

# "These Things"

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2 Peter 1:1-15

(Only read verses 8-15 – Draw attention to the repeated phrase "*these things*.")

**Introduction:** Who among us tonight would like to be known as a failure in the Christian life? That's a pretty stupid question isn't it? After all, who wants to fail? The truth is, every one of us wants to be a successful Christian and we really want to bring glory and honor to God.

My desire is to be the best that I can be for the glory of God. If I were guessing, I would say that that is what you want as well. Thankfully, Peter gives us the secret to Godly living. We are going to see some steps that if taken, will ensure our success as Christians. As we go through these verses this evening, let's notice these 7 Steps Toward Godly Living.

**2 Peter 1:8** For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Peter 1:9** But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

**2 Peter 1:10** Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

**2 Peter 1:12** Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.

**2 Peter 1:15** Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

## I. THE SPOILS - v. 8-11

("these things", whatever they are, will produce in your life.)

A. v. 8 "These Things" Guarantee Your Fruitfulness – If "these things" are found in your life, then you will never be barren, but you will always be a fruitful branch for God's glory. This implies that you will be a witness and a soul winner for Jesus. Whatever "these things" are, they must be pretty great because they promise us that we will always bear fruit. This, after all, is the goal of our

Heavenly Father – John 15:1-2. It is also proof of our faith in Him – Luke 6:43-44.

(III. "These things" will prevent the Christian from being shelved by the Lord, but will keep us productive and fruitful, 1 Cor. 9:27)

(III. Whatever "these things" are, they must really be some big things! If they can do this, then I really want to know what they are. Don't you?)

B. v. 9a These Things Guarantee Spiritual Discernment – Many people have absolutely no spiritual discernment. They are blind and easily lead astray, Eph. 4:14. But, when "these things" are active in our lives, we will be able to see the tricks, traps and temptations of the Devil. We will be able to see the needs of others and not be blinded by our own selfish interests. We won't ever be blind and in spiritual darkness ever again. I don't know about you, but whatever "these things" are, I want to know about them!

C. v. 9b These Things Guarantee You Absolute Assurance Of Salvation - Who among us hasn't doubted his/her salvation? We have all doubted from time to time! Many people are so over come with their doubts that are of no use to the Lord. Evidently, they lack "these things." Because, "these things" promise us that we can have assurance of salvation. They promise us that we can get to the place where we never doubt again! I tell you, "these things" must really be something! Whatever "these things" are, then I want to know them. I want to be secure in the knowledge that I am saved.

D. v. 10 These Things Guarantee That You Will Never Fall Again – This verse says plainly that "these things", if practiced in our lives, will ever keep us from falling. How many have fallen as a Christian? Every single one of us has fallen from time to time. But, "these things" promise us a fall free life. If I can get my hands on "these things" then I want them really bad because I never want to fall again. Whatever "these things" are, they are worth going after if they will do all this.

If "these things" can guarantee:

1. That I will always be fruitful.
2. That I will always have spiritual discernment.
3. That I will never doubt my salvation.
4. That I will never fall as a Christian.

Then I want to know what "these things" are. They must really be something! They are probably big things, or hard things, or expensive things. They are probably things that are just out of the reach of the ordinary Christian. I suppose they are things reserved for the "super saints" like Paul and Peter. Well, let's see what they are, even though they are bound to be really great things impossible to the likes of you and me.

## II. THE STEPS - v. 5-7

(Well, here we are, we are about to find out what these 7 great, wonderful, big "things" are. I hope they are something big. I hope they are something wonderful. I am really anticipating something-extra special if "these things" can produce all that wonderful stuff in our lives.) Here are "these things."

A. v. 5 **Virtue** – ("Moral uprightness"; "Holiness") This word literally means "Excellent living." I don't know about you, but I was looking for something really big. In one word, God is telling you and me that if we will live by the Bible and live morally pure lives, then He will guarantee those 4 invaluable gifts we talked about earlier.

(Ill. Moral purity refers to every aspect of our lives. Physical, mental, spiritual purity must be maintained if we expect His blessings on our lives – 1 Pet. 1:16)

(Ill. Maybe the next one will be some great thing!)

B. v. 5 **Knowledge** – (Literally "an understanding of the truth and how to live it out.") Well, what a let down! This word is telling us that we can have all those things we discovered by having a sound knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity and by applying them to our lives and living them out.

(Ill. What we are to do is this:

1. We are to get into the Word – 2 Tim. 2:15.
2. We are to let the Word get into us – Jer. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:2)

(Ill. Maybe the next one is something really stupendous!)

C. v. 6 **Temperance** – Oh brother! This word means "self-control." It implies that I do not do as I please, I control myself and do as the Lord pleases! (Ill. Paul – 1 Cor. 9:27) (Ill. This is one of the fruit of the Spirit Gal. 5:23.)

(Ill. This has application in every area of our lives. Often we lack those four benefits we talked of earlier because we lack self-control. There are several area where we need to practice temperance:

1. **Our Tongues** – (Gossip and telling another person off) Some people are doubting their salvation, being unfruitful, falling into sin, and have no spiritual discernment because they cannot control their tongues! (Ill. James 1:26; James 3:1-12; Ill. Pro. 26:20)

2. **Our Tempers** – (Flying off the handle, getting mad and getting even.) Some people lack the blessings because they cannot control their temper. Temper can get you into big trouble! (Eph. 4:26) (Never think that holding a grudge, or trying to get even will help you. When you do these things, you have assumed the place of God – Rom. 12:19)

3. **Our Temptations** – Ill. Everyone is tempted – 1 Cor. 10:13. However, not everyone falls into sin! The difference is self-control!

Many people are experiencing a lack of those four great blessings simply because they have no self-control!

(Well, "these things" are pretty important, but so far they are just common knowledge, if not common practice. Surely the next one will be something rare and special.)

D. v. 6 **Patience** – (Endurance) The patient person is the one not swerved from his devotion to God even by the greatest of trials. Many are suffering from the loss of the four great blessings just because they allow the slightest little wind to blow them off course. The patient person is one who has endurance.

(Ill. He is like the vine clinging to the tree during a severe storm. When the wind is to his back, he is merely pressed more tightly against the tree. When the wind is in his face, he is sheltered from the storm by the bulk of the tree. Whatever the circumstance he finds himself in, he always has the tree! Ill. Heb. 13:5)

(Ill. What I am saying tonight is this: If you want to have the four great blessings we mentioned earlier, then you must have endurance and stop allowing every little thing knock you down.)

(Alright, we're down to just 3 more. These are most certainly the really big ones. I can't wait to see what big thing I can do to get these blessings in my life.)

E. v. 6 **Godliness** – This word literally means, "Walking in view of His greatness." It has reference to the person who has every action and attitude

yielded to the fear of the Lord. This person spends his life in a state of "God-likeness." He spends his days serving God and serving men.

(III. Many are in doubt, in sin, in trouble, because they reached a place in their walk with God where they just didn't care anymore what God thought about anything. They do what they please about church, the Bible, prayer, witnessing, sin, etc. Self is the motivation and not the fear of the Lord. These people have forgotten that God speaks loudly and carries a big stick – Rev. 3:19)

(III. The person who practices godliness is one who understands that God truly is an awesome God. He fears the Lord, and strives at every turn to please Him and Him alone, III. Eccl. 12:13. He realizes that it doesn't matter what others think as long as God is pleased. This person enjoys those four great blessings promised earlier.)

(Only 2 to go, these have got to be the biggies!)

F. v. 7 **Brotherly Kindness** – (*Philadelphia* – Literally, just plain old brotherly love.) If Christians would practice the second Great Commandment, Matt. 22:39, then they would experience those four great blessings that we all want so badly.

(III. It's no wonder some people doubt their salvation and are in trouble in their walk with the Lord. After all, all they do is bicker and fight with others. This is not the Lord's way! Remember the lesson in 1 John 4:20-21 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

(Alright, this is the last one! Here comes the big one. This is the one we have waited for all night. This is the thing, that if we do it, will guarantee us those 4 great blessings spoken of earlier.)

G. v. 7 **Charity** – (agaph – Love!) He is referring to that self-sacrificing, never-ending, all-encompassing love that Jesus exhibited when He came to the earth to die for sin. It is that very same love that God desires to see lived out in our lives today. It is also for the lack of this love that many do not have the peace and assurance they desire – 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

(III. When a life is lived in pure *agape* love, God will be first, others second and self will be relegated to last place. The single motivation of life will be to manifest the love of Christ to everyone.)

(Are you disappointed with these things? Were you hoping for that something big that you could do that would make you stand out as a big-time Christian?)

Well, when you get right down to it, these things are pretty big. In fact, they are so big that they cannot be produced in the life of an unbeliever! The lost person just cannot fake "these things!" So, if they are present in your life then rejoice!

H. v. 5 Notice the word "Add." This little word means "to supply generously." It does not teach here that we are to first get faith, perfect that then add virtue, then add knowledge, etc. What it means is, that "these things" are to be practiced as a whole and every one of them is to be active all the time. So, don't pat yourself on the back if you have 3 or 4 out of the seven! God wants us to have them all operating in our lives all the time.

**Conclusion:** Now, we know what "these things" are and what they can do for us. The final question of the evening is this, "Are ALL of them present in your life tonight?" If you found yourself lacking then the place to be is right here at this altar. As for me:

1. To always be fruitful.
2. To always have spiritual discernment.
3. To never doubt my salvation.
4. To never fall as a Christian.

Therefore, I am going to seek the Lord for all of "these things." How about you?