

The Evidence of Spiritual Life, Part 1 | Peter

I. Peter's Spiritual Life

- Peter is by far one of the most well-known and most controversial of the disciples. Not only was his personality brash and impulsive, but the Lord accomplished so much through him
- But when was Peter truly born again?
- Many people take for granted that Peter was a genuine child of God from the moment he was called by Christ (or shortly thereafter), but one of the beautiful realities of Peter's life is that is a warning to us all of how determined, passionate, and outwardly successful a person can be without having a genuine, saving relationship with God.
 - Just because Peter was a physical "disciple of Christ" doesn't mean he had to be born again. Judas was a "disciple of Christ" too.
 - Just because he preached and did miracles when Jesus sent the disciples out doesn't mean he was born again. Judas did the same.
 - Everything we know about Peter before his conversion is consistent with a nominal Christian experience.
 - In Matthew 10:33, Jesus makes it very clear that he who denies Christ before men, Jesus would also deny him before the Father. Peter denied Christ three times.
 - Jesus and Peter's conversation on the Sea of Galilee supports the fact that Peter recognized his need to truly love Jesus.
 - There was a categorical shift in Peter's personality and ministry after that conversation. Peter was no longer the man he used to be, it was clear he had new life in Christ, and he was being sanctified.
 - This is beautiful because it is this man, a man who I believe thought he had genuine spiritual life but who later discovered he didn't, this man under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is going to share with the us the evidences of genuine spiritual life.

II. II Peter 1:1-15

- This passage is a gloriously concise explanation of how a Christian is to grow in his or her maturity, and therefore subsequently a valuable resource to determine if we have spiritual life in the first place.
- Because Christians are bond-servants of God, and because He has given us faith, grace, and peace that come through knowing Him and results in life and godliness, we *obviously* must be growing in that life. So then in verses 5-7 Peter provides an eight point plan for Christian growth.
- Over the next few weeks, you and I are going to work through this eight point plan in order to better know it, understand it, and grow in it. But since Peter's plan is nothing more than eight short descriptions, we're going to need to search the Scriptures (the knowledge of God) in order to truly know, understand, and live out these character traits in our lives.
- Each of these episodes is designed to help you dig deeper in your understanding of God's Word. Our goal is to be able to better understand each of the eight character traits in which Christians should be growing so that we can grow in them or come to the realization that we don't have spiritual life . . . and then run to Christ!

III. The Diligence of Spiritual Life

- If we have spiritual life, we have it for a reason. God has imported His glory and excellence to us so that we would be recipients of His precious and magnificent promises. And those promises are designed to make us partakers of His divine nature.

- Verse 5
 - We've talked much about this concept of escaping the corruption that's in the world by lust and being matured in the divine nature of Christ which includes His character, words, and deeds.
 - This is God's plan for our salvation, and it's going to take some earnest, careful, and diligent effort on our part to mature in this process.
 - It's not going to happen through osmosis or subconsciously or without our participation. Sanctification is the process of us cooperating with the Holy Spirit to be transformed. We have to do our part because He's not going to "force" it on us against our will.
- Verse 10
 - We must exercise earnest, careful, and diligent effort to *make certain* about His calling and choosing to give us life in Christ.
- Chapter 3, verse 14 — Our light shines all the brighter as our good works are evidence of the life of Christ in us. (II Peter 1:11)
- We have to be certain that our earthly life bears the earmarks of genuine spiritual life. We need to be diligent about it. We need to be earnest about proving it.

IV. The Necessity of Living Community

- II Peter 1:12-15
- It really doesn't matter if we've heard or know what we're going to cover in this series. It's so important to be reminded of them that Peter says that he would *always* be ready to remind us even though we might already be established in the truth.
- And here we find another reference to diligence. Not only are we to diligently pursue growth in our spiritual life, not only are we to diligently confirm the fact that we have spiritual life, but Peter was diligent to make certain that everyone under his care so knew these truths that they could easily call them to mind even after he was no longer around to remind them.
- We need to be diligent about our relationship with the Lord and our continued maturity in sanctification, but we also need other spiritually-alive, maturing believers who will be equally diligent about our relationship with the Lord and continued maturity.