

ADDING TO YOUR FAITH

Early in his second letter, Peter uplifts his readers with the fantastic message no believer should miss: *"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."* Everything you need for godly spiritual life. Through His grace and power, *"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 desires."* Christ has removed the penalty for sin by His sacrifice of Himself. And He has removed the power of sin in the lives of believers. And we look forward to the heavenly day when God will remove the presence of sin from our lives. Promises made and promises kept!

1- PARTAKERS. Let's expand on what we explored last time. Many professing Christians seem to regard 2 Peter 1:3-4 as a sort of spiritual reality that will come to pass one day in heaven. Certainly so, in all its fullness. But Peter is speaking of the present, of things true now, based on what God has done through Jesus in the past. When you are born again, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, so that through repentance and faith you put all your trust in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Bible says you come into "union with Christ." As you trust and obey, living for Him, by His power and according to His word of truth, you experience that new life. So, as Peter says, *"you may become partakers of the divine nature."* The Bible speaks about this in terms of bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Our previous study of the communicable attributes of God noted the ways that we, as being made in His image, are to reflect His character in our own lives. It's what the Bible calls being made holy or "sanctified" to become more like Christ.

2- PROMISES. This all happens through *"His precious and very great promises"* made to us in the Bible, the Word of truth. The Spirit of God works the Word of God so the people of God become like the Son of God. Jesus prayed about this in John 17: *"Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven and said, this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I manifested Your name to the people whom You gave Me; sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth; that they may all be one, just as You are in Me and I am in You, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me, and loved them even as You love Me, and so they may be with Me where I am."*

This powerful prayer of Jesus traces the same truths the apostle Paul talks about in Romans 8:29-30, *"to be conformed to the image of His Son...those whom He predestined He also called and justified and glorified."* Paul doesn't mention sanctification, what happens to believers between being justified and being glorified. It's the earthly experience of becoming like Christ, as He prayed in John 17, *"sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."* That's the fuel for your faith, believing what God says in the Bible is true, then in faith acting upon it and living it out, instead of the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. That's how you are made holy and sanctified to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Imperfectly in this life, due to our lack of faith and obedience. But progressively nonetheless. All pointing to future glorification.

3- SUPPLEMENT. Peter rehearses these precious "indicative" truths about being a Christian, but then says something perhaps unexpected, as he issues an "imperative" command: *"make every effort to supplement your faith."* God has given you everything you need. So get to it. Live it out. Grow! How? By adding to your faith. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, "You must know what you have in Christ, and then add to it." To know Him, then to become like Him, by His power within you, through His Word and His Spirit.

A personal illustration: the Saturday I was finishing the sermon this column is based upon, I was intently focusing in my computer when I became aware of a wee little voice, asking if I had a hair dryer. What? can't you see I'm busy! "Well then I'm going to have frizzy hair for Sunday." Well, I didn't want that. And I had the tools and parts to try to fix the cord. I just had to do it. Off I grumbled, getting it all together, and I fixed it. Then I realized it was my personal lesson for 2 Peter 1:1-5. God has given me everything I need for the Christian life. Salvation in Christ, His Word, and the power of the Holy Spirit. I just need to trust and obey. I need to believe what His Word says, step out in faith, and live it out, by His power within me. In doing so, I will become more like Christ, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, just as Peter commanded, and just as Jesus prayed. God gives believers not only the "want to" but the "how to" - so let's get to it.