

- Welcome back folks. It's good to see everybody. I would ask that everyone turn to 2 Peter the 1st Chapter. As we continue our journey through the last letter pinned in the New Testament.
 - When we last left off we studied (in depth) Peter's list of cascading virtues.
 - These were a list of virtues that Peter said every believer should pursue.
- Now let me say this before moving forward. That list is not an exhaustive list.
 - Rather it's one list – of a few different lists – that are mentioned in the New Testament.
 - And all those lists contain a list of characteristics and or virtues, that we (as children of God) are supposed to work towards – in our pursuit of perfect sanctification.
 - And perfect sanctification is much a kin to a perfect round of golf.
 - It's something that exists and it's something we should constantly be trying to pursue – but ultimately it's not attainable – at least this side of Heaven.
- But having said that, even though this effort may seem futile or a wasted effort! I get it, because honestly, what's the point of trying to achieve something that's not attainable – right?
 - Well if that is where your mind goes when you begin thinking about this topic, I would like to let you know, that it's okay to feel somewhat that way, and if I can be honest, I personally have felt that way many times throughout my Christian walk! I have thought the same thing.
 - But having said that I want to give you the reason why every believer should strive for “perfect sanctification” – regardless of how achievable it is.
- You see, anytime we glorify God in our life – we receive something in return. What is it that we receive?
 - We receive – peace – satisfaction – comfort, and sense of accomplishment.
 - Which is all delivered by a mechanism or the act of knowing we have pleased our father that is in Heaven.
 - Same feeling we receive when we please our earthly fathers and or mothers – or anyone who we are accountable to for that matter, even a boss!
 - We also receive something else.
 - We receive a sense of internal satisfaction – a satisfaction - that allows us to feel content – happy – and fulfilled. Which in turn – improves our life.
- But not in the worldly or earthly sense – but rather in a spiritual sense – causing us a sense of overwhelming joy to well up inside us – all by way of giving us a sense of belonging to the family of God – (not to mention God Himself).
 - What I am talking about is finding happiness in fulfilling your calling.
 - And what is your calling? Well Jesus told us in Matthew 28:16-20 when he said The Great Commission:

Matt. 28:16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which

Jesus had designated.

Matt. 28:17 When they saw Him, they worshiped *Him*; but some were doubtful.

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Matt. 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Matt. 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

- So, there it is – your calling. If you are a believer (if you are saved), everyone is in full time ministry!
 - And being in ministry isn’t just the act of telling people about Jesus.
 - It's living our lives in a way that God uses us to draw men to Himself.
- Which leads me to a question. Have you personally ever invested in another’s person’s life?
 - Meaning, have you ever taken someone under your wing and mentored them?
 - Walked with them through all their problems?
 - Have you put others first – above yourself?
 - Or is it always pretty much about you!
 - Your wants - Your desires - Your aggravation - Your earthly ambitions.
 - If you have ever mentored someone – then you know the personal feeling of satisfaction, you get when investing in someone else.
 - You see, after we answer God's call to become a believer, every believer is immediately “commissioned”.
 - Which is why it’s called the “Great Commission”.
 - Which simply means we have all been given a duty!
 - We are all commissioned and called to begin participating in the work of God.
- It’s that simple – and no-one is exempt, and the desire to fulfill that calling is a by-product that begins with an understanding of the salvation God has given you!
 - Meaning an understanding of what God did for you, and when that is realized internally for the believer – it creates a sense of appreciation or better said, a sense of Gratitude toward God!
 - Which then, should lead you into a place where you want to draw closer to Him!
 - And this process of drawing closer to God is called “Sanctification”!
 - And even though, we will never achieve nor complete “perfect sanctification”, because it’s simply not achievable, we still must strive to achieve it or as Paul describes it in 1 Cor. 9:24-26, we should all run the race and keep our eye on the prize. Listen to Paul’s words:

1 Cor. 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

1 Cor. 9:25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

1 Cor. 9:26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

1 Cor. 9:27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

- The main sentences we should all pay close attention to in these verses are in verse 24 – when he says, Run in such a way that you may win!
 - That’s a novel concept – it reminds me of the Oak Barrel race in Lynchburg. It’s a 5K and it comes right in front of my driveway – and let me tell you, most of these people aren’t running a race in effort to win! (Expound)
 - Paul is saying – if you are saved, then work at it.
 - Give it everything you have.
 - Pursue Sanctification and Godliness.
 - And do it in a way – that you are intentionally trying to earn your crown in heaven.
 - In other words, don’t simply be another sidelined Christian, one that sits over in the corner as an absent participant – one who does nothing with the Gift that God has given them!
- Next, verse 25 – Paul says, we must understand what we are trying to achieve.
 - Meaning – Our pursuit of godliness and sanctification has zero to do with anything this earth has to offer and everything to do with what God has waiting on us in Heaven.
 - Which Paul references as a wreath or crown!
 - Paul’s words tell us something. That our work here on earth for our Lord matters immensely in the next life to come, and this life is simply your proving ground or earning ground!
- And then he says in verse 27:

1 Cor. 9:27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

- Paul’s words are an essential writing of my ministry. We are to discipline our bodies, meaning we are to pray and study, spending time in God’s Word.
 - So that, we can go through the process of Sanctification and mature as believers, and then emerge from the other side of that process in a way that does not disqualify me.

- Meaning – we cannot mentor someone or even tell someone about Christ if we have put zero effort in – as it relates to growing to and becoming more like Christ.
 - And why?
 - Because of the possibility of the inverse of what Paul just said, which was that we might be disqualified.
- Meaning – what we do in the name of Christ will not apply towards our wreath or crown in Heaven.
- And even worse than that – it is also possible it could have the opposite effect on the individual person hearing your words.
 - In fact, I would tell you – you could cause more damage than Good!
- Moving on. So, Peter gave us a list of cascading virtues – ones we all should pursue, and as I said, those virtues don't cover the entire gambit, but they are a good start.
 - And now Peter finishes the chapter with the verses 12-15, and here is what he says:

2 Peter 1:12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*.

2 Peter 1:13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

2 Peter 1:14 knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

2 Peter 1:15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

- What a great set of verses, and of course – you know me – I say that about all the scriptures. But it's true.
 - Peter begins with the word “therefore”, and when we see that word, we should automatically ask – “what's the therefore, there for”?
 - When Peter or anyone else for that matter uses the word “therefore”, it means considering everything I just told you, you should now do this!
 - And sure enough – Peter does exactly that when he says, “Therefore, I will always be ready”
 - In other words, because of what I just told you I will always be ready.
 - But in this case the question is, Ready for what?
 - Ready to remind you of everything I just told you.
 - And then he says, and I will continue doing this even though you already know what I am telling you!
 - I find that interesting. It sounds like my wife, mother or grandmother you know what I mean?
 - When they tell you something over and over again. Even though they know they

have told you 100 times before.

- Well – evidently this is an important part of the process – so much so, that Peter felt the need to consistently remind them.
 - Which tells me, when I hear something over and over again in scripture, I shouldn't get an attitude about it.
 - An attitude like I might get toward my wife or mother or grandmother: You know, where I roll my eyes and say, "Okay I get it – I get!"
- Instead, we must embrace those reminders and understand it's important that we are continually reminded, and then also be thankful about it – knowing that God knows us better than we know ourselves – and He knows what we need even before we need it.
 - Next, he says this in verse 13:

2 Peter 1:13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

- Once again, he says its important – matter a fact, I consider it right, as long as I live – to stir you up by way of reminder.
 - Two things really quick about this verse:
 - One – evidently, we need reminding.
 - And two – that reminder should “stir us up”.
 - If it doesn't – that's not good.
 - In other words, if you are not convicted by what you hear coming from God's Holy Manuscript, that is not good!
 - And that is simply a fact of scripture.
 - A fact – that cannot be denied!
 - And why is that?
 - Because God's Word – are the Words of God!
 - Which will always stir up His Children!
- Moving on, verse 14&15 – and I am going to close here today, and let you out early for Mother's Day!
 - Peter says:

2 Peter 1:14 knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

2 Peter 1:15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

- In these verses Peter gives us a truth of life.

- One that I don't think any of us do a very good job of grasping!
- Peter reminds us that we are all going to die! No one lives forever!
 - This is an important reality for us to embrace – and this is an issue, because people in their minds – actually (if not consciously but subconsciously) – “somewhat” believe they may live forever.
 - Especially, if modern medicine finds new ways to extend our lives.
- Now you may say, well – that's ridiculous – I can't believe anyone really believes that. I am here to tell you, we all somewhat “subconsciously” believe it.
 - And proof of this shows up in the way we carry out our existence on this planet.
 - We are always planning and figuring, and many people go as far as putting it in writing.
 - But if not in writing – it's certainly top of all our minds, and that's okay because we are all human!
- Just think about it. Generally, our plans, revolve around this life – not the life after (For the most part) – most of us are planning retirement.
 - Planning for this – thinking to ourselves – well if I tried this health remedy or exercised this many times per week or consumed some herb – which gave me some type of benefit– I might have “x” amount of time left on the earth!
 - I remember a few months back, I was talking to guy and he told me that he had done a lot of research on life longevity!
 - And how that, based on His new diet, if he were correct, he could live to be 120 plus years old.
 - This man was not a believer; therefore, he did not have, what Paul calls “The Blessed Hope”.
 - Which is the hope and guarantee every believer has received from God.
 - A hope that says, this earth will soon be gone, but we will have eternity in Heaven forever!
- So – instead of the Blessed Hope that you and I have, his hope was placed in this new diet.
 - And by the way just a side bar, who wants to live to 120?
 - Someone who has nothing to look forward to in the next life, that's who!
 - I don't know why anyone would want to live that long – I mean seriously, your body is wearing out!
 - Even if you could live that long, you'd be lucky to still be moving. Therefore – what would be the point!
- Anyways, as Christians, we know we don't live forever. So we should do what Paul and Peter do; Live this life for God and do it to its fullest.
 - I didn't say go hide out and disconnect yourself from the world.
 - No – we should live it to the fullest as we work and live out our lives in the highways and byways of life!

- One more thing, I am not saying don't be healthy. I am saying – forecasting your life expectancy is a futile effort because our lives are on a countdown timer, and some of us have a little time left on this planet, and others not so much.
- And once again – my proof of this finds its origin in God's Word. Specifically when the writer of Hebrews says, "Our death is an appointment!"

Hebrews 9:27 **It's appointed man once to die and then the judgement**

- Pressing on let's finish up with verse 15.

2 Peter 1:15 **And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.**

- Verse 15 is telling us the whole purpose or reason we are to be reminded is so that when you are alone, confused, drifting far way, that you will think back and recall what you have been taught.
 - There is an ole saying in leadership and business.
 - That it takes 21 days to form a habit and 21 days to break a habit.
 - I am not sure if this is true. It's just what they say. However, what I can say is that for you as an individual believer to become filled up with God in the Holy Spirit, you must read, and study, and pray, and be consistently reminded of Gods Words.
 - If not, you will fade away.
- Peter says, I have told you these things – reminded you of these things – and I have done so, even though you already know them.
 - All so that when I am gone, you will be able to call these to mind!
 - Guys, if we weren't careful, we could blow right by this because on the surface, we would say, okay – he has constantly reminded us so we don't forget, I got it – so let's move on.
 - And if you think that, you would be making a big mistake!
- What Peter is actually saying is, and I am going to paraphrase here: In your Christian life you will experience many ups and down's. And the enemy will be constantly tempting you.
 - And not only you – but your kids – your husband and your wife.
 - And when the enemy comes calling, and you're all alone, many times the only thing that will get you through it is a recalling of Gods Word!
- The word call by the way isn't what it says in the Greek translation.
 - The Greek says – "a lasting remembrance to make" which means it isn't just something to remember.
 - No – this memory makes an edible mark, so much so that it gives you strength when

you are weak, and it gives you hope when there is no hope!

- That is the sense here.
 - God's Word isn't simply something to read.
 - It is something to ingest and marinate on.
 - It's something that gets inside of you and really messes you up.
 - And it's something – you should never forget, and we should carry it with us all the days of our lives!
- It's our lifeline – in troubled waters.
- It's anti-depressant in depressing times.
- It's joy – when there is nothing to be joyful about.
 - And all this is made available for every believer if we simply call on what we have learned.
 - Especially when there seems to be no Hope!
- I'll leave you with one of my favorite verses in all of scripture, and I think this verse best describes what Peter and Paul and all the other great men in the Bible are trying to convey about consuming God's Word. We read in Hebrews 4:12.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- What Heb. 4:12 is telling us is that God's Word isn't just another ancient document of antiquity. It is God in Word Form!
 - And therefore, when the individual believer studies it correctly, it possesses supernatural power that can transform your life!
 - There is no other document that can say the same, and for that reason Peter says, I remind you – so that you may recall!
 - Amen – Amen!!