

THE UPWARD WAY
(GROWING SPIRITUALLY IN A WICKED WORLD)
2 Peter 1:8-11

Intro: The Apostle Peter here exhorts us to apply the character traits found to our lives. When we apply character traits, we will grow spiritually; and by doing so, we will not be barren or unfruitful; we will bear fruit. Thomas Adams stresses the importance of having all of the character traits that Peter lists in vss. 5-7: “We must have ‘these’ all these; not one or two, but all. It is not enough faith and leave out virtue; nor knowledge without temperance, not piety without charity.” (90).

I. Vss. 8-9, EXAMINING SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- A. Vs. 8a, “*if these things be in you*”, the character traits of vss. 5-7, then you will be a fruitful Christian, not a barren one. In light of the fact that we, children of God, have a divine nature (vs. 4), these traits are to be a natural and expected outgrowth of faith.
1. These traits are not only to exist, they are to abound. The Greek word for abound is *pleonazo* meaning to “exist in abundance, to super abound.” Wuest says: “The Spirit filled life is the overflowing life” (25). The Spirit filled life is an Artesian Well whose source is higher than its overflow. Because the source of the water is higher than the well, the overflow is spontaneous. “The source of the Christian life is God; the overflow the believer” (Wuest 26).
 - a. The Bible teaches us that Jesus is: “the Rock that is higher than I” (Psalm 61:2).
 - b. Jesus is the living water (John 4:10); and through Him, comes the overflowing abundant life.
 - c. As Christians, we are to have lives that are truly filled and overflowing with spiritually. This is not just for us, but for others. We are to be a source of spiritual refreshment to others. We are not going to refresh others if we are not refreshed ourselves.
 - d. Step by step, we are to grow in grace. Barclay says: “The more we know any subject the more we are fit to know” (305).
- B. Vs. 8b, God wants us to bear fruit; He does not want to be

barren and unfruitful. Barren is the Greek *argos* and means “to be idle, lazy, shunning labor.”

1. When the ground is not cultivated, it lies idle and does not produce a crop. We are to cultivate all the character traits that Peter lists in vss. 5-7. We are to desire these traits growing within us, bearing fruit.
2. To be fruitful, we must be faithful. We are not to let the lusts of the world choke out the Word. “As parents want to see their infants gain weight, so Peter desires our spiritual growth in knowing Jesus more and more” (Kistemaker 254).

C. Vs. 9a, Those who lack the character traits given in vss. 5-7 are “*blind, and cannot see afar off...*”

1. “Blind” in the Greek is *muopazon* from which we get Myoptic meaning to “close the eyes, to squint.” Without the Lord to guide us, we walk blindly and make a lot of mistakes. Without the Word as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, we stumble through life as a blind man.
2. Nutrition affects our natural and spiritual vision. We need to be healthy in our physical and in our spiritual diet.

D. Vs. 9b, “*Cannot see afar off*” means to be nearsighted. This person only sees things on the earth and never gives much thought to the things beyond.

1. We are to be a people of spiritual sight and insight. The Bible says: “Where there is not vision the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18).
 - a. We need to believe in and see growth in spirit and in number.
 - b. We need to believe that Jesus is still in the business of saving sinners. Some have become blind to spiritual needs as did some of the disciples to whom Jesus said: “*Lift your eyes, and look upon the fields; for they are white already to harvest*” (John 4:35).

E. Vs. 9c, “*And hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*”

1. We are not to forget what Jesus has done for us. We are never to forget His grace and mercy.
 - a. *Ephesians 1:7: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according*

to the riches of his grace.”

b. 1 John 1:7: “...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son ,
cleanseth us from all sin.”

2. Keep looking to Jesus. “*Looking unto Jesus the author
and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set
before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and
is set down at the right side of God.”* If you don’t look to
Jesus, you will be blinded by the world.

II. Vss. 10-11, EXAMINING ETERNAL SECURITY

A. Vs. 10a, Peter uses an all important word in this verse:
“*Brethren,*” fellow believer. So he is addressing those who are
saved by God’s grace.

B. Vs.10b, “*Give diligence*” – Diligence means to make every
effort. If you are saved and sure, then you can rejoice in your
salvation. It is assurance that will give us courage and make
us better witnesses for Christ.

C. Vs. 10c, “*Make your calling and election sure.*” It is important
for us to realize that calling and election are God’s work not
ours; they are His action. This has been made plain by Peter.
In verse one, he speaks of “*like precious faith.*” He says that
the believers are those who “*have obtained like precious faith.*”
Not through any works of their own, but “*through the righteous
of God an our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

1. To obtain means to receive. We received this faith from
God as is illustrated in *Ephesians 2:8-9*. We did not elect
or call ourselves, God called us, and He elected us. This
is the way to gain full assurance. We need to realize that
“*salvation is of the Lord*” (Jonah 2:9).

a. In verse 3, we read: “*According to his divine power
hath given us all things that pertain unto life and
godliness...*” It is God alone who can give us life.
Paul says in *Ephesians 2:1*: “*And you hath he
quicken, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*”

D. Martin Lloyd-Jones says: “A dead person cannot
regenerate himself; a man cannot give life to
himself; he cannot quicken himself. He is incapable
of any action. A man cannot give birth to himself”
(33).

b. Salvation is from start to finish the gift of grace.

2. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, we see election and calling:

“...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvationWhereunto he called you by our gospel.”

 - a. God elects man in eternity (Eph. 1:4) and calls him in time (Rom. 8:29-30).
 - b. We are to make our calling and election sure because this is what God tells us to do. When we see and understand God’s way of salvation in contradiction to man’s failed plan, we can by faith have assurance.
 - c. The Apostle Paul understood this and could say with certainty: *“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12).*
- D. Vs. 11, Do you want an abundant entrance into heaven? Then do those things that cause Christian growth. Make the character traits of vss. 5-7 a vital part of your life.
1. Before anyone can enter into heaven, they must know Jesus as personal Saviour. *“Entrance”* is the Greek word *eisodos* made up of two Greek words *eis* “into” and *hodos* “road” thus meaning “the road into.” This points to a particular road, a particular way. Jesus Christ is the *hodos*, the only way, the only road, into heaven (John 14:6).
 2. Think of it, an abundant entrance into the kingdom; not just an entrance, but an abundant entrance. The Greeks used this phraseology to describe the welcome home given Olympic winners.
 - a. Every child of God is going to make it home, but some will have a more abundant, a more glorious entrance than others.
 - b. Some will be saved, yes, “yet so as by fire.” (1 Cor. 3:15).

Conclusion: Don’t be lacking, make your calling and election sure by adding all of the character traits of vss. 5-7 to your life.

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