

Everything We Need

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[0 : 00] That way we don't have to run up and down. I want to pray for us before we begin our new series in 2 Peter. Let's pray. Our gracious Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your word.

We do pray this morning as we hear again from your word that you might give us minds to understand and hearts to put into practice the things we need to. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, our daughter, who is in prep, and she's only been in this particular school for about a month now, she came home the other day and announced that she has decided she will now marry Dylan. Now, I don't really know who Dylan is. I'm not sure who Dylan is, and I'm not even sure Dylan knows that this is going to happen, actually. But apparently that's what's going to happen. See, our daughter, like a lot of children, they're desperate to grow up quickly, aren't they?

They want to be adults straight away. They're desperate to grow up. For the record, by the way, we've told her that she's not allowed to get married for another 20 years. But we'll see how that goes. But as I said, she's desperate to grow up.

[1 : 12] Well, Peter is also desperate for his readers to grow up, not in worldly maturity, but in spiritual maturity, so that they won't fall away. And we'll see this in today's passage.

But before we get to today's passage, we also see it at the end of the letter, where Peter summarises his letter for us. And so I've printed off the whole letter, and we can keep it with us. You can read through it at home, or if you don't want to take it home, you can put it on the table when you leave, and we can reuse them. But for now, just turn to the back page, to the last two verses of the letter, where Peter summarises his letter for us.

He says in chapter 3, verse 17, he says, Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people, and fall from your own stability or your stable position, but instead grow in, or it can be translated, by the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. You see from these two verses that Peter is keen that his readers don't fall, but instead grow.

[2 : 25] You see, there were false teachers around, people whom Peter calls lawless people, in verse 17. And Peter is concerned for his readers that they won't fall into the trap of these false teachers, that they won't be led astray.

And the way that they're not to fall, verse 17, is firstly to stand guard, but secondly, verse 18, it's also to grow. You see, the more we grow at something, the less likely you are to fall or fail at it. It's like that old saying, practice makes perfect, so on. And so Peter is concerned that his readers grow in or by the grace and knowledge of Jesus. Interestingly, these ideas here of grace and knowledge actually bookend the letter.

That is, Peter starts and ends with them. And they occur here in the last couple of verses, or the last verse of the letter, and they also occur at the start of the letter, which brings us to point one on your outlines in chapter one.

So let's turn back to chapter one, verses one and two, to see how Peter talks about grace and knowledge there. He says, chapter one, verse one, Now just a couple of quick things to notice here.

[3 : 54] At first, Peter calls himself Simeon Peter, rather than the traditional Simon Peter. Simeon is just the old school way of saying Simon. It's more Jewish way of writing it.

But the second thing is, verse one contains one of the clearest references in the Bible. There are a few, but this is one of them, a clear reference to Jesus being God. Do you see that in verse one? It says, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is clear that Jesus is God. But it's verse two, which uses those words of grace and knowledge that Peter ended his letter with.

And here Peter says that grace, that is God's unconditional generosity, God's grace and peace come through our knowledge of God and of Jesus.

The word knowledge here refers not just to knowing about God and Jesus, but also knowing them relationally, you know, knowing God as our Father, knowing Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

[4 : 57] In other words, it's talking about being a Christian. When we become Christians, we come to know God in a relational way. That's the connection, you see. But through knowing God, He gives us grace and peace.

Do you notice that? It says, May grace and peace be multiplied to you through knowing God and Jesus. But do also notice that He says here, He says, May grace and peace be multiplied to you through our knowledge of God and Jesus.

Why does Peter pray that? Well, presumably because he thinks they will continue to need God's grace and peace. Why? I think in order to grow as Christians.

You see, that's why Peter ends the letter by saying grow in grace or grow by grace. Peter knows we need God's gracious help not to fall, but to grow as Christians.

In the very next verse, He actually reminds them of what God has already given them by His grace, which brings us to point to verse 3. He says, For His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

[6 : 14] Peter says here that God has called us by His glory and goodness, which is another way of saying His gracious character. He has called us by grace to know Him.

And we haven't done anything to find God, really. He has worked in us first so that we might come to Him. And through knowing Him, He graciously gives us everything, it says, we need for life and godliness, including access to God so that we can receive more grace when we need it.

Just as Peter prayed, it might be multiplied to them. The word life here refers to new spiritual life, which begins when we believe in Jesus and come to know God. Our new life begins then and it goes on for eternity.

And we have to live out this new life in godliness. Of course, being godly doesn't happen overnight. You don't become a Christian one moment and then the next day, suddenly you're perfect like God. Well, I'm not.

I assume you're not either. It's something that's a lifelong process, isn't it? Something that we are to grow in and work at. But the point here is that through knowing God, He has graciously given us everything we need, everything required to live that godly life.

[7 : 28] I like playing a bit of soccer and so at my old church, a few boys and I put together a soccer team and we entered the local soccer competition. And our aim was to try and win the competition because there was \$200 prize money up for grabs.

We thought that was pretty good. Unfortunately, we came second last. But when you sign up to play soccer and you pay your money, you're actually given everything you need.

You're given shirt, shorts, socks, shin pads and even boots if you want them. Well, God has given us everything we need, not to play soccer, of course, but to live that godly life.

And He gives it to us when we sign up as Christians, when we come to know Him. Of course, signing up for Christianity doesn't cost us anything like it might cost us to sign up for soccer.

Instead, it cost Jesus something, didn't it? It cost Him His blood as He died on the cross so that we could be forgiven and given everything we need for life and godliness.

[8 : 29] Now, you might be thinking, what does everything include? What sort of things does that mean? Well, we know from the Bible that it includes things like our daily needs so that we won't be forced to be ungodly by stealing.

It includes giving us one another so that we can care for each other and build each other up to live godly lives. It includes the Bible itself so that we can know God better and know how to live a godly life.

It includes the Holy Spirit who convicts us and reminds us of God's truth in the Bible that we might continue to live a godly life. In fact, just the other night, I was quite tired, had a long day, and the kids were being not their angelic selves.

And I remember thinking, I just want these guys to go to bed. I've had enough. Just get to bed. And then I remembered that verse from Ephesians 6, you know, fathers, bring your children up in the fear and the instruction of the Lord.

And so instead of saying, get into bed and be quiet, I said, let's see what we're up to in the Bible. And so we read the Bible together. You see, God's Spirit was working in me to remind me of God's Word in order to live a godly life.

[9 : 35] That's how it works. Now, you need to know a couple of things. Firstly, that my children aren't always naughty. And secondly, I'm not always godly. There's a problem with using personal illustrations, but don't get the wrong idea.

But have you ever had that kind of experience where you've been prompted to do the right thing? God's worked through your conscience or reminded you of Scripture. See, God's given us these things to help us live out our new life in godliness.

And He's also given us access to Him so that, as Hebrews 4 says, we can come before the throne of God in prayer. And find more gracious help in our time of need.

He's given us everything, you see. And in particular, He's given us great and precious promises. Verse 4, He says, By these, that is, by His glory and goodness, His gracious character, He has given us very great and precious promises so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires.

You see, by God's grace, He has given us very great and precious promises. What are these promises? Well, Peter gives us an example in chapter 3 where he talks about the promise of Jesus' return and with that, the promise of our new heavenly home.

[10 : 55] And Peter says that it's through these sorts of promises that we can participate or share in the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world. What does that mean?

Does that mean we become God? Of course not. I mean, can you control the weather? No, I mean, it would be nice to from time to time, wouldn't it? But we can't, can we? It's not talking about the fact that we become divine.

No, it's talking about sharing in God's character, His likeness. As we heard from our first reading, it's about being imitators of God's character.

It's about being godly instead of worldly and corrupt. And Peter says that it's through these promises that we are helped, enabled, to share in that divine nature, to live that godly life instead of that worldly life.

But how does that work? What does that look like in practice? Let me try and illustrate. At one church I used to attend, there was a boy who suffered from severe autism.

[11 : 56] A boy, he's a man, he's about 33 years old now, I think. He was in my Bible study group for a while and he was a great bloke. But he made things difficult from time to time.

For example, at Bible study, at supper time, he'd grab some supper, taste it and then put it back. You know, it didn't go down too well with everyone else in the group. He made things hard but his parents had it hardest because his mother in particular still had to feed him and clothe him and help him live.

And I remember standing around in a circle with his mother and a couple other men and women from the church and one of the ladies asked her, she said, how do you keep going?

How do you keep being loving and patient? And she said this, she said, knowing that one day I will see him in heaven with a perfect autistic free body.

You see, the promise of heaven helped her to keep going, helped her to keep loving and being patient, helped her to keep being godly in other words, to share in that divine nature and it's the same for us.

[13 : 02] The promise of Jesus' return and of heaven helps us to keep going, to persevere at living godly lives knowing that it will be worth it. That's just one promise of course. The text says great and precious promises, plural, but hopefully you get the idea about how it works.

By God's grace he's given us very great and precious promises to help us share in that divine nature that is to live godly instead of worldly lives. And since God has given us these promises, indeed, since God has given us everything we need for life and godliness, then Peter says, well, grow in this new life and godliness.

That's point three, verse five. For this very reason, because God has given us everything including these promises, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, with goodness, with knowledge, knowledge, with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love.

See, Peter says, in light of what God has given us, then grow in your faith. Supplement or add to your faith, not because our faith is somehow inadequate. He's not talking about that. If we believe or have faith in Jesus, that's the same thing, believe, faith, same thing. If we believe in Jesus, then we become Christians. Simple as that. If you are here this morning and wondering how to become a Christian and receive eternal life, all you do is believe in Jesus.

[14:32] That's it. But Peter then says, now that you do have faith, now that you do believe in Jesus, now that you are a Christian, then add these other qualities as well.

In other words, grow as a Christian. Now, these qualities are not in chronological order as though we must first get goodness before we can get knowledge. Otherwise, we never end up with love, would we?

I'd never make it through that list until we get to love. Rather, they're a bit like the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. They're different aspects of the godly life that we're to have, that we're to exhibit.

But I think Peter has chosen them deliberately because these are the very things that the false teachers lack. Remember, there's false teachers around and these are the things they lack.

If you flick over the page in your insert to chapter 2, verse 1, we get a bit of a snapshot of what the false teachers are like. We'll come back to this in a couple of weeks' time, but just let's have a look at the first three verses of chapter 2 there.

[15:32] He says, But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.

Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and the way of truth will be blasphemed because of them. They will exploit you in their greed with deceptive words.

Their condemnation pronounced long ago is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep. You see, these false teachers lack knowledge and instead teach heresy.

They lack self-control and instead live unrestrained ways. They lack love and instead practice greed and exploitation. And so it's as though Peter says back in chapter 1, verses 5 to 7, he says to his readers, But you guys, you folk, make sure you make every effort to have these qualities that those false teachers lack.

And not only have these qualities, but grow in them, he says. You see verse 8, chapter 1, verse 8? He says, For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[16:53] See that phrase there? And increasing. In other words, we're to grow in these qualities, which makes sense because when you become a Christian, as I said, you don't become suddenly perfectly self-controlled.

You don't perfectly have goodness overnight. It's something you need to work at and grow in, isn't it? You've got to make every effort to work at these things. But if we don't grow, then says verse 8, we'll become useless, literally unproductive and unfruitful.

You see, for Peter, being a Christian isn't meant to be a static thing. We're not meant to believe in Jesus and then do nothing. We're meant to grow and bear fruit in our lives.

That is, we're meant to grow in our understanding of God and we're meant to grow in our likeness of God. That is, in our godliness. Of course, it does require effort, doesn't it? Effort to read our Bibles during the week.

Effort to get to church at the end of the week so that we might grow in our understanding and be encouraged and encourage one another to keep growing in godliness. Carol Norman and I visited Florey Jones last week or the week before now whom some of you will know.

[18:07] She's, she'd just come out of the ICU, intensive care unit and we'd visited that week and not just out of the ICU and she said this to us. She said, I'd like to be at church this Sunday but I don't think I'll get there.

Carol and I said, you've got to be kidding. She's got to have the ICU. That's fine. Don't worry about it. But you see, she was keen to make every effort she could to come to church so that she might keep growing in her relationship with Jesus.

keep growing in godliness. Peter says we're to make effort. Actually, no, he doesn't say that, does he? He says we're to make every effort to grow as Christians.

Otherwise, we'll become unproductive and unfruitful. Christians who claim to know Jesus on the one hand but bear no evidence of it on the other. What's more, if we're not growing as Christians in

godliness, then we've forgotten what Jesus has done for us.

See verse 9? The person who lacks these things, that is, those things in increasing measure, is blind and short-sighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his or her past sins.

[19 : 18] See, the person who doesn't make every effort to grow is short-sighted, says Peter. Now, I suffer from a little bit of physical short-sightedness and some of you might suffer a bit more from it.

Being short-sighted, of course, means you can see things up close but in the distance things were a bit hazy. In fact, one day I waved at Michelle in the distance only to discover that it wasn't Michelle, it was another girl.

The worst part was Michelle saw me and then I had to explain myself. But for the person who claims to know Jesus with their mouths but shows no evidence of it in their lives, then they are spiritually what I am physically short-sighted.

They don't look back, you see, to the cross and remember what Jesus has done for them. Instead, they forget the forgiveness Jesus brought them by his blood. You see, we are to keep looking back to the cross.

We are to keep remembering what Jesus has done for us, keep remembering how he suffered hell for us in our place so that we could be forgiven you see, we are never to lose sight of the gospel.

[20 : 30] We are never to tire of hearing it for it is not only the means by which we are saved but it is also the means by which we are motivated to keep living no longer for ourselves but for him who died for us and was raised again.

And so the conclusion to the first part of this letter I think comes in verse 10. Verse 10 and 11. He says, Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election because if you do these things you will never stumble for in this way entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to you.

Here Peter wants them to demonstrate that they are genuine Christians. He wants them to confirm their calling by growing in godliness for if they grow it will show they are genuine Christians and it will ensure that they don't stumble or fall but instead receive a rich welcome or rich entry into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ.

You see, Peter is desperate for his readers to grow as Christians. He wants them to remember that God's grace has given them everything they need to grow including great and precious promises and so he says, grow, make every effort to grow.

And so we need to ask ourselves, how are we going at growing? When you look at those qualities in verses 5 to 7, are there any there that you need to grow more in?

[22 : 03] I can see a few for myself. There might be though some that we're doing pretty well at, praise God, but there may be some that we could do better at. For me, I think I could do better at loving non-Christians.

I heard a story last week about a Christian lady who is friends with someone at our church. We'll call her Rose, this Christian lady. Rose was out at a cafe with some friends and sitting beside their table was another lady who was by herself looking down into a cup, obviously lonely.

And so Rose said hello to her. She said, are you here by yourself? And she said, yes. She said, would you like to come and join us? Oh, okay. And so this lady joined Rose and her friends and they had a coffee together.

And then they invited this lady to their church craft morning. And then this week, that lady is now finding out how to become a Christian. Just because of Rose's love for her.

It's a great example of how we might grow in love like that, isn't it? Whatever it is that we might need to grow in though, the great news is we're not alone in it, are we? We have God's gracious help.

[23 : 18] And so as Peter says in chapter 3 verse 18, grow in or by grace. And so why not pick one or two of those qualities this week and pray that God would help you to grow in them as you make every effort to grow in them yourselves so that we won't fall but rather find ourselves in Christ's eternal kingdom.

let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this letter which is encouraging yet also challenging.

Father, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you for your grace in him that though we don't deserve it, you gave him to die for us so that we could be forgiven.

Father, help us to always remember Jesus and his death for us that we might continue to make every effort to grow in our faith. We ask you for the Lord.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen.