

CONFIRMING THE CALL

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“One night, a mother fixed a special meal for her family: turkey with mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, green beans, cranberry sauce, and apple pie for dessert. It was everyone’s favorite meal, especially when it came at a time other than Thanksgiving. The aroma filled the house, and as the children came in from playing they could hardly wait for dinner to begin. The last child appeared only a few minutes before dinner time and sat through the meal without eating, even though he especially loved those foods. Why? Because he had filled up on junk food at a friend’s house. In settling for something good, he had lost his appetite for the best. The same applies to our spiritual appetites. Some people don’t have much of an appetite for spiritual truth because they have satisfied themselves with lesser things.”¹

In the passage that we are going to look at today Peter asks an important question to all Christians: has your life confirmed your calling and election? We tend to be too much like the



boy in the above story, filling our spiritual lives with lesser and often the sinful things of life. Too often believers choose to surrender small parts of their lives over to Christ but for the most part live like the pleasure-seeking pagans whose only goal in life is to gratify the evil desires of their hearts. When these carnal Christians refuse to confirm their calling by living holy lives they dishonor the sacrifice of Christ on the cross that cleansed their past sins! While choice is where sin dwells² it is also where spiritual maturity begins ... we can choose to live holy lives! The first part of this sermon will focus on God’s spiritual provision that enables believers to choose and remain on

the right path. The second part of this sermon will outline the need to grow spiritually by increasing one’s faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection and love. The last part of this sermon will focus on each believer’s true objective in life: confirming one’s calling and election by living holy lives so that they might receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹ Michael P. Green, [*1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 355.

² This quote was taken from Dallas Willard but not sure which book.

GOD'S SPIRITUAL PROVISIONS

While conversion is a big step towards knowing God, it is not intended to be the end of spiritual growth. Born again believers do not start out as spiritually mature but instead as mere babies (1 Peter 2:2) who continue to struggle with the evil desires of their hearts (James 1:14; 1 Peter 4:3). Through great effort and by the power of the Holy Spirit one can learn to be a slave unto righteousness rather than a slave to sin (Romans 6:18). Given this is true then why are so many Christians still immature in the faith? While laziness certainly keeps many from trying to become mature, it is the yoke of a defeatist attitude that typically holds many believers on the starting line of spiritual maturity. Having applied the pages of numerous self-help books only to repeatedly fail has left many “babes” in Christ with a profound feeling that spiritual maturity for any human being is elusive and beyond their reach!



Instead of running the race towards spiritual maturity too many Christians today choose to be satisfied with lying down on the kingdom track and remain babies, eating, sleeping and “pooping” (sinning) in God’s kingdom.

³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life 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, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (verses 3-4, NIV).

To combat the defeatist attitude of these babes, Peter reminds them that all that is needed for a believer to live the life that God intends was and will continue to be faith in the free gift of His unmerited grace through Jesus Christ (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9).³ Efforts to become spiritually mature fail when they are not grounded in the One who calls and enables His own to live holy lives (1 Thessalonians 4:7).⁴ It is through God’s divine power that our minds are transformed into His likeness (Romans 12:1-2).⁵ To know this is true the believer only needs to

³ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 160.

⁴ Michael Green, [2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 81.

⁵ Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 41.

review and stand⁶ on the promises of the O.T. about a “new era of salvation and the blessing that



God would bring into being through His Son.”⁷ The O.T. promise to cleanse and purify the heart and minds of believers has been fulfilled in the reception of the Holy Spirit. It is precisely through union with Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit that born-again believers participate in the divine nature, empowered to not only escape being corrupted by their evil desires but to embrace spiritual maturity as well.⁸ For a new believer to say, “God cannot help a wretch like me to grow spiritually” is the equivalent of denying God the power to turn a stone heart into flesh!

By the same faith that we were saved we are also transformed.

STEPS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love (verses 5-7, NIV).

In view of the great and precious promises and the prospect of sharing in the Divine nature, we are to make every effort to grow and develop spiritually.⁹ God will not automatically infuse virtue into our souls intravenously, we must make plans and expend effort if we are to grow from babes to the spiritual maturity.¹⁰ This is the kind of effort where God’s virtues are kept in the uppermost parts of our minds always.¹¹ For example, king David meditated on God’s

⁶ Clive Anderson, [Opening up 2 Peter](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2007), 23.

⁷ Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 43.

⁸ Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 44.

⁹ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 164.

¹⁰ Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 179.

¹¹ Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, eds., [John’s Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation](#), First Edition., The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary (Colorado Springs, CO; Paris, ON; Eastbourne: David C Cook, 2005), 318.

laws day and night and was called “a man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22). Paul tells us to go into strict training so that we might run the race of life in such a way as to get the prize (1 Corinthians 9:23). The author of Hebrews says that we are throw off everything that entangles us in the ways of this world and run the race with our eyes constantly fixed on Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (12:1-2). For Peter, successfully running the race means intentionally growing in the following virtues: faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection and love.



Faith. Before one can run the race, one must be on the track for only born-again



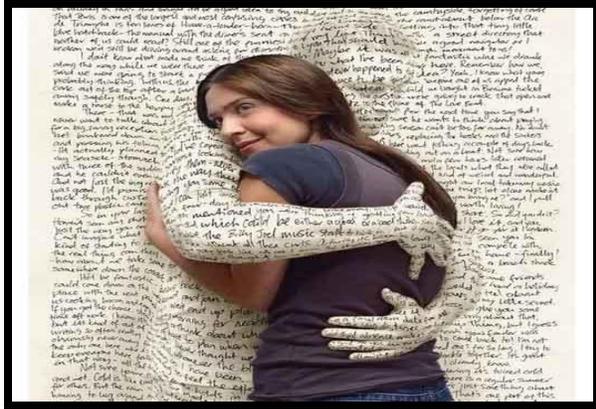
believers can attain spiritual maturity. Until a person is born again he/she has not participated in the Divine nature and therefore does not have the Spirit of God who enables people to be holy. Like the rich young ruler adoption into the kingdom of God is not accomplished through works of righteousness (Matthew 19:16-26) by through faith in a risen Savior.¹² Peter reminds Christians that it was by faith that they were saved by it is also by faith that they will spiritually mature. Christ’s love should compel (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) those who He has bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6:20) to faithfully commit¹³ to following His

command to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16)!

¹² Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 165.

¹³ Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 179.

Goodness and Knowledge. The next two virtues in the list are goodness and knowledge. By goodness Peter does not mean being a good person but one who has moral excellence.¹⁴ Our society defines “good” in relation to loosely held values that change as one’s circumstances change. For Peter, “good” must first be defined not by society but through the knowledge of



God’s holy word. Living in a society that no longer believes in absolute truth makes it very difficult to surrender and see God’s word not as a burden (1 John 5:3) but as the source of one’s life (John 6:35). Knowledge of the divine principles and knowing how to apply these principles (Ephesians 5:17; Philippians 1:9; Hebrews :14) is the key to being good and attaining spiritual maturity.¹⁵ And second, being good relates to discerning and orienting one’s life in accordance to the purpose that God has in mind for your life.¹⁶ Each Christian has been given a spiritual gift mix so

that they might accomplish the divine tasks that God has laid out for them to do thus producing Christlikeness in every department of the lives.¹⁷



Self-Control and Perseverance. The world teaches us that any act that does not harm another but gives one pleasure is a good act. This is certainly not true for God alone gets to define what is right and wrong. Left to themselves, human beings are not strong enough to discipline their passions but are liable to give in to evil desires and follow the ways of this world.¹⁸ Praise be to God that having self-control to stay on the righteous path is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23) and therefore is completely attainable through

¹⁴ Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 179.

¹⁵ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 165.

¹⁶ Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 45.

¹⁷ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 165.

¹⁸ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 165.

His power. Even in the face of the spiritual battles of persecution, those who have participated in the Divine nature can persevere and stand firm to their commitment to their Lord.¹⁹ James promises that those who “bear up under”²⁰ trials and tribulations should consider it pure joy for if they remain steadfast in their faith in God they will become spiritual mature and lack nothing in God’s kingdom (1:2-3)! It is precisely though relying on God as their rock, fortress and deliverer (Psalms 18:2) that believers can persevere through anything!

Godliness, Mutual Affection and Love. Clothed with loyalty to God above all else we are called to love one another (Mark 12:3-31; John 13:34).²¹ The ultimate authority in one’s life must not be oneself, friends or family but God²² for God alone is our Creator and Redeemer.



With the love, we have received from God we are to love one another. While it was not uncommon for the people of the Greco-Roman world to love their relatives, what makes “mutual affection” of this verse unique was that Christians were to treat those outside of their physical relatives as part of their families (Mark 3:31-35).²³ Believers are to be devoted (Romans 12:10) and deeply love each other (1 Peter 1:22), sealing it with the exchange of a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20). How fitting it is that those who share one faith,

one baptism and one God and Father of all would acknowledge and love each other as one family! It should come as no surprise that the last virtue is love for without love spiritual maturity is an impossibility (1 Corinthians 13).²⁴

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.

¹⁹ Peter H. Davids, [*The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 181.

²⁰ The Greek word hypomone means “bear up under.” Douglas J. Moo, [*2 Peter, Jude*](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 46.

²¹ Norman Hillyer, [*1 and 2 Peter, Jude*](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 166.

²² Peter H. Davids, [*The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 181.

²³ Peter H. Davids, [*The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 182–183.

²⁴ Douglas J. Moo, [*2 Peter, Jude*](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 47.

⁹ But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins (verses 8-9, NIV).

Peter promises that if believers put every effort into fostering and developing these virtues in increasing measure then the race they run in God's kingdom will not be ineffective and unproductive.²⁵ By "ineffective" Peter most likely means having faith without works (James 2:20) or idleness (Matthew 20:3; 1 Timothy 5:13) and by "unproductive" he most likely means living a life without bearing any spiritual fruit.²⁶ What an insult it will be to Christ who died for our sins to find us at the end of our lives still sitting on the track, eating, sleeping and pooping in God's kingdom! In verse nine Peter warns that those who choose to forget the sacrifice that enabled them to enter the waters of baptism, only to remain



nearsighted and focused on the things of this world, will not spiritually mature²⁷ but will instead metaphorically be slapping our divine Savior in the face (Romans 6:1-14).²⁸ I don't know about you but I want to be like Paul and run the race well so that when Christ returns I might receive the crowns of righteousness (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)!

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EACH BELIEVER'S OBJECTIVE

¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (verses 10-11).

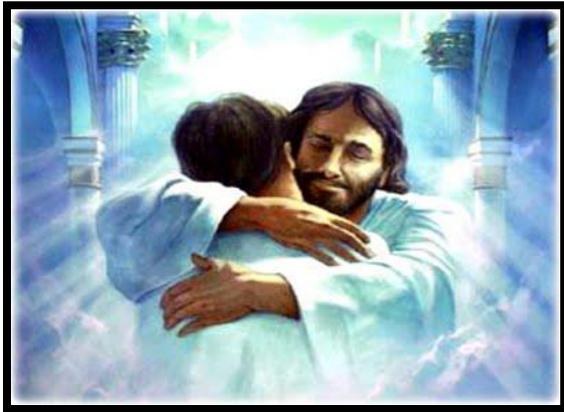
²⁵ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 166.

²⁶ Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 184.

²⁷ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 167.

²⁸ Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 187.

Peter sums up this passage by imploring believers everywhere to make every effort to confirm their calling and election by living good and holy lives.²⁹ Considering God's promises



Christians are to make every effort into increasing the virtues of faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection and love. While it will not always be possible to live every moment for Christ without sinning, Peter promises that those who are putting every effort into increasing in these virtues will never stumble beyond recovery (Romans 11:1).³⁰ By increasing these virtues in their lives, the believer can be rest assured that will not be either ineffective or unproductive in God's kingdom but as "faithful pilgrims on earth will

be astonished at the lavish provision God has prepared for them when they come to enter the next world."³¹ I want to leave you with one summary question to ponder: since you only have one life to live and spiritual maturity is obviously a choice, will you surrender the remaining time of your life over to Jesus and be productive in His kingdom?

²⁹ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 169.

³⁰ Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 49.

³¹ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 169.