

Personal Growth Plan

2 Peter 1:1-2

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Slave with Authority (1:1)

Peter introduced himself, which was usual for a letter, but did so with an unusual juxtaposition. He identified himself with two nouns that could not be farther from each other. He began with the title of “servant / slave” in greek, ***doulos***. This word was used to describe someone who was fully and completely under the authority of another. In this case, Peter is making it crystal clear that he is not operating under his own authority, but that he has willfully submitted himself entirely to Jesus the Messiah. Although this is an incredibly humble title, it is not without profound significance, for it is a great honor for a slave to serve an honorable master, and of course there is no master more honored than the Lord Jesus the Messiah. The title of servant / slave was also embraced in other New Testament letters by Paul, James, and Jude.¹

What a lowly term Peter willingly used for himself, and yet, he followed it up with the highest and most authoritative title on earth! Peter wasn't just a slave of Jesus the Messiah, he was an Apostle of Jesus as well! Now, the greek term ***apostolos*** is occasionally used in the New Testament to simply mean a “messenger”, but more often it is used as a technical title for those men who had seen the resurrected Messiah and had been chosen by him to authoritatively preach the gospel and guarantee the truth of the message. These Apostles were self identified slaves who had been given the highest level of authority on the earth in Jesus' absence.

These two seemingly contradictory titles were not something that Peter and the other Apostles came up with on their own, this identity had been clearly demonstrated by Jesus the Messiah, who, though he was God incarnate, did not come to be served but to serve others.² One of the most profound pictures of this was seen at the last supper, when Jesus washed his disciples feet in John 13.

Faith of Equal Significance (1:1)

Peter's identity as an Apostle reminds the readers that there are indeed different levels of authority in the christian world. However, when it comes to the christian faith, all are equal. As Billy Graham would say “The ground is level at the foot of the cross”. It doesn't matter if one is rich or poor, slave or free, Jew or Gentile, all are in equal need of the grace of God through Jesus the Messiah, and as Peter reminds his readers, Jesus, our God and Savior righteously and equally offers this salvation to all who have faith in Him.

¹ See the introductions of Romans, Philippians, Titus, James, 2 Peter, Jude.

² Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45

From Knowing Comes Growing (1:2)

Peter closed this introduction to his letter with a blessing and prayer for these brothers and sisters. It would be easy to gloss over this, but the idea here is so important that he bookends the entire book with it. (3:18) He desires that they grow in the knowledge of God and their Lord Jesus. This knowledge is not simply book knowledge. He isn't encouraging them to compile more and more facts about who God and Jesus are. (Although that is important) The way he uses knowledge here, is the way we would know our spouse or good friend which includes information and details about them, but goes far beyond that. There are times in this letter where he will use knowledge which is more the information type of knowledge (1:5-6), but here he lays out the way for grace and peace to be multiplied in their lives, a personal growth plan founded on knowing God and Jesus.

Knowing God and Jesus, means understanding the truths about them and integrating those truths into our relationship with them. Just these first two verses give us a profound starting point, for in them it is revealed to us that Jesus is: God, Savior, Messiah, and Lord. There are so many treasures we could mine out of just these four, and I pray that you take the time this week to consider them both in what truths they communicate, and also the ways those truths should be integrated into your relationship with God and Jesus.

Grace News and Needs

- **Men's Ministry: Pine Valley Men's Conference, Oct 4-6. Sign up on the patio**
- **Grace Family Praise and Worship Night: Sept 27th, 6:30pm**
- **Youth River Trip: Oct 11-13, see the website for more info and to register.**
- **VOM Needs for September: Hair Brushes**

For more information on our events and ministries, visit www.gccramona.com