

“THE LIFE GOD REWARDS”

Big Idea . . . Part 8: How Then Should We Live?

INTRO: Every NT writer (9 in all, mostly Paul (Rom.; 1&2 Cor.; 1&2 Thess; Titus; 2 Tim.), John, and Peter mention the PROMISE of His return, always including instruction on How we should live in Light of His Return. Ex: Jesus in Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25), Paul (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:58; Tit. 2:11-14), John . . . Peter provides most in one passage on how we should live (2 Pet. 3:8-18). Dot vs. Line? (Alcorn). We are living *in* the dot, let’s live FOR the line.

Context? 3:1ff (8 references to Promise). Read vv. 8-14 . . . What is Peter’s challenge? v. 14 to “be diligent” (4th time). An imperative to eagerly anticipate—not usual response. If you knew Jesus was coming next Wednesday, what would you change to better live the life God rewards?” One day it will be true, so how then should we live? Peter challenges us to be diligent: To SHOW our salvation (vv. 11-15a), to KNOW the Scriptures (vv. 15b-17), to GROW in our spiritual journey (v.18).

I. BE DILIGENT TO *SHOW YOUR SALVATION* (vv. 11-15a)

- A. LIVING “lives of holiness and godliness” (v. 11). *Holiness* more about the externals of what we do. *Godliness* mostly about the internals and who we worship. More in v. 14 “without spot (more external) or blemish (more internal).” Matt. 5:16 – serve, bear fruit, obey.
- B. EXPECTING His return (vv. 12-14 “waiting” 3xs) Idea of eager anticipation of His coming. When talk about “last days” too many are anxious or fearful. We should be watchful, faithful, and hopeful. Even if we aren’t living in the last days, we are living in *our* last days! A crown for this!
- C. KNOWING we are “found by Him . . . at peace” (v. 14) with God and others. We are confident of our relationship with Him (Rom. 5:2). See 1 John 2:28 . . .
- D. TELLING others the good news (v. 12 “hastening the coming”). Did you know we can impact when Jesus returns? Jesus’ words in Matt. 24:14. The sooner the whole world hears (has access to) the gospel Jesus could return. The more we get the Word out, the more we “hasten” His return. He is patiently delaying to win more (vv. 9, 15).

II. BE DILIGENT TO *KNOW YOUR SCRIPTURE* (vv. 15b-17)

- A. GUIDES us in our living (vv. 15-16) Peter calls Paul’s writings “Scripture”. Comforting that Peter found some of Paul’s writings “hard to understand.” Me too! It is our guide for living in the fallen world (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- B. GUARDS us from deception and apostasy (v. 17) Jesus, Paul, John, Peter all warn us not to be led astray and to fall away (Matt. 24:4-15 . . . 5xs led astray; love grows cold).

ILLUS: ABS survey: “More than . . .” (PPT)

III. BE DILIGENT TO *GROW YOUR SPIRITUAL WALK* (v. 18)

- A. A SINGLE COMMAND – Don’t be led astray and don’t fall away, but grow. A present active imperative to keep on growing – keep moving forward or else.
- B. GROW in TWO AREAS – DOUBLE APPLICATION
 - 1. “in the grace” Grace is a gift for the guilty. It is never earned or deserved. We are not only saved by grace, but we live in His grace (Rom. 5:1-2; Titus 2:11ff). Also show increasing grace toward others.
 - 2. “and knowledge of . . .” Knowledge is understanding and applying, specifically of what or who? “our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Each of the four names has meaning . . . How? Largely back to His Word (1 Pet. 2:1-2). Note – Growth is less about activity and more about intimacy.

RESULT (v. 18)? “*To Him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*” For the believer our ultimate aim and highest purpose is to live in such a way to bring glory and honor to him. It will be worth it. When we grow God is glorified.

CONC: So, how should we live? Be diligent to: SHOW our salvation in our living, expecting, knowing and telling; KNOW our Scriptures to guide and guard us; GROW in our spiritual journey to enjoy His grace and know Him more intimately. If I knew Jesus was coming Wednesday, I would _____. One day it will be true. Though we are living *in* the dot, let’s live *for* the line.

PRAYER to live the life God rewards (PPT).