

This week Peter tells us how to protect ourselves from backsliding on the Lord (v. 9) by taking advantage of the promises that God has provided to help us grow more like Christ, which Peter describes as being “partakers of the divine nature” (vs. 4-8).

In 2 Peter 3:1, Peter mentions that this letter is the second one he is writing to his recipients. Assuming that 1 Peter is the first letter, then Peter is writing to the same group of Christians in 2 Peter as he did in 1 Peter. Peter’s reason for writing this letter seems to be that he wants to remind his readers of some things that are too important to forget. Theologians believe that Peter is writing from prison because he expects to die soon and knows his opportunities to remind them of certain things will soon be gone (1:14). Although he briefly mentions other topics, Peter’s main theme is a warning against the false teachers (chapter 2) and skeptics (chapter 3) that would come.

¹ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

“Simon Peter, a servant [slave] and an apostle [delegate; messenger] of Jesus Christ” - Peter identifies himself as the writer of this letter, as a slave of Jesus Christ and also as a delegate or messenger sent by Him. This reflects his total commitment to Christ.

“to them that have obtained [receive by allotment] like precious faith with us” - Peter is writing to fellow Christians who have the same faith that he and the other servants of Christ have. The Greek word for “obtained” indicates that these Christians did not derive their faith on their own but it was given to them by God. **Eph. 2:8** “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*”

“through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” - The reason for them receiving their faith was not their own righteousness but that of Jesus Christ, who Peter describes as being both God and Savior.

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you” - Peter’s desire that both the blessings of the grace of God and the peace of God would be abundantly poured out on them.

“through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” - It’s only through our knowledge of God and of Christ that we are able to receive such blessings for faith is based on knowing what the truths of God are. **Rom. 10:17** “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Peter refers to knowledge multiple times in this letter.

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” - Our ability to live a godly life that is pleasing to God comes only through the power of God. We are unable to do it in our flesh or through our own determination and will power and we are foolish if we think that we can. **Gal 3:3** “*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*”

“through the knowledge of him” - Peter again refers to knowledge. We are only able to tap into God’s power for living a life of godliness through “the knowledge of Him” - that is, through faith, for we cannot have faith unless we are aware of the truth so that we can believe it. **Rom. 10:13-14** “¹³ *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* ¹⁴ *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*”

“that hath called us to glory and virtue [moral purity or goodness]” - God did not save us merely to give us a ticket to heaven. He saved us to share in His glory as well as to moral purity. His purpose is to raise us up from our past life of sin to a new life of virtue and glory with Him. He wants to take us from nothing and make us into something.

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

“Whereby [or “through which”] are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises” - Because of the fact that God has called us to glory and virtue, He has given us the means of obtaining this glory and virtue: through promises that are both exceedingly great and precious. When we look at the promises of God in the Bible (particularly in the NT) we are amazed at the greatness and the preciousness of what God has promised to lowly sinners such as us.

“that by these ye might be partakers [partner; to share in; companion] of the divine nature” - God wants to make us more like Jesus Christ, His Son. During His life on this earth Jesus lived in perfect obedience to His Father and was always in perfect fellowship with Him. He loved people and showed compassion on them as He met their needs. He always chose the way of righteous and rejected any temptations to sin. God wants us to share in Christ’s divine nature so that these characteristics also become true in our lives and they are available through the promises of God.

“having escaped the corruption [that which is perishing or decaying] that is in the world through lust [desires of the flesh]” - God has set us free from the moral and spiritual decay of this world that is the result of the sinful desires of men’s flesh. This world is heading for destruction in God’s judgment but we have escaped through Jesus Christ our Savior.

⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

“And beside this” - Commentators generally agree that this phrase should have been translated “For this very reason...” God has given us great and precious promises to enable us to take part in His divine nature. For this very reason we should do as Peter describes next.

“giving all diligence [to earnestly strive to accomplish]” - We should earnestly seek to obtain the benefits of the promises God has made to help us partake of His divine nature. To do this Peter lists seven characteristics that we should “add” or incorporate into our faith. These characteristics are derived from God’s divine nature and are intended to make us more like Christ, something that can only be done by the power of God and not by our own efforts.

“add to your faith virtue [moral purity or goodness]” - In contrast to the corruption mentioned in v. 4, we are to seek to be morally pure.

“and to virtue knowledge” - We need to have a correct understanding of God and His ways and the only way to do this is to study His word. Our faith grows as we learn more about God.

“And to knowledge temperance [self-control]” - We need to always be under the control of the Spirit and not give ourselves over to the sinful desires of the flesh. The world operates on the philosophy of “if it feels good, do it” but the Christian must adhere to God’s standard of righteousness.

“and to temperance patience [steadfastness; endurance]” - The Christian must remain faithful to God even when the world doesn’t approve, criticizes, or even persecutes. When the going gets rough, the Christian doesn’t quit on God but instead trusts Him.

“and to patience godliness” - Living in accordance with God’s will, pleasing Him in all our decisions and actions.

“And to godliness brotherly kindness [philadelphia – love toward brothers or sisters]” - Christians are to love one another as brothers and sisters.

“and to brotherly kindness charity [love (agape)]” - God’s selfless love toward the lost as well as the saved.

⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“For if these things be in you, and abound [exist in abundance]” - If the characteristics he’s just described have become a regular part of our lives and manifest themselves consistently...

“they make you that ye shall neither be barren [inactive; useless] nor unfruitful [unproductive] in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” - ...then these things will cause you to become an active, useful and productive servant of Jesus Christ. You will grow spiritually and become stronger in your faith and your knowledge of God as His power causes these characteristics to grow within you.

⁹ But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Peter now shows the other side of the coin and describes someone who has not grown in the Lord...

“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off” - Someone who has not allowed the Spirit of God to do His work of causing the divine nature to grow within him is spiritually blind and cannot see beyond what’s in directly in front of him. He has no spiritual discernment and only looks at things from a natural, worldly perspective.

“and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” - This person has returned to his old sins from which God has already set him free. He begins acting like an unbeliever, living a worldly life and even questioning whether or not he was ever saved. Spiritually this person is in a miserable state for he cannot be happy being caught between the world and the kingdom of God, not finding satisfaction in either.

¹⁰ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

“Wherefore the rather, brethren” - Knowing the miserable state of such a person as described in v. 9, Peter draws a conclusion as to the preferable course of action.

“give diligence [to exert oneself] to make your calling and election sure” - We should make certain of the assurance of our salvation, making sure that we know what God has called us to and the blessings that we have as a result.

“for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall [stumble]” - Someone who practices the things that Peter has described in vs. 5-7 will never doubt their salvation for their faith will be solidly in God.

¹¹ For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Peter seems to be picturing a victorious entrance into heaven for the Christian who practices the things described in vs. 5-7. Rather than limping in, wounded and embarrassed by our lack of faith, we can enter heaven victorious in the power of Jesus Christ, bringing glory to our Lord.