



The Second Epistle General of Peter

The Admonition to Growth

2 Peter 1:5-11

- I. THE MEANS OF GROWTH (2 Peter 1:5-7)
 - A. The Companionship of Growth (2 Peter 1:5)
 1. The declaration of companionship—“And beside this”
 2. The understanding of companionship
 - a. The previous truth—God has given us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3).
 - b. The coming truth
 - (1) What is about to be said works beside, or alongside, the previous truth.
 - (2) It is in addition to the previous truth and not independent of it.
 - B. The Effort of Growth (2 Peter 1:5)
 1. The sacrifice in the effort—“giving”
 - a. No matter how you define the word *giving*, it speaks to sacrifice.
 - b. In other words, Christian growth is going to cost you something.
 2. The extent of the effort—“all diligence”
 - a. Understanding diligence
 - (1) Sometimes a Bible word is best defined by first establishing what the word does not mean. Biblical diligence is such a case in point.
 - (2) A diligent man is one who is not slothful or lazy according to Proverbs 12:24. Proverbs 10:4 bears witness to this fact by contrasting the diligent with those who are slack or careless.
 - (3) According to Proverbs 13:4, a diligent man is not a sluggard.
 - (4) Yet, the Bible also points out that the diligent are to be properly balanced by not hastily rushing through work (Proverbs 21:5).
 - (5) Each of these truths concerning diligence reveals that diligence involves working hard, but with great care and concern.
 - b. Diligence and Christian growth
 - (1) Christians should first and foremost focus on growing their walk with God and their character before the world.
 - (2) However, that is to be accomplished by “giving all diligence” (with great effort, but without haste).
 - (3) The word of God is the only viable source from whence this diligent growth springs forth (1 Peter 2:2).
 - (4) Apparently, Christian growth is dependent upon following the plans and details set forth of the Lord.



C. The Foundation of Growth (2 Peter 1:5)

1. The foundation stated—“add to your faith”
2. The foundation explained
 - a. Whether this is the faith required for salvation or salvation itself, the truth remains that this is simply the foundation for the new believer.
 - b. Faith/salvation is not the end of the Christian life, but the entrance into it. It is foundational, and, as such, it is to be built upon.
 - c. Paul stated these truths in similar fashion (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).
 - (1) He identified the foundation when he stated, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).
 - (2) He pointed to man’s responsibility in building thereupon and the resulting consequences (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).
 - (3) Paul gave an ultimate warning when he said, “let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (1 Corinthians 3:10).
 - d. For the believer, the foundation of our relationship with God is our faith in Christ for salvation. From there, we must begin to add.

D. The Steps of Growth (2 Peter 1:5-7)

1. Add to your faith **virtue** (2 Peter 1:5)
 - a. Defining virtue
 - (1) The word *virtue* appears seven times in scripture of which three uses are found in our current chapter of study.
 - (2) The word is typically defined as being moral excellence which is in agreement with its sister word *virtuous* (Ruth 3:11; Proverbs 12:4; Proverbs 31:10, 29).
 - (3) Further back in history, the word was defined as strength, valor, bravery, excellence, or worth.
 - b. Adding virtue—In the context, it would seem to point to moral excellence, but likely from the standpoint of possessing and maintaining a right heart before God.
2. Add to virtue **knowledge** (2 Peter 1:5)
 - a. A pursuit of knowledge initiated the first sin (Genesis 2:9, 17).
 - b. However, it is obvious that, in the right situation, God desires for His people to add knowledge to their faith.
 - c. Along these lines, the apostle Paul often spoke favourably of knowledge (1 Corinthians 1:5; 2 Corinthians 8:7; Ephesians 1:17; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9-10; 1 Timothy 2:4).
 - d. At the same time, Paul issued a dire warning that if not met with a right heart, knowledge could puff one up in pride (1 Corinthians 8:1). This is not a new concept as knowledge is said to be able to pervert its possessor (Isaiah 47:10).
 - e. It should be no wonder that a proper order of growth would include the addition of virtue prior to the addition of knowledge and that temperance must then be added to that knowledge.



3. Add to knowledge **temperance** (2 Peter 1:6)
 - a. Defining temperance
 - (1) Searching a modern dictionary for the words *temperance* or *temperate* likely yields a definition limiting temperance to self-control or abstinence from alcohol.
 - (2) However, the scripture infers a much broader and deeper definition.
 - (3) Actually, studying the root word *temper* offers a better biblical definition of the word than today's typical dictionary definition.
 - (4) Temper is an action word that means to mix something. Although the Bible contains only a few uses of the words temperate and temperance, these words mean to be balanced or to have a proper mix.
 - b. Adding temperance
 - (1) The scripture contains many admonitions to seek for knowledge.
 - (2) Yet, knowledge brings with it a set of temptations.
 - a) Knowledge increases sorrow (Ecclesiastes 1:18).
 - b) It has potential to pervert (Isaiah 47:10).
 - c) When not handled properly, "knowledge puffeth up" (1 Corinthians 8:1).
 - (3) With this understanding, it should come as no surprise that the Lord would instruct believers to add temperance to knowledge.
 - (4) Knowledge without temperance leads to many pitfalls in an individual, church, or ministry. Knowledge must be balanced by temperance.
4. Add to temperance **patience** (2 Peter 1:6)
 - a. Defining patience
 - (1) The word *patience* is historically connected to the word *passion* which is biblically defined as suffering (Acts 1:3).
 - (2) True to its association, the word *patience* means to suffer or endure a time of trial.
 - (3) The Bible bears further testimony to these truths by associating patience with waiting (James 5:7) and enduring (2 Thessalonians 1:4; James 5:11).
 - (4) The Bible also combines patience with the word *longsuffering* (Colossians 1:11). These words may appear the same, but they are not. Longsuffering has to do with the quantity (or length of time) of endurance, while patience has to do with the quality of endurance.
 - b. Adding patience
 - (1) Patience makes the believer "perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4).
 - (2) It is especially necessary in times of trial and during periods of uncertainty.
 - (3) The addition of knowledge with a proper balance (temperance) creates the need for patience with circumstances and people.



5. Add to patience **godliness** (2 Peter 1:6)
 - a. Defining godliness
 - (1) Various uses of godly (godliness, godly, ungodliness, ungodly) appear sixty-one times in fifty-seven verses. The root word *god* is self-explanatory. The suffix *ly* suggests “having the qualities of, of the form or nature of” or “in a manner denoted by.”
 - (2) In other words, the word *godly* means one is like God. That being said, *godliness* means god-like-ness.
 - b. Adding godliness
 - (1) Unless there is a putting on of godliness, there could be no maintaining of the previously mentioned virtues.
 - (2) Likewise, without the putting on or the adding of godliness, one does not stand a chance to add brotherly kindness or charity.
6. Add to godliness **brotherly kindness** (2 Peter 1:7)
 - a. Defining kindness
 - (1) Kindness contains the root word *kind*.
 - (2) A cursory look might reveal this study as quite simplistic, but a good Bible student exposes the spiritual depths of any particular truth. He first considers other uses of the word *kind* and then examines the words containing the same root word.
 - a) For example, the Bible refers to something reproducing “after his kind.” The context of this phrase reveals that it refers to those belonging to the same family.
 - b) Likewise, the compound word *kindred* incorporates the same root word *kind* and means to be within the same family.
 - (3) These truths indicate that a man demonstrates kindness as he treats other people as though they are a treasured part of his own family. This truth is confirmed by the addition of the word *brotherly*.
 - b. Adding brotherly kindness
 - (1) The addition of the previous virtues certainly complicates our relationship with the world but can also do so with other believers as well.
 - (2) Therefore, adding brotherly kindness is a must.
7. Add to brotherly kindness **charity** (2 Peter 1:7)
 - a. Defining charity
 - (1) Charity is certainly love, but not merely what we would consider a standard type of love and certainly not like today’s usage or definition.
 - (2) Charity is a deeper, fuller, and stronger type of love.
 - b. Adding charity
 - (1) Charity remains at the peak of Christianity (1 Corinthians 13:13; 2 Peter 1:7) and is to be sought above all else (Colossians 3:14).
 - (2) When one considers its attributes, he would be convinced that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of charity.
 - (3) In many ways, it incorporates all previous virtues.



II. THE POSSIBILITY OF GROWTH (2 Peter 1:8-9)

A. The Possession of the Virtues (2 Peter 1:8)

1. The conditions set forth
 - a. The possession—"if these things be in you"; Note: The "these things" refers back to the process of growth mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-7.
 - b. The abundance—"and abound"
 - (1) In addition to calling for these virtues to be in you, the Bible adds that there is an additional benefit if these virtues abound.
 - (2) Simply put, to abound means to be in great plenty. Just a quick look at the word will show that it deals with bounds or boundaries and that to abound is to go outside the bounds of normality.
 - (3) The Lord Jesus dealt with this principle when He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." This speaks to two aspects available to men.
 - a) Life—That would be salvation and a future home with the Lord
 - b) Abundant life—That would be fruitful Christian living here and rewards in the future home with the Lord
 - (4) This is key in our understanding of the upcoming context and promises.
 - a) Avoidance of barrenness and unfruitfulness requires abundant Christian living (2 Peter 1:8).
 - b) Avoidance of falling requires abundant Christian living (2 Peter 1:10).
 - c) Abundant entrance into the kingdom requires abundant Christian living (2 Peter 1:11).
2. The results set forth
 - a. The prosperity—"they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful"
 - b. The place of prosperity—"in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"
 - (1) Again, we see a phrase that could independently be interpreted to mean one's knowledge of Christ or Christ's knowledge of man.
 - (2) Contextually, the first interpretation best fits, but the knowledge likely relates to a closer walk with God (see Philippians 3:10).

B. The Lack of the Virtues (2 Peter 1:9)

1. The conditions set forth—"he that lacketh these things"
2. The testimony of the conditions (see James 1:23-27)
 - a. He is blind.
 - b. He cannot see afar off.
 - c. He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.



III. THE RECOMMENDATION OF GROWTH (2 Peter 1:10-11)

A. The Recommendation Given (2 Peter 1:10)

1. The expression of the recommendation—"Wherefore the rather"
 - a. If there was any doubt as to which choice (see 2 Peter 1:8-9) is God's preferred choice, the answer is set forth in the word *rather*.
 - b. It was God's desire and will for the believer to add to the listed virtues to faith to grow in the Lord.
2. The audience to whom the recommendation is given—"brethren"
 - a. The reference to the audience as brethren is crucial.
 - b. Their salvation was not in question. Their growth was and, as a result, their love was.
3. The effort requested in the recommendation—"give diligence"
4. The content of the recommendation—"to make your calling and election sure"
 - a. The desire—"to make...sure"
 - b. The subject
 - (1) Your calling—The word *calling* only appears twice in second Peter. If the other appearance is any indication of how we should interpret the present, the calling is to glory and virtue.
 - (2) Your election—The word *election* appears only six times in scripture. It points to the separation of unbelieving Jews from believing Jews. Paul spoke about the elect, believing Israel, in Romans 11:5, 7, 28.
 - (3) Note: It should be noted that we are dealing with making something SURE or with ASSURANCE. If it seems foreign to consider that faithfulness offers assurance to one's positional and practical standing before God, it would be wise to read John's first epistle where he clearly sets forth faithfulness as a means of gaining assurance.
5. The purpose of the recommendation—"if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"

B. The Rewards Promised (2 Peter 1:11)

1. The manner of entrance into the reward
 - a. The entrance promised—"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you"
 - b. The manner promised—"abundantly"
 - (1) This word is key in the context.
 - (2) Every saved person will enter Christ's kingdom, but only those who faithfully grow in the Lord will do so ABUNDANTLY.
2. The nature of the reward entered into
 - a. The duration of the reward—"everlasting"
 - b. The nature of the reward—"kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"