

1. **Introduction:** 1 Peter was written about 63-64 AD and 2 Peter about 66 AD. Peter was executed about 67 AD.
  - Peter traveled throughout the northern Mediterranean region, preaching and teaching in Antioch (Gal 2:11), Corinth (1 Cor 1:12), Rome (1 Pt 5:13), and other places.
  - The last years of Peter's life were spent mainly in Rome where he ministered with Silvanus, also known as Silas, who assisted Peter in writing his first letter.
  - John Mark was also with Peter. Mark is said to have written the Gospel of Mark using Peter as his primary eyewitness source.
  - Nero was Emperor when Peter was executed by being crucified upside down in 67 AD.
  - 2 Peter was written about a year before Peter's execution.
  - In his first letter, Peter was concerned with sources of hardship and persecution external to the church from Roman officials and an increasingly hostile pagan society.
  - The second letter is focused on the problem of false teachers (2 Ptr 3:1-2) – treachery from within the church. Because Peter knew his time on earth was soon to end, he wanted to encourage a focus on sound teaching, spurring them to diligence in the faith.
2. **Overview of 2 Peter:** Peter was aware that he would soon die. The Emperor Nero was busy torturing, burning, hanging, crucifying, and feeding Christians to wild beasts. Often these atrocities were carried out publicly in the arena of Caligula.
  - Knowing that his life on earth was coming to its end, Peter, in concern for the well-being of the infant church wrote this letter of warning and concern.
  - Major topics: Climbing the ladder of Christian character development. Moral corruption within the family of believers (chapter 1). Doctrinal compromise arising from false teachers (chapter 2). Prophetic concerns (chapter 3).
3. **2 Peter:1-2:** *Simeon 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: <sup>2</sup> May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*
  - Simeon is his birth name. Peter is the new name given him when he confessed that Jesus is the Messiah (Mt 26:16-18). He was made an apostle of Jesus Christ (a leadership role) but he remained Jesus' servant.
  - The believers to whom Peter writes have faith of equal standing with Peter. All have been justified, apart from the Law, by the righteousness earned by Jesus Christ.
  - In the next verses, Peter talks about a ladder of Christian character attributes that must be climbed step by step. This presentation is based on a lesson I taught in 1993.
4. **NIV 2 Peter 1:3-8:** *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil*

*desires.* <sup>5</sup> *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;* <sup>6</sup> *and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;* <sup>7</sup> *and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.*

- The past tense (*has given*) of verse 3 dramatically caught my attention. It says to me that when we were spiritually born-again, we were given everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.
  - I don't know about you, but I know that I am not living a life of perfect godliness.
  - If I was given everything I need for godliness, why do I sin? Why is my life imperfect as it is? I think the answer lies in something that is the spiritual equivalent of physical DNA.
  - When a baby is conceived, it begins with one cell. In that very first cell, there is a DNA pattern that determines how the baby will develop from the initial cell into a full-grown adult. Yet, we certainly can't see the form and attributes of the adult in that initial cell.
  - The "plan" and instructions for how to make the adult manifest are in the cell in complete detail, but the necessary attributes and forms are latent and waiting to be made manifest.
  - Making manifest the coded plan contained in the first cell takes time, training, exercise, and proper nourishment.
5. **Spiritual DNA:** As an adult form is latent in the first cell formed at physical conception, so, it is with spiritual rebirth. That which is "born again" has everything needed for life and godliness given in latent form.
- When born into the family of God through God's grace by faith in Jesus Christ, we receive in latent form everything we need for godliness and life in Christ. That is God's gift. The pattern of latent spiritual capabilities must be developed and made manifest.
  - God graciously enables, allows, and requires us to participate in the process of making manifest the latent spiritual qualities He has given us so that we become spiritual adults having everything we need for life and godliness.
  - Peter says, because we have been given the gift of faith, have been born again into the family of God as a new creature, and been given in latent form everything we need for life and godliness, for that very reason, it is our obligation to make every effort to make manifest the latent provision of God.
  - In the work of "making manifest" we have the indwelling Holy Spirit supporting and enabling us. We must "walk in step with the Spirit", cooperating with Him, never grieving or quenching His work.
  - The grace of God both enables and demands effort from us (Philippians 2:12-13).
  - Peter says that we are to diligently add (supply generously) seven attributes of Christian character to the gift of enabling faith we received.
  - It is very important to note that adding an attribute depends on using previously attained attributes. There is no instantaneous way to attain all seven attributes.

6. **Saving Faith**: The beginning or base, to which spiritual attributes will be added, is the saving faith which by God's grace enables being born again.
  - Saving faith enables the Christian life to begin and provides the impetus for growth.
  - Believers, after being born again, receive "sustaining faith" which, as the name implies, sustains the believer as they progress in godliness.
  - Peter says that to your gift of faith, you are to add "goodness."
  - Peter's implication in this passage is that "saving faith" is the beginning, the foundation, on which attributes must be added to "fill out" the Christian life to which we are called.
  - So, He says, to saving faith focus on adding "goodness (excellence).
7. **Goodness (excellence)**: Goodness or excellence means achieving the proper fulfillment of a "things" nature. The purpose of saving faith is to enable a redeemed sinner to become "like Christ." For the "born again" person, becoming Christlike achieves excellence.
  - Christlikeness is the true fulfillment of a believer's new nature. Believers are helped as they strive to become Christlike by the Holy Spirit's transforming work within.
  - Faith and striving to be Christlike will lead a believer to realize they are ignorant of many important things of God. Striving to be Christlike requires knowing as much as possible about the nature and character of Christ. So, Peter says we are to strive to add knowledge.
8. **Knowledge**: The knowledge about Christ to be added is both intellectual and moral.
  - The added knowledge will be in the form of practical wisdom. That kind of wisdom enables clearly differentiating between good and evil, choosing the good, and fleeing from the devil and his evil schemes.
  - Practical wisdom means having the knowledge to live a life conformed to truth.
  - Striving for increased knowledge and practical wisdom will reveal that no one can live a life conformed to truth without "self-control."
9. **Self-Control (self-discipline)**: Self-control means exercising the ability to choose to do what we know is right. Passions must be controlled rather than allowing oneself to be controlled by them.
  - Striving to be self-controlled will reveal that, while practiced discipline is adequate under usual circumstances, when adversity strikes, perseverance is needed.
10. **Perseverance (steadfastness)**: Perseverance is a sustained ability to not give-in to sin or give-up the fight for godliness in troublesome circumstances. Steadfastness of character leads to being especially aware of God and people and their rightful relationship to us.
  - Striving for perseverance reveals the need for "godliness."
11. **Godliness (reverence and piety)**: Godliness is reverence toward God and respect toward other people. Godliness means striving to be right in relationships with both God and people. This is a necessary attribute if one is to persevere in tough times.
  - Godliness causes believers to seek to do the will of God and seek the welfare of others.
  - Increasing godliness will lead to realization that members of the family of God are to be special in our sight. That requires adding "brotherly kindness."

12. **Brotherly Kindness:** Brotherly kindness is a specific love for others in God’s family no matter how different or difficult they may be. It means guarding our Spirit-given unity from destruction by gossip, prejudice, and narrowness.
- If such a special love is good for those in the family of God, what about for other people?
  - When we have reached this stage in the process of sanctification, having added to faith the attributes of goodness (excellence), knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, and brotherly kindness, a believer is in position to take the final step to which Peter calls us – we are to strive to add agape love.
13. **Agape Love:** This “capstone attribute” is the proper fulfillment of the other six qualities.
- “Agape” is deliberate desire for what is best for the one loved, a desire we make manifest in sacrificial action to achieve good for the person even as God loved us (Jn 3:16).
  - No one can or does begin the Christian life possessing the attribute of “agape love.” All begin at the bottom of the ladder with God’s gift of “saving faith.” We add to that faith step-by-step until we reach the goal of “agape love.”
  - And who is to receive our “agape love.” Jesus answered that question clearly in citing the greatest commandment and the second, as well as in giving us the parable of the good Samaritan. “We are to *agape* everyone”. To strive for what is best for each person.
  - What happens when we strive diligently to add these virtues step-by-step?
  - Peter’s answer covers both adding and neglecting to add the virtues.
14. **Peter 1:8-9:** *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.<sup>9</sup> But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.*
- Peter says that we should make every effort to confirm our calling and election by diligently adding these attributes to our faith. Doing so will have excellent results on our behavior and lead to a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord.
15. **Peter 1:10-11:** *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble,<sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*
16. **Summary:** God’s gift of saving faith is an incredible benefit, but it is only the beginning of God’s blessings to believers not the end.
- Adding to the gift of faith - excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape love in increasing measure, will benefit believers by keeping them from being ineffective and unproductive in their knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Anyone given faith and adopted into the family of God who does not pursue these attributes, is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten they have been cleansed from their past sins by the blood of Christ.
  - Peter’s conclusion is that faith, together with possessing and using these attributes, is necessary for living a life that pleases God. He says, all believers should confirm their calling and election by making every effort to add these attributes.