

## **The Power and the Promises: 2 Peter 1:3-4**

In private, Christians will often admit to envying non-Christian friends in their freewheeling lifestyles and morality. They see other people, who sometimes call themselves more 'liberated' Christians, enjoying things that the bible clearly forbids. They might feel sure that such behaviors are wrong, but secretly wish they could join in. They are paralyzed into indecision, sometimes wishing they had the courage to enjoy a fully committed Christian life, and at other times wishing they had the courage to forget the whole thing and enjoy being utterly pagan.

Peter warns that obedient Christians are not killjoys or repressed, and that a Christianity that wants to have the best of both worlds will actually have the best of neither. This present world is being "*kept for the Day of Judgment, and destruction of ungodly men*" (3:7), and the future will be a home where "*righteousness dwells*," (3:13). We face a choice, and to choose a home in one world will mean not having a home in the other. The difficulty in the temptation is the promise of "liberty" in the worldly life (2:19), and a faulty belief that God was somehow miserly in dispensing His grace, in spite of God's revelation of His tremendous generosity ([1 Chron. 29:10-14](#)).

Peter wants us to know and believe that God lavishly dispensed through the indwelling Holy Spirit all the grace and spiritual resources they would ever need. Four essential components reminded these churches of the reality of their sufficient salvation: divine power, divine provision, divine procurement, and divine promises.

**1. Divine Power, v.3a.** Whatever spiritual sufficiency believers have is not because of any power they possess in themselves but derives from *His divine power*. Paul expressed it this way: "*Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us*" ([Eph. 3:20](#)). The **power** that operates in believers is of the same divine nature as that which resurrected Christ. That power enables us to do works that please and glorify God and accomplish spiritual things they cannot even imagine. *His* refers back to the Lord Jesus. If the personal pronoun modified God, Peter probably would not have used the descriptive

word divine since deity is inherent in God's name. His use of divine pointing to the Son underscores that Jesus is truly God.

God's supply of spiritual power for believers never fails. They may distance themselves from the divine source through sin, or fail to minister and use what is available, but from the moment they experienced faith in Jesus Christ, God *has granted* His power to them. *Has granted* is a perfect, passive participle meaning that in the past, with continuing results in the present, God permanently bestowed His power on believers.

**2. Divine Provision, v.3b.** Because of their constant sins and failures as Christians, many find it hard not to think that even after salvation something is missing in the sanctification process. This faulty idea causes believers to seek "second blessings," "spirit baptisms," tongues, mystical experiences, special psychological insights, private revelations, "self crucifixion," the "deeper life," heightened emotions, demon bindings, and combinations of various ones of all those in an attempt to attain what is supposedly missing from their spiritual resources. All manner of ignorance and Scripture twisting accompanies those foolish pursuits, which at their corrupt roots are failures to understand exactly what Peter says here. Christians have received **everything** in the form of divine power necessary to equip them for sanctification—they have no lack at all. To stress the extent of the divine power given each believer, Peter makes the amazing statement that saints have received from God *everything pertaining to life and godliness*.

The great power that gave Christians spiritual life will sustain that *life* in all its fullness. Without asking for more, they already have every spiritual resource needed to persevere in holy living. *Life and godliness* define the realm of sanctification, the living of the Christian life on earth to the glory of God—between initial salvation and final glorification. With the gift of new life in Christ came everything related to sustaining that *life*, all the way to glorification. That is why believers are eternally secure.

The word translated “*godliness*” encompasses both true reverence in worship and its companion—active obedience. Saints should never question God’s sufficiency, because His grace that is so powerful to save is equally powerful to sustain them and empower them to righteous conduct

**3. Divine Procurement, v.3c.** In light of the divine power and provision available to Christians, the question then arises, “How does one experience those to the fullest?” The apostle indicates that it is *through the true knowledge of Him*. *Knowledge* refers to a knowledge that is deep and genuine and in intimate relationship as we talked about last week. Personal saving knowledge of the Lord is the obvious beginning point for believers, and as with everything in the Christian life, it comes from *Him who called* them. In the bible, we see two types of calling: a general call, and an effectual call. Jesus called all people to Himself in Matt.11:28-29. That is the “general call.” The “effectual call” always results in salvation and is given to the ones God specifically chooses for salvation (Rom.8:30).

As in all appearances of this call in the epistles, Peter’s use of *called* here clearly refers to the effectual and irresistible call to salvation. God effects His saving call through the revealed majesty of His own Son. Sinners are drawn by the *glory and excellence* of Jesus Christ. In Scripture *glory* always belongs to God alone. When sinners see the glory of Christ they are witnessing His deity. Through the preaching of the gospel people realize who Christ is the glorious Son of God who is Savior; and understand their need for repentance, so as to come to Him in faith, pleading for salvation. So, when God draws sinners to Himself, they see not only Christ’s glory as God, but also His *virtue* as man. That refers to His morally virtuous life and His perfect humanity.

**4. Divine Promises, v.4.** Christ’s glory as God and His excellence as the perfect Man attract people to a saving relationship with Him. *By these* attributes of glory and excellence **He** **has** accomplished all that is necessary for believers’ salvation, so that He also *granted to them His*

*precious and magnificent promises.* The term rendered *has granted*; describing past action with continuing effects.

Peter describes all the salvation promises in Christ as *precious (timios) and magnificent.* These words include all the divine *promises* for God's own children contained in the OT & NT, such as: spiritual life, resurrection life, the Holy Spirit, abundant grace, joy, strength, guidance, help, instruction, wisdom, heaven, and eternal rewards.

The Lord bestows all these so that believers *may become full partakers of the divine nature.* First, *may become* is not intended to present merely a future possibility, but a present certainty. The verb builds on all Peter has written. He has said that in salvation saints are called effectually by God through the true knowledge of the glory and excellence of Christ, and thus they receive everything related to life and godliness, as well as priceless spiritual promises. It is because of all that that believers *may become*, here and now, possessors of God's own eternal life.

From what they do partake in, Peter turns to what believers do not partake in, *the corruption that is in the world by lust.* Those who share the eternal life of God and Christ have completely *escaped* the effects of sin. *Corruption* denotes an organism decomposing or rotting, and its accompanying stench. The world's moral decomposition is driven by sinful *lust* or "evil desire" *Having escaped* depicts a successful flight from danger, in this case the effects of one's fallen nature, the sinfulness of the decaying world, and its final destruction. At glorification, believers will be redeemed completely so that they possess eternal life in perfect holiness in a new heaven and new earth where no sin or corruption will ever exist.

These great bestowments from God far outweigh all the world has to offer and must convince us that we have much more going for us when we walk with God than we would living in worldly lust. Believe that God's way is eternally better, and enjoy this life and eternal life holding on to His power and promises.