

# 2ND PETER

## A VERSE BY VERSE STUDY THROUGH PETER'S SECOND EPISTLE

### **SESSION OBJECTIVE: 2 PETER 1:3-4**

To understand that Christians are capable of living a godly life.

## **Everything You Need**

It's no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic changed a lot of things last year. Some businesses opened, some closed, and some totally revamped their vision and mission. One type of business, in particular, that found a lot of success was meal-prep businesses. The reason? People started eating out less, and in more. One study showed that people were eating at home a considerable amount more since the pandemic first began. Among those who responded, 44% report eating breakfast at home, compared with 33% pre-COVID. Additionally, 31% are eating lunch at home every day, compared with 18% pre-COVID, and 33% are eating dinner at home daily, compared with 21% pre-COVID. As a result of these sudden shifts, meal prep businesses exploded. Most people with little experience cooking had no idea where to begin, and businesses that were able to provide people with everything they needed to make a meal found a good deal of success.

In 2 Peter 1:3, Peter writes, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness." Outside of Christ, we have no way of living a godly life, for indeed, we are hostile towards Him (Rom. 8:7). But Christ, Peter says, gives us everything we need to live a godly life, "through the knowledge of Him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (2 Pet. 1:3). Knowledge not only multiplies grace and peace, but equips us with all that is necessary to live obediently.

## Divine Power

Verse 3 begins by revealing the source of godly living: “His divine power.” It is not merely faith or faithfulness in the life of a Christian that secures godliness, but the very divine power of God Himself. The question becomes, “God the Father or God the Son?” Some commentators have suggested the Father is in view here, however it seems more reasonable that the Son is the intended source, and for two reasons. For one, the nearest reference to God is Christ, in verse 2: “...the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.” Secondly, there is a divine reference to Christ in verse 1: “...our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” For these reasons, then, it seems that Peter is saying that Jesus’ divine power is that which grants us what we need for, “life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).

Jesus’ divine power is expressed in multiple places in the New Testament. Peter, speaking to the crowds in Acts chapter 2 said, “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know” (Acts 2:22). Paul said that Jesus was, “declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). Even Jesus said, regarding the events after the tribulation, “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30, this being a reference to Daniel 7:13).

Jesus is often presented in culture and secular literature as a grand teacher, a cosmic thinker, and a peacemaker for the ages, but the Scripture’s revelation of Him is that He is the Divine Son of God, full of supernatural power and worthy of glory and worship. It is Christ who calls us to Himself, and not from a distance; He is, in fact, near to us (Acts 17:27). It is this same Divine power that also grants to all Christians the *ability* to live a life of godliness.

## Life and Godliness

Another question might be regarding whether *life and godliness* ought to be understood as two distinct concepts, or one? Again, scholars disagree on this question. Thomas Schreiner (*New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude*) argues that life is a reference to eternal life, and godliness is the result of receiving eternal life in Christ. On the other hand, Peter Davids (*The Pillar New Testament Commentary: 2 Peter and Jude*) argues that life and godliness are single idea, namely, a godly life. The reasoning for this is that life is nowhere else used to mean eternal life in any of Peter’s writings. Given the lack of usage and the general flow of the passage, I tend to agree with Davids over Schreiner. Peter is arguing that there is no excuse to not live a godly life if you are a Christian because Christ has done everything necessary to grant it to you. Godliness comes through knowledge of Christ, and Christ is calling His elect to Himself (2 Pet. 1:3, 10). However, it is also something that we must obediently *pursue* (2 Pet. 1:5).

Godly living is a central theme throughout the New Testament, and it always requires obedience. In fact, Paul likens it to something you train for in 1 Timothy 4:7: “Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” Godliness is something that Christ secures for us and calls us toward, and consistent obedience through the power of the Spirit is what actualizes it.

It's important to note that godly living is not merely surface action, but motivated from the heart. It is possible to appear godly, but not actually be. Paul talks about those, "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power" (2 Tim. 3:5). This is a crucial distinction to make. Often godly behavior can be presented as the means by which one comes to true, saving faith. In other words, it is sometimes maintained that if people will begin following the commandments of the Bible, that "obedience" will be the means towards faith and salvation. However, the Scripture presents a different view. Godly behavior is motivated by an already repentant and redeemed heart, and thus godliness begins with the inner-person, not the outward behavior. The outward behavior is merely the working out of the inward reality.

## Promises, Promises

Verse 4 picks up on an additional object that has been granted us. In verse 3, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness," but in verse 4, "He has granted to us his precious and very great promises." The promises of God are here described by the word precious, but also the superlative, "very great." In other words, one of the treasures of immeasurable value that we possess as Christians is the many promises of God. When God promises something to His covenant people, He always is good for it. There are two explicit effects of these promises in verse 4, and both will be briefly outline below.

### ***PARTAKERS OF DIVINE NATURE***

One of the benefits of coming to faith through the promise of God is that we become the temple for the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). Beyond that, we are uniquely gifted with gifts of the Spirit: "Now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4). In fact, the promise of participation in at least this aspect of the divine nature is given to the disciples in Acts 1:8, which serves as a theme for the entire book: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." When we are, spiritually speaking, "made alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5), we become partakers with Him in His divine nature.

### ***ESCAPE FROM CORRUPTION***

Secondly, we are enabled to, "escape from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire" (2 Pet. 1:4). This is also reflected in Ephesians 2. Paul describes our former condition apart from Christ: "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience — among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." We all were partakers once in the corruption of the world, but by the promises of Christ, we are given a way of escape.

In summary, Christ calls us to Himself to know Him, and through the knowledge of Him we are granted everything needed to live a godly life, namely participation in His divine nature through the power of His Holy Spirit, and an escape from the corruption of sin. Because of this, the godly life is achievable through obedience to Him.

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read 2 Peter 1:3. What has His divine power granted to us?
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- 2. Read 2 Peter 1:3. What does the knowledge of Him accomplish for us? Where else has the knowledge of God shown up so far (Hint: Last week).

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### Day Two

- 1. Read 2 Peter 1:3. What two things has Christ called us to?

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- 2. Read 2 Peter 1:4. What else has Christ granted to us?

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### Day Three

- 1. Read 2 Peter 1:4. Through the promises of God, what do we become partakers of? According to the notes, by what means do we participate with His divine nature?

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- 2. Read 2 Peter 1:4. What have we escaped? Read Ephesians 2:1-3. How does Paul describe this corruption that we escape from?

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### Day Four

- 1. In your own words, how has Christ made it possible for us to live a life of godliness?

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- 2. How important is obedience in concert with the work of God according to this passage?

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## Week 2 Discussion: Obedience

In 2 Peter 1:3-4, Peter lays out the reality that Christ has done everything necessary to make it possible for us to live a life of godliness; there are no excuses. He has called us to Himself to know Him, and through the knowledge of Him we are granted to participate in His divine nature through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and thus able to live obediently, and by extension, godly. Talk as a group about the importance of obedience in your life, and how you can walk more obediently in areas that you struggle.

- 1. Icebreaker: When you hear the word *obedience*, what comes to mind? Is it positive or negative?
- 2. What's the biggest thing you struggle to be obedient with in your walk with Jesus?
- 3. Is obedience easier, the same, or more difficult when you are in accountable community? Why?

4. Do you consider yourself *godly*? Why or why not?
5. Who is the most godly individual you know? What makes them so set apart?
6. How can others in this group help you through accountability to be more obedient in specific areas?

## **Takeaways:**

1. Christ has called us to Himself, and granted us to be participants in His divine nature through the Holy Spirit.
2. As a result, we have the necessary tools in Christ to live a godly life.

### ***PRAYER REQUESTS:***