
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 2 Peter

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2 Peter 1: 5-11: "Our Faithful Growth in Christ!"

General idea: The authentic knowledge of Christ that is revealed to us is the foundation of our faith. We are being directly called to make every conceivable effort to put into practice our faith and the Fruit that is given and is at our disposal to use. Our faith is the benefit we have as Christians, just like working for a company and having health and life insurance, a retirement account, and various other benefits. Employers are not always obligated to do so, but in order to make a healthier and more productive work environment, they do. The employees are responsible to sign up and use the benefits. If they do not, those benefits will not be available for use. Their use is not mandatory, but needed and necessary for life. The parallels are similar with what God has given us. He is not obligated to give to us out of His love and grace, but He does so because of that love and grace.

We are called to know Christ better and to practice moral excellence. But before moral excellence can happen, our hearts and minds must be lined up with God; and before we can do this, we have to know Him. Character and Fruit are only exhibited when we are communing with Him—not when we are negating or neglecting Him. The more we know God, the more we know His call, and the more we will have the desire and ability to grow in and apply it. Then we grow more in character, as the knowing and practicing also helps us to be built up in Christ. But, beware when we are myopic in our outlook on life; not seeing Christ or applying Him in our lives will cause us to fail at what is important, which is virtue and character!

Vs. 5-8: The order of the Fruits here is not comprehensive or in a sequential order like in Galatians where each one is a stage that begets the next one. Rather, here it is arranged in rhetorical "sorites," a type of argument that uses syllogisms to build to the climax of love. Each end is a "bookend" that holds the others; faith is what we all start with. It is the foundation. Then others build to the preeminent essential significance of what love is, the quintessential fruit of the Christian life.

- *Add to/supplement.* This is referring to fruit, which is what we are given when we grow in Him, what we add to, and what He then multiplies (Rom. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 13).
- *Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen* (Heb. 11:1). Christ is what we hope for; Christ is what is to be seen! Faith is the promise of God that gives us the hope and confidence so we can receive, act on, obey, and trust God's promises, because God is sovereign and

trustworthy. We can trust God for the future because we can see what He has done in the past—from creation, to testimonies, to His infallible Word (Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:1-14; Heb. 2:4; 11: 1-6; 12:2; James 1:2-4; 2:14-26).

- *Goodness/ virtue* refers to moral excellence, the engagement of love, and doing the right thing. Virtue is the application of being good from both the conscious will to do what is right and from personal responsibility. It encompasses integrity, honesty, compassion, and endearment and this is the quintessence of what biblical Character (that is right standards, strength, courage, modesty, and purity all done in excellence) is to be. We acquire Virtue by our faith, our obedience to Christ, being persistent in Him, and clothing ourselves in Him. This is what results when we truly repent; we will represent the nobility that we have in Christ (Amos 5:15; Psalm 103:17; 131; Prov. 8:13; 25:22; Matthew 7:12; 19:16; Luke 6:27, 35; Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 5:8-9; Col. 3:12-17; Phil. 2:14-18; 4:8; 1Timothy 4:12; 5:22; Tit.1: 15; Heb.10: 5-10; 1 Pet. 3:11; 2 Pet. 1:3-8; 2:9).
- *Knowledge* here refers to knowing the salvation we have in Christ because we have a personal relationship with Him. The Christian message, if it is real in our lives, will affect our attitudes and lifestyle (Luke 11:42; 18:10-14; John 14:1-6; Eph. 2:8-9).
- *Self-control* is allowing God to be in control of our will and heart, and seeking the Spirit to enable us. Then we will know what not to do and guard the areas in which we are weak. This will allow us to have discipline and restraint with obedience to God and others. It is refusing to let distractions derail or remove us from His will and plan so we will not be held back with what Christ called us to do (Prov. 16:32; 25:28; Rom 13:12-14; I Cor. 6:12; 9:25-27; 1Thess. 5: 22; Titus 2:12; Heb. 12:2; 2 Pet. 1:5-7).
- *Perseverance* is having confidence in God so we trust Him in difficult situations and still see His grace and love. We can do this by being encouraging with Christ-like temperament (2 Chron. 32:1-8; Esther 7; Luke 16:22-31; 18:9; Acts 19:8-10; 26:19-23; Rom. 15:14-16; Phil. 1:6; 12-14, 25; 2 Tim. 2:25).
- *Godliness* means living out our disposition with respect and reverence to Christ in all aspects of our life. This is rearranging our priorities, mindsets, and character to line up with God's character, and to be able to see the importance of virtue then be equipped to use it to value others. Godliness is a collection of personality traits within our personality that show our attitude, moral fiber, and how we treat one another—good or bad—which is what Character is about. This results from being pious and living a good, reverent life toward God and others because of what Christ has done in us (Psalm 15; Micah 6:8; Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31; Eph. 5:1; Col. 3:15-17; 1 Tim. 3:16; 4:8; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:5; 2 Pet. 1:3, 6; 3 John 11; Rev 14:6).

- *Brotherly kindness/Brotherly affection* means love for a brother or friend (in the Greek, *Philadelphia*). It is a call to treat others as family because we are all in God's family (Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1).
- *Love* is the turning of our backs to our self-concerns, and facing God and our neighbors. It will enable us to appreciate others in the Lord. Love desires to seek and apply what God has to say. When you have the wrong idea and definition of love, it will adversely impose on all those areas in your life. Understanding what love is not is as important as understanding what love is. God's love must be our model for life. It must flow into us from Christ, and in return flow out from us to those around us (John 13:1; 15:13; 1 Cor. 13; Col. 3:12-17; 1 Thess. 4:9-10; 5:8-13; 1 John)!
- *Possess these qualities*. The Greeks believed that the knowledge of something was what was important, not the practice of it. Here we are called to not just know but also to do.
- *Ineffective/...unproductive*. This means we are being called on to be productive and useful in the Kingdom as well as the community. If not, we are in disobedience and ignoring His love and gifts for us. Why would a Christian not want to be productive for the Kingdom (Phil. 4:8-9)?

We have privileges and responsibilities in Him. God has given us gifts, abilities, and promises that we are not to store when needed. When they are needed, they are for us to persistently use! Such benefits given will not only benefit us in our intimate relationship to Christ, but also empower and build much heartier relationships with others, too.

Vs. 9-11: We are called to grow in Him! Why? Because when we receive a faith and salvation that we do not deserve or earn, we consequently respond with gratitude for what He has given, and we will even desire more. But to be so, we need Christ's empowerment. This will come from knowing Him, growing in Him, and then having the desire for more.

- *Does not have them/lacks these qualities* refers to not exercising our faith perhaps not even having saving faith. If there is no fruit from a person claiming to be a Christian, the odds are he or she is not one, but rather is a pretender (1 Pet. 4: 1-11).
- *Nearsighted/...blind*. This refers to having faulty vision. You do not "squint" to see better, or for us today, use no glasses to see better. This can also mean to have good sight and yet refuse to use it, or only see what we want to see as in *myopic*. This is a failure on our part to either utilize His call or seek to understand and apply His precepts (Isa. 42:19; John 9:39-41; 2 Cor. 4:4).

- *Cleansed* is a Jewish depiction of being purified by getting rid of moral corruption and anything else that defiles us before God. For us, it means staying in our sinful ways or “the flesh” and ignoring our new life and responsibility (2 Pet. 2:20).
- *Calling*, in Judaism, referred to being close to God.
- *Make your calling/ election sure*. God calls us. We do not call on Him for our salvation. We receive it only as an act of undeserving grace that we cannot get on our own by merit or birthright. Now that we are transformed, we are called to show it and grow in it (Rom. 12). The Spirit gives us testimony and empowers ours; we are then to persevere in our faith. This is our assurance of salvation; what we have done with what He has given is the evidence of who we are in Christ (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:4-6; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 John 3:10-14).
- *If you do these things* refers to practicing what God gives, as God gives us salvation and eternal life that we continue in. Doing our Christian life is not sitting and doing nothing or only what we can get away with. Practice preserves and grows our faith and then produces fruit, character, and virtue (Matt. 10:22; 24:12-13; Gal. 5:6, 22-23; Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 3:6).

There is a stern warning here for all of us! We have a responsibility to pursue our faith development and do a good disposition of modeling Christ (2 Cor. 5:20)! If we ignore our call to pursue our spiritual growth thus not developing our virtue and character, we will face life without God’s empowerment and benefits. When we have forsaken Him, He does not forsake us; nevertheless, because we did not take a hold of the benefits He gives, they will not be in our arsenal or developed enough to be of much use in dealing with life. Our shortsightedness and refusal to be prepared results from taking our eyes off Christ and placing them on our circumstances and stresses, thus making us empty and bankrupt to deal with those circumstances! Do not let this *myopic* thinking happen to you!

We are called to emulate Christian virtues! We are also duty-bound to be diligent to take and receive them, not for our salvation but to grow in life and ministry. These benefits, which are the Fruits of the Spirit, God’s love and working in us, need to be known and then applied to be effective and real to us and those around us. If we know them and then do nothing with them, they are as useless as having health insurance but when you are sick not using it. The same is true with trying to apply a Fruit without understanding what it is and how it is to be used. We would be having an imitation or a skewed and perhaps even rotten fruit as His marvelous fruit goes unnoticed and unused. It is like never filling out the forms and starting the benefits. Not knowing God’s precepts means we will not be able to apply, because what we may be applying is not of Him!

Do not be shortsighted concerning your faith and the opportunities Christ

has and will still bring. If we do not have a desire to pursue the will of God, we have to ask ourselves *why* and *what is in the way*. Most, if not all of the time, it is the desire of sin that blocks us. Sometimes we may not recognize sin and perhaps rationalize it away. This happens especially when it is dumbed down and shown as OK in the media and entertainment, which are at our disposal. Our election is proven by our obedience and growth in Christ!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Why are called to grow in Him? Why do so many Christians see their faith as “on hold” until when it may be needed, and/or doing nothing or just what they can get away with?
2. What have you received from Christ that drives your life? What is in the way? What are you going to do about it?
3. What does it mean to you to make every conceivable effort to put into practice your faith and fruit? How is this necessary for your life?
4. How would you describe moral excellence? Can you give an example of it? Is it something that just happened? Why, or why not? What must happen for character and fruit to be exhibited?
5. What does it take for you to have a greater desire and ability to grow, practice, and apply your faith?
6. What happens when we are *myopic* in our outlook on life? How will neglecting our faith and Lord cause us to fail at what is important? How have you seen this?
7. Why is love the essential, quintessential fruit of the Christian life? How would

you define it? How do you know when it is real?

8. What does it mean that God supplements and multiplies our faith? How has He done this in you? How can He do this more in you?
9. How do we acquire Virtue and Character? How does repentance play a part? Do you realize that we all have privileges and responsibilities in Christ? What are yours? What are you going to do about the abilities and promises He has for you?
10. Has shortsightedness or a refusal to be prepared affected you in any area of your life? What can you do to make sure you do not become shortsighted?
11. How does the practice of Character build much heartier relationships with others? Can you think of a specific area in your life where one of the virtues that are listed needs to be more manifested? If so, how can you make this so?
12. Take a close look at each of the virtues listed. Which ones are you exhibiting well? Which ones do you lack? What are you going to do about the ones in which you are weak?