Lesson Six: **2 Peter 1** Confirming Your Call

*(extracted from 1 & 2 Peter and Jude by N. T. Wright)*

1. *Read 2 Peter 1:1-11*. As you read through Peter’s inventory of what God has provided for us, for which of these blessings are you most grateful and why?
2. Peter says we are given the promises “so that [we] may run away from the corruption of lust that is in the world, and may become partakers of the divine nature” (v.4). The word for “run away from” is sometimes translated “shun,” as though merely pushing these things away were enough, like refusing a second helping of food. Peter means something closer to what Joseph did when Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce him (Genesis 39). She made a grab at him, but he *ran away*. Running away from the lusts of the flesh isn’t a negative thing, despite what people will frantically tell you today. Lust is a drug. Like all drugs it demands more and more but gives less and less. It turns people into shadows of real human beings. Like shady financial dealings, it corrupts; it does to the moral fiber what cancer does to physical cells. Peter urges his readers to go in the opposite direction.

Lust is often used for inappropriate sexual desire, but *lust* can be a consuming desire for anything which God does not desire for us. What desires put you in conflict with God’s will?

1. What are practical ways to run away from that desire?
2. Peter says we have these blessings so that we “may become partakers of the divine nature” (v. 4). If we say that the Holy Spirit is fully divine, and if we say that the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and transform us from within, this is essentially saying that the divine nature is already dwelling within us, leading us forward until we are suffused with God’s own presence and power.

What difference does this make to you as you pursue life and godliness?

1. As we look at verses 5-7, we could think this is about “me making myself good enough for God,” which can then lead to pride or arrogance (“See what a fine Christian I’ve become!”). The surrounding verses indicate that Peter has something else in mind. God has already given us everything we need for such a life of godliness. Of course, all these take thought; all these take effort. They don’t happen by accident. You have to want to do them; you have to choose to do them. But when you do, and pray for God’s grace, promises and power to help, you will be coming to know Jesus the Messiah.

Think of one of the qualities mentioned in verse 5-7. In what practical ways might the Holy Spirit grow that in you Christian community?

1. How do verses 5-9 challenge you concerning the times when you feel you are wasting your time, or failing to bear fruit (v. 8)?
2. Peter urges his readers to confirm God’s call and choice (v. 10). He doesn’t mean that they can make *God* more sure of it; rather, they can make *themselves* more sure.

When in your growth as a Christian have you had a new sense of certainty that you were chosen by God?

1. *Read 2 Peter 1:12-21*. Peter intends to keep reminding his readers of what they already know (v. 12). Why do we need to be reminded about the truths of the gospel?
2. Why does Peter feel such urgency in what he writes (vv. 13-15)?
3. How does Peter confirm the fact that he and the other apostles were not following cleverly devised myths in what they taught (vv. 16-17)?
4. How do the Old Testament prophets fit into the gospel that Peter preached and that we believe today (vv. 19-21)?

Second Peter 1:16-18 is the only time outside the first three Gospels that anyone refers to the transfiguration – the time when Jesus was suddenly radiant with light, talking with Moses and Elijah, and when a voice from heaven proclaimed that he was God’s Son (for example mark 9:2-13). Presumably by this stage in the early church some of the opponents of the faith were scoffing at the extraordinary tales that were going around about Jesus. Peter insists that it was the truth.

The result of this eyewitness testimony is that the apostles could look back on the entire world of biblical prophecy represented by Moses and Elijah – that great, untidy, all-over-the-place story which functioned all through as a set of signposts pointing forward to what was to come – and could see that in retrospect it all made sense.

1. How is Jesus “a lamp shining in a dark place” (v. 19) for the world?

Like all other early Christians, Peter holds firm to two things: the ancient Scriptures and the newly revealed Son of God. Until we see *him*, we don’t understand where *they* were going. Until we understand *them*, we don’t see the point of who *he* was and what he did. We need to hold on to both until the morning star shines in our hearts, and then, through us, shines out into the world.

**PRAY**

**Thank God** for the promises of verses 2-4.

**Think** about the qualities in verses 5-7. Which ones do you feel you lack? Pray for the Holy Spirit to develop those qualities in you.

**Pray** that you will be continually reminded of the gospel, as Peter urgently wishes to remind his readers.