

Godly Virtues of Grace

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[0 : 00] And you can open your Bible up to 2 Peter. 2 Peter and chapter 1.

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3 Peter and 3 Peter. 3 Peter and 3 Peter and 3 Peter and 3 voy voy voy voy Help us to respond by believing and obeying.

Help us not to be those who hear the word only, but those who are doers of your word. For your glory and our good we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Many Christians try hard to live godly lives. And some Christians try without understanding the fuel that actually produces spiritual growth.

[4 : 27] This is like running out of gas and having to push your car. It's going to be easier if you have a friend and you will probably be able to move it at least for a short distance.

But without fuel you are not going to get very far and you will quickly become frustrated and exhausted and discouraged. Trying to be like Jesus without the right fuel is frustrating and exhausting and discouraging.

Ultimately it is defeating. You just want to quit. Maybe you have been there in your spiritual journey and maybe you feel like you are there right now.

Peter would like a word. Other Christians affirm that becoming like Jesus really is God's work in us. But they tend to misunderstand grace. They treat grace like it's a doctor's note. Excusing them from effort.

[5 : 39] Let go and let God they say. And if you call them to obedience. They are likely to call you a legalist. Their passivity sounds very pious.

But it clashes with clear biblical commands. A refusal to work at becoming more like Jesus reveals a deficient view of grace.

One that may be heartwarming but isn't life changing. Peter would like a word with you too.

Then there are some who treat faith like it is a get out of jail or get out of hell free card.

For them knowing Jesus means something about their future. It means someday when they die they will go to heaven. But it's not really impacting their life right now.

[6 : 41] It's about the future and not a present call to a godly life. James calls this kind of faith dead faith.

And dead faith leads to cycles of instability and insecurity and doubt and despair. And to questions like what if I'm not really saved?

Peter would like a word with you too. In the opening paragraph of this second letter. We find a better way to become like Jesus.

Not by trying harder in our own strength. Not by taking our hands off the wheel. Not by treating salvation like it is some kind of fire insurance.

Peter calls us to a growing knowledge of Jesus. That fuels godly living. And provides assurance and stability.

[7 : 45] While clinging to God's promises for the future. Knowing more of Jesus. Means growing more like Jesus.

Second Peter. Second Peter. I stuttered a little bit there. Second Peter. Begins in a style. That would be very familiar to the original readers.

And it's also a style. Very similar to other New Testament letters. Peter introduces himself. Notice the words in verse 1. He introduces himself as a slave.

A doulos. And also an apostle of Jesus. Like a slave. He is humble. But as a slave of Jesus Christ. He is also honored. How has he been honored? Well because he is an apostle. He is an authoritative eyewitness.

[8 : 46] To the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And that means we should hear and believe and obey. What Peter says to us.

Look at verse number 1. Simeon Peter. A servant. And apostle of Jesus Christ.

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours. By the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you. In the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. If you're taking notes you can underline that word knowledge.

In the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Verse 3. His divine power has granted to us all things. That pertain to life and godliness.

[9 : 46] Through the knowledge. There it is again. 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. Apart from God. You would have no faith in him.

I hope that's not controversial. Apart from God. You would have no faith in him. If you have faith in God. It is because you obtained it.

Do you see that there in verse number one? You received it. Faith in the world. By the righteousness of God our Savior. Of God and Savior Jesus Christ. Faith then is God's gracious gift.

[10 : 52] If you are a follower of Jesus. It is because God called you to his own glory and excellence. In other words.

Hearing the gospel. Learning about your sin. You were also pointed to the Savior. Perhaps someone said those words that we sang together this morning.

None but Jesus. None but Jesus. There's no other hope for you as a hopeless sinner. By faith you saw Jesus' beauty and goodness.

If you believe in Jesus in this way. Then God is multiplying his grace and peace in your life. How is it that grace and peace are being multiplied in my life?

The answer to that is at the end of verse two. In the knowledge of God. And of Jesus. Our Lord.

[12 : 01] It is through this knowledge. Of God and Jesus our Lord. Through this knowledge you have everything you need.

For life and godliness. God grants you his great and precious promises. You share in God's divine nature.

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit. And one day you will be delivered from everything in this world. That has been corrupted by sin. Consider.

Consider God's complete provision. Faith is gifted. Grace is multiplied. Promises are granted.

Power is available. And all of this. How? Through the knowledge. Of Jesus.

[13 : 00] Now if you feel exhausted by trying to be like Jesus. Or if you resist the idea of putting work into becoming more and more like Jesus.

Or if you treat salvation like it is only about the future and not the present. This is the word that Peter wants to have with you. Perhaps you have misunderstood what Peter means by knowledge.

Because in Peter's mind knowledge of Jesus isn't just informational. It's life changing. The

knowledge of Jesus that Peter describes is more than just knowing facts about God.

I'm confident. Confident that you can ace a hundred question Bible quiz. And still not know God.

You can hold a PhD in Old Testament theology. And not know God.

[14 : 21] You could know the gospel well enough to tell someone else the gospel. In such a way that they truly respond by repenting and believing the gospel that you gave them.

And you may still not know God. There's a difference between knowing about someone and truly knowing them.

You may know that Lois' birthday is September 7th. You might know her dear mom's maiden name.

You might know Lois' social security number. Or maybe what elementary school that she went to. And all of those things would make you a great hacker. And a lousy husband. You know facts about Lois. But I know Lois. [15:34] I know what she loves. And I know what stirs her heart to anger. I know what brings tears to her eyes.

And what will cause a lovely smile to grace her beautiful face. I know her insecurities. Her anxieties. I know the things that she's still clutching and not casting on God. I know these things about her. How do I know these things? Well because we have spent time together. We have gone through ups and downs together. Some really good days. Some really bad days. And lots of ordinary days in between all of those. We have come to know one another. This is the knowledge of Jesus that Peter describes. It is a personal, relational, transformational kind of knowledge. Knowledge of Jesus begins with truth about Jesus.

[16:48] But it is not limited to facts. Knowledge of Jesus means cultivating a relationship with him. By spending time with him.

In his word. In prayer. In solitude. In community with his people. Now when you first heard the gospel.

You may have been called to respond. And it may very well have felt like an invitation. That you can either respond to this gospel or not.

But when Jesus called you. It was less like an invitation. And more like a summons.

Here is what I mean. When the Holy Spirit compelled you to believe in Jesus. When you recognized your sin for the first time. And you saw the glory and the excellence of Jesus for the first time.

[17:51] And you realized I am a sinner. God would be just to punish me for my sin. And you saw Jesus as the savior that you needed.

Nothing could hold you back in that moment. Why? Because Jesus called you to himself. More like a summons.

Less like an invitation. This is an effective calling. It accomplishes its purpose. And it is a performative calling.

In other words. This calling that Jesus gives to you. Not only does it compel you to respond. It changes your life. We hear the phrase life changing.

Used about a lot of things. You can watch the NFL draft. Every person who gets drafted. And their parents. And their grandparents. This is life changing. I am sure in many ways that that is true.

[18:53] Peter really means it. Peter really means that knowing Jesus Christ. Is life changing. That being called by Jesus.

Is supposed to change your life. You will never be the same. It is this type of growing knowledge of Jesus.

That fuels becoming more like Jesus. Look at verse 5. For this very reason.

For what reason? Because you have received these promises. Because you have been called to Jesus. By Jesus.

Because you have become a partaker of the divine nature. You have received the spirit. Because you are going to escape the corruption that is in the world.

[19:53] For this very reason. Because of all that God has provided for you. 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. We should be very cautious.

About watering down Peter's words in verse 5. He says make every effort. And he means it.

Becoming more like Jesus. Is not optional. Becoming more like Jesus. Is not automatic. We don't let go and let God.

[20:54] Becoming more like Jesus. Is not legalistic. Peter says make every effort. Knowing more of Jesus.

Means growing more like Jesus. Notice the very first character quality. That Peter calls us to.

Make every effort to add virtue. Or goodness. To your faith. This is the character of Jesus. That's at the end of verse 3.

If you're taking notes. This is where we can develop our idea. Of becoming more like Jesus. Peter says you have been called. To his glory and excellence.
And then Peter says. Supplement your faith. With excellence. With virtue. Become more like Jesus.
[22 : 04] Make every effort to grow in your knowledge of God's word. His will. His ways. Make every effort to grow in the fruits of the spirit.

Like self-control. Make every effort to become more resilient in trial and hardship and suffering. Make every effort to grow in godliness and brotherly affection and love.
I hope we can agree that becoming more like Jesus in these ways is not a checklist. You know? Where you're like.

Well. Self-control today. I'm checking that one off of my list. I have self-control. Now I'm going to move on to the next one.

No, no, no. An increasing, growing kind of making every effort. These are lifelong efforts.
[23 : 01] We will not be perfectly like Jesus until Jesus returns and changes us in a moment to be like him in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. But until then, until that happens, we want our lives to count, don't we?

We want our lives to matter. We want to do things for God that matter for eternity. Is that true? I hope that's true.

Look at what Peter says next in verse 8. If these qualities, verses 5 through 7, if these qualities are yours, not in a checklist, but are increasing, they, these qualities, keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful.

How so? In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you're taking notes, there it is for the fourth time in our text. Aren't you glad that effectiveness and fruitfulness for Jesus doesn't require an overseas mission trip?

It doesn't require you becoming a full-time pastor, preacher, ministry leader at all. What does it require? You don't have to do something extra special for God.

[24 : 33] If these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful.

In other words, these qualities are what make your life count. Effective and fruitful for God. Verse 9. For whoever lacks these qualities, verses 5 through 7, whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.
I think Peter may be addressing here the faith without works that we talked about a little bit earlier. Faith that is treated like a get-out-of-hell-free card.

This so-called faith looks to eternity but ignores today. He says, if you refuse to be diligent, if you refuse to make any effort to grow in Christ's likeness, then you are so nearsighted that you're almost blind.

[25 : 56] You are acting as if you have forgotten the gospel altogether, as though you have never really seen the glory and the excellence of Jesus. How can he say that?

Because he's already told us the glory and the excellence of Jesus is compelling. Life-changing. Imagine you give me an unlimited account to buy books on Amazon.

You should not do this. But just imagine you did. And imagine that you gave me a brand new iPad. All of the accessories.

The keyboard. The pencil. All of it. The best one. And you gave me a subscription to Bible software. And you paid me money.

Paid me money to study the Bible. So that I could come and present sermons to you on Sunday mornings. Imagine you did all of those things.

[27 : 02] And I showed up Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. And I had some chicken scratch. No offense, Brotland family. I had some chicken scratch notes on my hands.

And the sermons. And the sermons were not clear. And they were not concise. And they were not at all compelling.

And I rarely, if ever, mentioned Jesus Christ. What would you say about me? After all we have given you?

You are negligent. You're irresponsible. You're lazy. Now imagine someone claiming to be a follower of Jesus.

Who makes absolutely no effort to follow Jesus. No effort to grow in godliness.

[28 : 10] No effort to repent of their sin. No desire to walk by the Holy Spirit. No interest in growing their knowledge of God through Jesus Christ.

Wouldn't you rightly say of them? Humbly and lovingly? Man, that's negligent. That's irresponsible. After all that you have been given, supposedly? Aren't you just being lazy? Peter can speak this boldly and this plainly.

Because he has already told us, You have everything you need. He is not calling us to do things that we have not been equipped for. You have everything you need for life and godliness. If you claim to have faith in Jesus, But refuse to make any effort at following Jesus, Then the problem is not with God.

[29 : 24] The problem is with your heart. As the song goes, Hi, I'm the problem. It's me. If you don't want to be ineffective or unfruitful, If you don't want to leave others wondering whether your faith is real, Peter reminds you what you need to do.

Verse number 10. Notice. Notice how it begins. Therefore, Therefore, Therefore, After everything that I've said so far, Peter says, One through nine, Therefore, Brothers and sisters, Be all the more diligent.

Be all the more diligent To confirm your calling and election. For if you practice these qualities, Verses five through seven, If you practice these qualities, You will never fall.

For in this way, By practicing these qualities, Verses five through seven, There will be richly provided for you An entrance into the eternal kingdom Of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Notice two promises here in this text. First, If you practice these qualities, You will never fall. Now that does not mean that you are going to be perfect.

[31 : 04] It does not mean that you are not going to still struggle And wrestle and strive with sin And need to repent every day, Like me, Of sin, Right?

It doesn't mean that. It means that God is holding you. You will not fall. Your growing Christ-likeness Confirms your calling and your election.

In other words, Growing in Christ-likeness Proves that your faith is real. And those who are continuing to grow, If they have these qualities, And they continue to increase in these qualities, Here is the promise.

Not sinless perfection, Not no more sin, But proof that you are being held. Assurance for your own soul That God really is holding you fast.

That you really are a child of God. That you have been drawn to faith in Jesus. Ongoing growth in Christ-likeness Is a guarantee That you will not turn from God Or abandon the faith.

[32 : 21] Peter gives a second promise. Notice how these two promises work together. Instead of falling away, Abandoning the faith. Those who grow more like Jesus Will what?

They will have a rich entrance Into the eternal kingdom. How does that sound? I mean, how does that sound? I don't know for sure What this will look like.

And I don't want to speculate too much. And I certainly do not want to be irreverent. But I can't help but think of that scene In the movie Aladdin. When Aladdin is coming into Agrabah.

Right? And it's Prince Ali. Mighty. Right? And it's all of this hoopla. Because he's coming into town. A rich entrance Into the eternal kingdom.

Now I know If you're more introverted You might be like Well, I don't know I just kind of want to get there. I want to get there too. But you know what? Peter makes a great promise here.

[33 : 28] A rich entrance Into the eternal kingdom. I don't know about you That is motivating. That is exciting.

That is exciting. Peter makes these two promises Because he understands That knowing more of Jesus Means growing more like Jesus.

If you have never truly known Jesus My friend, I wonder Have you seen the glory And the excellence of Jesus? Or is your attention still focused Somehow on lesser things?

What is the state of your soul Before God right now? Is grace and peace Multiplying in your heart? Or do you feel empty And restless and hopeless? Look at Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world If you have not yet received faith If you're not enjoying God's great and precious promises Humble your heart Ask God for the faith to believe Trust that he will give you that faith And believe in the Lord Jesus Christ And you will be saved If you affirm That becoming more like Jesus Is God's work in you But you resist the idea Of making any effort My friend Grace is not opposed to effort Grace is opposed to earning Grace empowers our effort Diligence is not

legalism

[35 : 23] It is evidence of new life in Christ Titus chapter 2 reminds us God's grace that brings salvation to us In the first place Is the same grace That is training us To live godly lives Please do not pretend to be pious While remaining passive If you are exhausted From trying to live a godly life In your own strength My friend Are you pushing your spiritual car Because you have Somehow run out of fuel If you're tired And you feel frustrated And you feel discouraged Don't stop making every effort But please remember The fuel for life change Is Christ's likeness That comes from knowing him Knowing God

Is more than just knowing facts It means cultivating Your relationship with him Spending time with him In his word and in prayer Being in community With other brothers and sisters Repenting often Staying sensitive To the Holy Spirit's conviction And direction Perhaps your faith feels Shallow or shaky Or stagnant Or irrelevant Maybe you worry That you might fall away someday Peter offers you This comfort and assurance Grow Grow in knowing Jesus And that knowledge Will make you all the more diligent To pursue Christ's likeness On the night when he was betrayed While he was in the upper room With his eleven disciples Jesus prayed to the Father And one sentence of this prayer Fits so well with this opening paragraph Of 2 Peter I thought it would be relevant To add here at the end This is what Jesus says John chapter 17 And verse 3 This Is eternal life That they Know you The only true God And Jesus Christ Whom you have sent This is what it means To have eternal life To know God And Jesus Christ Who he sent Since God provides Everything you need For life and godliness Through knowing Jesus What keeps you From knowing Jesus more Whatever it is It's not worth it Knowing Jesus Is eternal Life What needs to change So that you can know Jesus more What needs to change So that you give Every effort To being like him Let's grow in grace By being all the more Diligent To grow in Christ Likeness Through knowing Jesus Let's pray Father we are grateful To receive your word And as we have received Your word We now We now begin This process Of wrestling a bit With the implications Of it For me What does your word Say now To me What am I Obligated to What are my Responsibilities Now having seen This truth In your word Blessed Holy Spirit As we continue In our time of worship And as we gather Around The bread

And the cup Would you please Continue to do work In our hearts Cause us to repent Cause us to believe This gospel These truths That we really do Have everything We need For life And godliness And cause us Please Not to walk away Unchanged But to see Ourselves As you see us As beloved Children Yet In need Of more and more Christ likeness Would you please Help us we pray For your glory And for our good In Jesus name Amen Amen ■

[40 : 28] Amen ■ Amen ■ ■ ■!