

How then shall we live?
Week 9: God's part & my part

How are we supposed to live in this culture like Jesus? That is the question we have been asking as we go through the books of 1 & 2 Peter.

Today we turn a corner and head into 2nd Peter. We first need to find out if this is a different kind of writing or setting. Let's dive into verse 1 and see what we can learn about 2 Peter.

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ² May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 2 Peter 1:1-2

This is clearly a letter with what would have been a very **traditional greeting**. That is with one very important exception, which we will **get to later**.

This is an **insider talking to someone who was an outsider**, but no longer is. To be God's people, you had to be **Jewish and remain separated** from other people. They had only **two categories of people**, Jews and Gentiles, or us and them.

We have who wrote it and to whom it is intended. "May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

What part of that do you feel might not be a part of a traditional greeting?

It's the word knowledge that isn't really a part of a traditional greeting. **2 Peter begins and ends with an emphasis on knowledge.** Here's how it ends.
¹⁸ 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. 2 Peter 3:18

And, once again, here's how it begins. **² May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. V2.**

What does that tell you? For the rest of this letter we are to look for knowing and knowledge.

Peter begins with knowledge of "God and of Jesus our Lord." He ends this letter with knowledge of "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Peter is telling these people that knowing Jesus as God, Savior, Lord, and Christ is vitally important.

So how do we know Jesus? He wasn't still walking around at that point in history, and he isn't walking around now. What does it mean to know him or have knowledge about him?

This is very important, more so even for us than it was for them. When we think about the word knowledge, we think intellect, even academic understanding. Write this phrase in your journal beside verse 2...Knowing is both head and heart.

One scholar described this knowing or knowledge as an "intimate informed relationship". This is a heart level connection, with passion, you get me, we fit together. The heart is what gives yourself to someone where you are willing to be vulnerable and trust the other.

But also, background checks are good, aren't they? What are the facts, understanding of someone in a more definable way? What is your past behavior like, because the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.

When I met Robin, I was immediately attracted and drawn to her. But that alone didn't tell me that she wanted to be in ministry. Most women left skid marks when they heard you had entered into the exciting, challenging, and economically advantaged career in youth ministry.

The increase of head knowledge of a person will increase the emotional connection when the person is good. The more I knew about Robin, as far as information about her personality, her past, her likes and dislikes, the heart, with emotional connection only grew.

It's the same way with God. When we know more about how he has operated in the past and what he is doing now, and what is in his heart, the more we will love him and want to trust him with everything.

Peter is going to make it clear in chapter 1 and throughout this letter that he believes that knowing God is not a static, or fixed thing. He believes in the idea of **Growing Knowledge.**

What Peter is challenging us to do is grow in our knowledge of God, head, and heart, emotion/experiential and intellectual.

So how do we do that? Peter is going to help us with this.

In these next few verses, Peter wants the people to understand two sides of growing knowledge that will help us live a godly life. As I read starting with verse 3, I want you to look for anything that speaks to God's part. **³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,** **⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. Stop right there.** I want you to circle this next phrase, because it is important. **⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,** **⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.** **⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** **⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.** **¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.** **¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:3-11**

Write this phrase beside verse out of knowledge grows godly living.

The kind of living that will be an attractive alternative to others can come out of a growing knowledge of God.

The opposite then is true. If you don't know him, or attempt to gain knowledge of him through his word, or experiencing him in some way, then you cannot live a godly life that reflects Jesus. There's no just naturally being a good person and that becomes godly. Godly is based upon who God is and we can only really know him through Jesus.

Write this phrase beside this passage and leave room under it to make a list of what you have found, **God does his Part**...which only He can do.

Look again at verse 3. Peter says, ³ **His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.** God has the power to give us all that we need to live a life that pleases him.

This is how he provides all of this to us, **through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.**

Shout out something you found out about what Peter says is God's part in this.

- Divine power and everything we need to live godly lives.
- Called us to his glory and excellence.
- His precious and great promises.
- Partake in his divine nature.
- Entrance into the eternal kingdom v. 11.

Now we switch gears, looking at the same section of scripture, looking for what it says is their part, which is our part. Write this phrase beside this paragraph...**My part demands effort.** Leave space to make a list under it.

Look at verse 5 again. There's a transition word phrase of like **"therefore"** connecting what he has just said about God's part with what he's going to say about our part. Peter says, ⁵ **For this very reason,** before he tells us to **"make every effort."** Because God did all of this for us through Christ, our only reasonable response is to put effort behind the things I'm about to tell you.

That phrase "make every effort" = earnestness, haste, zeal. When I read this, it makes me think of the phrase, "going through the motions" or even "sleep- walking through" something. These are the exact opposites of earnestness, haste and zeal.

My part in living a godly life like God wants, demands effort, some earnestness on my part. Not assuming that because God is forgiving that everything I do is really ok. That's going through the motions of religion without earnest effort.

But remember, God has provided what we need to live godly lives. Because he has provided everything needed, I just need to put in the work.

Keep in mind, it is a thin line between effort and earning. We say all the time that God's grace is not anti-effort, but it is anti-earning. There is effort needed from us, but Jesus earned our salvation through his death on the cross and resurrection.

I have a membership to Planet fitness. They have this huge room full of every machine, free weights, devices for cardio, strength training or building muscle, and stretching, improving flexibility. We go there about two times a week for a combination of those three areas. They have everything I could ever need for making this old bag of bones healthier and more vital.

But I could tell people I have a membership, go into the building, and talk to people wearing workout clothes, check myself out in the mirrors (which people do) but never put in the effort by using all of those resources.

But, because it is a "no judgment zone" no one will come up to me and say, "Either start working out or hit the road buddy." As long as I pay my \$25 a month, the 20 year olds at the counter couldn't care less.

Peter isn't judging or guiltting us, he's just stating it as a fact. You have been provided everything you need to live a godly life that pleases God and is an example to our culture and don't complain when you stumble right

into sin. And don't be surprised when our culture looks at us and says, "Why would I ever want or need that?"

The context of this letter and our culture today are very similar. The context is there are **false teachers** that we will hear about beginning in the next chapter. These teachers say they know Jesus, but they are really following a philosophy called **Gnosticism**. What Gnosticism is about is separating the physical world and the spiritual realm. They are two different things and they do not mix. There's nothing about our spiritual life, our souls, that demands how we use our bodies or live our lives.

I can believe in this Jesus and accept his free gift of forgiveness and salvation that leads to eternal bliss and that has no claim on how I live my life in the physical world. I can listen to a sermon and then watch porn. I can read the bible and then steal my iced tea from Speedway. I can go to church and worship to the songs with my eyes closed and hands raised and then cheat on my wife. The spirit has no claim on the physical.

This way of thinking used the word knowledge to describe how deep they were in their spiritual knowledge and connection, while at the same time living like a hellion. They had heard that they were free in Christ and they believe that the deep knowledge of the spirit allowed them to turn freedom into a license to ignore God's call to live godly lives.

They were to live lives that reflected that they had been with the one who had no sin. Throughout this letter, Peter is reclaiming the word **knowledge**. Your real knowledge of Jesus', both head and heart, is what will fuel your life, become more and more like Jesus.

From a letter to the church in Rome...¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have **no obligation** to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. Romans 8:12-13

That is about effort. But again, I've been provided all that I need to continually, over and over put to death the deeds of the sinful nature. It's not a one-time deal. Earnestness means that when I become aware of

something new, or even something old that has crept in, I must put it to death. I must make the effort to replace it with something of God.

²² **throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.** ²³ **Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.** ²⁴ **Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.** Ephesians 4:22-24

It is a deception when we think that Jesus has no interest in how I live and how I use my body. It is a deception that sinful living will ultimately give me what I really need. Then Paul uses that powerful word “instead”. Instead let the spirit do its working of making things new. But, as that is happening, my part is to “Put on my new nature and that nature is righteous and holy.”

Gnosticism is missing the point of the gospel. They were following a false gospel, and guess what, it is the default gospel for much of the American church. We call this the “forgiveness only” gospel. This gospel ignores repentance, trusting God's commands, and following Jesus' example obediently, which are all a part of the gospel Jesus taught. They just cherry picked the part they wanted and ignored the rest. They are what Bill Hull calls “vampire Christians”; they just want a little bit of Jesus' blood to deal with their sin issue and then he must leave them alone.

If you haven't really repented, believed, and are actively following, then no wonder you can't do this. There's no Holy Spirit. All that stuff is under God's part, none of that is at your disposal. No wonder you're frustrated. You are following a religion called Christianity and not Christ himself; therefore you don't have all you need to live a godly life. Or you're living in this delusion that your faith doesn't really have anything to do with how you live. Either way, you don't have the power or, in the latter case, the “want to” to live the way God calls us to live. And that way is called, “life to the full!”

We today lack a theology of growth. And so we need to learn how we 'grow in the grace and knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18). In particular, we need to learn to cooperate with 'the means of grace' that God has ordained for the transformation of the human personality. Our

participation in these God-ordained 'means' will enable us increasingly to take into ourselves Christ's character." Page 58

The options are cooperating with The Holy Spirit, or resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit.

⁵¹ "You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That's what your ancestors did, and so do you! ⁵² Name one prophet your ancestors didn't persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. Acts 7:51

Back to 2 Peter. For whoever lacks these qualities is **so nearsighted that he is blind**, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 2 Peter 1:9...

It's like a guy sitting in Planet Fitness around everything necessary for growing in health, eating a triple cheese burger, smoking a pack of Camel unfiltered cigarettes, drinking a large slurpee, refusing to leave the massage chairs. That's willfully being nearsighted to the point of being blind.

Back to our list of things that God wants us to add to or put in an earnest effort. Don't get caught up in the order, because **order doesn't really matter**. But, it does matter **how the list ends**. ...and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 2 Peter 1:7 It is wrapped up with love. This is a **double scoop of love**. Brotherly affection is one way of translating phileo or brotherly love. And then a different word that is translated love, agape.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3:14 NLT

"Love is not only the last and greatest Christian virtue; it is also the 'glue' that holds all the rest of the together, the quality without which all the others will be less than they should be." The NIV Application Commentary page 47

If we can seek God's abundant resources to love even our enemies, then this somewhat intimidating list will just start to grow, because love is the glue that holds everything involved in a godly life together.

Here's the promise if you are allowing your knowledge of God and Jesus to grow both head and heart. ¹⁰ **Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.** ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:10-11

Is God speaking to you today? Are you, for lack of a better term, a modern day gnostic, or are you someone who continues to fail to live a godly life because you don't really know Jesus. You've made no effort to get to know him, head and heart. Then let's do something about this.
Aligning my life.

If you need to confess your Gnosticism, or your lack of effort, to access all that is needed that God has provided, then this is a good time to do that. You can do that right where you are. I'm going to wait to pray and anoint anyone after.

Here's a way to start doing your part with some effort. *Do this week's challenge in the study guide?*

Pics of my the study guide

Maybe pics from my journal like last week

To launch us into this week's challenge, let's read Peter's words again, but in a different way. I've got the scripture split up into God's part and my part. I'm going to start reading, but when I get to the bold print, I want you to join in. (We have table tents)

God does his part...

² *May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.* ³ *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,*^[a] ⁴ *by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may*

become partakers of the **divine nature**, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Because God did his part I can do mine...

⁵ For this very reason, **make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue**, and virtue with **knowledge**, ⁶ and knowledge with **self-control**, and self-control with **steadfastness**, and steadfastness with **godliness**, ⁷ and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**. ⁸ For **if these** (should be bold) qualities are **yours and are increasing**, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:2-8