

Peter has reminded us of the basics of Christian *life and godliness* God has given each believer through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We each have *like precious faith*. We each have been called to *glory and virtue*. We each have the *great and precious promises*. We've been given all of these things so we can personally be *partakers of the divine nature*. He now exhorts us to **grow** and to make our *calling and election sure*. **Not more sure in God's heart but in our hearts.** Peter refers to the fact that God, in His sovereign love, has *chosen* (elected) each believer out from among the mass of the lost and then He *called* us through the good news of the gospel to be saved and born again. Note that Peter mentions these terms in reverse chronological order. The calling is what he is focusing upon here. God's electing (choosing) us is in view of a specific purpose or calling God has in mind for each believer. This growth is a lifelong process not ending at age 18 or even 70. Yet there is noticeable growth, progress and fruitfulness beginning almost immediately. For example a newborn baby must grow to survive and become a mature man or woman. The youngster adds to his knowledge and different skills daily, growing and delighting parents and siblings. He had nothing to do with choosing his parents, the decision to be conceived and when, his or her gender, genetic heritage, or birth time or place. Once born he makes his calling and election sure through physical, emotional and spiritual growth. Similarly, a newly hired employee must learn and adopt the goals and objectives of his employer, learn the policies and rules of the company, learn his own role in the company, become acquainted with those he works with, etc., in order to be effective. As he works into the job he makes his calling and election sure as a loyal, increasingly productive employee.

So Peter sets before us the progression needed to become mature and fruitful Christians. In the process we continually make our calling and election sure. He encourages us to use **all** diligence, **to get at it, and stick to it**.

These things are to **abound** in us. Half hearted or token efforts won't achieve full growth. Such end up old men or women physically but immature spiritually. Not lost personally but never reaching their full, God given, potential. Peter speaks of them as barren or unfruitful. He predicts the outcome of those who do not tend to the business of growing. They may lapse into blindness no longer seeing realistically both their current situation and the future hope before all believers. They may even forget that they were purged from their old sins. Talk about a guilt trip. Yet this does not mean the person was saved and then lost his salvation due to neglecting the

blessings God gives each new born believer. But he may actually become indistinguishable from an unbeliever to our eyes and to the eyes of the world. His fruitfulness and testimony is gone. So it is with this very real danger in mind that Peter strongly urges we give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. We each confess we have not been as diligent as we could have been and have fallen short of the potential God placed in us and before us. But, no matter what our age, Peter's challenge is still set before us to take to heart. God hasn't changed. Go on with Him to maturity.

In this spiritual growth we begin with faith a gift from God. Next we add to it virtue. The progression expected is multiplication not mere addition. Virtue (moral courage and excellence) puts faith into practice, both in every day life and in life's crises. But spiritual excellence and courage must be according to knowledge. Paul, before he was saved, had boundless virtue and zeal, but he says it was not according to knowledge. Nevertheless we are changed, as we come to know Christ better and better we become more and more like Him. In our knowledge of Christ we exercise temperance (self control). "Knowledge puffs up" Paul said, 1Corinthians 8:1. We live as Jesus lived, in self control. When we live in moderation we need to endure those not exactly like us, yet are like Christ. And we need patient steadfastness or perseverance in the midst of ungodly, worldly influences and attacks. We are to add godliness assuring that in our endurance in the midst of evil and our gracious tolerance of each other we put God first in our thinking and walk. God first so we don't just focus on avoiding wrong or exposing evil but we walk with God through it all. A walk together with others of like precious faith.

2Timothy 2:22b follow righteous, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out a pure (undivided) heart.

To godliness we are to add brotherly love (*philadelphia*). Peter emphasized brotherly love in his first letter. It is precious and essential to enjoying the unity of all believers in the Assembly. We carry out the purposes of God in affectionate unity on a very human level. But the believer is carried beyond even genuine human affection as the cement that bonds us together in Christ. We are to add love (*agape*), the glory of the whole mature believer in Christ. All the attributes of a Christian named here are not only crowned with love, but generated and infused throughout by love. Selfless, unassuming, faithful love, God's love acting in our hearts. Love that has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit

Romans 5:1 ¶ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of

God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. 6 ¶ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

This list in Romans is a complement to the list in 2Peter 2. It describes the shaping and training of the believer by God that accompanies the believer's diligent spiritual growth urged in 2Peter. God has done His part, equipping us with the blessings mentioned plus the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the loving, encouraging assistance of godly believers around us. Let us diligently tend to our part. We won't fall if we are doing so. If we don't we will fall. Not that one can be lost once saved but we can still fall and need to be retrieved and confess our sin.

1John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

As we do our part "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." All

believers are part of the Kingdom of God. We are redeemed subjects of the coming King. Peter is not saying we earn our entrance into the kingdom of God. What is set before us here is the **abundance** of entrance granted us when that kingdom is established visibly on the earth. The abundance of entrance ministered to us will differ depending upon our faithfulness. While we are each part of that kingdom we will have differing positions in it. Those positions are awarded us based upon how we conduct our lives and how we avail ourselves of God's equipping blessings. It is in our hands, not that we earn it by our own strength, but though faith we lay hold on all that Peter has told us here and carry it out in the wisdom and strength that only God can give. While what we do for the Lord is out of love and gratitude to Him, He will reward us publically when He appears in glory to reign in the everlasting Kingdom. Long live the King.

The recent funeral of a pope and selection and crowning of a new pope gives but a hint of the ceremony, pomp and glory of the coming coronation of the King of Kings when He takes His Kingdom to reign forever, we with Him. Let us diligently seek to be a credit to Him now and thereby a glory to Him then.

By Ron Canner, April 20, 2005