

The Portrait of the Christ-Centered Life

Lesson for Sunday, August 3, 2025

LESSON AIM: As the teacher, your goal for this lesson is to create a hunger in the hearts of your class members to want to hear more!

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:5-11 (*IDEA: Work together as a class to memorize this text together as we work through this series – 13 weeks.*)

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Today we begin a new series on 2 Peter 1:5-7. Read the text together as a class and use this moment to challenge them to memorize it with you over the next 13 weeks.
- ⇒ Peter is writing to his former church members who are now dispersed throughout the Roman Empire and facing persecution for their Christian faith.
- ⇒ His challenge to them is that he wants them to come to an intimate knowledge of Christ that will transform them into the likeness of Jesus Christ (stated in vs. 3-4).
- ⇒ In our key text (vs. 5-7), Peter describes what full-grown Christian maturity looks like.
- ⇒ **STOP:** As the teacher, challenge your class like you are Peter writing to your church. Tell them that you wish for them to grow in their relationship with God and in their likeness to Christ.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. The List (vs. 5-7)
 - a. Re-read verses 5-7.
 - b. First, notice the sequence of the words. Did Peter list these traits in this specific order for a reason or is it random in its sequence? Do I need trait #1 before I proceed to trait #2?
 - i. The grammatical construction indicates that there is a sequence involved in these verses.
 - ii. D. Edmond Hiebert writes, “Peter lists seven qualities or traits of character in this moral development, and he introduces each new trait as being in connection with the preceding.”
 - iii. ILL: Think of a baby forming in its mother’s womb. All the parts of the baby are developing simultaneously. Yet even though this is true, there is a noticeable developmental sequence as well (brain, heart, etc.).
 - iv. With this understanding, the sequence of the essential virtues teaches us that none of the traits can reach maturity unless the previous supporting traits are maturing well.
 - c. Second, note the specificity of the words. In this case, the original Greek is clearer than our English translation.
 - i. We read in the list “temperance” which means self-control. The problem is that self-control can mean different things to different people.
 - ii. In Peter’s times, the Stoics taught self-control, but to them you attained this by logic and reason.
 - iii. Contrast that with what the Bible teaches. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit – God must be involved if we are to obtain temperance in our lives.
 - iv. To clarify this, Peter inserted the definite article before each virtue in the original language. “Add to *the* faith *the* virtue...” (read the verses inserting the definite article before each listed trait.
 - v. Why does that matter? ILL: The Spoon! (See page 3 for explanation.)
 - vi. Peter’s point: This list of essential virtues is unique. They must be cultivated in the power of the Holy Spirit upon the foundation of saving faith.

2. The harvest (vs. 8-11)

- a. Peter wants the listed virtues to belong to each individual believer and to be constantly growing more dominant. What are the benefits?
- b. First, the essential virtues are the cure for apathy.
 - i. Vs. 8 – “barren” means stalled or stuck, therefore ineffective.
 - ii. ILL: A stalled car is of no use – just like a stalled Christian.
 - iii. **Q: Are you barren? Are you spiritually stalled out?**
- c. Second, the essential virtues are the path to intimacy with Christ.
 - i. Vs. 8 – “nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”
 - ii. ILL: The Personal Trainer (See page 3 for explanation.)
 - iii. As we work on the essential virtues, we get to know our Personal Trainer in the process.
 - iv. **Q: Are you close to Christ? Can you be closer?**
- d. Third, the essential virtues are the key to discernment.
 - i. Vs. 9 – “blind and cannot see afar off” – the word in Greek is where we get our word “myopic” which means literally to shut the eye.
 - ii. Peter is describing someone who refuses to look at life with full perception, a willful blindness to spiritual matters.
 - iii. ILL: We have a world full of spiritually near-sighted Christians who only look at life for what they can get out of it here and now.
 - iv. **Q: Are you spiritually blind? Are there areas in your life you refuse to look at spiritually?**
- e. Fourth, the essential virtues are the basis for assurance.
 - i. Vs. 9 – “hath forgotten...” – this individual lives as if he is unsaved.
 - ii. Peter issues this individual a challenge in verse 10, “give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”
 - iii. The word “sure” refers to a business transaction whereby the purchaser could show a receipt.
 - iv. **Q: Do you have any receipts that would tell me you are saved?**
- f. Fifth, the essential virtues are the requirement for stability.
 - i. Vs. 10 – “if you do these things, ye will never fail.”
 - ii. This is the contrast. Peter is saying that the Christian who is pursuing Christlikeness will develop the characteristic of stability.
 - iii. Instead of the ups and downs of a double-minded person, you can be stable in your life.
 - iv. **Q: How would you describe your spiritual life? Are you stable? Unstable?**
- g. Sixth, the essential virtues are the cause for expectancy.
 - i. Vs. 11 – the word “ministered” is the same word translated “add” in verse 5.
 - ii. To those who add these essential virtues to their faith, God will “minister” – generously supply – a full and lavish welcome into His eternal presence upon death.
 - iii. Nothing please God more than our likeness to His Son.
 - iv. **Q: Can you describe yourself as Christlike?**

CONCLUSION:

- ⇒ Remind your class one more time – the life God longs for us to have is within our grasp. He has given us His Holy Spirit and His Word to lead us in cultivating the essential virtues of the faith.
- ⇒ If time, ask them to rate the virtues in their mind that need to most work.
- ⇒ Challenge to memorize the text and to be present in the coming weeks as we dive into each virtue.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

1. The Spoon:

- a. When I was growing up, I would often get in trouble. When I would approach the line in the sand, my mom or dad would warn me that they would get “the spoon” if I didn’t change my behavior very soon.
- b. In our house, we had many spoons. We had all sizes for all kinds of purposes. But when my parents threatened me with “the” spoon I knew exactly which one they were referring to – the one they used to spank me with.
- c. In the same way, Peter wanted to be sure his readers knew what he was talking about and inserted the definite article “the” before each.
- d. Peter wasn’t encouraging his readers to find a faith – he wanted them to embrace THE faith.

2. The Personal Trainer:

- a. Many people have never been to a gym. But assume your doctor has recommended you find a gym and a personal trainer to help you get in better shape.
- b. You join the gym, and you sign up with the recommended trainer. You know nothing about getting in shape and you know nothing about the personal trainer you are now being introduced to.
- c. As you learn about how to exercise, eat, etc. you simultaneously are getting to know your trainer. No doubt you would learn about them on a personal level, their past, their family, etc. The two go hand in hand.
- d. That’s what Peter is saying in this text. As we strive to grow in the essential virtues, we cannot do it without the Lord’s help. As we grow spiritually, we must spend time with our Personal Trainer.
- e. The side benefit: as we grow spiritually, we simultaneously grow closer to the Lord.