

Graduating to Godliness
2 Peter 1:3-12

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Introduction to Text: My subject today is “Graduating to Godliness.” Yes, I have these graduating students in mind, but I want you to know that I have all of us in mind. The truth of the matter is that many have graduated from various schools and programs, but have never graduated to godliness.

Our text today comes from 2 Peter. The author of 1 and 2 Peter is the apostle Peter that we are familiar with in the Gospels and Acts. During the ministry of Jesus, no other person is more important to the story than Peter. You will remember that Peter was the one who first identified Jesus as being the “Christ.” (Matthew 16) Peter is the primary preacher of the early church proclaiming the significance of the resurrection of the Lord. (Acts 2) Peter’s influential background is the backdrop of the importance of these two letters. These letters are written to “those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” That is, these are letters written to Christians who have been scattered perhaps as a result of their beliefs, but not necessarily so. They may have been scattered simply at the whim of the Roman government. Nevertheless, the idea of being a stranger is figuratively true for these believers. Peter desires to make the point that as believers they are strangers in this world. Their beliefs are foreign. Here is where these two books begin to take on contemporary application for the modern day believer in Christ. We also are strangers in this world. Our beliefs are foreign to the world around us. Our beliefs, desires, and habits of holiness are often thought of as foreign and silly among an unbelieving world. And as such, we sometimes fall into patterns of the world and lose our pursuit of holiness. This text speaks to that struggle that we often feel.

Text: ³ His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. ⁴ By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, ⁶ knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, ⁷ godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. ¹¹ For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to you.

¹² Therefore I will always remind you about these things, even though you know them and are established in the truth you have.

Introduction: A boy was asked, “How old are you?” His reply was, “Twelve, going on thirteen, soon to be fourteen.” There is a boy that wanted to grow up.

What if we all wanted to grow in Christ as much as that boy wanted to grow in age?

I am afraid that we are more like the farmer who was asked by his pastor, “How are you doing in your relationship to Christ?” His answer was, “Well, I’m not making as much progress as I would like or need to, but I am established.”

Soon after that the pastor came upon the farmer stuck in the mud. The pastor said, “Well, I see that you are not making as much progress as you would like or need to, but at least you are well established.”

No, he was more than well established; he was stuck. When we fail to make progress in our walk with Christ, let’s be honest, we are stuck!

This text before us today offers some fresh reminders on how to get “un-stuck” and graduate to godliness.

God’s Provision Regarding your Godliness

Here’s the big picture of verses 3-4. God provides everything you need for life and godliness. The emphasis on this passage is godliness, but we can’t help but pause a moment on that word life. I guess we should understand the context is what you need not what you want. Nevertheless, this is a big deal. Notice, as we consider verses 3 and 4, several things about God’s provision.

- The Power—His Power (Divine)
- The Parameters—Everything required for life and godliness
- The Pathway—Relationship through His Work
- The Purpose—His Glory and goodness
- The Promise—Secure
- The Product—Sharing in the divine nature and Escaping the corruption of this world

Irenaeus, a second century theologian said, “God became what we are, out of His immeasurable love for us, in order to make us what He is.”

Application: If you are struggling in the area of godliness, this is not God’s fault!

Your Participation Required for your Godliness

Here is the big idea: We cannot become godly without His power and grace, but we must be willing participants in getting to godliness. There is a balance.

- 7 Areas to Consider:
 - (1) Goodness—moral character
 - (2) Knowledge—different word than knowledge in verse 3. Knowledge relationally and theologically are both necessary.

- (3) Self-control
- (4) Endurance
- (5) Godliness
- (6) Brotherly love
- (7) Love—agape

- These are not 7 steps to godliness, but a continuing cycle!

Notice that we are to be increasing in these areas (v. 8).

There is an interesting Greek word back in verse 5 that is helpful in illustrating this balance of God's part and our part. The word is the one translated, "supplement." The Greek word is *epichorego*. The word comes from the Greek drama world. The *choregos* was the financier of the chorus that participated in the theater. This was very expensive and so a very rich individual was sought after to cooperate with the poet and the state to put on the show. The *choregos* partnered with the ones who supplied the other things required.

We are to be the ones who partner with God, the supplier of all power to be godly.

Application:

- (1) If you are struggling in the area of godliness, this is not God's fault!
- (2) You tend to pursue godliness best as you pursue God through prayer and His Word.

The Result: You will be useful and fruitful and have the assurance of your salvation.

The Preacher's Role in your Godliness

Peter says he will keep reminding them. To the graduates, we are going to keep reminding you. To you congregation, I am going to keep reminding you.

Application: Give yourself to the teaching and preaching of God's word.