

## Introduction

2 Peter addresses false teachers who were drawing people away from Christ. One pastor summarizes Peter’s response like this: “It is not too much to say that Peter’s primary solution to false teaching is knowledge of true doctrine.” Peter shifts our focus. If you’re at a new job, it’s easy to get overwhelmed (with procedures, tasks) and conclude, “I’m no good at this.” Or, you could focus on what you know and increase your skill over time. Peter’s saying, “Don’t get overwhelmed by the false teachers: focus instead on who you know: Jesus.” And we confirm our gracious calling by growing in godliness.

### 1. The Grace of Knowledge (vv.3–4)

Peter highlights God’s grace and what a grace it is! (v.3) “*through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.*” The highest peak, the wonder of wonders if you’re a believer is that you know God in Jesus Christ. And if we know him, it’s because God “called” us. God primarily calls us through the preaching of the gospel, that on the cross Jesus bore the sins of his people so they could (v.4) “*escape the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire*” to set us free. And through Christ’s resurrection, sinners are restored to God.

- When we know God, we’re given two aids: the Spirit and the word. With your finger, point to the word “*granted*” in v.3: “*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us.*” I take “*divine power*” to refer to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit “*grants*” us *all things* in the knowledge of Jesus to live a godly life. The Spirit teaches our minds to understand the Scriptures. But he also makes us new so we can practice it. Peter mentions “*life*” in v.3. The Spirit has made us a new creation in Christ, so we can live the new life for God’s glory. Now point to “*granted*” in v.4: “*he has granted [same word] to us his precious and very great promises.*” In 2 Peter, the main *promise* is that Jesus will indeed return. God will judge the wicked, rescue the godly, and establish the New Heavens and New Earth. Here’s a picture: we were locked up in sin and behind the door is God in his glory and excellence. God granted the Spirit and word to unlock the door and open a new life where we know God.
- Notice the purpose in v.4: “*so that through them [the promises] you may partake of the divine nature.*” This doesn’t mean we become gods; rather, the Spirit and the word’s goal is for us to look like Jesus, to bear good fruit like Jesus. Before we resembled Adam; but now saved, we’re called to look like the Last Adam, Jesus. Practically, what drives you to God’s word (devotions, sermons)? Is it so God can give you things, to appear knowledgeable, to feel good with God because you’re disciplined, or because you know you should? Peter’s point is God uses his *promises* in the word for us to know Christ and resemble him. That should be our goal with Scripture.

### 2. The Fruit of Knowledge (vv.5–9)

Grace doesn’t make us passive: it enables us to please God. V.5: “*For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith.*” Commentator Matthew Harmon writes, “One does not just drift into greater means of Christlikeness; intentional, Spirit-empowered effort must be exerted.” So Peter mentions seven traits that build sort of like steps (but it’s not as if you master on trait and then move on to the next, then the next trait, and so on; it’s more like a package deal: we’re

supposed to have them all). Let me give you a phrase for each trait in **vv.5–7**: “*virtue*,” someone morally upright (like God, **v.4**); “*knowledge*,” greater understanding of God and his ways (growth in theology); “*self-control*,” able to restrain yourself; “*steadfastness*,” unwavering faithfulness to Jesus no matter what; “*godliness*,” all of life oriented around God (your thoughts, actions, desires); “*brotherly affection*,” delight in God’s people; and “*love*,” preferring others before yourself. None of us have arrived, and we see the ways we fall short. But these traits must be present because the false teachers’ doctrine discouraged the church from them and were leading them to ungodliness. Yet if we’re called, we should practice them [the traits].

- Look at **v.8**: “*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” What does it mean for someone to know Jesus? Peter’s answer is those who know Jesus are changed by Jesus. Here’s a good way to pray for yourself and has really helped me. Puritan Richard Rogers (1500’s) distinguished between knowledge of rule (Scripture) and knowledge of proof. You can have head knowledge of the Bible, but true knowledge moves from the head down to the heart and shapes us from the inside-out. The *ineffective* or *unfruitful* person is who’s knowledge doesn’t impact their life or make them more Christlike. But if you would be a fruitful Christian, pray for God’s word to be real to you, that temptation and sin would repel you, and that your life would increasingly look more like Jesus as you practice these traits. Don’t just see a list here (**vv.5–7**); walking in these ways is part of how we know Christ.

### 3. The Promise of Knowledge (vv.10–11)

Finally, Peter concludes with a promise. “*Be all the more diligent.*” If you’re a kid you might be motivated to do your chores if you know there’s a reward. If you have a garden, perhaps you’re diligent to get up early and water it, to tend do it and not neglect it. The *diligent* person doesn’t let things slip; they stay on point. **V.10**: we’re to be “*all the more diligent to confirm [our] calling and election*” because there’s a promise: “*for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*” Peter doesn’t mean you won’t ever sin. Peter explains in **v.11** (read). In other words, whoever doesn’t have these traits won’t enter the kingdom because they don’t know Christ. But the one who possess these qualities “*will be richly provided an entrance*” into the eternal kingdom. There’s a way in for the godly and it will be glorious, more *rich* than worldliness can offer you!

- But if you’re asking, “How do I make progress here? How do I *confirm my calling and election*?” What do you do? It starts with being stunned daily at the gospel of grace for you. **V.4**, God rescued you from the world and your sinful desire; (**v.9**) don’t forget you were *cleansed* from your *former sins* by the precious blood of Jesus. You’ve been called to God’s glory; you know Jesus now; you’re a new creation. God didn’t have to do any of that for you, but he did by his grace. Start daily with the gospel of grace and you won’t want to return to your old ways. You’ve escaped the prison of sin: why would you go back? And finally, it’s good for us to ask ourselves: “Do I possess these eight qualities? Is my knowledge of Jesus merely head knowledge, or is there discernible fruit?” Our hope and motivation for godliness rests in the grace of God.