

Equip: In God's Word and Godly Living | 2 Peter 3:18 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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Preacher: Pastor Patrick Dailey

[0 : 00] Well good morning Ontario Community Church. It's good to see all of you this morning. It's great to be with you this morning. My name is Patrick Daley and I am the pastor here at Ontario Community Church. It is an honor to be with all of you this morning to be with you today. Today we are continuing our series going over the 3e pathway, encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ.

Our mission and our vision, the most important thing about our church is that we are pointing towards Christ. We are encouraged to love God and to love His people. When we make a decision for Christ, it is an internal decision that has eternal significance. To make a decision for Christ is it is accepting that you are a sinner and that you need a Savior and that Savior is Jesus Christ.

There's also baptism where a person is making that public proclamation and this comes after receiving Jesus Christ, receiving that salvation. Choosing Christ is personal, it is internal, and baptism is public and external. After you make a decision for Christ, I want all of us to remember it is not the end of your life, rather it is the beginning. I am reminded of Ecclesiastes chapter 3 where it says that for everything there is a season, there is a time for every matter under heaven. And this verse in Ecclesiastes, you have Solomon who is towards the end of his life and he's talking about all of the vanities and all of the fleeting things in life. The teacher is referring to his observation in the things in life and that there is a natural order to things. There are natural seasons in this earth. When we think of summer, winter, fall, and spring, there is a natural progression for things. We also know that there is a natural progression from when we are children to when we grow up to become adults. There is something that we can observe just like how Solomon learned that there is a time for everything under every matter under heaven. From being a new Christian to spiritual maturity, this message today we are learning about what it means to be equipped to grow in faith from being a baby Christian or being a new believer to becoming more mature in the word of God and knowing who Christ is and what it means to be a Christian. From the time we begin our walk with the Lord we begin as children. We don't begin as adults necessarily. We're gonna learn about equipping. But before we do that I want us to pray. Let's bow our heads and pray to the Lord before we go any further. And Father God as we begin our time going over this second E equip. We're reminded that in everything we do we are doing in honor of you to glorify you in excellence for you and your glory. We pray that our minds will be open to hearing your word and that our hearts will be opened. It will be moved to action. We pray that every one of us are on a path, a spiritual path that leads towards you and not away from you. A path of spiritual growth and maturity. We realize that as Solomon is writing that for everything there is a season. There is an appointed time and a moment for every matter under heaven. We are under heaven. We pray that we enter this season of growth and we take every moment and every opportunity to worship you, to glorify you, to learn more about you and to grow in you. May we apply these lessons to our lives and do what the word of God says. For your word it guides us, it equips us, it motivates us and it transforms us. We ask that you are with us today as we go through these many verses, these ideas, these biblical concepts, but more importantly may we be guided to you. May we come to you. May we return to you. May we grow in you. Not run and hide, but may we come to you. May we not be afraid of your word. May we not be afraid of your presence. May we be here together in this place. It is in Jesus' name that we pray and we all say together amen. And as we go from this idea of being equipped in the faith I have a question I want us to think of as we're going.

I'm wondering if we can have someone do the slides. My remote access is not working. Can we have someone do slides? Hold that time. See even as I, the younger guy, we run into technical difficulties.

So the opening question is what does it mean to you to be a student or a disciple of Jesus Christ? I want you to think of this question as we're going forth today. You know 2nd Peter, it's a verse that I want us to all turn into in our Bibles. It's going to be in our ESVB Bibles. Let's turn to page 1209. If you're not using the ESVB Bible that's perfectly fine. You'll find it in your notes. It's going to be 2nd Peter chapter 3 verse 18. So go ahead and turn that there to that place in Scripture with me.

[6 : 21] 1209. It's towards the end of 2nd Peter. It's actually the final verse in now. So I'm going to go ahead and read it. Let's read it together. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. You know in the context of this verse we find that Peter is encouraging Christians or believers to grow in their faith throughout their lives. Contextually 2nd Peter, it's a smaller letter, right? It's a smaller letter in the Bible where Peter is writing to health believers fight the battle against false teachers. One of the very incredible things that we have to be reminded of in Scripture is there are many warnings against false teachers, false prophets, false theology if you will. And here we find in Peter he's talking about God gives us everything that we need to live a life for God. And even though there are false teachers who are teaching things like contextually in 2nd Peter, denying the return of Christ or the importance of living for Christ or the importance of righteous living, Peter is encouraging believers to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. You see when we grow in our walk with the Lord we are encouraged to study the Word of God. We're encouraged to study Scripture. We're encouraged to be in Christian community.

We are encouraged to learn about what it means to live for Christ, to grow in the faith from once being a child to being a mature adult. We can grow to know more of the difference and one of the great things of studying the Word of God is knowing the difference between good and evil, truth and lies and things that are godly versus ungodly. Now we're not doing a study on 2nd Peter but this is an overview of what's happening in that book. We are encouraged in Scripture to become a Christian to make a decision for Christ, to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, right, with everything that we are and to love people. We are also encouraged to grow in the faith, to be baptized, to study the Word of God, to be in Christian community and to as a church even to grow. To grow in grace means to exhibit kindness, it means to exhibit favor, it means to show good will to others. This is but a reference for having love for people just as God has shown love and grace towards us. You see in the same way that God has shown love towards us like we talked about last week, we are to exhibit that same kind of agape love or agapeo love if you will. We are encouraged to do that. Let us remember that to know Jesus Christ, to grow in Jesus Christ, it's not just about having that head knowledge but it's also about having the heart knowledge, having the heart to love Jesus Christ and having the mind to understand the deeper things of Scripture. It's knowing, it's having that personal relationship with Jesus

Christ if you will. Jesus Christ is the firm foundation and we are to build our lives on the solid rock. I want us to consider Matthew chapter 7 verse 24 through 27 which talks about the two men who build their houses. Well what do they build their houses on? Some of you may know this, some of you may not. One person builds their house on the sand and the other person builds their house on what?

On the rock, the firm foundation. So one on the sand and one on the rock and when the rainstorm comes, I think of the hurricane that's coming up to California right now, right? When a rainstorm comes, do you want your house to be on solid ground or do you want it to be on the sand? I hope we all, we pick the solid rock.

We don't pick the sand. I love how in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 11 it says this is in reference to Christ as the firm foundation. It says that no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid which is in Jesus Christ. So that's interesting. Remember I always talk about there's connections in the Word of God.

[11 : 10] There's connections that we find just scattered throughout and it goes it should encourage us, it should help us grow in our faith. The entire chapter is having a ton of rich biblical truth in it. In 1 Corinthians you have Paul addressing divisions that are happening in Corinth and he is encouraging Christians that no one can lay that foundation in anything other than Jesus Christ and that's a very powerful verse. To be equipped is to be on a spiritual path of growth towards maturity from being once a baby Christian. I know that's always a weird thing to say. A new believer if you will. A child to someone who is mature. Do you guys remember when you were a baby? Maybe you remember better when you had your first child if you will or maybe your friend or your co-worker you saw a new child. They didn't eat steak and if they did I kind of question the way you're raising your child here. But the thing is we start as children and we grow into the adults. It is that natural progression. In Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11 through 13 it says this is a famous verse some of you may know it. It says that he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip. To equip who? The saints. Who are the saints? They are the believers. They are Christians. For the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain what? The unity in faith. Because you see in

Scripture we do better when we are together and we're not attacking one another. When we are united in Christ. And of the knowledge of the Son of God to maturity or as some translations say mature manhood. To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be children. Tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about every wind of doctrine by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather speaking the truth in love. This whole verse is talking about no longer being swayed right? But like by the waves. It's kind of like if you have a really small ship if you will right?

You've probably heard the saying that we are to be anchored in Christ. Well if you don't have an anchor and the waves come or storm comes you're going to be tossed to and fro. And that's like how when we have false teachers who will push you every which way. It's a famous verse that's talking about there are many parts of the body of Christ. There are shepherds right? There's evangelists.

There's all of these types of people who are to serve to equip the saints specifically to equip believers. We're talking about those who are set apart. Those who are part of the body of Christ. We are to be equipped so that we can serve. And that's that third E when we're talking about the three E pathway.

Right? To be encouraged to love God and love others. To be equipped in the word of God and what it means to be a Christian or godly living. And the third aspect is service.

[14 : 25] Engaging the community for Christ through service and through sharing your faith. So it's all connected here. So we are being equipped so that we can serve so that we can grow to maturity so we can have unity within the church. So we can have knowledge of our faith so we can give an account for what we believe in. Consider the fact that if you are a Christian, a brand new Christian, consider the consequence of if you've never grown in your faith. How vulnerable you can be to false doctrine and theology. But also consider the fact if someone asks you a question about why do you believe what you believe?

Who is Jesus? You don't want to say, I don't know. He's my savior. You got to go more. Come on, you got to do better than that. You have to be able to say this is I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of the living God. Or at least have something to say.

Something much more than I, you know, I like Jesus. You should be able to be equipped to give an account for your faith. We are equipped so that we will no longer be children.

So that we can stand firm in our faith and not be manipulated or convinced or something that is contrary to the teachings of Christ and the teachings of scripture. In making a decision for Christ, you are choosing to have Christ at the center of your life.

Because God needs to be at the center of everything that you do. And so you have to ask yourself the question, well, what foundation am I building my life on?

[16 : 05] Like we were talking about the two men who built their houses on different foundations, right? Is your foundation on Jesus the Rock? Or is it on the sinking sand of the world as it were? The choice is up to you.

How are you going to build your life? Being equipped requires actions for the believer. I've said it once and I'm going to say this almost in every sermon that I that I give here. We are saved by grace through faith.

We are to believe in Jesus Christ so that we can do good in the world. My friends, there is a difference between believing in a system that says you are saved by doing good in the world and there's many religions that teach that.

We can go on and on about different religions that do this. There's also, there is Christianity that says something very different. It talks about what has been done for you. Because Christ was born, he lived, he performed miracles, he healed the sick, he raised people from the dead, he turned water into wine, he performed so many miracles, he taught parables, he taught, he rebuked the Pharisees even. He fulfilled the prophecies, many prophecies, not just one prophecy. He died on that cross, he was buried and on the third day he rose again. There is so much to our faith.

And so I say this, I will say this so many times. We are saved by grace through faith so that we can do good in the name of Christ.

[17 : 44] We're to have an act of faith that means we are to engage in the reading and the studying and the application of the scriptures into our daily lives. Do you realize that scripture will change you? Do you realize that God, you are allowing God to transform your life? Do not be conformed to the patterns of this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

That's a very powerful verse. That God will transform you. I'm here to tell you that I'm not the man that I was 10 years ago. I'm not even the man that I was five years ago.

Because God continues to work in me. He continues to transform my life. But see, it's not just about me. It's about God who is the great transformer and he will transform each and every one of you.

We are to seek first the kingdom of God. We are to seek its righteousness. We are to do or to grow in our faith. We are to become equipped through Bible studies, through small groups, through serving the community, through prayer and mentorship. We are to choose Christ first and foremost and to grow in him. And central to our spiritual growth is the Bible.

It is the word of God. Scripture is used for equipping believers. That means for us as the church, we are to grow in our faith by knowing God and his word. To grow as a Christian, we do this as individuals and we do this together.

[19 : 12] Consider a bundle of sticks. Some of you may have heard this problem before. One stick may be easy to break. Two may be harder. Three sticks may be even more difficult. And that is a representation.

So too is the church that when we are together, when we grow together, we are not easily broken like the bundle of sticks. Because that's how the devil attacks you is when you're alone.

When we're together, when we are united in Christ and we're all on, we realize we're all on the same team, we're growing together. We are like the bundle of sticks. In 2 Timothy, I want to, I want you to turn your Bibles to, it's going to be 2 Timothy 3 verse 16 through 17.

It's going to be page 1182 in your ESPQ Bibles. It's a famous verse that some of you may know. 2 Timothy 3 verse 16 and 17.

1,182.

[20 : 32] 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16 and 17. So it just starts right at the bottom of 1,182. It says, all scripture is breathed out by God.

It is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete and equipped for every good work.

This verse is saying that scripture is breathed out by God, which means that the scriptures are divinely inspired as though God breathed on them. I love that verse where it's talking about the inspiration that comes from God. The Word of God is powerful and we're not to consider the Word of God just like any old textbook, or we're not to consider it like Grimm's fairy tales or other books. We are to elevate the Word of God as the Word of God, not the Word of man.

No, it's that divine inspiration that we have. The Word of God is profitable and that means that how the Word of God it is useful. It is invaluable for us as believers. I like looking at the Word of God as something that is useful for us and something that is invaluable. You can't put a price on the Word of God.

The Word of God scripture is used, it says in the verse, you can find this in your notes as well. It is for teaching, it is for reproof and correction and training. The training simply means instruction in the truth for we are to be taught the Word of God and we are to grow. We are to be on a path of growth.

[22 : 24] We're all on our own individual journey towards Christ, but we are all also on a journey as a community. And that journey should be towards Christ. It shouldn't be towards Buddha. It shouldn't be towards any other God, but it should be towards Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. The Word of God is a guide for us.

It molds us. It transforms us. We are taught as believers the truth of scripture and look, there's many easy passages and there's certainly difficult passages. There's some passages you're like, what is the firmament? What do I do with that?

How do I balance faith and works? That's why you hear me say so much. We're saved by grace through faith in Christ so that we can do works because it can be very easy to get that confused.

So some verses are harder than others. Very hard book in the Bible is Revelation. Also Romans. Some are a little easier than others.

Reprove means conviction or rebuking. Nobody likes that word rebuked, right? Or conviction for that matter. It is identifying if there is an error, if there is sin, if there is something that we need to horse correct. I'm not speaking of anger and aggression. I'm merely talking about the Word of God pointing out when you're sinning, when you're doing wrong. Let us remember, there's a famous quote, some of you may know it, to err is human.

[24 : 09] Well the Bible convicts us and corrects us towards Christ. Correction means straightening up or redirection. Now here's the thing about the Word of God. It'll point out when you're doing something wrong and it will give you a framework or a guidance towards how to fix it.

Because you see so often we were placed in situations where we're pointed out the wrong that we do but not how to fix it. And what's beautiful about the Bible is that correction aspect, redirection.

God provides a way for us to get back with him or to make our lives right with God. Consider a sailor, someone who is searing in the open sea.

If the sailor is even but one degree off, if he does not course correct, eventually he will be so far from his destination because he didn't make those adjustments along the journey.

So too is what is something we have to do in regards to sin. We course correct, we get right with God. Look, all fall short of the glory of God. We're all sinners.

[25 : 15] Just look, we're not perfect. None of us are perfect. So we need to course correct and we turn to the pages of scripture. We turn to God in prayer. We turn to our friends in Christ even.

God is like that map or that GPS. We need to realign ourselves. So we think another, this identifies the idea of sin. Now I love the definition of sin. Did you know that sin in Hebrew and Greek is the same definition?

It is to miss the mark. It is like how an archer, I don't know how to bow an arrow so I'm just giving a visual representation here. The archer will shoot towards his target and he'll miss.

Sometimes he'll hit the target, sometimes he'll hit the bullseye. The archer needs to adjust their aim or their technique but sometimes the archer needs to consider the wind or or different factors that are happening, the distance from the target. And it's a really great analogy of how we are to look at us when we sin. We are missing the mark.

We are when we fall short, it's we are missing the point. And I want us to remember to air as human, that's the famous quote, but to restore godly. The verse goes on to say that there's training in righteousness. This has to do with being disciplined, with being trained or instructed. We are corrected and put on a path towards Christ. We should never do it alone. We should have, we are to relate to Christ and we are to relate to fellow believers. That's why we have the church as the community of believers to pray for each other, to encourage each other, to love each other, and to help build the church up together.

[27 : 11] So often in Christianity there is a push against doing good in the world. Many people say that doing good works doesn't matter. Some people like to just ignore the fact that there are works in the Bible and others like to use works as, well this is the basis for your salvation. But I have to remind you, works matter after you have been saved. You make a decision for Christ, you place yourself on a trajectory of growing in Christ.

That includes doing good in the name of Christ. That is including how do you love your neighbor, how do you serve your community. I'm not going to go too much into this but that will be more for next week. But see how everything is connected.

We are being equipped so that we can make a defense for what we believe in. We are being equipped so that we can serve, so that we can share in our faith. So all of this is there's connection. It is my hope and prayer for this church that we grow in faith.

God wants us to grow from being children to mature adults. May we go from spiritual milk. I always think that's such a strange word for the word of God to use, going from milk to solid food.

First Corinthians chapter 13 verse 11, it talks about the natural stages from childhood to adulthood. When I was a child I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned like a child and when I became a man I gave up childish ways.

[28 : 40] Now contextually Paul is talking about the importance of spiritual growth from a child to an adult in the context of the ability to love other people. Because earlier in those passages it's talking about you can have all the gifts and the abilities but if you don't have love you're nothing. Then he goes on describing that love is patient, love is kind. He's talking referencing being a child.

So contextually going from a child to an adult is your ability to love others. So there's natural progressions and seasons in life. God does not wish for us to remain as children in our walk with the Lord.

God wants us to mature. This is a part of discipleship. This is a part of being a student. I love how disciple is defined as being a student of Jesus.

Because when we think of colleges and we think of universities and whatnot there's classes that we take and it ends at the end of the class or it ends at the degree that you have. But when being a student of Christ it is a lifelong process. It is something that God will continue to work in and through you through his word. Whether you're 15 or whether you're 50 you can be eight years old or 80 years old. You never you should never stop learning the word of God. How many of you have read the word of God once and then you read it again and it meant something the way God spoke to you was entirely different than the first time. I know there were situations where I read it I'm like okay it means this. The next time I read it meant something else. That's the power of the word of God.

First Peter chapter 2 verse 2 says like newborn infants long for pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation and I need to speak about this real quick. The growing up into salvation sounds like a very scary thing. What do you mean I'm growing up into salvation? Is that a workspace system? Well in first Peter he's talking about existing Christians who have already known the Lord. In fact in first Peter chapter 1 verse 23 he is talking about believers who are going through trials. It says since you have been born again so he's specifically talking to Christians who already exist and they are growing in the faith. He just chose the common salvation as some of the letters or the epistles are speaking to. First Corinthians chapter 3 verse 2 and Hebrews chapter 5 verses 12 through 14 make mention of similar themes of spiritual milk and solid food. First Corinthians I fed you with milk not solid food for you were not ready for it and even now you are not ready for it. Hebrews chapter 5 verse 12 through 14 it says you need milk not solid food for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled. So there's these connections with having milk as a child right?

[31 : 34] You don't give a baby that steak. Please don't. Just don't. Give them a bottle if you will. Give them milk and as they grow when they start getting their teeth in or when they start wanting to have what is it smoothies and other things they start going into mac and cheese or rice or more solid food. Then comes the point where they are ready for that solid food. Hebrews talks about how the people need to go back to the basics and grow in faith.

It is a wake-up call to begin again in their discipleship process. In first Corinthians Paul is telling the church to remain in faith and not on human leaders. My friends there's a lot of verses that talk about relying on Christ. Like in first first Corinthians there's the question that Paul is asking well who is Paul who is Apollos who is Cephas because he's addressing people. We don't follow people. Don't don't follow me.

Follow Christ and if any of you are following me I want to point you towards Jesus Christ. It's not about me. It is about Jesus Christ. That is what we are to keep in mind and sometimes we need reminders of the basics of the faith. Sometimes we do.

Sometimes we need that course correction in our life. Whether you're starting on your walk with God or you're further along may your path always be towards Christ. Not on the not on a celebrity. Not on man but on God. We place our faith and our trust in Christ and not on humanity. Now we love humanity by all means. We love our brothers and sisters in Christ. We love people as God has commanded us.

But when we talk about salvation it points to Christ. Psalm 119-105 says your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. For God's word is used as a guide for all of us in our faith journey. Joshua 1-8 it talks about how the how Joshua is to meditate on God's word every day so he can lead God's people. You see study, reading, meditating on the word of God is not about personal gain. It is allowing God to speak to you, to work in and through you and to transform you.

[34 : 06] Let us be a church like Acts chapter 2 verse 42 where the early church devoted themselves to teachings, fellowship, breaking bread and prayer. It is an encouragement much much like we are to hear from the word of God. Do life together all for the glory of God.

And in our beginning passage in 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 18 grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to him be the glory now and to the day of eternity.

And as we close our time today I want to ask you this question how can I draw closer to God and grow in him?

First it's about making a decision for Christ. First it's about receiving the gift of salvation. As you grow or as you make that decision grow in Christ and ask yourself that question how can I grow in Christ? If you don't know the Lord make a decision for Christ first and foremost. If you are a Christian how can you grow in faith? Does that mean studying languages? Does that mean being in Christian community? Does that mean being in a Bible study?

Does that mean reading different translations? How you answer that question is for you to think about. It's not for me to answer. I don't really want to think about how everyone can answer that.

[35 : 33] But it's for you to answer. So think about that as we are closing today and I want us to remember what we learned today. We are learning about what it means to be equipped.

We make the decision for Jesus Christ and we grow in our faith. We grow knowing who more about Jesus Christ more about Scripture. Allowing for God to work in and through us.

To be plugged into Christian community Bible study as if you will. There's many practical ways that we can do this. So with that let's close in prayer.

Father God as we continue as we conclude our time this morning we ask that we want to draw near to you each day. May we come to know you as you have known and known us even before we were born. We are made in your image and you love us unconditionally. Teach us how to love like you.

Teach us that we need you. That we are sinners in need of a Savior. Guide our steps. Teach how encourage us to grow in faith. May we be equipped so that we can produce good fruit.

[36 : 51] May we mature in our faith and let your word be a guide for everyday living. Let your word transform our lives, our church, and our community. And as we leave today may we grow in knowledge, love, and dedication to you. Bless everyone here today and be with those who are awake and those who are yet to come.

May they come to know that they are loved by you. May they come to know about your Son Jesus Christ who paid it all by dying and rising on that cross. We thank you so much for all that you have done, all that you do, and all that you continue to do.

You are that firm foundation and we need something we need a constant and an ever-changing world be with us this week. It is in Jesus' name that we pray.

Amen.