

Equipped for Godliness

2 Peter 1:3-14

SS Lesson for 05/12/2013

Devotional Scripture: 1 Tim 4:8

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson teaches about how to be **Equipped for Godliness**. The **study's aim** is to understand that God has already provided us with all that we need to live godly lives. The **study's application** is to learn how to use the resources God gives us to live the way God wants us to.

Key Verse: 2 Peter 1:3

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

Commentary from Barnes Notes

[According as his divine power hath given unto us] All the effects of the gospel on the human heart are, in the Scriptures, traced to the power of God. See Rom 1:16. There are no moral means which have ever been used that have such power as the gospel; none through which God has done so much in changing the character and affecting the destiny of man.

[All things that pertain unto life and godliness] The reference here in the word "life" is undoubtedly to the life of religion; the life of the soul imparted by the gospel. The word "godliness" is synonymous with piety. The phrase "according as" seems to be connected with the sentence in 2 Peter 1:5, "Forasmuch as he has conferred on us these privileges and promises connected with life and godliness, we are bound, in order to obtain all that is implied in these things, to give all diligence to add to our faith, knowledge," etc.

[Through the knowledge of him] By a proper acquaintance with him, or by the right kind of knowledge of him. See John 17:3.

[That hath called us to glory and virtue] Margin: "by." Greek, "through glory," etc. Doddridge supposes that it means that he has done this "by the strengthening virtue and energy of his spirit." Rosenmuller renders it, "by glorious benignity." Dr. Robinson (Lexicon) renders it, "through a glorious display of his efficiency." The objection which anyone feels to this rendering arises solely from the word "virtue," from the fact that we are not accustomed to apply that word to God. But the original word is not as limited in its signification as the English word is, but is rather a word which denotes a good quality or excellence of any kind. In the ancient classics it is used to denote manliness, vigor, courage, valor, fortitude; and the word would rather denote "energy" or "power" of some kind, than what we commonly understand by virtue, and would be, therefore, properly applied to the "energy" or "efficiency" which God has displayed in the work of our salvation. Indeed, when applied to moral excellence at all, as it is in 2 Peter 1:5, of this chapter, and often elsewhere, it is perhaps with a reference to the "energy, boldness, vigor," or "courage" which is evinced in overcoming our evil propensities, and resisting allurements and temptations. According to this interpretation, the passage teaches that it is "by a glorious Divine efficiency" that we are called into the kingdom of God.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the major outlines came from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator and by reviewing the Scriptural Text.

Verse	Phrase	Major Outline
3	His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness	God's Side of Godliness
5	But also for this very	Man's Side of Godliness

Verse	Phrase	Major Outline
	reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith	
8	For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful	Results of Godliness

Lesson Background

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

The list of inspired biblical books is the canon. They are considered equally inspired, but since they were produced over a long period of time, they were recognized as authoritative at different points of history-While the Old Testament took over a thousand years to be completed, the entire New Testament was written in only about a fifty-year time span. Since there were other books circulating in the early church (Luke 1:1-4), certain tests were applied to decide whether a book was canonical. Among these were apostolicity, orthodoxy, and universality. This meant that a book came from an apostle or one closely associated with an apostle, contained sound doctrine, and was universally accepted by the church. For whatever reason, II Peter was not as well-known or as quickly accepted as his first letter. Since some stylistic differences are found in Peter's two letters, some were not sure he wrote both. Since much of Jude and II Peter 2 are very similar, some have wondered about that. In time, II Peter was accepted as canonical. Our lesson this week reminds us that the Christian life is truly difficult to live out every day. But as Christians we are also provided with all the tools and resources we need so that we can be successful in any situation. Our lesson reminds us of the power of God's Word to build us up and provide us the victory we need daily. Over and over again we hear the claim that Christianity takes the fun out of life. But in reality, that is not true. It is exciting to discover what God can do for us daily when we fully trust Him. When we lean on our Lord Jesus for all that we need, we live a godly life of exciting faith. Our lesson this week shows us that God has not left us alone to somehow find a way to live a godly life. He has already put all the resources in place for us to succeed.

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

In many respects, 2 Peter is the sequel to 1 Peter (see the background to last week's lesson). The focus of 2 Peter is on that apostle's final instructions as he anticipates his pending death. We might say that this letter is Peter's "last will and testament." As such, it is a discourse on what he realizes the rising generation of Christians needs, the lessons he has learned through a lifetime of following Jesus in a sinful world. The letter focuses on a few key topics, including the life that results from the genuine message of God (2 Peter 1), resistance to false and immoral teachers (2 Peter 2), and patience and expectancy regarding Christ's return (2 Peter 3). This week's text belongs to that first section. We think 2 Peter was written in AD 67 or 68.

Commentary from A Study By: Bob Deffinbaugh From the Series: Standing on the Promises--A Study of 2 Peter

Fundamentally, false teachers attack the gospel of Jesus Christ. While the church today may be soft on such things, the apostles were not (see Acts 20:29-32; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4; Galatians 1:6-10). In chapters 2 and 3 of 2 Peter, Peter exposes the error of those false teachers who prey upon the churches. He focuses in chapter 1 on the positive dimension of the spiritual life, summarizing in verses 1-11 what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. In verses 12-21, Peter turns to the only source, and the only standard, for teaching and practice—the Scriptures as divinely revealed and authenticated to the apostles.

In the first four verses of chapter 1 in 2 Peter, Peter distills for us the essence of the gospel. He indicates this is not just "his" gospel, but the gospel revealed through Christ, attested to by the Father, and consistent with the teaching of the apostles. To be able to recognize false teachers, we must first be crystal clear about the truth which they seek to undermine, pervert, and distort. Peter gives in these four verses the fundamentals of the gospel.

When the Lord Jesus left His disciples to ascend and be with His Heavenly Father, He left the apostles in charge. It was to them and through them that His Word was to be conveyed to others (see Matthew 16:19; John 14:26; 16:12-15; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 2 Peter 1:12-19; 1 John 1:1-4). In these first verses of his second epistle, Peter reminds his readers of just what the gospel is. These verses summarize the gospel according to Peter and the apostles, as opposed to the “new gospel” of the false teachers (2 Peter 2 and 3; see also Galatians 1:6-10; 2 Corinthians 11).

Peter defines his gospel in these eight ways:

- (1) Peter’s gospel is an apostolically defined gospel.
- (2) Peter’s gospel is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel in which Jesus Christ is central.
- (3) Peter’s gospel proclaims a salvation which rests on the righteousness of God, made available to sinful men in the person and work of Christ.
- (4) Peter’s gospel is the manifestation of sovereign grace.
- (5) Peter’s gospel is available to the whole world; it is not an exclusive gospel available only to the Jews.
- (6) Peter’s gospel does not promise men everything they want or think they need; it does promise them all they truly need, in Christ.
- (7) The gospel Peter speaks of is a gospel which transforms men.
- (8) The gospel according to Peter leads to discipleship.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

God's Side of Godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4)

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

God's Divine Nature (3)

The power of God's Divine Nature (Barnes Notes)

All the effects of the gospel on the human heart are, in the Scriptures, traced to the power of God. There are no moral means which have ever been used that have such power as the gospel; none through which God has done so much in changing the character and affecting the destiny of man. God's Divine Nature is the way in which God exerts his power in the salvation of people. It is the efficacious or mighty plan, by which power goes forth to save, and by which all the obstacles of man's redemption are taken away.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means that we have been born of God (John 1:12-13)

12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means that we reflect God's glory (2 Cor 3:18)

18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means we have been renewed in the mind (Eph 4:23-24)

23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means God has given us a new self (Col 3:10)

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Sharing in God's Divine Nature means that we are a child of God (1 John 3:2)

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

God's definition of life and godliness (3)

Definition of true life (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

True life is knowing the Lord. He offers us not only eternal life in heaven but also abundant life now. Jesus declared, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10; 1 Tim. 4:8).

Definition of godliness (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

The word "godliness" is found frequently in the New Testament and denotes a piety that seeks to please God. Scripture tells us how to live and act so that we can see His divine purposes fulfilled in us.

Ingredients of "The Good Life" (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Have you ever felt like all the "stuff" you have is more of a burden than a blessing? Actor Tim Robbins appeared on television some time ago, talking about "downsizing" his life. He said he was getting rid of stuff he didn't need, such as voice mail. When asked how people would contact him, he said, "They'll have to call me when I'm home." The audience cheered! The late twentieth century brought us gadgets by the score that soon became "necessities" for many: computers, cell phones, and laptops, for example. We learned a new vocabulary: PDAs, CDs, DVDs, RAM, etc. High-powered executives, and even middle-school students, found they couldn't function without a cell phone. But we also found that last year's computer wasn't fast enough and didn't have enough memory for all the new programs we wanted to use. Last year's cell phone was a bit bulky, so we "needed" a new, smaller one. Social philosophers have been warning us for decades that technology is not a savior; on the contrary, it can send life spinning out of control. What a marvelous contrast is the text for today! The foundational provisions God makes for us, accompanied by his wonderful promises, these are what makes life good. Then, when we respond faithfully and begin to grow in the Christian graces mentioned in our text, that's when life *really* takes on meaning!

Godliness is of great value (1 Tim 4:8)

8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Godliness is of great gain when combined with contentment (1 Tim 6:6)

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Godliness is devoting oneself to doing good (Titus 3:8)

8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Gods precious promises (4)

Participating in the things of God (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

As Christians, we participate in the things of God in a way that is impossible for the unconverted to comprehend or know (1 Cor 2:14). One view understands this to mean we become partakers of the moral nature of God, sharing in His views, thoughts, purposes, and principles of action (Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament, Baker*).

Promises of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:25-27)

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Promises that are "yes" in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20)

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Promises that are better through the new covenant of Jesus (Heb 8:6)

6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

Promises for those who are called by God (Heb 9:15)

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Promises of eternal life (1 John 2:25)

25 And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.

Man's Side of Godliness (2 Peter 1:5-7)

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

Building on faith (5-7)

Building blocks of faith (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

The first quality to be added to faith is virtue. The particular Greek word used here indicates moral goodness or excellence. Sometimes the ancients used this word to describe courage. Indeed, Christian faith is courageous. To virtue must be added knowledge. The word used here suggests *practical* knowledge or discernment. It refers to the ability to handle life successfully. It is the opposite of being so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good (Wiersbe, *The Bible*

Exposition Commentary, Victor). Of course this requires Christians to be students of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), learning basic facts, principles, and concepts that will enable them to grow spiritually and discern God's will for their lives. To knowledge the believer must add temperance. This word has the basic meaning of self-control or self-mastery. Without self-control, we become slaves of sin instead of servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). To temperance Christians must add patience to their faith. While patience is an adequate translation of the Greek word used here, it could also be rendered endurance, perseverance, or steadfastness. It means staying under and is frequently used in the New Testament to refer to constancy or steadfast endurance under adversity, without giving in or giving up" (Walvoord and Zuck). To patience must be added godliness. This is the same word used previously (2 Pet. 1:3) and may be understood as reverence or piety. The person with this quality worships God and is also in a good relationship with other human beings (Matt. 5:23-24). The godly person will certainly express brotherly kindness toward others. The Greek word is *Philadelphia* and literally means brotherly love. True saints of God are known by their love for one another (John 13:34-35). At the top of the ladder of Christian growth is the crowning virtue charity. This is the Greek word *agape*, which is more commonly translated love in the New Testament. This is sacrificial love, such as was displayed on Calvary.

Eight steps toward spiritual maturity

Faith - Belief in action, which means believe without seeing (Heb 11:1), having confidence (Ps 27:13), and having hopefulness (Ps 42:11)

Goodness - Virtuous moral goodness, which means being pure and righteous (Phil 4:8) and knowing that only God is good (Matt 19:17)

Knowledge - Intelligence, understanding and moral wisdom, which means growing toward maturity (1 Cor 14:20), wisdom and revelation (Eph 1:17), and understanding (Eph 5:17)

Self Control - One who masters his desires and passions, which means being disciplined (Titus 1:8), worthy of respect (Titus 2:2), and devoted to God and prayer (1 Cor 7:5-9)

Perseverance - Patient, steadfast waiting on God, a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings, which means waiting on God (Ps 37:7), waiting with patient hope (Rom 8:25), having endurance (Rom 15:4), and being strengthened by God (Col 1:11)

Godliness - Reverence, respect, or piety toward God, which means being righteous and devout (Isa 57:1), always having faith based on sound doctrine (1 Tim 6:3), and based on the knowledge of truth (Titus 1:1)

Brotherly Kindness - The love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren, which means being devoted to one another (Rom 12:10), God loving through me (1 Thess 3:12), and being obedient to God's truth (1 Peter 1:22)

Love - Affection, good will, or benevolence, which means being compassionate, kind and humble to others (Col 3:12-14), living in harmony (1 Peter 3:8), loving God (1 John 4:21), and knowing that love never fails (1 Cor 13:4-8)

Mature faith (Ps 71:9-18)

9 Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. 10 For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together. 11 They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him." 12 Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me. 13 May my accusers perish in shame; may those who

want to harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace. 14 But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. 15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. 16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. 17 Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. 18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.

Results of Godliness (2 Peter 1:8-14)

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

Abounding in fruit (8-9)

Definition of knowledge (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

The word translated knowledge in 2 Peter 1:8 speaks of full or complete knowledge. This may be implying that effective, fruit-bearing believers have a deeper knowledge of what it means to serve Christ because they are growing in the faith.

Abounding fruit that is the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Abounding fruit that comes from the giving of oneself to God (2 Cor 8:2-5)

2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

Abounding fruit of love (Phil 1:9)

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

Abounding fruit of thanksgiving (Col 2:7)

7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Abounding fruit of pleasing God (1 Thess 4:1)

1 Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

Abounding fruit of growing faith (2 Thess 1:3)

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

Calling and election (10)

Evidence that our spiritual calling is sure (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

Spiritual progress is evidence that our calling and election is sure. It is not our profession of faith that guarantees that we are saved; it is our progression in the faith that gives us that assurance. The person who claims to be a child of God but whose character and conduct give no evidence of spiritual growth is deceiving himself (Wiersbe). Consequently, Peter told his readers that spiritual fruitfulness assured them that they would never fall, or stumble (John 10:28; Rom 8:39; Jude 1:24). Focusing on Christian growth provides not only needed motivation but also the assurance that we belong to Christ.

A calling that is according to God's purpose (Rom 8:28-30)

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

An election accomplished through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13-14)

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

An election accomplished through the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2)

2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

An election whereby God makes us holy and beloved (Col 3:12)

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Everlasting kingdom (11)

An everlasting kingdom that is on Jesus' shoulders (Isa 9:6-7)

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

An everlasting kingdom of which Jesus has been given authority and sovereignty (Dan 7:13-14)

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

An everlasting kingdom where all will worship and obey God (Dan 7:27)

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

An everlasting kingdom where righteousness will be the scepter (Heb 1:8)

8 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

Privilege of teaching (12-13)

A privilege because it is a gift from God (Rom 12:5-7)

6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

A privilege because of God's word indwelling us (Col 3:16)

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

A privilege because God has trusted us with it (2 Tim 2:2)

2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

A privilege because it is an ability that God has given us (2 Tim 2:24)

24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

A privilege that must be done in accordance with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)

1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

A privilege that has accountability attached to it (James 3:1)

1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

A privilege because of the anointing that should be part of it (1 John 2:27)

27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit-just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Privilege of death in Christ (14)

A death where there will be a resurrection (1 Thess 4:16)

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

A death that goes from perishable to imperishable (1 Cor 15:51-53)

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

A death that is precious in the sight of God (Ps 116:15)

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

A death that cannot separate us from the love of Jesus (Rom 8:37-39)

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A spiritual death that represents a baptism into Jesus' death (Rom 6:2-5)

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

A death that has no fear associated with it (Heb 2:14-15)

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-that is, the devil- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

When an individual becomes a believer, he receives all that he might need to develop a life of godliness. He is especially given the needed divine power. Nothing that a person has is his own. It is all the result of God's gracious gift. As part of the process, every believer has been given a special destiny. We have been called to "glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). We are recipients of all the "precious promises" (vs. 4) in the Bible, so we can live lives of godliness free from the corruption of the world. It is always important to remember that there must be a balance between the divine and the human side of spiritual growth (godliness). Spiritual growth is never automatic. Spiritual diligence and discipline are required. Visible growth should be obvious in the life of a true believer, Peter exhorted believers to give "all diligence" (2 Pet. 1:5) to add to their lives several key qualities that build on each other: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (love). This is quite a list, but it indicates that as God is working in us, we must respond by working out these qualities in our lives.

As we allow God to work and as we are working on these qualities ourselves, certain results will follow. These results become further affirmations that God is truly in our lives. The text suggests three key signs that spiritual growth is taking place. First, there will be fruit, or progress (2 Pet. 1:8). Second, there will be vision

(vs. 9). We will start to see the world as God sees it. Third, there will be a sense of assurance about our salvation (vss. 10-11) and especially about our eternal rewards. If we are growing in the Lord, we will have a sense of divine presence in our lives and look forward to a relationship with God hereafter: an abundant entrance into heaven. The text goes on to show how God's Word is an integral part of our spiritual growth. The author Peter told his readers that he had written this material down to remind them of the truth.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. We should never complain that the Christian life is too hard; we have been given all we need to live it gloriously (2 Pet. 1:3)
2. God has given us His nature; we must live it out in practice (vs. 4-7)
3. To neglect the qualities of the Spirit that we have been given is to inexcusably rob ourselves (vs. 8-9)
4. Living daily in God's power brings assurance that we are really His (vs. 10-11)
5. We will never outgrow the need for reminders of the truth (vs. 12-14)

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

That which stands out clearly in our text is the deficiency of man and the sufficiency of God. Man is unrighteous; God is righteous and He offers righteousness to men in Christ. Man is corrupted by worldly lusts; God is holy and offers men the opportunity to become partakers in the divine nature. We have nothing God needs or wants from us regarding our standing righteously before Him. And we have nothing which God does not have and which He has not made available to us. The gospel is about our need and God's provision, in Christ.

Closely related to the emphasis on man's poverty and God's provisions is the important role of knowledge. Knowledge is referred to in verses 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8. Whenever man departs from God and from divine revelation, he is ignorant. Ignorance is the opposite of knowledge, and it is deadly. Peter told the Jews that when they murdered and disowned the Holy and Righteous One, the Prince of life, they acted in ignorance (Acts 3:14-17). Likewise, the idolatry of the pagan Athenians was ignorant (Acts 17:23, 30). Paul speaks of the ignorant unbelief of the Jews (Romans 10:3) and of his own ignorance as a persecutor of the church (1 Timothy 1:13). Peter has written in his first epistle that ignorance is evident in conforming to one's lusts, while implying that knowledge leads to obedience (1 Peter 1:14). Peter also indicates that the resistance of unbelievers springs from ignorance (1 Peter 2:15). Later in 2 Peter we are told that false teachers are willfully ignorant of the reality of divine judgment in history (2 Peter 3:5). Ignorance is not bliss; it is death.

The New Testament instructs us that the cure for ignorance is knowledge. Let us note the emphasis on knowledge in verses 2, 3, 5, 6, 8. I take this to be doctrinal knowledge, for it certainly is knowledge of God and knowledge from God. It is scriptural knowledge, and it is true knowledge as opposed to false knowledge. This is the knowledge that protects the believer from false teachers and their teaching. This knowledge is also the means by which grace and peace are multiplied to us (2 Peter 1:2). Everything pertaining to life and godliness is granted to us through the knowledge of Him who called us (1:3). Knowledge is one of the virtues the Christian should diligently pursue (1:5, 6). The knowledge of which Peter writes is the knowledge of God as taught by the divinely revealed Word of God. It is also doctrinal knowledge, a propositional knowledge. Some tell us they do not worship doctrine—they worship Jesus. But, apart from doctrine, we cannot know which Jesus we worship. The maturing Christian is marked by his knowledge of God through the Scriptures (see Ephesians 1:15-23; 4:13; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9-10; 2:2; 3:10; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1). Knowledge can be perverted so that it becomes the enemy of love (see 1 Corinthians 8:1). Ideally, knowledge informs and regulates love (Philippians 1:9) and promotes godly living (Colossians 1:9-10). Godly teaching and instruction leads to love (1 Timothy 1:5). We also see from the Scriptures that knowledge of God leads to intimate fellowship with God.

I ask you, my friend, do you "know God," or are you still ignorant? The way to know God is through His written Word and through the Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us about God, and the Lord Jesus

revealed God to us in human flesh. He is God, manifested in human flesh; He died in our place and suffered the penalty for our sins. He is the righteous One who offers His righteousness to all who believe in Him, by faith. To know Christ is to know God and to have eternal life. If you are a Christian, my question to you is a bit different. Are you growing in your knowledge of Christ? Do you know more of Him today than when you first believed? Is your walk with Him more intimate than before? Is there evidence of continued growth in your life? There should be. Our God is infinite, and our knowledge of Him in this life will never be complete. But we should be constantly growing as we feast on His Word and fellowship with other believers. Because the gospel is the truth, it is under constant attack by Satan, by our culture, and by false teachers. Consequently, we are inclined to forget the importance of the gospel and slowly drift away from it.