

2 Peter
Move Along
2 Peter 1:5-11

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HDBC

When Joey Barrow was a teenager, his schoolmates labeled him the class sissy. While the other guys were involved in more "masculine" activities, Joey was taking violin lessons. One day, they called him "sissy" one time too many. Joey smacked the boy who made fun of him on the head with (you guessed it) his violin. It didn't help. The story simply brought another round of laughter from his classmates.

One boy did not laugh. Big, strapping Thurston McKinney decided it was time Joey got involved in something with a little more muscle. Thurston exercised regularly at a local gym and asked Joey to come along. As always, Joey had his violin with him. **If you want to work out with me,** said Thurston, **you'll have to rent a locker.**" Locker rental was fifty cents. The only money Joey had was what his mom had given him for that week's violin lesson. So Joey borrowed some gym trunks and some old tennis shoes from Thurston, rented the locker with his violin money, and put the violin inside.

The first time Thurston invited Joey to spar with him, Joey clobbered him. Flattened him. The dazed response of Thurston McKinney, himself already a Detroit Golden Gloves Champion, was, **"Boy, throw that violin away!"** With the money his mother had intended to finance weekly violin lessons, Joey kept a permanent locker. In five years, Joey Barrow would turn twenty-three and be the heavyweight boxing champion of the world!

Joey dropped his last name, Barrow, so his mother wouldn't know the newspapers were talking about her son. The world knew for years before she did that sissy Joey Barrow had been transformed into the unbeatable "Brown Bomber," Joe Louis. He made an intentional effort to change. He refused to remain what he was. He realized there was more & he changed.

Another changed man wrote 2 Peter. His name was Simon, but Jesus not only changed his name (Peter), but changed his life. In his case he was changed from a fighter (remember the cut off ear, into a courageous, disciplined, faithful servant to Jesus, who would help change his world.

So dramatic was the change in Peter's life that he wrote this letter to remind his readers that Christian faith was never intended to remain static. The transformation that happened when you were saved, did not end when you were saved. It was only beginning, a beginning of a lifetime of growth. We see an example of it in. **In 2 Peter 1:5-11.**

1. The Effort (5a)

Peter has made it clear that our salvation comes from God alone. He saves us! We don't save ourselves. Yet here we find him calling for personal effort on the part of believers in the process of growing in Christ. God has provided our salvation, but we must give effort to our spiritual growth and development. Note some key words:

Applying: Implies a strong effort to provide something needed.

Diligence: a zeal, eagerness accompanied by a sense of urgency.

Supply – From the word that means **choirmaster**. In ancient choral groups the choir leader was responsible for supplying everything needed for his group. So, he was the supplier. It was out of that context that this word came to refer to anyone who was a supplier. We are to work, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow in our faith.

Spiritual growth is expected and requires personal effort.

2. The Virtues (5b-7)

Peter lists seven virtues that we are to add to our lives. These are character qualities, virtues, that we are to seek to add and mature. They work together and built upon each other.

- 1) **Moral Excellence** – synonymous with the word *virtue*. Implies moral fortitude, courage. Knowing the right thing and doing the right thing. Willingness to stand alone if necessary for what is right.
- 2) **Knowledge** – Practical knowledge. That which is learned by keen observation and experience. It speaks of experiential knowledge of God. Regularly learning more of God in the context of relationship.
- 3) **Self-Control** – Literally means *holding oneself in*. It was used of athletes using self-discipline while training. Rejecting those things that would prevent our spiritual development. All kinds of things will retard your spiritual growth and set you back.
- 4) **Perseverance** – Patience and endurance in doing what is right. Enduring while experiencing trouble. Staying on the right path even when there are pressures that try to force us off of it.
- 5) **Godliness** – Reverence for God. One who properly honors and adores God. Having the right attitude or perspective on God.
- 6) **Brotherly Kindness** – Refers to treating others as if they were members of our own family. It includes a willingness love and support others, to bear their burdens and share their joys.
- 7) **Love** –Sacrificial, selfless love of the will. Seeking the highest good for others, putting their needs above self. It is unconditional devotion. This kind of love is best demonstrated by God sending His Son to become the sacrifice for our sins.

We must work toward these seven goals. Peter then explains the purpose for the pursuing these things, or the benefits that will come to those who do so. What happens as you pursue the development of these things in your life.

3. The Benefits (8-11)

1) Lead to a useful life (8)

Two things. These things should be present in every believer. And these things should be increasing in every believer. The presence and growth of these seven virtues will lead to a fruitful & useful life.

2) Lead to assurance of salvation (9-11)

If these are not present it leads to a loss of security and assurance.

Blind or short-sighted – without an effort to embrace and enlarge these the believer will be unable to assess his spiritual condition.

Having forgotten his purification from his former sins – this person loses sight of who he is in Christ. Without an intentional effort to grow in Christ even your salvation becomes cold and stale in your memory. This leads to confusion and doubt about salvation.

This is why Peter wrote what he did in verse 10. ***Be diligent to make certain of His calling.*** That is simply a way of saying ***make sure you are saved.*** When you remain static, refusing to work at your spiritual maturity, you will find yourself in a place of doubting your salvation. He offers the flip side. As long as you are pursuing these things, you will not stumble. Meaning you will not lose the confidence that you need to have in your relationship with God.

One of the purposes of this letter is to give assurance of salvation to the readers. Some had begun to doubt their salvation and Peter wrote to encourage them and to help them know how they could remain secure in the knowledge of their salvation.

The eternal security of every born again believer in Jesus is an objective truth revealed in the Scriptures. Nothing can change that.

The **assurance** of that security is a subjective reality that can come and go. Our security never changes because it is provided by God, who never changes. Our awareness of that security, on the other hand, is subjective. In other words we can have security but not realize it. This is a problem with many in the church.

Why do people doubt their salvation? Here are some reasons.

- 1) Focus on law over grace. You can never win, with the law.
- 2) Misunderstand the nature of salvation. What God does for us.
- 3) Struggle with ongoing sins and feel that they must not be saved.
- 4) Fail to understand the nature of trials and trouble. Assume God must not have saved them.
- 5) Lack of spiritual growth. This is what Peter is addressing.

One of the great benefits of growing spiritually is a deepening assurance of your salvation.

In the Spring of 1924, Jack Sundine was a four-year-old kid, standing in a line with his father inside the White House, waiting to meet **President Calvin Coolidge**. As they neared him, Jack noticed that he said something to each visitor as they shook hands. Soon, the thrilling moment arrived. Jack put his small hand into the President's waiting to hear the magical words of the president. Then the President said words Jack will always remember: ***Move along.***

Regardless of where you are in terms of your maturity in Christ, the Lord's command is for each of us to ***Move Along!*** Keep growing. Keep advancing. It's not the easy way, but it is the best way. Don't let the difficult cause you to shun it. Most things in life that are worthwhile, require effort.

John Stott's last bit of advice to his assistant before he died in 2011 was simply this: ***Do the hard thing***. He believed that choosing the easy trail, the road most taken, and the path of least resistance can only end in mediocrity—even if it comes with praise. He was right.

Remember the words of Jesus.

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.