



**Discipleship 101
The Checklist from Peter
2 Peter 1:4-9**

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Last time we were together, we learned about the background for the why for this book and then started wading into the text.

We discovered that we have everything we need to live the Christian life; we already have it right now. This is one more reason why I get so frustrated with the false teachers running around today saying you



need to do this or activate that to get more of God. I am going to us a theological term here, bunk. Peter will get to these folks in chapter 2.

You and I already have what we need. As a present possession. As a precious promise.

2 Peter 1:1–4

“Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. Through 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 on account of lust.” (NASB 2020)

After learning what serious precious promises we are already in possession of right now, Peter tells us exactly how we can make claim to those promises in the present day. It is “through these...” Through these what?

To get that, we must back up. What is it that tells us that God has indeed granted these promises as well as others to us? Peter already told us this back in verse 3.

2 Peter 1:3

“for **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.” (NASB 2020)

The promises of God are provided to us through His divine power. And because Peter does not limit this to only Jesus Christ or to God, he uses the term “He has granted” meaning this comes to us with the blessing and provision given to each of us as believers to have a complete relationship with all three persons of the Trinity.

We have grace and peace multiplied by at least x3.

We have everything we need to do life in the here and now. And we also have the power right now to live a Godly life while living on this ungodly planet as resident aliens. The Holy Spirit living inside of each of us makes that possible. His being in us is also the reason why we groan and lament what we see going on around us every day.

And what, through His divine power has He granted to us...”precious and magnificent promises.”

Observe that he uses the superlative form to depict these promises. With the perfect tense he has given, he implies that God not only has given these promises to us but also has fulfilled them in the person and work of Christ. (Kistemaker and Hendrikseon 1953-2001, 247)

This is not only limited to those promises we see here in 2 Peter, but this encompasses all those promises made to us in the scriptures.

God is a promise making and promise keeping God. He promised Adam and Eve that from Eve a descendant would come who would defeat the one who had just lied to them and led them into destruction at the fall, saving them (Genesis 3).

Joseph was reminded of this when he was told by an angel that his betrothed wife, who was pregnant, was pregnant due to having been conceived of the Holy Spirit.



Matthew 1:21 “She will give birth to a Son; and you shall name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (NASB 2020)

John 6:37

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and **whoever comes to me I will never cast out.**” (ESV)

A promise from Jesus that once we believe, due to us being a love gift from the Father to Jesus, we will never be cast out. We are totally secure in our salvation through Jesus Christ. Forever.

Matthew 11:28–30.

“**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for **I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (ESV)

John 14:27

“**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.** Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (ESV)

Rest, true rest and peace. Not the phony stuff that the world promises.

Satan and his slaves in this world make all sorts of promises to us all the time. Just watch a few ads objectively and ask what or who is making the promise. How difficult is it becoming today to even determine what is true and what is a lie. But Jesus promises us peace and true rest for our souls.

As you spend time in the word, when you come across a promise, claim it. They are there for you and for me since we have a tendency not to remember all of them. One more promise.

This is a promise that is massive in what it means, but very much misused. Note, the operative word in the verse.

Philippians 4:19

“And my **God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**” (ESV)

Do you stand in need of salvation? God will supply salvation. Do you need strength for life’s trials? God will supply strength. If you are lonely, God can meet you and comfort you in your loneliness. If you are discouraged, he can lift you up. No need is left out, for the verse says that “God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” (Boice 2000, 257)

Not wants but needs. We get so confused over that from time to time. The Lord promises to meet all, everyone of, our needs. Yes, there are those who expand on that and try to turn God into a genie who will give you what you want whenever you want. But He is sovereign.

And of course, the precious promises we just looked at last time are directly involved in what it is Peter is talking about. As we appropriate these promises, something amazing takes place in us that Peter now points to.

2 Peter 1:4

“Through 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 on account of lust.” (NASB 2020)



When we understand what that truly means, it takes our breath away. We, as believers of Jesus Christ, as members of His family due to what He did on the cross for us, due totally to the grace of God are currently sharers with Christ of the divine nature. Here is another headline for you, some day, and very soon in my opinion thanks to the pending pretribulation rapture of the church, we will be like Him.

1 John 3:1–3

“See what love the Father has lavished on us in letting us be called God’s children! For that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it has not known him. Dear friends, we are God’s children now; and it has not yet been made clear what we will become. We do know that when he appears, we will be like him; because we will see him as he really is. And everyone who has this hope in him continues purifying himself, since God is pure.” (CJB)

We are part of the family, present tense, if we are in Christ. This is not only for those who approaching the end of life, but also for all of us today.

We are all being sanctified every single day since we came to Christ. We are becoming Holy and being made to be more like Christ. Sanctification is Christ in us by the Holy Spirit making us holy.

Sanctification is a progressive change in the character of the person justified—making the believer become a partaker of God’s holy nature. Thus, God’s salvation of believers includes a continual process of sanctification. A believer’s walk is a path of continual growth—and a process that brings us closer to God. (Carpenter and Comfort 2000, 385)

We are being made like Him right now. How do we get ready for the full deal when the rapture takes place?

- Spend time with Jesus right now.
- Read His guidebook for how to do life – the Bible.
- Talk to Him about how life is going for you and let Him change you.
- Seriously, bring everything to Him in prayer, the good and the bad.

Since we spend time with Him right now, in preparation for being like Him at a future date, that drives us to ensure we act per His moral instructions in His word (1 John 3:3). We purify ourselves and renew our minds daily (Romans 12:2).

The idea of being like Christ, sharing in His divine nature, is a term we call theosis. I like how Dr. Heiser puts it on this topic.

“The concept of “theosis” has strong biblical roots, and extends from the divine council worldview, specifically the aspect of the original Edenic goal of having humans join the divine family. In the beginning, God made humans to image him (Genesis 1:26), to be like him, to dwell with him. He made us like his heavenly imagers and came to earth to unite his families, elevating humanity to share in divine life in a new world (Genesis 2:8). The message of “theosis” is that, in Christ, we are being transformed into his likeness—the perfect imager of God. The Spirit—who...“is but isn’t” Jesus—conforms us to Jesus’ own image. Scripture is clear that immortality as a divinized human is the destiny of the believer, and that our present lives in Christ are a process of becoming what we are.” (Heiser 2015, 391-320)

This is truth from Peter.

By realizing and appropriating the precious promises, not only here in 2 Peter but throughout the scriptures, we are becoming partakers of the divine nature. We have also escaped the world.



Because we have become new creatures in Christ, we have already escaped the corruption (the moral ruin) that is in the world through lust (perverted desire). We should make our escape from this world evident to all by our godly behavior and the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2). (Radmacher, Allen and House 1999, 1693)

I have counseled way too many who are believers but are still prisoners of their flesh. You see, Christ came to set us free, we take off the chains forever once we come to Christ. We are indeed free. Jesus said that. Don't you put them back on.

John 8:34–36

“Jesus responded, “Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain forever. So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.” (CSB)

But sanctification is participatory. There is a danger with the flesh. Paul talked about that in Romans.

We tend to get sucked in by the lies of the enemy.

Satan will use any and all attack vectors possible to get us back under his thumb so he can then accuse us and condemn us of our sin. These vectors include the opinions of others, the presumed weight of the culture (everyone is doing it you know). Our loved ones, people at work. Even governmental authority when acting outside of their God given purpose for existence. This is why so many were killed under the thumb of Rome, they refused to offer a pinch of incense at the Temple to Caesar and say Caesar is Lord. The culture condemned this as antisocial and disruptive to society at large.

This is no different than what we are seeing in the culture today. Those of us who hold to Biblical morality are condemned by our culture as being haters. We are accused of being homophobic and racist. We are condemned by the culture as being antisocial and disruptive to society at large.

As believers, we are to follow Jesus to the exclusion of all others. He is to be number one on a list of one.

Paul is seriously clear about our task in Romans.

Romans 6:12–18

“Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires. And do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness. For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under the law but under grace.** What then? Should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Absolutely not! Don't you know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of that one you obey—either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness? But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were handed over, and having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.” (CSB)

Galatians 3:26–29

“**For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female—for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise.” (NET 2nd ed.)

What Peter is telling us, as well as what Paul says is simple, we are, right now, part of this. “Ultimately, this sort of celestial language is trying to telegraph a simple but indescribably profound idea. In the eternal



afterlife with God, believers will have the same sort of body that Jesus had after the resurrection.” (Heiser 2015, 379)

Peter then continues after blowing us totally away with verse 4.

2 Peter 1:5–7

“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.” (NASB 2020)

Peter likes to build on ideas he has already covered. So as he continues here in verse 5, we see him building on what we just learned in verse 4. For the reasons we just learned about, we are to be “applying all diligence.” We will get to what in but first let’s look at this phrase.

The words translated as “applying all diligence” “translate a participle (pareisenenkantes, “applying, bringing to bear alongside of”; used only here in the NT) and spoudēn pasan (“all diligence” or “all zeal”; spoudē in Rom. 12:11 is rendered “zeal”). It takes every bit of diligence and effort a Christian can muster, along with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, to “escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:4) and to bring in alongside of his faith a complement of virtue.” (Gangel 1985, 865)

This is an expected action to be taken on the part of each of us as believers. As we do so, as we go about being zealous, fanatical about following Jesus because of all He has promised us, we will begin to see changes that produce seven different qualities that Peter now discusses.

As we become more like Christ, these qualities will come more and more into focus as they are made possible due to our increasing holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit as well as by our increasing sanctification as we become more like Jesus. These are indeed characteristics of His life.

We are commanded by Peter that by being diligently zealous, fanatical even about our walk, that we must, by faith, produce these virtues. “A believer is to “furnish, supply, or support” his life with these virtues.” (Gangel 1985, 865)

This is a command to us as believers since it is indeed possible for us to frustrate the grace of God by having faith, but no works, no outward visible signs of what has taken place in us.

James 2:19–20

“You believe that “God is one”? Good for you! The demons believe it too—the thought makes them shudder with fear! But, foolish fellow, do you want to be shown that such “faith” apart from actions is barren?” (CJB)

We must, per Peter, be fanatically diligent about seeing our lives produce these virtues in them. He commands us showing how important they are.

As we look at them, each one then leads to a natural outcome taking us to the next one.

Each of these stand alone, but each is also connected to what follows. The way Peter presents them to us emphasizes to us how inseparably linked they are to each other. We are commanded to allow these to become part of our life. Doing so does not save us; we are already saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone and rely solely on Him for our salvation. There is nothing you and I can add to what He did on the cross that will save us. Nothing at all.



But there is an expectation that as believers, we will be faithful and obedient to the one we follow.

2 Peter 1:5–7

“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.” (NASB 2020)

Did you notice that this list begins with faith as the cornerstone and love as the capstone.

Faith is the beginning.

“The realities of God’s kingdom are invisible realities to the natural eye. Faith is the faculty by which the spiritual realities are perceived as being real and capable of being realized. For Christians, faith is real “evidence.” Believers do not need other evidence to proceed in accord with the revealed will of God. In relationship to salvation, faith is based upon what God has done and promised through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is based entirely on the finished work of Christ as revealed in Scripture and confirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14–39). As with repentance, true faith includes an intellectual, emotional and volitional aspect.” (Duffield and Van Cleave 2016, 203-204)

Faith is not a blind leap in the dark. It is seeing and walking in the light of the Word.

Romans 10:17

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (ESV)

Remember, earlier we said how important it was for us to decide to really get to know Jesus and part of that was spending time in His word. Well, you want to know how to grow your faith? There is no instant solution other than the medicine recommended in Romans 10:17.

Yes, there is indeed joy when we see the Lord take what little faith we have and do a magnificent work through us or for us. Emotions are part of this but always remember, the truth, the fact of the word comes first.

Fact leads, Faith with the eye on Fact, following, and Feeling, with the eye on Faith, bringing up the rear. All goes well as long as this order is observed. But the moment Faith turns his back on Fact and looks at Feeling, the procession wobbles. (Pierson 1908, 243)

But there is still the decision part of this, the want to, the volitional part. Several times we have already talked about the need to appropriate the promises God makes for ourselves. That is what this is. The taking action phase. Embracing the promise for yourself.

Faith produces. It sweats. It grows.

James 2:18

“But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” (NKJV)

This reminds me of a story involving a man who truly believed the Lord was going to provide for him through the lottery. Every week he would pray that the Lord would allow him to win the lottery and resolve all of his financial woes as well as provide for ministry at church. For weeks he prayed and nothing. Then one evening, while praying, he heard the Lord say, “Buy a ticket.”



I am not saying run off and buy a lottery ticket. But if you win, it is Calvary Chapel Martin County. Just saying. Jesus wants us to grow, and this is point one.

Peter is telling us that faith becomes a source of supply for us as we grow in Christ. We start off at ground zero and years later, when you look back at where it all began, you simply give the glory to Jesus for how He has grown and used you.

The first place we begin to grow with faith is the area of moral excellence. I have talked with many who never quite got beyond this. They come to Christ, and then have this moral issue to resolve.

Many do not come to Christ because they refuse to accept the moral conundrums, they find themselves in and at the end of the day, have no desire to give them up. But for the believer, the one who has truly come to Christ, this is the serious beginning point.

We do not clean up our lives to come to Christ, that will not save you. We simply believe from the square we are in at that point in time. Then the Holy Spirit comes inside and begins to make changes. Moral excellence is the beginning. At times, those things the Holy Spirit is asking are not possible without Him being in us.

What does this mean Ken? It means that at some point after coming to Christ, the one who is using dope, in listening to the Holy Spirit, decides it is no longer for them. It means that the one who has recently come to Christ and has been involved in a series of ongoing sexual relationships with others has some lifestyle changes they need to make as the Holy Spirit deals with them. You can indeed come to Christ and be gay, but once you give your life to Christ, the Holy Spirit will begin working on moral excellence and that means having to confront a lifestyle that the Bible says nothing good about. He is in the business of change. He puts our passions under control.

But many stumble at moral excellence.

As we continue to grow, seeing the Holy Spirit deal with our previous life and the manner we lived, He then comes to the next area, knowledge. Peter does not use his favorite term here of super knowledge. Faith in Christ allows the Holy Spirit, now in us, to examine our lives for and resolve issues of moral excellence, cleaning us up over time. Then he moves on to the basic knowledge needed for us to participate as a believer with other believers.

The Christian life, for Peter, is more than a feeling; it must include an understanding of what it means for the mundane aspects of life in community. As a virtue, "knowledge" is the means to create an informed congregation of believers. (Vinson, Wilson and Mills 2010, 299)

This is also a pointer to a need for us to continue to grow in our knowledge of Christ and His word. We do that in community, we call it church.

As we grow in faith and watch in wonder as the Lord redirects our thinking and gives us the moral courage to overcome, we are also at the same time learning more about Him and His word. There are promises that by now we have learned about and appropriated for our own as part of enabling this to all take place in our life. This is practical knowledge. Yes, it includes Bible study and being involved with other believers.

This leads to self-control. A natural progression from where we started. A fruit of the spirit too.



The word translated self-control is ἐγκρατεία (enkrateia) “means the “dominion which one has over oneself or something” in the sense that one may or may not have it, that one can bear it, that one thus controls it.” (Grundmann 1964-, 340)

“Mastery or dominion over; self-command, self-control.” (Bullinger 1908, 763)

In other words, through the Holy Spirit, mastery over your own appetites. All of them. They are subjected to the Lord and His control and direction. True knowledge, which leads to this, results in self-control.

One of the things I have seen over the years is that those who are not in control of their own passions and appetites, tend to flip over to this wind of doctrine until it is not as attractive as this new doctrine coming up, so they flop over to it. It is so important for us as a church that as we disciple new believers, we do as much as we can to get them to self-control.

Once there, then perseverance is the next outcome. Without self-control though, then perseverance is difficult if not impossible.

Here is the thing about a lack of self-control, it gives Satan an avenue of attack. The first vector would be from the world. There will be those who will try and lead you away from the Lord using philosophy, intimidation or threats. There is also the enticement provided by the purveyors of false teaching that you can have it all right now by activating the Holy Spirit, or blessings, or whatever they are teaching this month to draw you away from what the Lord wants to do in your life to what they want to do to you and your pocketbook.

Part of that is the flesh as well. You are halfway there and there are no shortcuts for true Spiritual growth. Simon the Sorcerer is not a role model. I am sorry to report to you that there are no new and improved methods of growing us in the Spirit. There is just what Jesus Christ gives us and He is all sufficient. But the flesh and the desire for shortcuts is strong which is why false teachers continue to prosper as well as those churches that no longer teach the word or do anything whatsoever to offend anyone. But as we have moved to this point, then we can indeed persevere.

Perseverance can and does withstand the wiles of the devil. The believer who is growing and becoming more mature in Christ is easily seen, they do not give up. They are Bereans. They do not quit. They are not roaming the pastures at the fringe of the flock looking to jump over the fence the moment the grass looks a wee bit greener than it does here. Many times, there is no regard for who the shepherd of that flock is and there may be a sudden awakening about what they just jumped into as they enter a new flock.

And so it produces in the Christian a deepened awareness of a Father’s wise and loving hand controlling all that happens. Like Jesus himself, who for the joy set before him endured the cross (Heb. 12:2), we are enabled to see our apparent misfortunes in the calm light of eternity. (Green 1987, 88-89)

As we persevere in the face of opposition, persecution, temptation or shortcuts, we find that this develops another virtue in us.

Godliness. “It means exactly what it says—to be like God. After you have been born into the family of God, you want to be like your Father—Godlike. It doesn’t mean that you will be like God, but it does mean that you have that desire and aim in your life.” (McGee 1997, 723)

We have come to Christ in faith. The Holy Spirit has begun His work helping us to be virtuous and creating a desire for His word. As we dig into His word, we increase our knowledge of Him and our desire to be more like Him.



Being more like Him means we take note of all the times Jesus was in control of Himself as well as the situations He was in. We want that and we see the Holy Spirit developing that fruit in us. As we see that, we suddenly encounter an opportunity to exercise perseverance, but because we have learned through knowledge to rely on Him and His fellowship, as well as the other believers in our flock, we are able to persevere through the hard times, becoming Godly. Maybe not in every aspect of our life yet, but we are growing and moving that way.

We realize that we are indeed part of His family. We have been adopted and we belong to Him.

I mean, now I have more brothers and sisters than ever before. How cool is that. "In the NT disciples are called "brothers and sisters," a remark which encourages us to think of one another as kin, with all the rights and duties of kin...Christians were regularly exhorted to treat each other as kin (Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8). This generous way of dealing with each other was frequently commented on by outsiders, usually in a pejorative way. Thus "kinship affection" in the NT is in the process of becoming a distinguishing trait of disciples." (Neyrey 2008, 161)

As we grow, we realize that the command of the Lord, to love our brothers and sisters, is where we need to be as believers. This is an observable characteristic of the church that Jesus said was a must have.

John 13:34–35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**" (NKJV)

This list given here by Peter is not one you and I can pick and choose from. People tend to try and do that as the sin nature precludes them from embracing a virtue and giving up a sin they are unwilling to give up, but they have no issue with the other virtues. If you are doing that, then you will remain stuck at the point of sin until you say yes to the Spirit, repent, and move on. This is a list though that builds and not one thing can be left out. Consider it a discipleship check list.

Discipleship Check List

- Faith
- Moral excellence
- Knowledge
- Self-control
- Perseverance
- Godliness
- Brotherly kindness
- Agape love

We could not begin to work upon these divine virtues without the empowering presence of Christ and the Spirit within. With these gifts, however, comes strenuous activity on our part as we "make every effort" to grow in them. We do not grow in Christ by sitting back and waiting for God to do it for us; he demands an intense work ethic, where we put every ounce of energy we possess into our Christian walk. (Osborne 2011, 292)

2 Timothy 2:15

"Make every effort to **present yourself before God as a proven worker** who does not need to be ashamed, teaching the message of truth accurately." (NET 2nd ed.)



Again, there is no instant spirituality. There are no hidden steps to activate our faith, blessings, the Holy Spirit, or any other thing that false teachers want to suck you in on as a shortcut to spiritual growth.

Peter is setting the stage for what he will be bringing up in the 2nd chapter when he talks specifically about false teachers. But for those who are indeed following Christ and allowing the Holy Spirit to sanctifies us. We see this.

2 Peter 1:8–9

“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they do not make you useless nor unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the one who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.” (NASB 2020)

There is no such thing as standing still as a believer. We are to be always growing and moving forward with the Lord. Of course, we can also move backwards as we give into the flesh. This points to one of the things we, as believers, should spend more time doing, being fruit inspectors.

Are those things we have discussed so far, visible in our lives? If yes, are they increasing? Is our faith in Christ and His word increasing? Is our moral excellence holding firm? Is it getting easier to say no because we have our eyes on the Lord? This is a point of contention for many today because of internet porn, a whole new battlefield we must be aware of in the church which has indeed sent many back to the square of moral excellence. Again, we can indeed go backwards.

The culture also shows us the issues for us as a church to address as we see more come to Christ and what it is we need to be doing in terms of discipleship.

Moral Behaviors in America				
Is it morally acceptable to:	Generation of the Adult			
	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
tell a falsehood of minor consequence in order to protect your personal best interests or reputation	60%	54%	51%	48%
have an abortion for any reason other than to protect the life of the mother or child	69%	67%	59%	61%
have consensual sexual relations with someone of the opposite sex to whom you are not legally married	73%	69%	63%	59%
decide to not repay a loan because the person lending the money has not yet asked to be repaid and does not need the money back, but the borrower does	50%	42%	29%	25%
endorse two people of the same biological sex getting married	62%	70%	67%	61%

(Barna 2024)

“The United States is witnessing the destruction of biblical morality,” observed Barna, who directs research projects at the Cultural Research Center. “Whatever people may feel about that reality, we must recognize that an inescapable outcome of the rejection of our traditional moral base is the weakening of personal relationships”.

“You cannot trust people who believe that everything is conditional and who make every decision solely on the basis of personal needs and interests,” Barna continued. “It’s no wonder that Americans no



longer trust their central institutions or relationships. Lying, stealing and cheating have become the new moral norm for a majority of our citizens. We have steadily moved back to the jungle mentality of 'every man for himself.'" (Barna 2024)

Pray for revival. Not just for our nation, but here in South Florida. We desire to see a move of the Spirit. In these last days, just as King Josiah saw in Jerusalem prior to the fall to Babylon.

Matthew 24:11–12

"And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold." (NRSVue)

Jesus was talking about conditions prior to the Second Coming, we are already there.

How about your knowledge of the Word? Are you growing? "and like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation," (1 Peter 2:2, NASB 2020)

Self-control should be increasing, not decreasing. Sorry, but there are those who teach, falsely, that to be in the Spirit is to lose control to the Spirit, no, that is so far from the truth as to be laughable. To be Spirit filled and Spirit led is to also exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. Self-control shows not only we are growing, but we are also Spirit filled and Spirit led.

Galatians 5:22–23

"By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things." (NRSVue)

Are we persevering in our walk no matter what? Are we reflecting God's perspective in how we do life. In other words, how are we doing on exhibiting a Biblical worldview?

That is going to be a tough point for many today because of poor teaching as well as false teaching. It is obtainable but must be nurtured.

Peter is pretty matter of fact. If you have these and see them increasing, we are tools to be used by the King. Conversely, if they are not increasing, then spiritual blindness is the primary condition and that means salvation may not be present at all.

I have to say I have counseled those who say they are believers, but as I examine their lives, I hear the opposite. They have indeed forgotten about their alleged purification from their sins.

Usually, all it takes is a few questions and soon you know. Not a believer but there is hope, not a believer but thinks they are and there is little to no hope, carnal but there is hope, believer.

I have seen folks go from unbeliever with hope to believer. I have also seen those who say they believe, reflect that never really took place. The ones who are the toughest, those who think they are fine but aren't.

Let's stop there and pick up next time.



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