

Epistle of Second Peter III

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Today we're going to finish off the section where he gives us the things that we need to do, that we need to grow in, that we need to apply in our lives.

Let's come to 2-Peter 1:5 and we'll just a review a little bit and then we're going to get into the section where it shows that in the Old Testament there were prophecies that the disciples would finish off the Word of God. We will see the evidence in the New Testament where Peter and Paul and John were the ones who did the canonization. If you understand the Word of God, you understand how God works, and you can realize that the true canonization had to be done by the apostles. God would not leave it to a paganized, philosophized group of theologians who just converted, supposedly, from paganism to Christianity in the 300s_{A.D.} to canonize the Bible.

The true fact is that the apostles canonized the New Testament, and when it came time for them to canonize it in the 300s and the 400s in the Orthodox and the Catholic Church, all they did was go ahead and put their stamp of approval on the greatest number of extant manuscripts, which is the one that we have here. So, when you understand that, then you'll realize that God is the One Who inspired the apostles to canonize the New Testament, because it is the Word of God and it was inspired by Him, written by the apostles, and preserved for us, as we will see.

2-Peter 1:5: "And for this very reason also, having applied all *your* diligence besides..."—so we're to be diligent.

Verse 10: "For this reason, brethren... [after he sums everything all up] ...be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure..."—so *diligence* and *faithfulness* and *watchfulness* are all a part of Christian growth and understanding.

Back to v 5: "...for this very reason also, having applied all *your* diligence besides, add to your faith... [It's a little awkward to translate it literally in the Greek, as we saw with the Interlinear, which *in—add in*. It's *putting within*; and actually it's *growing from within that way*.] ...add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, **the love of God**" (vs 5-7). And the reason I translated it that way, because that's the way it is in the Greek, as we saw last time.

Let's just cover a few points concerning *the love*; because it's very important for us to

understand. However, we have done quite extensively a series of that when we were in 1st, 2nd & 3rd John, *the love of God*—and all that is there, because that's very important.

We're going to see with the writings of Peter, when you also understand that the book of Mark was written under Peter's tutelage, because Mark was the one who assisted Peter; as well as we will see a little later on he assisted Paul in helping get all the epistles together to canonize the New Testament. You will see that love was not a strong point with Peter. I think, toward the end of his life, he learned it more and more; but he certainly was not as strong as John; certainly not as strong as Paul.

1-Peter 4:8: "But above all, have fervent love among yourselves... [The *King James* says *charity*; but it actually is love. The Greek is 'agape' and most places where *charity* is used in the New Testament, it should be the Greek word 'agape'—which should be translated *love*.] ...because love will cover a multitude of sins." Now, why does *love* 'cover a multitude of sins'? *It understands* the problems and difficulties of human nature! When there is repentance—of course, if there's not repentance, it doesn't mean to whitewash, to cover up, to stonewall, to deny, to lie about. That's not the kind of covering it's talking about. It's talking about 'to cover a multitude of sin' because it ***understands!***

Matthew 18 gives us a very good lesson in repentance and acceptance upon repentance, as far as what someone does or doesn't do, or their lack thereof. This all has to do with 'love covers a multitude of sins'—***will cover it!*** Sometimes there are sins that need to be exposed, and Jesus talks about those. He said, 'That which is spoken in secret shall be shouted from the housetop.' You have to discern the difference between the two. Sometimes they have to be exposed because they're not repented of. And, of course, there are many sins, which effect many people in an overt way, such as we have just covered here with now the advent of Christmas in some Churches of God. That's a sin that should be exposed and 'shouted from the housetop' as wrong. But in dealing with each other in brotherly love:

We'll connect these two because Peter is the one who wrote the Second Epistle of Peter. Matthew 18:21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?'.... [that seems reasonable; but that does not cover *human nature*. Do you have sins that you have sinned more than seven times? *Yes!* Now he doesn't tell us the

timeframe involved, but let's just consider this as being a day.] ...Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven'" (vs 21-22). So then, that's how *love covers a multitude of sin*.

Let's also look at it this way—John 3:16—to show that the love of God is that which does cover sin. Since God is love, this all applies to it, and God is eventually going to cover all the sins of the world. They'll either be repented of and put under the blood of Christ; or as we know by the Scriptures, there will be the death of the wicked, which will be burned up in the lake of fire; but they will all be taken care of.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world... [He loves us; He loved the world; He still loves it and He's going to save it. Even though He let's humankind go the way that they do, God is greater than all the sins that human beings can do. God is able to work it out.] ...that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (vs 16-17). Which takes an awful lot of forgiveness to do so—correct? *Yes, it does!* So, that's how *love covers a multitude of sin*. And notice how then, John expands upon what Peter wrote.

I think perhaps maybe we're one of the few churches that does this: 1-Peter 5:13: "The *Church* in Babylon, chosen together with you, greets you, *as does* Mark, my son.... [the one who wrote the book of Mark; and as we will see a little later, he is the one who came and helped Paul; and he is the one who brought the parchments and brought the different things so that the New Testament could be finished.] ...Greet one another with a kiss of love...." (vs 13-14).

I think we do that in this church more than any other church. Some churches get so formal that everything is Mr. & Mrs. and it's a formal handshake and you don't dare show any emotion to each other; and I think that's totally wrong. This shows what kind of love we are to have.

Let's go to 2-Corinthians 6, and this is important because this shows us how that through everything that we go through—and there are many things that we go through, just like the Apostle Paul. I tell you my-oh-my-oh-my did he go through a lot. And I think all the suffering and all the difficulty that Paul went through taught him an awful lot about the love of God; and taught him an awful lot about how God really has the capacity to forgive upon repentance—and He does!

2-Corinthians 6:1: "We then, working together *with Him*, are also exhorting you not to

receive the grace of God in vain." The grace of God is not a license to sin. The grace of God is to cover sin—upon repentance. The grace of God is to give you a standing with God

- that gives you the fruits of His Spirit
- that gives you His love
- that gives you His understanding
- that gives you the things that God wants you to have to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ

That's all a part of the *grace of God*. and he says that you 'receive it not in vain.'

Verse 2: "(For He says, 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in a day of salvation...' Today is not the only day of salvation. If you look around at the world, you'd have to conclude that if this were the *only day* of salvation, surely God was losing, because Satan is winning hands down at this time. So, it is a day of salvation; and that is for us—we're called out.

"...I have helped you.' Behold, now *is* an acceptable time.... [that's for us] ...Behold, now *is the* day of salvation.)" (v 2)—and that is for us. It's not the day of salvation for the world, but for us.

Then he talks about his ministry, v 3: "We do not give offense to anyone in anything, so that the ministry may not be blamed; but in everything we are confirming ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings" (vs 3-5).

This doesn't sound like very many people I know today. Does it sound like very many people you know today? You think you've had it tough as a Christian? My, my, we haven't even started—have we? I mean, we're not even up to bat, let alone take any strikes, or run to first base.

Verse 6: "In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in *the* Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned." Through all of this every one of these things, developed into Paul:

- the *love of God*
- the patience
- the pureness
- the knowledge
- and all of these things]

Verse 7: "In *the* Word of Truth, in *the* power of God; through the armor of righteousness on the right hand and *on the* left, through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report, as deceivers and true... [So Paul had a lot of people going around saying things to him.] ...as unknown and well known; as dying, but behold, we are alive; as chastened, but not put to death; as sorrowful, but

always rejoicing; as poor, but enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. O *you* Corinthians! Our mouths have been opened to you, and our hearts have been enlarged *toward you*. You are not suppressed by us, but you are restricted in your own hearts” (vs 7-12). In other words, he is telling them that he is so concerned for them that he is just constrained within himself.

Now notice what he says here, v 14: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common?... [Isn’t that a true saying today? Isn’t this a true, living thing today?] ...And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness?... [You can’t bring in a little bit of darkness and expect the light of God to continue, because the darkness will take over; because you’re yielding to Satan.] ...And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For **you are a temple of the living God...**” (vs 14-16).

Will there be a temple during the Millennium? *The answer is, no, there will not be!* There will not be a Levitical priesthood during the Millennium. We will be the kings and priests. There will be no animal sacrifices. If Christ is here, why should there be animal sacrifices? At the Feast of Tabernacles I go through the whole section there in Ezek. 40-47; and you will see that there are some things that project out in prophecy to the Millennium and out beyond. But what you’re really dealing with in Ezek. 40-47 is the second temple and the preaching of the Gospel coming out from the second temple and the beginning of the Church.

Verse 16: “And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For **you are a temple of the living God**, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, **come out from the midst of them and be separate,**’ says *the Lord...*” (vs 16-17). Not go join the world; that’s what Paul is saying here. Love does not give the right to go out and join the world; that’s what he’s saying.

“...‘and touch not *the* unclean... [let alone eat it] ...and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the Lord Almighty*” (vs 17-18). Here we see the whole scope of Christianity reduced down into one chapter in 2-Cor. 6, in covering everything that we will experience as Christians. I’m convinced before the end is over, we’re going to experience many of these things that he had to go through, without a doubt we will.

Let’s go to 1-Timothy, the fourth chapter, and we’ll see some instructions here concerning the

love of God—some of the things that we didn’t cover before. 1-Timothy 4:12: “Do not allow anyone to despise your youth; but be an example to the believers—in word, in conduct, in love, in Spirit, in faith *and* in purity.” This doesn’t mean he didn’t have his difficulties and didn’t have his problems—he certainly did, all of us do, we can attest to that.

Here’s another admonition to Timothy by the Apostle Paul, 2-Timothy 2:22: “But flee youthful lusts; and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace with those who are calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.... [Then here’s a good admonition, because you can surely be drug down with these—we know that, don’t we?]: ...But foolish and ignorant speculations reject, knowing that they engender arguments” (vs 22-23).

And boy, that sure can be. I tell you, ***there’s been more argument over what the Bible means and not means down through history than any other book in the world!***

- Do people argue over Shakespeare? *No!*
- Do people argue over Homer’s writing, *The Odyssey* and the *Iliad*? *No!*
- Do they argue over, necessarily, the book of Koran?

I haven’t heard of any martyrdoms because there was argument over the book of Koran—I suppose there have been. But there sure is over the Bible— isn’t there? It’s interesting, ‘foolish and unlearned questions’ that defines the kind. Some people ask questions just to ask questions to cause problems; they don’t ask questions to learn, to know and to understand. So we’re to avoid those.

2-Timothy 3:10: “But you have closely followed my doctrine [teachings], conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions *and* sufferings—such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, *and* in Lystra. *You know* what sort of persecutions I endured... [he was left for dead; they got the crowds all riled up; had a big riot; went after Paul, stoned him, left him for dead; and he got up and walked away from that and came back preaching because]; ...and the Lord delivered me out of them all. And indeed, everyone who desires to live godly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted. But wicked men and imposters shall become worse and worse, deceiving *others* and being deceived *themselves*” (vs 10-13).

Isn’t that true? That’s exactly what’s happening! One deception leads to another deception. One of the things here is: Is it wrong for Christians to innovate in their worship of God? As then saying, ‘Well now, if we worship God without the pagan trappings of Christmas, then surely it’s all right; reasoning themselves totally astray! So, they

wax worse and worse. We're seeing these things happen right before our eyes.

Let's go to Colossians 3, and we'll finish the section in admonitions that we had that Peter wrote that we have to use to grow in grace and knowledge and add the different characteristics of the Holy Spirit in growth and understanding. Here are the things that we are to put on. This is difficult. This is high-level Christian growth, right here.

Colossians 3:12: "Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another... [That's why 'love covers a multitude of sins.'] ...if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*. and above all these things... [This is the *crowning glory*; this is what Paul was talking about; this is what Peter was talking about; this is why Paul said that there's faith, there's hope and love—and love is the greatest.] ...**put on love, which is the bond of perfection**" (vs 12-14).

How can you be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect? *Right here*:

- by putting on the love of God
- by letting God's Spirit be in you
- by letting God's Spirit lead you and guide you
- by standing the grace of God so that these things will grow in you

Let's come back to 2-Peter, the first chapter, and let's continue on from here and we're going to see some very interesting things—and then we will get into how the New Testament was canonized by the apostles—put together and finalized by them in a way that many people don't understand.

2-Peter 1:8: "For *if* these things are actually existing and abounding in you..."

- the *faith*
- the *virtue*
- the *knowledge*
- the *self-control*
- the *endurance*
- the *Godliness*
- the *brotherly love*
- and *love*

They're actually existing and abounding in you.

What's another term, a more modern terminology for *in you*? What is one thing that they have learned and they've known for a long time, but there's a modern phrase for it? *It's called, internalization*. Internalization means that *you understand the rules and regulations* out here; *you understand, as it were, the laws of God*, out here; but to be *internalized* then means *they are written in our*

heart and mind. So, he's saying the same thing here, that if these characteristics in vs 5, 6 & 7

"...are actually existing and abounding in you, they *will* cause you *to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.... [In other words, you're going to fulfill one of the very last things he said that *grow in the grace and the knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ.] ...But the one in whom these things are not present is *spiritually* blind—so short-sighted *that* he has forgotten that he was purified from his old sins" (vs 8-9).

Let's see what happens when they do not have these things in them; when they use the name of Christ for profit; when they use the name of Christ and combine it with Belial.

2-Peter 2:18 "For *while* they are speaking bombastic words of vanity, they are alluring through the lusts of the flesh—by granting indulgences to sin—those who truly were escaping from those who live in deception." Here's a whole group of people that were half-way out of the world, coming to the knowledge and understanding of the Truth, and someone comes along with some deception and begins telling them—through 'alluring to the lusts of the flesh'—the things that they were given in license to do.

Verse 19: "While promising them freedom, they themselves are actually the slaves of corruption; because by whom anyone has been overcome..." If you have something that is totally overcome you, you have been defeated by that, and you need to have the triumph of Christ to overcome that.

"...he is also being held in bondage. For if, after having escaped the moral defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in *corruptions* and are overcome by them, the final end is worse than the beginning" (vs 19-20). That is actually what we're seeing happening before our very eyes.

"For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing *it*, to turn back from the Holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. but the pronouncement *found* in the true proverb has happened to them: The dog has returned to *eat* his own vomit; and the sow *that was* washed *has returned* to her wallowing place in *the filthy mire*" (vs 21-22). And we're going to see some of that happen within the very Church of God. It was happening right then during Peter's time; so he gave this warning before he gets in to chapter two, he says:

2-Peter 1:9: "But the one in whom these things are not present is *spiritually* blind..." Are

those who are blind and naked and destitute? *Yes! the Laodiceans!* We're not going to pick on them. There are others who are blind.

Let's go to John, the ninth chapter; because Jesus gave quite a parable—lesson—the whole chapter is about a man who was healed from blindness that he had been born with. It shows everything that took place in this account. We'll just cover the first couple of verses in the chapter, and then we will pick up some of the verses at the end of the chapter for the lesson.

John 9:1: "Now *as Jesus was* passing by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (vs 1-2). That's really not a very good question—is it? *No, because* how could someone in the womb sin, to be born blind?

Verse 3: "Jesus answered, 'Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; rather, *this blindness came* so that the works of God might be manifested in him.'" There are some people that God deliberately caused to be born in a handicap situation to show His power and glory. This blind man was one particular one to teach a lesson that has been written in the Scriptures for us down to this day.

Verse 4: "I must work the works of Him Who sent Me while it is still day. When *the* night comes, no one is able to work. As long as I am in the world, I am *the* light of the world' After saying these things, He spat *on the* ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to the eyes of the blind man" (vs 4-6).

Now that's something—isn't it? You think about that! How would you like to have that done to you. Of course, you couldn't see it being done, but the disciples and apostles saw it. He reached down and got some dust and spit in it—probably had to spit quite a bit in it and mix it up and make a little paste and put it over the man's eyes. I imagine the disciples thought, 'Boy, this is really not very smart.' Well, it was, I think, in relationship to their dumb question. So He did this. So, he went to the Pool of Shilom and washed and came back.

Could it be that he had no eyes? *I do not know!* So, you're saying that the dust was part of that which was a miraculous creation of the eyes when he washed. I don't know. We'll just have to leave that as a question mark.

He went into the synagogue and the Pharisees said, 'Were you blind? Who healed you? And then he told them who healed him. They didn't believe it, so they asked the parents: 'Is this your son?' *Yes, this is our son.* 'Well, how does he see?' *Don't know, ask him, he's of age.* 'Well, we're going

to kick you out of the synagogue if you don't tell us the truth, because we know this man is a sinner.' So the lesson is:

Here's what the man told them after he said, v 31: "This is truly an amazing thing... [here he is instructing the Pharisees] ...that you do not know where He has come from, yet He has opened my eyes. Now we know that God does not hear sinners. But if anyone is God-fearing and is doing His will, He hears him. From the beginning of the world it has never been heard of that anyone has opened *the* eyes of *one* who was born blind. If this *man* were not from God, He could do nothing" (vs 31-33). Yet, the Pharisees said he's a sinner.

Verse 34: "They answered and said to him, 'You were born wholly in sin, and you are teaching us?'..." Here's a miracle that had never occurred—anything like it—from the foundation of the world; and what were the scribes and Pharisees more interested in than the fact that he could see and the miracle that was done? *They were interested in condemning Jesus and retaining their power and their political authority!* That's what they were concerned with.

"...And they cast him out.... [This sounds like some experience, that people have had, that we know.] ...Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He found him, He said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of God?' He answered and said, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?' And Jesus said to him, 'You have seen Him, and He is the One Who is even now speaking to you.' Then he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshiped Him" (vs 34-38).

If He was not God in the flesh, He wouldn't have allowed him to worship Him; because we go back in the book of Revelation where then John bowed down to an angel and the angel said, 'Don't do this, I am one of your fellow-servants and of your brethren—worship God.' So here he worshiped Him.

Verse 39: "And Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world...' It says in another place that He didn't come for judgment. He didn't come for judgment for those who repent, because their sins will be forgiven—but, He came for judgment for those who won't repent.

Here's why: "...so that those who do not see might see... [just like this blind man; of low status; of no consequence; obviously, of no education worthwhile considering by the Pharisees.] ...and those who see might become blind.' And those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things; and they said to Him, 'Are we also blind?'" (vs 39-40). That's the whole lesson. You go to some of these 'experts'—as Dr. Martin has pointed out many times concerning doctors. If you went up to a doctor

and told him, ‘You are totally wrong and you’re only here for the money’—you would be thrown out. You may even be arrested and thrown in jail if you get vociferous enough about it. They claim they see, just like the Pharisees; just like the religionists—they claim they see.

Verse 41: “Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore, your sin remains”

So, when you come to this point of spiritual blindness, then you’re going to be in deep, deep trouble with Christ. Why? *Because you won’t see your sins and you won’t repent of it.* It’s not the person who’s sinning and repenting who’s in trouble. It’s the person who’s sinning and refuses to recognize sin; and hence therefore, does not repent. That’s the one that’s in trouble, because they say, ‘We see.’ Therefore, their sin remains.

That’s why Peter wrote, but if these things are not present, 2-Peter 1:10: “For this reason, brethren, **be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure...**” We have here twice: *diligence*—right? Use all diligence; and here be *more diligence than all diligence*. “...**to make your calling and election sure...**”

It’s not a matter that we can guarantee it; it’s a matter that God has given us a tremendous amount of responsibility in our part to make sure that our calling and election is sure. We have things that we have to do. We are responsible and God is making sure that we follow through with that.

“...because *if* you are doing these things... [*doing* in the Greek means *practicing*] ...you will never stumble at any time. For in this way, you will be richly granted an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (vs 10-11)—and, of course, we know that is at the resurrection.

Now, let’s go ahead and amplify a little bit concerning *calling* and *election*. *Calling and election* are very interesting. No one can call himself. Let’s look at this calling. How is one called? Can one present himself forward and make God call him? Then who is doing whose will? No one is going to force God. God is the One Who is calling. This is a very important thing that we need to go back and review and rehearse and understand.

John 6:44—and here’s what Jesus said: “**No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...**” You can’t go to God on your own; God has to call you. Just living in the world, just living in the righteousness of the letter of the law, that’s a little bit different story. But we’re talking about *spiritual*, where you receive the Spirit of God. Since God the Father is the One Who gives the Holy Spirit, God is the One Who has to draw.

God is the One Who has to put it in the mind to desire God’s way.

“...and I will raise him up at the last day.... [This is the shortest summation of the whole process of the Gospel, right there!] ...It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’....” (vs 44-45). That is everyone that is called. That’s how we really learn. How do you understand the Bible and know the things in the Bible? *It’s the Word of God*, and if it’s the Word of God, Who’s teaching you? *God is!* If the Spirit of God is in you and God is leading you to understand His Word, Who’s teaching you? *God is!*

“...Therefore, everyone who has heard... [and you have to answer that call] ...from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me. No one has seen the Father except He Who is from God; He has seen the Father” (vs 45-46)—and He’s talking about Himself.

In John 6:65 He reiterates it again. To even come to the knowledge of the understanding of the Truth, it is a gift of God; and if that gift is rejected, then you’re all in trouble.

- The Holy Spirit is a gift of God
- The calling is a gift of God
- The Son of God as our sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins is a gift of God

And in the final analysis, as we have said before, ***we have nothing that we didn’t receive.***

(go to the next track)

Let’s read again, John 6:65—because we need to understand very thoroughly, very profoundly, in order to understand about how to make our calling and election sure, what Jesus really said here: “...For this reason, I have said to you, **no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him from My Father.**” So God is the One Who has to do it. God is the One Who has to call you (as we saw in v 44); you cannot come to Jesus Christ unless the Father gives you the ability to do it. So this is the way that God is going to insure that the calling—the ones He calls and really has His Spirit—are going to know and they are going to understand.

I realize that these are very basic Scriptures, which we should all know; yet, nevertheless, these are very foundational for us to understand about our calling lest we get lifted up in our own vanity and our own goodness and our own works, and think that we’re doing something. Remember, there is no work of any law that can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And also reiterate that there is no work of any law that can substitute for the imputation given to you as a free gift of the righteousness of Christ. ***No man can make himself just before God***—only God can through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

John 14:6—after Thomas said he didn't know where He [Christ] was going: “Jesus said to him, ‘**I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.**’” What we see there and we know is that God the Father has to start it; Jesus Christ has to be involved in it; and then we come to Christ because the Father makes it possible and He's the One Who does the initial calling in the first place—and this is the calling that we are to make sure of.

Let's go to Hebrews, the third chapter. Let's carry this on a little bit further here in the book of Hebrews, because we need to understand what kind of calling this is. This is not a calling to a religion, to make yourself better in the world. This is a calling directly from God the Father, the greatest Being in the universe. And please understand this: that He and He alone is fit to sit in the universe's throne. No one else is. Therefore, when you really comprehend that then you will understand the sin of Satan where he was going to exalt himself above ‘the stars of God and sit in the throne in the sides of the north.’

Hebrews 3:1: “Because of this, Holy brethren...” That comes from the word *sanctify*—that's what makes you Holy. If you have the Holy Spirit; if you have the Holy calling; if you have Christ *in you* you are Holy brethren.

“...partakers of *the* heavenly calling...” (v 1). This calling is tremendous! This calling is fantastic! And *calling* comes from the Greek ‘klesis’—which means (as we've been studying) *that God has to do it*. That's why it's a heavenly calling; *the Father has to do it*.

“...consider the Apostle and High Priest of *the faith* we profess—Jesus Christ, Who was faithful to Him Who appointed Him, even as Moses *was* in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of greater glory than Moses, even as He Who built the house has so much more honor than the house *itself*” (vs 1-3). Christ is the One Who is building the house; and actually the owner of the house—He has more honor than the house.

Verse 6: “But on the other hand, Christ *was faithful as the Son* over His own house; Whose house we are, if we are truly holding fast... [Tying in with the same wording of the Apostle Peter: *make your calling and election sure*. You have to hold fast]: ...the confidence... [and that confidence comes from the power of God's Spirit] ...and rejoicing of the hope firm to *the end*.”

Now let's see Who's the Beginner and the Finisher; the Author of our faith. This is important to understand because this fits right in with the calling that God has given.

Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, *since* we are

surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entraps us; *and* let us run the race set before us with endurance... [that is also *making your calling and election sure*.] ...having *our minds* fixed on **Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of our faith**...” (vs 1-2). How many times have we read in the Scriptures where Jesus said, ‘I'm the Beginning and I am the End; I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending.’

Here it is He's: “...the Beginner and Finisher of our faith...” (v 2). He's the One Who alone can make it possible. That's why we need to look to Him. We need not look to a man. We need not look to an organization. All of those things become idols when you do that; because men will disappoint you and organizations will disappoint you; but Christ will never!

“...Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin” (vs 2-4).

We're also in a time of correction; and this correction is coming in the form of a vomiting session—that's what's happening in the Churches of God today—so that they *can* ‘make their calling and election sure’ if they would only strive to do so.

Verse 5 is very important: “And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord, nor grow weary of being reproved by Him; for whom *the* Lord loves... [constant, current love; present tense] ...He chastens, and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives’... [all of those are present tense] ...If you endure chastening, God is dealing with you as *a Father* with *His* sons.... [and that's what's so important, brethren. We need to understand that the end of our calling is to be the very sons of God.] ...For who is the son whom *the* Father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all [everyone; every single one of us] are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons” (vs 5-8).

There it is! It's very important for us to understand that God also wants us to ‘make our calling and election sure.’ He is the One Who called us. He is the One Who makes it possible.

Now let's see where we are if we could look at it this way, in the history of the Church today. Let's go to 1-Corinthians, the first chapter—then we will go to Matthew 22. Let's look at what the Bible

says about our calling. We know this verse and we know it well; but we read this into the record, because it's talking about our calling—and it's something that God alone does.

1-Corinthians 1:23: “But we proclaim Christ crucified. To *the Jews it is* a cause of offense... [and the stone is going to fall on them and grind them to pieces] ...and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; but to those who are called...” (vs 23-24). Notice the word *calling*; selected of God. You are personally, individually selected by God the Father.

“...—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom” (v 24). You don't need the wisdom of philosophy; you don't need the power of demonism; you don't need the power of personality; you don't need the brains of a genius—***you need Christ!*** Why?

Verse 25: “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God... [if He has any] ...is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren... [God is doing a marvelous and magnificent and a wonderful thing; but it's going to astound the world!] ...that *there are* not many who are wise... [and that means only just a very few] ...according to the flesh, not many who are powerful... [that means those who have ability, political strength, powerful in the world—and I would have to say, I don't know of any] ...not many who are high-born *among you*” (vs 25-26)—those of noble birth or a princely line.

Verse 27: “Rather, God has chosen... [*Chosen* is the verb for calling, which is the noun. Chosen means *selected*.] ...the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world... [Every once and a while you've probably asked: Why has God called me? *Well, you're reading it, right here.*] ...and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing... [the world looks out and we don't even exist—we amount to nothing to them] ...—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are... [and here's the reason] ...**so that no flesh might glory in His presence**.... [No one is going to glory in His presence.] ...But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; so that, as it is written, ‘The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*’” (vs 27-31).

Let's look at what happens when you have those who think that they are called, or think they are mighty, or think they deserve it—and what happens to them. Let's go to Matthew 22, and perhaps maybe we'll get a good analysis also of where we are in the world today in relationship to

the Church.

Matthew 22:1: “And again Jesus answered and spoke to them in parables, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is compared to a man *who was* a king, who made a wedding feast for his son... [this is a type of the Church and Jesus Christ] ...and sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast; but they refused to come. Afterwards he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Say to those who have been invited, ‘Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and the fatted beasts are killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding feast.’ But they paid no attention and went away, one to his farm, and another to his business. And the rest, after seizing his servants, insulted and killed *them*’” (vs 1-6).

Do we not see the same thing in the Church of God today? How many were called that are now beginning to reject it? Is not God rejecting all of the organizational establishment that was there?—the lands? the buildings? the leaders? *Because they are treating the calling lightly!* In fact, they are speaking blasphemously of the Truth—which we will cover when we come to 2-Pet. 2—beginning to say that the way of the world is better; Christmas is better; Easter is better; all of these things are better; and Satan's interpretation of the Word of God we love more than God's interpretation of the Word of God. What did they do? *They kicked a lot of people out;* they disfellowshipped them; they killed them *spiritually* so to speak. *Yes, they did!* But there's something else that God is doing, which also lays a burden upon us, as well.

Verse 7: “Now, when the king heard *it*, he became angry; and he sent his armies *and* destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city” That's exactly what He did to Jerusalem; that's exactly what He's doing to the Churches of God that rise in power and arrogance and reject the Truth of God. He's going to take away what they have. Is that not what Jesus said concerning the talents? *Yes, He did!* It'll be taken and ‘given to those who bring forth fruit thereof.’ It's going to be destroyed, for the fact that we can understand that God is not looking to physical things.

God is not looking to a physical temple. He destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 70_{A.D.}—did He not? Why? What is Jesus looking for? What did He say that the true worshipers of God would be doing in worshipping God? Jesus said, ***‘The hour is coming, and now is, when the Father will seek those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. For God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth!’*** And that's what God wants.

Verse 8: “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast indeed is ready, but those who were

invited were not worthy... [Why were they not worthy? *Because they counted the calling as a light thing.*] ...therefore, go into the well-traveled highways, and invite all that you find to the wedding feast." And after going out into the highways, those servants brought together everyone that they found, both good and evil; and the wedding feast was filled with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, *he* noticed a man there who was not dressed in proper attire for *the* wedding feast" (vs 8-11).

This also tells us that once you are called, you are responsible for dressing yourself; and if you put on Christ and you put on the righteousness of God; and if you have the Spirit of God, then you know that the wedding garment is the *righteousness of the saints* as we're told in Rev. 19:7-8. So we have to be ready. There are things that we need to do. What is one of the problems with the Laodiceans—if we will just remember that we are living in that age? *They are poor and miserable and blind and naked*—they are not clothed!

Verse 12: "And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you enter here without a garment *fit* for the wedding feast?' But he had no answer." He was speechless. He didn't know what to say. Because, the truth is, when you stand before God at the Judgment Seat, which is says 'all shall come before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ and shall give an account for himself.' No one else is going to do it; and you won't have anything to say.

Verse 13: "Then the king said to the servants, "Bind his hands and feet, *and* take him away, and cast *him* into the outer darkness." There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few *are* chosen" (vs 13-14). Why are few chosen? *Because few repent, and you have to be always in an attitude of yieldedness and tenderheartedness to God*—which is in effect an attitude of repentance. You have that once you really understand the great and tremendous and fantastic calling. Once you comprehend and realize that

- it was God the Father Who personally called you
- it is God the Father Who led you to Christ
- that it is God the Father Who is doing these things for you.

Then He begins to open your mind to the understanding of *His will*, rather than *your will*.

Let's go to Ephesians, the first chapter, because this is very important for us to understand; very important for us to realize. *God has given us, with His Spirit, the understanding of His own personal will and pleasure.* Some of these verses, you will notice in these series, we will come back and cross paths quite a few times. And the reason is because these tell us and give us the greatest impact

of what God is doing.

Ephesians 1:4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself..." God the Father is the One Who has done it. Remember, we are studying out of 2-Pet. 1, that we are to make our calling and our election sure—*That becomes our responsibility.* But God will help us in it. God has to do it in us; but we have got to *choose* that; we have got to *choose* to yield to God.

"...before *the* foundation of *the* world... [that was God's plan all along, just like Christ was 'slain before the foundation of the world'—but yet, He wasn't slain until He was crucified.] ...in order that we might be Holy and blameless... [and *without blame* means there is no sin at all, because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and that's the way God the Father views us and looks at us.] ...before Him in love."

That's why there can never be enough of the preaching of the love of God, because that's the only thing that's going to get us there. That is the only thing that going to bring us the knowledge and the truth and the understanding of God and His way—is with the love of God.

Notice, this is our destiny, v 5: "Having predestinated us for sonship... [*not* 'adoption' (KJV) because we are God the Father's own children by receiving the begetting of the Holy Spirit.] ...to Himself through Jesus Christ... [it is for the Family of God to present us to Christ as His bride.] ...according to the good pleasure of His own will." That's what *the calling* is all about.

Now let's see a couple of other verses which are so important for us to realize and understand. This is where we need to be, brethren. This is what we need to be doing, always; so that we can understand and realize what God the Father really is doing and how He is doing it.

So that we understand how all of this flows together, v 13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." This Holy Spirit of promise is the begetting from God the Father. It actually imparts to us the beginning of the nature of God—the mind of Christ.

Verse 14: "Which is *the* earnest... [the down-payment, because the fullness of God's way has not yet been given.] ...of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession to *the* praise of His glory.... [We are going to be of the praise of the glory of God so that we can know and understand; we need to realize that as never before.] ...For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love

toward all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (vs 143-16).

Here’s what he was praying; this prayer is written down for us today. This is God’s desire for us. This is how we can make our calling and election sure, as the Apostle Peter admonished us to do.

Verse 17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation *in the* knowledge of Him.”

- That it’s got to come from God.
- It’s got to come from His Word.
- It has to come from His Truth.
- It has to come from His Spirit.

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...” Brethren, this is a spiritual thing that takes place; and this can only come with prayer, with yieldedness; with the choice of an attitude that comes from God the Father; but you have to provide the choice that your heart is tender before God.

“*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened... [God wants us to know] ...in order **that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling**... [He doesn’t want us to be in doubt, He wants us to know; and that hope is the greatest thing that there ever is—to be the very sons and daughters of God; to know that! That’s why God has called you!] ...and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (v 18). That is astonishing when you understand that.

- Does not Jesus Christ uphold the universe ‘by the word of His power’? *Yes!*
- Is He not going to inherit the universe? *Yes!*
- Are we not called ‘joint heirs with Christ’? *Yes! Yes, indeed!*

It is glorious, brethren.

Verse 19: “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe...” God has that power that He wants us to receive. God has that power that He wants to use in our minds and our hearts, that we can ***truly be converted; truly yielded to God.***

“...according to the inner working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above every principality and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come” (vs 19-21). That’s the One Who is our Savior. God the Father wants us to understand that, that we can make sure our calling and election. This is the greatest, more profound thing that there is.

Verse 22: “For He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the Church, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 22-23). And that’s fulfilling and filling the fullness of the calling of God, as well.

Let’s see the Apostle Paul, what his attitude was toward all of this; how the Apostle Paul looked at his calling. After he says all the physical things that he could lean upon and say how great he was, he said:

Philippians 3:8: “But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.... And may be found in Him... [that’s where we want to be found, brethren—***in Christ!***] ...not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law...” (vs 8-9). Oh yes, you can be a law-abiding person without Christ. But you cannot be a spiritually law-abiding person without the righteousness of Christ.

“...but that *righteousness* which *is* by the faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith... [that is the true righteousness—***Christ in you!***] ...**that I may know Him**... [that’s something we really need to know; we need to know Christ.] ...and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving... [that means he presses hard after] ...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus” (vs 9-12).

Here’s a key overcoming verse—v 13: “Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing *I do*—forgetting the things that are behind, and **reaching forth to the things that are ahead.**” That ties right back in with Matt. 6:33, ‘seek the Kingdom of God first, and His righteousness; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’

We’ve got enough problems and difficulties day-by-day as they come, so we need to forget those which are behind. You can’t change them; you can’t rework them; you can’t go back and redo them. So don’t spoil the minute today because of what happened yesterday; and do not worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow isn’t here yet. And don’t take today’s problems into tomorrow, just like you should not take yesterday’s problems into today.

Notice what he’s doing—this is how you change and grow and overcome, v 14: “**I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**” Always pressing toward that. Always moving toward that. Always realizing that

- God is greater
- God is love
- God is merciful
- God is forgiving
- God has given you the righteousness of Christ
- God's grace is to cover everything that you have in your life

Therefore, you can 'press toward the mark of the high calling.' Yes, as we saw, it's a heavenly calling.

Here is a promise, v 15: "So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind. And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you." That's why God shows you your bad attitudes when they come along, because He's revealing it to you; that you can repent of it, that you can change and grow and overcome. That is absolutely tremendous when you understand it, brethren.

Let's go to Romans, the eighth chapter, and here's something to always remember! Never forget this! This is so profound, this is true, and it is something that you need to make a very part of your being. Romans 8:28: "**And we know**... [it's what we have to know; it's what you have to know. Do you know this? Can you say this with the Apostle Paul? Are you convinced in your heart and your mind and soul and being that this is true—that regardless of what it is.] ...**that all things**... [and that mean *everything!*] ...**work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**" You're called for the very purpose of God and you are to *make that calling and election sure*.

Let's go back to 2-Peter 1—because we are not only to make our calling sure, but our *calling and election*. *Election* then is your response back. God calls you, and you choose back. *You're elected, you're selected, you are called!* But you then must elect and choose to respond to God; and this is what becomes very important. Let's read that again and then we'll look at a couple of other verses which helps bring out about this *calling* and *election*—or *selection*, as you could put it that way. Your choice involved.

2-Peter 1:10: "For this reason, brethren, be even more diligent... [this means we have to work at it; in the light of everything going on, we've got to be more diligent] ...**to make your calling and election sure**... [or that is *secure*. Now, how do you do that? He tells us right here in the last part of the verse]: ...because *if* you are doing these things... [What things?] ...you will never stumble at any time." What things? The things in verses 5, 6 & 7—let's read those again.

Verse 5: "And for this very reason also, having applied all *your* diligence besides, add [in]to your faith... [and as we learned: *in; put in* your faith] ...virtue; and [in]to virtue, knowledge; and [in]to knowledge, self-control; and [in]to self-control, endurance; and [in]to endurance, Godliness; and [in]to Godliness, brotherly love; and [in]to brotherly love, **the love of God**" (vs 5-7). What does he give to inspire us in this; because this is very important the way that this is written.

Let's go back to verses 2, 3 & 4, and let's go over those again; because this is what we are to be doing. This is our calling; this is our election; this is what we are to make sure. And God is doing this to inspire us because we will never be able to stand the assaults of all the false teachers that he talks about in chapter two unless we're doing this.

Verse 2: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord... [and that's what we need to be growing in] ...According as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life..." (vs 2-3). We don't need philosophy; we don't need the theology of men. And He's given us all things that pertain to life.

"...and **Godliness**, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises..." (vs 3-4). Brethren, the greatest and most precious and most inspiring promises that God can ever give. To be like God! To see Him face-to-face! That we are going to be.

"...that through these you may become partakers of the Divine nature... [That's what God has given us with the begetting of His Holy Spirit; and God wants to give us the completion of it. He wants to give us the fullness of it. He wants us to be as He is.] ...having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust" (v 4).

Now, why does He construct this epistle in this manner? Let's just survey ahead just a little bit and let's look.

1. **He's given the promises:** vs 1-4—great and precious promises.
2. **He tells us how we can grow:** vs 5-10—to make sure that we are able then to make our calling and election sure.

So that then: v 11: "For in this way, you will be richly granted an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." That's what it's for, that we can enter into the Kingdom of God. And of course, that's going to be at the resurrection; because we know that the Scriptures tell us that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.' **We must be a spirit being!** As 'we have born the image of the earthy, so shall

we also bear the image of the heavenly.’ So we need to have that entrance, brethren. Remember, we read that many will want to enter in, but won’t! They’re going to look to all the things they claim are the good works; and Jesus is going to say, ‘I never knew you, depart from Me who work iniquity.’ But these things give us the guarantees of entering into the eternal kingdom.

Verse 12: “Therefore, I will not neglect to make you always mindful of these things...” And as we will see next time, he also is going to write them down.

Then he says in v 16: “For we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but *we spoke as* having been eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory.”

Then we also have the “...confirmed prophetic Word...” (v 19).

And then vs 20-21 tell us how then the Word of God was put together. We’re going to study that next time. But we need to understand how this is put together—the way and the sequence that it is put together—so that we realize that now when we come down to chapter two, when we get into all the false prophets, when we get into all the things that are going on, and we’re also going to study the Epistle of Jude right along with it side-by-side, because those are parallel.

Then we will be able to understand that the calling of God is so great that no man, no false teacher, no false brethren can possibly take it from us; but we have got to understand and know how we can recognize false teachers and false prophets and false doctrines and different things like that—which then we will cover after we see that the apostles were the ones who canonized the Word of God and this is what he is telling us in the last part of the first chapter of 2-Peter.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

- ✓ Exception: 1& 2-Peter, from *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter—author’s translation

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- 2) 1-Peter 4:8
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- 6) 2-Corinthians 6:1-12, 14-18
- 7) 1-Timothy 4:12
- 8) 2-Timothy 2:22-23
- 9) 2-Timothy 3:10-13
- 10) Colossians 3:12-14

- 11) 2-Peter 1:8-9
- 12) 2-Peter 2:18-22
- 13) 2-Peter 1:9
- 14) John 9:1-6, 31-41
- 15) 2-Peter 1:10-11
- 16) John 6:44-46
- 17) John 6:65
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- 19) Hebrews 3:1-3, 6
- 20) Hebrews 12:1-8
- 21) 1-Corinthians 1:23-31
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- 23) Ephesians 1:4-5, 13-23
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- 26) 2-Peter 1:10, 5-7, 2-4, 11-12, 16, 19

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