

1, 2, 3

2 Peter 1: 3 - 11

³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

WORK, a four-letter word! A word many people struggle with. A word many people in our world do not like, nor, will they adhere to in their daily lives. It usually means something involving labor of some sort, and often hard labor - something some are allergic to - I think! Have you notice how almost every business is searching for workers? How many of our young, eligible workers, simply do not want to work? Then how particular many are as to what they will and or will not do? Putting your effort, our all, into whatever we are doing, is a lost art. Most often we see huddles of people standing around, while one or two are doing something, work, as it is needed. The rest are inspectors, supervisors, observers, or even innocent bystanders.

Illustration:

•Digging hole for sewer in Sherwood. 6 men, 1 backhoe, two men working, four of them talking about how it should be done, maybe?

It reminds me of that old adage, ***"I love work, I could sit and watch it for hours."***

I think many today have had so many people doing the work for them in our society life has become comfortable. Thus, many expect that everything they need will be to handed, or provided for them, that they simply don't understand what working hard is. Then there are those who only want to do select things, mostly involving very little labor, and it is difficult for them to do the work. When I grew up this was called, "laziness." From what I can tell, this has begun to flow over from the work ethic into other areas of life. For some, into their spiritual lives.

Work in the kingdom is essential. The Lord sets the table before us, but each of us has to pick up the fork and eat the food. There is some work involved in our relationship with the Lord.

This current work ethic has caused me to think ***“What does the Lord expect of His children, once they have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior?” “Does He do everything for us, after we have accepted Him? Or, does He expect us to feed ourselves once we accept His Grace?” “Is there anything else we are told to do, or, can we just ride that Grace of God straight into heaven?”***

“Are we to think that Grace means, He will pick up the fork and feed us?”

“What kind of effort does it take for those of us who are saved to get to their intended goal?” I think these are some valid questions to consider, since, so many seem to think that once we accept God’s forgiveness, the ticket is paid for, and the ride is free.

The danger I see in that kind of attitude, is simply, we could have the tendency to set back and expect the Lord to do all of our work without any other effort on our behalf. That leads to the dangerous thought, that I can live however I wish to live, because it doesn’t matter. However, I know that the Word of God says otherwise.

As I read God’s Word, I believe that once we accept Jesus as Lord, God doing what He needed to do to give us salvation, it is now on our laps to discovering the power of His Spirit and the fullness of His grace, by feeding ourselves on the richness of His Grace & Word.

When I say this, what I am saying is, ***“Are we willing to follow Him completely and obediently?” “Are there any commands, calling or instruction the Lord gives to those who accept His grace?”*** I would answer this with a loud and bold, ***“YES,”*** there are.

Peter says in this passage, that we need to make every effort to live a Godly life. To add to our faith some important qualities. To live a righteous life before God. Jesus said this, ***“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*** MAT 5:20

The Pharisees knew what was right, and were offended, when Jesus characterized them as people who were not living in the light of God’s teaching. Why did Jesus do this? Because these people of Godly, had the knowledge, yet did not apply that knowledge to their living. Is this applicable to any today?

You see, these people were the religious leaders of that day, the top dogs in the religious world, yet, Jesus instructed them, that they needed to live a life better life than what they living, ***“for, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*** I think this calls into question many who claim to live for Christ, yet are following the world around them, not striving to live as the Lord’s Word tells us. ***Grace unlocked the door, Grace paid the price of forgiveness, still, effort on our part, following His commands, is the key to entering into the kingdom of heaven.***

In fact, Jesus also spoke to the issue of being lazy in this life. In the parable of the talents, there was one who received a single talent, and instead of using that which the Lord had given him, he hid it in the ground. A single talent, means he may not have been as capable as some, but what he did with what he had was not what the Lord told him to do.

When the master came back to collect the talents, the servant with one talent, handed it to Him and said, ***“I knew you were a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So, I was afraid, and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See here is what belongs to you!”*** (Mat 25: 24-25) ***“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?’*** MAT 25:26

Jesus said to the man who knew what the Lord expected Him to do, yet didn’t even try, that he was too lazy to do it. Ouch!

So, what has Peter to say to us today?

First - No excuse for lacking godliness!

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.” (v.1)

What do you need to live a godly life once you accept Jesus as Lord? Peter says, only what God has already given you! How many times have I heard someone say, ***“How on earth am I going to live a perfect life?”*** Let’s start by defining a ***“perfect life.”*** I believe what Peter meant was a ***“godly life.”*** So, the question comes, ***“How on earth are you going to live a godly life?”***

It starts by determining in your mind and heart, that you want to live for the Lord. ***(have to decide that first)*** Then, we have to have a desire to serve Him as Lord. Seeking for and discovering the kind of lifestyle, defined in God’s Word. I also believe it deals with honesty, truth and spiritual integrity, as we walk after Him. Honesty with God, and ourselves.

Paul told Timothy, ***“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”*** 2TI 3:12 -13 Bad things are going to happen. Stay focused on God.

Know this, it is not if Satan will attack, is when He attacks. The only way to defeat him, is to start our life in Christ by deciding to follow Him no matter what comes. Notice Peter’s words in verse one, ***“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.”*** (v.1) How ready is the Lord to help us? What areas will He help us with? He says, ***“Everything we need!”*** Nothing is lacking... So, if we are not living a godly life, who is responsible for that?

Illustration:

There was a poll taken some time ago, designed and conducted by Market Facts, posted in an issue of U.S. Online News. A question was asked, ***“Of fifteen prominent figures, who is most likely to go to heaven, or, is in heaven?”*** Twelve people were listed from their research.

I have listed the first twelve of these prominent figures: *(This survey was taken in the world*

- Mother Teresa: 79 % *They could choose anyone they wish)*
- Oprah Winfrey: 66%
- Michael Jordan: 65%
- Colin Powell: 61%
- Princess Diana: 60%
- Al Gore: 55%

- Hillary Rodham Clinton: 55%
- Bill Clinton: 52%
- Pat Robertson: 47%
- Newt Gingrich: 40%
- Dennis Rodman: 28%
- O.J. Simpson: 19%

But the best part is yet to come. None of these figures had the highest score. Of the thousands of respondents, ***87% stated they believed that they themselves would go to heaven.***

How much more willing we are to excuse ourselves, than anyone else! Everyone wants to be in Heaven, but will they be there? *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.”* (v.1) There is one way, through Jesus. Peter says He has given us all we need. Are we using it? Do we live by it?

Second - Adding once we have subtracted...

⁵ *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;*⁶ *and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;* ⁷ *and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.* Peter then challenges us to add to our faith, a list of qualities which add strength during our life journey. His words are, ***“make every effort to add to your faith, then he lists,***

- goodness***
- knowledge***
- self-control***
- perseverance***
- godliness***
- brotherly kindness***
- love.***

Peter says, ***“If you have these qualities in an increasing measure, these will make you effective and productive in whatever you do.”*** Thank you, Jesus!

The majority of us will need to know the way to grow in Christ, while we live here. Peter gave us this path.

Goodness - in another translation, is uses for the word, ***“virtue.”*** This suggests that we add this quality to add to our faith, implying that our faith is not enough by itself, because we are weak and easily influenced as humans. We need ***Goodness*** and then ***Knowledge.*** We don't know as much as we might think we do.

Then, add to this ***“self-control.”*** Obviously, he must feel as though many of us lack the ability to control their lives adequately. That we need God in every area of their lives to help us make righteous choices. So, ***“self-control,”*** is actually the Holy Spirit's control. Following Him always.

O.K. most will admit, life is difficult at times. So, we need to, get our eyes off the things of this world and place them on God. This is what Peter is trying to tell us.

Jesus said, ***“But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”*** MAT 6:23 How much have we allow the world to darken our vision, to influence us our decisions?

The writer of Hebrews says,

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” HEB 12:2 Fix our eyes on Jesus, it’s the only way we can ***persevere***. The only way we can bring light into our lives to dispel the darkness of this world.

Then, to your perseverance, add ***godliness***. Godliness means, that we add to our faith any and every quality, which helps us become more like God. Why? So, we can live better lives here on earth. So, others will see the Lord through how we live each day.

Then add brotherly kindness and ***LOVE!*** Why on earth does Paul place the quality of ***LOVE*** last? I think he should have lead with LOVE... Paul said, ***“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.”***1CO 13:1 Love should permeate everything we do and are. In truth, Paul sets a strong priority on possessing love. He knows, that without it, we will not live the kind of life we should.

But there is one last reason for adding these qualities to our faith.

Third - Falling!

“Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (vv.10-11)

Have you ever fallen? As I age, that seems to be even a greater possibility.

Every successful person has fallen, or had a failure in life. But repeating the same failure, is no guarantee of eventual success. That’s what I think Peter was trying to say to us. If we want to keep from falling, you have to work at it. Work hard. Be aware!

(Fall prevention from medical group – came to speaks to us) Remove the obstacles so we might less of a chance of falling. We have to remove the obstacles to falling.

Illustration

Many years ago, a man was driving through Europe in a Rolls Royce, and the car had mechanical problems, and 2 mechanics flew from England, to the continent, to repair the engine. The owner of the car expected to receive a bill from the factory and yet no bill ever arrived, so he inquired about the cost of the repair job.

The reply he received from the factory, read something like this, “We have no record of 2 mechanics flying to Europe to repair your car - in fact, we have no record of any mechanical difficulty ever occurring in any Rolls Royce.” We simply do not like to admit we have fallen, so often we don’t.

Thus, even though we may fall many times in our walk with God, God through Christ, holds no record of our shortcomings, when we approach Him through repentance, putting our faith in

Christ, and thus admitting our shortcomings and accept His grace, He forgives us and remembers them no more...

I want to remind everyone that Peter says, faith with these added qualities, keeps us from braking down and falling apart. ***What a promise!***

He is not saying we will never face trials or struggles, only that we will find strength for today and tomorrow, and help to prevent falling.

Do you want to make it heaven?

Do you want to have eternal life?

Open your heart, accept Jesus, He has done His part, and now, we need to do our part, by adding to our faith, making every effort, working hard, to get to where we seek to go.

Forgiveness came at an extremely high price, the loss of His Son! Our entrance into Heaven comes at just as high a cost, acceptance of God's Son's forgiveness, and striving to live daily by taking up our cross and following Him.

"Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." MAR 8:34

Deny ourselves, Take Up our cross, and Follow Him!

1,2,3! It is that simple, or is it? Peter tries to make it clear.