

An Overview of the Christian Life  
2 Peter 1:3-11

*All Bible verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV).*

Part 1: The Power of God (verses 3-4)

"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, 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 the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."

- A. Stop and consider the results of his promisees
  1. Everything that has to do with life and godliness
  2. God's own glory and excellence
  3. Partakers of his divine nature
  4. Escape from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desires
- B. Consider your responsibilities
  1. Learn his precious and very great promises
  2. You can do this by reading the Bible, especially Jesus' words in the Gospels.

*My note: I used the word "consider" in hopes of getting the student to dwell on the points in the first section. With some thought, the student can experience awe at what God has promised. Yet these are not really promises but the results of other promises in regard to grace and the Holy Spirit. The student should be diligent in reading the Scriptures so that he or she learns the promises that lead to these fantastic results.*

Part II: Our Path (verses 5-7)

"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, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love."

- A. Virtue: The first thing to do after faith is to live a virtuous life. Everyone has some idea of goodness from his or her God-given conscious. As a brand-new, untaught disciple begins by living as virtuously as he or she knows to live.
- B. Knowledge: A disciple must be taught so that he or she can live out Jesus' commands and teaching rather than just his or her own concept of goodness.

1. This can be done from the Scriptures, through solid teaching from a trustworthy teacher, and from the exhortations, admonishments, and instruction of brothers and sisters in Christ.
  2. A trustworthy teacher is one whose life you consider worthy to be imitated (Heb. 13:7).
- C. Self-control: Obviously learning Jesus' commands will do no good unless you actually obey them.
- D. Steadfastness: While we have been given power to escape the corruption that is in this world through selfish desire, we are warned regularly not to grow weary in doing good (e.g., Gal. 6:7-9; Col. 1:21-23)
- E. Godliness: In my opinion, Peter adds this quality to self-control and steadfastness to tell us that if we continue in obedience to the things that we have learned—which is something we can do because we have learned his promises and know how he has equipped us—then our obedience to Jesus' commands and teachings will infuse us with godly character noticeable to others. They will not only see our good works, but they will experience God's influence through us (cf. 2 Cor. 2:15-16)
- F. Brotherly Affection: One of God's primary goals is the unity of his children (e.g., Eph. 4:1-16). Walking in the Spirit will necessarily infuse us with love (Rom. 5:8; all of 1 Jn.). The beginnings of this heavenly love are found in our affection to our brothers and sisters (Gal. 6:10).
- G. Love: This is always the primary goal. We can learn anything we want, but if we do not have love our knowledge is useless (1 Cor. 13:1-3). The purpose of all the commandments is love (Matt. 22:36-40; Rom. 13:8; 1 Tim. 1:5; etc.).

*My note: Though I have presented these qualities as a progression, and though it is true that they are a progression, they must all be increasing in us as we grow as Christians. We will see this in the next section.*

### Part III: Rewards and Punishments

"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. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fail. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

- A. Though I explained the qualities of verses 5-7 in a logical progression, and although the progression is real, all these qualities should be increasing in us as we grow in Christ.
- B. This passage lets the disciple know that Jesus is not expecting instant perfection from his students, but instead desires constant forward progress without tiring and quitting. Again, he has equipped us through great and

precious promises, especially by giving us his Spirit (Rom. 8:2-13; Gal. 6:7-9), to be able to run our race (the course of our life) without faltering (Isa. 40:29-31).

- C. Though we are called and chosen (elected) by God, it is nonetheless our duty to use the great and precious gifts (grace, the Holy Spirit, the new birth, the Word of God), to make our calling and election sure.
- D. If we fail in our perseverance, we will not only falter, but we will begin to forget that we were ever delivered from our sin (that we had once escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust). Just as his promises are great and precious, so the consequences of turning from them are severe (2 Pet. 2:20-22).
- E. If we persevere (are steadfast), the reward is abundant. It is a "rich" entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we will obtain.

#### Part IV: False Traditions that this passage exposes

*My note: It is heart-breaking that so much false tradition is around today, but no matter how much we do not like it, counterfeit disciples, teachers, and churches outnumber the real ones. Do not be confused, however, into thinking that it is hard to tell the counterfeit from the real. "You will know them by their fruit [i.e., deeds]," Jesus said (Matt. 7:15-20).*

- A. Obviously, it is not true that, as many teach, we should not add to our faith. Instead, if we hope to attain to the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we must "make every effort" to add to our faith.
- B. One does not enter the Kingdom of God by faith alone; instead, by faith alone (in Jesus as the Lord and Son of God and in God's great and precious promises) the disciple obtains the power to enter the Kingdom of God.
- C. In another lesson we will learn that this power comes in the form of grace (Rom. 6:14; Tit. 2:11-14), the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2-14), the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:14-17), our brothers and sisters in Christ individually (Heb. 3:12-13), and our brothers and sisters in Christ corporately (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 10:24-25).
- D. Though it is God who calls and chooses us, we play a role in being called and chosen.