SERMON NOTES OUTLINE • PRIMARY TEXT: 2 PETER 1:3–11

Partaking in the Divine Nature

Spiritual growth as the experience of union with God across every stage of life.

> **Core Theme:** Whole-life discipleship means faithfully walking with Jesus from conversion to full maturity, embracing how spiritual formation evolves across each stage and season of life.

I. Introduction: The Vision of Whole-Life Discipleship

- **Church Community & Gratitude:** Welcoming the congregation, praying for children before dismissal, and reflecting on the recent men's retreat studying the Psalms as a guide to prayer. Appreciation for Courtney's message and those serving while leadership was away.
- **Sabbatical & Leadership Reflections:** Focusing on what it looks like to follow Jesus across an entire lifetime—through different decades, seasons, and life stages.
- **The Church's Calling in Spiritual Formation:**
  - Spiritual formation looks and feels different in the first decade of faith compared to the second, third, and beyond.
  - Churches often excel at helping people grow in one specific stage, yet struggle to guide them through transitions into new seasons of spiritual life.
  - Our goal is to equip the saints for ministry at every stage, walking with people from initial conversion to full maturity so their lives remain rooted in Jesus through all questions and circumstances.

II. Theological Foundation: God's Provision & Union (2 Peter 1:3–4)

Understanding spiritual growth begins with grasping the reality of what God has already supplied in Christ:

- **Divine Power & Promises (vv. 3–4):** Through the knowledge of God, His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness, along with precious and magnificent promises to redeem the world.
- **Partaking in the Divine Nature:** God invites believers into union with Himself—participating in the life of the Trinity so that we become fully human as He intended.
- **Christianity Beyond Rules and Security:**
  - The Christian life is far more than mere eternal security or following a list of moral rules.
  - Treating faith as a static proposition leaves believers malnourished, dissatisfied, and disillusioned.
  - Through the Holy Spirit, union with God produces an abundant, continually increasing life of deep fellowship with Him.

III. Active Participation: Making Every Effort (2 Peter 1:5–11)

Because God has supplied everything needed, believers are called to respond with intentional diligence:

- **Supplementing Faith with Virtue (vv. 5–7):** Making every effort to add to faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love.
- **Fruitfulness vs. Spiritual Nearsightedness (vv. 8–9):**
  - Growing in these qualities keeps believers effective and fruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
  - Neglecting growth leads to spiritual nearsightedness and forgetfulness of past cleansing.
- **Confirming Our Calling & Election (vv. 10–11):** Practicing these qualities diligently prevents stumbling and provides a rich, safe entrance into the eternal kingdom.

IV. New Testament Witness: Ongoing Growth & Changing Seasons

Scripture consistently portrays spiritual maturity as an ongoing trajectory that requires adapting as we grow:

Passage	Emphasis on Spiritual Progression
2 Corinthians 10:15	Our hope is that as faith increases, our area of influence and ministry will expand abundantly.
Philippians 1:9	Prayer that love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment.
1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:1	The Lord makes believers increase and abound in love; having learned how to walk and please God, we are urged to do so more and more.
1 Peter 2:2	Like newborn infants, long for pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation.
2 Peter 3:18	Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Hebrews 5:11–14	Transitioning from milk to solid food; maturity comes through constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
1 John 2:12–14	Addressing distinct stages of spiritual life—children, young men, and fathers—each with unique strengths and realities.

V. Navigating Transitions Across Life Stages

- **Diagnosing Spiritual Dryness & Frustration:** Feeling stuck, dry, or struggling in your walk with God is often a normal part of the journey when we cling to practices suited for an earlier season.
- **The Analogy of Physical Growth (1 Corinthians 3:1–3a):**
  - Paul addresses believers who still need spiritual milk rather than solid food.
  - Just as the physical body moves from infancy through puberty into adulthood and midlife, our spiritual diet, rhythm, and exercise must adapt to our current stage.
  - A healthy adult cannot thrive on an infant's diet; trying to force a one-size-fits-all approach leaves believers stunted.
- **Overcoming Fear of Transition:** We often hesitate to let go of what nourished us in a previous season, even when God is inviting us into deeper meditation, prayer, and communion today.

VI. Practical Application: Generational Discipleship in the Church

- **Generational Responsibilities (Titus 2):** Older men and women are called to model godliness, train younger believers, and help them navigate the responsibilities and pressures of each season.
- **Supporting Young Adults (20s–30s):** Helping younger believers establish sound doctrine, resist cultural pressures, and build lives anchored in the gospel rather than worldly markers of success.
- **Conclusion & Invitation:** Embrace the stage of spiritual formation you are currently in, seek wise community and direction, and continue partaking in the divine nature as God shapes you toward full maturity in Christ.