

2Peter 1:3-9

## Are You Partaking of the Divine Nature?

***2Peter 1:3, “as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...”***

The main point of the third verse is that everything that is needed to live the life God has called us to, and to live it the way He has called us to live it, is provided for us by the One who called us.

Successful Christian living is not your work, it is the work of Christ who lives in us. You can't say, “I just don't have what it takes—if you have Jesus Christ, you have everything that is needed.

Now you just need to get to know Jesus, and get to know what He can do for you.

However, this is vital for us all to see in verse three, everything we need for life is accessed, or unpacked as we grow in our knowledge of Jesus.

This isn't talking about an academic knowledge—you can't say, “I'm not smart enough to get to know Jesus”—a child can get to know Jesus.

This is talking about spending time with Jesus, interacting with Him, depending on Him, trusting Him to do the things for you that He says He can do for you.

Let me use a crude illustration, but one that many of you will be able to relate to. It is a little bit like the first time you got a smart phone. It is amazing what that device is able to do for you, but until you get to know it, and become familiar with its features and try them out, you won't be able to make use of it's potential.

But the more time you spend on it, and the better you get to know all about it by using it, the more benefit you can get from it.

Now Jesus is not a device that we use for our purpose—but in a similar way, when you received Jesus Christ as your Lord, it is amazing all the blessings and benefits, all the grace and shalom (vs. 2) that became available to us—literally everything

that we need for life and godliness was included in that gift of eternal life that you received when you received Jesus.

How much of the potential that you have available to you in the indwelling life of Jesus Christ have you gotten to know, and become familiar with?

How familiar are you with Jesus? Young people, Jesus Christ longs to have the time and attention and interaction all day long, that you give to your device.

Your phone is just a tool, but it cannot give you life, and it is not everything you need for life and godliness. It can be useful when yielded to the Lord, or it can be a life-sucking idol that will rob you of all that brings joy and fulfillment.

Jesus offers life more abundantly, and He offers everything that we need. The better you get to know Him, by interacting with Him, the more you will discover, and begin accessing, of all that He makes available to you for abundant living.

Many of you young people (and older ones), your familiarity with Jesus, and your experience of all that He can do, is similar to the typical grandparents knowledge and experience of the capabilities of your smart device.

Verse three says that Jesus called us by glory and virtue. In the original Greek, this statement also implies that He called us to glory and virtue. He called us by glory and virtue, and He called us to glory and virtue. (See Amplified Bible)

What does this mean? Glory is the expression of God's greatness—it is what radiates out from God and impacts us, causing us to be aware of His presence even when we can't see Him.

Like the brightness that lights up everything around you when the sun rises, even though you may have your back turned to it, and you don't actually see the sun, you see its glory all around you—you see the expression of the sun.

And you feel its heat on your back—all that is radiating out from the sun is the glory of the sun.

So, verse three says that Jesus called us by glory, meaning that though we don't see Him, there is expression of His presence and power impacting and affecting us when He calls us to be His followers.

It implies that His call on our lives does something to us—there is evidence of His glory in those who are called. Others will see the light of Jesus in you, and they will experience His warmth radiating from you.

Romans eight implies the same thing—that the call of God has a transforming impact on the lives of those who are called.

***Romans 8:30***, “*Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified [the implication is that His success rate in justifying those He calls is pretty good]; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*”

“... ***These He also glorified.***” He called us by His glory, and He called us to experience and express His glory.

***Philippians 1:6***, “...***being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you*** [called you by His glory and virtue] ***will complete it*** [called you to His glory and virtue—to display His glory and His excellence] ***until the day of Jesus Christ...***”

Meaning, the glory and excellence of God is powerful and effective in its impact upon us, and will not fail to accomplish God’s purpose in us.

***2Peter 1:4***, “... [***Jesus our Lord***] ***who called us by glory and virtue,*** <sup>4</sup> ***by which*** [by glory and virtue] ***have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these*** [through these promises] ***you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.***”

What does it mean to be *partakers of the divine nature*?

A partaker is someone who takes a share, or participates in something in common with others.

Therefore, partakers of the divine nature, are believers, those who Peter is writing to, including us. We who have faith in Jesus Christ, we have a share in, and participate in, the very nature of God.

To be a partaker of the divine nature, means to be born again—to be born of the Holy Spirit—to become a child of God, to become a member of God’s family.

**John 1:12**, “*But as many as received [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.*” If we are children of God, we share God’s spiritual DNA. (See also 1John 5:1, Romans 8:9 and 1Peter 1:23)

**Galatians 2:20**, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the [body] I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*”

**1Peter 1:23 AMPC**,

The clearest, and most radical declaration of this truth, that believers are partakers in the very nature of God, is found in **Colossians 2:9-10**, “*For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; <sup>10</sup> and you are complete in Him...*”

The Amplified Bible translates it this way, **Colossians 2:9-10 AMPC**, “*For in Him [Christ] the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead) continues to dwell in bodily form [giving complete expression of the divine nature]. <sup>10</sup> And you are in Him, made full and having come to fullness of life [in Christ you too are filled with the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and reach full spiritual stature] ...”*

This does not mean that we become God, but it means that we who are born again as children of God will begin to display the family likeness—we will begin to look and sound a lot like our Father as we grow and mature.

Go back and look at our text, **2Peter 1:4**, where it says that our participation in the nature of God is the fulfillment of exceedingly great and precious promises.

What are the exceedingly great and precious promises that have been given to us?

One of the clearest promises that believers would become partakers of the very life of God was made in the Old Testament, by the prophet Ezekiel.

**Ezekiel 36:26-27**, “*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*”

Then there were many promises made by Jesus, like **John 3:16**, Jesus promised, “... *That whoever believes in [the Son of God] shall not perish but have everlasting life.*”

Everlasting life is literally in the Greek, eternal life—meaning life without beginning and without end. Only God is eternal; only God has no beginning. Therefore, to receive eternal life is to receive God’s life—it is to partake of the divine nature.

Do you have any idea of what you have, and of who you have become?

**John 10:28**, “*And I give them eternal life*, [again this means we are given God’s life—we are partakers of the divine nature] *and they shall never perish* [because God cannot die, and He has become our life]; *neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*”

These are just a few of the exceedingly great and precious promises of sharing in Christ’s nature, that are fulfilled in all who have obtained faith in Jesus Christ.

I am taking a bit of time to carefully flesh out these opening verses of Second Peter, because they are the foundation upon which the rest of Peter’s letter stands.

It is the life of God in you who enables you to become the kind of people that Peter goes on to talk about.

To be partakers of the divine nature implies more than just having a share in the divine nature, but it implies that you are entering in and experiencing and putting to use all that you have been given.

The spiritual life that we are called to live, and the Christ-like people we are called to be, is not a task that is placed upon our shoulders—God doesn’t expect us to reproduce His likeness—He knows that we can’t.

Christ is in us to live His life through us as we, in every situation in life, turn to Him, like you pull out your phone constantly for everything, pull out Jesus, and let Him show you what He can do in that situation.

The entire human history of the Old Testament is proof that people cannot successfully live a godly life. The only one who can truly live like God is God Himself—God in the person of Jesus Christ.

And now we have that same Spirit of God living in us who lived in Jesus.

But many of you never take Him out of your spiritual pocket and partake

It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. But this is not a call to passivity.

No! The opposite of apathy, indifference and passiveness should be stirred up in our hearts when we realize the amazing potential for successful godly living that has been placed into our hearts.

**2 Peter 1:5, “But also for this very reason,** [because we have been given everything needed for life and godliness; and because we have been given the opportunity to partake of the divine nature; to draw upon the resources of God’s life] ***giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge ...*”**

Some people are totally content to just have faith in God, period, full stop, nothing else.

**James 2:20, 26** responds to such a person calling him a fool, and then adds these words, “*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*”

If there is not a deep desire in your heart for more than just faith in God, if you are content with there being little more substance to your Christianity than going to church on Sunday, then, according to God’s word, your faith is probably dead and will not save you.

But the word of God exhorts us in **2Peter 1:5**, that because everything that we need for life and godliness has been given to us, we must respond by using what God has given us; ***“giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue...”***

Think of someone who is diligent in their work, meaning they don’t put it off, they don’t avoid it, they get to it and keep at it. We are to be diligent in partaking of the divine nature—diligent in accessing and relying on Christ.

Diligence is steady application in what you are doing; constant engagement to accomplish what is undertaken; without unnecessary delay or procrastination.

The Amplified Bible puts it this way, “... *employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue...*”

So, let’s look at the meaning of the word, virtue, which we are to be exercising our faith to develop.

Virtue means, excellence in fulfilling, or expressing the ideal of being what one is supposed to be, or the ideal of functioning as one is supposed to function. (*Michael Green, 2Peter and Jude*, p. 76-77)

Virtue is the energy and strength of character that enables one to reach the goal and be all that we were meant to be.

The virtue of a knife is to cut cleanly and effortlessly—the ideal of functioning as it is intended to function. There is no virtue (or excellence) in a dull knife.

The virtue (or excellence) of a horse is to demonstrate strength and to run—there is no virtue in a weak horse that can’t run—it falls short of its intended potential. (Ibid)

What is the virtue, or excellence, of a man or woman? **Proverbs 31** describes for us to the virtuous wife, and the description is an ideal woman in every way. She is perfect.

Romans 8:29 reveals that virtue for all of us, is to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ, who was the human par excellence. (Romans 8:29) (Ibid)

So, if virtue means excellence in functioning as we are supposed to function—like Christ, then how can we ever do this?

Look at how verse 5 begins. “***But also for this very reason,*** [because we have been given everything needed for life and godliness; and because we have been given the opportunity to partake of the divine nature; to draw upon the resources of God’s life] ***employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue...***”

Or as Paul said, “... *striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me...*”

The question I want to leave you with this morning is: “Are you partaking of the divine nature?”

When facing the possibility of losing your job, are you turning to the all-sufficiency of the indwelling life of Christ and trusting in Him to provide everything that is needed?

When facing relationship challenges, parenting challenges, or the unique challenges of singleness, are you constantly turning your focus to Jesus and drawing from His life in you all that you need?

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