

The Call and Capacity To Grow

2 Peter 1:1-2

Every Christian is called to a life of growth. To stop growing is a sign of spiritual unhealthiness.

"So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it ***you may grow up*** into salvation—" 1 Peter 2:1-2 (ESV)

"But ***grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ***. To him be the glory..." 2 Peter 3:18

"The most vital question to ask about all who claim to be Christian is this: Have they a soul thirst for God? ... Is their life centered on Him? Do they press forward more and more that they might know Him?" D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." 1 Peter 5:10

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence," 2 Peter 1:2-3 (ESV)

Here's the good news: He who called you to His glory is faithful to conform you to His glory

I. Simon Peter's Transformed Identity. 2 Peter 1:1

"Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ," 2 Peter 1:1

i. Peter's Name Change: Peter's name change is the claim of Christ upon his life.

"And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'" Matthew 16:17-18 (ESV)

Peter didn't get a new name because of what he would do for Christ but rather what Christ would do through Him.

ii. Peter's Role Change: Peter's role change is by the grace of God.

"Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ," 2 Peter 1:1

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, 'Follow me.'" John 21:18-19

People can change and Christ can and will use changed people: The coward will become courageous by the grace of God. The dismal failure will eventually become faithful to the point of death.

II. Simon Peter's Understanding of Gospel equality. 2 Peter 1:2

"... to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:1 (ESV)

Every Christian is to become in reality what he or she is in God's sight by faith in Christ.

i. The Ground of our Acceptance: Faith in Christ.

"You never become a Christian because you are what you are or because of what you've done. Never. It is in spite of what you are. It is in spite of what you've done." D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

"For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ." Robert Murray McCheyne

ii. The Guarantee of our Acceptance: The Righteousness of Christ.

"... by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:1 (ESV)

The possibility of change is to continue in the manner in which we began. Looking to Christ to do in us that which is pleasing in His sight. Faith in Him is the key to change.

III. Simon Peter's Life Principle: Knowing is Growing. 2 Peter 1:2

"May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Peter 1:2 (ESV)

The power to change exists not in our ability to look perpetually inwardly at ourselves but to look ever-increasingly into the beauty and splendor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"We are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it. The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a

disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul.” J.I. Packer

Will we embrace the joy of growing continually in our knowledge of the glory of Christ and experience His transforming power in our lives by faith?

Study Questions: **The Call and Capacity to Grow — 2 Peter 1:1–2**

1. **Peter's life is a powerful picture of how Jesus changes people.** Where have you seen Christ change you over the course of your life? What gives you hope that He is not finished with you yet?
2. Peter was given a new identity and a new calling—not because of what he had already accomplished, but because of what Christ would do through him. **How does knowing that your identity is rooted in Christ, rather than your performance, give you freedom to grow?**
3. **"Every Christian is called to a life of growth."** What are some signs that a person is growing spiritually? What are some things that tend to help you continue growing?
4. Peter describes believers as having **"a faith of equal standing"** with every other Christian through the righteousness of Jesus. How does the truth that we are equally accepted by God through Christ change the way we view ourselves—and the way we view other Christians?
5. We can easily become preoccupied with our failures, weaknesses, or areas where we still need to change. **What difference does it make to "look to Christ" rather than continually looking at ourselves?** What might that look like in everyday life?
6. **"The possibility of change is to continue in the manner in which we began"—by faith in Christ.** Where are you currently asking Jesus to change something in you? How can you depend on His grace rather than simply trying harder?
7. Peter says, **"May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."** What do you think it means to actually *grow in the knowledge of Jesus* rather than simply grow in knowledge *about* Jesus?
8. Think about the statement **"Knowing is Growing."** How has knowing more of Christ—His character, His grace, His promises, or His work—actually changed the way you think, respond, or live?
9. Peter's story reminds us that **our past failures do not determine what Christ can do through us.** Is there an area of your past, personality, or present weakness that you need to entrust more fully to Christ? How might His grace give you hope for growth?
10. **If Christ is faithful to conform us to His glory, what is one practical step you could take this week to pursue greater knowledge of and dependence upon Him?** How could the group pray for you in that area?