SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

2 PET. 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

NOTES

Fruitfulness of Wisdom

Lesson Text: 2 Peter 1:1-11

Related Scriptures: Ephesians 1:3-14; 4:17-24; Philippians 2:12-13; Matthew 5:17-20; 7:21-23

TIME: between A.D. 63 and 64 PLACE: likely from Rome

GOLDEN TEXT—"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).

Lesson Exposition

SALUTATION—2 Pet. 1:1-2

Unusually, Peter called himself Simeon Peter. The spelling in the original Greek has an extra vowel. This name was used for Peter only here and in Acts 15:14. Simon seems to be the way Greek-speaking believers knew Peter. So why the name Simeon? Authors sometimes used an assistant, called an *amanuensis*, to pen letters. This person would write as someone dictated, often providing his own style (cf. 1 Pet. 5:12). The name Simeon, a more formal name with Hebrew connections, may reflect the writer's Jewish heritage, or it may have emphasized the letter's authenticity.

Peter said his audience had received a faith of equal value to "ours." He may have considered their faith equal to the apostles'. Alternatively, Peter may have been reminding Gentile Christians that their faith had equal honor before God as that of Jewish Christians.

SALVATION—2 Pet. 1:3-4

All things that we need for life and godliness come through knowing God. God's power is at work in us, molding our character to be like His own. There are two applications here. First, God has given us all we need to live a godly life. We sometimes think that following God is too hard, or perhaps we need further supernatural insights. Yet God has provided Christians all they need to live godly lives.

Second, God has given us all we need for godliness through the knowledge of Him. A key part of seeking to grow in godliness is seeking to know Him better. We do not achieve holiness merely through effort, but through the knowledge of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Peter often used terms in pairs in 2 Peter, such as grace and peace (vs. 2), life and godliness (vs. 3), and glory and goodness. The pairs can be associated by seeing one term as derived from the other, or one as equated with the other.

VIRTUES—2 Pet. 1:5-7

Christians participate in the divine nature through a series of virtues that build on one another. Right belief leads to right behavior. Peter associated each virtue with another as he built his argument for

both right belief and behavior. The rhetorical device he used, called "sorites," forms a chain in which one virtue leads to the next, which leads to another.

Excellence of character (2 Pet. 1:5*a*). "Virtue" is the same term used to describe God's character. If faith unites us with God, then we should labor to become like Him in taking on the nature of Christ. Our virtue, or excellence, must reflect God's likeness.

Knowledge (2 Pet. 1:5*b*). Knowledge is important since through the knowledge of God we are provided with everything required for life and godliness. As we grow in the knowledge of God, we move toward the character of God Himself. We grow as our knowledge of God increases, changing us into His likeness.

Self-control (2 Pet. 1:6*a*). Peter contrasted the life of the faithful with the licentious ways of the false prophets (cf. 2:2). It is not enough to know about God intellectually. Following God means obeying Him. We are to reject temptations in pursuit of God.

Endurance (2 Pet. 1:6*b*). In light of coming persecution, endurance would be necessary. Christians need to stand fast in the faith, whether pressure comes from inside (via false prophets) or from outside the community.

Godliness (2 Pet. 1:6*c*). The word "godliness" can mean piety, reverence, or loyalty. It can also refer to the fear of God. Its importance cannot be overstated, given the challenge of the false prophets in 2 Peter 2.

Mutual affection (2 Pet. 1:7*a*). Mutual affection is "brotherly love." This refers to love among Christians. Virtues are not practiced just as individuals but in communities.

Love (2 Pet. 1:7*b*). This is the type of love that God displays when He loves even His enemies (cf. John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). It binds a community together.

CALLING—2 Pet. 1:8-11

Cultivating these virtues prevents us from being unproductive. When Peter said, "if these things be in you," he was establishing a picture of the normal Christian life. These virtues become the baseline of life in Christ as we inherit them from God. If we are not cultivating righteousness, we can fall back into the influences of the world. We should be zealous to confirm our calling in Christ. Those who have the knowledge of God will stand firm.

—Bob Anderson

QUESTIONS

1. Is the name Simeon Peter used anywhere else in the New Testament?
2. What two truths might Peter have emphasized with the statement "like precious faith with us" (2 Pet. 1:1)?
3. How has God provided all we need to live a godly life? What implications does this have for how we pursue godliness?
4. In what two ways does 2 Peter often use pairs?
5. What is the technical term for a chain of virtues that build on one another in pairs?
6. What is the practical application of faith that unites us to God?
7. What happens as we grow in the knowledge of God and embrace it?
8. What does "mutual affection" mean?
9. What did Peter consider to be a normal Christian life?
10. If we do not cultivate righteousness, what can happen?

—Tom Greene

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Our faith is a precious gift and should be cherished (2 Pet. 1:1).
2. The world offers peace, but true peace comes only through the knowledge of God (vs. 2).
3. In Christ, we already have all that we need to live godly lives (vss. 3-4).
4. We must work to grow in virtue and faith (vss. 5-7).
5. It is possible to be unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ, which should motivate us to grow (vs. 8).
6. If we fail to grow in being Christlike, we are blind and forgetful (vs. 9).
7. We should remain diligent in seeking the Lord (vss. 10-11).

—Tom Greene

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. If we already have "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" in Christ (2 Pet. 1:3), why do we need churches, prayer, and so forth?
2. How do we become "partakers of the divine nature" (vs. 4)? Is this past, present, or future tense?
3. Verses 5-7 contain a list of virtues that build on one another. How do you cultivate Christian virtues?
4. A major theme in verses 1-11 is the knowledge of God. What habits can you develop to increase this?
5. How is the knowledge of God connected with virtue?
6. Is it possible to truly be a Christian and yet be fruitless?
7. How do we give diligence to our calling and election?
8. How do our works relate to our entrance into the kingdom (vss. 10-11)?

—Tom Greene

Golden Text Illuminated

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).

God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. This generous provision encompasses not only our eternal salvation but also the practical needs of daily living. The source of this provision is God's power.

God has given us all we need to live a godly life! Peter outlined the process of spiritual growth, urging Christians to intentionally put on virtues (cf. 1:5-7). The list presents the progressive development of Christian character. It begins with faith and builds a series of interconnected spiritual qualities. Each virtue supports the others.

While God provides the resources for this growth, Peter emphasized human responsibility. He exhorted believers to "[give] all diligence" in developing these qualities (vs. 5). Peter assured us that if these qualities are present and increasing, we will not be unfruitful (2 Pet. 1:8). Rather, our lives will bear witness to the transforming power of the gospel.

This growth provides assurance of our calling and election (vss. 10-11). Our efforts do not earn our salvation, but the fruit in our lives confirms the reality of our faith. Are you actively building on your faith as Peter outlined?

If you think that the sins you struggle with are impossible to overcome, take comfort! God has given you all that you need to live a godly life through the knowledge of Christ! Reread verses 3-4, ask the Lord for His strength, and then strive with all your might to put on Christian virtue, as Peter said.

—Gene Kissinger

Daily Bible Readings for Home Study and Worship

(Readings are for the week previous to the lesson topics.)

1. September 6. Wisdom Calls the Foolish

M —Wisdom Calls. Prov. 8:1-11.
T —The Blessings of Wisdom. Prov. 8:32-36.
W —The Offer of Wisdom. Prov. 9:1-12.
T —Flee Sin. Prov. 5:7-14.
F —Blessings or Woe. Isa. 3:9-15.
S —The Crossroads. Jer. 6:16-21.
S —Turn to Wisdom. Prov. 1:20-33.

2. September 13. The Folly of Trusting in Riches

M —Refuge in the Lord. Ps. 11:1-7.
T —All Perish. Eccl. 3:16-22.
W —The Vanity of Wealth. Eccl. 5:10-20.
T —Though Praised, the Wicked Perish. Eccl. 8:5-13.
F —Lay up Treasure in Heaven. Matt. 6:19-24.
S —I Shall See God. Job 19:23-27.
S —Discern the End of All. Ps. 49:1-20.

3. September 20. Humble Wisdom Instructs Prideful Folly

M —Who Gathered the Wind? Job 37:1-13.
T —Who Bound the Waters? Job 38:1-11.
W —The Breathtaking Power of God. Job 38:22-41.
T —Who May Contend with God? Job 39:26—40:2.
F —The Rich Young Man. Mark 10:17-31.
S —The Fool. Ps. 14:1-7.
S —The Words of Agur. Prov. 30:1-14.

4. September 27. There Is a Way that Seems Right

M —Folly Calls. Prov. 9:13-18.
T —Dealing with a Fool. Prov. 26:1-12.
W —The Way of the Fool. Prov. 15:1-12.
T —Instruction of the Lord's Wisdom. Prov. 15:18-33.
F —Hear and Obey. Matt. 7:24-27.
S —Be Doers of the Word. Jas. 1:19-27.
S —Wisdom and Folly. Prov. 14:1-19.

5. October 4. Wisdom over Strength

M —The Lord Saves. Ps. 20:1-9.
T —All Go unto Dust. Eccl. 3:16-22.
W —Wisdom and Folly. Eccl. 2:12-16.
T —Wisdom over Money. Eccl. 7:11-14.
F —Better than Great Treasure. Prov. 15:14-17.
S —Better than the Mighty. Prov. 16:32—17:1.
S —Wisdom Is Better than Strength. Eccl. 9:11-18.

6. October 11. Wisdom and Money

M —The Righteous Contrasted with the Wicked. Prov. 11:1-8.
T —How to Use Riches. Prov. 11:24-31.
W —The Diligent and the Lazy. Prov. 12:24—13:8.
T —Honor the Lord. Prov. 3:1-12.
F —Do Not Trample the Poor. Amos 5:11-15.
S —Support the Weak. Acts 20:25-35.
S —The Results of Foolishness and Wisdom. Prov. 22:1-16.

7. October 18. A Soft Answer over Wrath

M —A Heart like Medicine. Prov. 17:22-28.
T —Living as Christians. Eph. 4:25-32.
W —Obedience Better than Sacrifice. 1 Sam. 15:12-23.
T —Praise that Pleases the Lord. Ps. 69:30-36.
F —An Offering that Did Not Please the Lord. 1 Sam. 13:5-14.
S —The Strength of Wisdom. Prov. 24:1-7.
S —Two Ways Contrasted. Prov. 15:1-15.

8. October 25. The Wisdom of the Meek

M —From the Heart. Matt. 12:33-37.
T —Submit to God. Jas. 4:1-10.
W —Do All in the Name of Jesus. Col. 3:12-17.
T —True Wisdom. 1 Cor. 3:18-23.
F —Reject Evil and Do Good. 1 Pet. 3:8-12.
S —The Tongue. Jas. 3:1-10.
S —Heavenly Wisdom. Jas. 3:13-18.

9. November 1. The Wisdom of the Gospel

M —The "Wisdom" of Men. Isa. 29:13-24.
T —There Is No Other. Isa. 45:20-25.
W —Boast in the Lord. Jer. 9:23-26.
T —The Lord Reveals Secrets. Luke 10:21-24.
F —Walk in Christ. Col. 2:1-15.
S —God's Hidden Wisdom. 1 Cor. 2:1-16.
S —The Wisdom of God. 1 Cor. 1:18-31.

10. November 8. Seek for Wisdom as for Silver

M —Get Wisdom. Prov. 4:1-9.
T —Avoid Evil. Prov. 4:10-19.
W —Ponder Your Way. Prov. 4:20-27.
T —Treasure the Commandments. Prov. 7:1-5.
F —The Lord's Testimonies Are Wonderful. Ps. 119:129-136.
S —The Blessings of Wisdom. Prov. 2:10-22.
S —The Lord Gives Wisdom. Prov. 2:1-9.

11. November 15. Enduring Trials in Wisdom

M —Ask in Jesus' Name. John 14:8-14.
T —Abide in Christ and Ask. John 15:1-11.
W —Ask that Your Joy May Be Full. John 16:16-24.
T —I Believe; Help My Unbelief. Mark 9:14-29.
F —The Word of the Lord Endures. Isa. 40:6-8.
S —The Shortness of Life. Jas. 4:13—5:6.
S —Wisdom amid Trials. Jas. 1:1-11.

12. November 22. Wisdom Brings Blessing

M —The Value of Wisdom. Prov. 16:16-22.
T —Blessed Is the One Who Fears the Lord. Ps. 112:1-10.
W —Cheerful Generosity. 2 Cor. 9:6-11.
T —Reproof and Wisdom. Prov. 8:12-21.
F —Trust the Lord. Ps. 37:1-20.
S —The Lord Blesses the Righteous. Ps. 37:21-40.
S —Wisdom Is Precious. Prov. 3:13-35.

13. November 29. Fruitfulness of Wisdom

M —Grace Trains Us. Titus 2:11-15.
T —How to Walk. Col. 1:9-14.
W —A Prayer for Strength. Eph. 3:14-21.
T —Walk in the Spirit. Gal. 5:16-26.
F —Grow in Grace. 2 Pet. 3:14-18.
S —Remember These Things. 2 Pet. 1:12-15.
S —If You Know Christ, Act! 2 Pet. 1:1-11.