

**Alignment – Ordering Your Life With God**  
**2 Peter 1:8-15**  
**Why Align?**

**Introduction:** Peter began this letter by telling us what God had done to align us with Himself, but then he immediately turned our attention to what we need to do to truly experience that alignment. If we want to abound in what God has done, then there are things we need to make every effort to do; that is, God has given us His divine nature, but for us to experience it, we need to intentionally and diligently practice it. Last week, Jason Gilbert did an awesome job of breaking down the seven specific characteristics Peter gave us of the divine nature. Let's do a quick review by reading the list and the previous sentence that establishes the context of the list. Peter wrote,

**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. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (2 Peter 1:3-7)**

So, the divine nature that God has given us, that we are now to make every effort to live out because we have it, is characterized, or described by:

- (1)** Virtue - moral excellence and character.
- (2)** Knowledge
- (3)** Self-control
- (4)** Steadfastness
- (5)** Godliness – literally means “good worship,” and thus, to live genuinely submitted to God’s authority and command. We see this perfectly in Jesus, the eternal Son of God and second person of the Trinity, who completely submitted himself to the will of the Father.
- (6)** Brotherly Affection
- (7)** Love

Those are the seven specific characteristics of the divine nature that we have been given, and Peter says we need to make EVERY EFFORT to put them into practice in our lives!!! “Every effort” removes any concept of low priority, casualness, or passivity in our approach. But why? Why must I work so hard to ensure these qualities grow in my life?

Some might say because God said so, and yes, like a parent who must first teach their children to do what they say because they are the parent, we must first learn to obey God because He’s God! For a parent to succeed, they must get their child to understand what it means that they, not the child, are the parent, and thus they, not the child, are the authority

in the relationship. If your child is old enough to say no, or some version of it, then your child has already passed the age where you should have started teaching them to obey you because you are their parent. But, as irrevocable as this truth is for a healthy and productive parent/child relationship, it is even more so in our relationship with God! You cannot be in a relationship with God if you don't understand His authority and identity are inseparable and undeniable.

However, despite the uncompromising nature of that truth, the Bible is still filled with explanations of why we must live in it. The same is true in parenting. Eventually, a parent has to start teaching their children why they must submit to their parental authority, including teaching them why what you are telling them to do and not do is important. One of the characteristics of the divine nature is knowledge; therefore, for us to grow in that characteristic, it has to be available for us to access and grow in! Consequently, it is no surprise that this is precisely what Peter will do in the text.

Clearly, Peter believes obeying God should happen first and foremost because God is GOD. But, Peter also wants us to grow in "knowledge," therefore Peter's next move in this letter is to increase our knowledge of why it's essential to make EVERY EFFORT to make the seven characteristics of the divine nature of God he listed in verses five through seven the authentic and consistent characteristics of our life. Specifically,

**Proposition: 2 Peter 1:8-15 gives us three reasons why we should make every effort to align our lives with God's divine nature.**

**The first reason we need to make every effort to align our lives with the divine nature of God is that,**

**(1) Aligning our lives with the divine nature keeps us from wasting the knowledge of the Gospel. (1:8-9)**

**A. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. Notice first that he says, "If these qualities are yours and are increasing," meaning:
  - a. "If" you have been born again and thus you have been set from the curse of sin that separates you from God, adopted by Him and, given the "divine nature."
  - b. And, two, "if" these qualities are increasing, that is, the momentum of your life is the characteristics of the divine nature, and thus the characteristics of your past sinful nature are on the decline; then and only then will the effect he's about to give us be a reality. Therefore, it's not that we have these qualities in storage, nor even execute them with perfection, but instead, it is if they are increasing; if they are the

momentum of our life; if they are what is receiving our energy and focus, then and only then will they have their intended effect! What's the effect?

2. When the growth of these qualities is the rising tide of who we are and how we experience the world, then those qualities keep us from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - a. "Ineffective" is a straightforward and blunt word. It means "useless."
  - b. However, "unfruitful" carries a little more specific but subtle definition that drives the knife of conviction deeper. A tree that bears no fruit is not only useless in supplying food, but it is also useless in expanding the supply of that fruit. By that, I mean a tree that bears no fruit is a tree that isn't reproducing more trees that can bear fruit! Remember, the primary purpose of fruit is to expand the number of vines or trees that produce that fruit!
3. Putting that together means if you want the knowledge of the Gospel, that is, the knowledge of Jesus and what He has done for us, to not be useless to your life and others; as well as not to cease its expansion from your life to others, then you need to make sure you are putting every effort into the increase of the characteristics of the divine nature in your life. The opposite is also true; if the tide of your life, that is, the momentum of your life, is not the increase of those characteristics, then the knowledge of who Jesus is and what He has done for you is a total waste of the effort to give it to you because you're not doing anything worthwhile with it! To that, Peter adds,

**B. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.**

1. To be nearsighted means you can only see what is right in front of you. It's the opposite of what has happened to me since my mid-40s. In my mid to late 40s, I started noticing that the closer I got to things, the blurrier they became. That's called farsighted, and it turns out to be a prevalent side effect of having more than 40 birthdays, even for people like me who had perfect vision!
2. Peter says people who refuse to diligently and intentionally grow in the seven characteristics of the divine nature, those with no momentum in this area, are so nearsighted that they are practically blind. If you can only see the things that are so close to your face that they touch your nose, it really doesn't matter that you can technically still see because functionally, your vision is useless. If you can only see things placed at the tip of your nose, then you can't see enough things to fully process and navigate the world around you in a highly productive and efficient manner. This is not to say a

blind person is less of a person but rather to express the reality that a blind person cannot perform and function in society with the same freedom and ability as a person who can see. All human senses play a significant role in our productivity and safety, but sight is easily argued as the most important. Losing any of your senses creates difficulty, but losing sight is the most difficult.

3. Peter tells us what caused the blindness of a person that doesn't diligently make every effort to grow in the seven qualities of the divine nature; he says it is because they have "**forgotten**" that they were "**cleansed from ... former sins**"
4. And listen, it's not simply that we were set free from less productive lifestyles to more productive ones, but rather we were set free from the sin that incurs God's eternal wrath to instead be graciously given the right to live under the eternal blessings of God. At one point in the life of the church in Corinth, there were enough spiritually nearsighted people that Paul felt the need to write something so blunt that they couldn't help but see it; he put the truth right up to their nose when he wrote,
5. **9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)**
6. Paul was saying this is who you were, but it's not who you are, so stop making room for who you were and get to work on being who you are! The Holy Spirit washed, sanctified, and justified you with all that Jesus accomplished for you; therefore, stop acting like who you were and start acting like who you are!
7. To a child of God with an addiction, you are NOT an addict; you are a child of God struggling with an addiction. To a child of God rebelling in sexual immorality, you are not a sexually immoral person; you are a child of God who is living as a blind man who can't see who he is and thus keeps acting like who he was!
8. And this is where we see something cyclical. The Good News of who Jesus is and what He has done opens our eyes to what life in Him looks like, but if we don't practice what we claim to have seen, it's because we really haven't seen it, and thus, we need to cry out to God to open our eyes!
9. Isaiah wrote,

- 10. 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; (Isaiah 35:5)**
- 11.** In speaking of the restoration of the Hebrew people from the harsh discipline God was about to pour out on them, Isaiah was ultimately prophesying what the Holy Spirit would fulfill in Christ. The key, however, is that the first thing God does in rescuing us from our captivity is open our eyes to life outside of captivity, to see what life is like in the freedom and power of abiding in Him!
- 12.** It is why Paul prayed this for the church in Ephesus:
- 13. 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (Ephesians 1:16-21)**
- 14.** The point is, if the momentum of your life is not the seven characteristics of the divine nature of God in 2 Peter 1:5-7, then the first thing you need to do is cry out to God to open your eyes to the truth of who Jesus is and what He has done for you! When we see him for who He really is and see what He has given us, we can't help but run towards it! We may fall down and even get sidetracked at times, but those who have seen it and truly believe what they have seen can't get it out of their mind; they can't get out of hearts, and they can't shake it off. Those who have met the Savior and seen who He is and what He offers can no longer be comfortable anywhere else! When we live as who we were instead of who we are, we feel like we don't belong; we feel left out and lonely because where we are is not who we are!
- 15.** So, if you are being overcome with nearsightedness about what God has done for you, don't turn to the effort of religious practice to fix it; fall on your knees and cry out to see Him with the eyes of your heart. Get God's Word right up to your nose and marinate your mind in the Gospel, the Good News of who He is and what He has done. Ask God to remove the scales from your eyes, soften your cold heart, and give you the power of seeing the LIGHT!

**16. 8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. (Psalm 146:8)**

**The second reason we need to make every effort to align our lives with the divine nature of God is that,**

**(2) Aligning our lives with the divine nature is essential for experiencing the “victorious” life. (1:10-11)**

- A. What do I mean by victorious life? Well, have you ever seen teams that never win, so much so that it almost seems like an accident when they do win? You find yourself asking, “How did that happen?” with energy and even humor in your voice because you are pleasantly surprised they won! On the other hand, some teams win so much that when they lose, you ask the same question but with a completely different tone. You find yourself almost disturbed when you ask, “How did that happen?” You are as shocked by their loss as they are because they, nor you, are used to them losing.
- B. In the same way, when we align ourselves with God and His divine nature, we align ourselves with winning! Winning becomes the description of our life, not losing, and thus the term “victorious life!” Listen to how Peter teaches this truth,
- C. **10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**
- D. K.S. Wuest wrote, “**There is no idea here of making sure that we *retain* our salvation but that we *possess* salvation.**”<sup>1</sup>
- E. Likewise, D.H. Wheaton wrote, “**Peter is not here teaching that our salvation is to be earned by good works, nor that we can forfeit our relationship to Christ once we have genuinely responded to his call. Rather, he is reminding us that the development of a genuinely Christlike character is the only proof (to ourselves as well as to others) of our Christian status even though at times we sadly fail.**”<sup>2</sup>
- F. When victory in Christ is our normality, the assurance that we are Christ’s is also our normality!

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<sup>1</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997). [\*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader\*](#) (Vol. 12, pp. 27–28). Eerdmans.

<sup>2</sup> Wheaton, D. H. (1994). [2 Peter](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., pp. 1390–1391). Inter-Varsity Press.

- G. However, before we move forward, I need to be clear that Peter is not saying these divine attributes are achieved apart from a relationship with Christ in that we can somehow practice them enough to gain Christ or even have more of Christ. When he writes, **“make your calling and election sure,”** he is making it clear that he is writing to those that God has not only decided to save (election) but that God has also already done the work of saving (calling them to Himself). Those whom God has called to Himself have been totally set free from the curse of sin, fully adopted as God’s favored children, and received all of the Holy Spirit of God who has implanted the divine nature within them. We have an equal status before God (2 Peter 1:1) because the righteousness of Christ has established our status!
- H. Imagine it this way. The Gospel is to repent and believe in Jesus, meaning we get on the boat with Christ because He has given us the right to be there and has even come on shore and stirred our hearts to follow Him onto the boat (called). This is when, in the context of being on the boat, we should be intentional about making every effort to do what we see Jesus doing while our lives are abiding totally in Him and with Him, on His boat. The context of our living is Him. However, religion says stand on the shore and try to replicate life on the boat—practice what Jesus is doing on the boat with all who are in Him, and if you can somehow act like you're on the boat while standing on the shore, He might let you join Him. It’s a ridiculous event to behold when you see somebody trying to act like they are living on a boat, all while not actually being on a boat! The Gospel calls us to repent of being who and where we are and surrender ourselves totally to Him, meaning to have His life, we must leave the shore and get on the boat! We might stumble and fall on the boat, but we are still on the boat, and as such, we are winning. Victory is rooted in where we are because of who He is. If I’m not on the boat, fundamentally, no matter how I act, I’m not winning!
- I. So, in practicing the qualities of the divine nature, a person is not getting more called or more elected because that has already happened to completion. Instead, by living in submission to the Holy Spirit, who not only empowers us to live this way but also demands it of us, we will not “fall,” which is also translated as “stumble,” in our effort to live in the victory Christ has achieved for us. When we live in submission to the Holy Spirit in our life, we will literally walk in the victory of the righteousness of Christ. It’s why Paul wrote,
- J. **16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)**
- K. Those who submit to Christ live victorious lives over sin, trials, insults, and whatever else comes their way! When we live in submissive obedience to what God is doing in us, also known as walking in the Spirit, we live in the peace and power of Christ that He has granted us! As such, our journey towards the day we

step into His presence, whether by death or at His return, is characterized by spiritual richness instead of poverty! Our entrance is rich!

- L. On the other hand, those who resist the leadership of the Spirit and are therefore not diligent in their effort to practice the divine nature will not only have an experience that is not described by the word “victory,” but they will also not look forward to the coming of Christ! John wrote,
- M. **28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. 29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. (1 John 2:28-29)**
- N. This passage speaks of the same things as 2 Peter 1:10-11 does and roots them in the exact same cause. Being ashamed at His coming and being unsure of our salvation results from living a life of constant stumbling rather than victory. That lack of victory is caused by not abiding in Him, which is also described by Paul as not walking in the Spirit, or here in 2 Peter as not practicing the divine nature! However, if you “abide in him” (1 John 1:28), which is to say, “practice the qualities” of the divine nature, then you will have confidence in his coming because you will know you belong to Him. If you practice the qualities of the divine nature by walking in submission to the Spirit, then you will have spent your life in Christ winning and, thus, looking forward to the prize of winning! You will spend your life looking forward to the day Jesus described in the parable of the talents when the master rewarded the servants whom he had given five talents and two talents.
- O. **23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' (Matthew 25:23)**

**The third reason we need to make every effort to align our lives with the divine nature of God is that,**

**(3) Aligning our lives with the divine nature enables us to leave a legacy worth leaving. (1:12-15)**

- A. Not every legacy is worth leaving. Some of you were left a legacy of sin and rebellion, of selfishness and arrogance, of an inability to love and be loved, of foolishness and deceit, of death instead of life. Peter wanted to make sure he left a legacy worth leaving and that the readers of his letter did the same thing. He wrote,
- B. **12 Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of**

**reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.**

- C. Having the knowledge of the Gospel and not aligning our lives with the divine nature is a complete waste, so Peter understood it wasn't enough to simply leave the church with the doctrines of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Peter knew if he wasn't also leaving a legacy of what we should do with that knowledge, then all the effort he made as an Apostle to proclaim the identity and work of Christ would be pointless. It's literally what he wrote in verse eight!
- D. Therefore, because Peter knew it wasn't enough to just leave behind the correct knowledge about the Gospel, he made sure to keep reminding them of how they were to respond to it, that is, how they were to put it into practice and thus experience what that Good News is all about so that it would become the genuine pattern of their lives and thus continue to be the pattern of their lives when he was gone—legacy!
- E. Therefore, Peter intentionally reminded them of these qualities, not with randomness and casualness but with intentionality, emphasis, and urgency because he knew that for it to become a legacy, the ones he was teaching it to had to continue it. A legacy is something that goes on without us; if it doesn't, then by definition, it's not a legacy!
- F. Likewise, Peter is not preaching this as if they are not doing it. In fact, he states very clearly that the people he's sending this letter to not only know the characteristics of the divine nature but are firmly established in their practice. But Peter also knows that our sin nature is still around; therefore, we need to be constantly stirred to move towards the divine.
- G. This is why it is so vital to be an active part of a BIBLE-preaching local church and why it is so helpful to get in a life group where you talk about God's Word and pray for one another. We live in a world that is literally trying to drag us away from His life, not to mention we still live with our own sinful fleshly desires constantly tugging at our hearts to submit to them instead of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, at no point should we ever believe we have achieved victory by which there will be no more battle. It's why we read things like this in the Bible,
- H. **11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11)**
- I. **8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)**
- J. It's why Paul said,

**K. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)**

**Challenge: What's your reason, that is, what's motivating the actions of your life?**

What motivates your life? What motivates us is what directs us. Your motivation, therefore, determines your direction and destiny. No matter how much you know about Jesus and what He accomplished, if the attributes of the divine nature are not growing in your life, then you are not being motivated by the knowledge of Christ. If your momentum is not further into His nature, it is because your reasons for life and living are not the Gospel!

So, are you being driven to experience God's life and not waste the gift you have in the knowledge of who Jesus is and what he's done, to truly live a victorious life, and leave that life as a legacy that is carried on by generations after you; or are you being driven to succeed in a career; to have money, to get relational affirmation, to control people and have influence, or to find another high in a substance or activity? Some are driven by their sexuality or need to be affirmed in how they define their gender. Some are driven by the affirmation they get from social media. Some are driven by their politics. Some are driven by their addiction to food. Some are driven by their addiction to their image and body. Some are driven by their financial security or lack of it. But no matter what it is, what's driving you, your reason, that's where you're headed. So, what's your reason?