

Alignment – Ordering Your Life With God
The Power of God’s Alignment
2 Peter 1:1-4

Introduction: I had to get new tires for one of our vehicles this week. As part of putting on new tires, most dealers want to do an “alignment.” I’m sure there is an upsell motive buried within the pitch to purchase an alignment with new tires, but regardless of the presence of a possible profiteering motive, it’s still a crucial step for helping ensure your new tires don’t get destroyed soon after purchasing them. When tires are not correctly aligned with the vehicle and one another, the tire's life is greatly diminished, as is the tire's performance, which determines how well your car rides down the road. When you have a tire out of alignment, the vehicle will constantly pull away from where you are steering it, which is dangerous. In addition, it can cause the vehicle to vibrate, which obviously makes for an uncomfortable ride. Simply put, letting your tires get out of alignment is a bad idea.

In the same way, it’s not only a bad idea for us to be out of alignment with one another but, more importantly, out of alignment with the vehicle—Christ! As a matter of fact, for tires to be correctly aligned, they have to be aligned with the vehicle; tires aligned to one another that are not aligned with the vehicle are necessarily not aligned. It is a complete disaster for the tires, the vehicle, and anybody in it!

So, Peter, the leader of the Apostles, writes a letter to every follower of Jesus to help them understand why alignment is critical, how to be aligned, and how to identify and avoid misalignment. Fittingly, he begins the letter with the power of God’s alignment, that is, when we repent and believe in Jesus, Christ doesn’t just give us new tires, but He Himself aligns us, who were totally out of alignment with God and His life with God and His life! Look how Peter begins this letter,

1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Proposition: 2 Peter 1:1-4 demonstrates two momentous outcomes of Christ’s alignment.

The first momentous outcome of Christ’s alignment is that ...

- (1) Our status with God has been equally aligned with every other child of God. (1:1-2)**

A. **1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**

B. Let me break this down real quick.

1. **“Simeon Peter”** - Some manuscripts have the common Greek spelling (*Simōn*), whereas others have the direct transliteration of the Hebrew (*Symeōn*). The best textual evidence supports the more unusual Hebrew spelling, used elsewhere only in Acts 15:14. This detail provides support for the authenticity of Petrine authorship, for an impostor probably would have used the more widely accepted spelling. “Peter,” the Greek translation of “Cephas” and the name given to Simon by Jesus, is discussed in the *Introduction* of 1 Peter (see also 1 Peter 1:1). Peter’s combining these distinctly Hebrew and Greek names may be an indication of the mixed audience (Hebrew and Greek Christians) he addressed.”¹
2. “The author of this letter is Simon Peter. **SIMON**, literally ‘Simeon’, is a Hebrew word, a diminutive of ‘Samuel’, which means ‘God is heard’. **PETER** means a ‘stone’. Peter is not God, but God is heard speaking through him; also, he is not the Rock, for that title belongs to God alone (see Ps. 18:2). A great deal of misunderstanding about Peter can be avoided if these things are remembered.”²
3. **“a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ”**
 - a. “The word is *doulos* (δουλος), the most abject and servile term for a slave of the five words the Greeks used when speaking of one who serves. The verb form is *deo* (δεο), “to bind.” Thus, a *doulos* (δουλος) is one bound to another as a slave. The word designated one who was born as a slave. This classical usage fits in very well with the doctrinal significance of the word as it is used in the Christian system. Sinners are born into slavery to sin at physical birth, and into a loving, willing, glad servitude to Jesus Christ by regeneration. The word referred to one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another. Before salvation, the sinner’s will is swallowed up in the will of Satan. After salvation has wrought its beneficent work in his being, his will is swallowed up in the sweet will of God. The word spoke of one who is bound to another in bands which only death can break. The sinner is bound to Satan in bands which only death can break. In the case of the believing sinner, his identification with the Lord Jesus in His death on the Cross broke the

¹ Gangel, K. O. (1985). [2 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 863). Victor Books.

² Anderson, C. (2007). [Opening up 2 Peter](#) (pp. 13–15). Day One Publications.

bands which bound him to Satan. Now, the believer is bound to Christ in bands which only death can break. But the Lord Jesus will never die again, and since He is the life of the saint, that saint will never be severed from his Lord, but will be His loving bondsman for time and eternity. Again, *doulos* (δουλος) refers to one who serves another to the disregard of his own interests.”³

- b. “The term *apostle* means not only that someone is sent out, but also that he has received full authority from Jesus Christ. In his preaching and in his writing, Peter delivers not his own message but that of the Lord (compare 1 Peter 1:1; Gal. 1:1). Therefore, Peter writes his second epistle on behalf of Christ, who confers his authority upon this letter. Peter writes his epistle in the capacity of an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he expects its recipients to acknowledge it as an apostolic document (see Luke 10:16).”⁴
- c. “... apostle of Jesus Christ,” a sent one, one who had seen the Lord, and who could bear personal testimony to the fact of his existence, his death, and his resurrection. Hence the apostleship has ceased, since there are no longer any who lived in our Lord’s days upon the earth.”⁵

4. To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ

- a. “**obtained**” - “To attain,’ usually by lot ... Even where there is no casting of lots, the attainment is not by one’s own effort or as a result of one’s own exertions, but is like ripe fruit falling into one’s lap. This is always to be kept in mind.”⁶
- b. “**a faith of EQUAL STANDING with ours**” – I’ll return to the word “faith” in a minute; for now, let’s focus on the phrase “equal standing with ours.” Peter is saying the believers reading this letter have a faith that is literally of “... equal significance or value,”⁷ with his and the other Apostles!

³ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 12, pp. 15–16). Eerdmans.

⁴ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). *Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude* (Vol. 16, pp. 238–241). Baker Book House.

⁵ Spurgeon, C. (2014). *Spurgeon Commentary: 2 Peter* (E. Ritzema & C. S. Wolcott, Eds.; 2 Pe 1:1). Lexham Press.

⁶ Hanse, H. (1964–). *ἀγγάζω*. In G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 4, p. 1). Eerdmans.

⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 588). United Bible Societies.

- c. **“by the righteousness”** – means the mechanism that makes us equal in righteousness (that which makes somebody deserving), but in this case, it’s not our righteousness or deserving that aligns us as equals with Peter, but rather,
- d. **“of our God and Savior Jesus Christ”** – “The grammar here clearly indicates that “God and Savior” are one Person, not two (i.e., there is one Gr. article with two substantives). This passage ranks with the great Christological passages of the New Testament which plainly teach that Jesus Christ is coequal in nature with God the Father (cf. Matt. 16:16; John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13). “Savior” is used of Christ five times in this short epistle (2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18).”⁸
- e. Therefore, to put this together, let’s return to the word **“Faith.”** Scholars debate whether it references my act of submitting to God or the doctrines that define Christianity. In my opinion, the majority seem to correctly point to “faith” as meaning my act of submission to God, which is then of equal standing with Peter’s and the other Apostles, not because of the caliber of my submission, nor the depth of my understanding, but rather because of the righteousness, that is, the “deserving” of the one who is our God and our Savior Jesus Christ that granted me my standing as one submitted to God! It is only because of Christ and nothing else that we are God’s children; nothing more and nothing less; thus, our standing before the Father is equal. We stand before God no other way and with nothing else than Jesus Christ and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; HIS deserving to be there!
- f. This equality before God is highlighted by the fact that Peter, whose job as an Apostle is resoundingly more critical than our jobs in the church, is nonetheless equal in his standing with us before God! Peter’s job doesn’t give him the right to have greater favor with God, nor did he get the job of an Apostle because he was given more favor. God chose Peter to be an Apostle in His church to declare a Gospel that we are all made fully favored children of God with the same standing before God by one thing and one thing only—the blood of Jesus!
- g. Based on this, Peter then writes,

5. 2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

⁸ Gangel, K. O. (1985). [2 Peter](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 863–864). Victor Books.

- a. Some see verse two as no more than a polite way of starting the letter; however, to accept that as its only purpose misses the most impactful part of the greeting—The Gospel!
 - b. **“Grace”** speaks of all that comes with God's unearned favor, and it is expounded upon by what is embedded in the next keyword – “peace.”
 - c. **“Peace”** – “The usual Hebrew greeting was *shalom*; this conveys the image of wholeness, unity and harmony. The New Testament Greek word translated ‘peace’ is *eirene*, which originally meant peace due to absence of war. In the New Testament, however, it speaks of something far greater than human peace. It is a divine peace, the direct result of being reconciled to God by the death of Jesus on the cross. It is peace with God, and as a result of this, the believer gains the peace of God. Peter prays that all of God’s people will have grace and peace in abundance and that these things will overflow into their daily lives.”⁹
 - d. Therefore, **“be multiplied to you”** doesn’t mean we are somehow positionally more saved than we were before; that we can somehow be given more of God’s favor and a more peaceful situation with God than we were already given. After all, Peter has already stated that our status with God is equal to the Apostles. Certainly, you can’t get any more saved and favored than that! Instead, it speaks to the experience of grace and peace, the practical, real-life application of the grace and peace that all in Christ have already fully received from God. It speaks to God’s grace and peace becoming more and more of the reality of our life’s experience, not that we can somehow get more of it than somebody else has and thus be more favored.
- C. Now, here is where I want to take this application a little deeper. Despite this very straightforward statement by Peter, our Catholic brothers, who ironically consider Peter as the ultimate authority of the church under Christ, have a hierarchy of status in God’s Kingdom. In the Catholic world of “saints,” Mary, the Mother of Jesus, has the ultimate status with the Lord, and right behind her is Peter, who ironically just clearly stated that every believer in Christ has the same status he and all the other Apostles have! The Catholic church and the other Christian denominations with spiritual hierarchies of saints have to perform an impressive song and dance to twist up clear statements like this all over the Bible and convince people that these straightforward teachings aren’t actually saying what they are saying!
- D. Why is it essential for me to point out this error by our Catholic brothers? The answer is that Peter himself felt the need to point it out. The idea of considering one believer to be more important to God than another was already spreading

⁹ Anderson, C. (2007). [Opening up 2 Peter](#) (pp. 17–18). Day One Publications.

throughout the Christian church not long after the church started to spread. Paul addressed this very same issue in his letters to the believers in Corinth, who were dividing themselves up according to which teacher or apostle they considered to be more important, as well as in numerous letters where he confronted the idea that Jewish Christians had a more valued and important standing with God than Gentile (non-Jewish) believers. Two millenniums later, followers of Jesus still struggle to align themselves with the truth that they are equally aligned with God with every other follower of Christ; that we were not aligned with God based on our religious acumen, race, ethnicity, economic status, gifting, leadership roles in the church, etc., but rather through the person and work of Christ that is equally poured out in abundance to all who are in Christ! Therefore, God's love and favor towards me is no different than it is for Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Peter, and as such, God's willingness to hear my prayers are no different than His willingness to hear Mary's and Peter's; and His desire AND commitment to bless me as His child is no different! According to Peter and every other New Testament writer, we are all ONE in Christ Jesus! We are truly aligned with one another before God! It's why Paul wrote,

- E. **26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:26-29)**
- F. Peter certainly had a more important role in the founding and leadership of the church than most people, but that didn't make him more favored or loved by God! While we believe status is determined by what we do, God determines our status by what Christ did, and therefore, we are aligned with one another before HIM!

The second momentous outcome of Christ's alignment is that ...

(2) We have been and are continuing to be aligned with God's nature! (1:3-4)

- A. **3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,**
 - 1. Peter is saying God has personally given us everything we need to live in this life and to do so with God's character as our character (godliness). We didn't gain these resources through our efforts; it was entirely HIS effort that supplied them to us. His DIVINE power delivered these resources to us when Christ died on the cross. The atoning work of Christ on the cross doesn't passively save us with a mere opportunity, but rather, it actively saves us! Christ died for the world, but it only sufficiently affects the elect; that is, it

totally and completely saves those who are called by God, which is why the writer of Hebrews wrote,

Note: 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:14)

2. It is not “if” God will do that work, but that God “has” done it and “continues” doing it until He completes it. It’s also not because of anything we did but rather entirely because of what Christ did. God is the one aligning us with His nature, not as an option, but as a guarantee! I praise God; my sinful, jacked-up nature will one day be fully aligned with HIS!!
3. But did you notice knowledge is once again crucial in this effort? God has decided to do this powerful work that only He is capable of doing, **“through the knowledge of him who called us ...,”** that is, through the knowledge of the Gospel! It’s why Paul wrote,

Note: 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)

- B. Furthermore, in giving us all we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of the Gospel, it is also made clear that God is doing this so that we can be aligned with God’s own glory and excellence. Peter said God is doing this **“through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,”**
 1. Now, I need to geek out a little here for a second. The words translated “glory” and “excellence” are in what is called the “dative” case. “The dative refers to the person or thing to which something is given or for whom something is done.”¹⁰ This means verse three could technically be translated as “to his own glory and excellence” as the KJV, ESV, and RSV do, or “for his own glory and excellence,” which ironically is the most common way of translating the dative and yet I could only find one published translation that used it. However, the NASB, NIV, and many others translated it “by his own glory and excellence.” Now, to those familiar with the different Bible translations, those are some weird bedfellows! All three possibilities highlight a different aspect of the very clear doctrines of the Gospel, so there is no issue with the confusion because no matter where you land, you are

¹⁰ Heiser, M. S., & Setterholm, V. M. (2013; 2013). [Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology](#). Lexham Press.

pointing to well-established truth. However, which one should we choose? Given what we will see in the next verse and the fact that the dative is more naturally translated the way the ESV handles it, versus the NIV and NASB, I feel really comfortable going with the ESV as the correct and thus intended translation.

2. Given that translation of the Greek, it's not surprising that God has called us to His "excellence" because the Greek word translated there is about "moral excellence" or "excellence of character." That completely matches everything we know about the sanctifying work of the Spirit in our lives. However, what may be startling to some is that He has also called us to His own glory!
3. Glory is what causes praise; it's what turns heads; it's what makes people stand awe-struck, and Peter just said God has called us to that, as in that we would have it!! Lest you think I'm crazy, listen to what Jesus Himself said,
 - a. **22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 10:22-23)**
 - b. Elsewhere Paul wrote, **14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:14)**
- C. So, God has aligned us with His resources to have His moral excellence and His GLORY! That's what's happening in your life if you are Christian, and the last verse of today's passage makes it even more straightforward. Peter writes in verse four,
- D. **4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.**
 1. The "precious" (prized, dear, cherished) and "very great" (awesome!) promises to have his glory and excellence enable us to be "**partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.**"
 2. To have His glory and excellence means we must have escaped the corruption and sinful desires we were born into, not as the environment of our lives but as the experience of our lives. The corruption in the world is because all who are in it are led by their own sinful desires, and such were we!

- a. **3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. (Titus 3:3)**
- b. **3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:3)**
- 3. **BUT GOD HAS** rescued us and, as such, aligned us with HIS DIVINE NATURE!!! What is that? Hendriksen & Kistemaker wrote, **“The term “his divine nature” indicates the sum of all God’s glorious attributes.”**¹¹
- 4. I’m going to talk more about His “divine nature” in just a minute, but before I do, I want to make sure you understand that in ransoming us from the curse of sin and into a relationship with Him, we were also taken out of the curse that has Sin and Satan as our master, and into a relationship with Him whereby we can now have His nature as our nature and His glory and excellence as the description of our life, instead of corruption and sinful desires! This description isn’t a label, it’s a reality, it’s what our life is now intended to be!

E. So, this takes us to an obvious challenge in my mind.

CHALLENGE: What is your life being aligned with, the character and nature of God, and consequently those who are also being aligned with the character and nature of God, or is it being aligned with the corruption and sinful desires of this world?

We need to be honest with how our lives are being aligned. Are we seeing God's glory and moral excellence dawning in our lives? Are we seeing his divine nature that is trustworthy, just, strong, humble, patient, and most prominently, loving becoming who we are?

To close, listen to these Scriptures and ask yourself if this is what you are being aligned with, and if not, let today be the day that you repent and cry out to God to rescue you from the idol of your own desires so that you can be aligned with HIS and all who are being aligned with HIM!

19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (Numbers 23:19)

5 For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning. (Psalm 30:5)

¹¹ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Vols. 12–13, p. 70). Baker Book House.

19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. (Psalm 68:19)

5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; our God is merciful. (Psalm 116:5)

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)

18 Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. 19 He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:18-19)

15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (1 Peter 1:15)

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. (1 John 4:7-9)

To exhaustively understand God's divine nature, we would need to read everything from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, however, we clearly don't have time to do that today, so hopefully, that was enough to get your attention!

How much of what the Bible just told us about God is being consistently told about you? Search the Bible so you can be honest about what you claim to be God's character and nature. As you do, make sure that it is, in fact, not the character and nature of sin that you are allowing to be your god! Be honest about who you are aligning yourself with and where it's taking you.

Are you aligning yourself with Christ and thus others doing the same; are you aligning yourself with the idol of religion and, therefore, others doing that, or are you aligning yourself with the idol of the desires of the flesh and those who gladly help you do it with them?