election always go together. God call through the gospel to call us to Himself. When we respond, we discover we have been chosen.

(The outside and inside of the gates of heaven—Come everyone who is thirsty—calling. Chosen before the foundations of the world.)

Divine election must never be a reason for human laziness. (*make your calling and election sure*) apply diligence. Friends, if we believe in Christ Jesus as Lord, and display growth in Christ, then we can be sure we are converted and will one day be in heaven. As a matter of fact the promise is *you will receive a rich welcome into*

the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. **The Christian life begins with faith!**

Faith leads to growth!
Growth leads to transformation and service!

"Knowing and Growing" is first in a series titled, "Growing in Spiritual Knowledge."
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