

Godliness: God's Provision

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: 2 Peter 1:1-8.

B. There are two elements to growing in godliness: God's enablement and our personal responsibility.

C. We must either grow or we will regress.

II. God's divine enablement through the Holy Spirit gives all we need to grow in godliness. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

A. "God's power" may refer to the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:35; Colossians 2)

B. The initiative for spiritual growth starts with God. (John 3:27)

1. He gives us everything we need to grow. (Colossians 1:9; Philippians 4:13)

2. The Christian life is for those who are weak and dependent. (Luke 10:21; Philippians 3:7ff)

C. There are two types of knowing God: the saving kind of knowledge and a relational kind of knowledge.

1. If we are going to continue to grow in godliness, we need to grow in our intimate, relational, experiential knowledge of Him.

2. Knowing God in this way is our first priority in life.

III. We become sharers in God's nature through our union with Christ. (2 Peter 1:4; John 15)

A. The uniqueness of Christianity is that we are partakers in the divine nature of God in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 1:30)

B. This can be described as spiritually organic union with Christ. (John 15)

C. This union is objectively true and subjectively experienced through abiding in Christ.

1. To abide in Christ means that we turn away from our own wisdom, merit, and strength. We cannot depend on these things to earn God's favor. (Romans 15:4-5, 13)

2. Abiding in Christ means that we look to God and the Holy Spirit for wisdom and strength while we are meditating on scripture and praying.

3. God has given us all we need for life and godliness, but we have to draw on that truth in order to benefit from it. (2 Peter 1; Colossians 2:9-10)

IV. There are four ways that Christians try to live the Christian life.

A. Some try to live totally by their own strength and merit.

1. Without God, we cannot do anything. (John 15:5)

2. This way leads to spiritual exhaustion.

B. Some try to leave everything to God.

C. Some partially depend on God. The everyday circumstances we can handle in our own strength, but in extenuating circumstances, we ask for God's help.

D. Abiding in Christ means that we acknowledge our personal responsibility for spiritual growth, but also our dependence on God in order to enable us to carry out that responsibility. (Philippians 4:13)

Application questions:

1. When you evaluate your life, which of the four ways of living the Christian life do you see?

2. Jerry states that we must appropriate the strength that God has given us in order to be able to live the Christian life. How can we "withdraw" that strength from Christ?

3. What does it mean to abide in Christ in a practical way?
