

# INTRODUCTION AND 2 PET. 1:1-15

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## Introduction

### I. Authorship

A. The author is identified in 1:1 as Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.

1. Peter's given name at birth was the Aramaic name *Shim'on*, which is transliterated into Greek both as *Simōn* (Σίμων) and *Sumeōn* (Συμεών), which are transliterated into English as Simon and Simeon, respectively. *Sumeōn* seems to be the preferred form of transliteration in certain Jewish circles.

2. He was given the nickname "Rock" by the Lord Jesus to symbolize his new role as an apostle (Jn. 1:42; see also Mat. 16:18). That nickname probably was given in Aramaic. The Aramaic word for rock is *kêpā'*, which is transliterated into Greek as *Kēphas* (Κηφᾶς), which in turn is transliterated into English as Cephas.

3. The Greek word for rock is *petra*. Since *petra* is grammatically feminine in form, when applied to a man it becomes *petros*, which is transliterated into English as Peter. So Peter is the English *transliteration* of the Greek *translation* (*Petros*) of the Aramaic nickname (*kêpā'*) and Cephas is the English *transliteration* of the Greek *transliteration* (*Kēphas*) of the Aramaic nickname.

4. Peter is most often referred to in the N.T. simply as Peter, but sometimes in the Gospels and in 2 Pet. 1:1 his given name and his nickname are combined, yielding Simon (or Simeon - 2 Pet. 1:1) Peter.

5. It is not clear why Peter identified himself in the opening of 1 Peter simply as Peter and in 2 Peter as Simeon Peter. Since he was known by both Peter and Simon/Simeon Peter, I suspect this was merely a stylistic variation, as I might sign one letter to a congregation as "Ashby" and a later letter to the same group as "Ashby Camp" without intending any significance in the difference.

B. Further identification of the author as the apostle Peter is made by the personal reminiscences in 1:13-14 and 1:16-18.

1. 1:13-14 refers to the Lord's prediction to Peter, later recorded in Jn. 21:18-19, that he would be put to death. Peter apparently found himself in a situation of persecution under Nero in which he could see that he would soon be executed; the handwriting was on the wall that the Lord's earlier prophecy was soon to be realized.

2. 1:16-18 refers to having been an eyewitness to the Lord's transfiguration.

C. Despite this internal evidence, there were doubts in some quarters of the early church about the authenticity of 2 Peter based on differences in style and vocabulary between it and 1 Peter.

1. But as Gene Green states in *Jude & 2 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 144:

The evidence from the early centuries of the church in favor of the authenticity of 2 Peter is not robust, but neither is it sufficiently weak to preclude the possibility of Petrine authorship. The book was used early and widely and, although doubts did exist, the letter was never classified as spurious and eventually found its way into the major canons.

2. The fact many unorthodox writings that had been forged in Peter's name were circulating in the second and third centuries (the Apocalypse of Peter, the Gospel of Peter, the Acts of Peter, the Teaching of Peter, the Letter of Peter to Philip, the Letter of Peter to James, the Preaching of Peter, the Coptic Apocalypse of Peter), combined with the differences between 2 Peter and the more widely known and accepted 1 Peter, probably slowed development of the church consensus regarding 2 Peter's authenticity.

D. Though 2 Peter's authenticity came to be recognized church-wide, most modern scholars deny that Peter wrote it. Their reasons for doing so, however, seem insufficient. Current scholars who defend Peter's authorship include such notable recent commentators as Michael Green, Douglas Moo, Thomas Schreiner, and Gene Green as well as the following authors of recent New Testament introductions: Donald Guthrie; D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo; and Andreas Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles.

1. D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo conclude in *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 663:

The very fact that 2 Peter was accepted as a canonical book, then, presumes that the early Christians who made this decision were sure that Peter wrote it. . . .

We are therefore left with the choice of accepting the letter's *prima facie* claim to have been written by the apostle Peter or viewing it as a forgery hardly deserving of canonical status. Since the usual arguments against Petrine authorship are not finally conclusive, we prefer the former option.

2. As Gene Green summarizes the matter (p. 150):

The contemporary objections to Petrine authorship are not without their weaknesses, and we must not allow the volume of opinion to decide the case . . . The verdict of the early church was ambiguous at first, but the problem of literary style in comparison to 1 Peter accounts for the early doubts. The book was used early and, according to early witnesses, used widely. The book is decidedly dissimilar to later literature that went under the name of Peter, such as the Acts of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, the gnostic [Coptic] Apocalypse of Peter, and even the early-second-century Apocalypse of Peter. The concerns raised within the letter fit well within the struggles of the church of the first century, and we may reasonably affirm that Simeon Peter, the apostle, authored the book.

## II. Relationship to Jude

A. There are quite a few parallels between 2 Peter and Jude. They occur almost without exception in the same order in the letters, and many of them involve words or expressions found nowhere else in the Bible. These include (Carson and Moo, 655-656):

<u>Jude</u>	<u>2 Peter</u>
4 the false teachers' "condemnation" from the past	2:3
4 [they] "deny" the "Sovereign [and] Lord"	2:1
6 angels confined for judgment (note the rare word ζόφος [ <i>zophos</i> , "darkness"])	2:4
7 Sodom and Gomorrah as examples of judgment of gross evil	2:6
8 [they] "reject [Jude]/despise [2 Pet.] authority"	2:10
9 "the archangel Michael . . . did not . . . condemn him for slander" [Jude]/ "angels . . . do not heap abuse" [2 Pet.]	2:11
12 [the false teachers are] "blemishes"	2:13
12 "clouds without rain, blown along by the wind" [Jude]/ "springs without water and mists driven by a storm" [2 Pet.]	2:17
18 ungodly [Jude] desires/"scoffers" following their own evil [2 Pet.]	3:3

B. This similarity in order and rarity of language elsewhere in the Bible suggests that Jude borrowed from 2 Peter in composing Jude, or that Peter borrowed from Jude in composing 2 Peter, or that both Jude and Peter both borrowed from some other source in composing Jude and 2 Peter, respectively. This poses no threat to inspiration, as God is able to produce precisely what he wanted written through inspired authors using sources. Luke, for example, specifies in Lk. 1:1-3 that he researched matters in writing his Gospel. The process of inspiration is often more complex than an author taking dictation from God, but the end product is no less from God; he superintends the entire process.

1. The early Christians generally held that Jude borrowed from 2 Peter, whereas most modern scholars think that Peter borrowed from Jude. The matter cannot be decided with any confidence, but with Douglas Moo, I think a comparison of 2 Pet. 3:3 and Jude 17-18 offers some support for the idea that Jude borrowed from Peter.

2 Pet. 3:3 (ESV) – knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

Jude 17-18 (ESV) – <sup>17</sup> But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."

2. If Jude borrowed from 2 Peter, he was extracting points that were relevant to a similar false teaching with which he was dealing. If Peter borrowed from Jude, he was expanding on Jude in a way suitable to the situation his readers were facing.

### III. Date and Place of Writing

A. Reliable early tradition records that Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome between A.D. 64-66 during Emperor Nero's persecution of Christians.

B. 2 Peter was written shortly before Peter's execution (1:13-14), so it was almost certainly written from Rome around A.D. 64-66.

### IV. Destination and Audience

A. It is quite possible, perhaps even likely, that 2 Peter was sent to the same audience as 1 Peter. That is certainly the case if the allusion in 3:1 to a first letter is a reference to 1 Peter. That would mean it was addressed mainly to Gentile Christians in Asia Minor.

B. It is possible, however, that Peter in 3:1 is referring to a letter we no longer have, like Paul's letter to the Corinthians noted in 1 Cor. 5:9. In that event, we are left with little to go on in determining the destination.

1. Despite having been classified historically as a "catholic" (in the sense of universal) or "general" epistle, meaning a letter to the church at large, it clearly was written to a specific group of Christians who were being threatened by certain false teachers and who had received at least one of Paul's letters (3:15).

2. Given the uncertainty of the reference in 3:1, Moo states in *2 Peter, Jude*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 25: "The most we can say, then, is that the Christians Peter writes to probably lived in Asia Minor, Macedonia, or Greece, since these are the regions in which Paul ministered and to which he addressed his letters. For this same reason, we can also surmise that at least most of the Christians Peter addresses in the letter were Gentiles." A couple of statements in the letter also may hint that the audience was mainly Gentile, but they are subject to differing interpretations.

### V. Occasion

A. Peter's main reason for writing was to combat certain false teachers who had arisen from within the church and were threatening the particular community to which he was writing.

1. Though they are spoken of in the future tense in 2:1-3 and 3:3, it is clear that they already are present. They are already feasting with the church (2:13) and are seeking converts from among its members (2:14, 19). They have perverted Paul's teaching (3:15-16) and are ignoring fundamental Christian truth (3:5-7).

2. Peter probably refers to the false teachers in the future tense in 2:1-3 to remind his readers that the false teachers' presence is fulfillment of earlier prophetic warnings about the rise of such teachers (e.g., Mat. 7:15, 24:11; see also, Acts 20:29-30; Deut. 13:2-6) (Moo, 91-92; Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 327; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 104). Schreiner states (p. 327), "He reminded his hearers that the advent of the false teachers was foreknown beforehand and hence that God reigns even in such perilous times."

3. Another possibility raised by Gene Green is that the shifting tenses are rooted in the already-and-not-yet aspect of eschatology. He writes (p. 238-239):

Another approach is to recognize that, at times, grammatical form and meaning come apart, and this is true for the future indicative as other tenses [citing Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, With Reference to Tense & Mood* (1989), 403-39]. While Peter does use the future to refer to coming events, as those that will occur after his own death (1:12, 15) or eschatological events (1:11; 2:12; 3:10, 12), he may elsewhere use a present (2:3b). The oscillation between the present and the future in the letter in reference to the heretics appears to be rooted in the author's eschatology. The heretics will come in the last days (3:3-4), and their presence in the church is evidence that the last times have come (3:5-7). Peter's thought differs little from the oscillation between present and future in 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:1-9, 13; and 4:3-4.

B. The false teachers were doctrinally and morally corrupt. They denied a future coming of Christ in judgment (3:3-4 with 1:16-21) and engaged in all manner of sins of the flesh (2:1-3, 10-16, 18-20). Christianity had become for them a license to sin. Schreiner remarks (p. 280):

Instead of identifying the opponents precisely, we must be content, historically, with the limited information available to us regarding the false teachers. We know that they denied the parousia and that they were antinomians. Perhaps they drew upon Paul's letters to justify their libertinism. Their denial of the future coming of Christ probably was linked with the rejection of a future judgment.

## The Letter

### I. The Letter Opening (1:1-15)

A. Salutation and greeting (1:1-4) – *Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to the ones who have received a faith of equal privilege to us through [the] righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup>may grace and peace be multiplied to you in [the] knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, <sup>3</sup>seeing that his divine power has given to us everything for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and manifestation of divine might, <sup>4</sup>through which things he has given to us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you might become sharers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption in the world [caused] by lust.*

1. Peter identifies himself as "a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ." He had been specially chosen by the Lord to serve as one of his authoritative representatives and is writing to them in that capacity.

2. He addresses them as those "who have *received* a faith."<sup>1</sup> Their faith was not something they generated on their own. It had been given to them through the message that had been preached to them.

a. As Paul says in Rom. 10:17, "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." He says in 2 Thess. 2:14 that one is called to salvation through the gospel. Whenever a person hears the gospel, the message that God the Son became a human, that he was crucified for humanity's sins, and that he was raised to life and exalted to the highest place, God is offering that person faith. If one will accept the truth of this good news, if one will surrender to it, then one will have received the faith that is offered. That is what Peter's audience had done.

b. Peter does not state that their faith was given to them through the preaching of the gospel, but I think that idea is lurking in his statement that they received their faith *through the "righteousness" of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

(1) When righteousness is attributed to God in the OT, it frequently has reference to his saving activity. That is the form that his righteousness takes. E.g., in Isa. 46:13 God promises through the prophet (ESV): "I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay." Ps. 98:2 says (ESV), "The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations." See also, Ps. 35:26-28, 40:10, 51:14, 71:15-16, 71:24, 88:12, 119:123; Isa. 51:5-6, 51:8.

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<sup>1</sup> With the NAU, NRS, NIV, NJB, and TNIV, I opt for "received" rather than "obtained." NET note states: "The verb λαγχάνω (*lanchanō*) means 'obtain by lot,' 'receive.' A literal translation would put it in the active, but some of the richness of the term would thereby be lost. It is used in collocation with κλήρος (*klēros*, "lot") frequently enough in the LXX to suggest the connotation of reception of a gift, or in the least reception of something that one does not deserve."

(2) In Rom. 1:16 Paul applies this concept of God's righteousness, righteousness as his saving action, to the preaching of the gospel. He says the gospel is "the power of God for salvation" for in it the "righteousness of God" is being revealed. In the preaching of the gospel, God's saving action, his bringing people into a right relationship with himself, is taking place (being "revealed" in history).

(3) Similarly, I think Peter is saying that they received their faith through the "righteousness," the saving activity of God, which took place in the exercise of his power for salvation through the preaching of the gospel. As Moo says (p. 35), "'Righteousness' (*dikaiosyne*) has a broad range of meaning in the Bible. One of its meanings is 'justice' or 'fairness,' and some commentators think that this meaning fits very well here . . . But 'righteousness' normally refers to the act by which God puts sinners in a right relationship with him. And this seems to be the more likely meaning here."

3. Notice that the title "God and Savior" is applied to Jesus Christ. This is acknowledged by the vast majority of modern commentators and Greek grammarians (see also, Jn. 1:1, 1:18, 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8-9; 1 Jn. 5:20[?]). Here and elsewhere, Jesus is expressly acknowledged to be divine – he is God the Son – though normally God refers to God the Father (as in 1:2).

4. The faith they received is of equal privilege (or equal standing, NRSV) to "us." It is not clear to whom "us" refers. It could refer to the apostles or to Jewish Christians or to all other Christians generally. But whatever the scope of "us," the point seems to be that the recipients are not second-class citizens in the kingdom. Their faith receives all the blessings that attach to the faith of any others; no one is any more a child of God than they are.

5. Peter in v. 2 invokes blessings on those who have come to know God and Christ in their conversion to the Christian faith. It is only as Christians, as those who have come to and not renounced the knowledge of God and Jesus, that people will experience the blessings of God's grace and peace.

6. His prayer for grace and peace to be multiplied to them is made in light of how richly Christ (or God the Father) has already blessed Christians ("us"), which includes them.<sup>2</sup>

a. Those blessings include his providing by divine power everything needed for "a godly life" (the phrase "life and godliness" is probably a hendiadys).<sup>3</sup> As Christians, we have all we need for living a moral life, a life that

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<sup>2</sup> I take ὡς at the beginning of v. 3 as a connection with v. 2 and thus translate it "seeing that" (see Schreiner, 289 and proponents noted there).

<sup>3</sup> A hendiadys is the expression of a single idea by two nouns linked by a conjunction instead of a noun and its qualifier (e.g., "He came despite the rain and weather" rather than "He came despite the rainy weather"). It is a stylistic way of adding force to the statement. See <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/figures/H/hendiadys.htm>.

respects God's will, which resources include the Holy Spirit empowering our lives (see, Eph. 3:16; Rom. 8:12-13).

b. We received this divine assistance for godly living in our conversion to Christ, who called us to conversion by the glory and power manifested in his incarnation, ministry, and resurrection. Though ἀρετή commonly is translated here as "virtue," "goodness," or "excellence," Richard Bauckham states in *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 179, "In this context, ἀρετή is virtually synonymous with δόξα [glory], and denotes the manifestation of divine power." BDAG (p. 130) puts 2 Pet. 1:3 under the meaning "manifestation of divine power."

c. Through Christ's saving work, through the glory and power manifested in his incarnation, ministry, and resurrection, he also gave to us the "precious and very great promises."

(1) Peter does not here specify the promises he has in mind, but I think he is referring to the magnificent promise of Christ's return to consummate the kingdom of God and the promise of resurrection life in the perfect reality, the new heavens and new earth, that is associated with that return (e.g., Mat. 19:28, 25:31-46; Jn. 5:28-29).

(a) The word "promises" points to the promises of chapter 3. Specifically, it points to Peter's statement in 3:4 about the false teachers denying the "promise" of Christ's coming, his assurance in 3:9 that the Lord is not slow to fulfill that "promise" when viewed from God's perspective, and his reference in 3:13 to the "promise" of a new heavens and new earth. Indeed, the word translated "promises" in 1:4 (plural form of ἐπάγγελμα) is used only one other time in the entire Bible – in 2 Pet. 3:13.

(b) That the promises Peter has in mind relate to the eschaton, the eternal state, fits nicely with the statement that it is through these promises, meaning through their fulfillment, that they might become sharers of the divine nature. (The switch from "us" to "you" "is probably because [Peter] is already thinking of his intention to exhort his readers to moral effort (v 5) so that they may be sure of inheriting the promises." Bauckham, 179.)

[1] They (and we) will become sharers of the divine nature in the sense that in the resurrection they will resemble God in additional aspects of his being. When this reality is "heavenized," when it is given the ultimate makeover in conjunction with Christ's return, the God who is *inherently* immortal and incorruptible will bestow immortality and incorruptibility on them.

[a] As Paul makes clear (1 Cor. 15:42-54), this perishable and mortal body will at that time, by God's grace, be made imperishable and immortal. And at that time our sanctification, our transformation



toward the likeness of Christ, will be completed. As John says in 1 Jn. 3:2, when Christ appears we shall be like him; our transformation will include our being morally perfected.

[b] Peter wrote in 1 Pet. 1:3 that God had given them a new birth into a living hope, and then in 1 Pet. 1:4-5 he spelled out the substance of that hope. It is an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, and it is the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

[2] As Paul indicates in Rom. 8:20-23, the present material world is under a curse of corruption as the divine judgment on sin. Peter says that in their participating in the divine nature through the bestowal of resurrection life, they will, in the fullest and most complete sense, have escaped from the corruption in the world caused by lust. In other words, they will finally and fully have escaped the decay, transitoriness, and mortality that characterize the world as a result of sin that flowed from unbridled desire.

(c) That Peter's focus is on the eschaton, the eternal state, is further suggested by 1:5-11. Verse 5 is tied to the preceding by the opening "for this very reason," and the goal of the exhortation is said in v. 11 to be "entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

(d) The denial of Christ's consummating return by the false teachers is central to the letter, so it makes sense that Peter would focus on that.

(2) Christ gave the promise of his return, and the promise of the new heavens and new earth that are associated with that return, through his saving work – through the glory and power manifested in his incarnation, ministry, and resurrection – in the sense his saving work provided for the *fulfillment* or *realization* of those promises.

(a) Moo writes (p. 43), "Peter's language here is elliptical: In saying, 'through these he has given us his very great and precious promises,' he really means that through these attributes, Christ has provided for the *fulfillment* of these promises."

(b) As Paul indicates in Eph. 1:7-10, God's will for the management of the end of history is that heaven and earth will be united *in Christ*. Christ's redemptive work is the basis on which creation will be transformed, "heavenized," at his return.

B. Strive to grow in Christian character (1:5-11) – <sup>5</sup>*And also for this very reason, making every effort, supplement your faith with virtue; and virtue with knowledge; <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control; and self-control with perseverance; and perseverance with godliness; <sup>7</sup>and godliness with brotherly affection; and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup>For if these things are existing in you and increasing, they make [you] neither useless nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>9</sup>for the man in whom these*

*things are not present is blind by being near-sighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his former sins.* <sup>10</sup>*Therefore, brothers, be more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for by doing these things you will never stumble.* <sup>11</sup>*For in this way entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided to you.*

1. Peter prays in v. 3 for grace and peace to be multiplied to them, seeing how God has blessed them so richly already as expressed in vv. 3-4. Verses 5-7 are then based on the description of those blessings.

a. Because Christ has given us everything necessary for godly living and has given us the precious and very great promises, we must work to be the people God wants us to be, to be morally and ethically pure. We cannot continue live like the world from which we have been saved.

b. Note that this requires effort on our part. The Spirit transforms us; he produces various qualities in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23), but he does not do so apart from our laboring to develop them. Through applying ourselves we yield to the Spirit's molding, we make ourselves a hospitable environment for the growth of his fruit.

2. In this list of virtues, it is unlikely that Peter is indicating a particular order of development as though each virtue builds on the preceding one.

a. He is probably employing a conventional literary form called a sorites (suh-RYE-tees) (A . . . B, B . . . C, C . . . D, and so on) to provide a memorable summary of the kind of qualities that should characterize a Christian's life. Moo states (p. 44-45) (see also, Bauckham, 174-176; Schreiner, 297-298):

Some commentators, and especially popular writers and speakers, make much of the sequence of the steps here – as if we must make sure to add these virtues exactly in the order that Peters sets them forth. But this reading of the passage, while superficially convincing, fails to take account of the literary form Peter is using. Once we see that Peter is using a popular device of his day, we will recognize also that the order in which he puts these virtues may be somewhat haphazard. All of them are important; but we doubt that Peter intends to say that we must pursue them in the precise order he gives them.

b. The only two fixed items in the Christian adaptation of this literary form were the first (faith) and the last (love) (see Bauckham, 174-176). The entire Christian life is based on faith, and love summarizes our responsibilities to God and to man.

3. So as Christians, people of faith, we are to labor to have lives of:

a. virtue (or goodness) – This is the very general quality of "moral excellence." We might express it as doing the right thing, as acting in our particular

circumstances and situations as Christ would act. This kind of character shines in our society. We need to be working to be a Christlike boss, a Christlike employee, a Christlike customer, a Christlike friend, a Christlike neighbor, a Christlike student, a Christlike parent, a Christlike child, a Christlike spouse, etc.

b. knowledge – This refers, in Bauckham's words (p. 186; see also, Moo, 45), to "the wisdom and discernment which a Christian needs for a virtuous life and which is progressively acquired." The virtuous person must have his eyes open for traps, for situations in which the chance of compromise is heightened. We gain this knowledge through absorbing God's perspective, which we do through hearing and studying his word. We need to be spending time doing this.

c. self control – We must work to be masters of our own desires. This term was often, but not exclusively, associated with sexual restraint, something woefully lacking in the false teachers. We are to exercise self-discipline and restraint, not excuse our lack of it in the name of a disease, poverty, genetic inclinations, or childhood mistreatment

d. perseverance (endurance or steadfastness) – This "refers to courageous and steadfast endurance in the face of suffering or evil" (Bauckham, 186). We are called to nobly cope with the difficulties and injustices of this life, to refuse to be spiritually or emotionally defeated by them, because we trust in God and hope for the fulfillment of his promises. Christian faith is to be a power for living in the "real world."

e. godliness – This general term denotes respect for God's will and moral living which are an inseparable part of a proper attitude toward God. Peter said in 1:3 that God had given them everything necessary for godly living and here he commands them to exert themselves in making use of those resources. Pursuing godliness, moral living, is not optional. As Moo states (p. 46), "While God gives us the ability to become godly, it is our responsibility to use the power he has made available to us and actually work at becoming people who please God in every phase of life."

f. brotherly love (or brotherly kindness) – This refers to the love, the bond, that naturally exists among siblings. In the early church it was applied to "spiritual siblings," brothers and sisters in Christ. We are commanded to have toward fellow believers the kind of commitment that one ideally has toward one's physical brother or sister.

g. love – With the last virtue we are called to love beyond the circle of fellow believers, to have a sacrificial commitment to the welfare of all others. Moo writes (p. 46-47):

The first word he uses is *philadelphia*, "love of the brother," or, as NIV renders it, "brotherly kindness." In distinction from the second word, the familiar *agape*, *philadelphia* probably refers to love expressed among fellow Christians. *Agape*, then, is not a completely different love, but

embraces "love of the brethren" as one sphere of Christian love in its fullest scope – the Spirit-given act of the will by which we treat other people with active benevolence. Surely it is not by chance that love, the crown of Christian virtues (see 1 Cor. 13), comes at the climax of Peter's staircase of Christian qualities.

4. Growing in these things is what it means to be a productive and fruitful Christian. That is how they "keep you" from being useless and unfruitful. Verse 8 literally says: "For if these things are existing in you and increasing, they make [you] neither useless nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

5. The unfruitful Christian, the man without these ethical manifestations of faith, is blind in that he cannot see the implications of his salvation; he has forgotten the significance of his prior cleansing from sin. He is living as though his forgiveness means nothing to him, ignoring the desire of the one who showed him such great mercy.

6. We must exert effort to grow spiritually, and in doing so we are assured that we will never stumble from the path we are on, a path that leads to glory, to entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is danger in stagnating in our faith. If we are not growing, we become more vulnerable to the enemy.

C. Importance of such growth demands reminders (1:12-15) – <sup>12</sup>*Therefore, I will always be poised to remind you of these things though you know [them] and are firmly established in the truth that is present [with you].* <sup>13</sup>*And I think it right, as long as I am in this tent, to arouse you by a reminder,* <sup>14</sup>*knowing that the putting off of my tent is imminent, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.* <sup>15</sup>*And I will also be diligent to cause you always to have, after my departure, the memory of these things.*

1. Verse 12 begins with *Therefore* or *So*. Because spiritual growth is a safeguard against falling away from the faith and thus has relevance to entering the consummated kingdom, it is a matter of top priority. As I said, if we are not actively tending our faith, consciously seeking to be more like Jesus, we are in danger of our faith eroding. We must be growth conscious. We cannot settle into the comfort zone and decide we will put no more effort into becoming more Christlike.

2. This is so important, Peter says that as long as he is alive (in this tent) he is always going to remind them of these things and that he will do all he can to ensure that they remember them even after his impending death. We need to remind one another of the importance of spiritual growth, and we need to expose ourselves to the reminder by regularly assembling, by developing ties with other Christians, and by studying the word.

3. Peter knows from his situation that he is about to be executed, which is in keeping with the Lord's prophecy to him in Jn. 21:18-19 that when he was old he would be put to death for his faith. Notice his attitude toward death, even knowing that it would be a violent one. According to Eusebius, the ancient church historian (late-third/early-fourth centuries), Peter was crucified in Rome.