

1 Peter 1:7 – Part Y

1Pe 1:6 (NKJV) **In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of *your* souls.**

We are addressing those things that Scripture says bring “**praise, glory, and honor**” to God. We have seen that **God is glorified when our life has a GODLY PURPOSE to it – [1 Corinthians 10:31](#)** and that **God is glorified when PEOPLE SEE OUR GOOD WORKS – [Matthew 5:16](#)**. God is glorified when **CHRISTIANS ARE LIKE-MINDED – [Romans 15:5-6](#)**. God is glorified when we **LIVE A PURE LIFE – [1 Corinthians 6:18-20](#)**, when we **REPROACHED FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST – [1 Peter 4:14](#)**, and when we **CONFESS THAT CHRIST IS LORD – [Philippians 2:9-11](#)**.

God is glorified when we **GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST – [2 Peter 3:18](#)**.

2Pe 3:18 (NKJV) **but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

Without over-analyzing this verse, it seems that it would be exegetically inappropriate to somehow divorce it from the overall context of the epistle which is dealing with false teachers who are peddling their false doctrines. In fact, [2 Peter 2](#), along with the epistle of [Jude](#), is in all likelihood the most intense chapter in the New Testament regarding the issue of false teachers within the church. In that chapter, Peter has absolutely nothing good whatsoever to say about false teachers and false prophets who simply peddle the word of God for their personal gain. In v1-3 he condemns what he calls their “**destructive heresies**”. He actually says that “**the way of truth will be blasphemed**” through them. From v4-11, he gives examples of how God dealt with those who were “**presumptuous and self-willed**”. In v12-17, he speaks about the utter depravity of the false teachers and calls them “**wells without water**” and men who have “**forsaken the right way and gone astray**”. Then to add fuel to his fire, he says in v18-22 that they speak “**words of emptiness**”, they allure people through “**lewdness**”, and that they are “**slaves of corruption**”. You will not find a more defining place in the New Testament on the nature, character, and doom of the false prophets and false teachers that bring people into bondage by their false teaching. Then to add to his overall assessment, [2 Peter 3](#) talks about the nature of the end times and several of its defining characteristics, one of which is men who scoff at God’s judgment and for some reason think that they will be exempt from it.

So, when Peter finally arrives at [2 Peter 3:14ff](#), his encouragement is that believers should be living lives that are “**without spot and blameless**” (v14). The phrase “**without spot**” (*áspilos*) refers specifically to a person’s moral conduct, to the moral purity of their life.¹ There probably is nothing that can destroy and ruin the spiritual integrity of a person’s life more than moral impurity. The second word is “**blameless**” (*amōmētos*) and means that the individual cannot be reproached and accused of

doing anything wrong. This actual word is only used twice in the New Testament. [Philippians 2:15](#) says,

Php 2:15 (NKJV) **that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,**

It is a word that refers to a believer who is living in such a way that no one can point a finger at them and accuse them of things that are actually wrong and ungodly in their life. These two words provide a great initial picture of someone who has become steadfast in their spiritual life. They are morally pure and living in such a way that others cannot legitimately accuse them of doing things that would bring reproach on Christ.

Then, to strengthen what he is saying to his readers, Peter encourages them in v17 to **“beware lest they fall from their own steadfastness”** so that they will not be **“led away with the error of the wicked”**. It is as if by that last statement in v17 that Peter recognizes how utterly easy it is to be **“led away”** by false teachers. The word for c.² I am so often just utterly astounded at how many people seem to so easily embrace false teachers and their destructive heresies. It is staggering to me personally how many books you can find in a Baptist bookstore that are written by false teachers, or how many false teachers people watch and listen to on TBN. It confuses me, bewilders me. It seems very clear in this verse that Peter believes that one of the primary reasons why this happens is because believers simply **“fall away from their own steadfastness”**. The verb **“fall away from”** is *“ekpiptō”* and is not the same word used for apostasy, but in its use with **“steadfastness”** refers specifically to being driven off of one’s course and of losing their spiritual focus and stability so as to be of no effect.³ This particular Greek word in the context of [2 Peter](#) is not speaking about someone who is just rebellious and completely disobedient to God’s Word – not at all. However, it is speaking about those believers who become very distracted with things that are incredibly temporal. The absence of maintaining a strong spiritual focus in their life simply puts them in a place where they fundamentally lack any meaningful discernment. They are nice people, they love God, but in the end their life simply has no spiritual resolve, no deep commitment, and a fundamental lack of spiritual determination. In the end, their spiritual impact is virtually non-existent. They have become comfortably satisfied with spiritual mediocrity, and what John refers to in [Revelation 3](#) as being **“lukewarm”**.

Now, all of that is a kind of spiritual backdrop that we have to keep in focus to properly appreciate Peter’s encouragement in [2 Peter 3:18](#). Obviously, a person cannot **“grow in the grace and knowledge”** of Christ if they are not steadfast in their faith and commitment to Christ. If that is the case, then the natural result of that lack of diligence to guard their spiritual life will lead them to eventually embrace false teachers and their false doctrines – or as Peter says it, **“to be led away with the error of the wicked”**. Now, the whole purpose of this study is to address what actually glorifies God in our life. Most of what glorifies God should be obvious to a committed believer, so our study is just somewhat of a reminder of the obvious. In the case of this final exhortation in its overall context, what Peter wants believers to understand is that when we are deeply committed to our personal spiritual growth, when we are diligent to live a moral life, and when we are discerning and steadfast to guard ourselves from false teaching, it is then that we are able to **“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”**.

As believers, we will never be able to grow spiritually if our life has little to no meaningful commitment to that which is actually spiritual. I cannot grow spiritually if my life is shrouded with moral impurity. I cannot grow if I lack spiritual discernment and am always listening to and embracing biblical error. The emergent spiritual climate that exists in many places today has an almost carnival like atmosphere – fog machines, strobe lights, concession booths. It is all about attracting people, but unfortunately with the wrong things. It is all about style rather than substance. Just as an example, the Emergent Church has adopted the Message Bible – which is not even a Bible, but just a paraphrase. The actual Word of God is significantly downplayed and plays second fiddle to all of the other factors that the church has deemed important and imperative. Jesus chided His generation for making God’s house a “**den of thieves**”, and most likely if He were to rebuke this generation it would probably have a similar tone to it.

Each of the godly spiritual attributes that Peter mentions in v14-18 are areas that must be purposefully and intentionally developed and cultivated in a believer’s life, and generally the effort required of the believer is demanding, time-consuming, and physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging. No one will ever grow spiritually by accident, by chance, or by coincidence. Spiritual growth is not without sacrifice at times. I have to work very hard in my garden. If I just ignore it, nothing grows but weeds. The process of spiritual growth called sanctification is a lifelong process whereby we as believers must be fully engaged with God’s Word, God’s Spirit, and God’s people if our life is going to genuinely glorify Christ. What that simply means is that we cannot casually divorce ourselves from God’s means and God’s methods that He has ordained and somehow think that all is well.

No wonder Peter adds the conjunction “**but**” to the last part of his sentence – “**but grow...**” The word “**but**” is what is called in the Greek as a “logical contrastive conjunction”. I.e., a contrast refers to something which is actually the opposite of something else. So, a contrastive conjunction suggests a thought or relationship that is in opposition to the word, phrase, or clause to which it is connected. For example, I might say “*That mattress sleeps really good, but the other mattress sleeps awful.*”⁴ Now, I know this is Basic English 101 and I do not want to insult your intelligence, but we simply cannot miss this. Why? It is because Peter is purposefully contrasting certain attributes that are in direct opposition to what is required to grow spiritually, and ultimately that which will not allow our life to glorify and honor Christ. Please appreciate that whenever someone lacks the will and the motivation to allow the Holy Spirit to work deeply in their life, they generally believe that they are the exception regarding spiritual growth and do not need to pay attention to these various areas of their life. The result is that they live their life in spiritual mediocrity and fail to glorify God in their life. The glory of God is always the goal, always the target, and what should always be motivating us in our life. We are never the exception to this – never!

So, what is it that actually glorifies Jesus Christ “**both now and forever**”? It is very simple. It is when we as believers “**grow**” spiritually, or as Peter states it, when we “**grow**” in God’s amazing grace, and when we “**grow**” and increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The construction of the phrase “**the grace and knowledge**” is what is known as the Granville Sharpe rule in Greek which states that when there are two nouns in the same case connected by “*kai*” (“**and**” in English) and the first noun has the article “**the**” and the second noun does not have the article, the second noun refers to the same thing the first noun does and is a further description of it. So, when we take the phrase “**the grace and**

knowledge”, they both are basically referring to the same objective and purpose. I.e., this can be considered one attribute, one idea where the two words “**grace**” and “**knowledge**” are connected to one another and are both in the dative case. The dative case refers to the person or thing to which something is given or for whom something is done.⁵ The practical side of this for the believer is really very simple. What it is saying is that the “**grace and knowledge**” of Christ are integrally connected. I.e., we do not just receive God’s “**grace**” in a spiritual vacuum, but it is specifically connected to our knowledge of God’s Word. This should be obvious. The majority of people who we know that are really being used by God the most are probably those people who know God’s Word the best. That should not be taken as a kind of blanket statement, but simply an empirical observation that a meaningful knowledge of the Word of God will lead a believer into a deeper experience of God’s grace. This is a very important element of the Greek construction of this verse that will give us a better understanding of how “**grace**” and “**knowledge**” are related to one another.

The Greek word for “**grow**” is “*auxanō*” and is in the present tense, imperative mood, active voice. What all of that simply means is that spiritual growth is something that is always an on-going activity in the believer’s life, always something that the believer is fully responsible to develop, and something that is non-optional for a genuine follower of Christ. God does not portray spiritual growth as optional. Every believer is to constantly be cultivating those areas of their life that contribute to meaningful spiritual maturity. The word “**grow**” could actually be correctly translated as “**but you grow and keep on growing...**” Never stop developing spiritual disciplines and spiritual attributes in your life that honor Christ. Never stop putting Christ and the will of God first in your life. Never stop studying God’s Word and learning more and more of what it genuinely means for Jesus Christ to be Lord over every area of your life. Never stop consistently meeting with other believers. Never stop yielding to the direction and promptings of the Holy Spirit. The list may at times seem endless, and that is what often creates the spiritual tensions and demands. However, the list is not endless. The list is God’s gracious invitation to trust Him with our life. The more yielded we become to His perfect will in our life, the greater will be the impact of our life, and the more Christ will be glorified through us. The list is what God uses to develop the character of Christ in our life and how He is ultimately glorified. It should be more than obvious that God will never be glorified in our life if we are uncommitted, immoral, undiscerning, and spiritually negligent as Peter has addressed in v14-17.

So first, we are to grow in the “**grace**” of God. Relative to the practical side, the grace of God is when God gives the believer two distinct attributes. The first attribute is the desire to do the will of God. In the New Testament, one of the primary words for “**desire**” is “*thelo*” and it means to consciously choose, to prefer, to be inclined to, to be disposed towards, and to delight in something.⁶ It is the same word used in [2 Timothy 3:12](#) which says,

2Ti 3:12 (NKJV) **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

This particular Greek word for “**desire**” carries the distinct idea of pressing on to action. So, it is more than simply wanting something. It is when the desire is so strong within the individual that they actually begin to work towards what they desire. Most everyone has goals that they want to achieve in their life – and there is certainly nothing wrong with that desire. That is a very good thing. However, it is vital that as fully devoted followers of Christ that we do not allow our worldly ambitions to override and supersede God’s spiritual will for our life. If we are not careful, our personal agendas will gradually

replace God’s divine purpose for our life. The goal is never what I want, but what does God want for my life. I love how Paul stated his perspective in [Philippians 1:21](#),

Php 1:21 (NKJV) For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

For Paul, the goal was to always be allowing Christ to live His life through him. To him, nothing else mattered because he fully understood that Christ being able to live His life through him was what brought glory, honor, and praise to the Father.

The second attribute of God’s grace that ties directly in with having a God-given, heart-felt desire is that of God giving the believer the strength and ability to actually achieve the desire He has placed within them. God gives the believer godly desires, but He does not leave the individual helpless to achieve those desires. It would be incredibly frustrating to have meaningful desires, but no way to fulfill and accomplish those desires in your life. To the contrary, God always gives the believer the spiritual power needed to accomplish what He has prompted them to achieve in their life. Simply stated, God gives the believer the desire to do His will and then He gives them the power to do His will. Paul said it this way in [Philippians 4:13](#),

Php 4:13 (NKJV) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Paul had developed an amazing perspective in his life that God was able to accomplish whatever He wanted to accomplish through him. He never placed limitations on God, he never placed his personal boundaries and goals around what he knew to be God’s divine will for his life.

The second area of our life that brings glory to Christ is when we “**grow in knowledge**” of Jesus Christ. The Greek word for “**knowledge**” is “*gnosis*” and in this context, it carries the specific idea of comprehending something by having learned it. There are a lot of people who have a somewhat general knowledge of the things of God, but it never seems to make an impact on their life. They do not seem to have really learned very much from their efforts. They come to church, but leave unchanged and unmoved. Unfortunately, that scenario may serve as a kind of judgment on their life because with a knowledge of God’s Word comes responsibility to obey it and be committed to it. That is why church could be considered a kind of dangerous place for those who are uncommitted to Christ simply because they hear a lot, but then fail to integrate what they learn into their life. The issue is never mere knowledge, but specifically the “**knowledge of God**”. [Colossians 2:3](#), speaking of Christ, declares,

Col 2:3 (NKJV) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I.e., the more meaningful our study of Christ, the more of God’s wisdom and knowledge we acquire. [Romans 11:33](#), one of the two greatest doxologies in Scripture, provides this great encouragement to us to constantly be seeking the “**knowledge of God**”.

Ro 11:33 (NKJV) Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

God has so much more to offer us than we could ever gain from the world. The wisdom of God is actually considered to be “**foolishness**” by those who do not know Him. The greatest display of God’s wisdom will forever be seen in the birth, death, burial, and resurrection of His amazing Son, yet the world sees the greatest thing that God has ever done to be utter foolishness. They disdain God, Christ,

and His work, yet what they do not realize is that the greatest sin that man could ever commit became the very source of their salvation. “**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!**” At a deeply personal level, I stand in awe and complete silence before a holy God who loves me with an everlasting love. I have absolutely nothing to say or add to His great work of salvation or His great love for one as wretched and blind as I. No wonder Paul prayed the following in [Colossians 1:10](#),

Col 1:10 (NKJV) **that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

Please appreciate that the greater a believer’s “**knowledge of God**”, the greater will be their understanding of how God’s grace is appropriated in their life. For instance, [James 4:6](#) says,

Jas 4:6 (NKJV) **But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*”**

The greater our level of personal pride about who we are and what we have accomplished, the less of God’s grace that we will receive from God. It is always about God being glorified through our life. By deflecting the praise to God when He does good things in our life, the greater will be the measure of grace that we receive. Think of it this way. A genuine knowledge of God that is gained through consistently spending time in His Word will open the door for God’s grace to operate in our life. We will learn what pleases God. We will learn those areas where we are to be obedient to Him. We will learn how to meaningfully relate to our family members, as well as those people that God has allowed to surround our life. We will learn how to relate to the lost, how to pray for them, and how to evangelize them. The list is endless, but the greater our knowledge of and investment in these things, the more God will extend His grace into our life, and the more our life will bring “**praise, honor, and glory**” to Jesus Christ. I close with Peter’s exhortation to each of us in [2 Peter 1:2](#),

2Pe 1:2 (NKJV) **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,**

ENDNOTES

¹ Zodiates, *áspilos*, ep.

² Strong, *sunapagō*, ep.

³ Strong, *ekpipto*, ep.

⁴ Heiser, *contrastive conjunction*, ep.

⁵ Heiser, *dative case*, ep.

⁶ Strong, *thelo*, ep.

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