

Thesis: Apostasy is a real possibility for the Christian. Therefore, we must be diligent to make our calling and election sure. We do so by relying on God's **provision** as we **pursue** Christian graces and eventually realize all of God's **promises**.

Support: 2 Peter 1:3-11

1. **Greeting**

- a. Good morning!
- b.

2. **Introduction**

- a. As he approached the starting line for the biggest race of his life, Dan Jansen could still hear his sister's last words to him.
 - i. She whispered, "I love you too."
 - ii. Jane, his sister, his mentor, the very reason why he got into speed skating in the first place, was losing her battle with leukemia.
 - iii. Dan knew, as she said these words, he wouldn't see her alive again.
 1. He wouldn't be able to speak to her again.
 2. She said, "I love you too."
 3. Just a short while later, Jane closed her eyes and did not open them again.
 - b. Some six hours after her death, Dan found himself in Calgary skating to the starting line of the 500-meter Olympic speed skating competition.
 - i. His mind was filled with thoughts of his sister.
 - ii. He was doing what his sister wanted him to do.
 1. Win the Olympic gold medal.
 2. Win gold!
 3. Win gold for his sister!
 - c. Dan glided to the starting block.
 - i. The heavy favorite to win gold shook himself to gain focus.
 - ii. It was time to go for the gold.
 - iii. It was time to win it for his sister.
 - d. After a false start, the gun went off.
 - i. The skaters blasted out of the block like a blur.
 - ii. But something was not right with Dan.
 - iii. He soon fell behind.
 1. Just eight seconds into the race, he fell to the ice and careened out of control, smashing into the padded wall.
 2. He sat on the ice for what seemed like an eternity, sobbing while he held his head up with his hands.
 - a. He had just lost his beloved sister, and he just lost the chance to win a gold medal for her because he fell.
 - b. Dan Jansen fell.
 - c. He was in the biggest race of his life and he fell.
3. **None of us is an Olympic athlete, but each of us is in a race. The life of a Christian is described in the scriptures as a race.**
- a. The Hebrew writer states in **Hebrews 12:1-2**, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and



sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,..."

b. Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 9:24**, "²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it."

i. Christians are running a race.

1. A race in which we set aside sin.

2. A race in which we look to Jesus.

3. A race in which we strive for the prize.

4. A race in which we can not afford to fall.

a. You see brothers and sisters, as heartbreaking as Dan Jansen's fall was, and it was heartbreaking, it would be more heartbreaking if one of us fell, because the stakes are infinitely higher.

b. We find ourselves in a race in which we must not fall.

c. Thankfully, God has given us a way to ensure we never fall.

4. **I invite you to open your Bibles to 2 Peter 1:3-11. Within these verses, the apostle teaches us how to make our calling and election sure, so that we never fall. In 2 Peter 1:3-11, the apostle Peter writes:**

a. ³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

5. **This text is so pregnant with meaning, we could easily spend three months studying it. Rather than doing that, I submit to you three main points which capture the essence of what Peter is saying.**

6. **First, Provision: God has provided everything we need for life and godliness.**

a. **1:3-4**, "³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

i. A chief provision of God's for us is his word. Before Jesus ascended to the father, he promised the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to his apostles.

1. The Holy Spirit would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus said to them (**John 14:26**).



- a. He would guide them into all truth (**John 16:13**).
 - b. Because of this Peter asserts in **2 Peter 1:21**, “²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
 - i. The apostles and prophets were inspired of God through the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The Holy Spirit worked through the apostles and prophets resulting in all scripture being breathed out by God (**2 Timothy 3:16**).
 - i. Moreover, these scriptures are “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).
 - ii. Peter is reminding his readers, reminding us to day, that through the apostles and prophets and their writings, we’ve already been granted all things that pertain to life and godliness.
 - 1. We don’t need anything else.
 - a. We don’t need later-day revelations.
 - b. We don’t need a pope or a synod or a council to tell us what to think or believe.
 - c. We don’t need the writings or thoughts of any man.
 - d. God’s Word is sufficient; his written revelation book is all we need.
 - iii. Through the reading and studying of God’s word, we can learn everything we need to know about God.
 - 1. How he calls us through Christ.
 - 2. The life we receive when answering the call.
 - 3. The godliness we demonstrate in Christian living.
 - 4. The precious and very great promises made to his followers.
 - a. How, through these promises:
 - i. We escape sin and worldly corruption.
 - ii. We partake of the divine nature.
 - 1. By being in Christ.
 - 2. By possessing the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - 3. By our ongoing sanctification as we grow spiritually.
 - b. As we run the race, Peter reminds us God has amply provisioned us for it, and we have no unmet need.
7. **Second, Pursuit. Based on these premises, God expects us to pursue Christian graces.**
- a. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are



increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

- i. God has provisioned us for the race, but we still need to do our part in running it.
 1. It is true that Christians are given these precious and very great promises.
 - a. Through them we do become partakers of the divine nature **(2 Peter 1:4)**.
- ii. Because of this, we ought to run the race and diligently pursue the graces mentioned here (and elsewhere in the Bible).
 1. **1:5** says, we are to make every effort to supplement our faith with virtue.
 - a. The Greek word translated as supplement (NASB – supply; NIV, KJV – add) is an interesting word.
 - i. According to brother Guy N. Woods, this word originally meant “to found and support a chorus, to lead a choir, to keep in tune, and then, to supply or provide. As here used, the graces which adorn the Christian’s character are to be chorused into a grand symphony to the delight and pleasure of him who fashioned and made us for his good pleasure.”
- iii. The apostle Peter mentions eight graces for Christians to supply:
 1. Faith heads the list. As Christians, we already have faith.
 - a. Faith undergirds the entire list; we add these Christian graces by faith.
 2. We add to our faith, virtue – The Greek word translated as virtue means, “uncommon character worthy of praise, *excellence of character, exceptional civic virtue*” (BDAG).
 - a. We are to have excellent and praiseworthy character.
 3. We add to our virtue, knowledge – This word means, “comprehension or intellectual grasp of something, *knowledge*” (BDAG).
 - a. This may come as a surprise to you, but God actually expects you to study your Bibles and understand his word.
 4. We add to our knowledge, self-control – This means, “restraint of one’s emotions, impulses, or desires, *self-control*” (BDAG).
 - a. God wants his people to control themselves. We are to control:
 - i. Anger.
 - ii. Lusts.
 - iii. Thoughts.
 - iv. Behavior.
 1. William Barclay said, “Self-control is when reason fights against passion and prevails.”

5. We add to our self-control, steadfastness – This is “the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, *patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance*” (BDAG).
 - a. As Christians, we will have our fair share of suffering and persecution.
 - i. We must persevere through it.
 6. We add to our steadfastness, godliness – This Greek word means, “awesome respect accorded to God, *devoutness, piety, godliness*” (BDAG).
 - a. The godly person faces life hand in hand with God.
 - b. God is always front and center in his life.
 7. We add to our godliness, brotherly affection - Brotherly affection is from the Greek word *Philadelphia* meaning, “love of brother/sister” (BDAG).
 - a. We are to warmly love our brothers and sisters-in-Christ.
 8. We add to our brotherly affection, love – This is *agape*.
 - a. *Agape* is the highest type of love.
 - i. It is the type of love that God has for sinful man.
 - ii. Of faith, hope, and love, “The greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).
- iv. This is a beautiful and comprehensive passage of Christian graces which we must pursue.
1. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins (2 Peter 1:8-9).
 - a. By possessing and adding to these qualities, we will be effective and fruitful in our knowledge of Christ.
 - b. However, if we don’t possess these, we will be ineffective and unfruitful.
 - i. We will have spiritual myopia which is extreme near-sightedness.
 1. This myopia renders us blind to his salvation and heaven.
- b. God has granted us provision, but of us he expects pursuit of these Christian graces.
8. **Third, Promises. Peter closes this passage with a couple of promises from God.**
 - a. He writes in 1:10-11, “¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - i. Salvation is a calling and an election.
 1. God calls us through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).
 2. Those that hear the call join the elect when they obey the gospel (Matthew 7:21).

- a. That being said, salvation, this calling, this election can be forfeited.
 - i. It can be lost.
- 3. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to make our salvation, our calling and election, sure.
 - a. We make our calling and election sure when we pursue these Christian graces.
- ii. Upon their pursuit, God gives us a two-fold promise.
 - 1. In **1:10b**, Peter writes, “[F]or if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”
 - a. God promises that if we possess and add to these eight qualities, we will never fall.
 - i. Yes, we will sin from time-to-time, but not so much as to put our soul in harm’s way.
 - 1. As John would say, we are still in the light.
 - 2. As Paul would say, we are still being led by the Spirit.
 - 2. The second promise is given in **1:11**, “¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
 - a. Here Peter is talking about the ultimate manifestation of the kingdom – the eternal, the heavenly kingdom.
 - i. If we supply the Christian graces, God will supply (Peter uses the same Greek word) and entrance into the eternal kingdom.
 - b. Peter concludes this powerful passage with these two promises from God.

9. Conclusion

- a. In the race of his life, Dan Jansen fell.
- b. We are in the race for eternal life, and we cannot afford to fall.
 - i. Thankfully, God has given us a way to make our calling and election sure.
 - 1. He has provisioned us for the race.
 - 2. He has told us the graces to pursue.
 - 3. He has promised us if we practice these qualities we will never fall.
 - a. Furthermore, waiting for us at the end of the race is the entrance to his eternal, heavenly kingdom.

10. Invitation

- a. If you want to finish the Christian race, you have to be in the Christian race.
 - i. The Bible says we are saved by grace through faith – obedient faith.
 - 1. Faith expressed as repentance.
 - 2. Confession.
 - 3. Baptism.
 - ii. At the point of baptism, you are at the starting block and are finally in the Christian race.
 - iii. Join the race today.
- b. I also invite you to rejoin the race if you’ve stumbled and fallen.



- i. Incidentally, Dan Jansen did eventually win Olympic gold six years later in Lillehammer.
 - 1. He skated a victory lap with his one-year old daughter in his arms – a daughter named Jane, after his older sister.
 - 2. Dan Jansen got up. Dan Jansen got back in the race, and so can you.
- c. If you are here this morning, and you are ready to put on Christ in baptism or you need an opportunity to repent and ask for the prayers of the church, we invite you to come forward while we stand and sing.
- d. Let us stand and sing.

