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**BIBLE STUDY**

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**“CALLED TO GLORY AND VIRTUE”**

**2 Peter 1:1-11**

***II Peter 1:1 "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"***

The author of this epistle is Simon Peter, a servant of Jesus Christ (that is, one under his authority and lordship) and an apostle (a member of the team of Jews chosen and commissioned by Jesus to proclaim the gospel and plant churches). Because he identifies himself elsewhere as Simeon Peter, has led some to conclude incorrectly that someone other than Peter wrote the letter. An explanation for the alternate spelling is that “Simeon” was a Semitic rendering, used especially in first-century Palestinian settings.

***Acts 15:14 “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”***

The recipients of the letter are those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. They are born-again Christians. In this letter, Peter is not concerned with winning the lost as much as he is with leading the saved into a deeper, experiential knowledge of God. Note also that he explicitly affirms the deity of Jesus he is “our God and Savior.” Simon was the name he had been known by, before he met and followed Jesus. The name Peter had been given him by Jesus.

***Matthew 16:17-18***

***17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.***

***18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

"Peter" means a rock. This is a general letter to Jew and Gentile who have accepted Jesus as their Saviour. Peter was very well aware of the great price the Lord Jesus paid to purchase his salvation. Peter thought of himself as a slave, because Jesus bought and paid for him with His precious blood. "Apostle", as we have said before, means ambassador. Salvation is a free gift from God and Peter makes that statement here, when he says "obtained like precious faith". We receive the righteousness of Christ, when we receive Jesus as our Saviour. We give our sin to Jesus, and He gives us His righteousness. The only way that faith comes after righteousness is when we receive the gift of faith. It takes faith to receive the righteousness of Christ. This is the faith that we activate within ourselves. The faith, here, is the abundance of faith that we receive as a gift of the Spirit.

***II Peter 1:2 "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,"***

Peter’s purpose in fostering spiritual growth and a greater personal experience with God in this life is underscored by his prayer that grace and peace would be multiplied to them through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. There is only one God, in three manifestations: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a blessing Peter speaks on those who believe. The more you know of Jesus, the more peace and grace you have. Jesus is King of Peace. When we are full of Jesus, we are full of peace. Knowledge is accumulated learning. The more you learn of the Lord Jesus, the more peace and grace you have.

***II Peter 1:3 "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:"***

Spiritual growth can be a reality for every believer because God already has given us everything required for life and godliness. The spiritual blessings we need are already available to us, but it’s up to us to access them.

***Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”***

These comprehensive blessings are appropriated through the knowledge of God that is, through the specific knowledge of God’s will for and blessings to believers. This knowledge is the difference between merely meeting the President of the United States and having a personal relationship with him. There is no need for a Christian to fear. The things of this world are for our benefit, not for our harm. He thought so much of us that He made the world and all that is in it, and on it, for the benefit of man. He prepared the earth for man to habitat. Then He made man. We have all the goodness of the earth to draw from, if we receive the knowledge of God and use it according to His will. The power to use the blessings come from us knowing the power in the name of Jesus. He gave us the earth to use, not to abuse. Jesus called us to receive His glory and virtue. When we come to the knowledge of God, we receive Jesus as Saviour and all the earth is subject to the name of Jesus. We have been given power to use that name on the earth. The part in this that we play, other than accepting Jesus as our Saviour, is to walk in the salvation He has provided for us. "Virtuous" means we are faithful to Jesus and His teachings.

***II Peter 1:4 "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."***

A key to spiritual growth is sharing in the divine nature, which penetrates and lives within every believer beginning at the moment of salvation through the Holy Spirit. Christians, in a manner of speaking, have God’s nature woven into their DNA. This nature includes spiritual appetite and godly behavior. Yet the divine nature is implanted in seed form and doesn’t immediately translate into mature, godly living.

***1 Peter 1:23 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”***

Rather, it gives every Christian the potential to escape the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire, much like a seed gives the person who possesses it the potential to grow a plant. When the seed is tended and grows, the life of the Spirit expands in a believer’s soul, and the expansion is manifested in the body through righteous living. The promises God made to Abraham are for all who believe in Jesus.

***Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."***

It is our faith in Christ that makes us heirs along with faithful Abraham. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto Him as righteousness. We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are clothed in His righteousness. The entire New Testament is a list of the promises made to the believer. To inherit the promises, we must prove we are sons of God. Christians are followers of, and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to become Christ-like. We, in fact, must let Christ live in us and through us. We are His hands upon this earth. When we get to heaven, we will be like Him.

***I John 3:2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."***

This Scripture just means that we will take on His nature {in our spiritual body}. We have crucified our flesh and the lusts of the flesh and have taken on Christ.

***Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."***

***II Peter 1:5 "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;"***

***II Peter 1:6 "And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;"***

***II Peter 1:7 "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."***

For the divine nature to express itself manifestly in a believer’s life, the believer must make every effort to supplement his or her faith with seven qualities, the number seven signifying completeness. The new nature has already been programmed to respond to the right input, just like a baby has been programmed to respond to its mother’s milk. The nutrients in the milk enable the baby’s growth and development. The seven supplemental qualities necessary for spiritual growth are virtue (living truthfully to glorify God), knowledge (responding to divine revelation), temperance (self-control resisting sinful desires), patience (endurance not quitting until God releases you), godliness (seeking to please God with your choices), brotherly kindness (affection caring for the well-being of other members of God’s family), charity (love compassionately and righteously seeking the well-being of others, including nonbelievers). These qualities act like vitamin supplements, enabling believers to adopt God’s kingdom perspective and live in accordance with it. We should earnestly try to please God in all that we do. "To be diligent in our work" would mean that we are totally dedicated to the task at hand. We should not only be hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word, as well. The walk of a Christian must be virtuous. We must walk holy before our Lord. To walk virtuous would mean that we had determined in our heart to do right before our God. To be virtuous, without the knowledge of what God's will is, is impossible. To walk in the will of God, we must know what His will is. We learn what His will is by studying His Word. Knowledge of the Word of God gives us the ability to know what His will is. When we walk in the knowledge of the Word of God, we will be temperate in all things. "Temperance", in this instance, means self- control. It, also, means moderately. The way I like to say this is, "let your spirit control your flesh". Patience is a lesson hard learned. Patience comes through tribulation. Turning your will over to God and allowing Him to have control of your life, leads to godliness. All of this is explaining the growing in grace that a Christian must do. "Charity", here, was translated from the word "agape", which means a special love. It is like the love of God. It is love not because of what you can do for me, but love wanting nothing in return.

***Romans 5:3-7***

***3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;***

***4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:***

***5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

***I John 4:20 "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"***

***II Peter 1:8 "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make [you that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."***

If believers possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will not be useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. A growing Christian produces spiritual fruit that God uses to bless others and bring joy. When you’re growing in Christ, you don’t have to strain to bear fruit. It will emerge as naturally as apples develop on a healthy apple tree. If these things be in you, you are full of Christ. In the process, you have taken on the nature of Christ. When you take Christ on in His fulness like is spoken of here, you have taken on the mind of Christ. You are allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you all things. Your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ will be full, because He dwells within you. The name "Lord Jesus Christ" means that you have accepted Him as your Saviour and your Lord. You, also, realize He is the Anointed One of God, the Messiah.

***II Peter 1:9 "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."***

On the other hand, the person who lacks the qualities listed in above is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the price Jesus paid on the cross to make spiritual growth and spiritual productivity possible. In this context, the admonition to make every effort to confirm your calling and election is not about making sure we’re saved. It’s about making sure we are spiritually productive. God chose believers for the purpose of spiritual productivity.

***1 Peter 1:15 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;”***

***1 Peter 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”***

Therefore, we must ensure that the purpose for which God called us is being achieved. If we do, we will never stumble in this life and entry into the eternal kingdom will be richly provided that is, with maximum rewards. It is possible to be saved yet enter heaven without rewards, but that is a destiny believers should strive to avoid. It is a very dangerous thing not to grow in God. The one-time experience of salvation is not enough. We are either growing in Christ, or we are going backwards. We will never stand still. Notice, the word "old" connected to sins. To live as the world lives, after you are saved, will draw you away from your salvation. Salvation is a daily walk through life growing each day more like Jesus. To do anything else will not work. We can be blinded by the world, if we are not careful, and forget the forgiveness we received in Christ.

***II Peter 1:10 "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:"***

We must take up our cross daily and follow Jesus. This is just saying, make up your mind to walk with Jesus and never wander away from that walk. If I am in Jesus, and He is in me, I cannot fall.

***John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."***

***I John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."***

***II Peter 1:11 "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."***

There is only one way to heaven. It is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus opened the way for all who would believe, when He gave His body on the cross. The door to heaven and the throne of God was opened, when the veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom. Jesus opened that door for us.

***John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."***

***Daniel 7:27 "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."***

***Matthew 27:51 "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"***

There is only one way to get to heaven. The next verses which explains it so well.

***Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”***

***Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."***

***Romans 10:10 "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."***

***Matthew 24:13 “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”***

**QUESTIONS**

1. What is the theme of this second letter?
2. Who wrote this letter?
3. When was the name Simon used for Peter?
4. Who was this letter written to?
5. Why did Peter think of himself as a slave?
6. What does "apostle" mean?
7. When do we receive righteousness?
8. What is knowledge?
9. Why should the Christian not fear?
10. What does "virtuous" mean?
11. What must we do to receive the inheritance God has given us?
12. What are we to add to our faith?
13. What would it mean "to be diligent in our work"?
14. What must we first do to walk in the will of God?
15. What does "temperance" in verse 6 mean?
16. What was the word "charity", in verse 7, translated from?
17. What does "agape" mean?
18. In the process of growth as a Christian, we have taken on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.
19. What cleanses us from all sin?
20. When was the door to the throne of God opened to us?