



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

GROWING STRONG IN TRUTH // • MAKE EVERY EFFORT // • 2 PETER 1:5-11 •

MAIN POINT

God's power enables us to grow in godliness and lead effective, productive lives for Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the most frustrated you have ever been with your inability to do something? How did you act in that moment? What was ultimately driving your frustration?

When you aren't good at something, are you the type of person who refuses to try or is motivated to excel? What does this tell you about your personality?

When have you been the most frustrated in your walk with God? What were the circumstances?

When we try to live the Christian life by our own power and efforts, the end result will always be frustration and failure. God didn't create us to excel on our own; He created us to be dependent on Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 PETER 1:5-7.

Growing in godliness is as process. Which of the qualities Peter listed is the most difficult for you to cultivate on a daily basis? Why do you think this is? Do any of these seem easier for you based on life's circumstances?

How have you seen your obedience to God in these specific areas lead to personal growth?

What are some specific ways Jesus set an example for us in brotherly affection and love?

These last two characteristics, "brotherly affection and love," are supremely the characteristics of Jesus Christ. His mission in life was to sacrifice Himself for humanity's good. The transforming process of God's Holy Spirit is to take each individual believer in this direction—becoming Christlike (see Rom. 8:28-29).

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 PETER 1:8-11.

Who is someone you know or admire who has embodied these characteristics and, as a result, experienced an effective and productive ministry? What specific characteristics from his or her life would you most like to emulate?

In light of the Lord's great promises to us as believers, what does verse 10 say are we to do?

Demonstrating the virtues Peter listed would give evidence that believers' redemption was genuine. Peter was not advocating a works-salvation but a salvation by God's grace expressed in distinctive Christlike virtues.

Peter wrote this section of his letter in part because false teachers were causing believers to doubt their faith. During times of doubt in your life, what challenges or encouragements from fellow believers have helped you continue to grow in godliness? How might Peter's words here reassure those who are struggling to be confident in their salvation?

As we begin to see changes and transformations occurring in our lives, we can be assured that God has called us to Himself. These changes serve to "confirm your calling and election." The opposite is also true. If your life shows no positive changes and this causes you no concern, then you should wonder and question whether you are a true believer in Jesus Christ. If you respond positively to the challenge, you will find encouragement in the

words, you will never stumble. This does not mean that you will never have a problem or that you will never sin again. The picture is that of a march, and the point here is that the true believer will never fall out of the march to heaven. You will never be left behind, but you can be assured of a glorious welcome into your eternal home. God will never change His mind about you, nor will He alter the means by which you get to heaven. The assurance of heaven that true believers have in Jesus is not found in their own goodness, but in Jesus' perfection and promise.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**In what areas of your life is God challenging you to grow in your godliness?
What should you do in response?**

When are you most tempted to depend on your own power rather than God's divine power to live and grow in godliness? What does it take to turn from self-dependence to a dependence on God?

**Are there certain promises of God you need to be reminded of this week?
What are some practical physical reminders we could put in place to help us remember the gospel and God's goodness toward us?**

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for the precious faith He has given us, and the divine power with which He works in our lives. Pray that the people of our church and your small group would be confident in their salvation, and that we would consistently grow in godliness in the days ahead.

COMMENTARY

| 2 PETER 1:5-11

1:1-2. Peter called himself Simeon Peter, a name not generally used of him (elsewhere only in Acts 15:14). It was more natural for Peter to use the original form of his name rather than a later form. He further identified himself as a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ. He saw himself as a servant submitted to Christ's lordship. As an "apostle," he was one of Christ's divinely ordained, appointed, authoritative representatives in the early church.

Though he surely had a specific group of people in mind, Peter named neither specific recipients in his letter nor their precise geographic location. The recipients are described simply as those who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours.

The reason for this equality of privilege between Peter's readers and the apostles is the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Through the righteousness that finds its source in Jesus, all believers have equal standing and share the same blessings. Peter described Jesus as both "God and Savior," which is not surprising since elsewhere Jesus is called God (Jn 1:1,18; 20:28; Rm 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8). The description of Jesus as "God" in no way denies the Trinity, as if Peter meant to say Jesus is both Father and Son. Peter wished his readers multiplied grace and peace. "Grace" is God's unmerited favor displayed toward sinners who trust Christ for salvation. "Peace" is the sense of well-being and the attendant blessings that a person enjoys because of a right relationship with Christ. Peter emphasized the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord to remind his readers that a person experiences grace and peace only through knowing Christ.

1:3-4. Peter next reminded his readers of the resources they had through knowing Christ. He provides believers everything they need for life and godliness. Life is eternal life, whereas godliness is godly living; the latter cannot be obtained without the former. The divine call of believers served as a foundation for Peter's appeal for godly living. Christ calls to Himself those whom God has saved, and this calling is brought about by His own glory and goodness. Christ's glory and goodness combine and seem to refer to the moral excellence of Christ. By these—by Christ's glory and goodness—He has given us very great and precious promises. The content of these great promises includes sharing in the divine nature. Peter did not mean that believers become gods or that they share in the divine nature of God in every way. He meant that they participate in God's moral excellence and will one day be morally perfected. Participation in the divine nature is possible only after escaping the corruption in the world because of evil desires. Jesus Christ offers the only way of escape from the rebellion of this evil world system that is opposed to and alienated from God.

1:5-7. Because of God's generous provision in Christ, Peter encouraged his readers to build upon their foundation of faith—their initial acceptance of God's love—with the Christian virtues of goodness ... knowledge ... self-control ... endurance ... godliness ... brotherly affection, and love. These graces, sometimes called the "ladder of faith," are the fruit of sharing in the divine nature. Each successive quality seems to spring from the previous one.

1:8-9. Useful and fruitful Christians have an abundance of the qualities mentioned in verses 5-7. On the other hand, those who lack them are blind and shortsighted because they have forgotten the cleansing from their past sins; they deliberately forget the background from which God delivered them. "Past sins" refers to sins committed before professing faith in Christ.

1:10-11. Because of God's grace, gifts, and the knowledge of Christ (vv. 3-9), Peter commanded his readers to make every effort to prove the reality of their calling and election to salvation; they would do so by godly living (vv. 5-7). Two results follow: (1) they will never stumble; (2) they will receive a glorious entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.