

Title: Confirming Your Calling (Part 4)

Passage: 2 Peter 1:5b-6a

Theme Growing in the knowledge of grace demonstrates the reality of grace

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] We've noted that central to this passage are the words, the exhortation of verse 10 {cite}

The first word of that verse, "Therefore," gives us insight into how we, as believers, are to be certain about our calling and election (our salvation) and that thread enters t/fabric of this text in verse 3, weaving its way thru vv. 4-8.

[ii] I hope you will stay with me through this entire passage

In some ways it's like a puzzle. There are lots of pieces, but you don't see t/big picture until you put all of t/pieces together. The danger is that we neglect a piece or over-emphasize one aspect of t/picture to t/detriment of t/rest.

[iii] There are some dangers in that regard

Last time I shared with you t/words of D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, the famed British expositor, who emphasized that to truly understand this passage is to apprec. t/balance that's preserved in it as it relates to what it means to be a Xn and to live t/Xn life.

He also addresses 2 principle errors that Xns tend to fall into when they fail to maintain that balance.

... There are two errors into which we always tend to fall. We go on repeating in every age the experiences of the first Christians that are depicted in the New Testament - the errors of extremes.

There are those . . . who think that by their own efforts they can make themselves Christian, that by adding these virtues to their natural life [i.e. vv. 5-7] they can fit themselves to stand in the presence of God. And on the other side there is the error of passivity. This is the error of saying, *'Of course one can do nothing; salvation is of Christ; and therefore any effort . . . to discipline the Christian life, is wrong, and means falling back on works, and trying to justify oneself by works.'* To go to one extreme or the other has always been the tendency, and you have these two errors described in the New Testament itself. On the one side there are those who preach justification by works, and on the other those who can be described as antinomians, and who say, *'If you are saved. you are saved, and your actions do not matter at all.'* These are in both instances contradictory to the teaching of Scripture, and upset the balance of its teaching.

His advice? ==>

Let us, then, follow the logical order and sequence that are indicated by the Apostle." [Lloyd-Jones, 23-25]

So we need to fasten our minds to how this passage unfolds so that we, like t/bicyclist on t/trapeze line, stay balanced.

To borrow that metaphor ==> you know that a trapeze artist gen. carries a balancing pole as he walks across the tight rope. Key word there is balance. You don't want a stick that weights 3 lbs on 1 end & 10 on t/other. You want balance.

[iv] After all, we're talking about some difficult topics

God's choosing t/believer/His sov. & t/prof. Xn making his election sure. Salvation wholly by grace & t/diligence required to enter t/eternal KD. Assurance of salvation vs. Doubt & despair.

The key is understanding that it all begins with God's grace & continues in t/grace God supplies.

This is our first main point ==>

I. Salvation's Sufficiency: The Believer's Inheritance (3-4)

A. An Inheritance Granted by Grace (3)

[It is by Christ's] **divine power** [that we have been granted] **everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.**

That t/Xns inheritance has been given to him & that it's based on knowing X, something that God does by His sovereign calling all points to the fact that all of our salvation is grounded in grace.

II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Faithfulness (5-9)

We're talking in terms of being "fruitful." Cf. v. 8.

A. We talked about how this passage unfolds – note the connection (how verse 5 begins)

Now for this very reason also . . .

Points back to verses 3-4. IOW - We see our responsibility to be diligent & to exercise virtues like moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, love– But those virtues have to spring from a heart transformed by grace or all we're talking about is religion.

"For this very reason also" ==> Because Xt has given you everything they need for life and godliness // He called you to life while you were dead in your sin // He made you a partaker of t/divine nature ==>

Now for this very reason also, apply all diligence [in your life]

B. While verse 5 points backward it also looks forward

Yes, God has lavished upon us His grace. Yes, our standing, our hope of salvation is totally by grace apart from any works or self-effort. Yes, God has given to us all things that we need for life and godliness. Yes, He has given us his precious and very great promises, joining us with X that we might escape the world's corruption.

BUT - We still have work to do! We're in a battle. It's not time to relax // rest. We have to be diligent.

We are coming up to the 40 year anniversary of an incredible story that occurred off the coast of FL. Labor Day weekend, 1970 Glenda Lennon and her husband Robert were vacationing in their 21 foot yacht in the Gulf of Mexico. They were just 2 miles off shore and Glenda decided to go for swim.

She was doing some spearfishing and after 20 minutes or so she began to swim back to the boat which was only 15 or 20 feet away from her. She noticed she wasn't getting any closer; in fact, the boat was further away. Terrified, she realized she was being swept away to open sea.

She called to her husband, a championship swimmer in school: "Robert, I'm not going anywhere."

He jumped in after her, but by the time he reached her the current had gotten stronger, pulling them both farther out into the gulf. He decided to swim back and get the boat and come back around to pick up his wife. He told her to stay calm, just keep treading lightly, and everything would be OK.

The current had gotten so strong that it took him over 6 hours to reach the boat.

By this time, the sun had set. He turned the boat toward where he thought she would be, but he could not locate his wife.

It was the next day that a search party found her 20 miles away – her skin was blistered and raw from the sun and salt, but she was alive.

She later said that the water underneath her was only 8 feet or so deep. She said, "I could always see the bottom but I didn't go under."

[http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1990-09-02/news/9009010609_1_glenda-stay-afloat-boat-moving]

Years ago John Piper used this true story as an example. He says,

"What it illustrates is this: Christians who just float never stay in the same place. Christians who disobey verses 5-7 and do not apply themselves with diligence to bear the fruit of faith drift into great peril. We must strive even to stand still, the tide of temptation is so strong."

"The Christian life is very much like climbing a hill of ice. You cannot slide up. You have to cut every step with an ice ax. Only with incessant labor in cutting and chipping can you make any progress. If you want to know how to [fall away], leave off going forward and you will go downward by necessity. You can never stand still." [C.H. Spurgeon]

Now for this very reason also, apply all diligence . . .

παραισφερω The verb occurs only here in N.T., & Lit. means, 'to bring alongside of.' That is, bring diligence to bear alongside of God's promises.

We could look at it this way ==>

God multiplies Grace and Peace (v. 2); to that grace, to that peace, t/Christian applies hard work, discipline, diligence.

Implies significant effort.

Josephus (Ant. 11.8.4 §324) writes that Sanballat [Governor of Samaria during t/time of Nehemiah] "brought all his energy to bear [πασαν εΙΣΕΝΕΓΚΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΣΠΟΥΔΗΝ] and built the temple."

We persevere, we discipline ourselves, even tho it's all of God's grace.

Colossians 1:29 ". . . I labor, striving according to His power that mightily works within me."

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, IN YOUR FAITH SUPPLY . . .

II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Faithfulness (5-9)

What follows from vv. 5-7 are 7 virtues ==>

A. Faithfulness Demonstrated Through Seven Virtues (5-7)

I want you to note that faith isn't one of the virtues. Some commentators I read claim faith as one of t/virtues & list 8 of them, rather than 7.

Faith isn't one of t/virtues ==> t/virtues are born out of faith.

This is a subjective use of faith, as opposed to an objective use. Same word used in 1:1. Faith as the action of believing in the truth.

Could be understood in the sense of "faithfulness" or "reliability"

Hence our second main point ==>

II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Faithfulness (5-9)

That faithfulness is born out of God's power and grace. We don't seek to be a Xn by being godly. We live godly because we are born again.

. . . **in your faith SUPPLY** [these things] . . .

Supply is a better translation than "add." To supply something implies that you have it. To "add" something may be understood that you have to go get it first. Remember, Peter's emphasis is on t/fact that, as a believer, you do have these things. They're in your arsenal.

If they are lacking, don't go to yourself (you have nothing) // Go to t/source, go to JC.

In his comments on this text, John Calvin, writes about this ==>

"Scripture . . . testifies also that all our progress and perseverance are from God. . . . [I]t expressly declares that wisdom, love, patience, are the gifts of God and the Spirit. When, therefore, the Apostle requires these things, he by no means asserts that they are in our power, but only shews what we ought to have, and what ought to be done. And as to the godly, when conscious of their own infirmity, they find themselves deficient in their duty, nothing remains for them but to flee to God for aid and help." Essential point.

Peter chooses a word here that paints a lovely picture.

The word "supply" (in your faith supply) is t/verb ἐπιχορηγέω. It's from t/noun χορηγός.

In t/Greek culture of Peter's day one of the main forms of mass entertainment was attending plays. Much like today's Broadway Play, these 1st c. dramas were lavish affairs.

I was in one play as a child. It wasn't very lavish. It was a Xmas play. I was very excited when I was told that I got to play t/part of Rudolph t/rednosed reindeer. That was like getting a lead part. The part came w/a costume. Interestingly, t/costume was for 2 ppl. not 1. I was crushed when Rudolph's costume head was handed to Jimmy Guido. In turn, I was given t/back part of t/suit & performed before t/masses as Rudolph's posterior. I could just see mom and dad out there in t/audience, pointing to Rudolph's rear quarter saying, "That's our boy!"

These plays in 1st c. Greek were not like those of a child. They were lavish, opulent.

Generally, they were musical as well. A huge part of t/Greek play was t/Chorus. No expense was spared to equip these choruses.

Barclay writes, for example, that ==>

[in] the city Dionysia there were produced three tragedies, five comedies and five dithyrnbs [poetic performances]. Men had to be found to provide the choruses for them all, a duty which could cost as much as 3,000 drachmae. [Barclay, 298-99]

For many at that time, 1 drachma was = 1 day's wage.

Each of these choruses had a supplier/benefactor whose responsibility was to furnish whatever was necessary to make t/chorus a success. This individual was known as t/Χορηγος.

Barclay goes on to say ==>

[This] word has a certain lavishness in it. It never means to equip in any . . . miserly way; it means lavishly to pour out everything that is necessary for a noble performance. *Epichor gein* went out into a larger world and it grew to mean not only to equip a chorus but to be responsible for any kind of equipment. It can mean to equip an army with all necessary provisions; it can mean to equip the soul with all the necessary virtues for life. But always at the back of it is this idea of a lavish generosity . . ." [Barclay, 298-99]

What did we see in verse 3?

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness . . .

Remember, I said that t/word "granted" (δωρομαι) has t/idea great generosity. That we could say ==>

. . . His divine power has 'lavished upon us' everything pertaining to life and godliness . . .

God lavishes us by His grace everything we need to live t/Xn life to t/fullest. In turn, we lavishly supply to our faith things like excellence, knowledge, perseverance, and love.

Peter is urging you to lavishly equip your life w/these things.

What things? Specifically, there are 7 qualities listed here.

II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Faithfulness (5-9)

A. Faithfulness Demonstrated Through Seven Virtues (5-7)

Or ==> 7 virtues supplied to faith.

One last point before we get into them . . .

In vv 5-7 Peter uses a literary device known as sorites (σωρητις). Sorites is an argument formed by taking t/predicate from one statement and making it the subject of the next.

Common in Jewish Literature. Example from the Mishnah:

“Heedfulness leads to cleanliness, and cleanliness leads to purity, and purity leads to abstinence, and abstinence leads to holiness, and holiness leads to humility, and humility leads to the shunning of sin, and the shunning of sin leads to saintliness, and saintliness leads to the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection of the dead.”
(M. Sotah 9:15)

Ladder or chain of virtues.

We have a step by step chain that culminates in a climax, t/top of t/laddar (t/pinnacle here in 2 Peter is "love" v. 7).

Keep in mind that this doesn't imply that each of these virtues has to be mastered before you can go on to t/next.

This isn't like, "first I have to take basic arithmetic, then I can take General Math, then I can go on to Algebra."

This isn't a wooden linear progression as much as it is a literary device for emphasis.

We have a chain of 7 virtues that serve to confirm one's calling.

1. Moral Excellence (5)

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence . . .

a. ἀρετή

An uncommon word in the NT, it was used among the Greeks to refer to high virtue. An all encompassing virtuous life that lacked hypocrisy

"Excellence in character shown in generosity toward others."

(1) The word is only used 4x in the NT — 3 of the 4 by Peter

It's used in 1 Peter 2:9 ==> to proclaim His excellencies"

It's used 2x here in our passage. We saw it in v. 3

God called us by His glory and excellence.

Here, we supply excellence.

So this is a characteristic or an attribute of God. "Excellence."

Where do we get it?

What does verse 4 say? ('partakers of t/Divine Nature').

You, as a follower of JC are to be demonstrating ==>

"Excellence in character shown in generosity toward others."

2. Knowledge (5)

. . . and in [your] moral excellence knowledge;

a. We already saw the word "knowledge" in verses 2 and 3

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Just as His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

1:8. 2:12 ==> false teachers had no true knowledge.

Growing in the knowledge of grace demonstrates the reality of grace.

We need to be learning, yes; but we need to go beyond learning to knowing. This is t/kind of knowledge that impacts t/heart.

Howard Hendricks ==>

"When I was youth director in a church in Illinois, a boy in the junior department had memorized six hundred verses word perfectly. We even had him on a Christian radio program and tested him on the air.

Later we were told someone apparently was stealing money from the junior-department offering each Sunday. A committee was appointed to investigate, and--you guessed it--the kid who knew the six-hundred verses was the culprit. I called him into my office and repeated to him a verse of Scripture (which, by the way, he told me I misquoted). I said, 'Do you see any connection between that verse of Scripture and your stealing from the offering?' 'No,' he said at first. And then, 'Well, maybe there is.' 'What do you think is the connection?' 'I got caught,' he said." [Howard Hendricks, Teaching to Change Lives, 95]

I hate t/fact that there is so much theological and biblical ignorance among Xns. That can be remedied; they can be taught.

But I'm weary of those who call themselves believers in JC (implies that they're followers of X) who have full minds & empty hearts.

Those who can nod their heads up and down in agreement about t/grace of salvation, and yet demonstrate so little of that grace in their own lives. Who can so readily see t/sin in others and yet are blind to their own.

. . . in [your] moral excellence [supply] knowledge;

Gaining in knowing about God through His Word is part of it, but it goes beyond that in a personal, intimate knowledge that flowers into actions and attitudes that honor Christ.

In 2 Tim. chapt. 3 Paul talks of those who have a form of godliness, but who deny t/power of godliness. He further describes them as always learning but never coming to the knowledge of t/truth.

We need to be about learning. Implicit in t/word for disciple (μαθητης). A disciple is a learner. R hearts/minds must be saturated w/Script. & S.D. We need to be learning more & more about JC & our doctrine should resonate w/His sovereign glory. That devotion, if it's real/alive will flower into prayer, worship, and a knowledge that transcends t/stubborn barrier that so often lies between our heads & our hearts.

Be in t/Word. Read it. Meditate on it. Prayer over it. Read good books by gifted, godly men. Draw from t/resources of t/CH. Bible studies, times of prayer. Cherish t/preaching of God's Word as an opportunity to hear t/very voice of God. But please, don't be hearers only; be doers.

This knowledge is so essential that Peter lit. bookends this letter w/it. (cf. v. 2, 3, 5; cf. 3:14-18).

3. Self control (6)

. . . and in [your] knowledge, self control . . .

Self-discipline. Think about those 2 words – and think about your life. Does your life demonstrate self control or is it out of control?

Here is a key to knowledge // here is a key to godly living ==> Discipline. Again, t/word "disciple" implies "discipline". If you desire to be a disciple of JC you have to desire discipline & apply self-control to your life.

If knowledge is t/rudder that directs t/ship; self-control is t/engine that moves it.

Years ago I came upon this book, *"Self Discipline in 10 Days."* I thought it would be humorous to write an online review of t/book, simply saying, *"I like t/concept, but I wasn't disciplined enough to read it. Is there a prequel, something like "1 Step to gaining t/self-discipline to read t/book, S.D.in10Days?"*

I always think of this illustration ==>

Euclid, t/famous Greek mathematician, wrote a 13 volume text for the study of geometry. But Ptolemy I, King of Egypt, wanted to learn the subject without having to study so many books. As a king, he was accustomed to having his way made easy, so he asked if there was a shortcut to mastering geometry. Euclid's reply to t/king was "No, there is no royal road to learning." [cited in Whitney Spiritual Disciplines, 223]

The fact of t/matter is, there's no royal road to self-discipline; no quick and easy tricks; you learn it by doing it.

We want t/quick & easy. But t/word "discipline" doesn't imply ease.

It is expected that this year alone, Americans alone will spend over 60 billion dollars in an attempt to lose weight. A few years ago I came up w/a simple diet plan (*"physician, heal thyself – take t/anchovy pizza out of your own mouth, then you will be fit to remove t/cheeseburger from mine"*) ==> ELF EMO diet plan.

The Greek word is ἐγκρατεία (stem of t/word - - is a word for power or might). Self mastery. To exercise dominion over one's desires and actions. Idea is that if you can be self-controlled in what you desire, you will enjoy mastery over what you do or don't do.

In t/context here, it's to be disciplined over those 'lusts' that we, as partakers in t/Divine Nature, are to have escaped.

This noun is also in Acts 24:25, & Gal. 5:23 (FOS).

Verb ἐνκρατεομαι is used in 1 Cor. 9:25.

... everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

Loew & Nida's Gk Lex. entry on this word ==>

An adequate rendering of the expression 'to exercise self-control' may require an idiomatic equivalent, for example, 'to hold oneself in,' 'to command oneself,' 'to be a chief of oneself,' 'to make one's heart be obedient,' 'to command one's own desires,' 'to be the master of what one wants,' or 'to say No to one's body.'

In the LXX ἐγκρατεομαι is used in Gen. 43:31 to describe Joseph's control of his emotions towards his brothers ("he controlled himself").

I mentioned that the word was used in Acts 24:25. That's an interesting context.

TAP is accused by t/Jews of bringing a Gentile into t/Temple (punishable by death). He's arrested by t/Romans & brought before t/Sanhedrin. From Jerusalem he's taken to Caesarea where he stands trial before t/Roman Governor Felix. We read in 24:25 ==>

[That as Paul] was discussing righteousness, self-control (ἐνκρατεῖσθαι), & the judgement to come, Felix became frightened..."

Many scholars believe that, contextually, his fear is directly connected to the word ἐνκρατεῖσθαι (self-control). Why? Was he lazy? His wife, Drusilla, was next to him. Did she have a "honey do" list that he kept ignoring? Maybe he was afraid of her?!

No, this word was frequently used of self-control as it relates to moral and sexual purity.

Felix, a Gentile, and Drusilla, a Jew were married. But not lawfully.

The Roman historiographer Suetonius records that Drusilla was Felix's 3rd wife. She also had her share of husbands.

Most recently, she had left Azizus a king in northern Syria, whom she had married at 14. She left him to become the wife of Felix.

One commentator writes ==>

"Since an adulteress sat beside Felix while Paul discussed self-control, its bearing on unchastity is easily apparent, and the verse compares naturally with 1 Cor. 7:9." [The New Bible Dictionary, 3rd Ed]

1 Cor. 7:9, Paul, after stating that it is good to remain unmarried ==>
But if they [unmarried and widows] do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

. . . applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, in [your] moral excellence knowledge, and in [your] knowledge, self control . . .

In saying this, Peter continues to take aim at t/false teachers who were anything but self-controlled.

They practiced sensuality (2:2)

They had eyes full of adultery (2:14)

Entangled in the defilements of the world (2:19).

They were anything but those who had escaped the corruption in the world by lust, because they were never partakers of the divine nature.

Partakers of grace give evidence of grace. This is making sure your calling and election. This is ==>

II. Salvation's Service: The Believer's Faithfulness (5-9)

One of the most tragic events during the Reagan Presidency was the Sunday morning terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut. 100s of Americans were killed or wounded as they slept.

Marine Corps Commandant Paul Kelly visited some of the wounded survivors who had been shuttled to a hospital in Frankfurt, Germany. Among them was Corporal Jeffrey Lee Nashton, severely wounded in the incident. Nashton had so many tubes running in and out of his body that a witness said he looked more like a machine than a man; yet he survived.

As Kelly neared him, Nashton, struggling to move and racked with pain, motioned for a piece of paper and a pen. He wrote a brief note and passed it back to the Commandant. On the slip of paper were but two Latin words—"Semper Fi" – the Marine motto, "forever faithful."

[Adapted from 'Children at Risk,' J. Dobson & Gary Bauer, Word, 1990, pp. 187-188]

Should that not be t/motto of the Xn? "Forever faithful?"

I'd be t/first to admit that we fall short, sometimes far short. But we stay in t/battle. That is our desire.

To hear our Lord say to us ==>

'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'