

Rooted: Core Truths

Week 10: Growing and Persevering in Faith -- 2 Peter 1:3–11

An old man sits down to write what he knows will be one of his last letters. Peter has walked a long road since the night he warmed his hands by a fire and denied he ever knew Jesus. He has preached at Pentecost, opened the door of the gospel to the nations, been jailed and beaten and freed, and shepherded the flock of God through decades of danger. Now, he says, he knows “the putting off of (his) body will be soon,” for the Lord has shown him. Death is close. And when a man like Peter, with all that behind him, picks up his pen to leave a final word for the people he loves, every sentence carries weight. What does he most want them to know? Not, as we might expect, “relax, you have arrived, your future is settled and nothing can touch it.” His urgent, dying plea is the opposite: keep growing, make every effort, be diligent, so that you never fall.

Peter holds two truths together that we are forever tempted to pull apart. On the one hand, he begins with sheer grace: God’s “divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” We are not left to scrape together holiness from our own meager resources; God has already given us everything we need. On the other hand, precisely because of that provision, Peter says, “make every effort.” He lists a chain of qualities to be added and increased: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love. These are not optional upgrades for advanced Christians. If they are missing, Peter says, a person has gone blind and forgotten that he was ever cleansed from his sins. So he urges, “be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”

There are two ways to get this badly wrong, and both are common. One is presumption: the notion that because we once believed, prayed, or were baptized, our salvation is now automatic and secure no matter how we live, so growth is optional and falling away is impossible. The other is anxiety: a fearful, exhausting uncertainty that never knows whether we have done enough. Peter walks a better road between them. He offers real assurance, a confidence that we “will never fall” and will receive a rich “entrance into the eternal kingdom,” but he grounds that assurance not in a presumed guarantee, but in the diligent, ongoing, grace-empowered growth of a living faith. Faith, for Peter, is not a finish line we cross once and forget. It is a living thing, and living things either grow or they die.

That is where this study comes to rest, with the dying words of an old apostle urging us to keep growing until we see the Lord. Read these verses slowly. Let Peter remind you of everything God has given you, stir you to make every effort, and show you the difference between a coasting, presumptuous faith and a diligent, assured one that will carry you all the way home.

Group Discussion: Christians often fall into one of two errors about their security: presumption, assuming that once we have believed our salvation is automatic no matter how we live, or anxiety, never sure whether we have done enough. Peter calls us instead to “be all the more diligent to confirm (our) calling and election.” Why do you think both presumption and anxiety are so common, and how does Peter’s call to diligent growth offer a better and more assured way?

Personal Reflection: Think honestly about your own walk with Christ over the past year or two. Are you actively growing, adding to your faith and increasing in the qualities Peter names, or have you quietly settled onto a plateau? Where do you sense the Lord calling you to renewed diligence in your faith?

Read 2 Peter 1:3–11

Study Questions

1. Peter begins by saying that God’s “divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us” (v. 3). What does it mean that God has already provided everything we need for a godly life, and how does this grace serve as the foundation for everything Peter asks of us?
2. Many believers try to live the Christian life on their own willpower, as if everything depended on their effort, and end up either proud or exhausted. Where have you been relying on your own strength rather than the power and provision God has already given? How would living as a fully equipped child of God change your week?
3. After all that grace, Peter says, “make every effort to supplement your faith” with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love (vv. 5–7). Why does Peter call us to such active effort right after stressing God’s provision, and what does this teach us about the relationship between God’s grace and our diligence?
4. Peter pictures the Christian life as a faith that keeps adding and increasing these qualities. Which of the qualities Peter lists, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, or love, do you most need to grow in right now? What is one concrete way you could pursue growth in that area this week?
5. Peter says that if these qualities “are yours and are increasing,” they keep us fruitful, but “whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins” (vv. 8–9). Why is ongoing growth so essential, and what does Peter say happens to a believer who stops growing?
6. Spiritual stagnation often creeps in unnoticed: prayer dries up, the word goes unread, old sins return, and zeal cools. Where do you see signs of stagnation or coasting in your own walk with Christ? What has caused your growth to stall, and what would it take to start moving forward again?
7. Peter urges, “be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election” (v. 10). What do “calling and election” mean here, and what does it tell us that Peter says our calling and

election are something we are to confirm by diligent growth, rather than something fixed apart from how we respond and live?

8. Real assurance is meant to be the fruit of a faithful walk, not a presumption we cling to while drifting. Is your confidence about your salvation grounded in a diligent, growing walk with Christ, or in something you did long ago that has made little difference since? How might Peter's words reshape the way you think about your own assurance?
9. Peter says, "if you practice these qualities you will never fall" (v. 10), and later in the same letter warns of those who, having escaped the corruption of the world, are again entangled in it and are worse off than before (2 Peter 2:20–22). How do we hold together the real assurance Peter offers ("you will never fall") with the genuine possibility of falling away, and why is this different from both "once saved, always saved" and an anxious, uncertain faith?
10. Look back across the passage, and across these ten weeks. Peter has reminded you of all God has provided, called you to diligent growth, warned against coasting, and held out the sure hope of a rich entrance into Christ's eternal kingdom. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth about growing and persevering in faith that you most need to carry forward from this study?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: 2 Peter 2:20–22, those who escape the world's corruption and become entangled again, ending worse off than before; Hebrews 3:12–14, sharing in Christ if we hold our original confidence firm to the end; Philippians 3:12–14, pressing on toward the goal rather than thinking we have already arrived; Galatians 6:9, not growing weary in doing good, for we will reap if we do not give up; John 15:1–8, abiding in the vine so that we bear much fruit