

Faith Supplements-Part Two



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2nd Peter 1:8-11

Have any of you, as an adult, ever had an experience that when it happened it just really hurt? Maybe there was a consequence to you or there was a consequence to those you love and it just took you a little while to get over either what you did or what happened. To the point that now, if you see someone that you suspect may get in a similar situation, you warn them not to do it because you have experienced the consequence. You do not want others to experience what you've experienced, so sometimes we just warn people to be careful because we know what could happen; we've seen the other side of a certain situation. As I read verses 8 through 11, I get the sense that something must have happened in Peter's life that he experienced, maybe a fall that he absolutely did not want others to experience what he experienced, and he's writing about it. He's warning us of what could happen.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Memish wanted me to clean the gutters. Now, I didn't know any way to clean the gutters other than to get a ladder out, put the ladder up to the gutters, and start cleaning the gutters. When Memish saw me on the ladder (I don't know if she's had a bad experience with a ladder before or what), she just wouldn't quit telling me how I

needed to be careful. She kept warning me how dangerous what I was doing actually was. Now I couldn't help this, but lightning was on the backside of the farm, and for some reason she was worried that I should not be up on a ladder with lightning—I mean, it was a mile and a half away; it wasn't like it was a hundred yards away! She just wouldn't quit, she just wouldn't rest, and when she got ready to leave, I was still on the ladder. She told me not to be on the ladder while she was away...can you believe that? Do you know what she did? She had one of the grandkids call me about five minutes after she left to see if I was on the ladder. Peter's not going to quit this morning...he's going to wear us out. Does anybody remember if something may have happened in his life that maybe caused him to be worried about you and I having the same possibility of doing what he did?

Scripture

"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

In verse 8, Peter ties what he's fixing to say to what he's just said, "For if these qualities are yours and are increasing"...now when he talks about qualities, we know he's talking about the seven supplements to faith that he spoke about in verses 5, 6, and 7. And we're supposed to be a 100% into equipping our faith with seven supplements. Yes, Peter believed we're saved by grace through faith alone but he believed that the faith that saves us does not *stay* alone once it saves us. We come along and add to, equip, our saving faith. There is a divine side of salvation, but Peter is now talking about the human side of salvation. Last week we talked about those seven faith supplements, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Now, Peter puts this in a

conditional sentence. He's writing to a church that he says in the first couple of verses he believes has a faith that's equal to his, which comes from the righteousness in Jesus Christ. So he fully believes they have the same relationship with God, through Jesus, that he does. Now he asks them by stating, "For if these qualities are yours"; in other words, he's asking them do you possess these seven supplements? But then he ties it with a conjunction, saying, "...and are increasing." So Peter not only wants us to possess these seven supplements, he wants them to be increasing in our life.

Now, I want to make sure you don't get the wrong picture here. We know that we should be growing as a Christian, and sometimes we try to measure our growth and it's hard. I remember being a kid and I had a dream, I had a goal—I wanted to play basketball. I had a particular team I wanted to play for and it was the only team I was going to play for; I wanted to play for the Kentucky Wildcats. I wanted to be the starting point guard. I would see them on late night TV on Channel 6 when they would re-broadcast their games, and I would watch those point guards. Problem was I knew I needed to grow to a certain height to be able to be a point guard in the SEC and play at a national level. So I had this piece of tape on my bedroom closet door, and probably... conservatively, three times a day, I would back up to that piece of tape and I would measure myself. Can I just say I didn't always see growth—but I would mark it, and I could see I was growing. That's not the picture here. This is not the picture of you being a new, little bitty baby Christian and you possess these seven supplements, and you have a 5% growth, then a 10% growth, then a 15% growth, then a 20%. No, no, no. It's not what it's talking about.

Now, I want you to let this sink in. Peter wants to know that we possess these, but not just possess them but that they are abounding, they are overflowing, in us. The first is virtue...moral excellence, the courage to let your faith be known by the excellent things you do, not haphazardly but excellently. Knowledge...you get in that situation and you just know to do the right thing, and so you choose that, the right thing not the wrong thing. Self-control...your emotions are under the control of your mind, not out of control, ever. You're steadfast...you get in that situation and you

don't bail, you don't quit, you remain under the load because you know God has a plan and a purpose for you being where you are. Even though it's difficult, you don't quit. Godliness...you don't have to think about it, you don't have to wear a bracelet that says "What Would Jesus Do" it just overflows from you because it's just who you are. When it comes to the family...you're affectionate. You love, you notice, and the reason you're noticing is because this is your brother, this is your sister. And then...the God kind of love, where we choose to be in a relationship with someone even though we're not going to get anything out of it. We're choosing to love someone because they have a need not because we have a need. Our love has no strings attached to it, so we're not looking for what we're going to get we're looking for what we can give. And in this relationship, we evaluate needs and we elevate those needs to a place of priority. We look within ourselves, we don't pass the buck to someone else, and we meet that need.

Now, if I can ask you what Peter's asking, we're not asking do we possess these; we're asking are they overflowing? Not two of them, not four of them, but all seven...and the assurance we have is if we have these seven supplements overflowing in our life, they will keep us, they will guard us, they will protect us from being "ineffective" and "unfruitful." Now, Peter's using a speaking technique here where he puts this in the negative to accentuate the positive. What he wants us to know is if we have these seven faith supplements in our life, if we are equipping our faith, if we are responding positively to what God has done for us in Christ, we will be effective. We'll be working, not idle. This word, ineffective, literally means to be idle. It means to not be doing what you're supposed to be doing. It means to not be engaged. If you're not engaged, if you're idle, there are not going to be fruits, you're going to be unfruitful, so these two concepts go together. Your work is fruitful. We're effective and fruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; this is talking about your personal knowledge of Him. This isn't doctrine; this is knowing Him through experience, through walking with Him. Have you ever had somebody ask you if you know someone and you say "Yeah," but when they begin to ask you more questions you have to say, "Well, I don't really know him like that, but I know who you're talking about. I know of him." How do you know Jesus? Do you know Him

intimately? Do you know Him personally? Or do you just know of Him? Do you just know about Him? If we know Him, we'll be adding these supplements to our faith so that we are fruitful, and having the root of Christ causes the fruit of Christ to be evident in our lives.

Now, look what Peter's going to do. He's not going to say if you possess, he's now going to switch to third person and say, "For whoever lacks these qualities" meaning they're not existent, they're not overflowing in the person's life. What qualities are we talking about? We're talking about virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. The person who lacks these, the ESV says, he "is so nearsighted that he is blind." Just about every English translation that I read puts nearsighted before blind, but in his letter to the church, Peter actually puts blind before nearsighted. But here's what the translators of the Bible have done...they've done what you and I know...if Peter says they're blind and they're really blind, then they can't be nearsighted. So we twist Peter's word order and don't think he's talking about what he's really talking about, because when we translate we have to interpret. But Peter said that guy who doesn't have these qualities abounding in his life is blind, blind like a nearsighted person. Now we're thinking, a person who's nearsighted isn't really blind—but the person who's nearsighted is blind to a lot of reality. If you or someone in your family is nearsighted, you have noticed that before you get glasses you squint. You squint to bring things into focus, and then what's right in front of you becomes clear but you don't see everything else around you anymore. Now, Peter's not saying you don't see *anything*...he's saying if you don't have these qualities in your life you're like a person who only sees what's right in front of them. You just see what's in your life right *now*, and Peter does not want us as Christians to live for now he wants us to live forever. Peter, like Paul doesn't believe right now just counts right now, they believe right now counts forever! So Peter is concerned about a person's vision being impaired, a believer, someone who's in the church who has the possibility that they don't see well. Could that be you? From time to time, I get digital news sent to my phone, and I saw that we have a whole generation now called the now generation. I'm so thankful that's not my generation. I would hate to be in a generation that only values what's going on now. That is so not Christian.

Are you hearing me? When these qualities, these supplements, have not been added to our faith, you and I live with the wrong perspective.

Now Peter's going to tell us what's causing our nearsightedness. He's going to tell us what's causing us to be spiritually blind and not have the right vision. He says, "...having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins." Now, we're going to be a little controversial from here on. I just want to prepare you for this. A lot of the people that I check myself out with to make sure I'm thinking correctly are going to disagree with me on what I'm going to tell you next. There are a lot of people in our churches who I respect that want to believe Peter is talking about someone here who's not a real believer. They don't want to believe there can be a Christian who doesn't have these seven supplements in their life. They do not want to believe it could be possible to be a Christian and be blind. But here's what Peter says, "...having forgotten." What have they forgotten? "...that he was cleansed from his former sins." When you get cleansed from your former sins, you become a believer in Jesus Christ. You become a Christian; you become a child of God. At the moment, your former sins are cleansed and you're brought into right relationship with God. Peter understands that it's possible for someone to be in that situation, to be right with God, having his sins forgiven, and him forget about that and not live in light of that truth. When you don't live in light of the truth that you're in a right relationship with God because your sins have been forgiven, it changes your vision so that you do not see what's happening in your life correctly. That's dangerous.

Now, that would never happen at Hardin, right? Every day you realize God has forgiven you of all your sin in Christ. You realize that you made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and you put your trust in the fact that all of your sin was dealt with at the cross in Jesus. When you went down into that water of baptism, you were fully saying that your faith for your salvation is in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and you know that God cleansed you from sin. When he cleansed you from sin, He didn't just forgive you, that person you were actually died and is no longer alive. When you came up out of that water, you were saying because of faith in Jesus Christ I'm a brand new person. You have a new life. You know

whose new life you have; you have Jesus's life. That's what Peter's trying to get us to realize here. You and I have the potential to live the life Christ lived right now, and He doesn't want us to fail in this. Do you know what causes people to fail? People fail when they suffer from amnesia you, and they don't remember. Don't remember what? Don't remember you've been cleansed. Remember, if we go back to verse 4 we're partakers in the divine nature. What does this divine nature do? Peter says it releases us from the corruption that's in this world through sinful desire. Peter wants that to be an influential moment in our life. He wants us to live in light of remembering who we are in Christ because of what God has done for us on the cross. When we fail to remember, the consequence of that is disastrous. I mean, we've all done it. We've all had somebody who was waiting on us, had expectations, and we forgot. We just didn't show up. It wasn't on our mind, we totally forgot about it, just doing our own thing, and then all of a sudden we get that call, "Where are you?" And we don't even remember! They tell us where we're supposed to be and what we're supposed to be doing, but we're not doing it because we've forgotten in that moment. We forgotten about the relationship we had with that person. That's what happens to us when we forget about the relationship we have with God through His Son Jesus Christ and we forget what He did for us on that cross in order to cleanse us from all our sin.

Now, Peter's not saying there's anybody in the church in this situation, but he's firmly believing it's possible. Don't you dare think this couldn't be you...it could. That's why he says in verse 10, "Therefore," because this is a possibility in the life of the church, because it is a possibility in someone's life who's a believer in Jesus. Therefore, he says, "be all the more diligent." It is that same phrase he used in verse 5 where he is saying let's be 100% in, in supplementing our faith with virtue knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Except he doesn't say it that way. In verse 10, he says it this way—make every effort, give all diligence to confirming your calling and your election. The reason we hold the beliefs we hold at this church is because we believe they're the beliefs the Bible teaches. Peter now goes back to the divine side of salvation and he reminds us of something. We have a divine call and we

have a divine election, but the human side of salvation is we are to confirm that divine calling and that divine election.

Now, it bothers some of the scholars that Peter again reverses the order. Peter puts calling before election, but we all know election comes before calling. The Bible clearly teaches that when it comes to the divine side of salvation, God elected us, God chose us, God foreknew us before the foundation of the world. The calling did not come until we were alive on the planet and heard the preaching of the gospel. But Peter reverses them and puts calling before election. Why? This is just my opinion...you and I had no idea God elected us before the foundation of the world until we came under the preaching of the gospel and received that divine call of God that opened our eyes to who we are and we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ—and the moment we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we knew it wasn't because we had chosen Him; it was because He had already chosen us before the foundation of the world.

Watch this...here is my responsibility. It's to confirm my calling and my election. Now I'm going to go against the grain a little bit here. I don't want to make any enemies here and I don't want to offend anybody, but I do not believe this is teaching, in the context, that making your calling and election sure means we do certain things so that we're sure we're really saved. I don't think that's what it's teaching. Here's what I think. It's teaching that when God elected you before the foundation of the world, and when God called you through the gospel, He had a purpose and He had a plan. And so Peter's teaching we need to confirm, we need to live out the purpose of our calling and our election.

Now I know you already know this, but let's just review. Why did God elect us before the foundation of the world? Let's not speculate. Let's not use philosophy. Let's turn to God's Word. Ephesians chapter 1 says, "Blessed to be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Why are we to be a blessing Him? Because He's "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." Then it says, "...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." When did God choose us? He chose us before the foundation of the world. Why did He choose us? It doesn't say so that we wouldn't go to Hell and we'd go to Heaven. That's not what it says. It says,

"...that we might be holy and blameless before Him." Wow! Do you know why God chose you before the foundation world? Because He didn't want you to live the life you were living in the flesh; He wanted you to live a life that was holy and blameless before Him.

Now, does anybody remember what Paul says in Romans 8:28? "For we know that all things work together for good..." but there's only one group of people on the planet who has that promise—it's the group who loves Him. Then he tells us who loves Him, "those who are called according to His purpose." So, if you've been called according to God's purpose, you have this promise—all things work together for good in your life. Then Paul is going to give us the foundation of why that's true in verses 29 and 30, "For those whom He foreknew [those whom He elected] He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers." And then it says, "And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified." Now, I want you to watch this. When God elected you before the foundation of the world, he predestined you to be like Jesus Christ. Wow! That word, predestine, means to blueprint. When we built our house, we had a blueprint. We followed the blueprint so that when we got done the house would look like what we wanted it to look like. Well, guess what? God's got a blueprint for your life, and that blueprint is Jesus Christ. So everything that's happening in your life, He's doing according to molding you, shaping you, into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. That's why all things work together for good, because God's not going to fail in one day you will be just like His Son Jesus Christ.

So here's what this means. I have this responsibility, I've got faith, but the faith that saved doesn't stay alone, I need to equip it. I equip it with virtue. I equip it with knowledge. I equip it with self-control. I equip it with steadfastness. I equip it with godliness. I equip it with brother affection. I equip it with love. Do you know what starts happening? I start living out my call. I start living out my election. I start living the life God's ordained me to live. Peter says if we practice these qualities...see, he just won't quit! We never talk about this in church—we talk about tithing, we talk about

Sunday school, we talk about small group, we talk about serving, we talk about praying, we talk about worship... *Come on, Peter, bring some of that in!* No, that's not what Peter's bringing in. Peter's bringing in that we ought to be overflowing with moral excellence, courage to do the right thing, the courage to let our faith be seen by others! If we get in that situation where a choice needs to be made, we make the right choice not the wrong choice. Yes, there are going to be some things that are going to cause us to get emotionally compassionate, but never do we react without being under the control of our brain, our mind so that we do the right thing. When it gets bad and we want to quit, we don't quit. Why? Because we are steadfast and godliness is just oozing out of us, it's overflowing because we can't hold it inside! And, we recognize something different about the church—we're not a building, we're not an institution; we're family. We have the same Father, the same big Brother; we're in this family because of the blood of Jesus. We don't pick on the world; we don't criticize the world all the time. Do you know what we do? We love the world. Not the things of the world that are sinful, but we love those people doing those sinful things. When we get our opportunity, we don't turn our back we engage. When we do this, we're doing what He's called us to do. We're being holy, we're being blameless, we're being like His Son.

And do you know what promise we have? We will not fall. Well, there's so many of us that are just like Peter... *Yeah, I know what the rest of y'all could do, but I'd never do it.* You've been there, hadn't you? Some of us are right there now. That's where Peter was. Jesus flatly told them guys... *Listen, I'm going to die on the cross. You're all going to deny me. It'll be okay after.* Peter steps up and says... *I get it Jesus, I know they'll deny you, but I'm not like them. I'm Peter. I'm the rock. I won't!* He even carried a sword to prevent Jesus from being crucified because He just could not fathom that being the will of God and he wasn't going to let it happen. And then, that little girl asked him if he was one of Jesus's disciples and he says... *What me? No, not me.* He was asked two more times and then the rooster crowed. He denied Jesus three times. Oh, the fall of Peter...

Do you know what Peter's doing in this letter? He tells us in this next part, he's going to keep reminding us of these qualities until the day he dies. What qualities? Virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love—faith supplements. Because, he says, when we practice these, when we're focused on, when we're giving 100%, when this is overflowing in us—we can't fall. But if we're not practicing these things, we can fall.

Falls always surprise us. A few months ago, the grandkids were staying all night at our house and right before we go to bed Celisa always gives them a snack. Their favorite bedtime snack at Memish's house is Smushy cookies. They're just awesome. So Memish is downstairs in the kitchen making the Smushy cookies, and when they get done she rings the little bell and down the steps goes G, down the steps goes Evie, then Finley goes, then Crider goes, and then last to go is Papaw. So on this particular night, by the time I started off the top step of the stairway, they were already at the table eating Smushy cookies. Now nobody witnessed this, but for some reason I didn't take my socks off and as I started down the steps, somehow I missed the third step. When I missed the third step, I hit every step, not with the bottom of my feet, but with that other bottom I've got...boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom! Nobody saw it, but everybody heard it. Memish goes crazy, she's screaming, all the grandkids are all wanting know if Papaw's okay. I was okay but man I'm humiliated, all the attention's now on me, and it hurt! Now, I didn't hurt bad enough that I couldn't get to the table. I got the table, I ate my part of the Smushy cookies, and they were absolutely awesome. This past Friday, the grandkids were over again. Memish did the Smushy cookie thing and we all go down the steps. This time it was G first, then Finley, then Crider, and now—I don't know if they've done this intentionally or not, but they will not let Papaw come down the steps by himself anymore—so Evie is last coming down the steps with Papaw. As we start down the steps, Evie's grinning, we get to about the third step, and Evie just looks at me and says, "Papaw, remember the last time, you fell?" Now, I don't think Evie's bringing that up to me to rub it in that I fell. I think Evie realizes, whoa, Papaw's in the same place he was before and he might could fall, so she's wanting to make sure I'm careful and I don't fall. But I also believe she's

smart enough to recognize, too, that now she's on the steps with Papaw and if I do fall, I might just take her with me and it's not only going to hurt me, it's going to hurt her. Amen?

Do you know why Peter doesn't want us to fall? He doesn't want us to hurt ourselves, but you also have a husband or a wife, you have kids, you have friends, you have an influence, you have a reputation. When you fall, there's not going to just be a consequence to you; there's going to be a consequence to others. Do you know what I've just noticed pastorally and personally? The one who falls sometimes is able to recover quicker than those others in their life. And that consequence? It doesn't just stop it; it's a ripple. Peter doesn't want us to fall. Remember Paul? Paul starts the Ephesians letter by talking about us being seated in Christ, and then in chapter 4 he switches metaphors to now that we're a church member we're to walk worthy of our calling. This means we're called to be a member of the church, we're called to be a part of the people who express they're in a relationship with Jesus Christ, and we're to walk worthy. Do you remember how he finishes the letter? For us to stand...at the end of each day, Paul wants us to be standing, not to have fallen, because we have an enemy who would love to knock us off our feet! Peter has this same belief; he doesn't want us to fall! Except in this letter he's not going to be talking about Satan, he's going to be talking about false doctrine, about false influence, and about false teachers. If there's ever an age in which a group of Christians are being infiltrated by false theology and heresy, it's us today! It used to just be a few bad preachers on TV, now it's the internet! Everybody is selling their version of God, and so many of us are drawn to a personality rather than drawn to the truth of teaching that is based on God's Word. That's why right after this Peter's going to go into the sure foundation of God's Word before he addresses the false doctrines that are plaguing the church that can cause us to fall.

Then, we close with what Peter says in verse 11. If you possess these seven qualities and they're abounding in you, here's what you have to look forward to—the eternal Kingdom of God. Do you know what's going to be supplied to you? A rich entrance. It's the same word that was used back in verse 5 to talk about that person who equipped the choir. It's the same

word. I want you get this picture...Peter's going to say in the next few verses that he knows he's getting ready to die soon, and he not only wants to live well, he wants to die well. Is that your heart's desire, not just live well but you want to die well? Peter is looking forward to this rich entrance. Now, I don't know exactly what that's going to be but it's just not going to be ordinary—you're not going to just have a gate open and an angel be there saying, "Welcome." No. If you are the person who overflows with these supplements, it's going to be a rich entrance.

Now, when we get to chapter 3, Peter's going to remind us about Paul's writing. He's going to talk about how Paul's talked about some of the same things he's talking about. I want to remind you of this picture in 1st Corinthians chapter 3. There's a picture of us building on the foundation of Jesus, and each one of us are building a life and some of us are building the wrong materials. You can either build with gold, silver, and precious stone, or you can build with wood, hay, and straw. Then Paul tells us on the Day of Judgment, you're going to be met by a fire, the fire of judgment. If you've built with gold, silver, and precious stones, guess what fire's going to do? It's going to refine those and show how glorious they are. But if you're building with wood, straw, or hay, everything's going to be burned up. So there's going to be a person on the Day of Judgment coming into Heaven, and wow, judgment reveals the life they lived, and it's glorious. Then there's this other person standing there with smoke all over them, and they have nothing. Now, I know what some of you're going to say, "Well praise God, they're going to Heaven not Hell!" I agree, but not really. Are you telling me you want to live a life in response to what God did for you and then on the day of judgment, everything in your life get burned up? Really? You just want to live down here and get all you can get and just get into Heaven by the skin of your teeth! Are you kidding me? After all He did for us, we have to be all in! And if we're all in, when we arrive...oh, it's going to be rich; it's going to be glorious! There is only one way I can possibly imagine it, and it fails in comparison. I'm a sports fan and I love to watch the NBA draft. Have you seen how those first lottery picks come into the NBA? They come into the NBA with fanfare. And those guys that don't get drafted, you don't even know about them. That's the way Heaven's going to be. Why is a guy picked number one in the draft?

He's picked number one because of his college career. He is picked number one because of the potential he has. They're not just speculating; there's some evidence that causes them to pick those guys. Here's what's going to happen in Heaven...if you've got these traits overflowing in your life, when you get there, ooh, it's going to be rich. I can just see Jesus, Peter, Paul, David, Moses, Joshua, Jeremiah, and Isaiah saying, "Here he comes!" "Here she comes!" "Hey guys, get ready!" And all of Heaven stops because the life you've lived down here didn't just count right now; it counts forever! On that day, if you're that guy that gets in because of the blood of Christ and that's all you have is the blood of Christ, you are going to so regret the life you failed to live for the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Do you have the qualities, or do you not, all seven? It doesn't matter if you're 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, they should all be there.