

STAYING GROUNDED

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, Revive '21

TEXT: 2 PETER 1:1-11

The faith that we have received by God's divine grace is equal to that of the apostles (v. 1). There aren't different classes of believers. If you are in Christ, you have received a faith equal to that of every other believer.

A key word in 2 Peter is knowledge (v. 2). **The greater, the deeper your knowledge of Him, the more grace and peace you will have.** The failure to really know God is at the heart of every problem we have. Conversely, knowing God is the key to every blessing of God in our lives.

Knowing God means having an intimate, experiential, firsthand knowledge of God. The word used in verse 2 is not a casual, surface knowledge like that of a distant relative or acquaintance. It's having a oneness and union with the object of your knowledge.

This same word is used in Scripture to refer to sexual intercourse. **That's why marriage is intended to reflect and represent the oneness and the union that we can have in Christ.**

God has provided resources for every believer:

- Grace and peace multiplied to us is a gift from God (v. 2).
- His divine power is ours (v. 3).
- He has given us everything required for life and godliness (v. 3).
- He has called us by His own glory and excellence (v. 3).
- God has given us very great and precious promises that enable us to share in His divine nature (v. 4).
- He has caused us to escape from corruption that is in the world due to evil desires (v. 4).

Our responsibility in staying grounded and becoming mature, true women of God is listed in verses 5–7. Remember the context, because if you try to do it without God's resources, it may kill you. You can't live the Christian life apart from Him. **The starting place is the ground of the cross, the work of Christ on our behalf, and the promises and the grace He has given us.**

The key phrase in this section is, "Make every effort" or "be diligent." To be diligent means "to make haste, to be eager, to exert oneself." **Spiritual growth does not happen by accident. It is a lifelong pursuit that requires careful planning and intentional effort.** It's years of faithfully soaking, meditating and living in God's Word. We have to be diligent in dependence on the divine life that He has placed within us.

2 Peter 1:5–7 gives seven supplements, “supplement your faith,” that will help you stay grounded and maintain spiritual health.

Faith is the foundation that undergirds the whole structure of your Christian life. After laying the foundation, these seven qualities build upon the other like floors of a building. You can't build the top floor if you haven't built the lower floors.

1. Goodness

Goodness means moral excellence and moral energy. It describes something that is strong, dynamic, and full of energy. **It's like a spiritual muscle with the strength to live a life that is pleasing to God.**

- Do you have a heart and an appetite for things that are excellent, good, and pure?
- Do you have an energetic, vigorous faith? Or are you relying on other people's spiritual muscles to carry you?
- Is your faith active, alive, and growing?
- Are you fulfilling your creative purpose?
- How well does your life reflect the goodness, character, virtue, and nature of God?

2. Knowledge

We need discernment and wisdom to know how to live out our faith in real-life, every-day circumstances. This means we let God's Word show us how to act in a godly way in each situation of life. Adding knowledge to our faith will give us the ability to use His Word to minister to our own needs, our own problems, and to the needs of others.

- Are you growing in your knowledge of God's Word?
- Do you actively apply the Word of God to your life circumstances?
- Do you find yourself using the Word to minister to others?

3. Self-Control

Instead of letting your emotions control you, remain under the Spirit's control in every area of your life. He will empower you to say “no” to your flesh and, “Yes, Lord. Si, Señor.” It isn't through sheer human effort or will power, but by drawing on the supernatural power of the Spirit that enables us to control our natural passions, drives, and desires.

- Is there any area of your life where you habitually give in to sinful or fleshly desires and passions?
- Do you exercise self-control with your tongue, moods, and emotions?
- Do you exercise self-control with your time, spending and sexuality?

4. Endurance (or Steadfastness)

Endurance means staying power, perseverance. **The steadfast person doesn't crater under stressful circumstances and doesn't give up when faced with trials.** Steadfastness is not passively surviving our difficulties, but actively overcoming them by responding to them with faith, gratitude, and joy. We do it by keeping our eyes on Jesus, who steadfastly persevered and endured the cross for us.

- What trials are you experiencing at this time? Are you enduring them steadfastly?
- Have you grown weary and fainthearted?
- Do you keep trusting, loving, and obeying God even when His choices for your life are not what you would choose?

5. Godliness

Godliness is a God-centered life, an attitude of reverence, devotion towards God, a desire to please Him in every area of our lives, and to orient our whole life around Him.

Godliness has a price (1 Tim. 4:7–8) and a promise. Working out in the godliness gym is hard. It's valuable both in this life and in the life to come. **We will be spiritually flabby if we don't develop spiritual muscles through consistent, purposeful training in godliness.**

- Is your heart inclined toward God and toward what He loves?
- Is the essential inclination and orientation of your life God-ward or self-ward, self-centered?
- What are you doing to train for godliness?

6. Brotherly Affection

As we experience the love of God, we become those who express His love to those around us. Being fond of our brethren and genuinely caring for them creates a climate in the Body of Christ where people feel safe to get honest with each other about their spiritual needs, struggles, and failures. If there were more true friendships, brotherly/sisterly affection between believers, there would be more victory over sin. But don't wait for others to show you brotherly affection. Give that kind of concern and friendship to others.

- Do you genuinely care for the people of God?
- Are you cultivating warm, healthy friendships with other believers?
- Are you kind to and considerate of your fellow believers?
- Do you assume the best of them?
- Do you look for ways to encourage and bless them?
- Do you look for opportunities to minister to their needs?
- Or is your focus on getting people to help you, to bless you, to benefit you?

7. Love

This kind of others-centered love, God's love, is **self-less, sacrificial concern for God and others.** **Your growth in the Christian life isn't so that you can be an amazing Christian. It's so you can become more loving, more like Jesus.**

- Is your life characterized with genuine love?
- Do you seek the interests of God and others above your own?

Verses 8 through 11 give the motivation and benefits for spiritual growth. **The joy of the Christian life is that you never stand still. You will not arrive until you see Jesus face-to-face. If you keep cultivating these graces, you will: 1) be spiritually fruitful, 2) have clear spiritual vision, 3) have assurance of your salvation, and 4) never fall.**

Pursuing spiritual growth protects you from wrong doctrine and wrong living. It helps you to persevere to the end, held and sustained by His grace. It doesn't mean you'll never trip or be tempted. But you won't go down and out.

During our days here on earth, however many or few they may be, we're not just marking days, weeks, years off the calendar. We are making decisions that will affect us forever.

2 Peter 3:17 warns that if you're not growing, you will be carried away with error. You will lose your spiritual footing and not only will your life be damaged, but the lives of others around you will be impacted because they saw you claiming to love Jesus, and then living in a way that was not obedient to God's Word. When this happens, the wreckage, the carnage is horrific. That's why we look to Christ and lean into His grace. We have to keep growing in His grace and knowledge. Never let down your guard.

We're on a long, hard journey. We live in a world that is shaking. I appeal to you: Be diligent. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "Continue in the faith, stable and steadfast not shifting from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23). "For in this way," Peter says, "entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you" (v. 11).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2 Peter 1:1 states the faith we've received by God's divine grace is equal to that of the apostles. Have you ever felt your faith was weak compared to others? How will this truth change your perspective when your faith is floundering?

Nancy said, "The failure to really know God is at the heart of every problem we have." Share some common struggles of women and a corresponding truth about God that provides grace and peace.

From verses 3–4, which of the resources given by God for spiritual vitality is the most meaningful to you right now? Can you remember a situation when you tried living the Christian life apart from God's grace and help?

Take a deep dive into one of the seven spiritual supplements found in verses 5–7. As a group, consider the application questions Nancy posed for the supplement you choose.

Nancy made the point that if there were more true friendships reflecting brotherly/sisterly affection between believers, there would be more victory over sin. Who is someone who helps you walk faithfully?

Of the seven supplements, choose the one you'd most like to develop during the next year and share why. Since spiritual growth doesn't happen by accident, what are ways you can diligently pursue it?

What specifically motivates you to keep growing spiritually from the four benefits outlined in verses 8–11?

2 Peter 3:17 warns that we can lose our spiritual footing when we're not growing in the Word. Discuss ways you see Christians harming others by claiming to love Jesus but not living out His principles. How will you guard your heart against the same sin?

