

PETER'S EPISTLES: PREPARING FOR ETERNITY

XXII. Growing In Our Christian Walk

(2 Peter 1:3-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Before the Apostle Peter began to minister for the Lord in the Church, his outlook was impacted by Christ's prophecy in John 21:18-19 that he would be crucified for Christ. Eternity was thus often on Peter's mind.
- B. Accordingly, 2 Peter 1:3-11 expressed Peter's desire that his readers grow in Christ that when they arrived in heaven, their entrance there would be greatly rewarded by the Lord, cf. 2 Peter 1:11. Significantly, Peter actually named the specific realms of growth that the Lord seeks in us for our insight, application and blessing.
- C. We thus view 2 Peter 1:3-11 for the specific goals of spiritual growth that God seeks and will greatly reward:

II. Growing In Our Christian Walk, 2 Peter 1:3-11.

- A. Christ's divine power has provided everything that a believer needs for life and godliness, 2 Peter 1:3a.
- B. That power provides spiritual vitality and godliness as the believer comes to have full, spiritually intimate knowledge (*epignosis*) of the Lord in his walk of faith, 2 Peter 1:3b.
- C. Peter then clarified how a believer is to mature in his walk with the Lord in 2 Peter 1:4-7 (as follows):
 1. The knowledge of the Lord is attained as a believer trusts the promises God has given in His Word, and as he trusts those promises, he escapes the corruption of the world that comes through lusts, 2 Peter 1:4.
 2. As the believer trusts God's promises for victory over the world's lusts, he needs to add by faith to that quality of faith the quality of "virtue" (KJV), the Greek term being *aretē*, and meaning "moral excellency," 2 Peter 1:5a; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 865.
 3. As a believer continues his walk, after moral excellency, by faith he needs to add "knowledge," the Greek word being *gnōsin* that refers to knowledge "focused on the person and Word of God," 2 Peter 1:5b; *Ibid.*
 4. After knowledge, the believer is to add by faith "self-control," the Greek word being *enkrateian*, 2 Peter 1:6a; *Ibid.* "This means to have one's passions under control" in contrast to the world, *Ibid.*, p. 865-866.
 5. Beyond self-control, believers "need perseverance," 2 Peter 1:6b; *Ibid.*, p. 866. The Greek word is *hupomenen*, what "is frequently used in the New Testament to refer to constancy or steadfast endurance under adversity, without giving in . . ." (*Ibid.*)
 6. After perseverance, believers by faith need to add *eusebian*, "godliness" in the sense of "piety, man's obligation of reverence toward God," 2 Peter 1:6c; *Ibid.*
 7. After godliness, by faith the believer is to add "brotherly kindness" (*philadelphian*), what constitutes "a fervent practical caring for others," 2 Peter 1:7a; *Ibid.*
 8. After brotherly kindness, the believer by faith needs to add "love" (*agapēn*), a quality that desires "the highest good for others," 2 Peter 1:7b; *Ibid.* This is the kind of attitude that caused God to send His only Son into the world that whosoever believed in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life, John 3:16.
- D. If a believer has these spiritual qualities in him and they are each increasing in his walk of faith, they make him effective and productive in his walk, 2 Peter 2:8. However, if he lacks these qualities, he is blind and nearsighted, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins as an unbeliever, 2 Peter 2:9; *Ibid.*
- E. Consequently, it is imperative that a believer confirm his profession of faith by godly living, and if he does this, he will never "stumble" (*ptaisete*), 2 Peter 1:10; *Ibid.*, p. 866-867. "This word 'stumble' does not suggest that a believer loses his salvation, for salvation does not depend on one's spiritual growth. The Greek word for stumble means 'to trip up' or 'to experience a reversal.' Certainly one who is maturing in Christ will not trip up in his spiritual life as readily as one who is immature and nearsighted," *Ibid.*, p. 867.
- F. "The ultimate reward of a growing, Christ-honoring life is the personal 'welcome' by the Savior into His kingdom in heaven. Stephen experienced it (Acts 7:56)," and any believer who is thus growing and abounding in these qualities in his walk will experience it when he sees the Lord, 2 Peter 1:11; *Ibid.*

Lesson: God has equipped us believers by His power and through our faith in the promises He gives us in His Word that by faith, we can grow in faith, then in moral excellency, then in knowledge, then in self-control, then in perseverance, then in godliness, then in brotherly kindness and then in love. If each of these qualities is increasing in us, they make us not only effective in our walk, but they prepare us for a positive response from the Lord when we enter His presence in heaven.

Application: May we grow in these qualities by faith in God's provision of His spiritual power and His Word.