

BLESSED ASSURANCE
The Evidence of Faith
2 Peter 1:4-9

Doubts can DRIVE you AWAY from God, or PUSH you TOWARD God; your choice!
 Now, how would it affect you if I told you that there are some qualities that YOU can NURTURE and DEVELOP in your life as a believer that will help you to erase many of the doubts that may currently be plaguing you about your relationship with Jesus? [This is like MARRIAGE COUNSELING: Salvation is a gift; intimacy is work!] Now listen, these qualities DO NOT SAVE YOU, but they can help to SETTLE YOUR HEART about your salvation! It's TRUE!

If you have been reading 2 Peter 1 and 1 John these past few weeks, then you have been exposed to what I am going to share with you this morning. Here is how Peter addresses the issue of quality assurance: **2 Peter 1:4-9 NASB**

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. **5** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, **7** and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

This is one reason why I chose 2 Peter 1 as my prime passage for this study. This passage gives us SOLID, OBJECTIVE CRITERIA by which we can examine our own faith for genuineness, and it offers an ACTION PLAN by which we can INCREASE our sense of SECURITY in Christ! That is so helpful to me. Because so many Christians doubt their salvation, we need to know what to look for and what to DO in order to KNOW if we are really "in Christ." Peter does this for us. What Peter is talking about in this passage is the FRUIT of a life of ministry: the essential evidence of TRUE FAITH that can only be present when God's children COOPERATE with the Holy Spirit in their daily life. But sadly, some of God's kids are drowning in doubt. Why?

The failure to live a fruitful life results in forgetfulness.

Results of Questionnaire: #1 Answer – Doubt because of no change/ no fruit.

*Doubts occur in the lives of those who do not stay FOCUSED on the essential importance of obedience and spiritual growth! [Near-sighted = To shut the eyes]

-This also involves the concept of shortsightedness vs. eternal vision.

*Current "Christian Culture" = Apathy and Avoidance. [Falling out of love?]

*Families who USED TO BE heavily involved in ministry, but now . . . NOT!

[Why? Maybe because of the PAIN involved in ministry compared to a comfortable, ministry-free life.] [Are you getting close to this mindset?]

-Regardless, they have ceased even looking for fruit in their life! **Have you?**

So, what is fruit?

***Christ-like character** (inner qualities)(First priority): **Galatians 5:22-23 NLT**

22 But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

***Christ-like conduct** (outer qualities): **2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT**

3) His divine power has given us everything we need for a **godly life [conduct]** through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4) Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you **may participate in the divine nature [character]**, having **escaped the corruption** in the world caused by evil desires.

-This is a REJECTION of our OLD WAYS of behaving: **1 Peter 1:14-15 NLT**

14 So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.

***Christ-like influence** (a by-product of godliness)

-It is related to the word "**goodness/excellence**" in **2 Peter 1:3**

-It is that which drew us to Christ in the first place; now it draws others TO him THROUGH us! ("**Attractiveness**")

*This includes (but is not limited to) those that we WIN to Christ.

*We must experience the growth of these qualities in INCREASING MEASURES.

-This means it is a never-ending process. **2 Peter 1:8**

*Neglecting growth CREATES a gradual dullness of mind and spirit.

Hebrews 5:11-12 AMP

11 Concerning this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have **become dull and sluggish** in [your spiritual] hearing *and disinclined to listen*. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers [because of the time you have had to learn these truths], you actually need someone to teach you again the elementary principles of God's word [from the beginning], and you have come to be *continually* in need of milk, not solid food.

So, HOW can you PRODUCE MORE FRUIT? Peter tells us: **2 Peter 1:5-7 NASB**

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, **in your faith supply moral excellence**, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in *your*

knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, **7** and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

Fruit is the energetic expression of God's GIFT of faith to us!

*Faith is not something you manufacture; it is a GIFT you RECEIVE. **(Vs. 2)**

-Faith is the FOUNDATION of and the FOUNTAIN for each aspect of fruit.

*Fruit necessarily involves our ACTIVE EFFORT in cooperation with his Spirit.

-Until we ACTIVATE our faith as Peter says, it will stay mostly dormant.

-Note the words in BOLD: "MAY participate." "Giving all DILIGENCE."

-Note the word in **2 Peter 1:8 NIV**

8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being **ineffective** and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Ineffective=LAZY, Free from labor, at leisure, shunning one's duty!

-First step of faith **(1:5)**: "Supply from your faith . . . VIRTUE."

* **Virtue=Energetic Effort, Moral Excellence**

[My experience with WORKING OUT: Energy increases with EFFORT!]

-God supplies more energy as you expend energy first by faith. **(1:3-4)**

[Every new experience with God begins with an expenditure of EFFORT.]

Peter did not instruct us to try to recapture old, good FEELINGS FOR GOD, or even to make a checklist of spiritual duties to do. Instead, he led us to ACTIVELY ENGAGE our faith in specific ways that will encourage spiritual growth and will enable us to experience God in an ever-increasing fashion.

[Where are you most apathetic: Some stronghold, No bible study, etc.? Pick one!]

Bearing fruit is a process that creates a progressive experience of grace.

*Remember: FAITH is IMMEDIATE, but FRUIT takes TIME!

-Growth is a CONTINUAL PROCESS.

*The progressive experience of grace: Attaining new levels in our walk with Christ!

[SCAVENGER HUNT at BASS PRO: Each discovery leads to another place.]

-There are some things you will not experience until you activate faith on a lesser level. [Law of the Harvest] **2 Corinthians 9:10 NLT**

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and **increase your store of seed** and will **enlarge the harvest of your righteousness**.

-The FRUIT OF FAITH is actually . . . greater FAITH, more FRUIT, and greater FELLOWSHIP! [We can see this in the progression of 2 Peter 1:5-7]

Peter describes SEVEN AREAS of GROWTH that flow from each preceding area. (2 Peter 1:5-7) "In your faith, supply virtue, and in your virtue supply knowledge."

Virtue

Knowledge

Insight that is EMBEDDED within the EXPERIENCE of God's nature working in us. It requires action that will then result in INTIMACY. **John 14:21 NLT**

21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

-Will also bring a greater awareness of our own motives!

* Leads you to learn WHY you are angry, lustful, deceitful, etc.

*This knowledge becomes INCENTIVE for the next area.

Self-Control

Used especially of one who is able to control their sexual/sensual passions.

*Pornography disables your ability to be truly intimate! [\[Freedom proves it\]](#)

Self-Control opens up your ability to experience greater pleasures!

*When a smoker quits smoking, he can taste and smell food again!!

*This gives greater incentive for the next area of fruit:

Patience

I am going to save this word and the ones that follow for the next couple of weeks. I just wanted to get us started on this today.

MY CHALLENGE TO YOU TODAY: [Are you in DANGER of going blind in your walk?](#)

*Admit the areas where you are apathetic and lazy in your spiritual life!

*Examine your life for GENUINE FRUIT.

*Begin to INVEST energy and effort in the process that Peter outlines for us.

-I can't wait for you to see what is in store for you!

Let's pray.