



2 Peter 1:1-15 (ESV)

Greeting

1 Simeon^[a] Peter, a servant^[b] 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:

2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Confirm Your Calling and Election

3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to^[c] his own glory and excellence,^[d] 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue,^[e] and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities^[f] are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers,^[g] be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body,^[h] to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

2 Peter 1:1-15 (HCSB)

Greeting

1 Simeon^[a] Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ:

To those who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours^[b] through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

²May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Growth in the Faith

³His^[c] divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by^[d] His own glory and goodness. ⁴By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, ⁶knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, ⁷godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. ¹¹For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to you.

¹²Therefore I will always remind you about these things, even though you know them and are established in the truth you have. ¹³I consider it right, as long as I am in this bodily tent,^[e] to wake you up with a reminder, ¹⁴knowing that I will soon lay aside my tent, as our Lord Jesus Christ has also shown me. ¹⁵And I will also make every effort that you may be able to recall these things at any time after my departure.^[f]

Footnotes

- a. 2 Peter 1:1 Other mss read *Simon*
- b. 2 Peter 1:1 Or *obtained a faith of the same kind as ours*
- c. 2 Peter 1:3 Lit *As His*
- d. 2 Peter 1:3 Or *to*
- e. 2 Peter 1:13 = Peter's body
- f. 2 Peter 1:15 Or *my death*

1:1-2 Initial Greeting. Peter's greeting is concise and to the point, identifying the author and the audience, and expressing a blessing.

1:1 Simeon. A Hebrew spelling of Simon (cf. [Acts 15:14](#)). **Peter**, as an **apostle of Jesus Christ**, is writing to those who have a faith of **equal standing**, showing that all believers share equal privileges before God. This standing was accomplished by **the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ**. "Righteousness" refers here to God's saving righteousness, showing that faith is a gift from Jesus. Jesus is called "God and Savior," making this one of the clearest NT declarations of the divinity of Christ.

1:2 In his initial blessing of those to whom he writes, Peter mentions a recurring idea in the letter: true **knowledge of God and of Jesus**. [Verse 2](#), like [v. 1](#), points to the deity of Christ (cf. note on [v. 1](#)), for both God and Christ are the object of this knowledge.

1:3-11 God's Grace in Christ Is the Source of Godly Living. In this first main section of his letter, Peter emphasizes that God's grace results in godliness.

1:3-4 God's Power Exercised on Our Behalf. God has provided blessing for the Christian in all things pertaining to life.

1:3 divine power. God himself has acted in his infinite power to accomplish salvation, something only he could accomplish and what human ability could not accomplish. He has **called us to his own glory and excellence**. Believers are called to live in harmony with God's own moral character. On God's "glory," see notes on [John 1:14](#); [Acts 6:15](#); cf. [Rev. 21:23](#). The word "excellence" (Gk. *aretē*, "virtue, excellence") was used by Greek writers to describe the sum of all desirable character qualities.

1:4 God has granted believers his **precious and great promises**. It is through these promises that they become **partakers** (Gk. *koinōnos*, "sharer, partaker") **of the divine nature**. They never become part of God, but amazingly they share in his nature as they become increasingly like him. The "great promises" include the promises Peter identifies in his Pentecost sermon in [Acts 2:14-41](#), especially the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in new power. But they also include other promises such as likeness to God ([2 Pet. 1:4](#); cf. [1 John 3:2](#)), Christ's return ([2 Pet. 3:4](#)), eternal life in heaven ([1 Pet. 1:4](#)), and more broadly, all the promises of Scripture that relate to the gift of new life. "Divine nature" uses terms familiar to Peter's Hellenistic readership to help them understand the idea of transformation into the image of Christ. Peter emphasizes the moral focus of the believer's transformed life. At conversion, Christians are delivered from the **corruption** of this world, which is rooted in **sinful desire**.

1:5-7 Making Every Effort to Live a Godly Life. Peter lists "qualities" ([v. 8](#)) that characterize a life partaking of the divine nature. These verses contain a straightforward catalog of biblical virtues (cf. [Gal. 5:22-23](#); [Heb. 12:10-11](#)). This list does not reflect a legalistic code but rather the desires and features of a transformed heart (cf. "for this very reason," [2 Pet. 1:5](#)). The exhortations to live a new life are grounded in the divine power and promises that were granted to believers when they came to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Peter 1".

1:5 supplement your faith. Peter exhorts Christians not merely to confess faith in Christ but actually to live as he taught. He is not saying that works are a prerequisite for salvation but rather is arguing that faith must take concrete form in life. All the virtues listed in [vv. 5-7](#) are results of faith, so faith is listed first, while love (the ultimate result of faith) is listed last ([v. 7](#); cf. [1 Tim. 1:5](#)). **Virtue** translates Greek *aretē*; see note on [2 Pet. 1:3](#).

1:6 Godliness translates Greek *eusebeia*, “devoutness, piety, devotion to God” (also in [vv. 3, 7](#); [3:11](#); see [2 Tim. 3:5](#)).

1:8-11 Living an Effective Life for Christ. Peter explains the necessary relationship between regeneration and a life that reflects the virtues inherent in the knowledge of Christ.

1:8 if these qualities are yours and are increasing. A lifelong pattern of growth in Christlike character is expected of Christians and is the key to fruitful ministry. By contrast, **knowledge** (Gk. *epignōsis*) **of... Christ** is **ineffective** and **unfruitful** unless accompanied by a life that increasingly exhibits the qualities of [vv. 5-7](#).

1:9 The one who **lacks these qualities** (cf. [vv. 5-7](#)) is spiritually **blind** and has **forgotten that he was cleansed** (cf. [Titus 3:5-7](#)) from his **sins**. This lack of fruit could exist because a person’s “cleansing” was merely an external reformation that did not come from a truly changed heart. But it could also describe a genuine Christian who has fallen into serious error regarding the Christian life. Only God knows the person’s true status (cf. [2 Tim. 2:19](#)).

1:10 Christians should be **diligent to make their calling and election** (Gk. *eklogē*) **sure** (Gk. *bebaios*, “reliable, unshifting, firm”). God calls believers to faith through the gospel ([2 Thess. 2:14](#)), but he has also chosen (elected) them “before the foundation of the world” ([Eph. 1:4](#)). But God’s grace in salvation should not be taken for granted. Growing in the Christlike virtues mentioned in [2 Pet. 1:5-7](#) will give believers increasing confidence that God really did call them and really did elect them to salvation before the foundation of the world. Thus their election becomes “sure,” as a sure foundation. Those who **practice these qualities... will never fall**, probably meaning apostasy (falling away from the faith). Good works are evidence of and give assurance of salvation, though they are never the basis for it. Peter’s wording does not imply that true followers of Christ can ever apostatize; those who do so were never really “called,” “elected,” or born again (cf. notes on [John 6:39](#); [6:40](#); [10:26-29](#); [1 Thess. 1:4](#); [Heb. 6:4-8](#)).

1:11 in this way. That is, by doing the things Peter mentions in [vv. 5-10](#). This way of life is the path into the **eternal kingdom** of Christ. Those who practice these qualities will be **richly provided** with the reward of eternal life. Some interpreters think “richly” indicates degrees of blessing and reward both in this life and in heaven. Others think that eternal life is itself the reward in view, in contrast to the prospect facing the false teachers.

1:12-21 Peter’s Reminder to the Churches. Peter contrasts the truth about Christ as revealed by God with the falsehood of man-made myths. In light of this certain truth, the church should be focused on living faithfully.

1:12-15 Stirring Up Christians to Holiness. Thinking of his impending death, Peter urgently reminds the churches to continue living in a godly way.

1:12 The readers of this letter already **know** these godly **qualities** (cf. [vv. 5-10](#)) and are already **established in the truth** concerning life in Christ. Peter's intent is simply to keep biblical morality in the forefront of the Christian's daily pursuits.

1:14 Peter expects that his execution by Rome is imminent, **as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me**. The nearness of his death seems to have been recently revealed to Peter, but he may also be reflecting on his conversation with Jesus in [John 21:18-19](#).

Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible²

2 Peter 1:1-15

1:1-2 Peter called himself **Simeon Peter**, a name not generally used of him (elsewhere only in [Ac 15:14](#)). The spelling is Semitic and may have lent authenticity to his letter. Moreover, it was more natural for Peter to use the original form of his name rather than a later form. He further identified himself as **a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ**. He saw himself as a servant submitted to Christ's lordship. As an "apostle," he was one of Christ's divinely ordained, appointed, authoritative representatives in the early church. Though he surely had a specific group of people in mind, Peter named neither specific recipients in his letter nor their precise geographic location. The recipients are described simply as **those who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours**.

The reason for this equality of privilege between Peter's readers and the apostles is **the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ**. Through the righteousness that finds its source in Jesus, all believers have equal standing and share the same blessings. Peter described Jesus as both "God and Savior," which is not surprising since elsewhere Jesus is called God ([Jn 1:1,18](#); [20:28](#); [Rm 9:5](#); [Titus 2:13](#); [Heb 1:8](#)). The description of Jesus as "God" in no way denies the Trinity, as if Peter meant to say Jesus is both Father and Son. Peter wished his readers multiplied **grace and peace**. "Grace" is God's unmerited favor displayed toward sinners who trust Christ for salvation. "Peace" is the sense of well-being and the attendant blessings that a person enjoys because of a right relationship with Christ. Peter emphasized **the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord** to remind his readers that a person experiences grace and peace only through knowing Christ.

1:3-4 Peter next reminded his readers of the resources they had through knowing Christ. He provides believers everything they need for **life and godliness**. "Life" (Gk *zoe*) is eternal life, whereas "godliness" (Gk *eusebeia*) is godly living; the latter cannot be obtained without the former. The divine call of believers served as a foundation for Peter's appeal for godly living. Christ calls to Himself those whom God has saved, and this calling is brought about by His own **glory and goodness**. Christ's "glory" (Gk *doxa*) and "goodness" (Gk *arete*) combine and seem to refer to the moral excellence of Christ. **By these**—by Christ's glory and goodness—**He has given us very great and precious promises**. The content of these great promises includes sharing in the **divine nature**. Peter did not mean that believers become gods or that they share in the divine nature of God in every way. He meant that they participate in God's moral excellence and will one day be morally perfected. Participation in the divine nature is possible only after escaping the **corruption** in the world because of **evil desires**. Jesus Christ offers the only way of escape from the rebellion of this evil world system that is opposed to and alienated from God.

2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Peter 1".

1:5-7 Because of God's generous provision in Christ, Peter encouraged his readers to build upon their foundation of **faith**—their initial acceptance of God's love—with the Christian virtues of **goodness... knowledge... self-control... endurance... godliness... brotherly affection**, and **love**. These graces, sometimes called the "ladder of faith," are the fruit of sharing in the divine nature. Each successive quality seems to spring from the previous one.

1:8-9 Useful and fruitful Christians have an abundance of the qualities mentioned in [verses 5-7](#). On the other hand, those who lack them are **blind and shortsighted** because they have forgotten the cleansing from their **past sins**; they deliberately forget the background from which God delivered them. "Past sins" refers to sins committed before professing faith in Christ.

1:10-11 Because of God's grace, gifts, and the knowledge of Christ ([vv. 3-9](#)), Peter commanded his readers to **make every effort** to prove the reality of their **calling and election** to salvation; they would do so by godly living ([vv. 5-7](#)). Two results follow: (1) they **will never stumble**, or they "will be spared a disastrous coming to grief" (Green, *2 Peter & Jude*, 83); (2) they will receive a glorious entry into the **eternal kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1:12-13 On the basis of the future hope of entry into the eternal kingdom, Peter determined always to **remind** his readers of teachings that they might otherwise lay aside despite his conviction that they were well-grounded in the truths they had been taught. Though they were established Christians, their lifestyles apparently left much to be desired. As long as he was **in this bodily tent**—alive in the human body, a temporary dwelling place for this life—Peter determined to continue stimulating his readers by way of reminder.

1:14-15 The apostle knew that his death was near, and he committed to make **every effort** to arrange that his readers would be **able to recall** his teachings **at any time**. This seems to refer to a written witness since it could be consulted "at any time." Peter might have been referring to Mark's Gospel. In the early second century, Papias called Mark "Peter's interpreter" (cp. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 3.39.15), meaning Mark's Gospel was based on eyewitness information given by Peter.

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

2 Peter 1:1-15

1:1 First Peter was written just before the time that the Roman emperor Nero began his persecution of Christians. Second Peter was written two or three years later (between A.D. 66 and 68), after persecution had intensified. First Peter was a letter of encouragement to the Christians who suffered, but 2 Peter focuses on the church's internal problems, especially on the false teachers who were causing people to doubt their faith and turn away from Christianity. Second Peter combats their heresies by denouncing the evil motives of the false teachers and reaffirming Christianity's truths—the authority of Scripture, the primacy of faith, and the certainty of Christ's return.

1:2 Many believers want an abundance of God's grace and peace, but they are unwilling to put forth the effort to get to know him better through Bible study and prayer. To enjoy the privileges God offers us freely, we must grow in our knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

1:3,4 The power to lead a godly life comes from God. Because we don't have the resources to be truly godly, God allows us to "share his divine nature" in order to keep us from sin and help us live for him. When we are born again, God by his Spirit empowers us with his own goodness. See [John 3:6](#); [14:17-23](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#); and [1 Peter 1:22, 23](#).

1:5-9 Faith must be more than belief in certain facts; it must result in action, growth in Christian character, and the practice of moral discipline, or it will die away ([James 2:14-17](#)). Peter lists several of faith's actions: learning to know God better, developing perseverance, doing God's will, loving others. These actions do not come automatically; they require hard work. They are not optional; all of them must be a continual part of the Christian life. We don't finish one and start on the next, but we work on them all together. God empowers and enables us, but he also gives us the responsibility to learn and to grow.

1:6 False teachers were saying that self-control was not needed because deeds do not help the believer anyway ([2:19](#)). It is true that deeds cannot save us, but it is absolutely false to think they are unimportant. We are saved so that we can grow to resemble Christ and serve others. God wants to produce his character in us. But to do this, he demands our discipline and effort. As we obey Christ, who guides us by his Spirit, we will develop self-control not only with respect to food and drink but also with respect to our emotions.

1:9 Our faith must go beyond what we believe; it must become a dynamic part of all we do, resulting in good fruit and spiritual maturity. Salvation does not depend on good deeds, but it results in good deeds. A person who claims to be saved while remaining unchanged does not understand faith or what God has done for him or her.

1:10 Peter wanted to rouse the complacent believers who had listened to the false teachers and believed that because salvation is not based on good deeds they could live any way they wanted. If you truly belong to the Lord, Peter wrote, your hard work will prove it. If you're not working to develop the qualities listed in [1:5-7](#), you may not belong to him. If you are the Lord's—and your hard work backs up your claim to be chosen by God—you will be able to resist the lure of false teaching or glamorous sin. What does your life say about your faith?

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 2138-2139.

[1:12-15](#) Outstanding coaches constantly review the basics of the sport with their teams, and good athletes can execute the fundamentals consistently well. Believers must not neglect the basics of their faith, even as they go on to study deeper truths. Just as an athlete needs constant practice, Christians need constant reminders of the fundamentals of our faith and of how we came to believe in the first place. Don't allow yourself to be bored or impatient with messages on the basics of the Christian life. Instead, take the attitude of an athlete who continues to practice and refine the basics.

[1:13, 14](#) Peter knew that he would die soon. Many years before, Christ had prepared Peter for the kind of death he would face (see [John 21:18, 19](#)). At this time, Peter knew that his death was at hand. Peter was martyred for the faith about A.D. 68. According to one tradition, he was crucified upside down, at his own request, because he did not feel worthy to die in the same manner as his Master.

Study and Discussion Questions



Making One's Calling and Election Sure - [2 Peter 1:1-11](#)

Topics: [Assurance](#), [Call](#), [Character](#), [Desires](#), [Discipline](#), [Eternal Life](#), [Evil](#), [Faith](#), [God](#), [Goodness](#), [Heaven](#), [Jesus Christ](#), [Kindness](#), [Knowledge](#), [Love](#), [Perseverance](#), [Quality](#), [Rewards](#), [Sin](#), [Sovereignty](#), [Spiritual Growth](#), [World](#)

Open It

1. *What character qualities do you find most attractive in other people?
2. What do people often do to "grow" intellectually, culturally, or in some similar way?
3. If you could be better at one thing, what would you want to improve?

Explore It

4. Who wrote 2 Peter? ([1:1](#))
5. To whom was 2 Peter written? ([1:1](#))
6. What did Peter say had been given to his audience? ([1:3](#))
7. How do God's people benefit from the promises God has given them? ([1:4](#))
8. *What did Peter urge his readers to add to their faith? ([1:5-7](#))
9. How did Peter encourage his audience? ([1:5-7](#))
10. What would be the result of possessing godly character in increasing measure? ([1:8](#))
11. What happens to the person who does not possess godly qualities? ([1:9](#))
12. *What did Peter want his audience to be eager to do? Why? ([1:10-11](#))
13. *What happens when we pursue the qualities Peter described? ([1:11](#))

Get It

14. How equipped do you feel for life and godliness?
15. What is the relationship between knowledge of God and Christ and spiritual growth?
16. Which of the character qualities that Peter listed do you find the most difficult to practice?
17. *Which of the qualities listed by Peter do you consider to be the most important to add to your faith? Why?
18. What does it mean to be ineffective and unproductive?
19. *How can the qualities Peter mentioned keep us from being ineffective and unproductive?
20. Why is it easy to forget what God has done for us?
21. How can someone make his or her calling and election sure?
22. Which of the qualities listed do you want most to add to your faith?

Apply It

23. *How will you add a godly quality to your faith today?
24. What steps will you take in order to make your calling and election sure?
25. What steps will you take this week to make your faith more effective and productive?