

119

MINISTRIES

“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

Confirm Your Calling: Partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:3-15)

Welcome back to our verse-by-verse study through 2 Peter. In this teaching, we will be going through 2 Peter 1:3-15. What do we need to live a godly life? Peter tells us that God has already given us all that we need. We’re going to learn about that today.

But before we get there, here’s a quick summary of what we discussed last time.

1. We addressed the main objections to 2 Peter’s authenticity and saw that they failed to demonstrate that Peter is not the author of this letter.
 - a. The objection based on a lack of early external attestation is overstated; we do have evidence that points to an early date and early acceptance of the letter among Christian communities.
 - b. The objection that 2 Peter’s literary relationship with Jude rules out Peter’s authorship is also overstated because it relies on unproven assumptions that are widely disputed.
 - c. The objection based on the differences between 1 and 2 Peter fails to convince because reasonable explanations for these differences can be offered that allow for the same author to have written both letters.
2. We discussed the identity of Peter’s audience and speculated that they are the same people to whom Peter wrote his first letter. This idea is based on 2 Peter 3:1, which refers to 2 Peter as “the second letter that I am writing to you.”
3. We learned that growing in knowledge is a prominent theme throughout the letter. Peter wants us to embrace biblical doctrine and resist those who teach false doctrine. Growing in our knowledge of God is part of how we confirm our calling and election—that is, demonstrate that our calling and election is genuine by how we live our lives.

After his greeting, Peter gets straight to the point of what he wants to say to his readers. He begins by explaining that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Let’s begin:

2 Peter 1:3-4

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

In verse 2, Peter introduced the concept of knowledge of God and of Yeshua. Peter ends his letter with this same theme—he admonishes us to grow in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). So, the theme of “knowledge” of God frames Peter’s letter.

Here, Peter says that God’s divine power “has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” That is to say, God has already given us what we need to live godly lives that glorify him. No matter what situation we find ourselves in, we can trust that we have everything we need to grow in faith and obedience.

This spiritual growth is “through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.” When we grow in our knowledge of God, we become equipped to fulfill our purpose to bring him glory. Again, God has given us everything we need for spiritual growth. For instance, he has given us the Scriptures by which we learn about his character and will for our lives. He has given us the community of believers so that we can be encouraged and helped in our walk.

Additionally, God has “granted to us his precious and very great promises.” We have great hope because God’s promises secure our future. The Messiah is “promised” to return (2 Peter 3:4, 9), and we will be granted everlasting life in his kingdom when the present created universe passes away and the new heavens and new earth appear (2 Peter 1:11; 3:11-13).

At that future time, according to God’s promises, we will become “partakers of the divine nature.” That is, our bodies will be transformed into incorruptible bodies (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:53). It is at the resurrection, when we receive our incorruptible bodies, that we will finally escape “from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” Sin, and the death that comes as a result of sin, will finally be abolished in the world to come (cf. Revelation 21:4).

So, Peter says that God has given us what we need to grow spiritually and to glorify God in our lives. Our spiritual growth comes as a result of growing in our knowledge of God. Additionally, we can trust that our future is secure because of God’s promises: Yeshua will return to establish his kingdom where we will spend eternity with him in our new, incorruptible bodies.

Peter goes on to say that our spiritual growth requires our participation:

2 Peter 1:5-7

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

“For this very reason” refers to what Peter said in the previous verses regarding God granting to us what we need to live godly lives and his precious promises about eternal life in the world to come. Because of God’s provision and promises, we should make every effort to grow spiritually in this life. In other words, our faith in God must lead to living a righteous life. That is why Peter says to supplement our

faith with virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Let's explore each of these in a little more detail.

“Virtue” (*arete*) is the same Greek word translated as God's own “excellence” in verse 3. The word simply means moral excellence—we are to grow to be more like God in character.

“Knowledge” (*gnosis*) here means an understanding of God's character and will and then acting accordingly.

“Self-control” (*egkrateia*), a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23), is the ability to stand firm against the temptations of the world. It is having the ability to resist the desire to sin.

“Steadfastness” (*hypomonē*) is something produced by the sorrows and trials believers face in life (James 1:3) that enable us to better handle suffering. The New Testament frequently admonishes believers to develop steadfastness so they may endure the pressures and trials of life (Romans 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 1:6; 6:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; James 1:3-4; 5:11; 1 Peter 1:6; Revelation 13:10).

“Godliness” (*eusebeia*) is having reverence for spiritual things and living in such a way that pleases God. Godliness is the goal of growing in knowledge of God (2 Peter 1:3). While God has granted us everything we need for life and godliness, we must use what he's provided us to actually become godly people.

“Brotherly affection” (*philadelphia*) refers to genuine kindness and affection toward fellow believers.

Finally, Peter wraps up this list with “love” (*agape*). Douglass Moo provides an excellent explanation of this final quality that Peter gives in this list:

Agape, then, is not a completely different love, but embraces “love of the brethren” as one sphere of Christian love in its fullest scope—that Spirit-given act of the will by which we treat other people with active benevolence. Surely it is not by chance that love, the crown of Christian virtues (See 1 Cor. 13), comes at the climax of Peter's staircase of Christian qualities. Note the parallel in Colossians 3:14: “And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Love is not only the last and greatest Christian virtue; it is also the “glue” that holds all the rest of them together, the quality without which all the others will be less than they should be.

—Douglass Moo, *2 Peter, Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 47

Let's continue:

2 Peter 1:8-9

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ [Yeshua Messiah]. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Here, Peter says that believers must live a righteous life in order to continue growing in their knowledge of God. Again, according to Peter, God has already given us everything we need for spiritual maturity; we must use what he's given us to develop our knowledge of him and grow spiritually, which happens

through righteous living. Failing to grow and pursue righteousness is to forget that God has forgiven our sins and given us everything we need to live a godly life. To “forget” is the opposite of growing in full “knowledge” of God. We want to move forward in our spiritual walk, not backward.

2 Peter 1:10-11

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ [Yeshua Messiah].

Here, Peter admonishes his readers to be diligent in bearing proof that God really has transformed them. In this way, they “confirm [their] calling and election.” That is, they show that they have indeed been called and elected because they “practice these qualities.” Their good character is proof that they are genuine followers of Messiah.

Now, Peter is not saying that we earn entrance into the eternal kingdom through our own efforts. But practicing these good qualities is the natural outgrowth of having been called and elected by God. If we are truly God’s children, we will behave like God’s children (cf. 1 Peter 1:14-16). Entrance into the kingdom will be richly provided to those who confirm their calling and election by their good character.

Let’s continue:

2 Peter 1:12-15

Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua] made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Here, Peter explains his purpose for writing: he wants to remind his readers of these qualities that they need to be practicing in order to confirm their calling and election. He reminds them of these things even though they already “know them and are established in the truth.” In other words, Peter is not teaching his readers anything new. He reminds them of what they already know and encourages them to continue putting these virtues into practice.

Peter thinks this is the right thing to do “as long as [he is] in this body.” The word “body” is literally “tent”—he uses this word to describe how his physical life here on earth is temporary, like a tent or perhaps the *sukkah*, the temporary dwelling during the festival of Sukkot. He realizes that soon he will be putting off his body, his tent. Putting off one’s tent and “departure” are metaphors for death (Duane F. Watson & Terrance Callan, *First and Second Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2012), 161). Peter realizes that he is growing old and will soon die. Thus, he wants to make the best use of the time he has left by reminding his readers of these essential Christian qualities.

Peter says he knows that he will soon die because “our Lord Yeshua Messiah made [it] clear to me.” Peter is likely referring to when Yeshua told him that he would be martyred when he is old:

John 21:18-19

Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was

to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

In accordance with Yeshua’s prophecy in this passage, Peter was eventually martyred via crucifixion, probably not long after writing his second epistle. According to Eusebius, Peter demanded that he be crucified upside down so that his crucifixion would not be compared to Yeshua’s (*Church History* 3.1).

In summary, Peter admonishes his readers to continue growing in knowledge of God and explains that God has provided them with what they need for life and godliness. He exhorts his readers to actively practice the qualities that come with having this knowledge. Their good character confirms their calling and election. Peter says that practicing these qualities is characteristic of those who have been provided entrance into Yeshua’s eternal kingdom. Peter recognizes that his days are short and wants to make the best use of the time he has left by reminding his readers of these qualities.

You are going to die

Let’s talk a little bit more about the fact that Peter realized that he was going to die. Well, we’re all going to die.

The psalmist writes, “[So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom](#)” (Psalm 90:12). Similarly, Ecclesiastes says that the heart of the wise is in the “[house of mourning](#)” (Ecclesiastes 7:4). Thinking about death is not easy nor fun. It can be painful and scary. But according to the Bible, it’s good for us. It is wise to spend some time thinking about the fact that you are going to die.

Peter numbered his days. He recognized that his time was short, so he wanted to use the few days he had left to encourage God’s people and remind them of the important things they needed to know (2 Peter 1:12-15).

When we consider how short this life really is, it helps us get our priorities straight. We begin to live more wisely. We stop wasting so much time on the things that don’t matter, and we start appreciating the things that do matter.

So here is your reminder that you are going to die. What are you doing with the few days you have left? Are you making every effort to glorify God, to love your neighbor, to use whatever God has given you to help others in their walk of faith?

Like Peter, may we all make the most of our time in this body.

In our next teaching, we will wrap up chapter 1 of 2 Peter. We will see you there!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/119Ministries#