

FOCUS ON GROWING!

2 Peter 1:1-11

What does it take to lead a productive life?

Most people just go through life—living from one day to the next—existing.

There's no purpose in life. They're going nowhere fast!

Fast pace—but getting nowhere.

People have a desire for meaning and purpose in life. But few find it.

One reason retired people give up: they've lost a purpose for living.

How can *WE* be sure that *our* life is productive?

That it produces something significant?

Goethe: "A useless life is only an early death."

When our life is rapidly going nowhere, we wither and die on the inside.

Peter prescribes a solution. He tells us how to be sure our life is productive

—that our life is worth living. => **Focus on Growing!**

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Written to same group as 1st Pet. 3:1

They're saints scattered throughout Asia Minor.

They've demonstrated trust in God.

They've passed through persecution mentioned in 1 Peter.

Now they're struggling against a new enemy:

false teachers have come into their midst.

PURPOSE AND THEME

Peter wants readers to continue our progressive development in virtues taught in God's Word.

He wants us to reject false teachers who contradict the truth we've been taught.

They're hindering people's growth.

They're causing stagnation.

Peter's letter is an exhortation to keep growing and not let false teachers stop us or "stunt" our spiritual growth.

Since God's going to intervene to judge the world,

those who claim to be His people should remain faithful

and focus on what will contribute to growth.

ORGANIZATION 4 main parts:

Exhortation to grow 1:1-11

Means of growth: the Word of God 1:12-21

In spite of God's provision for growth, many have no interest in growing.

Rejection of growth is introduced as a warning 2:1-22

Exhortation not to be deceived by ignorant critics,

but to understand God's plan for the future 3:1-18.

EXHORTATION TO GROWTH 1:1-11

GREETING 1-2 *"Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: 2 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."*

Introduction identifies Peter as author.

In the introduction to this manual on growth, Peter uses his name to remind us of the transformation God has produced in his life.

He's Simon Peter.

Christ changed him from a man named Simon into a rock.

Jesus wants to transform our life also.

God called Peter to be His servant and His delegate

—a spokesman, sent out to represent Him.

Peter writes to people who through Christ's righteousness have received an equally valuable faith—as precious as his own.

The false teachers caused them to question the reality of their faith.

Peter has no question about the authenticity of their salvation.

They demonstrate that they have the real thing.

Our faith is as real, as valuable, as his—& he's the rock—he's an apostle.

Because of Christ's righteousness—not our own!—

we have that same kind of faith.

Don't miss the fact that here's another place where

Jesus is identified as GOD!

Jesus, our Savior and Messiah, is also our GOD!

Grammar clearly points to the fact that this title refers to Him.

PROVISION FOR GROWTH 3-4 *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."*

His desire for our continued growth builds on that faith as a starting point 3-11

God doesn't want our faith to become stagnant.

Tozer: God's goal for our life isn't to make us *HAPPY*; it's to make us *HOLY*!
 He wants our faith to grow and develop
 until we become all He desires us to be.
 Power to grow and develop comes from God—HIS power's the source.

**God has provided everything we need
 to develop into all He wants us to become.**

Prego commercial: Mother's cooking spaghetti. Pot is full of red spaghetti sauce.

Son walks up, watches mom cooking the sauce:

"Mom, where are the mushrooms?" "It's in there."

"What about the sausage?" "It's in there."

"What about ripe tomatoes?" "It's in there."

Everytime he asked about something that might be missing, mom responds:

"It's in there!"

Peter wants us to know that God has given us His divine nature.

Everything we need for godly living is in there!

It doesn't come from us. God put it all in there!

It's not like the new electric toy we buy our kids at Christmas: ***"Batteries not included!" Everything is in there!***

God gives us everything we need for godly living.

Faith (2) leads to knowing Him (3).

Growth is result of living in the light of the knowledge He's given us.

The better we know Him, the more we become like Him.

When we trust Him and know Him, . . .

We're able to enjoy the promises He has made to us.

We're able to become partakers of His nature.

We're able to escape from the corruption that characterizes the world we live in.

We move closer to God and farther away from the sinful culture.

We demonstrate more of the character of God
 and less of the character of our culture.

God never intended for our faith to remain static.

Cynic: "Christianity is an initial spasm, followed by chronic inertia."

James tells us that genuine faith is *living* faith.

It is always growing.

John Newman: "Growth is the only evidence of life."

God's plan for our life is that our faith continue to grow

–that it develop progressively.

In contrast to “chronic inertia” Peter urges us to commit ourselves to the continual development (“generous piling on”) of more and more resources

–resources that God Himself provides.

That we keep adding on to our faith.

PROCESS FOR GROWTH 5-7 *“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.”*

We should attempt to add additional characteristics of a godly lifestyle to those we already display.

These traits demonstrate what participating in God’s nature looks like.

God wants us to develop progressively—to keep growing:

Faith is the starting point for growth.

Scripture repeatedly affirms we’ll never produce this fruit by our efforts, nevertheless, we do have a part in the process: *“Make every effort ...”*.

We make a commitment to keep developing as followers of Christ.

Add to your faith, virtue (moral excellence).

Add to your virtue, knowledge.

(Keep learning about Him, and about godly living)

Add to your knowledge, self-control.

(Inner strength to control our desires)

Add to your self-control, perseverance.

(Ability to “bear up under a load,” stick-to-it-iveness)

Add to your perseverance, godliness.

(*eusébeia* = godly living, living that is “rightly religious”)

Add to your godliness, brotherly affection.

(*philadelphía*—the love brothers have for each other)

Add to your brotherly affection, love.

(*agápe*—God’s kind of love, seeking the best for those loved)

God wants us to develop progressively in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love.

REASONS FOR GROWTH 8-9 *“For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from*

his past sins.”

This isn't a one-time, single transformation that lasts for a lifetime.

It's an ongoing series of changes in our lives.

God wants us to possess these qualities *“in increasing measure.”*

He wants us to keep developing these qualities.

The reasons for desiring to see this continued growth in these virtues are both positive and negative.

Positively, our progressive development protects us from ineffectiveness and unfruitfulness. 8

The development of these qualities makes us effective and productive.

Negatively, if we fail to develop these characteristics, . . .

we'll become near-sighted (short-sighted) and blind,

we'll forget what we already know about God's cleansing from sin. 9

Stott: “In their blindness, short-sightedness and forgetfulness, they no longer understand their past sins, their present disobedience or their future condemnation.”

RESULTS OF GROWTH 10-11 *“Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

False teachers call into question the reality of our faith.

They create lists of rules, and put the focus on *our performance*.

“Are we really good enough?”

We STILL don't earn our way! We STILL don't deserve God's gift! BUT, ...

If we develop these characteristics, . . .

we'll become certain that God has called us.

As we continue to develop, we become more confident. We're assured:

we'll never fall—doesn't mean we'll never have a problem or struggle.

But we'll never lose it. We'll never be left out.

we'll receive a rich welcome into God's eternal kingdom.

Growing Christians, developing a godly lifestyle,

won't have cause to doubt our standing before God.

The opposite is also true: if we don't continue to develop these qualities, we will struggle with the reality of our faith.

When we're not growing, we're wondering whether we really belong.

IMPLICATIONS FOR US

Growing, productive, prospering, faithful followers of Christ
are confident of their position in Christ. Therefore, ...

1. Remain faithful

2. Focus on growing.

Though our standing before Christ isn't dependent on this progressive development, that development gives us confidence to stand before God.