

STUDIES IN 2 PETER

STUDY 1. THE SAME PRECIOUS FAITH

By Pastor Bien A. Llobrera

Text: 2 Peter 1:1 - Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

1. Why the apostle Peter wrote his second letter, 2 Peter 1:12-15:

(a) He was about to depart;

(b) He wanted to make sure that, even after his departure, the believers would be firmly established as Christians who continue to KNOW, GROW, and GO.

(c) In effect, he reminds Christians of all ages of one truth: Pastors come and go; the church remains in the place where God has planted it to accomplish its mission.

2. Christians, then and now, need to make sure, FIRST, THAT THEY KNOW THEIR FAITH.

A. OUR FAITH LIKE THAT OF THE APOSTLES'

1. Faith as a body of truth that we must know (focus of this present study);

2. Faith as our response to the body of truth (focus of the next study).

B. SUMMARIES OF THE APOSTLES' FAITH

1. In the Bible:

We may say that the WHOLE BIBLE is our faith. But there are brief summaries of our faith given in key portions of the Bible. For example, in the Old Testament, one such summary is given in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. In the New Testament we find brief, meaning-packed statements of the core of the Christian faith. Note, for example, the following passages:

Matthew 16:16-17: 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Luke 24:45-49: 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise[a] from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem[b] until you are endued with power from on high.”

Acts 8:36-37: 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” 37 Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Romans 10:9-10: 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4: 15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

Philippians 2:6-11: 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Timothy 3:16: 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

In the above statements we gather that the GOSPEL is the Core Body of Truth that we must believe in; these truths include the following: Christ’s divine pre-existence; virgin birth & perfect human life, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension & present High

Priestly Ministry, Second Coming & eternal reign. Through this Gospel God demonstrates His righteousness and He puts believers in right relationship with Him.

2. In early Christian statements:

(a) After the apostolic generation passed away, the Christians came up with the acronym of the Greek word for FISH = ICHTHUS:

- **I** = IESOUS JESUS;
- **CH** = CHRISTOS CHRIST;
- **TH** = THEOU GOD'S;
- **U** = UIOS SON;
- **S** = SOTER SAVIOR

It is probable that, during times of persecution or simply when meeting strangers, that the early Christians used the FISH symbol as a sign and countersign to identify themselves. For example, while a Christian was talking with a complete stranger, he might draw a downward curved line on the ground; at an appropriate time during the conversation, the stranger, if he happened to be a Christian, would then draw an upward curved line over the first line, in order to produce the simple figure of fish found in many ancient Christian artifacts. If the other person is not a Christian, he would not know that he needed to supply the other half of the fish; he probably would not even have noticed that the first person drew a curved line on the ground.

The important fact is that the acronym of ICHTUS summarized the core message of the Gospel which saves!

(b) The APOSTLES' CREED is another very early statement of the Christian faith:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Bible believing evangelical Christians should not be scared of the phrase "the holy catholic church". This creed was written long before the church became divided into the eastern Greek Catholic Church based in Constantinople and the western Roman Catholic Church based in Rome. The "holy catholic church" simply refers to the Universal Church consisting of persons whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life in heaven, not in the membership book of any earthly church organization whether Greek or Roman or Protestant. See Luke 10:20, Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 20:15.

The important fact to remember is that the Apostles' Creed contains a summary of the basic truths of the Gospel.

APPLICATION

Ours is a PRECIOUS FAITH. How do you know it is precious to you? Answer the following questions honestly:

1. Have you "sold" everything else to obtain it? Matthew 13:45,46
2. Are you studying it above everything else? 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:15 (KJV); Acts 17:11; Colossians 3: 16-17; James 1:22; Ezra 7:10
3. Have you come to the True Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ? John 6:66-71; Matthew 11:28-30.
4. Can you give a clear and persuasive personal presentation of this faith? 1 Peter 3:15
5. Have you truly put your FAITH in the Gospel of Jesus Christ? (We shall focus on this in our next study.)

STUDY 2. THE SAME PRECIOUS FAITH – PART 2

Text: 2 Peter 1:1 - Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

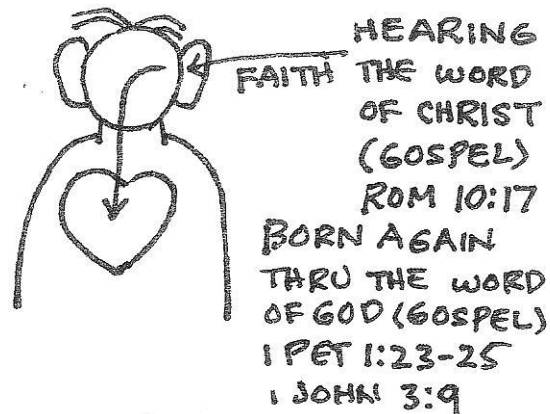
In our previous study we discovered that our PRECIOUS FAITH has two meanings:

1. Faith as a body of truth that we must know (focus of previous study);
2. Faith as our response to the body of truth (focus of present study).

A. FAITH AS A RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL IS A GIFT FROM GOD

1. Faith cannot come from our sinful human nature
Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Romans 8:9
2. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God, Romans 10:17
3. Faith and regeneration: which comes first? 1 Peter 1:23-25 (seed, Greek spora); 1 John 3:9 (seed, Greek sperma); Ephesians 2:4-5; John 1:12-13.

Please look at the diagram FAITH & REGENERATION.



4. Theologians have debated about the “order of the steps in salvation”:

- Hearing – Faith – Regeneration:

Did we first believe and as a result God caused us to be born again?

- Hearing – Regeneration – Faith:

Or did God first cause us to be born again and thus enabled us to believe?

Illustration: In human fertilization,

Did the egg first develop a heartbeat, and then got fertilized by the sperm?

Or did the egg first get fertilized and then developed a heartbeat?

B. SALVATION IS GOD’S WORK FROM BEGINNING TO END

God calls us through the Gospel, Romans 8:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

1. He sends His messenger to us – Acts 16:6-10
2. He opens our hearts – Acts 16:13-14.

This “opening of the heart” involves:

- God drawing us to Christ, John 6:44, 65;
- regeneration, 1 Peter 1:23; John 6:63;
- enlightening the mind, 2 Corinthians 4:5-6;
- convicting the heart, Acts 2:37;

- conviction leads to repentance and baptism (as a proof of sincere faith), Acts 2:38; 16:8:36-38; 9:17-18; 10:44-47; 16:14-15.
3. He saves us; in addition to all that He does in 2 above, He also
- forgives all our sins;
 - adopts us into His family, and as proof gives His Holy Spirit to live in us; (c) begins the process of sanctification to make us perfect like His Son; (d) at the end, will glorify us.

APPLICATION

1. Faith has been defined by the acronym: **F**orsaking **A**ll, **I** Trust **H**im.
 - a. We must FORSAKE
 - All our sins and sinful habits
 - All confidence in our good works and righteousness
 - All other ways or persons that promise salvation other than Christ
 - b. We must TRUST CHRIST alone
 - His death on the cross as sufficient payment for all our sins
 - His righteousness as our only robe of acceptance before God
 - His risen life in us through the Holy Spirit as the power to love and serve God
2. If you are not sure about your faith:
 - a. Look – keep looking – to the Lamb of God, John 3:14-15; Isaiah 45:22
 - b. Call on the name of the Lord Jesus, Romans 10:12-13. Say, “Lord Jesus, save me!”
3. If you think you have genuine faith, keep checking yourself, whether you are bearing the fruit of genuine faith, 2 Peter 1:10; Matthew 7:16-23; James 3:11-12; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 John 3:3, 9-10.

STUDY 3. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR GOD & SAVIOR – PART 1

Text: 2 Peter 1:1 - Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

1. We have already looked at our PRECIOUS FAITH and its two meanings:
 - (a) Faith as a body of truth that we must know (summarized in the GOSPEL);

(b) Faith as our response to the body of truth (belief, trust, and acceptance of the CHRIST OF THE GOSPEL).

2. Today we look at HOW we have obtained our precious faith – we have obtained it in and through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

3. There are two ways to interpret the phrase “the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ”. (Cp., Titus 2:13; Romans 9:5 in the KJV, NASB, etc.)

(a) One way is to treat God and Savior as one person, Jesus Christ; this way, there is only one person and one righteousness. Incidentally, this meaning is a proof of the deity of Christ.

(b) The second way is to treat God and Savior as distinct persons; incidentally, this doesn’t minimize the deity of Christ as it makes God and Christ equal sharers in one righteousness, similarly as the Trinity share in the One Name in Matthew 28:19. In this study we take this second interpretation, and our reason for doing so will become clear as we go along.

A. THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

1. While on earth He lived a perfect life of righteousness, Heb 10:5-7; John 8:29, 46; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22. His perfect life was characterized by:

(a) complete obedience to God’s will;

(b) total trust in God’s promises and provisions;

(c) His life was an unbroken worship to God. He lived a perfect life for two reasons:

- as the Second Representative Man, Rom 5:18-19;
- as the Lamb of God, John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21.

2. He also came to reveal God to people and to bring God as close as possible to the people, Matt 1:23; John 1:18; 14:8-11.

3. SUMMARY:

Throughout the Old Testament God progressively revealed to people

(a) about humanity as it should be;

(b) about who God is. When Christ came, He brought the full blaze of God’s revelation

- to show perfect humanity as He Himself lived it; and

- to show God in His perfect holiness and love as He has taught in His Words, and as He has demonstrated in His Works.

B. SINFUL HUMANITY RESPONDED WITH TOTAL REJECTION.

But what was sinful humanity's response to God's full revelation in Christ? Rejection.

1. Rejected the Perfect Man, Matthew 27:15-26; John 19:12-16; John 3:19-20
2. Rejected their holy, loving Creator, John 1:10-11.
3. SUMMARY:

The Incarnation (COMING-IN-FLESH OF GOD IN CHRIST) was God's ultimate offer of Himself to sinful humanity; but it became the occasion for the unmasking of the utter blackness and wickedness of sin:

- when confronted by the purest righteousness in the person of Christ, sinful humanity hid in deepest darkness;
- when approached by the loving Creator in the most humble and most defenseless form of Christ, sinful humanity killed the Giver of its life and all that sustains it. Hence the indictment: Acts 2:22-23; 3:14-15; 7:51-52.

APPLICATION

But how does all this apply to us? Two questions:

1. Were the Jews and Romans and the crowds with them the only ones guilty of rejecting God and His Son? No, sinful humanity continues to show rejection:
 - (a) Rejecting the light of nature, Rom 1:20-21
 - (b) Rejecting the light of conscience, Rom 2:14-15
 - (c) Rejecting the written Law of God, Rom 2:23
 - (d) Rejecting the Gospel of Christ, Acts 17:30-31
2. Who really killed Jesus? A simple old Gospel song puts it this way: "WHO KILLED JESUS? I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW?"

WHO KILLED JESUS?

Who killed Jesus? I would like to know.
 Who is guilty of a crime so low?
 Why did He have to die?
 What is the reason why?

Who killed Jesus? I would like to know.

Was it Roman Soldiers, with their tools of war?
Pounding nails through hands that did no wrong.
Mocking and abusing, crowning Him with thorns,
All the evidence is very clear.

Was it Pontius Pilate, he was Governor,
Trying to decide the case that day?
Finding that the Savior had no fault His own,
Was he guilty when he turned away?

Was it Hebrew children, proud of who they were?
Shouting "Crucify Him" to their King.
Rejecting their Messiah for a common thief
Turning down the Kingdom He could bring.

When I think of Jesus, and the way He died,
How upon Him all my sin was laid.
All the other people, fade away from view,
It's for me the Sacrifice was made.

I no longer wonder anymore,
I have found what I've been searching for;
My sin demanded Hell, on Him the Judgment fell,
I am guilty, now it's plain to see,
that it was really me!

3. We now have God's full revelation in Christ about who we should be and about who God wants to be to us. Shall we commit ourselves to become like Christ

(a) in complete obedience;

(b) in total trust in God;

(c) and in living solely for God's glory?

STUDY 4. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR GOD & SAVIOR – PART 2

Text: 2 Peter 1:1 - Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

A. In our previous study we saw that God sent His Son:

1. God's final and fullest revelation (Heb 1:1-2; Gal 4:4);
2. Culmination of God's pursuit of fugitive humanity (John 1:1-4,14);
3. But what was humanity's response? (John 1:10-11; Matt 23:37).

B. God's holiness & justice demanded the full punishment upon this greatest rejection and rebellion; God's wrath must be poured out (Rom 1:18).

C. But instead of wrath, God's righteousness was revealed on the Cross!

1. God gathered up all the sin of humanity and laid it on His Son (John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21).
2. He poured out to the last drop His wrath against sin on the person of His Son (Zech 13:7; Isa 53:5,6,10,11; Matt 26:42).
3. God abandoned His son to taste the bitterest fruit of death (death as separation from God, Matt 27:45-46; physical death, John 19:30,38-42; 1 Cor 15:3-4)
4. Summary:
 - Sin was fully exposed and judged.
 - God's wrath was completely spent.
 - Death emptied all its venom on Christ.
 - God's righteousness – holiness, justice – was vindicated and manifested for all heaven and earth to see!

D. God's Gift in the GOSPEL: Luke 24:46-47; Rom 4:25. For all who believe in Christ, God gives:

1. JUSTIFICATION (not guilty, forgiven) & THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (completely accepted), Rom 1:16-17; 3:21-26; Phil 3:9; Eph 1:6-7
2. ETERNAL LIFE, Rom 6:23; John 3:16-18; 5:24; 1 John 5:11-12
3. SUPERABUNDANT GRACE, Rom 5:17, 21; 1 Peter 1:2-4

APPLICATION

1. At the cross, Christ died as the LAST ADAM and in His death He defeated Satan, sin and death, and condemned the old order to destruction.
2. At His resurrection, Christ became the SECOND MAN (the Second Representative Head of humanity) who inaugurated the new order.

3. We must respond to His message of reconciliation!

2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. **18** Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, **19** that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. **20** Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. **21** For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

STUDY 5. MARKS OF A CHRISTIAN

Text: 2 Peter 1:2-4 - 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

INTRODUCTION

1. From 2 Peter 1:1:

(a) We learned about our precious Christian faith as summarized in the Gospel of Christ, concerning His coming down to earth in His virgin birth, His perfect life and gracious ministry on earth, His death on the cross for our sins, His resurrection, His ascension back to heaven to be our Mediator and High Priest before God, and His Second Coming.

(b) We learned that our precious faith came through the righteousness of God and of our Savior Jesus Christ.

2. Many of us claim that we hold this precious. How can we be sure that our claim is genuine?

3. From 2 Peter 1:2-4 we will discover three marks – there are other marks mentioned in the New Testament – of a Christian who has genuinely received and who is holding fast to the precious faith.

A. MARK #1: A CHRISTIAN HAS RECEIVED FROM GOD.

1. The difference between Christianity and other religions:

- All other religions seek to win God's favor by doing something for or giving something to God. CHRISTIANITY proclaims the good news that Christ has done everything necessary for salvation, and now He is offering that salvation as a free gift to all who believe.

2. After giving us FREE SALVATION & NEW LIFE IN CHRIST, God now gives all His exceeding great and precious promises to enable us to live that new life.

B. MARK #2: A CHRISTIAN HAS ESCAPED FROM THE WORLD'S CORRUPTION

1. Christ saves us FROM sin (Matthew 1:21); He does not give us HELL FIRE INSURANCE which allows us to continue in sin.

2. Christians will still be attacked by Satan with temptations to sin. Christians may still fall into sin because of ignorance, immaturity, and the old sinful nature. But the new nature in us will not continue in sin (1 John 3:6-10).

3. God has provided us a sure way to victory in temptation (1 Cor 10:13)

4. God has provided the remedy for a Christian who sins: confession (1 John 1:9).

C. MARK #3: A CHRISTIAN PARTAKES OF THE DIVINE NATURE.

1. When we were born again, we received God's nature (1 John 3:9).

2. But we begin our life as spiritual babies that need to grow (1 Peter 2:2).

3. One mark of a true Christian is spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18).

4. God's exceeding great and precious promises provide us with all the resources for growth and victory:

- The indwelling Holy Spirit – John 14:16,17,26
- The intercessory ministry of our High Priest – Hebrew 7:25
- The Word of God – Acts 20:32
- Prayer – Hebrews 4:15-16
- The Body of Christ – Ephesians 4:15-16
- God's sovereign control – Romans 8:28
- God's complete supply – Romans 8:32; Phil 4:19
- God's everlasting love – Romans 8:37-39
- And many, many more!

APPLICATION

1. God is not interested in what you will give to Him. Actually, you have nothing to give Him; He has given you all that you are and all that you have. And all your righteousness are like filthy rags in His eyes (Isaiah 64:6)

Have you received what God wants to give you? His Son to be your Savior and Lord, and in Him all His exceedingly great and precious promises.

2. Have you escaped and do you continue to escape from the world's corruption?
3. Are you partaking more and more of God's nature? Are you growing more and more like Christ?

STUDY 6. BALANCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: ADD TO FAITH, VIRTUE

Text: 2 Peter 1:5 – But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith...

INTRODUCTION

1. Lack of balance – going from one extreme to the other – is an ever-present danger, especially in the Christian life.
2. Two extremes we must beware of:

A. SALVATION BY WORKS

1. From the time of Cain (with his offering of fruit and vegetables, instead of an animal sacrifice like that of Abel's) there have been people who think they can buy salvation by their works.
2. The Bible is very clear: salvation is not by works. Isa 64:6; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

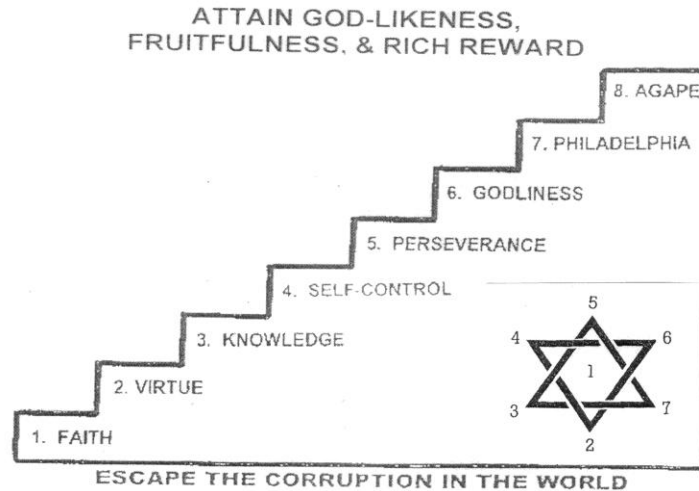
B. SALVATION WITHOUT WORKS

1. Some say it does not matter if a Christian commits sins, after all you cannot lose your salvation.
2. Others say that Christ has done everything necessary to salvation, therefore a person has only to believe and receive; Christian service is optional.

APPLICATION

1. This is why the apostle Peter wrote his second letter, to show the correct balance: **GENUINE SALVATION RESULTS IN GOD-ORDAINED WORKS (Eph. 2:8-10).**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.



The apostle Peter lists 8 qualities or characteristics that Christians must develop. The order in which these qualities are listed suggests a “ladder” of discipleship growth consisting of 8 steps. As we examine these qualities, we discern that each quality may be experienced at four levels. The description below of the levels are suggestive not exhaustive, and certainly not dogmatic.

2. After explaining in 2 Peter 1:1-4 that God has done everything necessary to provide free salvation together with all the resources needed to enjoy a life of salvation, he goes on to tell that Christians have to do their part: *2 Peter 1:5 – But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith...*

3. Because God has given us salvation along with all His exceeding great and precious promises, we must give all diligence to add to our faith. This doesn't mean our faith is not enough and we need to add our works to it. Another translation reads: FURNISH YOUR FAITH WITH the qualities listed in verses 5-7. Let's look at the first quality: VIRTUE – genuine commitment & moral energy.

- Versus PROCRASTINATION – Luke 9:59-60; Heb 3:14-15

Luke 9:59 Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” **60** Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, **15** while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice,^[SEP] Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

- Versus DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS – James 1:6-8; Luke 9:61-62; 1 Kings 18:21

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Luke 9:61 And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house.” **62** But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

1 Kings 18:21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

- Versus HALF-HEARTEDNESS – Rom 12:11; John 2:16-17; 4:34

Romans 12:11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

John 2:16 And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!” **17** Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

- Versus HALF-FINISHED JOB – Luke 14:28-30; John 17:4; Acts 20:24; 2 Tim 4:7

Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*— **29** lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, **30** saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’?

John 17:4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself,^[a] so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

4. One thing we need to BE COMMITTED TO & BE MORALLY ENERGETIC ABOUT: PRAYER.

- (a) Sinners are saved in answer to prayer;
- (b) Christians grow in answer to prayer;
- (c) God gives miracles in answer to prayer;
- (d) Spiritual awakening comes to the city in answer to prayer.

THEREFORE...shall we exercise VIRTUE IN USING THE MIGHTY WEAPON OF PRAYER?

- By faithful prayer for those on our PROSPECT LIST;
- By PRAYER WALKING every member's neighborhood, then developing relationship with our neighbors.

STUDY 7. ADD KNOWLEDGE

Text: 2 Peter 1:5 – But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

INTRODUCTION

1. God has given to us the gift of salvation by grace through faith. This faith itself is God's gift to us. In addition, He has given to us His exceedingly great and precious promises to enable us to live and serve in the way that God has planned for us to do (Eph 2:8-10).
2. With everything that God has freely given to us, we are called upon to do our part. In our previous study we saw, first, that we need to add to our faith VIRTUE (defined as genuine commitment and moral energy, manifested and expressed by zeal, passion and dedication). Christians, of all people, must be people with a passion for God.
3. In today's study we will see, second, that we need to add to our virtue KNOWLEDGE.
 - (a) We need to know the whole counsel of God as revealed in His Word, the Bible (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim 3:15-17).
 - (b) From a practical standpoint, we need to add knowledge in the sense of gaining a DEEPER UNDERSTANDING of the truths of our salvation.

A. DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND OURSELVES

1. We need the experiential knowledge similar to that of Isaiah's, Isa 6:1-8.
 - (a) God's loftiness and holiness
 - (b) Our unworthiness and sinfulness
 - (c) God's purpose for our lives

2. We need the experiential knowledge similar to that of Saul's, Acts 9:1-22.
 - (a) He realized who Jesus was: the Lord.
 - (b) He recognized who he himself was: a slave.
 - (c) He received his life mission from Jesus: to be a Gospel proclaimer.

B. DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SIN

We see major aspects of sin illustrated in the persons Jesus healed.

- (a) Sin is a loathsome, incurable disease like leprosy, Matt 8:1-3; compare Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 64:6.
- (b) Sin is a bondage that's humanly impossible to break, Mark 5; cp. Rom 7:15-24.
- (c) Sin brings spiritual death that only Christ can overcome, John 11:38-44; Rom 7:18.
 "Christ did not come to make bad people good; He came to make dead people live."

APPLICATION

Are you gaining deeper understanding:

1. Of who God is?
Is your deeper understanding of God leading you to more profound worship of Him?

2. Of who you are?
Is your deeper understanding of yourself leading you to deeper and deeper humility and less and less confidence in yourself?

3. Of the terrible power of sin?
How close do you think you can get to sin and still feel your Christian "maturity" will keep you safe? Truly mature Christians grow more and more wary of sin's deceitfulness and danger as they grow in Christ-likeness. The safest distance between you and sin is always the farthest you can stay away from it.

4. Of the Savior's saving power?
Christian maturity is gaining more and more experiential knowledge of Christ's power to save to the uttermost.

5. Of your God-given life work and mission?

STUDY 8. ADD SELF-CONTROL

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-6 – 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance...

INTRODUCTION

1. We receive faith as a free gift from God. Having received that faith, and along with it the free gift of salvation, do we then sit back and rest on our assurance of eternal life and simply wait to be carried to heaven?

2. The apostle Peter answers with a resounding NO. Rather, we are to add to or furnish our faith with necessary qualities: first, virtue (genuine commitment and moral energy, passion, zeal); second, knowledge (increasing experiential knowledge of God and of His word).

3. The next two qualities seem very similar and closely connected: self-control and perseverance (or patience). Wherein do they differ? Self-control deals with pressures coming from within ourselves; we have an enemy from the inside. Perseverance deals with pressures coming from outside of ourselves; we have an enemy from the outside.

4. In this study we will discover that we need SELF-CONTROL to deal with the enemy from the inside, our old self or our old nature.

(a) At the moment of our salvation, God imparts to us a new spiritual nature through the second birth. However, this new nature starts out as a spiritual baby, which needs to grow.

(b) But our old sinful nature remains, and it closely identifies itself with our old habits of thinking and feeling and acting. We need to exercise self-control toward our old nature, at least, in four ways.

A. MORTIFYING sinful physical desires while pursuing holy spiritual desires, Col 3:5-17; note contrast between vs. 5 and vs. 12; 2 Tim 2:22.

Col 3:5-17:

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, **7** in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, **10** and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, **11** where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

12 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. **14** But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. **15** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **17** And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

2 Tim 2:22:

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

B. DENYING lawful pleasures for the sake of spiritual growth,

1 Cor 6:12-14, 19-20:

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. **13** Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. **14** And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power...

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? **20** For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

C. ENJOYING God's gifts with due consideration of others,

Romans 14:13-19: **19** Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? **20** For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body[**a**] and in your spirit, which are God's.

D. SACRIFICING my rights for God's glory and work,

1 Cor 9:19-23:

19 For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; **20** and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law,[**a**] that I might win those *who are* under the law; **21** to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God,[**b**] but under law toward Christ[**c**]), that I might win those *who are* without law; **22** to the weak I became as[**d**] weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. **23** Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*.

APPLICATION

Let's follow two clear examples:

1. Christ's example, Matt 4:1-4, 11.

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. **3** Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" ... **11** Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

2. Paul's example, 1 Cor 9:25-27

25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for an imperishable crown*. **26** Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. **27** But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

STUDY 9. ADD PERSEVERANCE

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-6 – 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance...

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study we found out that, on top of faith and virtue, we need to add self-control (defined as the ability to handle the pressures from within, specifically pressures from the desires of our old nature).
2. In this study we will discover that we need to add PERSEVERANCE (PATIENCE) on top of self-control. Whereas self-control is the ability to handle pressures from within, perseverance is the ability to handle, over extended periods of time, pressures coming from the outside.

FOUR TYPES OF OUTSIDE PRESSURE

Four types of outside pressure:

TYPE A: Perseverance under temptation, trial and persecution.

TYPE B: Perseverance toward other people, their personalities, weaknesses, and failures.

TYPE C: Perseverance in completing a job and fully obeying the will of God.

TYPE D: Perseverance in waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled.

APPLICATION

Christ is our prime example of perseverance.

1. Under temptation, trial, and persecution,

(a) Christ persevered under temptations, trials and persecution.

Matt 4:1-11

Heb 12:3: **3** For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

(b) We too should persevere.

James 1:12; **12** Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

2. Toward other people,

(a) Christ persevered under the personalities of His disciples while on earth; He continues to persevere in sympathizing with us.

Heb 4:15, 16: **15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are, yet* without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(b) We are to carry one another's burdens (not only the extra loads we carry but, in a real sense, our personalities can be a burden on one another).

Gal 6:2: **2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

3. Completing the will of God,

(a) Christ could have saved Himself by refusing to complete God's will for our redemption. Instead, He persevered to complete God's will.

Matt 26:51-54: **51** And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. **52** But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish[**a**] by the sword. **53** Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? **54** How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

(b) We too need to persevere in our obedience.

James 1:25: **25** But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

4. Waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled,

(a) Did you know that God made a promise to Christ, which He is persevering to wait for, until it is fulfilled by God?

Heb 1:13: **13** But to which of the angels has He ever said:

“Sit at My right hand,^{[[L]]}^{[[SEP]]}Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”

(a) We too need perseverance in waiting for God's promises that we are claiming until they are fulfilled.

Heb 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise

STUDY 10. ADD GODLINESS

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-6 – **5** But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, **6** to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness.

INTRODUCTION

1. Christians are children of God, and they bear the family likeness of GODLINESS or being like God in their character, 1 Peter 1:14-16.

14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; **15** but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, **16** because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

2. Godliness is learned in FOUR STAGES.

FOUR STAGES OF GODLINESS

Stage 1: Hating sin

- Psalm 101 – Sins are personified as different types of sinners that the godly will destroy from “the city of the Lord” (his/her life).

I will sing of mercy and justice;^{[[L]]}^{[[SEP]]}To You, O Lord, I will sing praises.

2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way.^{[[L]]}^{[[SEP]]}Oh, when will You come to me?^{[[L]]}^{[[SEP]]}I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;^{[[L]]}^{[[SEP]]}I hate the work of those who fall away;^{[[L]]}^{[[SEP]]}It shall not cling to me.

4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.

5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor; Him I will destroy; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart; Him I will not endure.

6 My eyes *shall be* on the faithful of the land; That they may dwell with me; He who walks in a perfect way; He shall serve me.

7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.

8 Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land; That I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the Lord.

Stage 2: Fearing God's punishment or discipline

2 Cor 5:10, 11: **10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. **11** Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

Heb 10:30, 31; 12:29: **30** For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." **31** It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

... **29** For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Stage 3: Desiring God's approval and reward.

Col 3:23-25: **23** And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for [a] you serve the Lord Christ. **25** But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Stage 4: Loving God for Himself alone, not for His gifts.

Psa 73:25: **25** Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You.

Phil 3:8, 10: **8** Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; **10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

APPLICATION

Becoming godly is a life-long process that the Holy Spirit works in us,

2 Cor 3:17-18: **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. **18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

We become who we look at. We gaze upon the glory of the Lord:

- (1) By continually looking to Jesus (Heb 12:1-2);
- (2) By continually looking into His Word (James 1:25);
- (3) By continually praying without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17);
- (4) By continually abiding in Christ (John 15);
- (5) By continually living in the presence of God (Matt 28:20; Heb 13:5).

STUDY 11. ADD PHILADELPHIA

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-7 – 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness. 7 to godliness brotherly kindness (philadelphia, brotherly love) . . .

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study we learned that our faith should have the quality of GODLINESS, which we may define as GOD-LIKENESS.
2. In our study today we learn that if we are truly godlike, then we will also have the quality of love. Significantly, love is manifested in two ways, in the original Greek: PHILA-DELPHIA (brotherly love) and AGAPE (divine, self-sacrificial love).
3. God does not expect us immediately to express AGAPE; He wants us to learn to express PHILADELPHIA, which we might describe as a “baby step” towards AGAPE. 1 John 3:16-17: **16** *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*
 - (a) God does NOT expect us all to give our LIFE to show our love for another Christian;
 - (b) God DOES expect us all to share material and practical help as proof of our love for fellow believers.

SIX “ONE ANOTHER” COMMANDS

Philadelphia, love for our Christian brothers and sisters, is broken down into practical “one another” commands that we are to exercise among ourselves. Let’s mention six:

1. LOVE ONE ANOTHER (John 13:34,35). This is our all-embracing responsibility within the Body of Christ. We are to love one another with the same quality and intensity as Christ loves each one of us.

2. ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER (Romans 15:7). Accepting one another is the first demonstration of love. If you love me you will accept me as Christ has accepted me, “warts and all”.

3. PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER (Ephesians 6:18). Saints, in the Bible, mean living Christians. When you pray for someone, you are actually opening the windows of heaven so that God's blessings are poured out upon the one you are praying for. What a tremendous way to give gifts to others!

4. HELP ONE ANOTHER (1 John 3:16,17). This refers to practical, material help. We cannot love only in words; we must back up our words with action.

5. TEACH ONE ANOTHER (Colossians 3:16). We need to teach the Word of God to each other. "But what can I teach?" You can teach what you have already learned, applied, and experienced in your life.

6. RESTORE ONE ANOTHER (Matthew 5:23,24; 18:15-17). What do we do when a part of the Body gets sick? Do we cut off the sick part? No, we restore it back to health and normal functioning. Let’s strictly follow the steps given by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5:23,24; 18:15-17. This last function, RESTORING ONE ANOTHER, may seem very difficult. But if we faithfully do the first five functions, the process of restoration will most often result in healing, instead of cutting off.

APPLICATION

The key to brotherly love is DO EVERYTHING AS UNTO CHRIST (Matt 25:40).

This story is told about a tourist who observed Mother Theresa ministering to the dying outcasts in India. The tourist said, “I wouldn’t do what you’re doing for a million dollars.” Mother Theresa replied, “Neither would I.” But why did she do it? As she always reminded the members of her order, “Serve each person as if that is Christ Himself.”

We can show philadelphia as we serve one another as if we are serving Christ Himself.

STUDY 12. ADD AGAPE LOVE

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-7 – 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness. 7 to godliness brotherly kindness (philadelphia, brotherly love), and to brotherly kindness love (agape).

INTRODUCTION

1. The apostle Peter mentions seven qualities that we are to add to our FAITH. We may consider these as STEPS TO CHRISTIAN MATURITY AND FRUITFULNESS. Our spiritual journey looks like this, if we treat FAITH as the first and foundational step:

- STEP 8: LOVE (AGAPE)**
- STEP 7: BROTHERLY LOVE (PHILADELPHIA)**
- STEP 6: GODLINESS**
- STEP 5: PERSEVERANCE**
- STEP 4: SELF-CONTROL**
- STEP 3: KNOWLEDGE**
- STEP 2: VIRTUE**
- STEP 1: FAITH**

2. AGAPE LOVE is God's kind of love:

(a) This was supremely demonstrated in God's gift of His most precious treasure, His only begotten Son (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16).

(b) Agape love serves as the culmination of our Christian growth, such that we will also be able to lay down our life for others. This doesn't mean that we are not able or not expected to show agape love until we get to STEP 8. Agape love is part of the divine nature that we received when we were born again; hence we are able and are expected to manifest agape love from the very start.

(c) But the New Testament makes clear the fact that Christian maturity passes through stages of growth, similar to physical development from babyhood to adulthood. Hence, our experience of agape love goes through stages as well.

STAGES OF AGAPE LOVE

From the Scriptures we discern at least four stages of agape love.

1. Giving up precious possessions to help others' needs.

The first Christians in Jerusalem manifested this kind of love, Acts 2:34-5:11. But note:

(a) The correct example of Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37)

(b) The wrong example of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

2. Helping others to advance ahead of me.

(a) John the Baptist showed this love toward Jesus, John 3:30. In the Old Testament Jonathan showed this kind of love toward David, 1 Samuel 20.

(b) The Philippian Christians were encouraged to exercise this quality, Phil 2:3-4.

3. Living to serve others.

(a) Which is easier, to live for someone or to die for someone?

(b) The apostle Paul demonstrated that LIVING for others may be more necessary than DYING for them, Philippians 1:21-26.

4. Dying so others may live.

(a) Christ is the ultimate example, Romans 5:8.

(b) We Christians are given this privilege, Phil 2:17; 1 John 3:16.

“The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Missionary advance has always been marked by the trail of blood.

APPLICATION

1. Confronted by this HIGH STANDARD of God’s agape love, we can only cry out in helplessness: HOW WILL I BE ABLE TO SHOW AGAPE LOVE ALL THE TIME TO EVERYONE? The only answer is THROUGH CHRIST. Gal 2:20; Phil 4:13.

2. But we must always say: YES, LORD JESUS, LET YOUR LOVE FLOW TO OTHERS THROUGH ME.

“You will spill whatever you’re full of.”

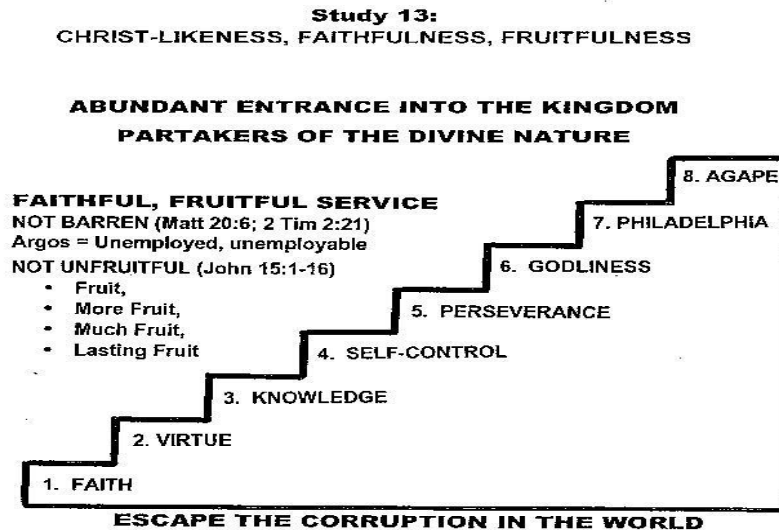
A former missionary tells about women folk out in the countryside in India who still carry water from the public well in jars which they balance on their heads. Others also carry jars filled with milk which they buy from the market. And there’s a saying in that part of the country which says, “When someone bumps you, you will spill whatever you’re full of.”

As we let Christ fill us with Himself and with His love, a time will come when no matter who will bump up, whether accidentally or intentionally, whether with spite or not, no matter how hard or soft, only agape love will spill out of us because we are full only of Christ and full of His agape love.

**STUDY 13:
CHRIST-LIKENESS, FAITHFULNESS, FRUITFULNESS**

INTRODUCTION

The 8 qualities listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7 serve as steps in the Ladder of escape and attainment in the Christian life (please see diagram).



A. ESCAPE

Through the Ladder of 8 Qualities:

1. We escape the corruption of worldly lusts (vs. 4).
2. A true Christian hates this corruption and flees from this corruption.

Gal 1:4 - who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father

2 Cor 6:17-18 - **17** Therefore “Come out from among them,^[SEP] And be separate, says the Lord.^[SEP] Do not touch what is unclean,^[SEP] And I will receive you.” **18** “I will be a Father to you,^[SEP] And you shall be My sons and daughters,^[SEP] Says the Lord Almighty.”

Revelation 18:4 - And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

B. ATTAIN

Through the Ladder of 8 Qualities:

1. We attain Christ-likeness (God-likeness), participate in the divine nature, manifested through the 8 qualities and the fruit of the Spirit (vs. 4-7; Gal 5:22-23);

Gal 5:22-23 - **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

2. We attain faithfulness and fruitfulness in service (vs. 8):

(a) Not barren (argos – unemployed, unemployable)

Matt 20:6 - And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’

2 Tim 2:21 - Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

1 Cor 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

(b) Not unfruitful (stages of fruitfulness: fruit, more fruit, much fruit, lasting fruit, John 15:1-16).

3. We attain an abundant entrance into the kingdom; there will be rewards at the coming of Christ (cp. 1 Cor 3:12-15; Rev 22:12).

APPLICATION

1. Reminder: Growth in the 8 Qualities not optional (vss. 8-9);

2. Warning: (vss. 8-10):

(a) Against short-sightedness

(b) Against blindness

(c) Against forgetfulness

(d) Against groundless assurance of salvation

3. Encouragement: Escape and attainment are possible through:

(a) God’s all-sufficient resources (vs. 3);

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

(b) God’s exceeding great and precious promises (vs. 4).

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

Study 14: BIBLICAL ATTITUDE TO THE BODY

INTRODUCTION

The death of Pope Francis gives us a unique opportunity to listen to a timely reminder from the apostle Peter regarding the right attitude toward life, particularly regarding the proper treatment of our physical bodies.

2 Peter 1:12-15:

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. **13** Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, **14** knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. **15** Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

Our study in this second letter of the apostle Peter provides us with the foundations of a stable and fruitful Christian life from 2 Peter:

- Foundation 1: A clear and firm grasp of our faith in Christ as our atonement sacrifice and our righteousness.
- Foundation 2: Genuine faith results in discipleship growth following 8 steps or levels: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, philadelphia brotherly kindness, agape love.
- Foundation 3: We must beware of false assurance of salvation; we must make our calling and election sure.
- Foundation 4: We must develop a biblical attitude toward our physical body. This is the focus of our present study.

BIBLICAL ATTITUDE TO THE BODY

We must always keep in mind:

1. THIS BODY IS A TEMPORARY HOUSE:

The apostle Peter wrote: “Knowing that ... I *must* put off my tent”. Like the apostle Peter, we must make this a part of our realism: our physical body is but the temporary residence of our eternal soul. Sooner or later, we will have to leave this body behind.

2. GOD HAS SET THE LENGTH OF OUR STAY IN THIS HOUSE:

The apostle Peter wrote, “Just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.” He did not forget that memorable morning when the newly risen Savior appeared to him and to several other disciples. The account of that appearance is recorded in John 21. The disciples had been fishing all night, when suddenly someone on the shore inquired if they caught anything, and upon receiving a negative answer, this stranger directed them to cast their net on the right side of the boat, and all of a sudden their net enclosed a large haul of fish. One of the disciples immediately realized it was the Lord Himself. Three miracles happened that morning, the first was the huge catch of fish; second was that their net did not break from such a heavy catch; third, when they got to the shore, fish and bread was already broiling and ready for breakfast. After breakfast, the Lord and Peter had a heart-to-heart conversation, in which Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved the Lord, which Peter answered in the affirmative but with his feelings deeply hurt. Was this the Lord’s way of helping Peter overcome his guilt over his threefold denial a few nights before? At the end of their conversation, the Lord made a prophecy regarding Peter’s final days.

This is how the Gospel of John recorded the prophecy.

John 21:18-23: Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep. ¹⁸ Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish.” ¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

God clearly tells us that from the moment of our birth, the length of our life is already divinely ordained.

Psalm 139:16:

Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When *as yet there were* none of them.

3. OUR TIME OF DEPARTURE COMES SUDDENLY:

The apostle Peter wrote that his departure from this earthly life was coming “Shortly”.

The apostle James also wrote about the brevity of life.

James 4:13-15:

¹³ Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow ^[h]we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; ¹⁴ whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

APPLICATION

Therefore:

1. LET’S KEEP ON SHARING GOD’S WORD, SPECIALLY THE GOSPEL: “as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*” (cp. Phil 1:20-25)

The apostle Paul maintained the same attitude.

Philippians 1:20-25:

²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²² But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ ^[e]For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. ²⁴ Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵ And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,

(a) Our body is not meant for sinful indulgence but for the Lord (1 Cor 6:13);

(b) Christians will be judged for works done in the body (2 Cor 5:10).

2. LET’S BEAR FRUIT THAT WILL LAST:

“Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease” (cp. John 15:16; 1 Cor 3:10-15).

(a) The apostle Peter hoped his “letter of reminder” would continue to minister to believers after he was gone.

(b) What do you hope to leave as a legacy that will continue to bless people after you’re gone?

STUDY 15: GOD’S WORD OUR AUTHORITY FOR FAITH & PRACTICE

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

1. Your source of authority determines your faith and practice.
2. For example, the Roman Catholic Church claims to follow three sources of authority:
 - (a) The Bible (as interpreted by the Church);
 - (b) Traditions (as accepted by the Church);
 - (c) The Church (through the official pronouncements of the pope and councils).

Question: If the Bible and Traditions have to pass the approval of the church, then what or who is the real authority?

3. Evangelical churches and Christians claim only one source of authority: God’s Word the Bible.

Question: How can we be sure that an individual’s personal interpretation is the correct interpretation?

Answer:

- (a) CLARITY.

The Bible is like any other book. The plain common sense meaning of the Bible is clear, specially in regard to salvation;

- (b) UNITY.

The Bible has a unified message; the true meaning of one scripture passage is that which is consistent with the plain meaning of other scripture passages. In other words, we should never make one verse contradict another. Any belief or practice (based on tradition or the statements of the church) that contradicts the plain teachings of the Bible must be rejected. For example, the Roman Catholic church approves the use of idols or images based on tradition and church statements. However, Exodus 20:4-5 plainly prohibits (1) making, (2) bowing to, and (3) serving images of any kind. The Roman church denies that it worships

the images; however, the Bible prohibits the MAKING of images; therefore, statues and images should never be inside a Christian building of worship. Roman Catholics & Orthodox churches reason that in the Old Testament temple, certain images were allowed. Yes, but those temple images were directly permitted by God. In the New Testament, Jesus declared that from His coming onwards, worship was to be “in spirit and truth” apart from any physical temple or holy place (John 4:24). The New Testament unequivocally warns against idols (1 John 5:21).

(c) COMPETENCY.

Every individual has the right to read the Bible for himself/herself and has COMPETENCY to understand its plain common sense meaning, without the interference of any other human authority, as the example of the Berean believers demonstrated.

Acts 17:11:

11 These (Bereans) were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

4. From 2 Peter 1:16-21, the apostle Peter shows us two powerful reasons why we can trust the Bible.

REASON 1: EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

Verse 16-17: The Gospels recount the eyewitness testimonies of the disciples (comp. Luke 1:1-4; Acts 26:14-16).

Luke 1:1 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, **2** just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, **3** it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, **4** that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

Acts 26:14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads.’ **15** So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. **16** But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

REASON 2: THE INSPIRATION & ILLUMINATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Verses 20-12: The scriptures were given through the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament disciples under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (comp. 2 Timothy 3:16); and they are understood today with the illumination of the same Holy Spirit (comp. 1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. **14** But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

APPLICATION

2 Peter 1:19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

1. This world is in darkness (2 Cor 4:3-4); we must be aware of the dark ideas, influences, and lifestyles that keep bombarding us with unscriptural beliefs and practices.

2 Cor 4:3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, **4** whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

2. The Word of God is the only reliable light (Psalm 119:105; 2 Cor 4:6);

Psalm 119:105 Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

2 Cor 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

3. We must give utmost attention and obedience to the Word of God (Acts 17:11);

Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

4. The Word of God must work in our lives “until the day dawns and the morning star rises in (our) hearts”, until it brings our complete transformation into the image of Christ at His coming. Compare Christ's transfiguration (Matt 17:1-2), and our transformation (2 Cor 3:18; Phil 3:20-21).

Matt 17:1 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; **2** and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Phil 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

STUDY 16: VIGILANCE AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS & FALSE TEACHINGS

2 Peter 2:1-3: **1** But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. **2** And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. **3** By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

INTRODUCTION

1. "Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom!"
2. Another foundation of a mature and fruitful Christian life is vigilance against false teachers and false teachings.
3. It is not enough just to teach the truth; we must also expose error and falsehood.
4. "For evil to triumph, good men just have to do nothing."

A. FALSE TEACHERS/TEACHINGS: EVER-PRESENT DANGER

- 1 The history of Israel (2:1; Matt 13:24-25);

Matt 13:24-25: **24** Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; **25** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

2. Coming of false teachers prophesied (Matt 24:24; 1 Tim 4:1)

Matt 24:24: **24** For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

1 Tim 4:1: Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

B. MARKS OF FALSE TEACHERS/TEACHINGS

1. Deception: Sneaky, “smuggled in” (2:1);
2. Denial of Christ the Master & Redeemer (2:1);
3. Sexual immorality (2:2):
4. Greed (2:3);
5. Dishonesty (2:3).

C. DESTINY OF FALSE TEACHERS & FOLLOWERS: DESTRUCTION

1. Swift (2:1);
2. Sure (2:3)
3. Eternal (2 Thess 1:9): These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

APPLICATION

We must defend – by lip and by life – the all-encompassing truth of Christ our Master & Redeemer.

1. *Christ is Lord by CREATION (John 1:1-3)*

- (a) Worship & gratitude toward Him (Rom 1:20-21)

Romans 1:**20** For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, **21** because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- (b) Humility, dependence upon Him (John 15:5).

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

2. Lord by REDEMPTION

- (a) Repentance of our sins (Acts 17:30);

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

- (b) Faith in His atonement (Romans 3:24-25).

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

3. Lord by DECISION

- (a) Personal acceptance in the heart (Rom 10:9-10);

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- (b) Public testimony: baptism, church membership (Acts 2:41).

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

4. *Lord by ACTION*

(a) Life of continual obedience (Luke 6:46);

46 “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

(b) Life of consistent witnessing (Matt 10:32-33; Acts 1:8).

Matt 10:32-33: **32** “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. **33** But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Acts 1:8: **8** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**STUDY 17: GOD’S TWO-EDGED GUARANTEE:
JUDGMENT IS SURE, DELIVERANCE IS ASSURED
2 Peter 2:4-9**

INTRODUCTION

1. Because of the threats and pressures that false teachers and false teachings bring, Christians will surely be tempted to get discouraged.
2. God’s two-edged guarantee will help Christians not to be discouraged or afraid: judgment of false teachers and their followers is sure, deliverance of Christians is assured.

A. TWO EXAMPLES

1. TIME OF NOAH

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; **5** and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

- (a) Sinning angels were judged (2:4); ancient sinful world punished in the Flood (2:5a);
- (b) Noah and family were delivered (2:5b)

2. TIME OF LOT

6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; **7** and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked **8** (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— **9** *then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

- (a) Sodom and Gomorrah were judged (2:6)
- (b) Lot was delivered (2:7-8)

B. GOD’S GUARANTEE

2 Peter 2:9: Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

APPLICATION

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 shows us how we may experience God’s deliverance:

1. We must continually watch ourselves (verse 12):
2. We must understand how God gives deliverance:

Verse 13: No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

- (a) All people encounter the same temptations;
- (b) God is faithful and He will control the intensity of the temptation, according to our spiritual maturity;
- (c) God always provides a way of escape: find it and use it;
- (d) Determine to endure:

1 Peter 5:8-10: **8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **9** Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. **10** But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

STUDY 18: CHRIST’S SECOND COMING: TRULY LIFE-CHANGING FOR YOU?

A. IN THE LAST DAYS, MANY WILL SCOFF AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

(1) This will be a sign of the last days.

2 Peter 3 1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), **2** that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, **3** knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, **4** and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."

B. CHRIST'S SECOND COMING IS SURE

(1) The WORD of God decreed the beginning and middle and end of all things.

5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, **6** by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. **7** But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

(2) God works according to His timetable.

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

(3) God works according to His program of saving sinners.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

(3) But when the day of the Lord arrives, He will put an end to the present order of things and usher in His eternal order of the new heaven and new earth.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. **11** Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

C. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION: IS CHRIST'S SECOND COMING REALLY LIFE-CHANGING FOR YOU?

(1) What difference does the hope of the Second Coming make?

- (a) Make sure of your peace with God through salvation;
- (b) Make sure that your salvation results in holy Christian living;
- (c) Make sure you develop steadfastness and endurance;
- (d) Make sure you are growing in Christ (1) through His grace (2) and through experiential knowledge of Him.

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; **15** and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, **16** as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; **18** but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

D. CONCLUDING CHALLENGE

This is the final installment of our studies in 2 Peter. We want to evaluate ourselves again by the three important questions raised in chapter 1:

1. Do you really have genuine faith? (2 Peter 1:1)

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

2. Are you really growing in your faith? (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Are you progressively growing upward through the 8 steps listed in verses 5-7?

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, **6** to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, **7** to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

3. Are you bearing fruit in your faith? (2 Peter 1:8)

8 For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.