
a *Grace Notes* course

2 Peter

Lesson 1

2 Peter 1:1-4

by Dr. Grant C. Richison

2 Peter Lesson 1

Contents

Introduction.....	4
2 Peter 1:1.....	6
2 Peter 1:2.....	12
2 Peter 1:3.....	15
2 Peter 1:4.....	20

2 Peter*Course Outline*

There are ten (10) lessons in the 1 Peter course. Each lesson has a Quiz, to be completed and returned to Grace Notes after studying the lesson. Here is a list of the Philippians portion to be studied in each lesson.

Lesson 1	Introduction; 2 Peter 1:1 to 4
Lesson 2	2 Peter 1 :5 to 6
Lesson 3	2 Peter 1:7 to 9
Lesson 4	2 Peter 1:10 to 14
Lesson 5	2 Peter 1:15 to 21
Lesson 6	2 Peter 2 :1 to 5
Lesson 7	2 Peter 2:6 to 16
Lesson 8	2 Peter 2 :17 to 22
Lesson 9	2 Peter 3 :1-9
Lesson 10	2 Peter 3:10-18

Introduction

Dr. Grant C. Richison

I. AUTHOR

A. Peter (1:1)

1. Peter's given name was Simon.
2. Jesus gave him the name Cephas (John 1:42). Cephas means stone or rock. The Greek translation of the Aramaic word Cephas is petros, which also means stone or rock. Peter is the only man in the New Testament called by this name.
3. Peter occupied a favored place among the apostles.
4. He occupied a central place in the book of Acts (first 12 chapters).
5. He married and lived in Capernaum.
6. He worked in the fishing business with his brother Andrew.
7. The Lord came to him in a special appearance after the resurrection (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5).
8. God used Peter to win 3,000 souls to Christ on Pentecost.
9. Peter had an important part in the first Church council in Acts, chapter 15 (AD 50; Peter is not mentioned after this in the book of Acts).
10. Paul refers to Peter in Galatians 1:18; 2:11; 1 Corinthians 1-4; 9:5.

B. Peter was literate but unschooled.

1. Called from his trade as a fisherman.
2. Called to be a fisher of men (Luke 5:1-11).

C. Peter's public ministry spanned 30 years and stretched from Jerusalem to Rome.

D. Martyred by Nero (Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Clement of Rome and Dionysius of Corinth tell us he suffered martyrdom).

1. Origen said he was crucified with his head downwards.
2. He died AD 67-68.

II. DATE

A. Probably just before Peter's death and just after the writing of 1 Peter (1:12-15).

B. Written after a collection of Paul's epistles (3:15-16).

C. Since 3:1 probably refers to 1 Peter, this letter was probably written after AD 62.

D. Eusebius places Peter's martyrdom in Rome during the period of Nero's persecution (AD 64-68).

E. Date: AD 67-68

III. DESTINATION

A. 2 Peter may have been written to the same crowd as 1 Peter (3:1).

B. This epistle is written to believers (2 Peter 1:1).

IV. PURPOSE

A. Knowing that his time on earth is short, he warns God's people of apostasy (1:13-14; 2:1-3).

B. Peter wants them to remember the fundamentals (1:12-21).

C. The main purpose of the epistle is to help believers grow in grace and in knowledge of Christ that they may be established in the faith (3:18).

D. Peter wants Christians to expect the return of the Lord (3:1-14).

E. He wants to stir their minds to remember (3:1).

V. CANONICITY (why 2 Peter belongs in the Bible)

More people have challenged 2 Peter as authentic than any other book of the New Testament.

A. External Evidence

1. The Church Fathers: [None of the early Fathers definitely quotes 2 Peter. Eusebius, the great church historian of the fourth century, listed 2

Peter, along with 2 and 3 John and James as antilegomena (books spoken against as belonging in the Bible)].

Cited or alluded to by Pseudo-Barnabas (c. 70-130)

Cited or alluded to by Clement of Rome (c. 95-96)

Named as disputed by Origen (c. 185-254)

Bodmer papyrus (P72) accepts 2 Peter as canonical Gospel of Truth and the Apocrypha of John contain allusions to 2 Peter

Named as authentic by Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-86)

Named as disputed by Eusebius (c. 325-40)

Named as authentic by Jerome (c. 340-420)

Named as authentic by Augustine (c. 400)

2. Canons:

This epistle is omitted in the Muratorian Canon (AD 200), but this canon also omits 1 Peter and its present text is almost certainly incomplete

Named as authentic by the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae (c. 206)

Named as authentic by Apostolic (c. 300)

Named as disputed by Cheltenham (c. 360)

Named as authentic by Athanasius (c. 367)

3. Translations:

Second Peter was not included in the Tatian Diatessaron (c. 170) Old Latin (c. 200) or the Old Syriac #14 (c. 400) translations

4. Councils:

Named as disputed by the council of Nicea (325-40)

Named as authentic by the council of Hippo (393)

Named as authentic by the council of Carthage (397)

Named as authentic by the council of Carthage (491)

B. Internal Evidence (Best support for 2 Peter)

1. The author calls himself Peter (1:1, 14, 16-18; 3:1, 15)

2. He is acquainted with the life of Christ and his teachings

3. 2 Peter used a different amanuensis than 1 Peter. Thus there is a different style of writing.

4. The book claims to be Peter's second epistle (3:1)

5. The author claims to be Paul's brother in Christ (3:15)

6. The letter gives no hint of influence from the second century

7. Peter was at the transfiguration and 2 Peter refers to the transfiguration in 1:16-18

8. The letter contains no allusions to second century gnosticism

9. 2 Peter's doctrine is consistent with 1 Peter's doctrine

10. The text is similar to Peter's speeches

11. 2 Peter is superior to spurious books

C. B. B. Warfield

"It cannot be denied, therefore, that it was a part of the Church Canon of the early Third Century; and the evidence goes further and proves that it was naturally in the Canon at this time--that the men of the early Third Century did not put it in, but found it in the Canon. It was, therefore, in the Canon of the later years of the Second Century ... but it was commented on by Clement of Alexandria, and has a place in both the Egyptian versions and in the early form of Peshito (Syriac), all of which date from the Second Century--known all over the church at this period and securely fixed in the Canon, we find it quoted here and there back to the very earliest in writers; nay, Justin Martyr, before 147 AD, quotes it in such a way as to prove that he esteemed it authoritative."

VI. PLACE OF WRITING

It is not possible to know the place of writing since Peter did not mention the place and he traveled widely from Palestine to Rome.

VII. OCCASION

A. New outbreak of heresy

B. Design of 2nd Peter 2 fold:

1. To warn against false teachers.
2. To exhort to progress in grace.

C. There is an air of urgency in the epistle. D. Two heresies in particular:

1. Incipient Gnosticism
2. Antinomianism.

VIII. THEME: Knowledge of Christ

IX. KEY VERSE--3:18

X. KEY WORDS

A. "Know" and "knowledge"

1. 16 times in various cognates
2. six times in intense form

B. Knowledge is the antidote to false teaching

1. It is through Christ that the great promises of God become available to men
2. The best method for combating error is to learn the truth rather than study error

C. Knowledge: 1:2,3,5,6,8; 2:20; 3:18

XI. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Written to the same people as 1 Peter (3:1)

Written just before the death of Peter (1:14)

Epistle deals with apostasy.

No one mentioned with Peter.

Three chapters, 61 verses, 1,559 words

Peter's name occurs 210 times in the New Testament; Paul's name, 162 times; and all other

apostles, 142 times.

Old Testament quotes: 2:22 (Proverbs 26:11); 3:8 (Psalm 90:4); 3:9 (Ezekiel 33:11)

Character: general epistle

2 Peter is Peter's last words

Elliptical Greek because of Peter's passion against false teachers.

XII. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUDE AND 2 PETER:

A. Similarities:

1. Nature: Both have the same literary style.
2. Most of 2 Peter and Jude are parallel. 15 of 25 verses in Jude appear in 2nd Peter

B. Differences:

1. The groups of false teachers are similar but not identical.
2. Jude is harsher and 2 Peter more positive.
3. Jude uses apocryphal books and Peter does not.

XIII. DISTINCTIVE: Polemical

XIV. OUTLINE

I. EXHORTATION TO GROW BASED ON TRUE KNOWLEDGE (1:3-11)

- A. God's provision (1:3-4)
- B. Our responsibility (1:5-11)

II. BASIS FOR GROWTH -- CERTAINTY OF KNOWLEDGE (1:12-21)

- A. Experience of the apostles (1:12-18)
- B. Ground for certainty (1:19-21)

III. WARNING AGAINST FALSE KNOWLEDGE (2:1-22)

- A. Incursion of false teachers (2:1-3)
- B. Judgment of false teachers (2:4-19)
- C. Danger of false teachers (2:20-22)

IV. REMINDER OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE (3:1-13)

- A. The mockers (3:1-7)
- B. The character of the day (3:8-13)

V. CONCLUSION (3:14-18)

2 Peter 1:1

"Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ."

Simon Peter

The authors of New Testament epistles always sign their names at the beginning. In every New Testament Epistle, there are two basic landmarks: the writer and the addressee. First, we come to the writer, Peter. Peter was at once a slave and a follower of the Lord Jesus. This is all he says of himself, just those two things. These two ideas balance one another. Although Peter was an apostle, all he was after all was a slave to Jesus Christ.

"Simon" is the Greek spelling and "Peter" is the Hebrew spelling. Simon is the name given to him at birth. Peter is the name given to him by Jesus. Peter did not use his name "Simon" in the first epistle. "Peter" is the Greek translation of "Cephas." Jesus gave him the name "Peter." This is the name most commonly used of Peter in the New Testament. The double name may indicate that Peter writes to both Jews and Greeks.

Cephas is an Aramaic word meaning "stone." Stone translated into Greek and then English comes out Peter. Peter then became his new name when he became a Christian. Peter here uses both his names.

"And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)" (John 1:42). Peter was Simon the son of Jonah, that would be equivalent to Simon Johnson today!

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?'" (John 21:15). We also know that Peter was married for he had a mother-in-law (Mark 1:30)!

Principle

We should not be afraid to identify ourselves with the Lord.

Application

Invariably Peter identifies himself with Jesus Christ. It may make good copy for the news to know where you stand regarding the great leaders of the day. However, this makes no impression on God whatever. What counts in God's eyes is whether we identify with Christ. When you meet those without Christ, are you courageous enough to advertise who you are?

The question of your eternal destiny revolves around the question "What do you think of Christ?" Your answer to that question will determine your eternal destiny. The issue is not whether you are Protestant or Catholic. Denominations have nothing to do with your salvation. The issue of your salvation revolves around your embracing Jesus as your Savior.

"Saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They said to Him, 'The Son of David'" (Matthew 22:42).

a bondservant

Peter viewed himself first as a slave of Jesus Christ. "Bondservant" is not strong enough translation. The "bondservant" was a slave. Everyone understood this term in the Roman Empire since there were about fifty million slaves in the Empire. In fact, there were more slaves than there were freemen. Slaves numbering four or five times the number of citizens. Numerous wars of conquest had swelled the numbers of the slave class to an enormous extent. Prisoners of war made up a large part of that number. Slaves had few rights. There was no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Slaves in the Roman Empire of the first century. A man could do anything he wanted with his slaves.

Peter calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ. Slave to Christ is the highest role anyone could possess. This is the way God honors the Christian (John 12:26). The slave ultimately becomes a king (Revelation 1:6). True joy comes from serving the King.

Peter essentially says, "I am a slave of Christ. I have no rights. I give myself lock, stock and barrel to the Lord Jesus. Jesus completely possesses me. Everything else is incidental whether it be my wife, children, career, profession, my health or future. He is my Master and Lord!" No wonder God used Peter in a special way. God uses people like that.

Paul viewed himself as a slave as well (Romans 1:1).

Principle

The slave is totally at his master's disposal.

Application

The slave is at the master's disposal but the master also had total obligation for the well-being of his slave. Have you placed yourself at the service of King Jesus? Can you say with Peter, "I am a slave of Christ. I have no rights. I give myself lock, stock and barrel to the Lord Jesus. Jesus completely possesses me. Everything else is incidental whether it be my wife, children, career, profession, my health or future. He is my Master

and Lord." You can be sure that God will bless you if you do.

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

"Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6).

"And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient" (2 Timothy 2:24).

and apostle of Jesus Christ

An "apostle" was a special person in the foundation of Christianity. A person received the gift of apostleship by election from Christ (Romans 1:1). New Testament apostles were appointed by the ascended Christ (Ephesians 4:11). The apostles to Israel were different from the apostles to the church. There were some overlaps between the apostles to Israel and the church.

An apostle was also an eyewitness to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:22; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8,9). God endowed apostles with miraculous powers to demonstrate their authority for writing Scripture and founding the church (Acts 5:15; 16:16-18). These powers are no longer extant in the church today.

The word "apostle" comes two words: from and to send. An apostle was a sent one. The New Testament uses this word generally for all Christians as well. God sends us out into the world as His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). As ambassadors, we represent Him to other people.

Principle

God calls every Christian to be an ambassador for Christ.

Application

Every Christian is an epistle of Christ.

"Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Being an epistle means people can read us. "I read you. You come through loud and clear. I get the

message." God's design for our lives is that people read both what we are and what we say. Do you say something with your life? People may never read the gospel of John but they will read you. What kind of book are you? They will read the Epistle of Sue or the Epistle of Sam.

Has God called you to ministry? It is a great vocation but there are great obstacles in ministry. When we enter ministry, our ministry may not end in "And they lived happily ever after." The two greatest missionaries of the first century ended their careers in what man calls tragedy. These intrepid missionaries ended their ministries in jail and in execution. Peter knew he was not going to die in bed (2 Peter 1:14). The Lord told him so. Call to ministry transcends the pleasant and the nice.

to those who have obtained

"Obtained" comes from two words: equal and honor or value. This is an unusual word for the idea of receive. "Obtained" occurs only four times in the New Testament and uses this word for casting lots (Luke 1:9-10; John 19:24).

"Obtained" means to receive, to choose by lot, to decide by gambling, with the implication that the process relates somehow to God's will or favor. The church selected Judas by a decision based on the casting of lots,

"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 'Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry'" (Acts 1:15-17).

"Obtained" is not a normal word for the idea of receiving. It means to have an assignment. God assigns us to His plan when we initially believe in Christ. Even if we die within one second after we believe in Christ, we enter God's plan and possess eternal life. God assigned each person who believes to the plan of God.

Believers in Asia Minor came to Christ by process of divine choice. God allots our faith to us. We do not acquire it for ourselves but receive it by divine grace. It comes to us independent from our

control. It comes to us as in the casting of lots. God in His sovereignty chose them for His own. No merit of our own deserves such salvation. Our merit comes through Christ.

"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14).

"Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:1-2).

Note the word "obtained" is not the word "attained." We obtain faith as a gift not as a work. You cannot attain faith. We cannot work for or earn faith.

Principle

God assigns each Christian to His eternal plan.

Application

Though we may have failed in every possible way as Christians, we are still in the plan of God. God has a purpose for our lives. God's plan for the Christian begins with 1 John 1:9. Exercising that promise frees us to serve the Lord again.

God assigns people to eternal life apart from merit. We cannot work for salvation because Christ already has done all of the work necessary for salvation.

"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works" (Romans 4:5-6).

If we win the lottery, it is no credit to us. It was sheer luck. Winning has nothing to do with skill. Winning was the result of the lot falling on us. There is nothing in us to merit salvation. All the merit resides in Christ. Do you believe that? Why not accept His generous offer of salvation free of charge?

like precious faith with us

Peter loves the word "precious" (1 Peter 2:7).

"That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor,

and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

The phrase "like precious" means equal in value. It comes from two words: equal and honor. What is equal honor faith? Peter says that those to whom he writes have faith that equals his own. Their faith is equal in significance and value.

The Roman world used this word for a person they gave the privilege of equal citizenship with those native to the country. The faith that God gives us is of equal privilege to that of an apostle. Anyone who expresses faith in Christ holds equal honor before God. All believers have equal honor in their salvation. The reason for this is that at the point of faith we received imputed righteousness. This is God's righteousness that He puts into us when we believe.

Principle

Saving faith is exactly the same for every person.

Application

Faith is equally precious in the individual Christian and in the apostle. It produces the same effects in one as in the other. Faith unites the weak believer to Christ as truly as it does the strong one. Every believer is, by his faith, justified in the sight of God (Acts 13:39).

We should hold our faith in equal honor with Peter's faith. Our faith has the same privileges as his. We possess full-fledged membership of the household of faith.

Our faith puts us in good stead with God. There is nothing as valuable as that. This is saving faith. This faith will also stand us in good stead in the hour our baby is dying for it is not only faith to live by but to die by. Do you pin both your eternal future and contingencies of this life to your faith in Christ? If not, receive Christ as the one who fully suffered for your sins and trust Him for everything that comes into your life.

Every believer at the point of salvation receives divine operating assets. These blessings are what

we call positional truth. We possess these spiritual assets at the moment we come to Christ. These blessings come simply by virtue of knowing Christ. We do not possess them because of our spiritual growth.

It is a pity that so few Christians know what they possess before God. They do not realize what they are worth so they do not enjoy full lives as Christians. Though they know they are Christians, they do not realize how well God saved them. But God put the Bible in our hands and His Spirit in our hearts. So that we might learn our position in Christ, and live in power and fullness. Many people have come to Christ but do not have an assurance of salvation. The Devil has short-changed them.

All Christians have the same sized Savior (John 1:12,16). We do not receive Christ on the installment plan. We do not receive a little of Him now and a little later. If we received Christ, we received the complete Christ. The issue is not getting more of Christ; the issue is allowing Him to get more of us.

There is nothing more valuable to us than our faith. No doubt we will realize how valuable our faith is to us when we are dying. Confidence in our doctor will pale in comparison to our faith in the Son of God.

Christ forgives all who come to Him fully. He forgives us totally. Neither are there degrees of forgiveness. Neither are there degrees of salvation from the penalty of sin. Salvation is complete. We need to do nothing further than what Jesus did for our salvation.

Saving faith is exactly the same for all people. A person's skin color, culture or educational background make no difference. The quality of saving faith is the same for everyone who comes to Christ. There are no degrees of saving faith (Titus 1:4; Jude 3). However, there are different degrees of developing faith. The building up of each person's faith is different. The degree to which a person applies principles to experience, is the degree to which that person's faith grows. This differs in each believer.

Little faith in a big Savior will take us to heaven. Great faith in a false Savior will lead us astray. It is not our faith that saves us; it is our Savior. Our

faith simply connects us to our Savior. Faith is the coupling that links us to the Lord of Glory. We ride along as the Engineer pulls us to heaven.

by the righteousness

God is perfect and 100% righteous (1 John 1:5). He is so righteous that He does not tolerate sin to the slightest degree (Haggai 1:13). He cannot rationalize sin away. However, God is just in forgiving us our sin because he sent Jesus to pay for our sin (Romans 3:26). The argument of the book of Romans explains how God declares sinners to be as right as Jesus is right in His eyes.

We tend to think that God is just an extension of people like ourselves. We think that He is finite to some degree. But, God is absolute and as an absolute Being, He does not bend or flex to finite standards. He operates according to His own limitless standards. Man is the opposite. Man is finite. We operate on the relative plain and on a system of degrees. That is why our best efforts are obnoxious in God's eyes no matter how righteous they may be in our own eyes. God's righteousness is perfect. Our attempts will not hold up before a perfect God (Romans 3:10, 21-26; Matthew 5:20).

We receive faith by grace. This does not mean that grace did not cost something. Jesus paid a great price for the privilege of exercising our faith. The means of our faith is the righteousness of the God-man, Jesus Christ.

The good news is that God makes available His righteousness (as over against our righteousness) to all of us whenever we accept His Son's righteousness. God's righteousness is accessible to anyone (Romans 3:22). The one qualification is whether we believe in Jesus' death to forgive our sins and give us His righteousness. God reckons our faith for His righteousness (Romans 4:5). God puts to our account His very own righteousness. We go to heaven on the merit of Christ's righteousness. This is a righteousness that can come to us only by faith (Hebrews 11:7). We cannot earn this righteousness; we obtain it as a gift from God (Romans 5:17). As soon as we work for it, it is no longer a gift but a work.

Principle

God's standard for accepting us into His heaven is His own righteousness.

Application

Our good works are obnoxious to God (Isaiah 64:6; Titus 3:5). No matter how righteous, cultured or educated we may be on human standards, we are not righteous on God's standards. By earthly standards, we may hold character and good habits. Those are areas of personal strength but even our areas of strength do not measure up to God's 100% standards. None of us are absolute in character. That is why we need the righteousness of God given to us by Christ.

None of us wants to be the finest person in hell. Who wants to be the most outstanding person in the Lake of Fire!? What a dubious distinction! We are totally lost in God's eyes even if the areas of strength of our character far exceed our areas of weakness. With all our character, we have no capacity to live up to the standard of who God is. This is why God says none of us are righteous in God's eyes (Romans 3:10).

God imputes His own righteousness to our account the split second we believe in Christ's penalty for our sin (Romans 3:22). There are no degrees of God's imputed righteousness. Each believer has the same perfect position before God. God accepts us because He loves Christ (Ephesians 1:6).

There are no degrees of justification. God justifies each believer fully the moment he becomes a Christian,

"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).

None of us can say that we are more justified than someone else is because we have been Christians longer than him or her. Length of salvation is inconsequential and irrelevant when it comes to justification. Justification is the same for us all.

God redeems us all equally. None of us can say, "I am more redeemed than you." There are no degrees of redemption (Ephesians 1:7). We all share equally the forgiveness of sin. None of us can say, "Only 50% of your sins are forgiven but 75% of mine are forgiven. I'm more of a Christian than you are because I have more sins forgiven than you." There are no degrees of forgiveness of

sin. Each born again person has all sins forgiven the moment he came to Christ. The penalty for our sin has been fully paid by Christ (Acts 10:43).

Each of our names is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. None of us can say, "My name is in indelible ink but your name is written in pencil! Someone may come along and erase it (Revelation 20:15)." Eternal life is the same for everyone. No one can say, "I have 900 billion years of eternal life and you only have 500 billion years." We all have the same amount of eternal life (John 6:47). We all possess the same eternal life by the virtue of what Christ did for us. Each Christian has the blood-bought right for eternal life. We cannot be almost saved. If we are almost saved, we are completely lost. Each born again person is totally in (1 Corinthians 1:13).

God did not almost reconcile us. He totally reconciled us to Himself (Romans 5:10). Therefore, there are no degrees of salvation.

Open your heart and receive God's righteousness. Don't work for it (Romans 10:1-10; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:7-9). Receiving the absolute righteousness of God is the genius of the gospel. We have no righteousness of our own that we can present to God as some form of merit in His eyes. We cannot earn brownie points before God. That is present day fashionable, present day religion. "Do good. Be sincere. Have a good batting average with the Ten Commandments. Live by the golden rule. Be nice to your neighbor. Do these things and you have a fine standing before God." This is the rational but it is a deadly rational. It is the opposite of dealing with God's righteousness. It simply deals with man's righteousness. This is the surest route to hell that we could try to conjure before God. We must come to Christ's righteousness. No human righteousness will impress God. The only righteousness that impresses God is the righteousness of Christ.

of our God

This is one of the greatest verses to prove the deity of Christ. The Greek makes no mistake that God and our Savior Jesus Christ are one person (Matthew 16:16; John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13). The Greek makes the name "God" and "Savior" the same person [Granville Sharp Rule].

Note other great passage that deal with this subject: John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20.

and Savior Jesus Christ

The New Testament never calls Jesus "Savior and Lord," it always calls him "Lord and Savior." This is the divine order. Experientially, we first come to Christ as Savior then later get to know Him as Lord. The emphasis of the New Testament is upon his Lordship. Savior occurs 16 times in the New Testament but Lord occurs 663 times. All four occurrences of "Lord and Savior" occur in 2 Peter.

"For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11).

"For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20).

"That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior" (2 Peter 3:2).

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

The title "Lord" conveys primarily the idea of the deity of Christ but the deity of Christ implies lordship or sovereignty over our lives. He has the right to dominate us. He has the right to rule over every aspect of our lives.

Can you say, "My life belongs to you. You can do anything you desire with me?"

Peter uses the rare title "Savior" of Jesus no less than five times in this brief epistle (1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18).

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

"Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior-- Jesus" (Acts 13:23)

"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23).

"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14).

Principle

It is God-in the form of Christ who saved us from our sin.

Application

Did you know that Jesus is God Almighty? He was God incognito who died on the cross. He is the Son of God.

The Savior saves people from sin and hell. He seeks you. Are you hiding from the Savior? You are not reading this study by accident. He brought you here. He brings you here by divine design. Will you at this divine interjection receive Christ as your personal Savior? Has it come as a shock to you that Jesus is the only Savior of the world? It is not until you come into a personal confrontation with Jesus Christ that He becomes your Savior.

2 Peter 1:2

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

Most epistles begin with a blessing (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 1:2). The Greek indicates Peter's wish for these Asia Minor Christians.

Grace

Peter wants us to bless believers but that blessing comes in an exclusive form--in the "full-knowledge" of God. God blesses us when we come into intimate, personal relationship with God. This is the means of grace.

Grace is God's favor and provision for us. Peter wants God's favor multiplied in our lives. We do this through knowledge of God (John 17:3). The more knowledge we have of God the more He increases grace in our lives. Jesus is the means of that grace,

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through

Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:16-17).

Just when we feel that we cannot go on, the Lord provides His grace.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

God gives grace to help us just in the nick of time. His timing is perfect. We do not earn or deserve grace. We come to the throne of grace and we receive what we need. The reason we receive grace so readily is that God is the "God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10). God has cornered the market on grace.

God's grace is available to us (Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 3:8). Whatever situation we may face or whatever our predicament, God gives us what we need. His grace will sustain us.

Principle

God commits Himself to provide for us and to sustain us.

Application

Grace emphasizes the character and action of God on our behalf. God's plan for us includes His participation in our lives. He willingly pours out unmerited favor upon His own people. God has a perfect plan whereby imperfect creatures can function. That plan is His grace to us.

When we accept Christ, we join God's team. God has a game plan for his team that cannot fail since execution of the plan rests upon the Coach. The second we commit sin, God's plan of grace goes into action. Jesus lives to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25).

When a Christian steps out of God's plan, God Himself does something to make sure the plan continues. Jesus' blood keeps on cleansing us from all sin (1 John 1:7). No one can ruin His plan. No matter what we do, we cannot exceed God's grace for us. This is grace.

and peace

There are two kinds of peace--a peace with God and a peace of God. First, peace with God is the peace that Jesus won for us. He reconciled us from

living as enemies with God to people who are at peace with Him (Romans 5:10).

Secondly, there is the peace of God. It is the peace that He possesses and which is available to us as Christians. If the Christian does not accept grace, then he will not know peace. Grace always precedes peace. This is the peace of our verse.

"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3).

We will know "perfect peace" if we keep our minds on God's provision.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Peace comes through, the person of Christ.

"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

A characteristic of the kingdom of God is peace.

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Peace comes through believing.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (Galatians 5:22).

A result of the filling of the Spirit is peace.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

The peace that God possesses transcends our capacity to understand and guards our hearts.

Principle

Peace is God's peace that comes to us because of grace.

Application

Peace always follows grace. We cannot understand and apprehend God's peace without first understanding and appropriating God's grace. Grace eliminates the wear and tear on our soul.

be multiplied to you

The word "multiplied" comes from the word to fill. God wants grace and peace to fill our lives. It is one thing to have a measure of grace and peace and it is quite another to have an abundance of grace and peace in our lives. Is grace and peace increasing in ever-greater measure in your life? May God's grace increase in extent and measure in your experience.

Grace and peace can sanctify us.

Principle

The multiplication of grace and peace can revolutionize our lives.

Application

Addition is one thing and multiplication another. We get there faster with multiplication than with addition.

When we multiply grace and peace, we ignite spiritual fuel for our Christian journey. We can no more live the Christian life without spiritual fuel than we can operate our car without gas and oil. If we are not going anywhere for the Lord, we will not need much spiritual fuel. However, if we expend a great amount of spiritual energy, we need to increase the volume of our spiritual fuel. The spiritual fuel here is grace and peace. We consume vast amounts of grace in serving the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:16; James 4:6). We need great peace and settlement of soul while serving Him. The battle will wear us down without replenishment from the Lord.

One of the great benefits to some stock is that it compounds its interest. This is one of the reasons that the rich get richer. Microsoft keeps getting bigger and bigger because its assets keep multiplying. Some people let their wealth accumulate. God wants us to multiply grace and peace in our lives so that we will use those blessings in time. Do you draw on your spiritual assets from time to time?

Spiritually, we are all billionaires. We can live on the interest of our capital in Christ. If you had Bill Gates' money, you might withdraw enough to buy an ice cream cone occasionally! You may want to withdraw a few thousand to go on an extensive trip somewhere. No Christian should wait till he or she gets to heaven before withdrawing their spiritual capital. Since your spiritual interest constantly accumulates (multiplies), why not treat yourself to something? We can think in terms of letting our spiritual capital sit or we can think in terms of using it. Draw on your spiritual resources now! You will never run out of spiritual resources. They constantly accumulate.

We often hear stories of people who beg for money yet they are enormously wealthy. As strange that this may seem, this is exactly the problem with many Christians today. The prodigal son ate the slop of pigs while his wealthy father waited for him at home. Why should we live like paupers? Clip your spiritual dividends. Draw on God's unlimited resources. Every time we draw upon the knowledge of God, that opens the bank account of God's grace. There is no way for grace to grow in our lives without knowledge of God. There is no substitute for knowing God's Word.

in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord

Blessings at the beginning of epistles are not mere formalities. We discover blessings in personal knowledge of God.

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

The word for "knowledge" implies an active relationship with God. We do not know God from hearsay. We know Him personally for ourselves. Knowing Him personally, influences the direction of our lives.

This knowledge edifies us as we participate in it (Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 14:6). Knowledge of this sort transcends the theoretical and goes hand in hand with relationship (Philippians 3:10). When we come to grips with the person of Christ we renounce confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:4), confess Christ as Lord (Philippians 3:8) and constantly renew our relationship with him (Philippians 3:12). We experience the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:10).

"That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light" (Colossians 1:10-12).

The Colossians passage implies more than knowledge about God. The idea is to experience knowledge of God. That is, we should increase in the experience of knowing God.

The word "knowledge" in this verse is an intense word. It means to know thoroughly. We must know God with discernment and full knowledge.

Knowledge of God is not obscure. We cannot grow in knowledge of God (2 Peter 3:18) with a closed Bible. Rather we increase in the knowledge of God as we increase in the knowledge of God's Word. The more we know the Bible, the more we know God. We cannot know how to live the Christian life without the Bible.

Principle

Extensive, personal knowledge of God is the highest ideal of the Christian life.

Application

Do you know God as a person or is He just a lot of information?

Knowledge of God is the greatest virtue of Christianity. No experience, even a spiritual experience, will validate our relationship with God. Truth validates experience, not the other way around. Thus only the Bible can validate experience. We are incapable of loving Christ without some knowledge of Christ. We cannot love Christ without truth. Experience can only confirm truth; it does not make truth.

Some people have wide emotional swings. They can go to a movie and cry the moment the good guy gets the girl at the end. This is an ecstatic experience for them. Some people can get an ecstatic experience from a bottle. There are many ways to produce an ecstatic experience if you are easily triggered by emotion. Often, these people are far from true Christian living because they lack the self discipline to get into the Word. They operate on wide emotional swings. They think that

they can agonize in the closet and be spiritual. Many people operate by strictly psychologically induced experience. But emotional variations have little to do with true Christian living.

"For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

2 Peter 1:3

"As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue." as His divine power

"As" is a marker of a reason--on the grounds that, because. Because God's power has given us everything we need, we possess well-founded assurance to live the Christian life.

"Divine" means pertaining to God. Peter talks about the power pertaining to God. "Divine" speaks of the attributes of God. This is God seen from the standpoint of His attributes. "Divine" then is all that bears the stamp of God. It is what God is and especially what proceeds from Him. Here Peter sees God especially from the attribute of power. Divine, then, means the manifested presence of God. It is the bloom of His character, His glory (John 1:14, 18).

In the previous verse, Peter summons Christians to gain a "full-knowledge" of God. In this verse, we now come to understand what he means. God is a God of power. That power is available to us. We have the possibility to address our problems beyond operation bootstraps.

The word for "power" here is inherent power and refers to God's potency. We enjoy built-in power to live the Christian life. God guarantees us power to live in God's strength. God makes it possible for us to win. God cannot be defeated.

Principle

There is a relationship between the power of God and the benefits of the Christian life.

Application

The relationship between the believer and God is direct when it comes to living the Christian life.

God's power, His omnipotent power, is available to us for whatever we face in life.

From eternity, God thought about us in terms of His limitless power. He knew billions of years ago that you would accept Christ as your Savior. Knowing this, He set up a trust fund for you. This trust fund contains many spiritual assets to operate in life. God provided in eternity past every blessing we require for living the Christian life. God does not wait until you are in a jam and then try to figure out what to do for you.

There is nothing unstable about God. God established this trust fund in eternity past (Ephesians 1:4-5). God provided in such a way as to leave nothing out. He furnished everything we need for time and eternity. He did this in His power. He has the ability to deliver it to us anytime we need it.

The words "has given" mean to bestow, to grant (1John 3:1; 2 Corinthians 8:1). The idea is that of something freely given. This word "given" is a rare term for giving and is much stronger than the normal word for giving. The idea is to grant or bestow freely without strings attached. Great generosity is the idea. God grants Christians gifts for living. This term always implies the grace of God. God freely gives to us.

Often "given" carries the idea of a promissory note. God wrote a promise to pay on demand what we need to live the Christian life. This is pure grace maintained at the Father's expense.

"Given" means to give with no strings attached. God does not say, "If you do this or that, I will give this or that. If you give a tithe to me, I will bless you. If you witness for me, I will bless you." No, God gives freely, without strings. He does this out of His own perfect character. In other words, He does not benefit personally from what you do. He does not benefit from what He gives us. He gives simply out of His perfectly generous character. He does it no other way.

The words "have given" are in the perfect tense in the Greek. At a point in the past (eternity past) God set up a trust fund with our name on it because He knew we would accept Jesus Christ as our Savior in this century. No lapse of time diminishes, destroys, removes or negates this trust fund because it rests on the character of God,

especially God's power. God gives to us based on what He is and does. God does this Himself (middle voice in the Greek). The middle voice can be translated "He Himself has given without strings." This puts emphasis on the Giver.

What does God give us? "All things." The name of our trust fund is "all things." This trust fund contains a portfolio of thousands of things God planned for you. God does this for each Christian with no exceptions and no limits to His grace for us.

Principle

God gives us a promissory note to live the Christian life freely, out of His grace.

Application

Suppose I say to you, "I'll give you \$200 for installing a hard drive in my computer next Tuesday." You say, "OK, I'll do that." In this case, there is a string. For some reason you did not come Tuesday. You may give a number of excuses for not coming. Whatever the excuse, it makes no difference, you do not get your \$200. There is a string attached to my offer of giving you \$200. God, however, does not have any strings attached to His giving. This is grace.

If we feel sorry for sin in order to seek forgiveness from God, this is not grace. The string in this case is feeling sorry. Feeling sorry is a work on our part to placate God. This insults God for God has already been placated by the death of Christ. We do not beg God to forgive us because we stand forgiven by His cross. We simply accept by faith His promise that He forgave us by Christ's blood (1 John 1:9).

We must come under conviction about the sin we committed and confess it. We cannot do anything to change God's mind about it. Jesus' death on the cross changed His mind already and permanently at that. He already holds an attitude of forgiveness about our sin. That attitude is forgiveness based on Christ's cross (1 John 2:1-2). That is why we simply place our trust in Christ's death to forgive us for salvation. That is why we also simply place our trust in Christ's death for the individual sins we commit as Christians.

There are no strings attached to our forgiveness as Christians. God has already been placated by the

cross. He forgave us when we came to faith in Christ. Our acceptance before God does not rest on who and what we are but on what Jesus did for us on the cross.

that pertain to life

"Life" includes not only eternal life but life as we now live it. God provides for our life now. This is divine life, not life that consists of issues, like food, clothing, and shelter. This is the vitality and animation of life with God.

The New Testament uses "life" to refer to the life of God. He has absolute fullness of life, both the essence of life and the ethics that flow from that life. His is the noble life, the highest and best life. Whatever truly lives does so because sin has not found its place in it. This is life in the absolute sense. It is more than nobility and power. It is life as God has it; it is life in the fullest sense.

God's life is an abiding antithesis to death, a positive, free-from-death living. In other words, this is a life of glory, full of vitality. We can be fulfilled beings with abundant lives. God's life is the furthest thing from mere existence. The vitality of God rules our entire life.

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

There is a corollary between life and holiness. We must have breath before behavior. We cannot live the Christian life without first having spiritual life to live it. We do not get life by goodness. Goodness comes from the life of God.

and godliness

"Godliness" is piety. It comes from two words: well and to worship. Godly people worship well. They direct their worship rightly. They pay their worth to God. We owe this response to God.

Ancient Greeks used this word for the function of polytheism (Greek and Roman religions teaching there are many gods). "Godliness" carries a technical meaning in the New Testament; it has the idea of functioning in God's plan. It is our devotion to God based on His provision for us.

"Godliness" is the opposite of religion. Godliness is having a true spiritual relationship God. Religion relates more to outward acts of religious

observance or ceremony. Godliness, on the other hand, cherishes the will of God.

When we put "godliness" with the preposition "that," we get the idea of living the whole Christian life before God. This includes both the Spirit-filled life and growth in the principles and application of the Christian life. In other words, this involves everything God expects of us in the Christian life. This is the entire structure of Christian living. God provided everything that pertains to living on earth.

Principle

"Life" and "godliness" come from a real relationship with God.

Application

When people come to Christ, they receive the highest life possible, eternal life. Eternal life gives us the capacity to live before God. Eternal life is the highest state a creature can have. Eternal life begins at the moment of salvation, not death (John 5:24). Eternal death comes through the sin of Adam and we inherit that death. Eternal life comes through Christ and we inherit His life when we believe in His death as the means of our salvation (Romans 5:12).

The power of God gives us new life (Colossians 2:12-13; Titus 3:4-5) and the ability to live godly lives (Philippians 2:12-13; 4:13).

Do you have a vital spiritual life? Is God real to you? There is no excuse for not living vitally before God because we have His power for "all things."

through the knowledge of Him

Christ is the source of knowledge mentioned in verse two. God the Father is the source of life and godliness in verse three. To know Christ is to know God; to know God is to know Christ. We can use God's power for life and godliness when we know His power.

The emphasis is on "source." By knowing God, we understand all things that pertain to life and godliness. This makes our knowledge firm and solid. We find out what God has provided for us as we read and study our Bible. The better we know our Bible, the better we know God.

This word for "knowledge" is different from the normal word for knowledge. There is a prefix in front of this word making it an intense term--"full-knowledge." This is more than ordinary knowledge. It is a full-orbed knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10).

Principle

The better we know God's Word the better able we are to apply God's principles for us.

Application

The better we know God, the better able we are to appropriate all operating assets God has put at our disposal. What good is an asset if we do not use it? What good is my computer if I do not use it? What good are the provisions of God if we do not use them?

God catalogues all our assets in the Word of God. The child of God is supposed to read and study the Word so that he may be able to use his assets efficiently. The better we know the manual the better we can use the equipment. Where do you start? Too bad babies do not come with a manual!

We should know God better this year than we did last year. Our spiritual development should be further along than it was last year. Are you going forward or falling behind in your Christian walk? Are your spiritual wheels spinning without any progress?

Go forward, get ahead in your Christian walk. Just because you fall down, do not let that stop you. Don't stay there. Get up. Don't let time go by without confessing your sin. Deal with it immediately and move on.

If we do not confess sin immediately, we may develop attitude sins such as resentment and bitterness. If we do, we may fill our minds with self-pity. Then we will blame others. We will not be honest with ourselves. We will operate with a "hurt-orientation," where everyone and everything hurts us. God may put us on the shelf with this. When we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be no doubt that the problem lies with us.

Have you lost your spiritual resiliency? Are your spiritual reflexes as quick as they should be? We need to deal with sin quickly and keep short accounts with God.

Is this stocktaking time for you? What is your spiritual inventory? Do you ever say, "Lord, I have been bitter toward....? I have been mean toward.... What is the matter with me? Why am I so ornery? Why am I wretched? God, I'm ready to blame everyone and anyone. I feel like biting their heads off. What is bothering me, Lord?"

who called us

The word "called" indicates our election. Our election is God's plan in eternity past that sets aside everything we need to live before Him.

God's plan took place before He created man. This is the meaning of predestination. Predestination is pre-design. Logically, God's plan of salvation came before God's creation of man. God's plan for man came from eternity past. A perfect plan came from a perfect God. In this plan, there is no place for man to take the credit. All of it rests upon God because this plan took place in eternity.

God's plan comes from God's decrees. His decrees come from eternity past. In eternity past, God took cognizance of everyone who would ever live. God provided for our salvation in Christ before He decided to create.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:28-30).

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9).

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus

Christ to Himself, according to the god pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:3-5).

Principle

God anticipates every contingency we may face.

Application

Regardless of their shortcomings, all believers have been called by God. We share the election of Christ. There never will be a time when we do not share this election with Christ. God must be perfectly consistent with His plan because He is immutable. He cannot change His election. God cannot change for that would mean He is not absolute.

Billions of years before creation God decided to elect Christ to resolve His own perfect righteousness. The death of Christ satisfied the demands of God's absolute being, His perfect righteousness. Jesus propitiated the Father's righteousness by His death on the cross. This is how God can love us in spite of our sin. God is free to love us because Jesus met the demands of His absolute being. God cannot by pass His absolute righteousness.

No matter how we may fail God, He cannot fail us. He must remain true to what Jesus did on the cross. No matter what we do, God must keep on loving us. Why? Because election describes who and what God is. We change every hour on the hour. God has never changed and will be consistent forever in His character.

We cannot change God's plan. Once in that plan, even God cannot change this plan because He must be true to Himself. There is no sin too great for God to handle. There will never be a problem, catastrophe or disaster too great for the plan of God. God's plan provides for any contingency. No one can commit a sin too great for this plan.

It is the epitome of human pride to believe there is some sin God did not anticipate from eternity past. Do you really think He did not examine every possible contingency for man? This assaults the essence of God and implies He is not perfect in everything He does. God overlooks nothing.

Immutability stabilizes everything. God is not about to change anytime, anywhere under any circumstance. That is hard for many people to swallow especially if we think we have something

to offer Him. If we depend on who and what we are to gain God's acceptance, we can never measure up to an absolute being. If we assume we are special because of our righteousness and God is under obligation to love us because we measure up, then we miss the principle. The principle is that we cannot change the love of God by what we do. God's love for us comes from Christ and what He did on the cross.

by glory

"Glory" in this context means heaven. Christians are headed for glory. He called us "to glory" (literally). God will glorify us in eternity because we believed in Christ in our lifetime.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10).

"But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 5:10-11).

The Lord Jesus calls us by means of His unique glory and virtue. The word "own" does not occur in this translation but we find it in the Greek text. The word "own" carries the idea of private, unique or peculiar possession. God called us to His "own unique glory."

Glory refers to the ultimate triumph of the plan of God. You may be a loser but you will ultimately triumph in the plan of God. Some are losers because they accept defeat. The loser gives up. Losers usually are ignorant of God's provisions.

Glory is a term of dignity and refers to God's essence but here it means more. Glory is the fact that God designed a perfect plan for us. God designed a plan where He and we cannot lose.

and virtue

"Virtue" occurs five times in the New Testament. God calls us to virtue. "Virtue" is excellence, praises (1 Peter 2:9). This word has lost some of its meaning to us today. "Virtue" means excellence in workmanship. The work of Christ is a work of excellence. God calls us by His own merit and workmanship. Virtue is a quality of excellence that belongs to God.

Principle

We will ultimately triumph in God's plan for us.

Application

Glory is the fact that God designed a perfect plan for us. God designed a plan where He cannot lose. You say, "He included me in His plan, doesn't that make Him a loser?" No, God cannot lose because He made provision for any contingency we might face. Stand by for a shock--God's plan is greater than you are! Even at your best, you are at your worst in God's eyes. God is greater than your sin.

God's glory is His perfect character plus the plan that comes from it. It is impossible for a perfect God to come up with an imperfect plan. The plan would indeed be imperfect if it depended on man and what man does. There is no place in God's plan for the energy of the flesh.

Grace depends on who God is and what God has done, never on who we are and what we do. That is why we must function under God's power and God's provision. God's glory takes His perfect plan and relates it to us. God will reveal ultimate glory in eternity. That is where He makes the plan experientially perfect in us. He made it judicially perfect when He sacrificed Christ on the cross.

God calls us to His Excellency. He is building excellent character in us. He called us with a definite purpose in mind. God is in the business of reproducing His Son in me (2 Timothy 1:9). I do not think any of us have been mistaken for the Lord Jesus lately. One of these days we will be like Him. In the meantime, we are supposed to become more and more like Him.

2 Peter 1:4

"By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

By which

"By which" refers to the things God gives us in the previous verse. God's power gives us "exceedingly great and precious promises." "Which" is in the plural. The plural may indicate knowledge of our glory and virtue makes known God's promises to us.

have been given to us

The word "given" is the same word used in the previous verse meaning to bestow or endow. God makes a gift of His promises. "Given" is not the usual word for "give" and carries the idea of grace by the giver. God gives His promises with no strings attached.

The Greek indicates God gave us these promises in the past with the result continuing to the present. All along our spiritual journey, God gives us spiritual equipment for the pilgrim pathway.

Note the word "us." God discriminates to whom He gives His promises. The "us" is not just anyone, it is only those who embrace his Son. Not everyone is a child of God.

Principle

God puts at the disposal of every Christian divine operating assets whether or not we use them, whether or not we are aware of them.

Application

Are you discouraged because people reject you for some sin you committed? You sing the blues that the bird with the broken wing will never fly so high again. You heard in a sermon somewhere that you become a second-class Christian after you "blew it." People ostracized you from certain Christian circles. You feel you do not belong anymore. You sense God has completely set you aside.

How do you know God still has a plan for you after you have blown it? If you still breath, God has a plan for you. It makes no difference how you feel because your feelings do not determine your spiritual status.

Our fellowship with God does not depend on who we are but on who Jesus is. There are many Horatio Alger stories out there. Someone was flat on his back financially and now he is a millionaire. People say, "That sounds like a good deal, I think I

will try God." These people are not truly interested in God, they are interested in making money. They think that if they tithe ten per cent of their income then they will become millionaires. They think they have found a way to rub the genie. They kick in their ten per cent because they want something from God. "I'll go along with His routine so I can get something from God."

exceedingly

This is the only occurrence of the superlative "exceedingly" in the New Testament. This speaks of the magnitude of God's promises. God describes His promises with three outstanding qualifications: exceedingly, great and precious.

First, God's promises exceed any promise you ever heard. We know what it means to "exceed" the speed limit. It means to go beyond. God's promises go past man's promises. His promises are bigger and better than anything man can do.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

"Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Corinthians 7:4).

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power" (Ephesians 1:18-19).

"That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

great

The second description of God's promises is they are "great." We abuse this word today. Everything is "great." We have great automobiles and great hotdogs! When everything is great, nothing is

great. However, when the Bible uses the word "great" it carries impact.

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4).

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?" (Hebrews 2:3).

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Hebrews 13:20).

Principle

God's promises exceed anything we might face.

Application

Whatever problem we might face as a child of God, we can come to the Bible and find God makes commitments to our welfare. We will find a promise that will exceed any problem we might face. God's promises go beyond our problems. Whether we have physical, mental, domestic or financial problems, we will find God's promises exceed any situation we face.

and precious promises

The third description of our promises is they are "precious." "Precious" carries the idea of value or worth. God's promises are valuable. God's promises are extremely important to the believer. The promises of God are of considerable worth to those who use them. Peter uses "precious" for faith (1 Peter 2:7; 2 Peter 1:1) and for Christ's blood (1 Peter 1:19).

God's promises are His guarantees to us that He will be there for us. That is why when He makes a promise they are valuable.

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5).

The phrase "never leave" in the Greek is "I will never, ever, ever, ever, ever leave you [five particles]." That is quite an emphatic commitment to us!!

Principle

God makes us guarantees to be with us.

Application

Stake out the Bible and find special promises that fit your situation and then claim those promises. Hold God to those promises. God will make good on His promises to you. He is faithful to Himself and to you.

With His "promises," God makes voluntary and spontaneous commitments to us. A promise from God is His guarantee. We have grounds to expect things from God because He is true to His word. Sometimes employers make promises to their employees that they do not keep. Sometimes they make promises to raise the employees salary then the employees find they have lost their jobs. We will not get this kind of surprise from God. He is always true to what He says.

We find all God's promises in the Bible. God's promises are not like the promises of a politician. He will make good on His promises. Try some of these promises on for size.

"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do?" (Numbers 23:19).

"But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Philippians 4:19-20).

that through these

"These" are the promises of the previous phrase. As a result of using these promises, we partake of the divine nature.

you may be partakers

"May be" comes from a word meaning to become. Becoming implies the idea of growth. This is not primarily dealing with being but with becoming. The normal word for "be" means to exist. That would imply we possess the divine nature. That is not the point here.

Since "be" here means become, this passage is referring to becoming something we are not right now. We are not like Christ right now. We want to become more like Him. This is not dealing with receiving the nature of God at our spiritual birth but manifesting the nature we share with God. "Becoming" is not absorption into God as the mystics would have us believe but the application of positional truth to experience.

"Partakers" means companions, partners, sharers. This is someone who participates with someone else in some enterprise or joint matter of concern. This is a partner or associate. Christians partake in the divine nature. We join with God in the common concern of manifesting God's character in our lives.

Principle

We need to join with God in manifesting His character to the world.

Application

We cannot lose our salvation but we can lose a lot if we step out of fellowship with God. When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband, catastrophe followed him for the next few years. Sin has a price tag. That price tag is ugly.

We must live the Spirit-filled life or we will revert to type. If we do not allow ourselves to be filled with the Spirit, we will fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The old capacity cannot do anything right. The new capacity cannot do anything wrong. There is a struggle between the old and new capacities.

If we struggle within, then that is an indication we are born again. The non-Christian does not struggle with sin on a regular basis because his conscience does not bother him. His conscience is dead toward God. His conscience is as reliable as a rubber tape measure.

There is nothing within a non-Christian but sin capacity. Their Adamic capacity given to them by their parents completely monopolizes the direction of their lives. They are 100% flesh. Thus, they do anything they want to do. They look at anything they want. They listen to anything without discrimination. They touch anything they desire. They have no restraint or inhibition. To them, there are no restrictions or prohibitions. They are without God and therefore without internal spiritual standards.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

of the divine nature

[Part 1]

"Nature" means disposition. Our "nature" is a disposition or inborn quality that generates and produces power in us. This nature is not the quality that determines whether someone is a human being. In other words, our nature is not equivalent to our person. The sin nature is a change in capacity or disposition and not a metaphysical change in us (the transfer of God's attributes to us). A nature is the inherent disposition that ultimately affects our conduct and character.

Before Adam's fall, he had a human nature but not a sin nature. He possessed attributes unique to man. When Adam fell, he acquired a sin nature (Romans 5:12). Now he possessed two natures: a human nature and a sin nature. A better term for "nature" in this context might be "capacity." Adam in the fall acquired a capacity for sin. When a person become Christians, they receive a capacity toward God.

The addition of the sin nature in Adam produced a drastic spiritual change but not a metaphysical change in him. He still was the same person he was before the fall. Therefore, his sin nature is a disposition rather than a change of attributes unique to his human nature.

Hypothetically, if the sin nature did change the attributes of the human nature, then man would have been different from the human being God created when He created Adam. The non-Christian possesses a human nature in the sense of the attributes unique to man plus a sin nature. He does not have the new nature in the sense of a new disposition toward God. All he has is a sin capacity. That is why his disposition is dark toward God (John 3:19).

When people become Christians, a radical change in their disposition takes place. They receive a divine nature. They are not a new kind of human being but they have a new orientation toward God. Christians still possess characteristics unique to man but God introduces something new into them, a divine disposition. God reintroduces into the born again person the same orientation toward God that Adam had before the fall. Once we are favorably disposed toward God, He can make us more like Christ.

Christians in their new nature are legally just before God. Therefore, they have certain rights before God.

Principle

In conflict with the sin capacity, Christians can claim their legal right to reject the mastery of the sin nature because of their identification with Christ's death.

Application

The sin nature or capacity is our inherent disposition toward sin. We received at our physical birth a disposition toward rebellion toward God. We call that disposition the sin nature (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 6:16-20). The sin nature holds both legal authority and experiential power over the lives of non-Christians. The sin nature only hold experiential power over Christians if do not apply their legal authority in Christ to its power.

Non-Christians only have the sin nature but not the divine nature. The sin nature is totally depraved. This means that by possessing the sin capacity, non-Christians are depraved in reference to God. This does not mean they cannot do right according to human standards. It does mean their

morality is worthless, compared to the absolute righteousness of God (Romans 8:7).

Non-Christians have inherent hostility toward God's will (Romans 8:7). This does not mean the old nature will always act as badly as it is capable. Non-Christians do many moral and humanitarian things but they do them apart from God. They operate essentially apart from God and their life revolves around themselves. Their orientation is man-centered rather than God-centered. Their chief end is themselves rather than God (Ephesians 2:3). This is why they must be born again because in their own nature they will not orient to God (John 3:19).

Christians receive a divine nature [capacity] at the point of salvation but they still retain the sin capacity after salvation. Christians, then, have two warring capacities within their bosom. However, in the Christian, Jesus forever legally defeated the sin nature by His death on the cross (Romans 6).

Christians have legal rights over the sin nature but they cannot defeat sin simply by possessing a divine nature. Simple possession of the divine nature does not provide the power necessary to overcome the sin nature. Christians need more than the divine nature for that. Christians can defeat the sin nature by claiming, through experience, their legal rights over the sin capacity in God's eyes. Christians live by the promises of God in Christ.

If we rely on our own strength as the source of power to overcome the sin nature, the sinful disposition will defeat us every time. Neither keeping the commands of God nor self-will are enough to overcome struggle with the sin nature.

Christians need not allow the sin nature to defeat them because they have the indwelling Holy Spirit who can fill them with power. At the point of our salvation, the Holy Spirit set us free from the controlling power of the sin nature in principle and made available His own power to us. If we give Him power over our lives, we will have victory over the sin capacity. The Holy Spirit can produce in us what we cannot produce in ourselves.

The divine nature plays a powerful role in transforming the regenerate man ("new man") more and more into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). This, again, is a process (2 Corinthians

3:18). In eternity, God will make us morally perfect in our experience.

the divine nature

[Part 2]

Remember that the word "divine" from the previous verse means that which is God's, that which ensues from Him. In two verses running, we have "divine power" and "divine nature." Peter uses the word "divine" both of God's power (1:3) and of God's nature (here). In both places, nature is something that proceeds from God Himself.

People often teach we have an old nature and a new nature. That is not quite correct. The "divine nature" is not the same as the "new man" (Colossians 3:10). Our "old man" was our unregenerate disposition. The divine nature then is a new orientation to God.

A massive change toward God occurred in us when we became Christians. We do not get the divine nature through reformation of the old nature. It is not something that grows or develops by a process. Rather, God imparts this new nature instantaneously and supernaturally to us the moment we become Christians. Therefore, only regenerate people possess this nature. It is God's orientation planted within us. It is far more than inherent morality.

There also remains an old capacity in every believer after we accept Christ. That old nature is what produces sin in our lives. It is a disposition toward sin and it also has an area of strength that produces human good apart from God.

The Christian cannot partake of God's nature in the sense of sharing His deity. That would be heresy. Man can never become God or even deity. Man cannot share infinite attributes. Possessing infinite attributes would annihilate finite man. People who hold that we share God's attributes as over against His disposition are Pantheistic in their thinking (everything is god and we are gods). This confounds the creature with the Creator and is blasphemy.

Partaking of God's disposition is different from partaking of His essence. We can partake of His holiness in the sense of having the same disposition He has.

"For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Hebrews 12:10).

Principle

As we lay hold of the promises, we manifest the divine nature.

Application

According to Romans six, the sinful disposition loses its mastery over Christians permanently by our identifying with the death of Christ. We are no longer sin's slaves. The sin nature no longer has legal authority over us any more. Although it no longer holds legal authority over us, it continues with us till we die. It will try to exercise an illegal authority over us if we do not claim our legal rights. We can claim our legal right by Christ's death for any sin we might commit as a Christian. If we try to operate in our own strength, the sin nature will defeat us.

The "divine nature" is not the "new man" of Colossians 3:9-10. The new man is the born-again man (the regenerate person). God gives the new man freedom from slavery of the sin nature by newness of life. The divine nature is in the new man but it is not the new man.

We received a human nature when we were born physically. We received God's nature when we were born spiritually. We cannot reverse that. Once born a human we cannot revert to a horse. Once born spiritually we cannot revert to being a non-Christian. We cannot lose our sin capacity in time nor can we lose our divine capacity. The same people who talk about losing their old capacity think they can lose their new capacity. They are wrong on both accounts. We can lose neither except when we enter glory. Then we lose the old capacity.

Everyone born again received a divine capacity at the point of salvation. So every Christian has two capacities, a human and a divine capacity. The human capacity can do nothing but sin and the divine capacity cannot sin. Because we Christians still possess the human nature, we still have the potential for any sin.

"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9).

having escaped

"Escaped" comes from two words: to flee or to be a fugitive and away from. Christians escaped by flight from the corruption in the world when we became Christians. We became fugitives from the sin capacity at the point of our salvation.

The Greek indicates we escaped in principle, not practice. We escaped by positional truth. We are not trying to escape but we escaped.

Principle

God delivered us from the world by our coming to know Christ personally.

Application

In principle, the Holy Spirit indwells us but the filling of the Holy Spirit means He must control our lives. One is principle and the other is experience. How does your experience line up with principle? Some of you have not escaped in practice.

"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:6).

Our sin capacity perpetuates in us through physical birth (Psalm 51:5; 1 Timothy 2:13-14). By being born in the lineage of Adam, we inherit the sin capacity. By spiritual birth, we inherit the lineage of Christ (Romans 5:12). Both the sin capacity and the divine capacity operate in the Christian until he dies (1 John 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:1). The sin capacity does not continue in our resurrection body (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:56).

Personal sin is our sin capacity expressing itself in experience. When the sin capacity controls the Christian, the Bible calls this carnality (Romans 7:14; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3). He reverts to living by spiritual death (Romans 5:12)! The source of the sin capacity is spiritual death. Spiritual death is death toward God.

We escaped from the sin capacity in principle when Jesus died on the cross.

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:24-25).

We escape from the sin capacity in practice when we apply the principle to our life. A person goes to medical school then later specializes in surgery. He now has the credentials to operate on human beings. We place confidence in the principle of this training. None of us would want a butcher to take out our appendix even if he previously did take out the appendix of a horse! I have no beef against butchers. They have their place, but I would not want to have a butcher operate on me. We escaped the sin capacity in principle, not practice. We escaped from the capacity in principle by Christ's death. We escape from the sin capacity's power when we live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh [sin capacity]. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Galatians 5:16).

God's plan does not depend on what we do, it depends on what God does. God executed three judgments on the sin capacity:

1. He judged Christ for our sins, 1 Peter 2:24
2. We judge our sin in the light of Christ's judgment for our sin, 1 Corinthians 11:31; 1 John 1:9
3. The sin that we do not judge, Christ will judge at the Judgment Seat of Christ and reward us accordingly, 1 Corinthians 3:11-16.

escaped the corruption

This word "escaped" occurs three times in this epistle and Peter uses it primarily in relation to religion:

"For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning" (1 Peter 2:18-20).

"Corruption" means ruin, destruction, dissolution and deterioration. "Corruption" brings things to a worse state. Here the corruption is the depravity of the sin capacity. Here Peter uses this term of the effect of the depravity of lusts. One of the great benefits of being born again is that God delivers us from the sensuality, smut, vulgarity, blasphemy and profanity that characterize the world.

Later in chapter 2, verse 12, Peter uses "corruption" of the death and decay of beasts (religionists). Religion causes corruption when we try to placate God by what we do. There is a destruction that comes with religion. If we try to change the sin capacity by religion, we only exacerbate the problem because religion does not change the disposition. Religion is man's attempt to placate God. That can only bring a person to a worse condition.

Principle

A by-product of being born again is that God delivers us from sin.

Application

The World loves smut as a pig loves the mud. The dirtier the story, the better. The more racy or suggestive, the more sexy, the more vulgar the movie, the more the public wants it and the more money it grosses. That is what the public wants and that is what the movie industry gives because the movie industry is driven by money. God's people are different because God has delivered them from this present evil world.

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:4).

Many Christians rationalize sin by the phrase "I do not see anything wrong with...." Many Christians see nothing wrong in anything short of murder because they do not read the Bible. That is their problem. They do not study the Bible. They live on their experience and feeling. They are maudlin and sentimental in their thinking but not biblical. Sometimes the pollutions of the world are not coarse but refined and inviting. Some sin is cultured and religious. They do not seem to realize sin took their Savior to the cross. He went to the cross to save us from the corruption in the world.

It is impossible to escape the pollutions of the world unless you are born again with a divine capacity to orient to God's values. We hear much today that people cannot get out from under obsessions and compulsions. The Bible says we can. We can escape those foul habits we accumulated over the years. When God puts in us His divine capacity, we can get victory over them if we appropriate the principle to experience.

that is in the world

The "world" in the Bible is the system of values from Satan that believes something other than God will fill our needs. The world system is Satan's system of values as over against God's system of values. At the point of salvation, God delivered us in Christ from the world.

Principle

Through God's promise of living in our divine capacity, He disables our hankering for the world.

Application

Are you fond of the corruption that is in the world? Do you still have a hankering for the worst kinds of sin? Do the tinsel and baubles of this world still appeal to you? This is contrary to how the apostle Paul lived his life. The Lord Jesus spoiled Paul for living for the world.

"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14).

God does not want us isolated from the world but He does want us insulated from it. The ship is supposed to be in the sea but not the sea in the ship. The Christian is supposed to be in the world but the world is not supposed to be in the Christian. The Bible does not sponsor the idea of religious recluses. God does not want us become religious hermits who live eccentric lives not connected with people about us.

It is one thing not to be eccentric and it is another thing not to be deceived by the world. Worldly living loses its fascination when we embrace the Lord Jesus. He exposes the facade of this world. When we fall in love with Him, the world loses its grip on us.

"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

through lust

This particular word for "lust" conveys something that someone greatly desires. It denotes great intensity. This person longs for some object very much. "Lust" almost carries the idea of an obsession. Obsessions control people and they become captive to these lusts.

Lust here is the sphere of lust (Greek). The nature of this word means we direct our being towards something (the intensive part of the word). It is a desire that attaches itself to or upon its object. Lust in this verse corresponds to our depraved capacity. This capacity is the root of our corruption.

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Galatians 5:16-17).

The Christian has the responsibility to put to death the idolatry of "evil desire."

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Sexual lust is something every Christian must face,

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).

"For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts" (2 Timothy 3:6).

"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

There is a lust for false doctrine,

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers" (2 Timothy 4:3).

"Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3).

"These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage" (Jude 16).

"How they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts" (Jude 18).

Lusts are not necessarily base and immoral, they may be refined in character, but are evil if inconsistent with the will of God.

"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:11-12).

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2).

Positionally and legally, Jesus crucified our lust pattern on the cross,

"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24).

Principle

There is an in-born proclivity in each of us to focus on obsessions that are not the will of God.

Application

Do certain lusts control your life? Jesus already defeated those lusts on the cross. Turn to the cross and allow Him defeat those sins that ruin your life.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).