

BOOK OF 2 PETER
KEYS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH
PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE
2 PETER 1:1-11 (Text Vs 5a)

Introduction

Understand that **PETER'S** original readers were living in an environment that was **EXTREMELY HOSTILE** to the cause of **JESUS CHRIST** and **HIS FOLLOWERS!** *(This, for the most part, is still the case in the world today for those who are determined to live godly in Christ Jesus. Paul prophesied it would be this way in 2 Timothy 3:12. Even in our own nation that was originally founded upon religious liberty, an increasing number of committed Christians are facing persecution and hostility and sadly, some of that is from so-called Christians who are NOT committed!)*

Now, **PETER** knew **from experience** that if **BELIEVERS** were going to **STAND FAITHFUL** in the face of **PRESSURE** and **MAKE AN IMPACT** on the world for **CHRIST**, they would need to **GROW** or **MATURE** in their **FAITH** and **BECOME SPIRITUALLY STRONG!**

And so **PETER** gave **INSTRUCTION** here (i.e. **DOCTRINE**) to help them **GROW**. If they would only heed his **INSTRUCTION**, it would help **FORTIFY their FAITH** by helping them **GROW STRONG in THE FAITH!** And today, if we will heed his **INSTRUCTION**, it can help **us** to **GROW STRONG in the FAITH for the CAUSE OF CHRIST** for whatever we might have to face in our time!

I don't know about you, but **I WANT TO GROW UP SPIRITUALLY in CHRIST and BE AS MATURE and BE AS EFFECTIVE as a SERVANT OF CHRIST** as I can possibly be!

As a **PASTOR**, one of my greatest desires for our **CHURCH** is to see each **BELIEVER GROW and MATURE into EFFECTIVE SERVANTS** of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** to the **GLORY OF GOD!**

So for today and for several more weeks I want us to see some **"KEYS OF GROWTH!"** (i.e. What it takes to **GROW SPIRITUALLY** and **MATURE** into **EFFECTIVE CHRISTIANS.**)

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Here in **verse 5**, **PETER** admonishes his readers to **"add to"** or **BUILD** upon the **FOUNDATION of FAITH!** (In fact, he gives **SEVEN STORIES** that are to be added to the **FOUNDATION** of our **FAITH.**)

The main **PRINCIPLE** that I want to cover today is **FOUNDATIONAL!** Now we shared one **FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE** last week that is also in this verse...that is this: To **GROW WE FIRST HAVE TO BE GENUINELY SAVED**— that is, you must begin with **FAITH IN CHRIST!** **ADD TO YOUR FAITH...MEANS FAITH IN CHRIST IS THE STARTING POINT!**

Now notice this next **FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPAL:** **In order to properly MATURE as a BELIEVER, we MUST BE SPIRITUALLY DILIGENT!** Our **PART** in **GROWTH** is to **GIVE ALL DILIGENCE** to **ADD** the things in these verses to our **FAITH!**

If WE are going to be **EFFECTIVE BELIEVERS GROWING IN MATURITY, WE HAVE TO BE "ALL IN" WHEN IT COMES TO THE EFFORT!**

Sadly, what we see in our day are **MANY**, if not **MOST PROFESSING BELIEVERS** that are, for the most part, **IMMATURE** and **INEFFECTIVE** in their **CHRISTIAN WALK!** Why is that? I don't know, but I suspect that the problem may be that the necessary **EFFORT** to **PROPERLY MATURE** is **LACKING** on the part of many?

I. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE. (vs 5)

PETER gives the **COMMAND** here to **"...add to your faith..."** and then he names **seven things we are to ADD or BUILD upon the FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH!** But there is that preceding phrase that is of utmost importance—**"giving all diligence"!**

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The word "*diligence*" refers to "*the earnest, zealous, exertion of oneself.*" "*Giving all diligence*" takes **HONEST EFFORT!**
It takes **WORK!** (*WORK is a four-letter word to many folks!*)

This matter of **ADDING TO OUR FAITH**—i.e. Seeing that our **FAITH IS STRENGTHENED** and **ENRICHED** so that we **GROW PROPERLY**—**DEMANDS OUR DILIGENCE!**

No one grows in the **SPIRITUAL** realm **AUTOMATICALLY!**
As a Pastor, I can tell you that it would be great if I could just put people in a room, flip a switch, and bang, it would produce **MATURE, GROWING, and EFFECTIVE BELIEVERS** for the **KINGDOM OF GOD.** But that is **NOT** the way it is done!

Sure, it takes **GOOD DOCTRINE**, but **GOOD DOCTRINE** being made **AVAILABLE** is not enough! For over 15 years now I've been **TEACHING** and **PREACHING DOCTRINE** here at this **CHURCH** that is **BOTH RIGHT** and **GOOD**, but that is not enough!

"You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

It takes **INTENTIONAL EFFORT TO LISTEN, to HEAR, and to HEED** what is being **TAUGHT and PREACHED.**

The attainment of anything worthwhile doesn't just happen.
It takes INTENTIONAL EFFORT! (*e.g. Sports Professionals*)

Again, anything worthwhile takes **INTENTIONAL EFFORT!**
Not one of us can afford to dilly-dally around **SPIRITUALLY!**
But rather we must be DILIGENT in our **PURSUIT** of becoming **ALL** the **LORD** wants us to be! What happens when we are not **DILIGENT?**

Let see: *Deuteronomy 6:1-7; 17-25; Judges 2:10-11*

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ISRAEL'S problem was a **LACK of DILIGENCE** in the things that they were warned about!

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE.

II. WE MUST USE THE RESOURCES WE'VE BEEN GIVEN TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE. (vs 3-4)

Remember what those **BASIC RESOURCES** are?

SPIRITUAL LIFE—THE HOLY SPIRIT—GOD'S WORD

Can we be SUCCESSFUL in the PROCESS of ADDING TO OUR FAITH? YES, IF we will **GIVE ALL DILIGENCE!**

Is SPIRITUAL GROWTH for EVERY BELIEVER? Yes it is!

There is **ABSOLUTELY NO REASON** why any **BELIEVER** can not **GROW SPIRITUALLY** if they really **WANT TO GROW!**

PETER tells us to **GIVE ALL DILIGENCE** in **ADDING TO OUR FAITH** the things he reveals in *verses 5, 6, and 7!*

A. We Have GOD'S POWER To ENABLE Us. (Vs 3)
PETER is saying that our **LORD'S POWER** is sufficient!
The PROVISION OF DIVINE POWER that is available to us is **ABLE** to provide **ALL** that we need for **LIFE and GODLINESS.**

PETER'S point is that "**DIVINE POWER**" not only **PRODUCES NEW LIFE** in the **BELIEVER**, but it also can **ENABLE US TO LIVE GODLY LIVES.** It will **ENABLE US TO ADD TO OUR FAITH!**

So, **NO BELIEVER** should ever be **mired in mediocrity!**

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Not when there is DIVINE POWER AVAILABLE to enable US to live VICTORIOUSLY for JESUS!

Notice also, that as we begin to **DILIGENTLY ADD TO OUR FAITH**, we not only have at our disposal **GOD'S POWER TO ENABLE US...But**

B. We Have GOD'S PROMISES To ENCOURAGE Us. (Vs 4)

It says we have been given, "*exceeding great and precious promises...*"

Herbert Lockyer, in his book, "*All the Promises of the Bible*", says that in the **WORD OF GOD** there are 7487 **PROMISES** made to mankind by **GOD! (I haven't personally counted them—I'll take his word on that!)**

The PROMISES OF GOD are described as "EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS".

- 1. They are EXCEEDING GREAT because of their SOURCE—They come from GOD!**
- 2. They are EXCEEDING PRECIOUS because of their SIGNIFICANCE—Their value is beyond measure!**

Think of some of those promises:

The believer is promised... *eternal life (John 3:16), strength when weary (Isaiah 40:28-31), reward when obedient (Revelation 22:12), comfort for trials (2 Corinthians 1:3-5), victory over temptation, answers to prayers, companionship when dying!* And that is to name just a few!

We can depend on **GOD'S PROMISES!**

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(e.g. **ABRAHAM** in *Genesis 12:1-4*)

We need to tap into these resources by **FAITH** and let **CHRIST** mold us into all **HE** wants us to be!

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE...WE MUST USE THE RESOURCES WE'VE BEEN GIVEN TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE...And lastly:

III. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE REWARDS OF PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE. (Vs 8-10)

No doubt there was probably someone in the crowd that **PETER** was writing to, and maybe even someone in our crowd who might be thinking, "*Yeah I know I need to get more diligent about my spiritual development but is it really worth it.*"

It is going to take **MORE** than treating this the way that most folks do with New Years resolutions. Some resolve to do things at the beginning of the New Year, but after a few days, they start thinking "*Is it worth it?*" Many of them decide "**NO!**"

The problem often is that **we cannot see afar off... i.e. we fail to see the future reward.**

OK, so let's say we **DETERMINE** to go "**ALL IN**" on this **ADDING TO OUR FAITH**, what's in it for us? **Is it really worth it to ADD TO OUR FAITH WITH ALL DILIGENCE? YES!**

For example, in *verse 8*, **PETER** says, "*If these things be in you and abound...*" (i.e. If we will build these **SPIRITUAL HABITS** into our lives and stick with it!)

If we will do that, then several things will happen...

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- A. We Will Be EQUIPPED! (vs 8)**
If we **BUILD** these **HABITS** into our life we will become **USEFUL, FRUITFUL, GROWING BELIEVERS!**
- B. We Will Be ENLIGHTENED! (vs 9)**
Peter says that those who **NEGLECT** these habits are **BLIND. BLIND** to **HEAVENLY THINGS** while being **ENGROSSED IN EARTHLY THINGS!** They **LACK SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION** and **FORGET THE WORK OF GOD'S GRACE IN THEIR HEARTS!**
- So, those that **PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE** by **ADDING THESE THINGS TO THEIR FAITH** will be just the opposite! They can **SEE** and not only **SEE** but they can **SEE AFAR OFF** understanding their **PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE!**
- C. We Will Be ESTABLISHED! (vs 10-11)**
We will have confidence.
We won't "*fall*", literally "*stumble.*"
We will **CONTINUE** on the **PATH OF GROWTH!**

Conclusion:

So, are you a genuine **CHILD OF GOD?** Do you know that if you died today that you would go to **HEAVEN?** If not, put your **FAITH** in **JESUS** and get **HIS LIFE** as a firm **FOUNDATION** to build your life on!

BELIEVER, do you want to be a **MATURE** and **EFFECTIVE** **SERVANT** of **JESUS CHRIST?** That is what **CHRIST** wants you to be!

If you are going to go **ALL IN** for **CHRIST,** it is going to cost you something! **COMMIT** today to **GIVE ALL DILIGENCE** to **BE ALL YOU CAN BE FOR CHRIST!**