

The Books of 1 and 2 Peter

Lesson 10: Confirm Your Calling and Election -- 2 Peter 1:1-21

There is a difference between owning something and living like you own it. A man can inherit a fortune and still wake up every morning feeling poor, anxious about money, hoarding pennies, never enjoying the wealth that is legally his. Peter opens his second letter to people who have inherited the greatest fortune imaginable, “a faith of equal standing with ours,” “his precious and very great promises,” “everything pertaining to life and godliness,” and he writes so that they will actually live like the rich heirs they are. He does not want them clutching their salvation in fear or taking it for granted in presumption. He wants them confident, growing, and sure.

And so Peter does something very practical. He hands them a ladder. Make every effort, he says, to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and then steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. These qualities are not the price of admission to grace; they are the growth that grace produces. Peter pictures the Christian life not as standing still on a single decision made long ago, but as a steady climb, each quality building on the last, until a person is fruitful and effective in the knowledge of Christ. The opposite, he warns, is a believer so shortsighted he has forgotten he was ever cleansed from his sins.

Then Peter says something that has comforted and challenged the church for two thousand years: “Be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.” There it is. Calling and election are real, but they are things we confirm by how we live, and the promise of never falling is tied to practicing these qualities. Peter assumes what the whole letter assumes, that a Christian can grow sure of his salvation through faithful living, and that a Christian who stops growing is in real danger. This is assurance, but it is the assurance of the diligent, not the presumption of the idle.

Peter knows his time is short; the Lord has shown him his death is near, and he writes like a man making sure his children will remember after he is gone. So he anchors everything in something unshakable: he was there. He saw the majesty of Christ on the holy mountain; he heard the voice from heaven say, “This is my beloved Son.” And he points to the prophetic word, made even more sure, men carried along by the Holy Spirit. Read this chapter as Peter’s deathbed charge to people he loves: you have everything you need, so climb, grow, make your calling sure, and stand on a word that will never let you down.

Group Discussion: Peter says God has given us “everything pertaining to life and godliness” and “his precious and very great promises” (vv. 3-4). If we truly have everything we need for a godly life, why do so many Christians still feel stuck, powerless, or spiritually poor? What gets in the way of actually living from the riches God has given?

Personal Reflection: Peter lists qualities to add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love (vv. 5-7). Which one of these is God most

calling you to grow in right now, and what is one specific way you could “make every effort” in that area this week?

Read 2 Peter 1:1-21

Study Questions

1. Peter writes to those who have “obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ,” who has given us “all things that pertain to life and godliness” and “his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature” (vv. 1-4). What do these opening verses teach about what God has provided for the Christian and about who Jesus Christ is?
2. Peter says we have everything we need for “life and godliness,” yet many of us live as though we are spiritually empty-handed. Where in your life are you living as though you lack what God says you already have in Christ, and how would believing His provision change that?
3. Peter urges us to “make every effort” to supplement our faith with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love (vv. 5-7). What does this list teach about the nature of Christian growth, and why does Peter present these qualities as something we actively add rather than passively wait to receive?
4. Peter says that whoever lacks these qualities “is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins” (v. 9). When have you found yourself spiritually “nearsighted,” losing sight of the bigger picture of your salvation? What helps you remember what God has done for you?
5. Peter says, “Be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall” (v. 10). What does it mean to “confirm” our calling and election, and how does this verse teach assurance of salvation through faithful, ongoing practice rather than through a one-time decision that guarantees we can never fall away?
6. Peter ties never falling to the active “practice” of these qualities (v. 10). Where might spiritual passivity or coasting be putting you at risk, and what would it look like to be “diligent” rather than coasting in your walk with Christ?
7. Peter says that practicing these qualities leads to a rich welcome “into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 11). What does it teach us that entrance into the kingdom is described as something richly provided to the faithful, and how does this shape the way we run the Christian race?
8. Peter, knowing his death is near, says he will keep reminding them of these truths so that “after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things” (vv. 12-15). Why do mature Christians still need constant reminders of basic truths, and what truths do you most need to be reminded of regularly?
9. Peter grounds his message in two unshakable foundations: he was an eyewitness of Christ’s majesty on the holy mountain (vv. 16-18), and the prophetic word, “men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (vv. 19-21). What do these verses teach about

the trustworthiness of the apostolic witness and the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture, and why does this matter for how we treat the Bible today?

10. Look back across the whole passage. Peter moves from God's rich provision, to the qualities we must add, to confirming our calling, to the sure word of Scripture. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through these verses. What single truth from 2 Peter 1:1-21 do you most need to carry into this week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, all Scripture breathed out by God and profitable; Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit that grace produces; Hebrews 6:11-12, diligence to the full assurance of hope; Matthew 17:1-8, the Transfiguration that Peter witnessed; Philippians 2:12-13, working out our salvation as God works in us