
a *Grace Notes* course

2 Peter

Lesson 2

2 Peter 1:5, 6

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2 Peter*Course Outline*

There are ten (10) lessons in the 2 Peter course. Each lesson has a Quiz, to be completed and returned to Grace Notes after studying the lesson. Here is a list showing the portion of 2 Peter to be studied in each lesson.

Lesson 1	Introduction; 2 Peter 1:1 to 4
Lesson 2	2 Peter 1 :5 to 6
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2 Peter 1:5

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge."

We now come to the first main segment of 2 Peter. The first four verses comprise the Introduction. Verse five begins the body of the epistle. Verses 5-11 set before us the characteristics of the Christian life. Just any kind of life is not the Christian life. Certain qualities indicate whether the Christian is living genuine Christianity.

But also for this very reason

"This" refers to the divine disposition of the previous verse.

We can render "for this very reason" as "for this very cause." The antecedent of this phrase is verses three and four, in particular the double gift of "life" and "godliness" bestowed on us by Christ. This double gift should compel us to use our divine nature for God's glory. The idea is this: "Seeing that we have power for life and godliness, we should use our divine nature."

There is a striking advance on the first four verses. The first four verses set forth our status in Christ. Beginning with verse five, we come to other side of the coin. This is the corollary truth to our status in Christ. This truth has to do with our state, not our status. It has to do with our deportment before God. This truth depends on what we do, not what He did.

Principle

God wants us to apply truth to experience.

Application

Our status before God is not changeable but our state is changeable for it is the experience of our status. The order is important. First comes our status then our state. First comes our position before God then follows our responsibility to that position. God first saves us by grace. Now that we have the gift of eternal life, we do something with it.

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Ephesians 4:1).

Our calling is our status quo before God in Christ (Ephesians chapters 1-3). Our "walk" is how we apply that status to experience. We need to do something with the "divine nature [disposition]" God gave us.

giving all diligence

The phrase "giving all diligence" translates a double compound word: 1) along side 2) into 3) to bring. God wants us to bring something along side so that it enters our lives. This is a word of powerful application. We must be eager to bring along side and into our lives the seven virtues that follow. We need to give all our energies to bring these points of character into our lives. If we do, we will escape the corruption in the world (v.3).

"Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).

"They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do" (Galatians 2:10).

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

"Diligence" conveys intense effort. "Diligence" means haste, speed, eagerness, earnestness. A diligent person makes every effort to do what God asks. This is a word of zeal. A person of diligence will give serious attention to what he is doing and exert great energy to get it done. The idea is to be eager to do something with the implication of readiness to expend energy and effort.

Principle

God expects Christians to be dead earnest with their Christianity.

Application

God expects us to make an all-out effort to apply truth to experience. He wants us to expend great motivation and effort to live for Him.

Do you leave no stone unturned to make character the passion of your life? Christians cannot look upon their Christianity as a hobby. If we devote the fringe area of our spare time to character, our character will be seen for what it is--weak. The Christian life is far more than a hobby like golfing. It is something to which we should devote our lives. Note how Paul makes Christianity his life,

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

As people low on the totem pole of an organization are brought up to work under the experience and influence of the President of the company, so Christians are to work under the influence of God's disposition. Those Christians should then live their life with earnestness.

Earnestness requires exertion. We cannot enjoy our possessions unless we use them. The divine disposition is not an automatic machine that will produce Christian character regardless of the our engagement with it. Farmers do not directly grow their crops. They must do certain things to give their crops an environment for growth. Christians must do certain things to give their life an environment for growth. They must give all diligence to bring God's promises along-side their life so they can grow. God has a role and Christians have a role. Only the Lord can ultimately give the increase.

New Christians usually show a first flush of enthusiasm and spiritual zeal. They can hardly wait to share their faith with their husbands or wives. Every time the church opens its doors, they are there. Somewhere along the line, their fire extinguishes. Some puncture-proof saint gets to them. They call out the bucket brigade and throw water on these new Christians because of their enthusiasm.

The zeal and dynamic of new Christians reveals apathetic Christians' dead spiritual lives. They do not want their state of affairs revealed for what it is. They say, "What a minute, slow down, you can't" New Christians waken sleeping saints. They rub their eyes, yawn, and say, "You lead someone to Christ? Quiet, you are disturbing my sleep. Don't you see that I am worshipping?"

Where is the zeal you had when first you came to Christ? The subsequent virtues will do us no good if we do not deal with this first.

People who design airplanes proved "conclusively" that bumblebees cannot fly. "The fuselage is too large for its wing spread." The bumblebee does not know that, so it goes ahead and flies. New Christians, do not know they cannot do this or that. They just go ahead and do

it. They do not find this out until later when other Christians inform them they cannot do it. They go out and win ten people to Christ the first week they know Christ. They are not that concerned about making mistakes. They just mistake their way into winning a number of people to Christ!

add

We come now to the second term of arithmetic. The first word was "multiply" (v. 2). Now we have the word "add."

We get the English words "chorus and choreograph" from the Greek word "add." "Add" comes from three Greek words: chorus; to bring; beside. To "add" is to bring something to the side of the chorus. Metaphorically, it means to make every effort to provide abundantly for someone. This word came to mean to defray the expenses of a chorus. The idea is to supply something more than that which already exists. "Add" is a term of grace.

The Greek drama used this word by 600 BC The Greeks gave choral performances of dancing and singing at festivals honoring Dionysius (the god of wine and fertility). Generally, a benefactor selected by the state paid the expenses of the chorus of these ancient Greek plays. He defrayed both the expenses of the chorus and the dance group. They called this citizen the "choregus." He provided the money for training and costuming the chorus. This was a duty connected with the state religion.

In ancient Greece, the chorus was a band of singers and dancers who performed on occasions of ceremony. Even during the acting out of comedy or tragedy, the chorus remained in front of the stage singing and dancing to fill in for the pauses.

These tragedies were a series of dramatic episodes separated by choral odes. Three actors generally performed these episodes. These actors wore masks to indicate the nature of the character they represented.

All performances were religious in nature. Almost all surviving tragedies were based on myths. The hero generally confronted a moral choice. His struggle against hostile forces ended in defeat and often in his death because of some tragic flaw in

his character. Therefore, the hero is great but not perfect (virtuous). The hero passes from fortune to misfortune. A Greek tragedy never portrayed the bad person going from happiness to misery. This would violate their senses. The hero was always well known and prosperous but not permanently virtuous.

Misfortune is not brought about by vice or depravity. The hero comes to a tragic end by failure or error in judgment. Otherwise, it is not true tragedy. There is no poetic justice whereby the hero gets his comeuppance for some wrong he did. The ideas of the good prospering and the evil suffering were not part of the Greek mindset.

Providing for these great plays meant great expense to the benefactor. "Add" came to mean lavishly supply. The Christian is to copiously or lavishly stock his life with the virtues that follow. Do you incur costs to advance your faith?

By "adding" one character component to another, we develop one quality in the exercise of another. Each new grace vaults out of the other.

"Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness" (2 Corinthians 9:10).

"And not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations" (Colossians 2:19-20).

"Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord" (2 Peter 1:11).

Since "add" is a term of grace, God wants us to provide for our own character out of grace toward ourselves. We need to make sure we add character to our spiritual lives.

Principle

God provides whatever we need to live the Christian life.

Application

We often judge God by how we do things. We make others pay for what we do for them. God

does not make us pay. He gives out of His grace. God wants us to give out of grace as well. In this case, God wants us to give to ourselves out of grace. He wants us to supply for our spiritual need the character He supplies.

Some Christians operate in a sphere of fear. They never know whether they have God's approval or not because they know of no definite standard whereby they gain God's approval. They operate constantly in fear of some bolt of lightning streaking down on them. They have no idea of the finished work of Christ for them.

This is like getting out of a jet plane and trying to help push it along. God does not need any help. God does not bless your business because you give to Him. He blesses you because He is the God of "all grace" (1 Peter 5:10).

to your faith

"Faith" in this context means the structure that gives bones to the body of the Christian life. Faith is the foundation of all virtues. Like lining up a group of numbers for adding, believers are to line up a group of virtues that will advance their faith.

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

Faith is the sub-structure to character and is the base to all subsequent characteristics listed from verses 5-7. The building of our character by seven characteristics continues to rise until we crown the edifice of our soul with the sum of the seven.

Principle

Faith is the foundation of all character.

Application

Now that we have come to Christ, we must add to our soul seven characteristics. Peter does not say, "Pick and choose whichever characteristics that might interest you. Add one or two of these characteristics." God builds strength into us when we add these characteristics to our souls.

No matter what our cultural heritage, no matter what personality, disposition, or temperament we might have, God will construct an edifice after His own heart if we apply truth to experience.

virtue

We met the word "virtue" in verse three. "Virtue" occurs five times in the New Testament.

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

"Virtue" carries the idea of excellence. There are two kinds of excellence: 1) Operative excellence. This excellence makes us effective in character. 2) Courage. Faith vaults our life into courage. True faith does not retreat in a refuge but enters the dynamic of life. We may understand by virtue courage. No Christian can advance his life without courage.

"The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1).

Cowardly Christians are weak and make little impact for Christ.

"Virtue" is something that procures pre-estimation for a person or thing. When Christians acquire "virtue" in their life, they assume an intrinsic prominence in the minds of others. Others view as people of renown or praise those who carry the glory of Christ with them.

Principle

God wants excellence in Christian character.

Application

Excellence is superiority and efficiency in character. Are you an expert in the spiritual character? Have you developed renown in virtue?

We are not too handy when it comes to excellence. There is little nobility in our Christian lives. What spiritual courage or valor is there in your life? Is there some spiritual enthusiasm? How much strength is there to your Christianity? How much can you press with your character?

What can you do? Can you do anything? Have you exercised your faith to such a degree that you can do things that you could not do otherwise? In other words, are you dynamic rather than static in your Christian life? Are you dynamic or are you a sham in character?

to virtue knowledge

Another item to add to faith is "knowledge." There are certain principles that we must know before we can apply them. We also must add knowledge to our faith.

Knowledge is not wisdom. Knowledge is the accumulation of the facts of God's Word. Wisdom is the application of knowledge to experience. Knowledge here is the experience of knowledge. In this context, knowledge is personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ.

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10).

"That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).

If we add knowledge to faith, we will know what to do in any predicament we might face. Courage ("diligence") without knowledge is dangerous.

Principle

Knowledge should precede zeal so that our zeal can be effective.

Application

If zeal comes first and knowledge second, our zeal may not be properly directed. Zeal without knowledge is like an empty semi that takes off down the road without its load. There is no purpose to the trip. Zeal for the experience of enthusiasm is not a Christian value.

God wants us to add the knowledge of His Word to our experience. Knowledge of the Word is the only way we can know God truly.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

"For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6).

We need to balance both zeal and knowledge. Knowledge without zeal is deadness. Zeal without knowledge is emptiness. If we are static, we are stagnate. If we do not go forward, we lose momentum. Fire and water are opposites. Water puts out fire. Fire uncontrolled destroys things in its path. This is the problem with zeal and knowledge. Knowledge puts out zeal. Uncontrollable zeal destroys the development of Christian character.

"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:12-13).

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

2 Peter 1:6

"To knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness;"

To knowledge, self-control;

The fourth building block of Christian character is "self-control." We add self-control to our faith.

The term does not regularly occur in the New Testament. The New Testament uses "self-control" only two other times (Acts 24:25; Galatians 5:23). The New Testament uses "self-control" very infrequently because God does not sponsor autonomous self-mastery. Salvation or spirituality by mastery of the self is not the Christian way of life.

"Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations-- 'Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,' which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed

religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh" (Colossians 2:20-23).

The New Testament does not view self-control as legalistic abstinence. Christianity does not de-sex or empty all desires from the person. But the Christian does maintain self-control and mastery over those desires.

We add self-control to knowledge. "Self-control" comes from two words: out of and strength. "Self-control" is power. "Self-control" is mastery over our passions so that we control our desires and actions. God bestows this power upon us.

Idiomatically, "self-control" means to hold oneself in, to command oneself. Self-control then is the mastery of self. We stay in command of our desires and wants. It is the ability to say "no" to self. This is the freedom of self-restraint.

Principle

Self-control frees us.

Application

The Christian life carries certain qualities. Any kind of life is not Christian living. There are certain standards unique to Christianity. It is more than being nice to your neighbors or not breaking the law.

Self-control in God's economy comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christian self-control is not autonomous self-control.

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

Why do people fail in any sphere of life? People fail in athletics, academics and business because of lack of self-discipline. Lazy people fail in athletics and school. Lazy people will fail spiritually in Christian living. This is why people fail especially in the Christian life. They have little internal power that comes from the Holy Spirit.

We live in an undisciplined generation. Young people rebel against all authority. Much of their music revolves around that rebellion. They come from undisciplined homes and schools. They go to university and the theme of thought is rebellion against authority--whether it is the authority of

rule or the authority of concepts. Some people never accept authority, even police authority. In fact, the only places where discipline remains today is in sports and the military. Sadly, there is little authority left in the home, the school or even the church.

The Christian who wants to get in shape spiritually must get into the Word. That is where he gets his spiritual muscles. By applying principles to experience, he begins to lose his spiritual flab.

Do you restrain yourself or do you indulge yourself?

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 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. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

The believer must go into training for living the Christian life. If you are on the track team, you waive the right to eat certain foods. Others may eat chocolate ice cream two or three times a day but you do not because you are in training. There is nothing wrong with chocolate ice cream in itself but it is poison if you are to run the hundred-yard dash. If you want to win, foregoing chocolate ice cream is a price you must pay. This is self-control for a purpose. Others may eat all the chocolate ice cream they desire because they are not on the track team. We want to win in the Christian life. We do not want to come in last.

to self-control perseverance

The third building block of Christian character is "perseverance." We add "perseverance" to our faith.

"Perseverance" comes from two words: under and remain. This word carries the ideas of endurance, fortitude, stead-fastness. A person with perseverance remains under the situation. He hangs in there through trial and testing.

"Perseverance" carries the idea of endurance especially in trials (Luke 21:19; Romans 12:12; Hebrews 12:7; James 1:12; 1 Peter 2:20).

A person with perseverance stays under the load no matter what adversity may come his way (Romans 5:3-4; 15:4-5; 2 Corinthians 1:6; 6:4; Colossians 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; James 1:3). However, this is not endurance of the inevitable. Jesus could have extricated Himself of His suffering (Hebrews 12:2-3). He not only sustained suffering but He struggled with suffering. On the other hand, he did not maintain stupid insensibility toward the struggle with suffering. He did not approach suffering with stubborn resolve but faced suffering with apprehension (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46).

The New Testament never asserts "self-control" of God because God is all-powerful.

Principle

The Christian should be stable under pressure.

Application

The Christian should develop unswerving steadfastness in trial. When disasters come your way, how do you handle them? Do you have an inner order of soul? A person with stability in suffering does not beat his head against the wall. He orients to God's plan for his life. Disaster is part of God's plan for our lives.

The Christian life is not an easy road. However, this road has hope. The Christian does not simply accept whatever may come his way. He transcends endurance. He holds out with because of his hope.

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

Tribulation produces patience or endurance. Trouble, well-managed, makes the believer a seasoned veteran. He does not whine about his problems for that is a sign of immaturity. Children whine about their predicaments.

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider

Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?" (Hebrews 12:1-7).

We do not run with "patience" but with "endurance." Endurance means stick-to-itiveness. Tenacity enables us to say, "I will not quit. It is too soon to quit." This Christian does not throw in the towel.

One of the first things we want to do when someone criticizes us is to quit. Who wants to be known as a quitter? We need to develop the attitude that, "This too shall pass. God will give me the endurance to hang in there." Running from the problem is no solution because you will run into the same problem wherever you go. You are still the same person there as well. You take yourself with you. It will not profit you to run from the problem.

Are you about to quit your education? Are you ready to resign your position? "Oh, what is the use? This situation is too difficult to resolve. I did not do well on my last exam. I might as well give up." One of the presidents of a college I attended gave a message in chapel each year entitled, "Don't quit too soon." Ask the Lord to give you the strength to go on. You will be amazed to find out what you can do when God gives us a "second wind." Press on! God will see you through.

Have you developed unwavering perseverance in the trials of your life?

to perseverance godliness

The fifth building block of Christian character is "godliness." We add "godliness" to our faith.

"Godliness" is reverence toward God. "Godliness" comes from two words: well and devout denoting a piety characterized by a Godward attitude. This person desires to please God (2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7; 3:11).

In ancient Greek, "godliness" meant to shrink from suggesting awe or reverence. The idea was veneration. Later the word developed into the idea of worship. In the New Testament, godliness is our manner of life in relation to God.

Elsewhere "godliness" occurs in

"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, ...Now godliness with contentment is great gain....But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:3,6,11).

"Christian" is not moralistic for it rests in a relationship with a person (1 Timothy 3:16).

"Godliness" is more than outward worship or a human virtue. The Bible sets "godliness" over against asceticism that regards creation as intrinsically evil. "Godliness" is something that covers everyday conduct that honors God as Creator and Redeemer.

Truth produces godliness in character. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make the child of God like the Son of God. That is godliness.

"Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness" (Titus 1:1).

Principle

Godliness is living like one who believes in God.

Application

We are what we read. We are what we eat. We are what we believe and practice spiritually. Why read the Word? Because it will do something to your soul. It will do something to your character. It will do something to your disposition.

"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" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Does your life have any indication that God is live and real in your life? Do you live your life with an eye on God, trusting Him for whatever may come your way?

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

A godly person has a reverence, loyalty and fear of God.