

The Multiplied Harvest

THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH “The Potential for Spiritual Growth”

“The purpose of 2 Peter is to call Christians to spiritual growth so that they can combat apostasy as they look forward to the Lord’s return.” Ken Gangel

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:8-11

2 Peter 1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION: So far, we have navigated through Peter’s words describing the Power and Promises in ***Spiritual Growth*** (1:1-5a); the Process in ***Spiritual Growth*** (1:5-7); and now the Potential in ***Spiritual Growth*** (1:8-11). ***Spiritual growth*** in the Christian life demands the strenuous involvement of the believer in diligent cultivation. (D. Edmond Hiebert, page 50.)

The “*abounding*” condition expressed in verse 8 comes from a deep-ceded joy. [James 1:2 says to consider every manner of joy for yourself when you are surrounded with trials. The AMPC Edition expresses it this way, “*Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations.*”] The Christian graces that are to be added to our faith create in us a scarce commodity. “There are many who *say* that they are abiding in Christ. There are few who *show* that they are abounding in Him.”¹ The evidence of Christ’s character overflowing in His children will be a soul filled with joy. **A precaution to warn against is that joy can be forged, obscure, elusive, and disguised as some other temporal emotion. The superfluity of true joy and its effect will be hard to conceal.**

▶ ***This joy flows from the wells of Salvation. Israel had known God’s favor and his judgment. They had returned unto God and declared his deliverance.***

Isaiah 12:2-4 Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation. (3) Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. (4) And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

▶ ***This joy finds its maker and model in Jesus Christ.***

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that **my joy** might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

John 17:13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have **my joy** fulfilled in themselves.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

¹ Leonard Ravenhill, *Revival God’s Way; A Message for the Church. How the Church Can Be Brought from Where It Is to Where It Ought to Be*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1983), page 17.

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- ***This joy fills the prayer of our Lord with hope and prospect of the future when mentioning them who would be saved as a result of the disciples' message & teaching.***

John 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“(Amplified Bible) Neither for these alone do I pray [*it is not for their sake only that I make this request*], but also for all those who will ever come to believe in (trust in, cling to, rely on) Me through their word (Message) and teaching,

This joy is complete and stable . . .

This joy is as real at the graveside as at the fireside.
It does not evaporate under the heat of adversity.
It does not collapse in the presence of slander or defamation.
It does not wither at the onslaught of calamity.
It does not panic in the presence of deception and betrayal.
It does not sour under the test of poverty.
It does not die at the cruel hand of tragedy.
It does not falter in the presence of misery.²

I. THE CONTROL EXISTING IN YOU (1:8a) “*For if these things be in you*” This literally means ...

Gk. “*Gar,*” *for if these things* – introduces two incentive in verses 8-9. +/- (Two participles)

- The effect of abundant growth **belonging** to you (1:8a): adding 7 traits listed in 1:5-7.
- The effect of abundant growth **abounding** in you (1:8b)

- A. “***In your possession*** or custody,” To keep, guard, watch or preserve.
- B. “*At your disposal*” – they have an influence upon you. Do not confuse the thought of knowing where something is kept or having it somewhere close by lost in the shuffle but instead, *ready at hand*. *These qualities are a rightful part of your character not just a fleeting manifestation.* (Hiebert, page 56)
- C. You have *diligently and faithfully added* these graces to your faith. This describes a continuing process of growth and development.

II. THE CHARACTER EMERGING FROM YOU (1:8b) “*... and abound*”

- A. “*in rich abundance*” (ever “*increasing in measure*” - NIV)
- B. “*To overflow or be superfluous,*” (to be over and above what is required)

² Ibid, page 17.

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- C. There is an outward evidence of an inward condition, (God is at work).

III. THE CHRIST-LIKENESS EDIFIED IN YOU (1:8c): “*They make you*” The developmental marks of Christ (BEING BUILT) in us as believers.

“**Make**” - καθίστημι (kathistēmi) *kath-is'-tay-mee* = From [G2596](#) and [G2476](#); to place down (permanently), that is, (figuratively) to designate, constitute, convey: - appoint, be, conduct, **make**, **render** (**cause to be**), **keep**, ordain, set.

- A. **Not barren or “idle” but productive.** (Philippians 3:13, 14): idle depicts “lazy or unemployed” (James 2:20 – *faith without works is dead*).

“It is never a vain thing to attempt to grow in grace and knowledge.”

Breaking up the barren, fallow ground; at leisure; off work, having extra time on your hands, plowing, preparing – engaging

[Jeremiah 4:3](#) For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

[Hosea 10:12](#) Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

- B. **Not unfruitful but plentiful:** *They should not be an unfruitful tree in the most favorable conditions.* You were diligent in cultivating these Ch. Graces, powerful, prolific – enriched.

[John 15:8](#) Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

* Both of these descriptions indicate a development reaching toward full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. THE COMPREHENSION OF OUR FAITH AND OF CHRIST

(1:8d): “*in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Cf. *Matt. 16:13-18; Phil. 3:10*) – The illumination that comes to us when the HS opens our eyes to receive God’s revelation of Himself in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

*J.I. Packer*³ said, “A little knowledge of God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about Him . . . One can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of Him. I am sure that many of us have never really grasped this. We

³ **James Innell Packer** (b. July 22, 1926) is a conservative evangelical Anglican, author, and theologian in the Calvinist tradition. He currently serves as the Board of Governors' Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He is considered to be one of the most important evangelical theologians of the late 20th century. He is a prolific writer and frequent lecturer, but he is best known for his book, *Knowing God*. He is a frequent contributor to and an executive editor of *Christianity Today*.

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find in ourselves a deep interest in theology (which is, of course, a most fascinating and intriguing subject – in the seventeenth century it was every gentleman’s hobby). We read books of theological exposition and apologetics. We dip into Christian history and study the Christian creed. We learn to find our way around in the Scriptures. Others appreciate our interest in these things, and we find ourselves asked to give our opinion in public on this or that Christian question, to lead study groups, to give papers, to write articles, and generally to accept responsibility, informal if not formal, for acting as teachers and arbiters of orthodoxy in our own Christian circle. Our friends tell us how much they value our contribution, and this spurs us to further explorations of God’s truth, so that we may be equal to the demands made of us. All very fine—yet interest in theology, and knowledge about God, and the capacity to think clearly and talk well on Christian themes, is not at all the same thing as knowing Him. We may know as much about God as Calvin knew—indeed, if we study his works diligently, sooner or later we shall—and yet all the time (unlike Calvin, may I say) we may hardly know God at all.”⁴

What Effect does the Knowledge of God have on a Person?⁵

1. **Those who know God have great energy for God** (Daniel 11:32- the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits, in other words, **stand strong and take action**). For an example, we can all pray about the ungodliness and apostasy which we see in everyday life all around us. If, however, there is in us little energy for such prayer, and little consequent practice for it, this is a sure sign that as yet we scarcely know our God.
2. **Those who know God have great thoughts of God.** Again, Daniel tells us about the wisdom, might, and truth of the great God who rules history and shows His sovereignty in acts of judgment and mercy towards individuals and nations according to His own good pleasure.
3. **Those who know God show great boldness for God.** Daniel and the Hebrew children who experienced the fiery furnace were men who had counted the cost of following God and trusted Him to miraculously intervene.
4. **Those who know God have great contentment in God.** There is no peace like the peace that passes all understanding; that has confidence and full assurance of knowing God and God knowing you (Romans 5:1; 8:). Keep your eyes upon the Lord.

Knowledge: (Gk.words) ἐπίγνωσις, epignōsis pronounced ip-ig'-no-sis. From G1921; recognition, that is, (by implication) full discernment, acknowledgement: **Total KJV occurrences: 20** – found in 1:2, 3, 8; 2:20.

⁴ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), pages 21-22.

⁵ *Ibid*, pages 23-28.

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2 Peter 1:2-8 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, (3) According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (8) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

- Richard Trench informs us that “epi” gives more **intensity** to the word – ginosko. “A **deeper and more intimate knowledge and acquaintance.**”⁶
- “True knowledge of Him involves not just intellectual understanding . . . but knowledge that comes through obedience. This growth should be the goal of every believer.” (Constable, 17)
- The Apostle Paul spoke of a dim, distorted and fragmented present view of God as looking through a mirror (in the Roman Empire, mirrors were pieces of polished metal) but one day there will be perfect, **full knowledge**, you begin to recognize or discern.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know (G1097; *ginosko* – experience and acquaintance) in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (G1922 both know and known; *epiginosis* – full knowledge) Proceed from; having an acquaintance or personal experience with someone and advance into an intimate or perfect knowledge of them. This knowledge brings a person into a better acquaintance with a thing he or she has already known. A **vision that is much improved, stronger and clearer. The following passages bear out this meaning:**

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Romans 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Ephesians 4:11-15 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (14) That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

⁶ Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament: Studies in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, tenth printing, 1978, originally published in 1880), page 285.

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Philippians 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment; (10) That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; (11) Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

1 Timothy 2:1-6 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; (2) For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (3) For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (5) For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (6) Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

2 Timothy 2:24-25 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, (25) In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (Cf. Hebrews 10:26 – sin willfully after having a knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins...)

In Ephesians 1:17 and Colossians 1:9 - Eadie writes, “The Colossians had gnosis (i.e. knowledge), but the apostle wished them to be filled with additional and supplemental knowledge, not new knowledge, or a different form or section of Christian science, but **a fuller development of the partial theological information which they already possessed. . . .** more of the insight which they already enjoyed.”⁷

With the example of Job in the OT, this summary can be made over man’s suffering. “I do not need to know WHY things happen; I only need to know the One WHO governs my life, and willingly submit to whatever He does – because He’s always righteous, He’s always trustworthy, and He’s always good. (Dr. Layton Talbot, BJU)

VI. THE CONDITIONS ENSUING WHEN WE CANNOT SEE (1:9): “*he that lacks these qualities*” NASB: *These virtues are absent – saved but lacking!*

- A. **“Blind and cannot see afar off”** – This is a description of the blindness, **short-sightedness** of a Christian, seeing only what is near, unable to see apparent, spiritual realities. Some scholars interpret this as a willful blindness causing impaired perception of reality. Peter has incorporated a great deal in these two companion epistles concerning sight. In this passage, he addresses the opposite of good vision or seeing.⁸ (Note: this may be a hint to the writer’s constant battle with old age coming through. There is also a mention of poor memory.) The blight of the failure to spiritual growth . . .

⁷ John Eadie, *Colossians* (Klock and Klock: USA, 1980, originally published by Richard Griffin and Company, 1856), page 21

⁸ Vincent, Volume One, page 620

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1. Lot was vexed at seeing the wickedness of his neighbors. (2 Peter 2:8)
2. The wicked have eyes full of adultery (2 Peter 2:14)
3. Hatred of the brethren blinds one's eyes (1 John 2:11)
4. This type of blindness keeps us from have eternity's values in view
5. *Cannot see afar off* – to squint – an abstract illustration (e.g. claiming to have “faith without works” – “in whom these things are not present.”)

Examples of Spiritual blindness from Scripture:

- **Pharaoh** (Exodus 5:2) “Who is the LORD that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?”
- **The Wicked** (Proverbs 4:19) the way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at [over] what they stumble.
- **Israel** (Isaiah 29:10) The LORD hath closed your eyes.
- **The Lost** (2 Corinthians 4:3-6) To them the gospel is hidden, the god of this world hath blinded their eyes.
- **Cretians** – defiled and unbelieving (Titus 1:16) Profess to know God but in works deny Him.

B. **“Hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins”**

1. The Acceptance of the blind condition, making excuses. Peter does not call out anyone personally nor does he indicate that he has someone in mind when he uses this example.
2. The Atrophy – a decline and failure of the memory that one's sins were cleansed – “purged.” (Gk. καθαρισμός, *katharismos*, Phonetic Pronunciation: [kath-ar-is-mos!](#)) meaning to *wash off, purify*.
 - a. **Hebrews 1:3** “Christ purged our sins”
 - b. **Hebrews 9:14** “Christ's blood purges our conscience from dead works”
 - c. **1 Peter 1:18-19** We were purged from sin not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ.
 - d. **1 Peter 3:18** the Just (Christ) purged the sin of the unjust (mankind)

* Never forget what Christ has done. Never live your life so as to portray one who tramples underfoot the sacrifice of our Lord.

VII. THE CHOICE EXEMPLIFYING GOD'S CALL (1:10-11)

A. **The Sense of Diligence** (1:10a): “give diligence to make your calling an election sure”

1. As time passes, become more diligent – Man's consideration.
2. Man's behavior is the evidence of God's calling and choosing (there will be a proper moral response). James 2 – *faith without works is dead*.
4. Man's conformity to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29-30): “called according to His purpose” (11 verses in the NT illustrate this calling – *klay-tos* - invite)

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κλησις klēsis (*klay'-sis*) From a shorter form of G2564(kaleo); an invitation (figuratively): - **calling, vocation**. (General/universal vs. effectual/ individual)

(Romans 11:29) For the gifts and **calling**^{G2821} of God *are* without repentance. [God is not sorry for his gifts to and calling of the Jews (Rom_9:4.)]

(1 Corinthians 1:26) For^{G1063} ye see^{G991} your^{G5216} **calling**,^{G2821} brethren,^{G80} how that^{G3754} not^{G3756} many^{G4183} wise men^{G4680} after^{G2596} the flesh,^{G4561} not^{G3756} many^{G4183} mighty,^{G1415} not^{G3756} many^{G4183} noble,^{G2104} *are called*:

(1 Corinthians 7:20) Let every man^{G1538} (G1722 G5026) abide^{G3306} in^{G1722} the same^{G3588} **calling**^{G2821} wherein^{G3739} he was called.^{G2564}

(Ephesians 1:18) The^{G3588} eyes^{G3788} of your^{G5216} understanding^{G1271} being enlightened;^{G5461} that ye^{G5209} may know^{G1492} what^{G5101} is^{G2076} the^{G3588} hope^{G1680} of his^{G846} **calling**,^{G2821} and^{G2532} what^{G5101} the^{G3588} riches^{G4149} of the^{G3588} glory^{G1391} of his^{G846} inheritance^{G2817} in^{G1722} the^{G3588} saints,^{G40}

(Ephesians 4:1) I^{G1473} therefore,^{G3767} the^{G3588} prisoner^{G1198} of^{G1722} the Lord,^{G2962} beseech^{G3870} you^{G5209} that ye walk^{G4043} worthy^{G516} of the^{G3588} **vocation**^{G2821} wherewith^{G3739} ye are called,^{G2564}

(Ephesians 4:4) *There is one*^{G1520} body,^{G4983} and^{G2532} one^{G1520} Spirit,^{G4151} even as^{G2531} ye are called^{G2564} in^{G1722} one^{G3391} hope^{G1680} of your^{G5216} **calling**,^{G2821}

(Philippians 3:14) I press^{G1377} toward^{G2596} the mark^{G4649} for^{G1909} the^{G3588} prize^{G1017} of the^{G3588} high^{G507} **calling**^{G2821} of God^{G2316} in^{G1722} Christ^{G5547} Jesus.^{G2424}

(2 Thessalonians 1:11) Wherefore^{G1519} ^{G3739} also^{G2532} we pray^{G4336} always^{G3842} for^{G4012} you,^{G5216} that^{G2443} our^{G2257} God^{G2316} would count you worthy^{G515} ^{G5209} of this **calling**,^{G2821} and^{G2532} fulfil^{G4137} all^{G3956} the good pleasure^{G2107} of his goodness,^{G19} and^{G2532} the work^{G2041} of faith^{G4102} with^{G1722} power:^{G1411}

(2 Timothy 1:9) Who hath saved^{G4982} us,^{G2248} and^{G2532} called^{G2564} us with an holy^{G40} **calling**,^{G2821} not^{G3756} according^{G2596} to our^{G2257} works,^{G2041} but^{G235} according^{G2596} to his own^{G2398} purpose^{G4286} and^{G2532} grace,^{G5485} which was given^{G1325} us^{G2254} in^{G1722} Christ^{G5547} Jesus^{G2424} before^{G4253} the world began,^{G5550} ^{G166}

(Hebrews 3:1) Wherefore,^{G3606} holy^{G40} brethren,^{G80} partakers^{G3353} of the heavenly^{G2032} **calling**,^{G2821} consider^{G2657} the^{G3588} Apostle^{G652} and^{G2532} High Priest^{G749} of our^{G2257} profession,^{G3671} Christ^{G5547} Jesus,^{G2424}

(2 Peter 1:10) Wherefore^{G1352} the rather,^{G3123} brethren,^{G80} give diligence^{G4704} to make^{G4160} your^{G5216} **calling**^{G2821} and^{G2532} election^{G1589} sure:^{G949} for^{G1063} if ye do^{G4160} these things,^{G5023} ye shall never^{G3364} ^{G4218} fall:^{G4417}

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B. *The Soundness of Doing* (1:10b, 11)

1. A life of steady progress is the doing of these things. There may be some momentary setbacks but the promise is . . . you shall never stumble (i.e. fall).
 - a. **Walking without stumbling.** Contrast ([Jude 24](#)) *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*
 - b. **Loss of salvation** is not in question here. Losing one's salvations would be a complete fall being unable to rise again (Proverbs 24:16).

[King James Bible](#)

For a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

[Holman Christian Standard Bible](#)

Though a righteous man falls seven times, he will get up, but the wicked will stumble into ruin.

- c. **We stumble when we are not giving proper attention to where we step.** “We stumble when we become preoccupied with other things and do not pay attention to where we are going.”⁹
- d. **The assurance of our salvation does not rest on good works.** Our assurance rests on the promise of God that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior has eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24; Romans 5:1; 8:38-39; 1 John 5:11-13).
- e. **Having some type of moral progress does not provide the Christian with a “subjective assurance” of his election** (the sense it was given by Luther and Calvin, and especially in 17th Century Calvinists suggested) . . .”¹⁰
- d. **“Nowhere in the Bible is a Christian asked to examine either his faith or his life to find out if he is a Christian.** He is told only to look outside of himself to Christ alone for his assurance that he is a Christian. The Christian is, however, often told to examine his faith and life to see if he is walking in fellowship and in conformity to God’s commands.”¹¹

⁹ Paul A. Cedar, *James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude: The Communicator’s Commentary Series* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), page 213.

¹⁰ Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter: Word Biblical Commentary Series* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), page 190.

¹¹ Joseph C. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1992), page 288.

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2. A loving obedience in this pursuit of the person of Christ ultimately leads to an existence which is richly supplied or rewarded (Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:15).

[1 Corinthians 3:11-15](#) For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; (13) Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. (15) If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

- C. ***The State of our Destiny*** (1:10b, 11) “an everlasting kingdom” – inheritance (Cf. 1 Peter 1:4) ***The results of our spiritual growth: The assured stability in the present life (1:10b); future: The triumphant entry into the eternal kingdom (1:11).***

1. One that is eternal – not ending.
2. One that is still future – there is nothing to compare presently.
3. One that is belonging to our Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION:

SPIRITUAL GROWTH ILLUSTRATIONS:

In *The Last Days Newsletter*, Leonard Ravenhill told about a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village who walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked, "Were any great men born in this village?" The old man replied, "Nope, only babies." A frothy question brought a profound answer. There are no instant heroes--whether in this world or in the kingdom of God. Growth takes time, and as I Timothy 3:6 and 5:22 point out, even spiritual leadership must be earned.

[William C. Shereos.](#)

One spring our family was driving from Fort Lauderdale to Tampa, Florida. As far as the eye could see, orange trees were loaded with fruit. When we stopped for breakfast, I ordered orange juice with my eggs. "I'm sorry," the waitress said. "I can't bring you orange juice. Our machine is broken." At first I was dumbfounded. We were surrounded by millions of oranges, and I knew they had oranges in the kitchen--orange slices garnished our plates. What was the problem? No juice? Hardly! We were surrounded by thousands of gallons of juice. The problem was they had become dependent on a machine to get it. Christians are sometimes like that. They may be surrounded by Bibles in their homes, but if something should happen to the Sunday morning preaching service, they would have no nourishment for their souls. The problem is not a lack of spiritual food--but that many Christians haven't grown enough to know how to get it for themselves.

[Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*.](#)

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Though many of us have seen pictures of a huge eagle's nest high in the branches of a tree or in the crag of a cliff, few of us have gotten a glimpse inside. When a mother eagle builds her nest she starts with thorns, broken branches, sharp rocks, and a number of other items that seem entirely unsuitable for the project. But then she lines the nest with a thick padding of wool, feathers, and fur from animals she has killed, making it soft and comfortable for the eggs. By the time the growing birds reach flying age, the comfort of the nest and the luxury of free meals make them quite reluctant to leave. That's when the mother eagle begins "stirring up the nest." With her strong talons she begins pulling up the thick carpet of fur and feathers, bringing the sharp rocks and branches to the surface. As more of the bedding gets plucked up, the nest becomes more uncomfortable for the young eagles. Eventually, this and other urgings prompt the growing eagles to leave their once-comfortable abode and move on to more mature behavior.

Today in the Word, June 11, 1989.

I met a young man not long ago who dives for exotic fish for aquariums. He said one of the most popular aquarium fish is the shark. He explained that if you catch a small shark and confine it, it will stay a size proportionate to the aquarium. Sharks can be six inches long yet fully matured. But if you turn them loose in the ocean, they grow to their normal length of eight feet. That also happens to some Christians. I've seen some of the cutest little six-inch Christians who swim around in a little puddle. But if you put them into a larger arena--into the whole creation--only then can they become great.

Charles Simpson.

APPENDIX A

THE IMPACT OF JOY IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this day is* holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for *the joy of the LORD is your strength*.

Psalms 5:11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

Psalms 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fullness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

David is speaking of Christ and His resurrection:

“In thy presence” – Literally, *with thy face*

At thy right hand – in Heaven

“Where you are ... joy is complete.”

“pleasures evermore” – eternal joy of heaven.

Cf. Acts 2:25-28 also extend to verse 31.

Psalms 30:5 For his anger *endureth* but a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

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Psalms 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

Psalms 126:5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Acts 13:49-52 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. (50) But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. (51) But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. (52) And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

APPENDIX B

Jesus knew the anchor of this great joy!

WHAT WAS THE JOY OF JESUS

- Realizing and accomplishing **the will of the Father**.
- Death on the cross would mean **redemption and liberation for millions of souls**. Jesus proclaimed from the cross, "*It is Finished.*" Redemption was complete.
- His death and resurrection would supply **the gift of eternal life** for those who receive Him and believe on His name.
- The joy of **glorious triumph** over tenacious Satan, death and the grave.
- His path of humiliation would be lifted in exaltation to resurrection for multitudes of people.

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- He was providing the substance of victory and allowing others to overcome the throes of sin (i.e. the anguish, pain and the daily struggle with life-dominating sin). This substance is the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony: *“Truly this was the Son of God”* (the words of the centurion at the foot of the cross; *Matthew 27:54*).
- The shame of Jesus translates into eternal glory for the redeemed.
- The ultimate defeat of Satan.

[James 1:2-3](#) My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; [\(3\)](#) Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

[3 John 1:4](#) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

[Jude 1:24-25](#) Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, [\(25\)](#) To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.