

A STUDY OF 2 PETER

Growing in Faith (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Peter began his letter by assuring his readers that God has blessed them with every resource necessary to live a godly life. Their ability to achieve the result godliness comes through the divine power of God, their knowledge of him, and his precious and very great promises. Now Peter calls these Christians to a growing and mature Christian faith based upon what they have in Christ.

The list of qualities listed in verses 5-7 does not need to be understood as a stair-step method where one completed task leads to another, but rather a group of qualities that a Christian should possess in increasing measure. God has provided all a Christian needs to succeed, now Peter says “*make every effort.*” This phrase tells us that our Christian growth does not come automatically or even easily, but requires a strenuous effort on our part.



1. How does one make every effort and how can we know when every effort has been made?
2. Define the following words or phrases:
 - a. Faith -
 - b. Virtue -
 - c. Knowledge -
 - d. Self-Control -
 - e. Steadfastness
 - f. Godliness -
 - g. Brotherly Affection -
 - h. Love -

Salvation does not come through man's efforts, but those who are Christians should desire to develop the Christ-like characteristics found in verses 5-7. Our desire to incorporate these qualities into our lives is so great that we *"make every effort."*

3. Why did Peter begin his list with faith and complete the list with love?

LOVE					
Virtue	Knowledge	Self-Control	Steadfastness	Godliness	Brotherly Affection
FAITH					

Bearing Fruit (2 Peter 1:8-9)

The qualities listed in verses 5-7 are to be present and growing in the life of any Christian. It is not enough to possess faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. These godly characteristics are to be present in increasing measure so that the Christian's life will be effective and fruitful.

To be *"ineffective"* is to be unprofitable or unable to accomplish a desired result. To be *"unfruitful"* is to lack in producing anything of use to God. The one who does not make every effort to develop a vibrant and growing faith makes himself useless in his knowledge of Christ. *"Knowledge"* is the obtaining of information that is incorporated into the life of the Christian. This knowledge is obtained by learning and obeying what God says in his Word.



The man who lacks the qualities listed in verses 5-7 is *"so nearsighted that he is blind having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins."* This man has both a vision problem and a memory problem. He is nearsighted (Greek word *myopazo*) because he is focused on the present. He shuts his eyes to the truth which leads to sin and separation from God.¹

4. What would cause a Christian to focus on the present with little regard for the future?

The ineffective and unfruitful man intentionally forgets that God has cleansed him from his sins. This forgetting is not that he cannot recall what has happened, but that it makes not practical difference in his life. The cleansing refers to baptism when sins are washed away.

5. Describe what you would find in the life of a Christian who is effective and fruitful.

Avoiding a Fall (2 Peter 1:10-15)

The word *"therefore"* in verse 11 tells us that Peter is drawing his opening thoughts to a conclusion. He continues to urge his readers to be serious about growing their faith. In verse 5 he wrote to *"make every effort"* and now he writes to be *"diligent."* Diligence means *"to be in a hurry, to exert effort"*² Every Christian must be completely engaged in growing, serving, and

¹ Smith, James E. *Teacher's Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com, 2010. p. 121.

² Ibid.

loving Christ. Our faith will not grow and will not be fruitful unless it is a priority in our lives. God has given us everything we need to live a godly life and any failure comes from us. Within this truth stands this promise: If you are diligent in your faith and you practice the qualities of verses 5-7, you will never fall. The one who does not fall will enter into the eternal kingdom of God.

God makes forgiveness possible to man and elects all those who respond to the gospel in faith. A part of that response includes baptism. God's divine power makes it possible to live a godly life, but the Christian is expected to make every effort to grow in faith and if a Christian is ineffective and unfruitful he stands in danger of falling. Paying diligence to a growing faith will protect the Christian so that he will not fall. It is not man's effort that brings salvation and perfection is not possible, but God does expect us to love him, to serve him, and to grow in our faith.

The rich provision of entrance into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ pictures "the reception given to a conquering general when he returned to his hometown."³ Those who are faithful and fruitful will not only enter into heaven, but will do so with a great and rich welcome.

6. How are Christians called and how are Christians elected?



7. How many times in verses 12-15 does Peter use the word or thought of reminding his readers of something?

8. What is the importance of the word "always" in verse 12?

9. What did Peter expect to happen in his own life in the near future?

10. How long would Peter keep reminding his readers to be faithful?

Christians need to be reminded of the truth in which we are established. We should never tire of hearing the truth and being reminded of what God says to us. Peter knew that difficult days awaited the church as even those within the body would seek to move them from the truth. What an important and timely reminder Peter provides to the church in the first century as well as the twenty-first century.

³ Ibid. p. 124.