

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH BIBLE STUDY INSTITUTE

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II PETER VS 8 -11

“ KNOWING AND GROWING “

PART III

SO FAR WE HAVE LEARNED THAT :

I. **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEGINS WITH FAITH**..... VS 1-4

II. **FAITH RESULTS IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH** VS 5-7

THEN WE ASK FOR SEVERAL STUDENTS TO DO RESEARCH ON 7 CHRISTIAN CHARACTERISTICS

NOTE : IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR FALLEN HUMAN NATURE TO MANUFACTURE THESE SEVEN QUALITIES OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. THEY MUST BE PRODUCED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. TO BE SURE, THERE ARE UNSAVED PEOPLE WHO POSSESS AMAZING SELF CONTROL AND ENDURANCE , BUT THESE VIRTUES POINT TO THEM AND NOT TO THE LORD. THEY GET THE GLORY. WHEN GOD PRODUCES THE BEAUTIFUL NATURE OF HIS SON IN A CHRISTIAN, IT IS GOD WHO RECEIVES THE PRAISE AND THE GLORY.

BECAUSE WE HAVE THE DIVINE NATURE , WE CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY AND DEVELOP THIS KIND OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. IT IS THROUGH THE POWER OF GOD AND THE PRECIOUS PROMISES OF GOD THAT THIS GROWTH TAKES PLACE. THE DIVINE “ **GENETIC STRUCTURE** “ IS ALREADY THERE: GOD WANTS US TO BE CONFORMED TO THE VERY IMAGE OF HIS SON (ROM 8 VS 29). THE LIFE WITHIN WILL REPRODUCE THAT IMAGE IF WE WILL BUT DILIGENTLY COOPERATE WITH GOD AND USE THE MEANS HE HAS LAVISHLY GIVEN US. AND THE AMAZING THING IS THIS: AS THE IMAGE OF CHRIST IS PRODUCED IN US, THE PROCESS DOES NOT DESTROY OUR PERSONALITIES. WE STILL REMAIN UNIQUELY OURSELVES! ONE OF THE DANGERS IN THE CHURCH TODAY IS IMITATION. PEOPLE HAVE THE TENDENCY TO BECOME LIKE THEIR PASTOR, OR LIKE A CHURCH LEADER, OR PERHAPS LIKE SOME FAMOUS CHRISTIAN. AS THEY DO THIS THEY DESTROY THEIR OWN UNIQUENESS WHILE FAILING TO BECOME LIKE JESUS CHRIST. THEY LOOSE BOTH WAYS. JUST AS EACH CHILD RESEMBLES THEIR PARENTS BUT ARE DIFFERENT , SO EACH CHILD IN GODS FAMILY COMES MORE AND MORE TO RESEMBLE JESUS CHRIST AND YET IS DIFFERENT. PARENTS DON'T DUPLICATE THEMSELVES , THEY REPRODUCE THEMSELVES, AND WISE PARENTS PERMIT THEIR CHILDREN TO BE THEMSELVES.

AS WE LOOK AT VERSE 8-11 WE WILL FIND THE THIRD AND FINAL AFFIRMATION THAT PETER MAKES ABOUT THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE:

III. **SPIRITUAL GROWTH BRINGS PRACTICAL RESULTS** VS 8-11 THE QUESTION IS “ **HOW CAN A BELIEVER BE CERTAIN THAT HE IS GROWING SPIRITUALLY ?** “ PETER GIVES THREE EVIDENCES OF TRUE SPIRITUAL GROWTH :

1. **FRUITFULNESS** (VS 8) THE MORE WE BECOME LIKE JESUS CHRIST, THE MORE THE SPIRIT CAN USE US IN WITNESS AND IN SERVICE . THE BELIEVER WHO IS NOT GROWING IS BARREN (IDLE) UNFRUITFUL. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST IS PRODUCING NOTHING PRACTICAL IN HIS LIFE. THE WORD TRANSLATED “ **IDLE** “ ALSO MEANS “ **INEFFECTIVE**” . THE PEOPLE WHO FAIL TO GROW USUALLY FAIL IN EVERYTHING ELSE! SOME OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE CHRISTIANS ARE PEOPLE WITHOUT DRAMATIC TALENTS AND SPECIAL ABILITIES, OR EVEN EXCITING PERSONALITIES, YET GOD HAS USED THEM IN A MARVELOUS WAY. WHY ? BECAUSE THEY ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE LIKE JESUS CHRIST. THEY HAVE THE KIND OF CHARACTER AND CONDUCT THAT GOD CAN TRUST WITH BLESSING. THEY ARE FRUITFUL BECAUSE THEY ARE FAITHFUL ; THEY ARE EFFECTIVE BECAUSE THEY ARE GROWING IN THEIR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. THESE BEAUTIFUL QUALITIES OF CHARACTER DO EXIST “ **WITHIN US** “ BECAUSE WE POSSESS THE DIVINE NATURE. WE MUST CULTIVATE THEM SO THAT THEY INCREASE AND PRODUCE FRUIT IN AND THROUGH OUR LIVES.

2. **VISION** (VS 9) NUTRITIONIST TELL US THAT DIET CAN CERTAINLY AFFECT VISION, AND THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM. THE UNSAVED PERSON IS IN THE DARK BECAUSE SATAN HAS BLINDED HIS MIND (2 COR 4 VS 3-4). A PERSON HAS TO BE BORN AGAIN BEFORE HIS EYES ARE OPENED AND HE CAN SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD (JOHN 3 VS 3). BUT AFTER OUR EYES ARE OPENED, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE INCREASE OUR VISION AND SEE ALL THAT GOD WANTS US TO SEE. THE PHRASE “ **CAN NOT SEE AFAR OFF**” IS THE TRANSLATION OF A WORD THAT MEANS “ **SHORTSIGHTED** “ IT IS A PICTURE OF SOMEBODY CLOSING OR SQUINTING HIS EYES, UNABLE TO SEE AT A DISTANCE.

SHORT SIGHTED PEOPLE SEE:

A. **OWN CHURCH / OWN DENOMINATION**

B. **NEEDS AT HOME / NO VISION FOR THE LOST WORLD**

BLIND PEOPLE DON'T SEE :

A. **THEIR TRUE CONDITION** (REV 3 VS 17)

NOTE : IF WE FORGET WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US , WE WILL NOT BE EXCITED TO SHARE CHRIST WITH OTHERS. THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST WE HAVE BEEN PURGED AND FORGIVEN! GOD HAS OPENED OUR EYES ! LETS NOT FORGET WHAT HE HAS DONE ! RATHER , LET US CULTIVATE GRATITUDE IN OUR HEARTS AND SHARPEN OUR SPIRITUAL VISION. LIFE IS TOO BRIEF AND THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD TOO GREAT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TO BE WALKING AROUND WITH THEIR EYES CLOSED.

3. SECURITY (VS 10-11) IF YOU WALK AROUND WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED YOU WILL STUMBLE ! BUT THE GROWING CHRISTIAN WALKS WITH CONFIDENCE BECAUSE HE KNOWS HE IS SECURE IN CHRIST.

WHAT GAURANTEES OUR THAT WE ARE SAVED ?

A. PROFESSION

B. PROGRESSION

THE PERSON WHO CLAIMS TO BE A CHILD OF GOD BUT WHOSE **CHARACTER** AND **CONDUCT** GIVE NO **EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH** IS DECEIVING HIMSELF AND HEADING FOR JUDGEMENT. PETER POINTED OUT THAT “**CALLING**” AND “**ELECTION**” GO TOGETHER , THE SAME GOD WHO ELECTS HIS PEOPLE ALSO ORDAINS THE MEANS TO CALL THEM. THE TWO MUST GO TOGETHER. PAUL SAYS TO THE THESSALONIANS “ GOD HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION ... WHERUNTO HE CALLED YOU BY OUR GOSPEL “ (2 THESS 2 VS 13-14). WE DO NOT PREACH ELECTION TO UNSAVED PEOPLE ; WE PREACH THE GOSPEL TO CALL SINNERS TO REPENTANCE , AND THEN THOSE SINNERS DISCOVER THAT THEY WERE CHOSSN BY GOD!

PETER ALSO POINTS OUT THAT ELECTION IS NO EXCUSE FOR SPIRITUAL IMMATUREITY OR FOR LACK OF EFFORT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. SOME BELEIVERS SAY, “ **WHAT’S GOING TO BE IS GOING TO BE** “ THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO . BUT PETER ADMONISHED US TO BE DILIGENT – THIS MEANS TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT GOD MUST WORK IN US BEFORE WE CAN DO HIS WILL (PHIL 2 VS 12-13), IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT WE MUST BE WILLING FOR GOD TO WORK, AND WE MUST COOPERATE WITH HIM. DIVINE ELECTION MUST NEVER BE AN EXCUSE FOR HUMAN LAZINESS.

THE CHRISRIAN WHO IS SURE OF HIS ELECTIONV AND CALLING WILL NEVER “**STUMBLE**” BUT WILL PROVE BY A CONSISTENT LIFE THAT HE IS TRULY A CHILD OF GOD. HE WILL NOT ALWAYS BE ON THE MOUNTATOP, BUT HE WILL ALWAYS BE CLIMBING HIGHER. IF WE DO “**THESE THINGS**” , THE THINGS LISTED IN (2 PETER 1 VS 5-7 VS 8) , IF WE DISPLAY CHRISTIAN GROWTH AND CHARACTER IN OUR DAILY LIVES, THEN WE CAN BE SURE WE ARE CONVERTED AND WILL ONE DAY BE IN HEAVEN.

VS 11..... GROWING CHRISTIANS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO AN “ ABUNDANT ENTRANCE “ INTO THE ETERNAL KINGDOM. EVERY BELEIVER WILL ARRIVE IN HEAVEN , BUT SOME WILL HAVE A MORE GLORIOUS WELCOME THAN OTHERS. **1 COR 3 VS 15** TELLS US THAT COME BELEIVERS SHALL BE SAVED, YET SO AS BY FIRE .

CLOSE : THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEGINS WITH FAITH , BUT THAT FAITH MUST LEAD TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH , UNLESS IT IS DEAD FAITH. BUT DEAD FAITH IS NOT SAVING FAITH (JAMES 2 VS 14-26). FAITH LEADS TO GROWTH , GROWTH LEADS TO PRACTICAL RESULTS IN LIFE AND IN SERVICE. PEOPLE WHO HAVE THIS KIND OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE ARE NOT LIKELY TO FALL PREY TO APOSTATE FALSE TEACHERS