

CCF Study Notes
Tuesday 7 AM Study
26 December 2006
2 Peter 1

Before beginning to read from 2 Peter, let us spend time in prayer, considering the faith which is ours and the work of God's word in our lives, bringing us to maturity. Let us ask God to help us do the following:

1. **Know God** that we might grow by faith and knowledge to maturity in Christ,
2. **Diligently** walk with God, growing more and more in His likeness,
3. **Walk** in such a way as to be sure of entering Christ's eternal kingdom,
4. **Hear and heed** the constant reminders of who Jesus is and how we must walk,
5. **Beware** of cunningly devised fables while embracing the eyewitness accounts of Jesus,
6. **Reverence Christ** as we ought, knowing that His glory was revealed to eyewitnesses, and
7. **Hold** to the inerrancy and authority of scripture knowing the Holy Spirit is their Author.

Our precious faith gives us the knowledge of God through Christ. If we know God then we will grow constantly in godliness and love and assurance of our salvation. We need the constant reminder of those eyewitnesses and apostles who were with Jesus. We need the testimony of the Old Testament as spoken by those who were moved by the Holy Spirit. Thus we know God!

(1:1-4) Compare this opening paragraph with the opening of 1 Peter. What is different? Who is this letter addressed to? Why would Peter identify immediately with all those to whom he wrote?

It is vital that we know God. It is in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord that grace and peace are multiplied to us. It is through the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord that we receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. The knowledge spoken of is not some esoteric, Gnostic wisdom, but the simple truth about Jesus Christ as told in the gospel. When we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, then we know the Father as well. Otherwise we do not know God at all. Many religious people do not know God at all.

Peter speaks of our precious faith and of God's exceedingly great and precious promises. What promise does the future hold for us? The future is dark and hopeless without God's promises. God's promises are validated and certified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Just as the promises of God bring us glory, virtue, life and godliness, so lust brings corruption to the world. When our heart is set on God's gracious gifts through Jesus Christ we find eternal life and the path of growing godliness. When we set our hearts on things which God forbids or detests we grow more and more corrupt. This simple warning was needed in Peter's day. This warning is needed in our day as well.

We read of God's divine power at work in us and we read of entering into His divine nature. Corrupt men partake of God's divine nature only by the work of God's divine power in them!

The Gnostics in Peter's day and the mystics of our day speak of divine power and the divine nature as well. These people look to rituals and spirits to give them such power and nature. They are sadly mistaken, for they are merely being overcome by Satan. Have you noticed the recent emphasis in the arts and popular media on magic, wizardry and supernatural powers?

(1:5-9) God's power doesn't eliminate the need for diligence on our part. Because of God's promises there are things we are looking to add to our faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Everybody needs more of these things! So coming to faith in Jesus Christ isn't the end – it is just the beginning of all that God wants to do in us. These are things God wants us to have. These are things God wants to give to each of us. We need only seek these things, take hold of them when God grants them to us, and refuse to ever let go of them. Virtue comes when faith is put into action. Knowledge comes through long experience of living by faith. Self-control comes as we come to know who God is and what we are not! Perseverance comes as we struggle long and hard against sin and adversity, never giving up even when we have fallen. Godliness comes through patient perseverance in doing good – not through some emotional experience. Brotherly kindness comes as we see others going through the same struggles we are going through. Love is the ultimate form of godliness and covers even those situations where kindness seems impossible.

If Satan cannot keep us from faith in Christ, then he will try to keep us barren and unfruitful. Healthy, growing Christians reproduce and are fruitful in their labor. The knowledge of God comes through the Living Word, so that true knowledge always bears fruit in our lives. Some people don't want these things and are satisfied to remain as babies in Christ. Such people are shortsighted, not seeing the eternal implications of failing to mature. Such people are blind, not seeing what God has done, is doing and will do in years to come. Such people forget that God has cleansed them from those old sins that held us captive – they forget their new freedom in Christ.

(1:10-11) Some people delude themselves into thinking that they are saved, thinking that some ritual or communion will save them. A failure to thrive in the Christian life is sometimes a sign that the precious faith that leads to salvation was never obtained. When our faith bears fruit in works and character, there is much greater assurance of salvation. When we are walking with God, moving on in life, then we will not stumble, suddenly discovering that we are on the wrong path. And if we are on the right path, walking with God in His way, then we know we will one day enter His everlasting kingdom. The bottom line is simple: growing in Christ bolsters our faith and gives us greater hope concerning our eternal salvation. Where there is no growth there is no hope for eternity. Hence the need for diligence! How diligent are we about our walk with Christ?

(1:12-15) We get tired of hearing the same things over and over. But we need to be reminded always of these things. Amnesia is surprisingly common today – people seem to forget who they are, reinventing themselves every day, with every changing whim. Peter wants to remind us always of the vital truths concerning Jesus Christ so that we will always be firmly established. Peter vowed to continue the reminder as long as he was alive, and leave reminders even after

death – like this letter we are reading. Here is why we keep studying the Bible, looking at the same things over and over: we need to be reminded constantly of what we know about God and about Jesus Christ.

(1:16) Fiction writers in Peter's day often took their writings far too seriously – even as they do today. Greek and Roman religion was centered on the literature concerning the Greek and Roman gods – which was merely fiction. Several large, modern day cults were founded by writers of fiction. Peter did not write fiction, but an eyewitness account. Peter had a perspective of Jesus that few men could claim. Peter had seen something of the glory and majesty of Christ. One of the great things about those whom Jesus chose as disciples is that none of them were so eloquent as to be able to make up such stories as they recounted. They gave simple eyewitness accounts. The media of our day sometimes lures people away from Christ. Movies and television, novels and paintings portray events that never could have happened – and people subconsciously give credence to these things. Let us not be led astray!

(1:17-18) Peter was with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, when Jesus shone with glory and the Father spoke of Jesus. Peter was with Jesus at His baptism when the heavens were opened and God spoke. Peter heard God's voice when it thundered in confirmation of Jesus' glory in Jerusalem. Peter knew that there was a glory about Jesus that transcended all earthly glory. Peter didn't have to look forward to the revelation of Jesus. Peter had already seen the glory and bore witness to it. We must wait to see the glory of Christ. In the meantime, we can take Peter at his word – for it is inspired of the Holy Spirit.

(1:19-21) Jesus confirmed before His disciples everything that the prophets predicted concerning Him. So we know the Jesus is the Messiah. And we know the prophetic words are all true. More than that, God's word is our light in this dark world. God's word tells of the rising of that Morning Star – Jesus. Today, as in that day, dark mysteries hold many people spell bound. Because we have the scriptures Jesus is not shrouded in mystery. He is the fulfillment of everything the prophets wrote. So the New Testament interprets the Old Testament. We must never be ashamed of this truth!

Sometimes human teachers try to lead us astray by weird interpretations of Old Testament scriptures. Such interpretations are not needed and are not helpful. The Old Testament scriptures were fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, so that we need no other interpretation.

The Old Testament writers were not free to say whatever they wanted. They wrote only what God instructed them to write. They spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. So we must not dismiss what is written in the Old Testament. We must not twist what is written in the Old Testament. It was all spoken for our benefit, so we must study it carefully. It all points to Jesus!

P.S. Recordings and notes for these studies are available at <http://www.jstoker.name> . A podcast is available at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast> .