

Grace to Growth

What motivates you? We all have different drives that push us forward — for some, it's a carrot, and for others, it's a stick. Whether we're trying to get through school, become a better spouse or parent, or even aspiring to grow our hobby into a career, motivation is a huge factor in whether we'll stick with it.

But no task is worth our time and attention more than spiritual growth. So, what motivates you toward maturity? This year at Monte Vista, we're looking at 2nd Peter 1 for guidance on growing. But before we start those conversations, it's helpful to ensure we're doing all this for the right reason.

The Big Idea: God's incredible grace motivates us to become spiritually mature.

What God Does

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." (2 Peter 1:3-4)

He Equips Us for Excellence in every area of our life. It's God's gracious gift to us that we know Jesus — a topic Peter bookends this letter with (2 Peter 1:2; 3:18). The more we know, the more we grow. And everything about Christ's life shows us the way to live ours. We can shine like glorious lights in this world, following a higher standard when we follow Jesus.

He Preciously Promises something more profound and meaningful than anything we could ever know. While many scholars argue about these promises, it's not hard to think about how we're waiting for a new heaven and earth, where righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:11-13)! That alone would be enough. But his promises also include a deepening relationship with him here on earth.

Because **He Calls Us Closer** to himself as we escape the world's passions. Just think that we can be partakers of God's divine nature. What even does that even mean? We live with holiness as God does. We're more like him than we are like the world. We've escaped the world's clutches and been freed from their passions (2 Peter 2:20). It doesn't mean we've "arrived" or that there's no more danger, but it does provide us security as we're part of God's children.

How We Respond

"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 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." (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Because of what God has done, we "make every effort" to grow.

We live with a faithful conviction that Jesus is God's Son. Therefore, we strive for excellence in our virtuous way of living. We not only want to know more about Jesus, but we want to be known by him. Our thoughts, words, and actions are always before us to remain controlled. We're immovable and steadfast, no matter what comes our way! We want to be more like our Father each day, in holiness and godliness. Our brother's and sisters' needs lead us to take action out of love for them. Everything we do starts from the inner quality of love for God first and then for our neighbor.

Basically, we're becoming more like God and less like the world. And the more these virtues increase, the more effective we are as Christ's servants.

What Awaits Us

"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." (2 Peter 1:9-11)

As we grow closer to Jesus, we look forward to seeing ourselves more clearly (2 Peter 1:9). Being like Christ gives us confidence about where we're headed (2 Peter 1:10). When our Savior leads us, we walk with stability (2 Peter 1:10). As our relationship with Jesus grows, the doors to our heavenly home are open wide (2 Peter 1:11)!

Conclusion

Don't set out on a path to grow because you want to make your parents proud or because you think people will be disappointed with you if you don't. Don't even reach maturity because you think it will improve your life. We work so hard to become more mature because of God's gracious gift to know Jesus, our hope for an eternal home, and our deepening relationship with God, our Savior! May God bless you this year in growing deeper in your devotion to him.