

Life Group Notes 9/11/2022
Mark Warren Peter's Epistles Week 6

If these notes are useful to you, and you've enjoyed them, or if you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the bar. Please be obedient and enjoy!

CROWD BREAKER Where were you when you heard the news of 9/11? How vivid is the memory? What other traumatic event in history struck you like this? What has changed since 9/11?

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark has raised this week, 9/11. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

Look up Philippians 2:12: [12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.](#) **How do you do that?**

Look at verse 13. On Whom do we rely? [13 For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose...](#) **How comforting is it that God gives both the desire and the determination to do the right thing? Do you have a testimony?** Mark says, "Paul is telling us that there is something more we need to do, beyond giving our life to Jesus." **What do you think it is?**

A Greeting from Peter ([1 Peter 1:1-2](#))

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, **“Why, “Simon Peter,” and not just “Simon” or “Peter”? Any ideas?”**

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: **How does Peter say our faith compares to that of the apostles? Is there a hierarchy of faith, one more precious than another?**

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. **If God tells Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you,” what happens when that grace is “multiplied to you?” What does Peter say will “multiply” that faith? So, then, how do you get to know God and Jesus our Lord? How is peace multiplied? Mark says, “We, as followers of God, need to model what it is to live anxiety-free.” What does that look like? Do you know anyone who is an excellent role model?**

Partakers of the Divine Nature

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. **Read this verse again. Explain what it means. What does the word “everything” mean? What is lacking? Notice again, how is this “everything” obtained? This is the second time the knowledge of God, i.e., knowing God personally, is key. (See Scribe’s note on “gnosis”, “knowing,” below)** **4** Through these He has given us His precious and magnificent promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, now that you have escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. **Note: Peter says God’s power gives Him license to make promises. These promises, if we believe them, make us partakers of His nature. What does that do for us? What are the implications of this? What if we do not believe the promises? What if we are skeptical? What does doubt do?** Mark says, “This journey we are on is to make us become Christlike.” **What does Peter say we possess to help us in this journey?**

Peter says, we have “escaped from the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” **How are you doing? Why does this statement renew lost hope?**

Pastor says, “OK, so ‘Work out your salvation with fear and trembling...here it is. Are you ready for your workout.’ **What does it tell you when Peter and Paul build their epistles on the same theme?**

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith virtue; “Mark says, “It says, ‘Supplement your faith with virtue (excellence).’ Your faith is a free gift. You do not need to work for your faith.” **Why is this important? Where does Paul say faith come from? If faith comes from hearing the Word of God, and each promise is in the Word, how is each promise, then, a free gift because you have believed? How is it free? Is there a cost to believing?**

Pastor Mark asks, “What does it mean to be virtuous? Does it just mean to be excellent people?” Answer him. He adds, “I think it means to be excellent in the gifts that God has given us...God has uniquely put gifts inside of you that He wants you to use in an excellent way.” What do you think?

and to virtue, knowledge; Mark says, “Knowledge in what? Do we have to go back to school?” (Scribe’s note: This is not an accident that this is the *third* time Peter has talked about our “knowledge.” Again, see below.) Mark says, “The knowledge here is the knowledge of Jesus Christ. I think He wants you to pursue Him in greater ways. To know Him.” **How? What steps can be taken? Why does Mark say Life Groups are so important? Do you agree?**

and to knowledge, self-control. “I think sometimes as Christians we say, ‘Well the Holy Spirit will help me.’ And He does, but sometimes we say, ‘But the Holy Spirit has to do all the work.’” **Do you agree? If self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, how does self-control become evidence of the Spirit in you? What do you do if you are lacking self-control? (What did Peter say comes before? How do you think adding virtue and knowledge would help?)**

and to self-control, perseverance (steadfastness); **Define it. What does it mean? (See below.)**

and to perseverance, godliness; **Define it. What does it mean? (See below.) Mark says, “If you want to know what godliness is, study who Jesus is. See how He conducted Himself, how He cared for people, how He disciplined Himself.” Is there any other way? Does this make sense?**

and to godliness, brotherly kindness; **See where our relationship with others is at the end of the process. Is that important?**

and to brotherly kindness, love. **See Scribe’s note below on these two kinds of love.**

For if you possess these qualities and continue to grow in them, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. “So, you can’t go on ‘autopilot cruise control.’” **Why not? What is the key phrase that guarantees fruit? Why is perfection not the key? What is the only requirement to life and godliness to keep us from being ineffective and unproductive? How is this an amazing encouragement?**

Once again, knowledge of Jesus Christ is key. Third mention. Why is personal knowledge of Jesus Christ so important? How does knowing Him well make you more like Him?

⁹But whoever lacks these traits is nearsighted to the point of blindness, having forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. **Do you have a testimony of times of frustration? Can you see what happened to restrain your growth?**

Look up 2 Timothy 3: ¹But understand this: In the last days terrible times will come. ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, ⁴traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. Turn away from such as these! **How do these embody the of blindness Peter describes above in his epistle? How do they describe this day and hour?**

Look at Romans 1: ²⁸Furthermore, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, He gave them up to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They invent new forms of evil; they disobey their parents. ³¹They are senseless, faithless, heartless, merciless.

³²Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things are worthy of death, they not only continue to do these things, but also approve of those who practice them. **How dangerous are these days we live in? Describe the contrast between those who are growing as Peter describes growth, and those who are not. How does hope begin when we acknowledge God and begin the quest for faith? How does the concept of growth change everything?**

¹⁰Therefore, brothers, strive to make your calling and election sure. **Look at this promise. Why "strive?" What does it mean to "make your calling and election sure?" Have you ever doubted? What impact does doubt have on fruitfulness? What conquered your doubt?**

For if you practice these things, you will never stumble, **Use your own words...What does the promise say? What does it mean to "practice." Can you see how this might make you a "partaker in the divine nature" not in perfection of virtue but in growth in that direction?**

Look up Romans 8:29 ²⁹For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also

justified; those He justified, He also glorified. **How is being “predestined to be conformed to the image...” of Jesus like being a “partaker of His divine nature?” How does this encourage us to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling?” How does God work to cause us to both will and do? James says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” Why is it a good thing to pursue Jesus Christ?** Pastor Mark says, “Your main purpose as a follower of Jesus is to look like Jesus. **Think about that. Do you see Peter is saying this? How much greater is the quest, knowing the promised result?**

11and you will receive a lavish reception into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **What is the promise here? Why is this encouraging? What is the key to this reception? (I’ll help: Perfection or growth?)**

12Therefore I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are established in the truth you now have. **13**I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of my body, **14**because I know that this tent will soon be laid aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. **15**And I will make every effort to ensure that after my departure, you will be able to recall these things at all times. **What do you think: Is this the first time Peter has said these words to these people? Is it the first time you’re hearing them? Why is it so important to “refresh our memory?” What happens if we forget? What happens when we remember How does the “truth we now have” become greater? ? When did Jesus make clear to Peter that he would soon “leave his tent behind? What did Peter leave us when he “left his tent?” How fruitful was the effort Peter made? How fresh is that gift? How does Peter’s effort define “fruitful?”**

Eyewitnesses of His Majesty

(Matthew 17:1–13; Mark 9:1–13; Luke 9:28–36)

16For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. **17**For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” **18**And we ourselves heard this voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. **When did this happen to Peter? Who was with him? What did they actually see? Why does being an eyewitness secure credibility? When Jesus told us we would be His witnesses, what can we expect to see?**

19We also have the word of the prophets as confirmed beyond doubt. **How do personal eyewitness experiences and the promises of the prophets work together to cement our relationships in the knowledge of God?**

And you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **How does growth in the**

above virtues relate to the dawning of the day? Is light growing brighter for you? Can you explain?

20Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation. **21**For no such prophecy was ever brought forth by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. **Have you ever heard someone "explain" the Bible in a way that made no sense? What do you do with that kind of "interpretation." How do you know if it is not true? Look at 1 John 2: 27**And as for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But just as His TRUE and genuine anointing teaches you about all things, so remain in Him as you have been taught. **Who does John say your teacher is? Do you trust Him to teach you? Do you trust him to help you discern between Truth and "Meh. not-so-much?" What do you need to "add" to avoid accepting falsehood? Why does Mark say, "It is really important for you to be in your Bibles?"**

For those who prayed with Pastor Mark for the first time, and received Jesus, what is their next step?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's notes:

On the steps to increasing faith:

When Peter laid out the process of increasing faith, he made a list that is the best revelation of process in the entire scripture. Here is a quick study of the steps:

Peter begins by reviewing all the promises of God to which we are heirs, making us "partakers of the divine nature," a breathtaking revelation. Again, Peter is corroborating what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:20 "For as many as they be, the promises of God, in Him they are "yes;" therefore also through Him is our "Amen" spoken to the glory of God through us." Thus, Paul gives us license to pray each and every promise in scripture as heirs to each promise.

This is why, since we now believe, we need to take steps that guarantee growth:

He said, "add to your faith virtue;" "Faith" in Greek is "*pistis*." It is not an esoteric word that only the wise understand. It simply acknowledges that we believe. Like Abraham, the father of our faith, we take God at His Word. And having believed, we "lavishly supply" virtue. That is, unstinting effort. "Virtue" is the Greek word "*arete*." It means "moral goodness," or "virtue, excellence, moral excellence." Once we believe, the next step to beginning a new life is to stop being a jerk and to start behaving better. **What does that mean in your own**

words? What does the Bible say should change first, once we begin to say we believe?

“and to virtue, knowledge;” “Knowledge” is “*gnosis*.” This is “knowledge that is gleaned by first-hand, personal experience.” It connects theory to application, but it is never defined by theory or anyone else’s experience. **Apply this to the knowledge of God that Peter opened his epistle with, whereby grace is multiplied to us. Explain why virtue comes before knowledge in beginning our new quest? Which of the two is easier to display immediately and convincingly to our neighbors, virtue or knowledge? If we stumble in either, virtue or knowledge, which could potentially cause more damage?**

“and to knowledge, self-control;” “Self-control” is “*engkrateia*.” It’s variously translated “self-control,” or “self-restraint,” or “self-mastery,” or “continence.” “*En*,” the prefix, implies “in the sphere of” and “*kratos*” means “dominion.” It is “control proceeding out from within oneself, but not by oneself.” It is the last mentioned of the fruit of the Spirit. **Can you explain how greater control proceeds from greater acquaintance with God Himself?**

“and to self-control, perseverance;” “Perseverance” is “*hypomone*” defined as “a remaining behind, a patient enduring.” The prefix “*hypo-*” means under. “*Hypoglycemic*” is low blood glucose. “*Mone*” means to remain/to stay. Hence, “To remain under the challenges/despite the challenges” being faced. **Why is self-control essential to perseverance?**

“and to perseverance, godliness;” The next step is “godliness,” “*eusebeia*” in the Greek. Strong’s defines it as “piety (towards God), godliness, devotion.” The prefix “*eu-*” means good or well, and the root “*seboma*” means to venerate or pay homage to. It reflects “someone’s inner response to the things of God which reveals itself in godly reverence, and naturally reflects itself in the same.” Hence, it is not a reflection of God in this sense, but a perpetual acknowledgement of God’s ever-presence in one’s attitude and demeanor. We behave as we would if we were standing in God’s throne room and before His throne. **Explain why this attitude proceeds from perseverance.**

“and to godliness, brotherly kindness;” In Greek there are three words that are translated “love” in English. In this passage, Peter keys in on two of them: “*phileo*” and “*agape*.” “*Phileo*” finds its root in “*philos*,” “an associate or a prized friend” and “*adelphos*” which means brother. It is the affection one has for a dear brother. **In the progression Peter is describing, what comes before we even look at our relationship with others? Why is that?**

“and to brotherly kindness, love.” This is the word “*agape*,” It is the John 3:16 kind of love. It is the love for which there is none greater than to lay down one’s soul (the actual Greek “*psyche*” translated “life” in most translations) for a friend (*philos*). It is the “new” commandment given to the Church in Jesus final address in the gospel of John, that we love one another as Jesus loved us. Note that Peter had the contrast driven home in his last encounter with Jesus at the lakeside in Galilee. **Look up John 21: 15** When they had finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “**Simon son of John, do you love (*agape*--love) Me more than these?**” “Yes, Lord,” he answered, “You know I love (*phileo*—like) You.”

Jesus replied, “**Feed My lambs.**”

16 Jesus asked a second time, “**Simon son of John, do you love (*agape*—love) Me?**” “Yes, Lord,” he answered, “You know I love (*phileo*--like) You.”

Jesus told him, “**Shepherd My sheep.**”

17 Jesus asked a third time, “**Simon son of John, do you love (*phileo*—like) Me?**” Peter was deeply hurt that Jesus had asked him a third time, “**Do you love (*phileo*—like) Me?**” **Notice how Jesus is highlighting the process of growth... There is always a starting point. “Do you really like me...there is still something you can do.”**

“Lord, You know all things,” he replied. “You know I love (*phileo*—like) You.”

Jesus said to him, “**Feed My sheep. How is it clear that Peter never forgot this lesson? Why is fervent obedience to the new commandment to *agape* love our neighbor the last on the list in the process of faith?**”

It is essential to remember that Peter did not imply perfection at any point, but growth in each: “**8** For if you **possess** these qualities and **continue to grow in them**, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** But whoever lacks these traits is nearsighted to the point of blindness, having forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.” **Notice these are the keys to effective and fruitful ministry. Explain.**

If one has “forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins,” has one lost his salvation? What must that one do?