

“How Healthy Do You Want To Be?”, Michael Gatlin, 2 Peter 1:3 – 11, January 3, 2015

Good morning, how are we doing today? Doing awesome? I love this time of year, this time at the very beginning of the year. It feels kind of new, laid out in front, you know lots of people take some time to do some reflection, even as John was talking about during communion that we take this time of year to kind of reflect back a little bit on what's gone on. Lots of folks make New Year's resolutions, anybody make a New Year's resolution this year? Ok, 4 of us, the rest of you get to work. You know, lots of people do make resolutions and some of them do last past President's day. They go on a little while longer throughout the year. Some of us like to make plans for a better life, some people want to lose weight, others want to gain muscle, some need to what's the phrase I heard, eye guzzle. They need to catch up on all the past episodes of Downton Abby before the new season starts. Is that today too? There's a whole lot going on today, it's a crazy day, Brenda burping alphabet, Downton Abby, football games. Well here's what we're doing at the Vineyard, this is the first in a series of messages, although last year Jessica did such a great job, her message was a prequel, I learned that from Star Wars. So, we're going to take a look at what does a healthy life look like from a biblical perspective. We're going to look at it from a whole bunch of different angles. So to start with, this year we're going to be looking at things for us personally, what does healthy spirituality look like? That's what I'm talking about today, from a biblical perspective, what does it mean to be healthy in terms of our physical bodies and in terms of eating, what does it mean to have healthy emotions, healthy relationships. We're going to move on from there, we're going to talk about what does a healthy community look like, what does a healthy church look like from a biblical perspective and how can we grow and become more healthy as a church. We're going to take some time, this year we're going to study the book of Galatians because there's a really great, detailed look in the letter that Paul wrote to the church in Galatia about healthy life and healthy community and healthy spirituality. We're going to look at that in some detail. And then as the election kind of warms up or maybe comes to a close, finally in the fall, we're going to take a look at how do we as followers of Jesus engage in the rest of the world in a really healthy way, so that's kind of where we're going and it comes to me really by way of a question that I often ask people as I'm kind of being a pastor with people and we're talking about stuff going on in their life and there's something in the scripture that seems like it's going to be hard to do, it's going to be hard to follow through on. The question that I often ask myself and I ask others is this. How healthy do you want to be? You can just keep doing the same things you're doing and be right where you're at. But when you actually begin to ask that question, when you come up against a fork in the road, when you come up against a change that needs to be made, you just ask that question, how healthy do you want to be? If you want to be healthy, if you want to really have an interactual experience with God, part of what we're talking about today, well there's things you sort of have to do along the way in order to be healthy. If you do want to lose weight, there are some things you have to do. You have to eat less, exercise more. Right foot, left foot, eat less, exercise more. What do you do the next day? Eat less, exercise more right? Isn't that the way it works? Not that I would know, but I've heard. I'm joking, I would know.

So here's where I want to start today, have you ever noticed that for some people, they will begin a relationship with God, they will profess faith in Christ, maybe they'll stand up at a meeting or they'll get baptized in front of a church, but have you ever noticed how for some people, nothing changes in their life as a result of doing that? I've had conversations with people over my years of being a pastor, about 20

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years now, where a wife will come to me and say my husband made a profession of faith in Christ, I was so excited because he stood up in a meeting and he came forward and he got prayer, he got baptized but he's still addicted to porn, he won't give up pornography. Or I got a call at one point from a local business guy who said I'm doing business with a guy that goes to the Vineyard but never delivers on his contract and now he won't return any of my calls or emails and then he paused for a minute and then he said, I thought Christians were different, I thought they were supposed to be different. You know, there's this thing that really is true, that we believe it because it's supposed to be there, actually following Jesus is supposed to make a difference in our lives. That things are actually supposed to change, that things are actually supposed to get better in every part of our lives. If someone professes Christ, if they claim to be a Christian, things in our lives should change, shouldn't we expect that things will be different? I don't mean different in terms of a self-righteous, religious jerk who judges people who don't do what they do or vote the way they vote, I'm not talking about that kind of difference. I'm talking about as a result of following Jesus, shouldn't we expect that someone would become more honest, more loving, or more kind or more consistent, more authentic in their relationships with other people. Shouldn't we expect that as a result of becoming a follower of Jesus a person would become a safer person, somebody who you don't need to protect yourself when you're around them? They're not going to be ruthless in romance, or dishonest in business or indiscreet with personal information. Shouldn't we expect that as a result of following Jesus that we would actually begin to live better lives, more like Christ.

There's this wonderful story, there's this guy named Leslie Newbegen, that's a cool name isn't it, he was actually a pastor in England in the 1930's, he left to do missionary work in India and returned more than 40 years later to England. So he left in the 30's and he came back in the 70's and he made a couple observations after being out of England for more than 40 years. He found that church and Christian influence in English society had massively declined over the time he spent in India. That the larger society was no longer supportive of Christian values or of biblical understanding of life and one of the things that Newbegen stressed when you read his writings is that the church in the west declined mostly because the Christians didn't look any different from the folks who weren't following Jesus. Their lives looked exactly the same, like you couldn't tell them apart and really there are some things that shouldn't look any different. Like we eat the same kind of food, we root for the same teams, we watch some of the same kinds of shows, there's some things like our engagement in the school system or engagement in neighborhood or politics or pursuing excellence in the arts or athletics or diligence or discipline in our lives. Many things should look really similar. But when you look at the scriptures, when you look at the early church, the early Christians looked really different from the rest of the Roman world around them in many, many different ways. The early Christians were marked by integrity, they were so completely honest in business, and they were fair in their dealings with other people. The early Christians were incredibly generous, they not only helped the poor in their own midst, in their own community, but they went out of their way to help the poor in the larger society. The early Christians were known for their hospitality, they opened up their homes regularly and they welcomed people in. They were marked by forgiveness, they refused to hold grudges, they sought reconciliation, they rejected being vengeful. The early Christians were marked by chastity, they simply refused to have sex outside of marriage regardless of what rest of society did. In fact, when you read early Roman writings about the early church from kind of a non-church perspective, they were shocked the early Christians would open up their table to anybody, welcome anybody to their table, share their food with anybody, but they didn't share their bed with anybody which was completely opposite of society. Society in that day, they shared their bed with anybody but they would only share their table with their trusted, most loyal friends and family members, it was so completely opposite. The early Christians were able to handle adversity, they didn't think

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something was radically wrong when they were persecuted or when they went through trials, they just thought that was part in parcel of following Christ. When you look at yourself, when you look in the mirror or when you look at the larger church or even the folks that you know here at the Vineyard or around the city that are following Jesus, I wonder how different we look. I wonder how much change has really taken place.

So at this time of year, when I'm reflecting on my own life one of the things that I like to do is, I like to spend some time wondering what does healthy spirituality look like for me, what does that look like for you? What would that look like for us as a church and if we actually wanted to see our lives changed to become more like Jesus, how would we do that? Well, thankfully the Bible is full of stuff like this, so if you have a Bible, why don't you open it up to 2 Peter 1. This is one of the passages that we use in something here that we call Gospel of Wholeness which is a really useful tool. We go through about 8 versus and we talk about what it means to have real, interactual experiences with Jesus, how do you allow him deep into your lives to deal with the stuff that you've done or the stuff that's been done to you and allow him to bring healing. This is one of the passages we use in that and I just want to take some time and unpack this passage because I think it's really helpful for us as we think about what healthy spirituality looks like. 2 Peter 1, I'm going to pray and then I'm going to read versus 3-11 and unpack that just a little bit. Heavenly Father, thank you for your grace and your presence here, thank you for the way, that if we let you, you really will bring change to pretty much every area of our life. So, Holy Spirit, Jesus said that you would be our teacher, that you would guide us in the truth and we invite your presence here, we invite you to come teach us. Holy Spirit would you put your finger on anything in our lives that you would like to, for us individually, for us as a community and would you speak to us through this passage. In Christ's name, Amen.

2 Peter 1, it reads like this: His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I love the stark contrasts in versus 8-11 in an unhealthy spirituality and a healthy spirituality that's listed right there. First he lists the unhealthy in verse 8, he talks about being ineffective and unproductive in our knowledge of Jesus Christ, that if we don't have these things that he's listing, that we're nearsighted and blind, that we're forgetting that we've been cleansed. And then he goes to the healthy and he says, if you have these things, that you'll never stumble, you'll receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So one of our questions is how healthy do we want to be? How long do we want to be ineffective and unproductive, near-sighted, blind and forgetful? I don't know, I don't think I want to be there very long or do I want to be the kind of person that will never stumble and receive a rich welcome. I love the contrast that's there. I wonder how many of us might personally identify with sometimes feeling or maybe long-term feeling ineffective, unproductive in our knowledge and our experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word unproductive could also be translated

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as unfruitful. Throughout the scriptures we read of a life of following God, a life filled with God is meant to be a fruitful life. We read about it in Psalm 1, we read about it in Galatians 5, the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you might look at your life in a more introspective, reflective moment at the 1st of the year and you might say, I don't see much fruit. It's maybe my patience, or my kindness is in short supply, maybe there's not a lot of joy there. Maybe you see yourself as someone who's easily irritated, often upset like a person walking around with a really bad sunburn all the time, like oh my gosh, it's painful to be here. Everything irritates you, everything bugs you, you're always in a funk, people have to walk on eggshells around you, maybe you're there. Or, maybe the unfruitfulness comes in very little self-control over your appetite or the kinds of things that you say or maybe you have very little confidence in terms of your relationship with Christ. The slightest doubt that comes your way is really unsettling, shaking,

One of the things that I love about the Bible is that the Bible doesn't just identify the problems like so many books out there, where it's like 11 or 12 chapters identifying the problems in your life and then a prologue or epilogue or something at the end, what's that thing at the end? That's epilogue right? It's not that helpful. I love that the way the scriptures are not just identifying problems but they're helping to real, effective solutions and that's what we see here. So, when you take stock of your spiritual life, you find you have a bit of ineffectiveness or even a lot of unproductiveness in your relationship with God and your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, there's a way to change that. There's a way that you can actually be more healthy and so, once again the question, how healthy do we want to be? How healthy do we want to be with this thing because he shows us exactly what we need to get there so go back up to the top of this passage, go to verses 3 or 4. Look at verse 3, first line, His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life, he's provided power for us to live this life. It's really important to understand that Christ has given us everything that we need to become the kind of people that we should be, that we know we should be. We're not expected to do this on our own, in fact, there is no way possible to do this on our own, there's no way we can do that. I'm reminded of John 15 where Jesus says, I am the vine and you are the branches, if you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. And I love that little line at the end, apart from me you'd do squat. Not squats, I'm not back on exercising again, but you can't do anything without him. What if we started every day with this simple statement, you get up, you sit up in bed, your feet touch the floor and you just say, Jesus I can't do anything without you today, I can't do anything without you. Sometimes it's good for me to list all the things I can't do without him today. Jesus, there's nobody I'm going to talk to like you would on my own, that's just not going to happen. I'm not going to be kind to people today, the way that I should without you. I can't love people, I can't love my family the way you love them, without you today. I can't say no to the things that I should say no to, I can't say yes to the things I should say yes to without you in my life today. I won't be able to forgive as you forgive.

So, what if we switched, instead of just really trying to gut through life, what if we switched and we just started every day with negative confession. Jesus if you don't show up today, I'm going to be a total Beep. I need you today, so you just open up your mind, you open up your heart and you open up your hands and you say Lord Jesus would you fill me today. Would you fill me so that when I interact with people today, they see you? Because he is really attractive, I don't mean really attractive, my mind just went blank, I couldn't think of a single male model name, what's the name of the guy with the long hair, Fabio, not attractive like Fabio, I couldn't even get there. People liked being around him, what if people experienced Jesus when they experienced Michael today? What would that be like? Jesus I need you to fill me up because there's no way that I can get there without you. So Christ's power is available, his divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life. Look at verse 4, through these he has

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given us his very great and precious promises, his promises are available to us and I love it that God is a person who always keeps his promises, he's not like you and I. He doesn't start stuff and get exhausted by it and go, Ugh I can't keep up with Michael anymore that guy's just like all over, I'm done with him. What kind of promises might Peter have been talking about? Christ promised he was going away to prepare a place for us and when it was done, he'd come back and get us. That's a promise that he made that we have, he promised that we would never have any temptation too great for us to bear. That's a promise that we have. He promised that he would complete his work in us, he would finish it. He promised that his church would endure, no matter what. That even the gates of hell would not make their way against us. He promised to forgive us, no matter what we did or failed to do. He promised forgiveness for us, if we truly confess, we don't have to live dragging around the regrets of last week or last month or last year. Listen, we can't become effective faithful followers of Jesus if we don't know what's been given to us. His power, his promises and he keeps his promises. Remember the promise of the Holy Spirit? I love this promise in Luke 11. Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks is given, everyone who seeks will find and everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Then he goes on to unpack what this means. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, you give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Sometimes I think we don't experience much of God's presence. That's the whole Holy Spirit, the experienced presence of God. Sometimes I think we don't experience much of God's presence because we just don't ask. We get up in the morning and we just go our own way and we kind of hope he's there when we really need him. But what if we started this year, every single day, you want a new year's resolution? Here's one, start every single day just saying, Lord I need your presence today, I can't do this thing on my own, I can't do this without you. And then we're invited, he says, as a result of that. This is a great line, to participate in his divine nature. What the heck does that mean? That just sounds pretty sweet. It means that we get to be united with God, by his spirit. We don't become God, we're all his creatures, but we, through faith, could be united to God. So in the midst of that, his promises and the participation and power, why is it that we often don't see growth. Well, it comes right at the beginning of verse 5, there is a clear process toward health, verse 5, for this reason, makes every effort to add to your faith, make every effort to add to your faith. This is so different from what so many folks think. I've heard people quote this completely non-biblical phrase to me over and over and over again, if I hear it one more time I'm going to go ballistic, it won't be like Jesus at all. When people say Michael here's what I just need to do, I just need to let go and let God. No, you don't let go, you hold on tight. You make every effort, you make every effort, and you press into this stuff. You lean into this; I'm not going to magically become this follower of Jesus. I'm not going to magically become mature, to participate. To grow as a healthy follower of God it requires activity, it requires God's activity and our activity. We have to follow what he's doing, in Galatians 5:23 the apostle Paul makes this statement, he says, keep in step with the spirit of God. Keep in step with the spirit, since we live by the spirit, let us keep in step, it's like this 2 person dance God is leading but we have to follow. He's not just dragging around a rag doll on the dance floor. You have to move your feet too, that was my only dance move, did you see it? Because it's not coming back again. You missed out Joey that was it, that's all I got. The New Testament uses this language over and over again like Luke 13, make every effort Jesus says to enter through the narrow door because many I tell you will try and not be able to. Hebrews 12, make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to holy. Without holiness no one will see the Lord and then later on in this book, so then dear friends since you are looking forward this, make every effort to be spotless. One of the ways the

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apostle Paul describes this in 1 Timothy 6, he says this, fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. It's a fight, notice he says it's a good fight, it's not like a fight with your spouse or your parents or your kids, it's like this is a good fight. Fight the good fight of faith. Richard Foster said it this way, effort is not the opposite of grace; works are the opposite of grace. See work is me actually doing this so that God will accept me, no God's accepted me, he loves me, and he dearly loves me. That's a got be, unconditional love and forgiveness has been extended to me and how I have to work to appropriate that in my life.

I have to press into this thing, I don't just let go and hope it happens, I lean in. So to continue to be a follower of Christ is a struggle, back to my original question. How healthy do we want to be? How healthy do we want to be? Your know, our number 1 biggest problem as followers of Jesus that you and I have is that we don't make the effort; we just don't make the effort. We just give into things hoping it will happen. Like I just hope as I watch Downton Abby, all the seasons in 3 days and get caught up that somehow I'll also lose weight and develop great abs. I just hope it will happen. Sometimes we embrace this apathy, this indifference about our spiritual help, we embrace the lack of passion, the lack of feeling about caring what's right and there can settle over us a spiritual dullness where we just don't care about our sin, we don't care about our life, our relationship with God or prayer or helping other people find relationship with God or worship or pursuing values like reconciling with someone difficult or peacemaking or pursuing patience or pursuing purity. We just don't really care. You know, in the ancient church tradition this was called the sin of swath. We end up looking like that guy, so we just give up, we no longer care, we just need to sleep 23.9 hours in a day and we just kind of give up on this thing. We're not motivated to change but if you want to be different this year than you were last year, there's a process so in verse 5 he says, for this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. Some theologians, some commentators that think these are the actual things that you need to add. You have to make sure, this is like a recipe, like a formula, you gotta add these exact things in. I don't think that's the case. I think Peter is listing the kind of things that you add in but I believe it does start with faith and it does end with love, those are the things you have to add into this then these other things are examples of what you have to put alongside that so initially you have to start with faith in Christ. You start by saying Jesus, I need your kind of life because I can't do this on my own and where it's going to end, is it's going to end in loving God and loving one another, that's it's going to end with love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. That fulfills all the law and all the commandments. Peter's describing this staircase where one thing builds upon another and we're taking one step at a time. Goodness is about being pleasing to God, perseverance is about sticking with this thing, godliness is about looking more and more like Christ. This mutual affection is about loving those who are also following Jesus together and love, love is the crowning virtue.

I love the way that the apostle John sums it up in his first letter he says, God is love, if we were to boil this whole thing down. But one of the things i want to spend some time today unpacking is this growing in knowledge. Peter underlines the knowledge of knowing God, knowing Jesus in several places. In verse 2 of this same chapter, chapter 1 he says this, he says: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Grace and peace be yours in abundance, we can know grace and peace through our knowledge of God. In chapter 3 he says it again, he says therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by

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the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. Biblically, there are two ways that the word knowledge is used in scripture. For one the bible uses the word knowledge to refer to an intimate relationship between an husband and a wife, it's an intimate relationship, there's experience and intimacy there and that's one kind of knowledge and that word is used in different passages like Philippians 3, I want to know Christ, the apostle Paul writes, and to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. There is a deep experiential knowledge there. Or we read about it, Jesus uses that, where he says I am the good Shepard, in John 10, and I know my sheep and my sheep know me. There's a deep intimate, experiential knowledge. But knowledge in the bible is not just intimate and personal, it's also cognitive, it has a certain intellectual concept to it. Again, I think the reason that many of us don't see the change that we'd like to see in our lives is because we haven't actually applied our minds to our faith. We apply our minds to our jobs and we solve some amazing problems in the world when we do that. When we apply our minds to problems and diseases and illnesses and economic problems, even just in our own city, we see some amazing things happen. What I'm championing for here is that we apply our minds to our faith as well. That we apply our minds to our relationship with God in the same kind of way. We don't want to become compartmentalized and isolated in our thinking. So we want to apply our minds to that, you know so many people buy into, I believe, like a false stycotomy; a lie, that parts of our life are sacred and parts of our life are secular. Have you heard that before? There's parts of my life where I go to work and stuff, that's secular part of life but then there's my faith part of life and that's my sacred part. That is such a broken way of looking at the world and looking at how we live. You see when Christ redeems you, he redeems all of you, everywhere you go now, the Holy Spirit's there. In your bathroom, in your bedroom, in your kitchen, in your family arguments, the Holy Spirit's there all the time now because you are a temple of the Holy Spirit the apostle Paul says. So everywhere you go now becomes a sacred space. It's about where you're at and your connection with Jesus in this thing, not just like where you happen to be and that changes everything. We can apply our minds to our faith in the same way that we apply our minds to the rest of life. One of the things that's really important as you begin to apply your mind to your faith is to have a really clear, good picture be growing in your picture of who God is and how he operates. And the primary place that we learn that is in the scriptures. We come back to the scriptures, just like I'm doing today over and over and over again. In fact, if you hang out at the Vineyard for very long, you're going to find that every time we get together, I'm going to teach the Bible. We're just going to teach the Bible because we feel that in the Bible is everything that we need to know in order to live this life incredibly well and in order to let Jesus into our lives in some pretty deep ways. So if you're newer in your relationship with God, if you're newer in your experience of being with us in the Vineyard, just expect man, the Bible's coming up all the time. If you want to grow in your understanding and practical applications, we got a lot of places you can do that. Brenda and Mike talked about our core classes that are coming up in a weekend or so and those are some really good places to press into that. We have small groups; we actually have like a college level course that we participate in the Vineyard with internationally called Vineyard Institute that is really helpful. You can find out lots more information about that as well.

I think the Bible is incredibly important so let me go back to Leslie Newbegen again, that Indian missionary. One of the things, when he was in India, he was working with a ton of Hindu folks and here's a quote from a Hindu guy about the Bible to Leslie. The quote goes like this, I don't know why you Christians introduce your bible to us as book of religion, it's not a book of religion. I see your bible as an absolutely unique interpretation of universal history and therefore, of the human person as a responsible

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actor in history. There is simply no other book like it anywhere in the world. An absolutely unique interpretation of universal history. That's from creation to the end of the world. It applies to everybody and because it tells us a story of which we're a part, it tells us the meaning of our own story and it enables us to act responsibly in this part of history that we're a part of. Newbegen goes on to write, he says the Bible is a nitty, gritty, happenings in history and it gives us the meaning behind all of that. It tells us the story of God and what God has done in the world and the human race and by telling us his story. It allows us to get to know God. Some would say, isn't only a story about Israel? Yes, it is but it's the story of Israel taken as a story of everything, everything's in there. Those who got rescued out of slavery and into freedom, and that story is told over and over again in the Old Testament and in the New. It's the story you and I are being invited into and we're invited in as participants, as players, that everything that God is doing in the world and in our worlds. This is a picture of what it means to grow in knowledge, that we see how the scriptures apply to everything, it applies to our minds, to our faith and then just imagine all the other things that we can be to grow and add to that. He lists another one that I don't have time to unpack but he says grow in self-control. Isn't it amazing we grow in self-control, being able to say yes to the right things and no to the right things. It's also listed in Galatians the fruit of the spirit. We're going to unpack that in some detail this year as well. So what's the end result of pursuing healthy spirituality? In order to press in, in order to live healthier this year than we did last year, one of the things that helps is the right motivation. So Paul gives us the motivation at the end of this, right here where I started is where I'm going to end. The picture of where we're headed provides the right motivation. Vision of where you want to get to is crucial for anything you're doing in life. Vision for where you want to get to is always crucial. Vision for what a healthy church looks like is always crucial if you're leading something like this. Vision for what a healthy family looks like is crucial if you want to actually begin to have a more healthy family. So, the first thing Peter does is he give us the negative in verse 8, if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. To be nearsighted or to be completely blind is to not see, like to only be able to see what's right in front of you and not be able to see the bigger picture. It'd be like the person who just wants to make everybody happy for Christmas so they max out all their credit cards, not thinking of what's going to happen in January when all of a sudden the credit card bill comes due. And then Peter gives us the bigger picture, the long-term vision, therefore my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things you will never stumble. Just make it really practical. What would it take and what would it look like for you to be the person you really want to be? What would it look like for you to be the person that God's created you to be and you really want to be? What would that look like for you? Not just today but tomorrow and not just this week, but for the rest of the year. Really think about it, what would it look like for you to be the person that God's called you to be and created you to be that you really want be in 10 years, in 20 years, in 30 years. If you're younger and you're not married yet, what would it look like for you to be the person that God wants you're a grandparent, like way out there, to infinity and beyond. What would it look like to be that person, start thinking about that? What would it look like to get there, allow yourself to dream about that and apply your mind to that. What kind of person do I really want to be? Then Peter takes it even further, he says, verse 11, the last verse, you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Imagine dying and not being afraid. Imagine getting older and older and knowing that you don't have much time left and you don't need another midlife crisis, you can just enjoy whatever years you have left knowing that this is really good and I'm looking forward to what's left to come. Imagine knowing that when you get a disease that's fatal, imagine knowing that you're going to be received into what God is doing, God's kingdom with applause. Imagine him saying over your life, when

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you finally get to meet face to face, well done, good and faithful servant. Imagine hearing that, see, that's the motivation and that right motivation is crucial to making every effort.

So what does healthy spirituality look like? It looks like becoming more and more like Jesus in every part of our lives. Could've been a really short sermon but I decided to have some more fun. It means looking like Jesus in every single area of our lives and God's inviting us into that, he's provided what we need and we make every effort to participate. Why don't you guys stand up, Heavenly Father, I ask that you would give us vision for what you're inviting us into. Vision for hearing from you, well done, you have honored me with your life. You've honored me in all of your relationships. You stumbled a few times, Michael, but you kept pressing into honoring me. Imagine hearing that. Well done. So Father, I ask that for every single one of us, would you put your finger on something today. Put your finger on something in our lives that you want to begin to address and bring healing to areas of our life where we may be given into apathy or sloths where we've embraced not caring. I have this picture in my mind's eye of Homer Simpson, so I think I need deliverance now. Just sitting on the couch, crumbs everywhere, not caring. For some of us, that's where we find ourselves in our relationship with God. I just believe he's inviting you into so much more. For others, you can feel overwhelmed with so much that needs to be done and I've always loved the way the Holy Spirit just invites me to take the next step, whatever the next step is. Yes, there is a lot to be done but he's just inviting you to take one step and then stay in step with him as he continues to move. So here's what I want to invite you to do, if God is highlighting something to you that he wants to begin to address, that he's inviting you to begin to change, I want you to come forward for prayer right now. If you're on the ministry team, come forward as well. Let's just come forward and pray for one another, the worship team's going to play a little bit more, you guys are free to hang out in here as long as you want to. There's lots of coffee if you want to hang out and talk and pray with one another and just allow God to begin to press in, allow the Holy Spirit to put his finger on an area in your life and just begin to dialogue with him about that. It's so helpful to have other people to be in community like this where we can have those kinds of conversations. It doesn't leave it as a pressing thought. But it's a discipline. Make every effort. Part of that every effort, let's pray for one another, let's receive prayer from one another, let's talk about this, let's lean into this a little bit. How healthy do we want to be? Make some time for that right now as these guys lead us in worship. Other than that, God bless you and thanks for starting the New Year right here with us at the Vineyard.