

## Standing in the True Knowledge of Christ

# “Make Your Calling and Election Sure”

## *The Proof of Maturity*

### 2 Peter 1:8-11

As we come to verses 8–11, Peter is continuing the same line of thought he began back in verse 1. He is not changing subjects; he is bringing his argument to its practical conclusion.

In the opening verses (vv. 1-4), Peter showed us what God has graciously provided for every believer: a precious faith bestowed; multiplied grace and peace; divine power sufficient for life and godliness; and exceeding great and precious promises.

As we saw in that study, God has not left His people spiritually helpless. Everything necessary for spiritual life and godliness has been graciously supplied in Christ.

Then in verses 5-7, Peter showed the believer’s responsibility in light of that provision.

Because God has supplied all things necessary for spiritual life, believers are to pursue spiritual growth with diligence. Faith is to grow into virtue, virtue into knowledge, knowledge into self-control (temperance), and onward into godliness, brotherly love, and charity.

Peter now goes further. He explains what these qualities accomplish in the life of the believer. What happens when these graces (vv. 1-4) are truly present and increasing (vv. 5-7)? What is the evidence of genuine spiritual maturity? What is the result of a growing Christian life?

Peter's answer to these questions is that spiritual growth produces spiritual fruitfulness, spiritual stability, and spiritual assurance.

In other words, Peter is teaching us that the Christian life is not merely a profession to claim, but a transforming work of grace that becomes visible over time.

These verses deal with one of the great concerns of the Christian life: How can a believer possess confidence and stability in a world filled with false teachers, empty professions, and spiritual deception?

The answer is found in the visible evidence of God's transforming work within the believer's life. Where spiritual life truly exists, spiritual growth will increasingly appear.

So Peter now shows us "The Proof of Maturity."

## I. THE EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS (V. 8)

This points back to verses 5-7 — the "growth ladder."

### A. The presence of these graces

“For if these things be in you”

This speaks of true possession.

### B. The progress of these graces

“And abound”

1. The word “abound” (πλεονάζοντα) means to be overflowing; increasing beyond measure.
2. This shows that spiritual growth will naturally lead to affective usefulness.

### C. The proof seen through these graces (John 15:1-8)

“That ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful”

1. “Barren” (ἀργός) — compound word that literally means not at work, not employed. As used here — idle, inactive, ineffective.
2. “Unfruitful” (ἄκαρπος) — without spiritual productivity.

**Titus 3:14**

<sup>14</sup> And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

3. The fruit we are to produce is given in Galatians 5:22-23

**Galatians 5:22–23**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

#### **D. The pursuit of fruitfulness**

“In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”

1. Peter again returns to true knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις).
2. This connects to the theme of the entire epistle — Standing in the true knowledge of Christ.

## **II. THE EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS (V. 9)**

There is a very clear contrast between these two verses: verse 8 — growing believer; verse 9 — stagnant believer.

#### **A. The deficiency described**

“He that lacketh these things”

1. “Lacketh” (μὴ πάρεστιν) — literally, not nearby — to whom these things are not present.

2. This isn't lacking salvation necessarily, but lacking growth where there should have been some.

## B. The darkness displayed

“Is blind, and cannot see afar off”

Interesting wording here:

1. “Blind” (τυφλός); “cannot see afar off” (μωπαάζων)

The second phrase — “cannot see afar off” — comes from a word we get the idea behind “myopic” or near-sighted.

2. The picture given here is that of a believer who only sees earthly things because spiritual vision has become clouded.
3. This ties back to the worldly corruption mentioned in verse 4.

## C. The forgetfulness demonstrated (Eph. 5:8-17)

“And hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins”

1. “Hath forgotten” (λήθην λαβών) — literally, having taken forgetfulness. This is not loss of salvation; it's loss of spiritual perspective.
2. “The man who forgets this cleansing of his soul, and acts as if he were in his simply natural state, with no power to resist temptation, does in fact ignore what God has done for him, and treats ‘the sins of long ago’ as though they were still the inevitable accompaniments of the present (Cambridge Bible Notes).

### Psalm 51:10–12

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. <sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. <sup>12</sup> Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

### James 1:22–25

<sup>22</sup> But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. <sup>23</sup> For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: <sup>24</sup> For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

## III. THE EXHORTATION TO SPIRITUAL ASSURANCE (V. 10)

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence”

This is the central verse of the section where Peter returns to diligence from verse 5.

This forms a literary bracket: verse 5 — “giving all diligence”; verse 10 — “give diligence.”

### A. The earnest pursuit commanded

“Give diligence”

Having the assurance, we need to live for Christ is cultivated through pursuit. It isn’t going to come any other way.

### B. The calling confirmed

“To make your calling... sure”

1. “Calling” (κλήσις) — invitation to a banquet —

refers to God's effective call to salvation.

Romans 8:30

<sup>30</sup> Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

2. "Sure" (βέβαιος) — that upon which one may build, rely, or trust.

C. The election confirmed (James 2:17-26)

"And election sure"

1. This is not making election true. It is making it certain, evident, confirmed.
2. Peter is not teaching that works produce salvation. He is teaching that spiritual fruit confirms salvation.

Matthew 7:15–20

<sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. <sup>16</sup> Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

D. The stability promised

"For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"

1. "If ye do these things" (ταῦτα γὰρ ποιοῦντες)

- a) Primarily, those things given in verses 5-7, although the whole of the first 7 verses is in view.
  - b) "Ye do" — literally, "doing these things" — present active participle. This is not an occasional effort, but this verb tense carries the idea of ongoing action, continual practice, habitual conduct, and activity characteristic of biblical Christianity.
  - c) In other words, Peter is describing a continuing pattern of life.
  - d) The force is: "If these things characterize your life..."
2. "Ye shall never fall" (οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ποτε) — to stumble spiritually. As used here, to fail of success.
- a) This is not teaching sinless perfection or impossibility of failure in every sense.
  - b) The idea is spiritual stability and steadfastness.
  - c) Peter is saying that the believer who continually practices these graces will not live a life characterized by spiritual collapse, instability, or ruin.

#### IV. THE ENTRANCE INTO ETERNAL GLORY (v. 11)

Peter moves from present assurance (v. 10) to future entrance (vs. 11).

##### A. The richness of the entrance

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly..."

1. Interesting contrast:

- a) In verse 5, believers are to “add” (ἐπιχορηγέω);
- b) In verse 11, God supplies richly the entrance, seen in the phrase “shall be ministered unto you abundantly” (πλουσίως ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται).
- c) The same verb is used in both verses.

“We are to furnish in our faith: the reward shall be furnished unto us” (Vincent).

2. There is almost a full-circle idea here. The believer who diligently supplies spiritual growth experiences (vv. 5-7) will experience a richly supplied entrance into glory.

Matthew 25:21

<sup>21</sup> His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

2 Timothy 4:6–8

<sup>6</sup> For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. <sup>7</sup> I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

## B. The realm of the entrance

“Into the everlasting kingdom”

This goes from present growth to eternal glory.

## C. The reigning king of the entrance

“Of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”

Conclusion:

As Peter brings this section to a close (vv. 1-11), the emphasis turns from possessing salvation to displaying the reality of it through a growing and fruitful Christian life.

God has already provided everything necessary for life and godliness — faith, grace, divine power, and precious promises (vv. 1-4). And because of that provision, believers are called to diligent spiritual growth (vv. 5-7). And in these verses, we've studied, Peter now shows us why that growth matters so deeply.

The graces mentioned in the first 7 verses are the evidence of spiritual life at work within us. Where these things abound (v. 8):

- There will be fruitfulness instead of barrenness,
- Spiritual vision instead of blindness,
- Assurance instead of uncertainty,
- Stability instead of stumbling,
- And ultimately a rich entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ.

The false teachers warned about later in this epistle would claim knowledge while denying godliness. But true knowledge of Christ produces change. It produces growth. It produces perseverance. It produces holiness.

So the question before us is not only, "Have I made a profession?" But rather, "Is the grace of God producing visible spiritual growth in my life?"