

*2 Peter: Truth for Temporary Citizens of Earth,  
Act II: "We Have Everything We Need"  
2 Peter 1:1-4*

*Take a first look.*

I. IN THE SHORT STORY "HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN NEED?" LEO TOLSTOY PROBES THE TENSION BETWEEN AMBITION AND CONTENTMENT. He tells about a man who is offered all the land that he can walk around in one day. The only catch is that he must come back to the place he began walking by the setting of the sun. He gets up early to get a good start. As he walks, he thinks more and more about what others will think of him when he becomes a major landowner instead of a city dweller with low social status. He begins to walk faster and faster. He comes to mid-day, but rather than turning around to circle back, he picks up his pace again to gain still more land. By the moment the sun is setting, he begins to run. He is short of breath, but he is determined to make it back to the starting line. Just as the sun goes behind the hill, he crosses over the line. He is so exhausted that he collapses. The last thing he hears is the cheering of the ethnic group that offered him the land. It is his last memory in this life, as he dies from overexertion. Tolstoy then poses the key question of the story, "How much land does a man need?" The answer: "Six feet from head to toe is all the land a man needs."

II. WHAT DO WE REALLY NEED IN THIS LIFE? WHAT MATTERS MOST? WHAT MATTERS FOR ETERNITY AND NOT JUST FOR THE REMAINDER OF OUR LIVES?

III. ON THE FRONTIER OF ETERNITY, PETER HELPS US BOTH ASK AND ANSWER SUCH QUESTIONS. He boldly states that God has given us everything we need for everything that really matters. Listen to his claim with me.

*Take a closer look 2 Peter 1:1-4.*

**I. WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED, WHEN WE HAVE THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF FAITH.**  
vv. 1-2

1. *This faith comes through the righteousness of Christ not our own.* v. 1b. Here is a very strong affirmation of the deity of Jesus Christ: "through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." The construction in Greek makes it very clear that Jesus Christ is to be considered *both* "our God and Savior." That which Peter and his readers have in common is this precious *faith* that is made possible by the personal work of the Son of God Himself.

2. *This faith is received as a gift, being based on God's grace.* vv. 2, 3b. The salvation that God desires for us to receive is offered freely based not on our worthiness to receive it, but on the greatness of His love to offer it.

3. *This faith brings peace to the life of the believer.* v. 2. We have peace with God, peace within our souls, and the potential of peace with anyone who also has found this precious faith in Christ, the Son of God.

A—Have we come to put our trust in Jesus Christ alone to restore our relationship with God and give us Him peace?
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I—In an interview a few years ago with Chuck Colson, in *Jubilee*, the magazine of Prison Fellowship, Colson told about a time when he was standing in line, very tired, in Jakarta, Indonesia, waiting to clear customs. “There were mobs of people,” he said. “I wasn’t self-conscious of who I was, I was just being myself. But a year later I got a letter from a lawyer of Chinese extraction who lives in Singapore. He wrote that a couple of years earlier he, an atheist, had put his son in Sunday school to learn ‘moral values.’ He had heard about me and had seen the cover of *Born Again*. He hadn’t read the book. When he was standing in line waiting for immigration in Jakarta ... he recognized me and wrote that he saw such peace on my face that he went back and read the book. Then he gave his life to Christ!”<sup>1</sup>

Surely it is only the presence of Jesus Christ that can make such a difference even in our countenance when we are tired and under pressure.

4. *Such faith is expressed beyond the believer’s life as the servant-life is lived.* v. 1a. It is always significant to see how these inspired writers refer to themselves. Here, Peter calls himself a *servant/slave* before he calls himself an *apostle*. This is an important sequence. It should be the same for me and you. Before we have any position of leadership, we are simply servants of Jesus Christ and of each other. This is the only kind of leadership that is legitimate. When God’s grace has drawn us; when His Spirit has renewed us; when His righteousness has brought faith to our hearts, our response is to offer life to Him as an act of worship. This is the kind of service we offer to God.

A—Are we living our lives with a clear focus on God as the object of all that we do?

I—I read a book several years ago by Bob Buford entitled *Half Time: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance*. It has left me with many questions about my own sense of my life’s accomplishments and purposes. He describes the man (in this case) who begins to realize that success is no longer satisfying. It’s right there in the old movie *City Slickers*. The character played by Billy Crystal is riding a horse next to the trail boss and guide, played by Jack Palance. The moment of truth comes in this conversation.

The crusty Palance character says, “If you ain’t got that one thing” that is most important in your life, “you ain’t got [nothin’].”

How about us? What is our “one thing” that gives our lives meaning and direction? For Peter, it was not an “it,” it was *He*. God Himself had become for Him the Center. When we have Him, we have everything we need.

## II. WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED, WHEN WE HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD. vv. 2b, 3b

1. The “*grace and peace*” of the Lord is received through knowing God. The word translated “knowledge” here is one that means “full knowledge.”

2. This is a “*knowledge by acquaintance*” not merely a knowledge based on the possession of information alone. It is the knowledge of a growing relationship, not just the knowledge of a scholarly interest. It is the result of being together, not the result of dispassionate research alone.

A—Do we know the Lord in this way?

<sup>1</sup> *Jubilee*, Summer 1998, p. 10.

**I—John Wesley was used greatly by God throughout his long career of preaching, both across England and for a brief time in Georgia.** He had been a very religious person, seeking a religious career as a student at Oxford University in England. But something was missing. One night he attended a meeting where someone was reading from the preface of Martin Luther's commentary on the book of Romans. As he listened to the story of Luther's experience of finding grace to trust fully in Christ alone, he said, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." He knew that he trusted Christ, and nothing else and no one else for his salvation. It was the moment of his true conversion. He passed over from mere religious devotion to a vital relationship with the living God through His Son Jesus Christ.

### **III. WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED, WHEN WE HAVE GOD'S POWER. v. 3a**

1. *Just as our salvation is not based on our own effort, neither is our growth.* This is the crux of the passage: "His divine power has given us everything we need ...." Both our initial entrance into His life and our growth in that life are works of His power.

A—Have we come to realize that we have all the power we need to be all that God intends for us to be and to accomplish everything that God intends for us to do?

**I—In his book *Pastoral Grit: The Strength to Stand and to Stay* (Bethany), Craig Brian Larson writes:**

"In 1972, NASA launched the exploratory space probe Pioneer 10. According to Leon Jaroff in *Time*, the satellite's primary mission was to reach Jupiter, photograph the planet and its moons, and beam data to earth about Jupiter's magnetic field, radiation belts, and atmosphere. Scientists regarded this as a bold plan, for at that time no earth satellite had ever gone beyond Mars, and they feared the asteroid belt would destroy the satellite before it could reach its target.

"But Pioneer 10 accomplished its mission and much, much more. Swinging past the giant planet in November 1973, Jupiter's immense gravity hurled Pioneer 10 at a higher rate of speed toward the edge of the solar system. At one billion miles from the sun, Pioneer 10 passed Saturn. At some two billion miles, it hurtled past Uranus; Neptune at nearly three billion miles; Pluto at almost four billion miles. By 1997, twenty-five years after its launch, Pioneer 10 was more than six billion miles from the sun.

"And despite that immense distance, Pioneer 10 continued to beam back radio signals to scientists on Earth. 'Perhaps most remarkable,' writes Jaroff, 'those signals emanate from an 8-watt transmitter, which radiates about as much power as a bedroom night light and takes more than nine hours to reach Earth.'

"The Little Satellite That Could was not qualified to do what it did. Engineers designed Pioneer 10 with a useful life of just three years. But it kept going and going. By simple longevity, its tiny 8-watt transmitter radio accomplished more than anyone thought possible.

He draws the application for us: "So it is when we offer ourselves to serve the Lord. God can work even through someone with 8-watt abilities. God cannot work, however, through someone who quits."<sup>2</sup> The key is to continue to draw, even our 8 watts of spiritual energy, from the sun of God's love in Christ, Who never leaves us nor forsakes us.

2. *His power provides all we need for "life and godliness."*

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<sup>2</sup> *Leadership*, Vol. 19, #1.

a. This **life** is not mere biological life; it is the life of the soul and the spirit. It is the life which is ultimately eternal. It is not βίος (bios), but rather ζωή (zoe), the inner life not the outer life.

b. And **godliness** is simply the life offered up to God. This word comes from a combination of words that mean “to worship well.” To worship well is to offer up to God all of life: your labor at work, your studies at school, your relationships at home and at play, your service beyond home and work.

A—Again, Peter compels us to ask, “What is the focus of our lives and ambitions?”

**I—Amy Carmichael prayed, “Holy Spirit, think through me till your ideas are my ideas.”<sup>3</sup>**

She expresses a desire to engage the power of the Holy Spirit at the level of her thoughts and intentions. This is the spirit of submission needed in the Christian life.

**I—Without such a focus, we will perish. Vaclav Havel** was used by God in both the awakening of the Czech people and in the transition between communist government and free government in Czechoslovakia. He has said, “I believe that with the loss of God, man has lost a kind of absolute and universal system of coordinates, to which he could always relate everything, chiefly himself.”

He went on, “His world and his personality gradually began to break up into separate, incoherent fragments corresponding to different, relative coordinates.”<sup>4</sup> We need God, as He has revealed Himself most fully in Jesus Christ, as our central coordinate, around which everything else pivots.

#### **IV. WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED, WHEN WE ARE HOLDING TO GOD’S PROMISES.** v. 4

1. *These promises make it possible for us to share in the very nature of God.* The promise of salvation is this: When we open our hearts to God’s Son, Jesus Christ, His Spirit comes into our lives (Romans 8:9) and makes us children of God. It is a matter of spiritual birth, coming alive in the spiritual realm for the first time. Prior to this new birth, this birth “from above” (John 3:3), we are “dead in our trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1ff).

2. *These promises help us escape the corrupting influences of the world that are fueled by individual lusts.*

A—Have each of us received this promise of new birth for ourselves?

**I—It is truly a life-changing matter. That issue of *Jubilee*, to which I referred already, contained a section on the modern plague of pornography in our culture.** One of the articles told about the ministry of a prison chaplain named John Wyrick, who served at a state prison in the northeast. He met a man they called Buddy, whom he discovered ran a few sex shops in a nearby city. His father Sam, also in the same prison, was one of the top porn distributors in the state. After building a relationship, Buddy started attending chapel. One day, he asked Christ to forgive him and be his Savior and Lord. Then he asked chaplain Wyrick to visit his 74-year-old dad Sam. Wyrick visited him, relaying messages back and forth between

<sup>3</sup> Amy Carmichael, *The Doubleday Prayer Collection*. Christianity Today, Vol. 42, no. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Vaclav Havel, cited by Philip Yancey in *Books & Culture*, Vol. 4, no. 1.

son and father and talking with Sam about food, since Sam had told him he loved to cook. One afternoon in January (1998), Wyrick told Sam about love and forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Sam bowed his head and prayed. Wyrick recalled, "It's no exaggeration, you could feel a burden being taken away." Unexpectedly, Sam had a heart attack that night and died. Wyrick was asked to speak at the funeral.

The funeral director pointed out to Wyrick at the service that the people attending were a "who's who" in the sex industry. Brother John spoke about Sam's decision to trust in Christ and then summed up the message that had touched both son and father. He invited them all to bow their heads and make their own decisions. At the end he left a stack of his business cards—just in case someone wanted to call. He reported that the next week, the phone rang off the hook. Six people said they had committed their lives to Christ at the service: two porn stars, a bouncer, and Sam's ex-wife and two other children. Others had questions, wanting to know more.

Wyrick stresses, "This is the way God deals with the porn industry. He sends grace to save the soul." Amen! He is the only One who has the power and makes the promise to do just that.

*Take it home (applications).*

I. WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED TO BECOME ALL GOD WANTS US TO BECOME.

II. HAVE EACH OF US ENTERED THIS LIFE FULLY AND PERSONALLY OURSELVES?

III. IS OUR FOCUS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND GODLINESS THAT THE LORD DESIRES, OR ARE WE WASTING OUR FOCUS ON THAT WHICH DOESN'T LAST AND WON'T SATISFY FOR LONG?