

Divine Power for Human Renovation

2 Peter 1:1-11

Brown Bible: Page 1225

Green Bible: Page 830

Chinese Bible: Page 1972

Spanish Bible: Page 1552

Performance Improvement

- Where in life might we see someone trying to improve?
- Where might we see someone trying to help another person (or group) improve?
- In those scenarios, what motivates people to improve?
- What motivates Christians to improve?
 - Especially in difficulty?
 - In ways that aren't motivated by fear or guilt?
- Prayer

Background of 2 Peter

- Author: Simon Peter
 - fisherman, close disciple of Jesus, bold actions, denied Jesus 3x, restored by Jesus, leader in early church
- Context & Themes
 - Ch 1 Imprisoned, nearing death, Peter cares for suffering Christians
 - Ch 2 False teachers pressuring churches to depart from true knowledge of Jesus Christ
 - Ch 3 Christ's return is sure, though timing unknown; so Christians should live fruitful, faithful lives

2 Peter 1

1-2 A humble leader writes to equals in the faith

- Simon Peter ('rock'), a slave and messenger of Jesus
- All Christians bow to the same Savior, and so have equal standing; No second class citizens
- True grace and peace are only found (and abound!) in Jesus Christ, because he is truly God

2 Peter 1

- 1-2 A humble leader writes to equals in the faith
- **3-4 God who calls enables godlike living**
 - God's glory and goodness calls and compels Christians
 - Power and promises (both given, not earned)
 - Participate in divine nature = a personal, noticeable transformation to godlikeness (family resemblance)
 - Corruption = decay of life without God

2 Peter 1

- 1-2 A humble leader writes to equals in the faith
- 3-4 God who calls enables godlike living
- **5-7 So...work hard to be virtuous (like God)!**
 - Faith alone saves; but should not remain alone
 - Lavishly supplement faith with godly qualities

Godlike qualities

Goodness	Moral excellence, like Jesus (v.3)
Knowledge	Understanding & experiencing God's character and will
Self-control	Submission to Christ's indwelling spirit, not self interest
Perseverance	Continuing with patient faith, seeing this world and time with God's eyes
Godliness	A very practical awareness of God in every aspect of life
Mutual Affection	A warmth toward fellow Christians
Love	Limitlessly committed to good for others in attitude and actions; supreme over all gifts & qualities

2 Peter 1

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- 5-7 So...work hard to be virtuous (like God)!
- **8-9 Actions (or inactions) have consequences**
 - Effective and productive = Confidence in the right things; stripping it away in wrong things. Phil 3:4-11
 - Knowledge of JC = beginning, middle, end goal
 - Faith w/out virtues = spiritual blindness, memory loss

Philippians 3:4-11

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

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- 8-9 Actions (or inactions) have consequences
- **10-11 Promised rewards in heaven motivate efforts now on earth**
 - ‘make every effort’ (again) = human response to God’s work
 - Acting like the King proves (to self and others) you are a true citizen of the kingdom

Big Idea

**God's indwelling presence
enables Christians to resemble him,
with lives lavished in his qualities
to assure everyone
His grace truly transforms humans
now and forever.**

lavished = given very generously

Reflection

- God's election and human action are not competitors
- Growing in holiness (sanctification) = 'a work of God in which believers co-operate' (L. Berkhof)
- Biblical pattern:
 - 'ethical imperatives built on dogmatic indicatives'
 - Grammar: imperative (command), indicative (statement)
 - Christian responsibilities rooted in Christian identity
 - Christian human doing follows Christian human being

Co-operating with God

Human action

God's action

God's action

Human action

1 Peter 2

(Christian Identity – God's action)

- ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

(Christian Responsibility – Human action)

- ¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Application

- Co-operate with God
 - Receive freely his grace through faith!
 - Work diligently to exercise your faith to build virtues!
- Assure yourself and others - especially in difficulty!
 - *Two sides of the truth*
 - We are *living houses* God is renovating

Two sides of the truth (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

Here is another way of putting the two sides of the truth. On the one hand we must never imagine that our own unaided efforts can be relied on to carry us even through the next 24 hours as a decent people. If he does not support us, not one of us is safe from gross sin. On the other hand, no possible degree of holiness or heroism which has ever been recorded of the greatest saints is beyond what he is determined to produce in every one of us in the end. The job will not be completed in this life, but he means to get us as far as possible before death.

Two sides of the truth
(C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

That is why we must not be surprised if we are in for rough time. When a man turns to Christ and seems to be getting on pretty well (in the sense that some of his bad habits are now corrected) he often feels that it would now be natural if things went fairly smoothly. When troubles come along—illnesses, money troubles, new kinds of temptation—he is disappointed. These things, he feels, might have been necessary to rouse him and make him repent in his bad old days, but why now? Because God is forcing him on, or up, to higher level: putting him into situations where he will have to be very much braver, or more patient, or more loving, than he ever dreamed of being before. It seems to us all unnecessary, but that is because we have not yet had the slightest notion of the tremendous thing he means to make of us.

A living house
(C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes into rebuild the house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he's doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you're not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is he up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house than the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage, but he is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself.

A living house

(C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

The command '*be ye perfect*' is not idealistic gas (a disappearing vapor with no substance). Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command. He said (in the Bible) that we were 'gods' and He's going to make good his words. If we let Him—for we can prevent him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and the filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though of course on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in. Nothing less. He meant what he said.

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