



Sunday School- May 12, 2013

LIFE WORTH LIVING

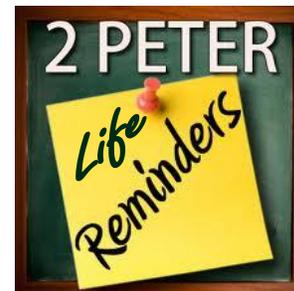
Unifying Topic: EQUIPPED WITH HOPE

Lesson Text

I. Participants Of The Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4)

II. Equipped For Everlasting Life (2 Peter 1:5-11)

III. Remember And Live (2 Peter 1:12-14)



The Main Thought: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (2Peter 1:3, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Many people feel they are ineffective, unproductive, and unable to make the right choices in life. Where can we find the strength to surmount this sense of despair? Peter says that the inner strength needed to face life with new assurance and hope comes because of our knowledge of and faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Lesson Aim: To help the students discover that faith in Jesus Christ provides the inner strength needed to navigate through life's struggles.

Life aim: To emphasize the power of Jesus Christ has given believers all they need to live a life pleasing to God.

- 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
- 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
- 1:7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.
- 1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.
- 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:
- 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- 1:12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.
- 1:13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;
- 1:14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

HISTORY:

The last chapter of **1 Peter 5** was addressed to the elders or shepherds. They were to feed the flock (the church) of God and be examples to the flock. By doing this when the chief Shepherd returned, they would receive a "Crown of Glory" that would not fade. Also instructions to the young: submit to the elder. To both the young and the elder were to have a humble spirit, for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble; being humbled under the mighty hand of God will show that in due time, God will be the One who would be doing the exalting. They were to give all their worries to God, because He is the One who cares for them. Peter lets them know that there is an enemy roaring like a lion trying to attack and eat them, so stay sober (aware) and vigilant (watchful). Continue to resist firmly in the faith, knowing that their brethren have experienced these same afflictions. Peter lets them know that they will suffer for a little while, but the God of all grace will restore, establish, strengthen, and settle them. The letter closes with "Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus Amen."

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ,— Peter had heard and answered God's call. God did not override Peter's will. Peter responded. He was called to be a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. He was not called to occupy a position of authority or to be honored by men but to minister them. He lets his readers know that he is a servant. The word "servant" (*doulos*) means far more than just a servant. It means a slave totally possessed by the master. It is a "bond-servant" by law to a master. That means a servant:

- was owned by his master
- existed for his master
- served his master
- his will belonged to his master

He was sold-out for Christ! Peter was also an apostle of Jesus Christ. The word "apostle" (*apostolos*) means either a person who is sent out or a person who is sent forth; a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into

one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle Peter:

1. He belongs to the "One" who has sent him out.
2. He is commissioned to be sent out.
3. He possesses all the authority and power of the One who has sent him out.

This says one thing: that Peter thought that Jesus Christ was worth of total devotion.

1:1b ...to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:— Peter is writing to those who share in the same valuable faith; equal privilege before God that he has. This faith in the righteousness of God and Savior Jesus Christ is obtained not earned; no one can work for it, it is a gift. This faith comes through the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ means:

1. Jesus is the righteous Man who can stand for and cover all men.
2. Jesus bore the sins of men and died for them. This was acceptable to God because He was the Perfect Man without sin.

We therefore stand before God as righteous because He counts us righteous by the death of Christ; free of sin. God only sees Christ! Peter's aim is to stabilize the Christians; combat and warn the church against false teachers and false doctrine that caused believers to doubt and turn away from Christianity.

1: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,— Peter blesses those that have obtained like precious faith which came through the righteousness of God, our Savior Jesus Christ. He greets them with grace and peace to be multiplied. The more you know of Jesus, the more grace and peace you have. Grace and peace is always through the knowledge of God, Jesus our Lord. The result of receiving God's grace is a state of peace. And so we see that the biblical order is always grace and then peace.

- "*Grace*" (*charis*) – the undeserved favor and blessings of God.

God gives an abundance of grace and peace; He causes overflow; no lack. How can a person be always overflowing with the grace and peace of God? - Through the true knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. We have to know God in order to receive the grace and peace of God. What does it mean to know God?

- "*Knowledge*" (*epignosei*) means full, personal, precise, and correct knowledge.

You gain the knowledge of God through the Spirit, who dwells in you, and brings to your remembrance everything that God has said in His Word. He interprets and explains the spiritual truth of God, giving you the true knowledge of Him. Man deserves nothing from God except judgment, condemnation, and punishment. But God is love and makes it possible for man to experience His grace, in particular the favor and blessings of salvation which is in His Son, Jesus Christ.

- "*Peace*" (*eirene*) –means to be bound, joined, and woven together; assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God.

The believer's "*peace*" in one sense is independent of our circumstances because it is a divine "fruit" brought forth in a life yielded to the control of the Holy Spirit. The better we know God, the more we experience grace and peace. Peace does not mean the absence of pain or absence of conflict or absence of testing times. But divine peace, the peace that the Spirit gives, does mean that in our pain, in our conflicts, in our testing times, we can have genuine inner peace (our soul at "*rest*").

2Peter 1:3: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:— Peter says, divine power has been granted to us; freely given. Who is "us"? The "us" is not just anyone. It is only those who embrace God's Son. Not everyone is a child of God. When you are born into the family of God by faith in Christ, you are born complete and God has given us everything we need for this life and for godliness. It is through an intimate knowledge of God (relationship) who has called us by His own glory and excellence.

- "*All things that pertain unto life*" mean a godly life; our eternal life, and our present life. Life comes from the One who has the power to stop the process of death and to deliver us from death. No man has such power. God longs for man to live, to have abundance of life; therefore He gives all things that will make a person overflow with life.

- *"Godliness" (euseberian)* means living like God; Christ-like; to live in the reverence and awe of God; to be conscious of God's presence, that one lives just as God would live, as if He were walking upon the earth; live seeking to be like God; seek to possess the very character, nature, and behavior of God.

LESSON:

2 Peter 1:4 Participants Of The Divine Nature

2:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. These promises are great because they come from a great God and they lead to a great life. They are precious because of their value is beyond calculation.

1. He not only provides for our redemption but for our eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12).
2. He not only gives us life but the promise of life to the full (John 10:10).
3. He not only gives us His joy but joy that is complete (John 15:11). Compare 1 Peter 1:8.
4. He not only gives us peace but the promise of perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3). Compare Philippians 4:7.
5. He not only promises His forgiveness but He will remember our sins no more (Jeremiah 31:34).
6. He not only guarantees heaven but He promises heaven with Him (John 14:2-3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17).
7. He not only offers us His grace but He promises that it will be sufficient for every need (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Why did God give *"these exceeding great and precious and magnificent promises"*? He gave them in order that by them, *"you might become partakers of His divine nature."* God places within the heart of the believer His own divine nature and makes him a new creature and a new man in Christ. Then, having become partakers of the *"divine nature,"* one who has been born again enters the spiritual state of communion with God and fellowship with Christ. *"...having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"* mean all who come to Christ and are in Him have escaped from sin and corruption. How can we survive in a corrupt world and remain faithful to our wonderful Lord? We must rely on Christ's divine power; and we must rely on Christ's divine nature. Paul summed it all up when he wrote in (Gal. 2:20), *"I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me."* We have become a partaker; a partner of God's promises and accepting His divine nature.

2 Peter 1:5-11 Equipped For Everlasting Life

1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;— As Peter continued, for this very reason— in addition to what God has already given them, Peter covers seven great qualities and virtues which are a progressive list to be in the life of the believer. If you miss any of those steps, you will not be able to get to the next place on the list. And that's why Peter says *"applying all diligence, add to your faith."* The word *"add"* (*epichoregein*) means to give lavishly and generously. In other words, he's telling and charging them: *"give all diligence"* (hasten, jump, act now, don't wait, be energetic and earnest, and strenuously work) to add these things to your faith as you progress and mature.

The starting point is **Faith**—You had to come to Jesus Christ by faith—that unseen part where you trusted and believed. This is the dynamic catalyst that will result in good works and spiritual maturity that will minister fruitfulness. **Now begin to add:**

1. **Virtue** (*areten*) which is moral excellence, goodness of character, moral strength and moral courage. It means always choosing the excellent way.
2. **Knowledge** (*gnosin*) which is practical intelligence, practical insight; that which enables a man to know what to do in every situation and do it according to the Will of God.

Faith is developed by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. By us adding to our faith, virtue, we fulfill moral excellence and goodness of character; then adding knowledge, we do it according to the Will of God because we are successfully growing.

1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

¹ <http://www.wordsoflife.co.uk/BibleStudy/Series40/Study2.htm>

3. **Temperance** (*egkrateian*) which is master and control of the body or the appetites of the flesh; self-control. You begin to take control of self and prevail against the lusts that rise up. *"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls"* Prov.25:28. Know that self-control is of God, a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
4. **Patience** (*hupomonein*) which is translated endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, constancy, and perseverance. With this fruit, this is the ability to endure when circumstances are difficult.
5. **Godliness** (*eusebeian*) which means to live in devoutness, piety, and devotion to God. This helps a person live above petty things because of one's devotion to God.

Temperance handles the pleasures of life; patience handles the pressures and problems of life. The person who gives in to pleasures is not disciplined enough to handle pressures, and so gives up. Godliness does what is right because it is the Will of God and therefore doing what is right in the welfare of others.

1:7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

6. **Brotherly kindness** (*philadelphian*) which is a love between brothers and sisters. The word used for love is *phileo* which means deep-seated affection and care, deep and warm feelings, holding near and dear within the heart. This enables us to be loyal and kind to the other members of God's family.
7. **Love** (*agape*) goes beyond just our fellow believers. It is for the entire world. Loves regardless of feelings; sacrificial love. This love enables us to want nothing in return.

When we have brotherly love, we love because of our likeness to others, but with agape love, we love in spite of the differences we have. These seven virtues stem first from faith and ends with love.

1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. *"These things"* mean the seven virtues or qualities. The word *"abound"* (*pleonazonta*) means to increase and grow, to overflow and be filled with more and more, ever learning. As we increase in these virtues, we will not be idle and slothful or unproductive or unfruitful in knowing what to do in every situation of our lives. We must learn to keep our minds on Christ Jesus. In other words, do not be satisfied with your present growth; with staying where you are, adding one step, but keep abounding in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christians must develop these qualities, and by doing so, they will know Christ better. If these things be in us, we are full of Christ.

1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Without Christ we are blind; unable to discern our true spiritual condition. This verse is the opposite of abounding in verse 8. When you lack any of these things (virtues), it makes you blind and shortsighted. It makes you forget that you have been cleansed from your sins. This person's lack of fruit could exist because a person's cleansing was merely an external reformation that did not come from a truly changed heart or one who has fallen into serious error regarding the Christian life and becomes a backslider. Unfortunately, you can also go backwards. You can forget being purged from old sins and regress. Some people had godliness at one time, but sin caused them to abandon it. Many exercised self-control for a time, but then gave up on it. A person is either moving ahead in Christ or either he is sliding back from Christ.

1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:— Peter wants to rouse the complacent believer. Rather than staying blind in verse 9, Peter urges his readers to make *"sure"* (confirm and secure) their calling and election, in making their salvation sure to their own minds; having no lingering doubts. Christians should diligently pursue; work at and confirm that their calling and election is reliable, unshifting and firm; that God has called them to be saved. God has called us by His Word and His Spirit; He has elected us, separated us from the world, through sanctification of the Spirit. In other words, the believer who pursues the spiritual qualities or virtues mentioned, guarantees to himself, spiritual fruit. By practicing these virtues, we will not fall, meaning into doubt; despair; fear or even fall into apostasy (falling away from the faith) or into perdition (hell). People stumble and come short of the glory of God, but God's calling and election pursues us and will not allow us to fall. Our own efforts in pursuing the Christ-like character, continues to make our calling and election sure. By God's grace we will continue to grow in the virtues; manifesting those fruits. We have to continue on in these

things by having undoubted evidence that we are children of God.

1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Those who practice those qualities will be richly provided with the reward of eternal life. We will be richly and gloriously welcomed into heaven.

2 Peter 1:12-14 Remember And Live

1:12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. The readers already knew the true gospel message. However, truth always needs repetition because believers forget so easily. Since we share a new nature, and a new quality of life in Christ, Peter is always going to preach, teach, repeat, and remind them of the importance of these things. The letter will always remind them as they read it over and over.

POINT:

Salvation is to know Christ as the Son of God, who was sent to earth by the Father to save the world. We are not to look upon Christ as a mere man, as a great religious leader who founded the religion of Christianity. The person is to look upon Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is this person's heart who in turn surrenders totally to Christ as his Lord and Savior; that comes to know Christ, day by day, experiencing the overflow of the Lord's Grace and Life abundantly. This is the power of Christ— the power to save us from death and to give us Life and godliness—the power that can stop death and give us Life and Peace.

1:13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;— Peter thought this was the right thing to do—to stir (wake-up from sleep; excite and arouse) believers to be reminded to perform these virtues as long as he lived in *“this tabernacle”*—the tent of his body—temporary earthly vessel. Therefore, as long as he was in this bodily tent, he would stir them by reminding those believers to diligent performance their duties.

1:14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Peter knew his death was at hand as he wrote this letter. Nero's persecution had already begun killing the Christians and Peter was martyred right after writing this epistle. Tradition says he was crucified upside down, refusing to be crucified like his Lord.

SUMMARY:

This is Peter's second letter. The lesson tells us that God has given us everything we need for spiritual growth. Believers are called to put forth an effort to grow in God's Word. He tells us that to build our faith, we need to practice all these virtues that Peter lists. All is built on faith – that is, trusting in God's providence when things get tough. We add virtue – courage in the face of adversity; add knowledge –a deeper appreciation of who God is, who we are, and what the difference is; add temperance– self-control; a restraining of our desires and passions to come into line with Scripture; add patience– steadfastness with others who really grind on our nerves; add godliness – an awareness of the presence of God around you; add brotherly kindness, and add love. These are our exercises that we should practice daily; chase after, and pursue, so that we can build upon our faith. If we possess these qualities we will abound and be fruitful in our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't want to become blind because we had doubts, thereby, making our calling and election not sure to ourselves, and eventually falling. We want to receive that entrance; that rich welcome into the eternal kingdom. Peter says he would continue to remind them, for he was soon going to put aside his earthly tent.

APPLICATION:

Everything we need for life and godliness comes from God. God equips us while we add to our faith, allowing us to know God better. These virtues equip us for life worth living which also makes possible the entrance to receive the reward of eternal life. This assurance and hope gives inner strength to make our calling and election sure, which will cause us not to doubt or fall. Add to your faith while praying, while reading; and it will come to pass.