

GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

GROWING IN FAITH: EXPLORING 2 PETER · 2 PETER 3:14-18 · DECEMBER 17, 2023 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

Being and Becoming the Beloved (2 Peter 3:14, 17)

- Hearing of Jesus the Beloved (1:17)
- Becoming aware of God's love for us (1:3-4)
- Hearing our name (3:1, 8, 14, 17)

Make Every Effort (2 Peter 3:14)

- Make every effort to grow in the character of Christ (1:5-9)
- Make every effort to confirm your calling and election (1:10-11)
- Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him (3:14)
- God's patience (3:15a)

An Aside About the Apostle Paul (2 Peter 3:15-16)

- Paul writes with God-given wisdom (3:15)
- Paul writes consistently on these themes (3:16a)
- Paul writes things that can be hard to understand (3:16b)

Final Words (2 Peter 3:17-18)

- A warning to be on guard (3:17)
- An encouragement to grow (3:18a)
- Glory to God now and forever (3:18b)

Making It Real: Looking Back & Looking Forward

- Looking Back
- Looking Forward

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever encountered someone promising what they could not deliver? How did you deal with it?
2. This week we conclude our series "Growing in Faith" by looking at 2 Peter 3:14-18. Whether you are on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to

speak to you, and then read that passage aloud.

3. This passage begins with the author inviting his readers to action based on what they are looking forward to or waiting for. Based on the verses beforehand what is the "this" in verse 14 that they are anticipating?
4. What is this anticipation supposed to propel his readers on toward for action in verse 14?
5. What do you think it looks like to live in the way described by verse 14? What might you find in other parts of the letter that help us understand this?
6. In verses 15-16, Peter refers to the apostle Paul and his writings. How does Peter describe Paul and his writings?
7. *Background: While debate exists about whether Peter references a specific letter of Paul, based on the locality of the recipients of 1 Peter, it is possible these could be the letters we know as Galatians, Colossians, or Ephesians. However, it is more likely that Peter is referring to Paul's teaching on the return of Christ, which Peter has been speaking about and is a theme found in many Pauline letters.*
8. The last two verses offer a warning and an encouragement. What is the warning found in verse 17? What is the encouragement found in verse 18?
9. As you reflect on our journey through 2 Peter, what are some of the biggest takeaways or growth edges God has been speaking to you about through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone during the next few days.

DIG DEEPER:

- Memorize 2 Peter 3:14 or 3:18
- As we draw near to the end of the year, take some time to reflect back on the previous year on ways you've experienced God's goodness. Write down specific things you are thankful for and offer thanks to God for those things. Also, take some time to look forward to the coming year, asking God how He wants you to grow in your faith. Write down specific ways you can grow and set up a plan to implement this in your life for the coming year.
- Explore one of the following books about spiritual growth:
 - Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*
 - Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*
 - Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*