

# Growing in Grace

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening to you. Good to see you. And I hope you've had a good week to this point. Can you see me? I can see you. It's one of those things I was noticing on Wednesday nights sitting back there listening to Pastor speak. It seems dark up here looking up here.

And if you turn that light on, it'd really be bright. Amen. Yeah. Yeah. So anyway, well, I'm going to have to change what I was going to do today because I didn't think the pastor was going to be here. You know, I think he did that on purpose. He just slipped in. At least he let me know ahead of time he was here. And not just slip in and sit on the back pew.

But anyway, but it's good to be here. I was thinking, praying about what to do tonight. And I thought to myself, let's be smart. Amen. Yeah. And just not do anything. No.

But I really thought I didn't know how many of you were able to and did pick up on the videos of the last parts of the Malachi study.

[ 1 : 27 ] And some of you, we did, I know, because I saw some responses on the feed. But I thought, why not go ahead and just kind of rehash that closing section, that closing segment of that study?

Because there's a lot of stuff that has taken place since that time. And it's that study was a very appropriate time for every time, every day, but even more so now, I think.

And so I want to invite you then to turn to 2 Peter chapter 3. We use this as kind of a closing segment to the study of Malachi. We had been in it a number of weeks.

And of course, we had the COVID shut down for a few weeks before we even started the video time. And so as we finished that up, then we had a couple of weeks left that we needed, somebody needed to do something.

And so I told Pastor Mike, I'll be able to stretch this out a little bit until we do whatever. And so I thought we'd go to 2 Peter chapter 3 and use that as a good conclusion to that because we could.

[ 2 : 53 ] Now, in the book of Malachi, of course, we saw a lot of things that God dealt with when it comes to the nation of Israel. A lot of contention that he had there with them.

You know, he mentioned to them that he loved them. They said, how have you demonstrated your love for me or for us? And he said, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated, as a good example, and all of those things.

But as we boil down all of that as to what they, the contentions were with them, it just really comes down to the idea of their attitude toward God.

Their attitude toward God just was not healthy. And the reason being, for the most part, just in this summary, is that the people of Israel saw, talking about the godly people aspect of Israel, they saw the ungodly prospering.

And there was an absence of the judgment of God against the ungodly in light of the fact that God had promised that that judgment would come.

[ 4 : 05 ] So that formed an ill attitude toward God on the heart and mind of the people. As a result, then, the priests were offering polluted sacrifices.

They were calling the service of God a wearisome thing. A thing that just wasn't worth doing type of thing. And so God deals with them.

And then at the end of the end of the prophecy, he assures them, you know, they complained about judgment upon the ungodly not coming. He said, that is going to come.

That is going to come. He said, I will send my messenger. And he will prepare the way of the Lord. All right? Looking at Messiah to come.

And then spoke of the fact that one day judgment will come that he had promised to come. And that, of course, we saw as the day of the Lord. And so we picked that up, if you will, in Peter's

writing.

[ 5 : 06 ] Because he deals with that same thing as far as the coming of the day of the Lord. That great judgment and display of the wrath of God that will come.

And so we recognize that that day then is still future. It has not come yet, but it will come. It's a future event that will transpire.

So as we read what Peter says here, we recognize then that being a future date yet still, as far as the day of the Lord, we then must take to heart the things that Peter shows here.

And so that's the reason why I think it's apropos for us today. So begin with me in chapter 3, verse 10, if you will, of Peter's epistle, second epistle.

And he says, but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Now, stop there just a minute. There's a lot of people through the years have used that phrase to look at the rapture of the church.

[ 6 : 10 ] But that's not what he's talking about here. He's talking about the day of the Lord, which will come at the end, really, of the millennial reign. And so that day will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless, and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable rest, as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction.

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing you know those things before, beware, lest you be led away with the error of the wicked. Fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, or Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be glory both now and forever. Amen. I think all of us can recognize that we're really living in the closing days of what we call the church age.

[ 8 : 13 ] So the next prophetic event to take place will be the glorious rapture of the church. Jesus coming to translate his church, true believers, to be in his presence.

And then after that, of course, the seven-year period of tribulation broken into two parts. First three and a half years, relative peace.

But then in the middle of the end of that first three and a half years, Antichrist really shows himself for who he is, and then ushers in the last three and a half years known as the Great Tribulation.

And all that, of course, is the 70th week of Daniel, according to Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9.

That, of course, then will be followed. Jesus comes, establishes millennial reign, and rules and reigns upon the earth for a thousand years.

At its conclusion, then, comes the Great White Throne Judgment, where God will judge the wicked dead and those things that will be needed to be judged.

[ 9 : 19 ] All right? That will take place. So, that's what Peter has reference to here in the chapter that we just read, chapter 3. The Day of the Lord, now, is not just one single event.

It comprises the Tribulation, the Millennium, and then the Great Judgment of God upon the earth. So, all those three elements there are pictured in what's called the Day of the Lord.

And that's the time when the heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up, according to 2 Peter 3.10.

You think about that just a moment, all this global warming stuff, and the polar ice cap melting. Perhaps God's just getting it ready. Amen? Amen? For all that to transpire.

So, I don't think we ought to worry about that. Now, the aspect of the Day of the Lord then will come suddenly, Peter says, as a thief in the night.

[ 10 : 23 ] Just the same way that he said in Malachi that that coming of the messenger would come unexpectedly. So, it would do us well to take heed, not only to the question Peter raises, but to the

answer that God gives through him.

Now, what manner of persons ought we to be in light of that is a question that Peter raises here. The word ought here is the idea of that's in the necessity or the necessity in the nature of the case. The nature of the case is judgment's going to come, and all this is going to come to a climax in the judgment of God. So, as a result of that, there's a necessary way that you and I are to live. It's necessary in what manner of persons we ought to be. To be gives us the idea here that the way that we live is an obligation.

That's the Lord cutting this thing off. Amen? Or he may be coming. All right. What manner we ought to be. It's an obligation. Not just something we ought to be.

[11:41] All right. It's necessary in light of the case. But it's also a mandate for us that we are obligated to maintain the type of life that Peter speaks of.

When you stop and think about that, what type of life is it? Simply a life that manifests and expresses the righteousness and holiness of God.

Stop and think just a moment. Yes, judgment is coming from God. It's going to be severe and it's going to be complete. But God is always just in his judgments, is he not?

And he always gives people space to repent. But he also gives a witness of who he is and his righteousness, his holiness, and the salvation that he has provided for lost mankind.

And so our righteous and holy living is not just to be an example to an ungodly world, but it is God's means by which he invites them to that same relationship that we possess with him.

[12:54] A righteous and holy life. That's why it's necessary and that's why it's an obligation for us to do that. So we are obligated to live a holy and separated life.

That's what he says here. What manner of life, what manner of people ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, literally in consecrated and holy behavior and devout and godly qualities that are included in that.

Now, holy conversation, literally a holy manner of life or living. The word holy there, of course, is a word that means to be separate or to be separated.

Separated from the world and unto God. Now think about that. A separation. Separated from the world and unto God.

Boy, have we lost, in a lot of cases, lost the seriousness of that and lost the implication in that.

[14:07] We've become comfortable in the world, even God's people have. And so, that's why I'm always amazed when, wherever it may be, you can go a little bit farther east in Oklahoma, and it's not too long down the road that you see, you see the Mennonites riding in their two-wheeled buggies being drawn by a horse.

All right? All right? and the long beards and the long dresses and the bonnets, not the beards on the ladies, but the long beards on the men, the long dresses on the ladies with their bonnets on. They pick up a lot of scorn and a lot of ridicule. And I don't know for sure what all their theology is, but I tell you what, they've got separation right.

Yeah, amen? Except every once in a while you see one on a gas-powered tractor. Amen? I don't know if I've seen one yet with an air-conditioned cab or not, but nonetheless, you can see the idea. You know, there's both sides, both ends of the spectrum here. We've got to be sure that whatever lifestyle we live, whatever conveniences we enjoy, whatever the things we do, are not pulling us away from our separated status toward God and from the world.

[15:35] He goes on a little bit later, and we'll look at that here in just a moment and expresses more of that. So, live a separated and holy life. In all godliness, all right?

That godliness, of course, is piety toward God. Our reverence and respect toward God in all that He is. Amen? Yeah.

You know, I think one of the best things we could do, and we ought to do, and any time we question our own activity, what we are doing, what we should do, should I do this, should I not do this, is always remember, whatever you do and wherever you go, you're taking God with you because you possess the Spirit of God within you.

So, will He be comfortable with what we're doing? Amen? Omi? Yeah. Okay. Will He be comfortable in what I'm doing?

Is He feeling at home in my activity and feeling at home in my life and what we then are doing? So, our lives should be a daily walk of holiness dedicated unto the Lord, separated from the world unto Him, and our focus be upon Him, God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 17 : 05 ] So, that's what He begins with. Then there's something else here that's interesting that He says. That our lives then are to be characterized as well by looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.

All right? The day when God brings us to be with Him. Now, the word hastening there, interesting word. We know that whenever Jesus comes for the church in the rapture, that's a day that only God knows when it'll transpire.

The sun doesn't even know. I like the picture in my mind here that I pictured years ago of the Lord Jesus seated at the right hand of God, all right, in heaven, where He's at now, making intercession for us.

But I don't think He's sitting back relaxed. Amen? You know, I think He's sitting on the edge of His chair. Yeah. And every once in a while, gives a glimpse of the Father, and He does like our, I don't want to equate God to our toy poodle, but He does, you know, does like our toy poodle does.

You know, when it comes close and approaching nine o'clock, time for her evening, time for her evening treat before bedtime, she'll be there on the couch with Calvita, and all I have to do is move.

[ 18 : 41 ] I mean, it could just be that I move my arm or do this or whatever, and boy, she's up, and she's looking at me, tail wagging, and I say, it's too early yet, too early yet, and she'll sit back down most of the time.

Most, a lot of times, she'll just come to my, the foot of my recliner and just, and just stare at me. You know, like, come on, you know what I need, yeah, or what I want.

I picture Jesus somewhat like that, looking at the Father and just, the Father giving some sort of movement, and him going, like it's time to go, like it's time to come get to church, amen, yeah, the Father, only the Father knows when that day will come, all right, but you and I are to live our lives in such a way that we know he's coming, but the word, and expect that with, with great anticipation, but that word hasten has another, has a transitory meaning to it, and that transitory meaning gives us the idea that there are things we can do to hasten on the coming of the Lord, and that's the idea here, that there are things that we, the believer, can do to make that come to pass maybe a little sooner.

That's the word. Now, causing that to come a little bit more quickly, in Matthew chapter 24, verse 14, remember, verse 14, remember, and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.

Now, remember, Matthew 24 is a tribulation period chapter. So, during the tribulation period, not the gospel of grace, but the gospel of the kingdom will be preached, the fact of the coming of the kingdom of God.

[ 20 : 47 ] He said, that has to be preached throughout the entire world, and when that happens, then the end shall come.

Acts 3, 19, repent and be converted so that there may come seasons of refreshing. Okay? So, there's a rabbinical saying that says, if thou keepest this precept, thou hastenest the day of Messiah.

So, Peter seems to be teaching that here, that the believers can hasten the coming of the day of God by living a holy, separated life, simply a life in obedience to the call of God and His direction in our life.

So, we just need to do what God instructs us to do and let God take care of that and what He wants to do and how He wants to use that.

And if He uses that to hasten His coming, then more so be it. Amen? Yeah. Now, don't get up in the morning and say, man, I wonder what I can do to help Jesus come tomorrow.

[ 21 : 53 ] Amen? No, that's not the idea. The idea here is that we just live a life surrendered to Him, yielded to Him, being sensitive to His direction by His Spirit and then allowing Him to work through that however He determines He wants to do that.

Now, take note with me here. Up to this point in the passage, verse 12, it's all been a part of the question what manner of persons ought we to be?

The implication there is that that's the type of people we should already be being, if that's not correct English. Amen? That's the type of people we should already be expressing.

All right? Looking excitedly, being separated unto God, away from the world, looking forward with great anticipation to the fact of His coming and being obedient to Him to hasten what it is about His coming that He will bring.

Now, verse 13, nevertheless, in spite of the fact that all that's going to happen and those are the type of people we should be in the meantime, here's what happens.

[ 23 : 15 ] Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, in other words, in light of all the promises that He's given to us, we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Now, how many of you are just kind of tired of this earth? You ever thought about that? Yeah, I know there's some great looking, you know, sceneries and Pastor Mike and his family have been enjoying the lake this week and I've been envious of that.

But, but still, it's a world that's cursed by sin that sin becomes more and more characteristic of the lifestyle of its inhabitants.

But one day, Jesus has promised that one day we'll become a new heaven and a new earth along with the new Jerusalem which I believe is the dwelling place of the bride.

With all that prospect in mind, we ought to be excitedly anticipating the coming of the Lord Jesus for the church. Because when He comes for us, then that'll be hastening on that day of God or the day of the Lord which will then open the gateway for that new heaven and the new earth to come when it is completed.

[ 24 : 41 ] Nevertheless, we according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. That word dwelleth is to be permanently at home.

Permanently, at home with Him. Now, we anxiously look forward to the fulfillment of those promises because it will be a life in the sphere of complete and perfect righteousness and that permanently.

Amen? Not temporarily but permanently. You won't have to wake up in the morning and worry about what the news is going to be today. Amen?

You won't have to worry about what ungodliness has taken place or what dangerous things are transpiring outside your door. It'll be complete and perfect righteousness and that permanently.

It will never stop being that way. So, verse 14, Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things.

[ 25 : 54 ] Okay? So, the idea there, we should be looking toward that, looking forward to that. Mike, next time you get into a dirty masonry, not masonry, but plumbing job, amen?

You just think about that. And so, you start whistling. Amen? Start whistling while you're digging out that dirty drain or whatever, and realize Jesus is going to come, and one day we're going to live in a place of permanent, complete, perfect righteousness.

Now, wherefore, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent now. The idea there is, be laborious, work hard, all right, exert great effort and labor, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

I like the idea, literally, what he's saying is that we're to protect our heart. Protect our heart, protect our mind as well. Be diligent to be sure.

You're found of him, literally, in respect to a relationship with him. So, protect our mind, protect our heart, and our standing in Christ.

[ 27 : 24 ] Now, he's not talking here about the idea of losing salvation. No. I think it really can equate to Revelation chapter 2, when God gives to John the message to the church at Ephesus.

Remember what happened there? They were, I mean, doctrinally sound. They were zealous in their work for God.

They were resistant to the unbelievers and the ungodliness that is portrayed around them. All of those things that you picture in one of the greatest, sweetest churches.

But God said, I have one thing against you. And some people would say, well, just one. Amen. But the one thing God had against them, the condemnation against them was serious.

And it is that you have lost your first love. now, it is not the idea that they lost their salvation, but their relationship to the Lord had suffered.

[ 28 : 45 ] Their love for Him had dwindled. Now, I am not going to ask you to raise your hand, but just ask yourself this question.

You know, we can easily answer yes to this in our minds, but really search it out and consider it.

Think back about the very moment you placed faith and trust in Christ, when you realized that you were lost in sin, but that Jesus had died on your behalf as the satisfactory payment for your sin, and you placed faith and trust in Him, you rejoiced then in Him.

In essence, you fell in love with Him. Amen? Yeah. Now, does your heart sense and radiate the same love for Him today as it did back then?

That's a good question for us to ask ourselves. Amen? Because time has a way of eroding things, especially when we get a life that is filled with stuff, busyness. Even busyness in the things of God. The church at Ephesus did that. To maintain a heart that has a good walk and relationship with Christ Jesus on a daily basis.

[ 30 : 32 ] Yeah. Yeah. See, be diligent, exert labor to be sure that you may be found having that true, pure relationship with Him.

You know, it would be good if we could ever find out for sure the truth as to how other people see us. Amen? And what they see about us.

Yeah. Do they see, really, an expression of love for God from us and in us as we go about our daily life and daily living?

You know, I think that's one of the things that Peter was thinking about here when he talks about hastening the day of the Lord. Then as a result, then, people see our heart toward God, though they may not know what it is, it's something that God uses to draw people to Him.

All right? Now, so, what about our life? be diligent that you may be found of Him in peace, that is, in peace with one another, all right?

[ 31 : 50 ] Our brothers and sisters in Christ. What is it that Jesus said? A new commandment I give unto you that you have agape love, one for another. Yeah.

That love that is so expressive in what it is. 1 Corinthians chapter 13. I was going through this Sunday morning at Rose Hill.

That's where we were Sunday morning and got called all of a sudden to come and verse Corinthians 13 gives the characteristics of agape love.

And where was this? Oh, well, I'm not going to try that because there was something really funny in this, but I can't find it now, so I was going to express that to you so you'd laugh.

Amen? But laugh anyway, so that's fine. All right. But that's what we are to be. Love one another, be found in peace with each other, without spot.

[ 33 : 06 ] That's free from censure and irreproachable. All right? Be free from that. So nobody can bring accusation against you and blame us.

Literally that which cannot be blamed or found fault with. Now, verses 15 and 16 of 2 Peter 3. An account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which some things are hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable rest, or distort from their proper meaning, as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction.

salvation. Now, the long suffering of God provides opportunity for people to come to know him as Lord and Savior. So, that's, you know, you think about, you think about what Peter's saying here. Again, the accusation of God in Malachi's day was, why hasn't the judgment come? Why hasn't the judgment come? Well, Peter expresses it, and Paul does a number of places, according to what Peter says, that the long suffering of God, his waiting, if you will, provides salvation for others that have not yet been saved.

Now, look at verse 17. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing that you know these things beforehand, here, all right, see that you know this, beware, lest also you being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

[ 35 : 06 ] Now, in chapter 4 of Malachi, verse 4, as Malachi was addressing the righteous of the nation, and then he tells them about the fact that the day of the Lord will be a time of refreshing and restoration as well for those that believe, but he said in all of that, he said, keep mindful or be aware of the fact that you need to keep the law of God.

And the reason being, and he didn't say this, but the reason for that was that it was going to be a long time from the day of Malachi to the time when the day of the Lord comes.

He said, in all that time, you're going to get restless, you're going to tend to want to drift away, but he said, keep the law of God. Now here, Peter, sounds the same type of warning for us, knowing that really the day of the Lord is still a ways away.

And so we have the same propensity then to drift away from the things of God. So he says, beware, lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

That word term, beware, that word beware is a military term, to be on guard. Be on guard here, so that you're not led away. Being led away is to be carried away with the force that carries others

away, if you will, and that is by the error of the wicked, by their error.

[ 36 : 51 ] Now, the word error here is the word that means a wandering or a straying about. Alright? You ever see anybody just kind of in a daze and just kind of meandering around?

Amen? No determined purpose, no real set goal of where you're going, you're just kind of meandering around. Sometimes I would like to do that.

Amen? Don't have to worry about where I'm supposed to be, what I'm supposed to be doing, just go do it. That's what retirement's supposed to be, Mike. Yeah, I haven't found that to be true.

My wife won't let it be. Where'd she go? Oh, there she is. I'm getting the look. Now, the idea here is this, being led astray from the right way, one then just simply roams around.

By the error of the wicked, the lawless, all right, the one who breaks through the restraints of the law to gratify his own lusts, to fall away, or fall out of your own steadfastness, that is, your firm adherence to the truth.

[ 38 : 03 ] Now, it's not the danger of falling from grace or from salvation. It's the idea of falling away from the firm and settled principles of Christian truth, and then be going into error.

Boy, used to be, you know, used to be a time when people had such conviction about things. Most of those convictions were established by what the Word of God said.

You don't see that a whole lot anymore. People are easily led away, led astray, able to be pulled away from the true foundational truths of the Word of God and what He expects out of the life, even in the church.

I'm glad, and I'm going to say this because I'm an expert. Amen? I see Highland Park as an exception to the rule in a lot of things.

Most churches you go to, I venture a guess that sitting in the pews of those churches are a number of people who have fallen into this trap.

[ 39 : 22 ] They've fallen away from the steadfastness of the truths of God's Word, the principles of the Christian faith, if you will, and have chosen what they feel they can live with and disregarded what they feel they can't live with because it gets in the way of their lifestyle.

Amen? Now, the reason for that being, I think, is that the personal relationship with God through Christ is suffering.

Amen? that the intimacy of that relationship has changed because we've gotten so busy doing other things.

That's why the apostle, or the writer of the Hebrews, in Hebrews chapter 12, remember, he said, wherefore, seeing we're accomplished about with so great a cloud of witnesses, that's speaking of the fact that we can look at the Old Testament saints in particular, and us now, the New Testament saints, and see the faithful life they lived, in spite of everything.

Seeing we're accomplished about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us then lay aside the weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

[ 40 : 55 ] Amen? You know, in order to run that race, you've got to lay aside the weight and the sin. I've told you before, I think, that word weight is a word in the Greek that literally means a swelling, superfluous flesh.

Amen? Yeah. You ever seen a fat runner? A fat runner? No. Runners are always slender, skinny as a rail.

Amen? And why is that? Because anything less than that or more than that would be a hindrance to their running. All right?

Lay aside the weight, those things that are not of themselves sin, but the things that hinder our walk with God and our obedience to Him.

Lay those things aside. have I told you before? I'm sorry. It's almost time to shut down here. Can you see me now? Yeah. It's been a number of years now ago that Calvita and I had the privilege of hosting a Chinese couple.

[ 42 : 14 ] The association was having, wasn't it an association, babe? That was having an association-wide missions conference. So you have missionaries from various places come. They were looking for people to house them.

So we agreed to let our house be used. We were in the house we were in now at the time. And so we said, yeah, we'd love to have somebody. So they assigned a Chinese couple to us that were working at the convention in Oklahoma City.

And a sweet couple. We enjoyed so much having them with us and visiting with them. But we're sitting on the patio. He and I, drinking coffee one morning.

And he was just kind of gazing around. And at the time, we had the Explorer that we've got now, I think, and the pickup truck.

But I also had a little Ford whatever, small little thing that was dad's. And they gave that to me because they couldn't use it anymore.

[ 43 : 14 ] So they just gave it to me to run around in. So we had three vehicles. And he was looking out there. And he all of a sudden said, you've got three cars.

I said, yes, I do. And I proceeded to explain. This is my wife's. This is the pickup that I use. And this third one is one that just dad gave to me because he can't drive it anymore.

And I figured that would be sufficient. But you've got three cars. As if to say, why do you need three cars? Amen?

Yeah. Yeah. I tried again. No, he wasn't going to have it. Of course, you go to China and you see why he was thinking the way he was thinking. All right.

Now, so, there's baggage stuff that we can get rid of. Amen? We just don't need. They get in the way of our satisfying the will of God.

[ 44 : 19 ] It's not just stuff, but it's activities as well. I think even more so. Activities that we can set aside so that we can serve God more completely and more thoroughly.

Now, so, yeah. Set aside the weight and the sin that does easily beset us and let us run with patience the race set before us, keeping our focus on the person of Christ Jesus.

That's the key. Verse 18 of 2 Peter 3, but grow then in grace. All right? Don't fall from your steadfastness, but instead, grow in grace.

That'll help keep you from falling or losing your steadfastness. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Yeah, that's how we grow in grace.

Have the graces of Christ more and more at work and expressed through our life. And that comes through more and more thorough knowledge of the person of Christ.

[ 45 : 32 ] That's why it's good for us to just take some time. Maybe take a whole year. Take a whole year. Don't worry about reading through the Bible. Just say, God, here's what I want to do.

This year, I want you to show me through your word more of the Lord Jesus. More of who he is, more of what he is, more of what he says, more of what he directs me to do.

I just want to learn more, have a more thorough, complete knowledge of him. Amen? And see what God does with that.

Amen? Amen. Oh, me. Time's up. I'll pray, then James can come pray. All right, let's pray. Father, thank you again for your loving kindness.

Thank you, Father, for the time together this evening. Now, I do pray that you will enable us to do those things that Peter instructs us to do here through your word.

[ 46 : 34 ] That, Lord, we will look toward you, look at you, gain a greater knowledge of you through your word, and anticipate the fact that one day you're coming for us, and that one day all of this on this earth will be done, and you will have done everything through it you want to do, and then you will usher in eternity for us.

And so, Father, I pray, God, that you'll just enable us day by day to focus our attention upon you and upon your Son. We thank you for what you do now.

In Jesus' name, Amen.