

# Making your Calling and Election Sure

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to turn to our Bibles now, and if you'd turn with me to the New Testament and to Peter's second letter. Edward began last Sunday evening, a series in this second letter of Peter, and we're going to read again in chapter 1, beginning at verse 1 through to verse 15.

I'll read in English, and then one of our brothers is going to come and read also in Farsi, so that our Farsi speakers can understand fully the passage before us tonight.

So first Peter then, sorry, second Peter, chapter 1 and verse 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.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 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.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

[ 1 : 59 ] 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. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right as long as I am in this body to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

And I will make every effort so that after my departure, you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Well, friends, let's turn in our Bibles to 2 Peter chapter 1. And I think you'll find this on page 1018 in our church Bibles.

[ 3 : 26 ] 2 Peter chapter 1, verses 3 to 11. And my title for this evening is Making Your Calling and Election Sure.

Now, a service like this, in which we admit new members to the congregation, is always a very happy occasion.

Once you've become a member, your name is on the roll. It's there in black and white. You've been admitted. You're a member of the Tron Church.

And you don't doubt that. And nobody doubts it. But can we be quite so sure that we are members of God's eternal kingdom? Can we be certain that our names are on his eternal roll?

Just look at verse 11 in our passage. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[ 4 : 27 ] Can we be sure about that? Can we have the same certainty about our eternal membership as we can about our membership of the congregation? Well, the Apostle Peter says, yes, we can.

And that's what our passage for this evening is all about. It's really important for Christian people to be sure about this. Because if we haven't got a firm grip on the Bible's teaching about our sure and certain membership of God's eternal kingdom, we shall remain underdeveloped and insecure, hesitant in bearing witness about Christ.

We shall lack boldness and lack in the sheer happiness which is such a central element in the Bible's teaching about the Christian life. Now, it's verses 5 to 11 that I particularly want us to dig into this evening.

But before we look at those verses, let's take a bird's-eye view of what Peter the Apostle is wanting his readers to grasp in the whole section from verse 3 to verse 11.

Now, the key verse in this section, the verse that Peter is really driving towards throughout the whole paragraph, is verse 10. Therefore, brothers. Now, whenever a verse begins like that, you know that the writer is driving his nail home.

[ 5 : 47 ] Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. For if you practice these qualities, you will never fail, never fall.

Now, that's the key verse. And you'll see that it's a command that takes its force from what the Apostle has been saying in the foregoing verses. Now, there's a striking phrase in verse 10 there.

These qualities. And that's a phrase he repeats in verse 12. Therefore, I intend always to remind you of these qualities. And if you look back to verse 8, you'll see it there again.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being ineffective. And the same phrase comes again in verse 9. So, what are these qualities?

They are the eight qualities that Peter describes in verses 5, 6, and 7. Faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love.

[ 6 : 52 ] And you'll see that that list of qualities is headed by a command at the beginning of verse 5. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, and so on.

So, that list of desirable qualities, commanded in verse 5, described in verses 5, 6, and 7, referred to again in verse 8 and verse 9, pressed upon the reader in verse 10, and re-emphasized in verse 12, these qualities are clearly Peter's main concern in this part of his letter.

They are of central importance. And verse 10 is clearly saying that if the readers will practice these qualities, they will never fall, and they will make their calling and election sure.

Now, friends, a penny for your thoughts. Are you thinking, surely the apostle Peter is at odds here with the apostle Paul? Doesn't Paul teach that justification comes through faith and not through works?

But Peter seems to be saying that it's all about effort. Try very hard, and you'll get there. Doesn't he say in verse 5, supplement your faith with these seven other things, seven grunt qualities, over which we are to make every effort?

- [ 8 : 16 ] If faith has to be supplemented with seven other things before we can be sure about our calling and election, it's not justification by faith alone.
- It looks much more like salvation through a lot of hard work. Now, it's at a point like this where we suddenly feel baffled that we need to remind ourselves of what Peter has been saying back in verses 3 and 4.
- It's so easy to misunderstand a Bible passage if we don't read it in its context. Look at how verse 5 begins. For this very reason, make every effort.
- So the grunt work is based upon prior facts. And those facts are the two great grants or gifts that God has already given to all Christians without which we couldn't even begin to live the Christian life.
- You could sum the whole thing up like this. That divine provision is the precondition of human effort. Look again at verse 3 and 4.
- [ 9 : 20 ] Two gifts. The first gift or grant described in verse 3 is the grant of all things that pertain to life and godliness. Everything that enables you and me to live a godly life is granted to us by God's divine power.
- So the origin of all this is heavenly. It's not human. And then what is the second grant? It's there in verse 4. He has granted to us his precious and very great promises.
- And that means that he has given to us not simply bare promises but also the things promised. And in verse 4, he especially mentions the ability to escape from the world's corrupting influence by partaking of the divine nature.
- In other words, by becoming God's children and beginning to share and reproduce his own characteristics. So it means that this human effort that Peter is calling his readers to in verses 5, 6, and 7 is impossible without God's prior provision.
- Divine provision is the precondition of human effort. Now this is exactly what the apostle Paul teaches. Think of his letter to the Ephesians in chapter 2, for example.
- [ 10 : 33 ] He says to his readers, you were dead. Dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. He doesn't mean physically dead. He means spiritually dead. Now if you're dead, you can't be commanded to rise up.
- You can't respond to anything. But Paul goes on in Ephesians 2. But God, being rich in mercy, made us, who were corpses, alive together with Christ.
- And it's only then, on that basis of God's prior life-giving action, that Paul goes on to urge the Ephesian Christians to express the Christian faith in godly living.
- And the apostle James makes just the same kind of point in his opening chapter, in James chapter 1. He says, of his own will, God brought us forth by the word of truth.
- In other words, God has caused us to be born again. And it's only on that basis that James then urges his readers to live a godly life. And he goes on to say that faith, apart from works, is dead.
- [ 11 : 38 ] So to return to 2 Peter chapter 1, it's important that we see the order in which Peter describes the Christian life. What comes first is God's action, God's power, his divine power, as verse 3 puts it.
- allied to which is the giving of his precious and very great promises which bring about the new birth and enable us to become partakers of the divine nature.
- And it's only once we've understood these wonderful prior gifts of God that Peter then issues his command in verse 5 for this very reason, because we now partake of the divine nature, because we've been granted all things that pertain to life and godliness.
- For this reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with the lovely qualities listed in verses 5 to 7. So do you see how the order is crystal clear?

New birth first by the power of God, and then growth in godly living and godly effort. Now friends, let me ask this. Have you grasped this?

- [ 12 : 46 ] This order? If you haven't, you'll be in a muddle about the security of your salvation. The Bible's teaching, the whole Bible's teaching which lies behind these verses, is that God chooses or elects those who will come to Christ, and he takes all the initiative.

Now we don't know why he chooses some and not others. Those questions are hidden within his own counsel. But he does this before we are born. He did it before the world was created.

And his choice does not rest upon our merits. Far from it. As you know, some of the world's most violent and unpleasant people become Christians.

I'm sure he wouldn't mind me saying this, but I think, for example, of Ramraj David, who's one of the senior leaders of the Delhi Bible Institute. As an angry young man 20 or 30 years ago, he was the commander of a Red Brigade communist unit in northern India and did all sorts of wrong things.

He was then wonderfully converted and he's now planting churches and training pastors all across north India. He didn't deserve God's mercy. He had no claim upon God to give him the new birth.

- [ 14 : 02 ] Neither did I and neither do you. All of us, all of us have been hard-hearted God opponents in the past. All of us once had no room for God.

We despised godliness. We thought of the church as a peculiar museum piece and if people spoke to us about becoming Christians or being saved, we thought they were soft in the head.

But if you're a Christian today, God elected you before you were born and he called you and then he opened your ear to the gospel. He gave you ears to hear it and a heart to understand how Christ had died for you and then you came to Christ humbled to the core of your being and then you got down on your knees and you thanked him for having mercy on a sinner like you who had defied his authority and rejected his love and then you realized that you were born again, born into a new world where Christ is king.

In Peter's words that you were now a partaker of the divine nature, that the very nature of God was beginning to refashion your very thinking and your values.

Now it's those who don't understand this gospel who think that human effort has to come first. Try hard, people think.

- [ 15 : 24 ] Do good. Keep your nose clean. And God might accept you in the end if you don't blot your copybook too badly. Now that's always the approach of unregenerate man.

It's the approach of all the world's religious faiths except for the gospel. It's only Christianity that shows us the wonder of undeserved and prior grace.

Grace to the sinner, mercy and forgiveness to the God rejecter. Peter is so clear about the order of things here. First, in verse 3, comes God's divine power which has made us a grant of all we need to live a godly life.

along with that blessing come his promises in verse 4. Promises not only given but delivered upon so that we can have and experience now his divine nature at work in our own natures.

Reshaping us to reproduce the likeness of Christ in us. And it's for this very reason, verse 5, that the apostle now commands his readers to make every effort to supplement the faith which is the basis of the Christian life with these seven other qualities.

- [ 16 : 38 ] So this is not salvation by works. This is salvation by calling and election, by divine power and glorious promises from God in response to all of which we then learn to make every effort.

Well, let's move on now as we try to grasp the apostles' teaching. I don't want to spend long on these seven qualities here but we will look at them briefly. Faith comes first. In verse 5, that's the basis of our whole relationship with the Lord.

And you'll see that love comes last as the climax of the list. Love in this context not so much for God as love for other people. Then after faith, Peter starts with virtue by which he means an energy of goodness, something proactive that throws itself into the Christian life with enthusiasm and joy.

Next, there's knowledge. above all, knowledge of God, both knowing him and knowing about him. Peter speaks of this knowledge in chapter 1, verse 2 and again in the very last verse of the whole letter.

Now, the source of this knowledge, knowledge of God, is of course the Bible, not our thick heads or our silly imaginations. Next, there comes self-control.

[ 17 : 57 ] self-control. And self-control is right at the heart of all the ethical teaching of the Bible. It means self-discipline, learning to control not only the appetites for food and drink and sex and indolence, but also our tendencies to speak rashly, to grumble, to become angry and to throw our weight around.

Next, there's steadfastness, the ability to persevere through thick and thin, trusting the Lord as much when the road is uphill as when the road is level and easy.

Then there's godliness. One of my commentaries defines this as a very practical awareness of God in every aspect of life. I quite like that.

In every aspect of life, you're walking the dog, let's say, but you're very much aware of the Lord. You're ironing your husband's shirt or your wife's trousers, but you're still thinking glad thoughts of the Lord.

Your life becomes infiltrated at every level with thoughts of truth and gospel and the world to come. You're often thinking about these things. Next comes brotherly affection.

[ 19 : 11 ] Philadelphia is the word in the Greek and that means learning to love and rejoice in your Christian brothers and sisters, especially those who are very different humanly, different in nationality or color or educational background or temperament.

The extrovert learning to appreciate the introvert. The shy person learning to talk to the irrepressible optimist. Philadelphia, that's one of the great joys of the Christian life.

And then finally, love. Love not just for Christians but for all people and not least for those who are far from God and who so much need the gospel. Now to help us to see how Peter is dealing with these qualities, let's notice the verb that he uses in verse 5.

For this very reason, he says, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and so on. That word supplement, it's an important word here.

It really means to furnish or to develop or to increase. Let me illustrate what I mean. When I'd been in my first job as a young minister for a few months, the church that I was working with got hold of a council flat for me in a high-rise block in our parish on the edge of Manchester.

[ 20 : 26 ] I'd been lodging with a family there in the church initially but then this flat became available for me. I was young and unmarried. It was rather exciting. But I didn't have a stick of furniture at that point in my life, not one stick.

But just as I was about to move into this flat without a stick of furniture, it happened that an elderly man died in a neighboring flat. Now the flats in these high-rise blocks were all designed on exactly the same model, all exactly the same size.

So the old man's daughter happened to hear that I was moving into the flat very close by and she phoned me up and she said, do you want my dad's furniture? I've got to clear the flat out. So I said, yes please, without a moment's hesitation.

I'll tell you what I had. There was a fridge, a kitchen table, a cooker, which worked. There were upright chairs, armchairs, a sofa, a carpet. There was the bed that the old man had died in. I took the lot.

Well the bed was fine, it was the old man who'd been ill. So I had all the basics of this flat and I was able to move in without paying a penny.

[ 21 : 32 ] But the flat still needed to be further furnished out. So as time went on over the next few months, I got hold of a desk for working at, I got some pictures for the walls, a radio, towels and blankets, a record player for my vinyl LPs and so on and so forth.

So I started with an empty flat but gradually this empty flat began to be furnished out. Now in verses 5, 6 and 7, Peter is describing a new life which is like an empty flat and it then needs to be furnished out.

It's God of course who has provided the new life. He's given us all we need to enable us to live a godly life. But we now, in the words of verse 5, have to make every effort to furnish out our faith with these seven qualities.

And Peter is not asking us to do the impossible. If you're a young Christian, you'll perhaps have only a few sticks of furniture in the flat of your Christian life so far.

But when you look at the lives of those who've been Christians for a lot longer than you have, you will see that they have indeed developed these qualities to a much greater degree. They have been making every effort and that's why you see in them unmistakable signs of steadfastness and self-control and brotherly affection and all these other things.

[ 22 : 57 ] You'll see from verse 8 that these qualities need to be increasing. The Christian life is constantly growing and increasing. That's one of the joys of getting older as a Christian.

The Christian life really does get better and better. Now, do you feel that all this is very daunting? Does your heart sink at the thought of making every effort?

Do you think to yourself, I want a quiet life. It's hard enough for me just to survive from one week to the next. Don't ask me to get into the spiritual gymnasium. I just want a very quiet, gentle Christian life.

I don't want to have too many demands made upon me. I wonder if you think like that. Well, if you do, see what Peter says next and you might just be encouraged to follow his advice because what he gives us in the next few verses is three powerful incentives to make every effort to furnish out our lives with the qualities of verses 5 to 7.

So let's look at these incentives, these great encouragements to develop the Christian life. First, from verse 8, there's the incentive to be effective and fruitful in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

[ 24 : 14 ] Verse 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.

Wouldn't it be sad to get to the end of our life, to be sitting in one of those high-backed chairs in the old folks' home with your Zimmer frame beside you, looking back over 70 or 80 years and thinking, I have been an idle and undeveloped Christian.

I fear that my Christian life has been ineffective and unfruitful. Wouldn't that be sad? Well, Peter is telling us how to be sure that things don't end up that way.

If these qualities, he says, are yours and are increasing, you won't be ineffective or unfruitful. Your Christian life will make a real contribution to the strength and growth of the gospel.

Isn't that a great incentive to make every effort to furnish out our lives with these qualities? But let's notice something important here. Peter is not saying that the way to be effective and fruitful is to cram our diaries so full that every moment of the week is taken up with Christian meetings and Christian activities.

[ 25 : 27 ] Verses 5, 6, and 7 are not about hyper-activism. They're about the growth of godly character, virtue and knowledge and self-control and steadfastness.

Now, of course, the Christian, the committed Christian will be a busy person. There's always plenty to do. But if it's activism at the expense of the growth of godly character, it's not what Peter is teaching us here.

If we're to increase in these qualities, we need time to breathe and think. We need time to discuss with friends how to grow in steadfastness and self-control and brotherly affection.

We need time to be able to pray and to read. Over-activism is much more likely to lead to exhaustion and falling into sin than to the growth of godly character.

But with that little caution in mind, let's attend to the furnishing of our lives with godly qualities because the increase of them will keep us from being ineffective or unfruitful.

[ 26 : 32 ] Now the second incentive that Peter gives us comes in verse 9. For whoever lacks these qualities is so short-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Now who wants to lose both sight and memory to become blind and forgetful? A person who doesn't press forward to increase in these godly qualities loses his ability to see what his life means.

He becomes not only short-sighted but so short-sighted that he's blind. And in particular, Peter says, he becomes blind to the fact that he has been cleansed from his former sins.

And that is the same as saying that he has forgotten the meaning of the gospel. Think of it. If I forget that I've been cleansed from my former sins, it means that I forget why Jesus came.

The angel, way back, said to Joseph, you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. But I've forgotten about that. I no longer care about it.

[ 27 : 41 ] John the Baptist said of Jesus, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. But I've forgotten that as well. I've forgotten that the blood of the Passover lambs was sprinkled and daubed on the lintels and doorposts of the Israelites' houses in Egypt so that the destroying angel should spare them as he passed through the land.

I've forgotten that the Passover lambs were slaughtered to teach me the meaning of the slaughter of Jesus. Well, then again, Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, I'm the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, meaning to save them, to be a sacrifice for them, his life for ours, death for him so that life could be ours, our sins cleansed.

But I've forgotten that he laid down his life for me. The gratitude has drained out of my heart. I've become short-sighted to the point of blindness. I can see my life in terms of the physical and transient world that I live in.

I eat and I drink and I walk the dog and I pay my bills. But I'm no longer aware of the eternal dimensions of my life. I've become a blind man. I've also forgotten what Peter wrote to me in his first letter, that we were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from our fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

[ 29 : 09 ] Precious blood. But I've forgotten the blood. I've forgotten the value of it. I've forgotten the Lord's sufferings. As verse 9 puts it, I've forgotten that I've been cleansed from my sins and that means that I no longer care about Jesus.

And the point of verse 9 is to urge us to make every effort to furnish out our lives with the godly qualities of verses 5 to 7 because if we lack them, it means that blindness and darkness will descend upon us and the very heart of the gospel will disappear from our understanding.

Isn't that an incentive to obey the command of verse 5? Then Peter's third incentive comes in verses 10 and 11, picking it up halfway through verse 10.

For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall, for in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

J.B. Phillips translates it like this. If you have lived the sort of life I've recommended, God will open wide to you the gates of the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[ 30 : 23 ] And the point at which the gates are opened wide is the point at which this life ends and the life of the world to come begins. The gates are flung open and you walk through an entrance richly provided.

Jesus pictures this so well in one of his parables where the master says, well done good and faithful servant. You've been faithful over a little. I will set you now over much.

Enter into the joy of your master. Now that's the final goal of the Christian life. That's where it all leads to. Now I know we have all sorts of proper and good goals during our earthly lives.

Spreading the gospel, building up the church, encouraging the brothers and sisters. But the great goal is there in verse 11. To leave the united kingdom and to enter the eternal kingdom.

The kingdom where Christ is king. In his prayer to God the Father just before he died in John chapter 17 Jesus said this, Father, I desire that they also whom you have given to me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

[ 31 : 40 ] isn't that an extraordinary request? Jesus wants you and me to be with him forever so that we can see him as he is so that we can share his glory and his reign.

That's why he came to earth to die for us. He yearns for our company forever and that is Peter's incentive perhaps the greatest of these incentives to us to make every effort to furnish our lives with godly qualities so that we can rejoice in a richly provided entrance into the kingdom where Christ reigns forever when the gates are flung wide to welcome us into our true and glorious home.

So let's lastly turn to verse 10 and ask exactly what Peter means by it. It is the key verse in this section. Really you might say it's the key verse of the whole letter.

The apostle who greatly loves the churches wants their members to be deeply assured that God has called and elected them. Therefore brothers he says in verse 10 be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

It's the practicing and the increasing of these qualities that will give us deep assurance that we really are called and chosen by God. So let me try and clarify this now in one or two brief points.

[ 33 : 08 ] First and this is a very important one. The making sure of our calling and election is not a making sure in God's mind as if he were in doubt about us.

What it means is making sure in our minds. God made his choice and election of every Christian before the world was created. He has always known those who are his.



It's in our minds that the assurance needs to be secured. And Peter is saying that the diligent application of our efforts to grow in the lifestyle of verses 5 to 7 will bring us to a point where we have no doubts in our minds about God's election of us to membership of his people.

Throw yourself into the godly life. That's what Peter is saying. And your doubts about whether you're a Christian will disappear. The sureness, the being sure, that's for our minds, not for God's.

He knows already. Then secondly, a person might ask, but isn't it presumptuous for me to say I'm certain that God has chosen me?

[ 34 : 18 ] The answer, friend, is no, not at all. In fact, it's the other way around. It would be presumptuous, in fact, unbelieving, to reject this kind of certainty when God offers it to us.

In this passage, we're listening to the voice of God the Father speaking through Simon Peter, pressing upon his children the joy and the certainty of their belonging to him, their calling and election.

Just think of this for a moment in human terms. One of the things that every parent wants for their child is that the child should be sure about the relationship between itself and the parent.

The little boy knows that even though he's just kicked the football through the kitchen window and shattered it, he's not thrown out of the family. He needs to know that.

Oh, he's disciplined, yes, but the security of his place in the family is not threatened. One of the strongest instincts in the human parent is to let the child know, deep down inside, that he or she is loved and belongs permanently.

[ 35 : 23 ] Now, if that's the way that frail men and women think about their children, how much more does our heavenly father want us to be sure that we're called and chosen, that we belong forever, that we will be richly provided with an entrance into the eternal kingdom.

He loves us. He doesn't want us to be in a doubt about our relationship with him. Thirdly then, let's muster our energies to obey the command of verse 5 because it's the obeying of the command in verse 5 that produces the assurance of verse 10.

Practicing and increasing in these qualities of verses 5 to 7, it's a very practical matter. It's to do with how we actually live. These qualities are all about our relationships, the way we live with each other.

Just think for a moment, everybody, of what you can do, what kind of gifts and abilities you have. Think of your capabilities and whatever those capabilities are, throw them into the life of the church.

Everything can be used. What can you do? Let me just list a few things. Admin, IT skills, cleaning, photography, electronics, joinery, painting, baking, making jam, jam.

[ 36 : 40 ] Tending the garden of an elderly church member, especially between April and September when the weeds are growing. How about that? Visiting the elderly, teaching the young, leading at a summer camp, leading Bible studies, encouraging other people, hospitality at home, making people laugh.

There are some people who have a ministry of fun. We need it in the church. Supporting the unmarried and the married in times of stress. Listening, making real friendships with those of other nationalities, advising people out of your professional skills without charging a fee.

Now the list of things we can do for each other, they can go on endlessly, but don't just stand at the edge of the swimming pool, teetering on the brink. Dive in and you'll find that the Lord won't allow you to sink.

But it's in these very practical ways that we exercise virtue and knowledge and steadfastness and brotherly affection and love and all these other qualities. And it's the exercising of all these things that builds up our confidence that we really are called and chosen by God.

It's a bit like muscles. If you don't use them, you lose your ability to use them. But the more you exercise them, the more your confidence and ability grows. And inevitably, you become a much more effective and fruitful and joyful Christian.

[ 38 : 11 ] And then lastly, as the assurance of our salvation grows within us, the effect it has on us is to make us not cocky or arrogant, but humble and grateful.

To pick up Peter's phrases, when we remember that we have been cleansed from our former sins, when we ponder and consider God's precious and very great promises, when we think of how his grace and kindness, all undeserved, have made us partakers of the divine nature, when we realize that he has enabled us to escape from the corruption that pollutes and defaces the world, and when we think of that richly provided final entrance into the eternal kingdom which is promised to us, how could we be anything but humbled?

We've done nothing to deserve it. His calling and election of us is not based on our merits. It's based on his loving purpose, which is ultimately beyond our understanding.

but this loving, wonderful Father commands us to make every effort to furnish out our lives with all these godly qualities, and it's for our sake, for the sake of our peace and joy and security, so that we should know for certain that we are members not just of the Tron congregation, but of his eternal kingdom.

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall, for in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[ 39 : 57 ] Amen. Let's bow our heads and we'll pray. Our dear Heavenly Father, we do ask that you will write these wonderful words deep into our hearts so that we may rejoice in this assurance, and help us therefore diligently to make every effort to practice these qualities and to grow in our joy and usefulness.

And all these things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.