

## Grow in the Grace & Knowledge of Jesus Christ

### *2 Peter 3:14-18*

**Thought for the Day:** The best way to prepare ourselves for the Return of Jesus Christ is to grow in God's grace (spiritual growth, sanctification) and in our intellectual (God's Word) and experiential (obedience) knowledge of the Lord.

Throughout his letter, Peter has been warning: *Beware of Wolves in Sheep's Clothing*. Now, as he brings his letter to a close, he exhorts his readers to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (vs. 18) as they eagerly await His return from heaven and the establishment of "new heavens and a new earth" (vs. 13). The Lord's return is the believers Blessed Hope (Titus 2:11-14) and should motivate us to holy and godly living (vss. 11, 14) and to sharing the Gospel with those who are not yet saved (vs. 15).

#### **14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these...**

- "These" refers back to vs. 13, to the promise of the creation of "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."
- "Waiting" = eager anticipation. Are we eagerly looking forward to the creation of new heavens and a new earth?

#### **...be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.**

- "Be diligent" = "to take great pains at accomplishing a task; to work hard at it."
  - We do not work to earn God's gift of salvation, but we are repeatedly exhorted in Scripture to work hard at growing in our Christian life. (Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- "To be found by him" refers back to Christ's return (vs. 12).
  - How will Christ find us when He returns? Living to please Him or living to please ourselves? (1 John 2:28; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10)
- To be "without spot or blemish" speaks of "a pure character and reputation above reproach." (*MacArthur, 1 & 2 Peter, p. 98*)
- "And at peace" – living in obedience to God's Word. (James 4:4)
  - When we live according to the standards of the world and our own sinful lusts, we are committing spiritual adultery against the Lord, making ourselves enemies of God!
- How do we maintain this eager expectancy that leads to holy living? By keeping the promise of His soon return fresh in our hearts and minds; by continually reminding ourselves of our "blessed hope," the return of Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-14)

#### **15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation...**

- In his final words before his own execution and departure from planet earth, Peter exhorts us to use the time remaining to win the lost. (2 Peter 3:9)
- God is withholding His judgment as long as possible so that individuals will turn to Him and be saved.

#### **...just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.**

- Peter appeals to the writings of the Apostle Paul to support his contention that the Lord is delaying His return so that more people can be saved. (1 Timothy 2:3-4; Romans 2:4-5)

**There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.**

- "Hard to understand" but not impossible! God has given us His Holy Spirit to teach and guide us into the truth.
- "If Peter himself noticed some difficult passages in Paul's letters, how much more should we approach the Holy Scriptures with humility & patience!" (*Swindoll, 1&2 Peter, p. 363*)
- Peter puts Paul's writings on a par with the rest of the Scriptures.
- "Twist" = "to torture on the rack, to distort and pervert." (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, p. 113*)
  - It is amazing to see the contortions people will go through in order to deny the plain teachings of Scripture, trying to rationalize, justify and excuse their own disobedience to God's Word!
  - "This is why we must filter what we hear through the whole counsel of God—the unified voice of all the Scriptures, not just isolated texts. We can't allow a preacher's style or a teacher's charisma to lure us into concocted arguments and clever conclusions. We need to think critically, comparing a person's teaching with what Christians have believed from day one—and with the central truths that can be demonstrated clearly in Scripture. Unlike the flimsy flap of false prophets, reliable interpretations of Scripture will stand under God's Word, stand up to challenges, and stand the test of time." (*Swindoll, 1&2 Peter, pp. 364-65*)
  - "Most heresies are the perversion of some fundamental doctrine of the Bible. False teachers take verses out of context, twist the Scriptures, and manufacture doctrines that are contrary to the Word of God. Peter probably had the false teachers in mind, but the warning is good for all of us. We must accept the teaching of the Scriptures & not try to make them say what we want them to say." (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, p. 113*)

**17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.**

- We must constantly be on guard against being led astray by false teachers, and have no one to blame but ourselves if we are!
- "True Christians cannot fall from salvation and be lost, but they can fall from their own [stability]... The stability of the Christian comes from his faith in the Word of God, his knowledge of that Word, and his ability to use that Word in the practical decisions of life." (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, p. 115*)
- If we are not watchful, we will be led astray by false teachers and lose our spiritual stability, being rendered useless and unfruitful in the Christian life.

**18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

- "How can we as believers maintain our stability and avoid being among the 'unstable souls' who are easily beguiled and led astray? By growing spiritually. 'But be constantly growing' is the literal translation." (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, p. 115*)
- We will experience God's grace and peace as we grow in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (2 Peter 1:2)
  - Intellectually – knowledge and understanding of God's Word.
  - Experientially – pursuing intimate fellowship w/ God through obedience to His Word.
  - Cultivating Christlike character and conduct; faithful and fruitful service to the Lord.

**To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.**