

**THE RIGHT STUFF****2 Peter 1:1-11****(Read 2 Peter 1:1-11)**

**INTRO:** Have you ever tried to make fresh squeezed lemonade with anything but real lemons. It's impossible. I mean, you can't make lemonade with oranges, right? And if you used tomatoes, it wouldn't be lemonade would it? No, you need the right stuff to make the genuine article.

On a bitterly cold and snowy January weekend back in 1985, Ken and Deb Danielson and Kathy and I splurged. We combined our funds and rented a new-fangled video disk machine and some movies from Spectrum, and because ABC was snowed out that weekend and with a high temperature in the minus teens, we watched movies all weekend. One of the movies was a relatively recent release about the early years of the US space program, entitled *THE RIGHT STUFF*. The story was about how the first astronauts were selected. They were the best of the best. The training was grueling. The testing was relentless, and in the end the astronaut corps was staffed with the cream of the crop. Only those with the right stuff were chosen

As we move into the last letter we will cover in our Little Letters, BIG MESSAGE series, Peter is saying that we need to be the best we can be. In order to be just like Jesus, we need to be the right stuff. Now unlike those would be astronauts who didn't make the cut for the U.S. Space Program, we all have the right stuff as long as we follow the formula, and Peter provides that formula here. We have to have the right stuff to make an impact for the Kingdom. Let me show you what it is.

The first ingredient is to realize that . . .

**Total submission to God is necessary**

- Peter introduces himself as "*a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ*". (verse 1) For Peter, slavery was a badge of honor and it should be for us as well. Should we accept this mission it puts us in good company – and not just with Peter. Moses was called a servant of God in Deuteronomy 34:5, Joshua, Moses' successor was called a servant of God in Joshua 24:29, David (Israel's greatest king and the man "called after God's own heart") was called the servant of God in 2 Samuel 3:18, Paul called himself a servant of Jesus Christ a half dozen times or so, and so do James and Jude.
- The badge of servanthood is the right stuff but it flies in the face of our American rugged individualism – we don't want to be subservient to anyone. (Tell about how the Kennedy's ignored protocol when they met Queen Elizabeth. Everyone was horrified when she didn't curtsy and he didn't bow) Being a slave to anyone, including the God of the universe is hard for many to swallow. But a Christ Follower needs to gulp down their need to lead and ask, "What would you have me do, Lord?" We need to completely submit to God – the Apostle Peter did, and so must we. And truth be told, we are only doing what Jesus did. He said of himself, *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Mark 10:45. I think it was F. B. Meyer who wrote, "*He became what we are to make us what he is.*" Follow the leader – learn to serve.
- The next ingredient is . . .

**Faith**

- Peter is writing here to those who "*have received a faith as precious as ours*" (verse 1). Before you go any further – you've got to have faith in Christ. This is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions. Other religions are based on works which build up points so that in the end you might, and it's a huge MIGHT, be able to make it into paradise. You just never know. But with Christ, doing all the work on the Cross, that is taken care of. What he requires from us then, it to acknowledge that he is Lord. Listen to what Paul says, *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Romans 10:9-13.
- Have you done this key prerequisite? Most of you have, but if you haven't, or if you're not sure, your life will be little more than spinning your wheels and you know how frustrating that is. Jesus desires a relationship with you but you need to make him Lord of your life – it's up to you to do that. He will not force himself into your life.

- And notice the blessing that comes from making him Lord: In this world, peace is increasingly at a premium – and real true peace is non-existent. People are stressed out – it’s an epidemic. We have words in our vocab now like “road rage” and “going postal” and “post-traumatic stress syndrome”. All because of a marked lack of peace. The old gospel chorus says, *Peace, peace wonderful peace, flowing down from the heavens above*. . . – How do you get that? How do you have peace in this crazy world? – Turn it all over to Christ. Make him your Lord. Your troubles will not go away – I’m not saying that, but what I’m saying is, your troubles in God’s hands are much smaller than your troubles in your hands.
- Next, Peter adds . . .

### **The remaining ingredients to make the right stuff**

- Notice that he presents a step by step procedure.
- We just talked about faith, and Peter tells us in verse 5 to add to it. We are to add, goodness. Our belief in the one whom we profess produces a desire for moral excellence – which is another way of saying goodness. What does that mean in a world that says that morality is what “I” say it is? Well, for one thing, it often means that there is no morality. With the Bible we have the formula for moral excellence – a time tested recipe for life that is pleasing to God.
- Goodness then produces a deeper knowledge of God – we can’t lose! The more we become like him, the more we know him. The more we know Jesus, the more we know grace, and the peace we just talked about. Peter, as Jude and John were addressing in their little letters, was dealing with the heresy of Gnosticism. Here he points out that the knowledge we need is simple practical wisdom – or common sense – which seems to be in short supply these days.
- The next step from knowledge is self-control. Self-control? What’s that? It’s a cause for every manner of addictions from the opiate epidemic to sexual addiction to opening a bag of LAYS Potato Chips and eating the whole bag. Jesus told us to . . . *seek first his kingdom and his righteousness* . . . Matthew 6:33a. Addiction is awful! Breaking its bondage is easier said than done, but the deeper we know God, the more he fills the emptiness we try to fill with food, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, porn, TV or anything else that takes his place in our life. And self-control is much more than addiction – it’s important in controlling our words and our anger. Turn control of you over to the Master.
- From self-control Peter progresses to what the NIV translates as perseverance. What is perseverance? Try patience or patient endurance. This word in the Greek paints a word picture of bearing up under. When we have the right stuff we have patience because we know “this too shall pass”. As Christ Followers we know that there is something much better still to come – we have that sure promise – so we can bear up under whatever comes along.
- And patience produces godliness. Plain and simply, we become more like Jesus. We are in his likeness. And if we are his reflection, we are his representatives. How are we doing with that? We might be the only picture some people ever have of God. That’s why I often pray – that we “be Jesus” to those we meet. The people Jesus met were never the same. How about those who meet us?
- And then godliness leads us to a deeper love for one another, or philadelphia. Isn’t appropriate on the day that the Philadelphia Eagles play for a Conference Championship that we should hear their city’s name in a sermon from a Philadelphia boy? But the name of the Eagles’ home-town means Brotherly Love. And that’s what we are to have for one another and for all humanity. When we love each other like this, it spills over. It gets contagious. We pass it on. And what comes from that brotherly love is the crowning virtue of the entire list, LOVE. This is the kind of love that Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. It’s an unconditional, no holds barred love that mirrors God’s love. The Greek word is one you’ve probably heard a few times – *αγαπη* – and it is what every Christ Follower needs.
- With all these ingredients the kingdom will grow, and we will impact our culture. But there is a problem – the Church has been falling down in its calling. We’ve not built on these stepping stone. That’s why Peter says that there’s a danger. . .

### **We might neglect to add these ingredients to the mix**

- The result will be that nothing will happen. (Tell about Morris' hamburger w/o the burger) – These ingredients are necessary. Peter's actual words are that we will become nearsighted, and maybe even blind. He warns us against forgetting how far God has brought us.
- Peter says that as we take these steps – and keep adding the right stuff, we will always progress and keep from stumbling. The plan is to take as many with us into what he calls the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Who do you know, who needs an application of this recipe?

**Conclusion:**

You've all got the right stuff, right at your finger tips – add it in. Get into the mix. Stand firm in the faith, look forward to the promise of eternal life and do the Lord's work. The final result will be out of this world. Amen.