

# LEST YE FAINT

by

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE SECRET OF CONTINUAL TRIUMPH

**“For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall”** (II Peter 1:10).

THE SUGGESTIVENESS OF OUR TEXT is exceeded only by the reality of its factual involvements.

- Faith has a foe to withstand;
- Faith has a fight to wage;
- Faith has a force to wield;
- Faith has a favour to win.

The foe of faith is a treacherous trickster who comes as an angel of light, robed in the glittering tinsel of deception. He is sinister in his designs and subtle in his deeds. His chief delight is to have the believer fall, if for no other reason than the fact that the Lord would have him stand.

The Apostle Peter introduces us to a practical line of thought which ought to prove profitable to the earnest child of God. The preface to his dissertation is helpfully encouraging. **“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord”** (I Peter 1:2), he intreated.

It is an entreaty, for, while grace and peace are the bestowments of God, the multiplication of them is clearly the responsibility of the recipients. Grace is implanted power and peace is imbedded confidence. These are to be added together and multiplied by the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

No matter what aspect of the believer’s experience we may be emphasizing, we are invariably and of necessity brought face to face with the matter of Bible study, for **“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Romans 10:17).

So does instruction, and direction, and devotion. Knowledge of God and of Jesus as Lord is the multiplier of strength, stability and steadfastness—the sinews of sturdiness in every sincere servant of Christ.

## The Things of Heavenly Provision

**“His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness”** (II Peter 1:3).

Here we have a sweeping statement, the magnitude of which has never been calculated, the value of which can never be assayed. It has to do with the **“All Things”** of God’s provision. Observe closely that it does not state that He hath given unto us all things. No, there is a very important qualification. He has provided not only those things, but all those things that **“pertain unto life and godliness.”**

The life herein designated is later characterized or identified as **“the divine nature”** (II Peter 1:4). All that this new life requires for growth and strength is supplied. Just as the natural life must have nutriment and refreshment, sun and air, and just as the hand of Providence supplies these things, just so is the divine nature, acquired by grace through faith, supernaturally nourished and strengthened.

Nothing is lacking in the provisions to make strong and healthful every soul who takes shelter under the shadow of the wings of Him who preserveth man and beast (Psalm 36:6, 7).

No excuse then for a believer to lapse into the weakness of spiritual anemia or the new man in Christ to wear a ghastly pallor. Within his reach and at his disposal are the **“all things”** to give him the blush of spiritual health and the stamina to bulwark him against the most pernicious thrusts of enemy forces. Whatever we need and whenever we need it, we have the authority of the Most High that it is ready for our appropriation and in abundant quantities.

And witness, also, the **“all things”** of divine provision are for godliness.

This has to do with the conduct of the new life, its operation and output. The same supply which sustains it in healthfulness is designed to support it in helpfulness, to promote it in paths of spiritual maturity and productiveness. This makes it possible for the new life to assert, **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Philippians 4:13).

This is the source of propulsion in progress and the dynamic inherent in determination; and the reason for the breathtaking possibilities for every born again man or woman is that these provisions for life and godliness are **“according to divine power”** (II Peter 1:3).

This by no means suggests limitation. On the contrary, the storehouse is inexhaustible, and the believer is in vital contact with the source of supply.

## The Things of Human Possession

**“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful . . .”** (II Peter 1:8).

Here is a vital consideration, a lesson to be learned upon our knees. The things of divine provision must be appropriated; they must be possessed. The difference between success and failure in Christian profession, and the difference between effectiveness and ineffectiveness in Christian procedure, is contingent upon the little conjunction *if*.

**“If these things be in you,”** the Apostle solemnly contended, thus introducing the matter of Christian accomplishment, “the whole of your Christian experience will be one of exceptional usefulness and abounding blessing.” The very thought incorporated in his earnest and inquiring statement prompts an immediate inventory of one’s life. Do we actually possess the things of divine provision? They are available to us, but do we have them? By what accurate and revealing gauge can we ascertain our possession of these things?

The text is very clear on this point. **“He that lacketh these things”** (II Peter 1:9), which are divinely furnished to develop the Christian life and to order its course, is devoid of the evidences of an active faith. The exhortation is to the effect that **“in your faith provide virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, kindness and love”** (II Peter 1:5-7, margin).

All these elevating characteristics issue from an appropriation of the divine gifts which are designed to equip and to energize the new nature acquired through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Dr. F. E. Marsh asks: “What is virtue but faith undaunted; what is knowledge but faith apprehending; what is temperance but faith overcoming; what is patience but faith untiring; what is godliness but faith imitating; what is kindness but faith in practice; what is love but faith at work?” \*

\* *“Fully Furnished”* – **this book is also posted on our website at [BaptistBibleBelievers.com](http://BaptistBibleBelievers.com).**

Yes, the true status of any Christian can be readily determined through a moment of honest deductive consideration.

Then, there is a second aspect to the believer’s appropriation of the divine provisions. There is a sense in which he can possess and yet not produce.

**“If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful”** (II Peter 1:8).

They must be possessed to benefit us; they must abound to bless others. The word **“abound”** is a wholesome word. It is peculiar to Scripture, especially as touching upon the bestowments of the Lord. They are always bountiful. The amplitude of His grace is ever and always a matter of challenging wonder. The word **“abound”** means, literally, *to overflow*. It is illustrated by a vessel under an hydrant with the inflowing water rising higher and higher in the vessel until it at last reaches the brim and begins to pour over the sides. This is the extent to which God desires the all things of His giving to be in us—to the point of overflowing to others. Then, there will be no subjective dearth and no passive denial of the Lord’s commands.

**“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”** (II Peter 1:8).

## The Things of Honest Practice

**“For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall”** (II Peter 1:10b).

Here, then, looming brightly in its elevating encouragement, is the true secret of continual spiritual triumph. It is not in the provision or in the possession, as indispensable as these are, but in the practice. It is reasonable to conclude, in the light of this wonderful revelation, that all failure and defeat in the Christian life of any individual is rightly attributable to a lack of practical application, either through neglect or through deliberate rebellion against heavenly orders.

Having shown how sadly one can fail with regard to one’s daily life in Christ, the Apostle is emboldened to plead for the positive and preferable procedure: **“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure”** (II Peter 1:10a).

Realizing that we are utterly incapable of making either our calling or our election sure, we must understand that the Holy Spirit, here, through Peter, is calling upon God’s people to exercise themselves more carefully and cautiously to confirm their calling and election. How? In making their faith to be vitalized in practice.

In order to establish a strong incentive and to encourage constant diligence in the accepted practice of the faith, the Apostle adds, **“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (II Peter 1:11).

This is the rich reward for a well-run race; this is the victory of a well-fought fight of faith.

- It is the eternal joy of having **“gold, silver and precious stones”** (I Corinthians 3:12), to be divinely assayed.
- It is the joy of hearing from the lips of the Lord of Glory, **“Well done, my good and faithful servant”** (Matthew 25:21).
- It speaks of a meeting and greeting of the Coming One without being **“ashamed before him at his appearing”** (I John 2:28).

Peter is here urging all in the course of Christian profession to keep their eyes on the goal and to **“press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 3:14).

## The Things of Helpful Preaching

**“I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things”** (II Peter 1:12).

Here is a faithful preacher, who, knowing the tendency of people to forget even sacred matters of importance, exhibits a commendable determination to keep the challenge before them.

They might not like to be prodded. They may even resent the constant reminders, but the Apostle was firm in his promise and decided in his intention.

They may have requested this emphasis to be dropped from his preaching, for he added in his epistle, **“Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance”** (II Peter 1:13).

Thus, the expression **“to stir you up”** means *to arouse by reminder*.

Every decadent age, filled with indifference and fraught with the dangers of loss, requires this emphasis. This is prodigiously illustrated in the Minor Prophets. But when has there been a day when it was not necessary to stir up the hearts of God’s dear people?

An experience in the life of Paul provides for us a very vivid description of the professing Church of today. At Troas, in the company of Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius and Timothy, a meeting was held with the saints. Because of their departure the next morning, the Apostle prolonged his message until midnight.

A youth by the name of Eutychus was sitting in the window but **“being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead”** (Acts 20:9).

Likewise, the Church has sagged down in slumber while the enemy sows his tares. It has dropped from the third story, so suggestive of the third heaven (II Corinthians 12:2), the presence and power of the Lord.

Why did the Apostle decide to preach about these things unceasingly? Perhaps his hearers knew them, even understanding them well. Yes, they did know them. He stated that they did. His purpose, however, was to make sure that they were **“established in the present truth”** (II Peter 1:12).

Knowing about a truth and being established in it are two vastly different matters. There are multitudes of professing Christians who are informed about the tenets of the faith, but comparatively few are steady-minded in them.

Peter himself could remember the day when his impetuosity rendered him grievously unsteady. But now it is different. He is a towering strength of encouragement to others. He would wave every believer down the course to cross the line a winner.

### **The Things of Hopeful Perpetuation**

**“Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance”** (II Peter 1:15).

Peter’s desire was twofold.

First, that they might be established in the present truth to experience a scriptural godliness.

Second, that they might leave for posterity a challenge sufficiently attractive to induce their children to live a life of like character according to the divine standard.

God's standard for life is higher than the world can conceive or appreciate, and holier than the Church is wont to believe and accept. It is one of absolute justice and purity. Perhaps it is too high for Christians to reach?

**But then, a standard of godliness is not to be reached; it is to keep one reaching.**

- It is the incentive which keeps one pressing on.
- It is that vision of higher and greater things which makes us dissatisfied with our strongest effort for Christ.
- It is that impelling challenge which elicits prayerful devotion to the Lord.
- It is a constraint which the trusting heart cannot avoid.

God's standard for life is a towline which gracefully directs the barge of human energies into the channel of spiritual productiveness.

- It is the indispensable inducement which brings the desires of true disciples into sweet concurrence with the divine will.

In order to fulfil God's purpose, one must be willing to abandon one's own designs and desires and leave all to follow Christ. Nothing should stand in the way. Just as a soldier of the state disentangles himself from all civil and personal pursuits, even so the soldier of the cross must sever all ties that could in any wise hinder a full obedience to the commands of the Captain of the Lord's hosts. Then, having made such a wise and profitable decision, there must be a faithful pursuance of that purpose. **"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"** (Luke 9:62).

The tiller of the soil would plow a crooked furrow if he looked back, and the servant of Christ would walk a crooked path if he diverted his attention to nonessentials or extraneous matters. He must run with constancy and consistency the race that is set before him, looking always and only unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Moses was a great leader, but death terminated his leadership. Peter was a faithful preacher, but he must follow his Lord in a similar decease. Ministers come and go, but the people must go on—ever on!

The reason which Peter had in mind for urging a perpetuation of these things is too obvious for mention. One generation follows another, and the bearing of the former upon the latter, spiritually, is marked. Bezaleel conscientiously finished the work God gave him to do in constructing the tabernacle of old because he had a heart interest in doing the will of God. The explanation for this is simple. His paternal grandfather's name was Hur (Exodus 31:2).

Hur means “*noble*”. He was a noble man of prayer. His father’s name was Uri. Uri means “*enlightened*”. A praying father will always enlighten his children, who, in turn, will properly instruct their children in the things of the Lord.

Timothy is another example. The unfeigned faith which Paul found in him was resident, before him, in his grandmother Lois and also in his mother Eunice (II Timothy 1:5). Unless the spiritual standard is raised noticeably and soon, one cannot but fear for the succeeding generations. The things of divine provision must be perpetuated in our testimony and life.

### **The Things of Harmful Preclusion**

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

We may either possess or preclude the blessings of the Lord. If we are not fully furnished unto all good works, either through neglect or carelessness, indifference or rejection, we ought to know something of the divine diagnosis of such a case.

#### *HE WHO LACKS THESE THINGS IS BLIND*

He is blind to his own status. He knows not what he is missing now or what he shall miss hereafter. He has only a form of godliness, denying the power thereof (II Timothy 3:5).

Let us understand of what this denial consists on the part of one who is satisfied to have merely a form (*morphosis*) of profession. It is not an open denunciation of the power of God. It is not an attempted denial of the existence or the extent of that power. It is robbing oneself of the provisions and privileges of that power—all through a lack of knowledge of God. This has ever been serious. We find at least one echo from Old Testament times: “**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge**” (Hosea 4:6).

#### *HE WHO LACKS THESE THINGS IS SHORT-VISIONED*

- He does not see the fields white unto harvest with the labourers so few.
- He does not see that there is no man to stand in the gap which is his responsibility to fill.
- He does not see that upwards of five thousand souls die every hour of the day and night, of whom only a small percentage is ready to meet the Lord.
- He does not see that he must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to render an accounting.

He is short-visioned. He only sees what relates to himself and his own personal comforts. What a dreadful status! What a sorrowful plight!

#### *HE WHO LACKS THESE THINGS HAS FORGOTTEN THAT HE WAS PURGED FROM HIS OLD SINS*

His character and conduct give no perceptible evidence of his being translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

The course which he follows shows no indication that he has submitted to a new Lord. The company he keeps offers no proof that he is now a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17).

The interests which engage his attention and absorb his energies in no wise betray the truth that the blessed Holy Spirit lives within (I Corinthians 6:19).

He has forgotten that one day, weary and worn and sad, he came to the cross where the Saviour willingly lifted the load and sweetly and tenderly instructed him to go his way, with the assurance that He would be his constant companion, even until the consummation of the age.

This statement of failure with its far-reaching consequences is given for our admonition. Why should we fail? According to His divine power He has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. Why should we linger in the shadows? He is the Light, waiting and willing to flood our pathway with the very effulgence of His own glory. Why should we be so impoverished? Every good gift cometh from Him with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He desires to give us freely all things (Romans 8:32).

**“Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face”** (I Corinthians 13:12).

The “now” has its implications and the “then” its contemplations. Together, they call us to the utmost sobriety and reverence.

- Now, it is the walk; then, it is the welcome.
- Now, it is the practice; then, it is the presentation.
- Now, it is the exercise; then the entrance.
- Now, it is the obedience; then, it is the abundance.
- Now, it is the remembrance; then, it is the reward.
- Now, it is our calling; then, it is His coming.

**“If ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”**

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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