

2 Peter: "What We Ought to Be"

Reach Your Full Potential

2 Peter 1:1-8

"Confirm your calling!"

The apostle Peter is writing to the Church. To those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ. To be exact, according to 2 Peter 3:1, he is writing to the same people of faith who received his first letter. 1 Peter 1:1: To "those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion," which occurred way back in Acts when the Jews were dispersed from Jerusalem because of severe persecution, when after the murder of Stephen, Saul ravaged the Church. So it's primarily the dispersed Jewish audience who have seen some things, and continue to see some things—some hard things.

2 Peter is like Peter's final word to the Church before his departure. He admits in chapter 1:14 that his death is near. The traditional date of Peter's death is late AD 67 or early 68. This is written shortly before his death. And he is writing to this saved flock of his throughout the scattered regions of Asia Minor to remind them of all that he has taught them in the past so that they persevere to the end of their lives.

They need to be reminded because they have and are experiencing difficulties, problems, persecutions, and have been given false messages about Christ from false teachers who are among them. And later in the letter Peter predicts that scoffers will come, and they will scoff at their faith in Christ, and they will put questions in their minds about Christ and Christianity. Peter is preparing them to stand firm in their faith no matter the questions. And in 2 Peter 3:11, Peter poses his own question. In light of all that is going on around us and ahead of us, "what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?" And it's out of that question that comes our theme for this eight-part series.

Do you have questions? We live in the age of scoffing, don't we? The world scoffs at our faith. They scoff at God's Word. They belittle those who believe in God and believe His Word. They attempt to put questions in our heads and hearts. Do you have questions? Perhaps you have _____. You come from hard and sometimes cruel, and too often from abuse. You've been deeply wounded. Life has disenchanted you, embittered you, disappointed you. People have caused you to be frightened. They have disrupted your security and significance, and you

are afraid. And one of the great fears that may be implanted in our minds and emotions is our doubt about our faith. Have you ever doubted to the point of asking, "Am I truly saved?"

Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has a solution. Ask yourself this question: "**What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?**" And in 2 Peter 1:1-15 he begins by challenging you and me to confirm our calling. "Your calling" is your salvation call. Did you at one time call upon the Lord to be saved? Peter challenges us, "**Then confirm it!**" Deal a death blow to your doubts and fears by taking advantage of all that God has given you as a saved person. If you placed your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior because you knew you needed a Savior to be saved from your sin, then prove it! But if you keep sinning and fail to take full advantage of all that you received at the point of your salvation, *you should doubt*. So it's time to prove that Jesus is your Savior **by confirming your calling**. And in so doing, **you will reach your full potential in Christ. Today Peter gives us five ways to do that.**

Five ways to reach your full potential:

1. Have faith in your equal _____ (1-2).

Notice the article "of" in verse 2: "...of God [the Father], and of Jesus our Lord." The article demonstrates that Peter is talking about two Persons in the Trinity. But in verse 1, Peter uses only one article: "...of our God *and* Savior Jesus Christ." Clearly he is speaking of one Person in the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, and clearly he calls Jesus _____! Don't doubt it. And don't doubt the first part of verse 1.

Did you answer the call of Jesus Christ to be saved? Then "you obtained a saving faith *by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*" You and I can't *take* credit for the faith we have obtained. We can only _____ credit. Christ's righteousness has been imputed [credited] to us. It is His righteousness, and by His righteousness we have been saved. *And* if you have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ, you "have obtained a faith of ***equal standing with ours,***" *with the apostles!* You have sovereignly received the same salvation as the apostles. So confirm your salvation calling. **Choose to believe God's infallible Word.**

2. Take advantage of His divine _____ (3).

We have available to us the divine power of Jesus Christ! And we are given this awesome power for a purpose: *His divine power has given us everything we _____ for a vital spiritual life and for godly living! Everything...*“through the knowledge of Him.”

“Knowledge” is an important word in 2 Peter. He employs it seven times. And it speaks of *intimate knowledge*—the up close and personal sharing of life with Jesus, “*who called us into His own glory and excellence.*” We don’t have to ask for anything else. Nothing more is needed to become godly and experience vitality of life in Christ. For we have been effectively called into His own excellence and glory! **The power of Christ is in us. We only have to take advantage of it.**

3. Take hold of His precious _____ (4a).

Jesus Christ can’t lie! So *every promise* He has given us is *precious and very great*—their worth, value, and certainty can’t be measured!

Go back a few decades from here to the Gospels and all the promises our Savior made to all who trust in Him. Go back to all the promises in Paul’s inspired writings. Go back just a few years before this writing to all the promises made to us in 1 Peter. And go back just a couple verses in 2 Peter 1 to the precious and great promises of Christ: He promises us a precious faith of equal standing. He promises us a righteousness that is not our own. He promises us His divine power through intimate knowledge of Him. He promises that He called us to his own glory and excellence. **So take hold of His precious promises!**

4. Partake in His divine _____ (4b).

Did you receive a faith of equal standing? Then you were born again, born from above, placed in Christ, indwelt by the Triune God, and have become a new creation in Christ—all of which means you now _____ in His divine nature, and you may now increasingly become partakers of His divine nature.

Verse 4 NLT: “And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. *These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires.*” You have escaped worldly, moral corruption in your *position* in Christ, but how about in your *practice*? **Know that in Christ you can, because you may become partakers in His divine nature!**

5. Make every effort to be effective and _____ (5-8).

Peter says, “Make every effort!” In other words, *make maximum _____*. It takes two energies to produce these characteristics within us: It takes every effort we believers can muster, *and* it takes the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. That’s exactly what Paul said in Philippians 2:12-13: “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,*¹³ *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*” The new birth is not the end but the beginning. Don’t try in the flesh, but *give every effort as God works in us*.

The first of eight characteristics is ***faith***, which if you are saved, you have—it’s *an effective, saving faith in Christ*. Now make every effort to add to your *faith*, ***virtue***, or *goodness*, or *moral excellence*. Add to your *moral excellence*, ***knowledge***—*intimate, spiritual knowledge*—the ability to handle life well that proceeds out of a diligent pursuit of the truth discovered in God’s Word. And that takes every effort, *plus* the enabling power of the Holy Spirit! And add to *knowledge*, ***self-control***. You can only work that out as God works within. You can only bring your passions fully under control by making every effort in complete dependence on the Spirit. Add to *self-control*, ***steadfastness***, or *perseverance*, or *patient endurance*. It’s the worked out and worked in ability to remain steadfast under pressure and pain without giving in or giving up. It is staying power that would rather die before it gives in or gives up. Add to *patient endurance*, ***godliness***—if I’m growing in godliness, I’m growing up into Christ-likeness. We have all of these God-given trials and tests to make us more like Christ. Are we taking advantage of the opportunity to become more godly? Add to *godliness*, ***brotherly affection***. Do you really like and care about all your brothers and sisters in Christ? Are you supernaturally kind and affectionate, even to those who disagree with you? Add to *brotherly affection*, ***love***—*agape love, divine love* that God demonstrates toward you. The kind of love that loves in spite of our differences, desiring the highest good for others.

Verse 8: Reach your full potential—confirm your calling by making every effort to be both effective and fruitful!

Do you have doubts?

Have you failed to grow up in Christ and overcome in Christ? Do have doubts? In that case, I’m pretty sure that the problem lies in you not **reaching your full potential. But in Christ, you can!**