

Three Steps to Living God's Will

The First Step: Accept God's Grace and Peace
Open in prayer, ready to accept God's grace and peace:

The words, "grace and peace" sound good in themselves, but have we heard the words so much that they are too common for us to value them? Yet to persecuted churches these are among the first words Simon Peter writes.

"Grace" and "Peace" are standard greetings in a letter like 2nd Peter. Grace is God's favor, given at His initiative without someone having to earn it; it's a gift. Grace brings peace because faith in Christ means that we are separated no longer from God. Peace, the same as the Jewish greeting, "shalom," suggests well-being, security, and confidence. Peace comes from an abundance of knowledge, the knowledge centered in Jesus Christ who, through His righteousness, is Lord and Savior. We have this knowledge of His grace and peace, have we accepted it?

Read 2 Peter 1:1 - 2.

Questions to answer and apply: Have we thought deeply about this grace and its meaning for us? How much peace do we truly experience today? If we are no longer separated from God because of His grace and peace, from where does anxiety and worry come from? Are we living apart or in this grace and peace?

Close with prayer in thanksgiving to God.

The Second Step: Accept God's Promises
Open in prayer, ready to rely on God's power

What does "Divine Power" have to do with us? In 2nd Peter, "divine power" refers to the presence of God acting in our lives. Actually it is God in Jesus Christ, present in divine power and active in us. God gives what we need for "life and godliness" as 2nd Peter claims. The power worked in the apostles, worked in the church then, worked in the church since then, and works in the church now. This power is backed up and made certain by Jesus' "glory" (his reputation, who He is) and His "goodness" (Jesus never is wrong, never deceives). We need divine power we can only receive in relationship to Jesus.

Read 2 Peter 1:3 - 4.

Questions to answer and apply: In your own words, explain what is meant by divine power. Is the divine power operative in us? Do we believe that? What is the basis for the assurance that it is?

Close with prayer in thanksgiving to God.

The Third Step: Accept the Growing Pains
Open with prayer, ready to give yourself to spiritual growth.

Living the Christian life is not easy, but is it tragic? God the Father wants us to grow up - a challenge given with joy, love, and excitement for His children. Two weeks ago, we learned to accept God's gifts of grace and peace. Keep doing so. Last week, we learned to accept God's promises. Again, keep doing so. We must keep accepting and actively responding to God's work in our lives. 2nd Peter continues by listing ways we add His direction to what we already know and do. We must repeat again and again; this is a major part of living God's will. God wants us to keep changing, always becoming more and more as He wants us to be - our best. We must grow in faith; we must mature. Much is to our blessing by God's love; all is to His glory, not ours.

Read 2 Peter 1:5 - 8.

Questions to answer and apply: Is there any special meaning to the fact that the last in this list of virtues in verse 7 is love (Hint: 1 Corinthians 13)? As we strive, through worship, by prayer, scriptural study, service, and more, does life become more difficult to live more virtuously as we mature? Or does life improve as we strive through divine power given by God? What can God's promises do to encourage us when life gets difficult?

Close in prayer with thanksgiving to God. Live God's will for your life!