

Confirming Your Salvation by Practicing God's Virtues (Confirm Your Calling and Election, 2 **Peter 1:3-11**)

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**2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:1-11**

*1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

3 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, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. **11** For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Starting at the beginning: Verses 3-4 essentially describe a glorious salvation, where God calls us to himself **for His own glory**, granting us precious and great promises, The result is we get to participate in His divine nature, and escape corruption. Us escaping worldly, sinful corruption is what brings God glory – and it's by His divine power and will that this happens. We should always be thankful for such a plan! Praise the Lord for this!

In verse 5 and onward, where it becomes clear that **we do have a part.**

Quickly, I'll define "Legalism" which some of us may have heard and experienced before. Doctrinally, Legalism is a position opposite of grace. Those who hold a legalistic position typically fail to see the real purpose for law, especially the purpose of the Old Testament law of Moses, which is to be our "schoolmaster" or "tutor" to bring us to Christ, the true author of Salvation. Instead, those under legalism are convinced that adherence to rules and regulation are what saves them.

On other words, legalism is the idea that you must "be good" to have salvation. I bring this up because with a casual reading, this passage here and much of James would make this seem to be the case. Careless scratching at the surface can give you an incorrect impression of what's underneath. Remember that the Bible is like a gold mine. If you rummage around at the surface, you won't find gold. You won't discover true riches! We must go into the mine, dig deep, and pay close attention to God's Word.

In verse 3, it says that **His power is what grants us** the things that “pertain to life and godliness.” So right there, It's clear that **living a Godly life is only possible because God gives the ability**, and this comes **only after true salvation**; after the saving grace of Jesus has been applied to our lives. We, by ourselves, are unable to meet the rigorous demands of the law. We're unable to fake a life of righteousness. Many of us have tried this, and everyone who has tried has failed.

**James 2:10:** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

It is only God who saves us; and **even our ability to believe** in Jesus is a gift from Him. As Ephesians 2:8 says, “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, **it is the gift of God.***”

Now that we've established that it's God who saves us through the work of Christ, and that it's He who draws us to believe, Verses 5-7 give us a list of Godly attributes to “*make every effort to*” work towards.

Virtue, Knowledge, Self-Control, Steadfastness, Godliness, Brotherly Affection, and Love. That's seven things that we are to – with **every effort** – “supplement our faith.” In other words, these 7 things should **go with** and accompany our faith. We're commanded to supplement our faith with Godly virtue.

So is Jesus saves us, why do we even need to strive towards these seven virtues?

Verse 5 helpfully has the words “*for this very reason, make every effort*”. So what's the reason the Apostle Peter is referring to? Looking back to verse 4 gives us the reason: “**...you may become partakers of the divine nature.**” In other words, the reason is that we're supposed to participate, live out, and join in God's divine nature. Gods plan is for us to partake. We're called to do it. We're called practice it! Once we've been given the gift of salvation through faith, we must act on it. We're not saved by good works, **but we are saved TO good works!**

This list of things found in God's nature, when practiced, when lived out; acts to confirm, or show us that we have indeed been saved.

Practicing these virtues demonstrates – by their visible existence in our lives – that we're in the faith, because none of this is not even possible without first being changed by the Savior. These virtues are a sure sign, or marker, of our salvation.

Verse 9 says: “For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, **having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.**”

It doesn't say that whoever lacks these qualities *was never saved to begin with*, although that is certainly possible. Through forms of legalism, with great effort and fakery, a person could outwardly appear to have a Godly virtue, but it'll be hollow and temporary; lacking in substance.

Peter is speaking to believing Christians in this letter, and from this context, **we are taught that a true believer who does not have these seven Godly virtues in his or her life, forgets their salvation.** Peter calls them blind!

**Don't forget – remember and practice! Let your faith WORK.**

James 1:22 encourages us to be doers of the words, not just hearers of the word. Don't hear this message and fail to practice it – don't forget follow through. **If you believe it, you must DO it.**

If you're in Christ, there's nothing you can do to increase your righteousness before God. **His grace is not mixed with your merit.** But the ability to practice these Godly virtues, along with the actual practicing of them, is a sign that **we can look at** to be sure of our salvation.

Verse 8 gives us the good results of this *practicing*. It says “**if these qualities are yours and are increasing**, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In other words, through practice, these virtues should be visible and growing and increase our effectiveness. In verse 10, it says to “be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, **for if you practice these qualities** you will never fall.”

If you have repented of your sins and accepted Jesus as your savior and King, **then this is your part: to practice God's virtues.** You may not be an expert in self-control today, but keep practicing. You might not be perfectly loving – keep practicing. You might not be perfect Godly – but keep practicing!

*Verse 11*

For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.