

Make Every Effort

2 Peter 1:1-11

Pastors Mark Kremer & Ryan Harmon

Well good morning everyone. My name is Ryan Harmon. I'm the Pastor of Young Adults here at Lincoln Berean Church. I want to welcome you this morning to our service. I also want to just introduce to you some of what we're hoping to do today. If you can't tell already, the service is going to be a little bit different than our normal weekend service. Today what we want to do—Mark Kremer and I—we want to invite you in on a conversation with us. We want to invite you in on a conversation where we dream together about the coming year, about what God might do over the coming year. And we want to help you think strategically and intentionally about the year to come. The question we really want to frame around this morning is this one: You already saw some of them on the screen but it's, "What are your hopes for the coming year?" And I want to press it a little further and say, "Are your hopes big enough for the coming year?" Are they hopes that align with the greatness of the God that we have? Are they big enough that they align with who God is and what He's done for us? We ask this question this morning and the reason we're going here is natural. It's the beginning of the year and it's a time where people are making resolutions like crazy, right? I don't know about you but I love this time of year. I make dozens of resolutions each year; I really don't intend to keep any of them. (Laughter) It's my little secret but I find the fun is in making them, not necessarily in keeping them. There was one year in particular where I resolved to cook more than I ever had before. I was going to cook once a week—some extravagant meal—to really learn the art of cooking. And I think that that was also the same year that I cooked less and I went to Chipotle to eat black bean and chicken burritos more than I ever had! But that's not what we want to do today. Often these resolutions that we make around the New Year are ones that we make half-heartedly, but that's really not what we want to do today. We want to think intentionally and have our vision enlarged by God for the coming year. We don't want to think small today. We want to dream big because we have a big God. So this morning we don't know what God is going to prompt you to think about for this coming year, what He's going to prompt you about or where He's going to lead you today. That's something only you can do. But we want to encourage you to really listen for His voice this morning. In fact, if you have a pen or pencil, we want to encourage you to pull it out because we're going to give you time during the service to write down a few notes and really listen for what God would have for you this year. So here's the deal: Let's not settle on a small vision today, okay? We're going to think big and this morning we're going to start our reflection in 2 Peter, Chapter 1. So if you have your Bibles with you, you can turn with me there. I'm going to reflect on the first four verses and then Mark Kremer is going to lead us through verses five through eleven. So this is 2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; (*NASB, 2 Peter 1:1-2,)

Just two things I want to point out real quickly here. I don't know if you caught that first section but this is Peter, the apostle, and he turns to people that are just like you and me, right? Just people that are at these churches throughout an area that is now Turkey and he says...**to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.** I think that's astounding. This is Peter—Peter who

walked with Jesus for three years—Peter who jumped out of the boat and walked on water for a little bit before he sank, because he was chasing after Jesus. The same Peter that saw the empty tomb where Jesus once lay and saw Jesus ascend into heaven. He's saying that you and I possess the same faith that he does. How can that be? I think he answers it. And the only way that can be is...**by the righteousness of Jesus Christ**. You might remember that last week Bryan mentioned the difference between religion and following Jesus is that religion says "I" can do it. Religion says that I can do enough things to put myself in good standing with God but following Jesus goes the exact opposite direction and says "I can't" do it and thank goodness Jesus can and Jesus did! And that's exactly the fact here. Our faith falls right in line with Moses and with David and with Peter and with Paul, because God's the one who did it. God's the one who did it in *them* and God's the one who's done it in *us*. And then he says: **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God...** and we'll say more about this in a moment. I just want to highlight that the place that grace and peace are multiplied, is in knowledge. And I think that's interesting and we're going to talk about that more in a minute because knowledge is mentioned a couple times in this passage. Now moving on to...

Verse 3:

...seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Okay now I need to remind myself at least, and I want to remind you, that he's talking to people just like you and me. And he says that God's power has granted us—what does he say—a *few* of the things pertaining to life and godliness? No, he says **everything** that we need pertaining **to life and godliness** has been given to us by **His divine power**. That covers it, right? That pretty much covers it. Everything's a big word—that covers **everything** that we need! And so the question is, "How can that be?" And he said it's **...through the true knowledge**. So we might need to talk about knowledge for a second because it's the second time that Peter mentions knowledge. When we think about knowledge we often think about things that we know about. So facts and figures—that kind of thing—and that's not really what is meant in this passage here. When Peter says knowledge here, really what he's talking about is an interactive relationship. And so the way I think of it is that when I first applied to become a pastor here at Lincoln Berean, I gave them my resume; I even gave them my strength finder so they could know all about me. And I think they would say they knew a little bit about me at that time. They knew kind of some of where I'd been and what I had done. But I don't think we'd ever say they know me like they know me now, after being on staff for two and a half years. Now for those of you who know me, the miracle is that they still have kept me on staff, now that they know me. (Laughter) But the way that they know me now is much different than what they knew *about* me when I first applied. And that's what Peter's talking about here. He's talking about interactive relationship with God. And that's what God has done for us. He's made it possible for you and me to enter into an interactive dynamic *give and take* relationship with Him. We get to know God personally, interact with Him daily. And when we live in that reality, we're in a place that's completely safe and sufficient because, as Peter tells us, He gives us **everything** we need. There's nothing that we lack. Now the question you've got to ask yourself, when you consider that for a second is, "Why would God do that?" I think Peter answers it when he says that He does it **...by His own glory and excellence**. The way I think of that is, He does it because He's so good; God is so good. Have you ever stopped to consider just how good He is? I don't even know that we can comprehend it. I'm on a team that's going to go to Madrid a year from now—a church planting team—and our team's meeting weekly right now. And a practice we just recently did: we went through our week looking for God's grace throughout the week. We just looked for it everywhere.

We wondered where we could see it. And the question that we came back and started asking ourselves, when we were reflecting on what we had seen, was, “How small of a thing is too small but to say that it’s God’s grace?” I wake up in the morning; my heart starts beating; we get here safely this morning; we come and we worship in a body of believers; we have a cup of coffee with a friend or a family member this afternoon. Are those things too small to say, “Boy that is God’s goodness and God’s grace in my life?” His grace abounds all over us! He’s incredibly good! Every time we try to worship, we try to comprehend it but I don’t know that we can ever exhaust His goodness or the comprehension of His goodness.

Verse 4:

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

There is just so much to say here and we don’t have much time left before the worship team comes back out, but I just want to say that the promise that God gives us here is that as we get to know Him, as we interact with Him, the thing He promises us is that somehow, by His power and by His goodness, He allows us to become like Him. That phrase **...partakers of the divine nature**; it’s a weighty thing to say, a “partaker of the divine nature” but it means a *sharer* in the divine nature. God’s Spirit comes into us and lives and that’s the reality that we live in now. The most real part of us is that we are spiritual beings alive now with God—by His Spirit. We can’t think too big about these things. They’re massive promises that God gives us. Now I mentioned these promises and I’m just going to read a few. A great thing to do in the coming year is just to sit down for an hour and just look for God’s promises throughout Scripture. He makes incredible promises to us that are found in Him. And I just want to read a few of them. I kind of went through the Gospel of John and before the Worship Team starts playing again, I’m just going to read a few that are found in the Gospel of John—promises that Jesus makes to His followers. So if you will, just listen to these and really try to soak in that these are true for you and me.

John 5:24: Jesus says, **Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death and into life.**

John 10: 9-10 **I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved and will go in and out, and will find pasture. The thief comes only to kill and steal and destroy; I come that they may have life and have it abundantly.**

And finally, John 14: 27 Jesus says, **Peace, I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give. Do not let your heart be troubled nor let it be fearful.**

Mark Kremer:

The question that we’ve posed this morning is, “What are God’s dreams for us in 2010?” And given the reality of what Peter has told us in these first four verses, does it seem likely that God’s dream and His vision for your life could be most likely bigger than the dream and vision that you have for your own life? What an amazing promise that is—that God has provided for us...**everything we need for life and for godliness—everything!** Years ago I memorized those verses and I would have to say, regularly in my life, I come back to them. If I had to say what God was doing in the

last ten years in my life—what He has been focusing attention on in developing me—one of the main things would be perseverance. And we’re going to talk about that in a minute. But when you’re under a pile at times, what do you go back to? You go back to promises like this—that God has provided *everything* we need for life and for godliness. You see on the front of your Loop this morning we’ve laid out this passage for you and posed three questions. The first of the questions at the bottom of the front of The Loop is: “What has God done for us or promised to us for the New Year?” And the answer to that, we should all write down together, is the same. We’re all going to have the same answer: He’s given us *everything*! Everything we need. Now the question is, “What do we do with all that God has given to us?” Do we just sit on it? Do we just sit back and sort of be thankful that we have it, but not really take any action? Is it just saying: God, keep doing what you’re doing but I’m not going to be a participant? Well I think Peter challenges us with what we should do in response to God’s amazing provision for us and that’s where we pick it up in verse 5:

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (vs. 5-11)

What Peter says here is that, precisely because of all that God has done for us, we’re supposed to get after it. We’re supposed to **apply all diligence** to add to that faith that is a gift from God, to grow in that faith, to grow in intimacy and knowledge of God, to become like Jesus. And we’re to do it with diligence, to make every effort. Now almost every writer in the New Testament of a New Testament letter has said a similar thing and put it in different languages. Paul said, “I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of me.” The writer of Hebrews says, “Run with endurance the race marked out for us.” There is a part that you and I must play. God’s grace provides salvation and makes that relationship with Him a possible reality, but you and I are to fully engage and cooperate and grow to be more like Jesus. We cannot sit idly, expecting to be zapped by God, and have all of our problems gone. We don’t have a microwave Christianity. Now in an instantaneous world like ours, I think a lot of us would prefer that. I think we’d prefer to just say, “*God here are all of my issues; here are all of the challenges. I want to be like Jesus. Zap me! You know, microwave me for a couple of minutes and I’ll pop out hot and just like Jesus.*” But it just isn’t like that. Peter makes that point very clear here and he does that through this literary device of building each one of these quality traits upon the other. It’s like a stair-step. So he mentions each one of these things twice—where he says **...add to your faith, moral excellence**. And then he repeats that and **...add to your moral excellence, knowledge**. And what he’s doing in that is to say, “This is a continual step-by-step process that you and I must deliberately be a part of for a lifetime. We must identify and build on the qualities that God has already built into us and keep pressing on. Keep climbing the stairs to become more and more like Christ.

Now we’re not doing that on our own; we’re not doing that on our own strength because we already have said we have the power of God within us to do that. So this morning we want to pose the question for you and for me: “What qualities would God want to focus attention on this year developing in your life?” And there are many lists like this in the New Testament. I don’t think this

is an all inclusive thing. But there does seem to be a progression to these qualities. It starts with faith and it ends with love—that quality that makes us most like Jesus, who is love. But these qualities are sort of broad categories of growth and so, as we walk through these and I give a little bit of definition to them, I want you this morning to really listen and ask God, “Which of these things do I need to focus attention on and make every effort to grow in, in 2010? Where do I need to add to my faith by diligently pursuing these qualities?”

Well let’s look at them briefly for just a minute. In verse five, he says **...to your faith supply** (or add) **moral excellence**. Moral excellence is the same word that was used in verse three that talks about God’s goodness. It is that goodness of character that Jesus possesses. It includes a lot of individual characteristics like honesty, purity, patience, trustworthiness, humility, generosity, kindness—those qualities that we admire and look to Jesus and say, “Now that’s what the ideal person should look like”. So the question for you and me is, “What characteristics of Jesus’ life would God want to build into our lives this year?” What character qualities does He want to develop in your life? Are there any that sort of jump off the page at you this morning, that you need to jot down and think about?

To that **moral excellence** or goodness he says we’re to **...add knowledge**. Ryan talked about the fact that knowledge is an intimacy with God—that we are to press on to become more and more intimate with God, to know God’s heart better. Is that something that God wants you to focus on this year of really seeking Him first...to want to know Jesus more than anything else...to know Him more intimately? Last year I was reading in II Corinthians 11 and Paul says to the Corinthians, “I betroth you to one husband, to Jesus, and I want to present you to Jesus as a pure bride but I fear lest like Eve was tempted or drawn away in the garden that you’ll be drawn away from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” I memorized that verse because that’s really hitting at the core of this. It’s so easy to be drawn away from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. That’s what he’s talking about here and adding to that moral character, knowledge, intimacy—an intimate knowledge of God.

To the **knowledge**, he says, **add self control**. Here he’s talking about not being ruled or controlled by our appetites or our desires or by our emotions, but that we are controlled by the Spirit of God. So the question for us would be, “Is there some appetite, some desire, some motions that we tend to act out of, that get us in trouble, that are not in alignment with God’s will and purpose for our life, that we would ask God in this year to bring a new level of self control in those areas, so that we’re not dominated by our appetites or desires that get us into trouble?”

To that kind of **self control** he says **...add perseverance** or another word would be *endurance*. I talked about that in my own life. It’s that quality of continuing to pursue Christ regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the opposition we face. Regardless of the trials that come into our life or the circumstances that we find ourselves in, we are continuing to pursue Christ. We are going to be relentless in following Christ, even when it’s hard, not just when it’s easy. The word literally means to *bear up* under trials and difficulties and a world system that stands in opposition to a godly life. Is perseverance a quality that God would want to develop in your life in 2010?

To **perseverance** he says **godliness**. Godliness is what we might call *total life worship*. It’s what Ryan was talking about their team did as an exercise—of looking for God in everything, to see that God is everywhere present in our life and to be godly means that we’re seeing God in every aspect of our life. We don’t have Him categorized and stuck in a little box and only available to part of our lives but we see Him penetrating everything and we’re worshipping Him in everything that we do.

We have eyes that are trained to see Him in my life and in the world and I'm pursuing Him in the middle of that.

To that kind of **godliness** he says we're to **...add brotherly kindness** or warm affection for other believers. He's talking here about the fact that we're to be engaged with one another as followers of Jesus. We're not to just sort of sit in isolation, but we're to have a strong emotional attachment to each other as Christ followers. We're to be involved in each others' lives. There's thirty-two for *one another* different statements in the New Testament. We're to love one another, accept one another, care for another, encourage one another. And that's what Peter is talking about here—that we're to have an affection for one another that causes us to be involved in each other's lives, not just to attend church and then do our own thing.

And finally he says to **brotherly kindness** we're to **...add love**, which is that sacrificial self-giving that puts the needs of others above ourselves. That's really what Jesus demonstrated to us when He came to die for sinners, when He came to love people who hated Him. It's that kind of giving that extends beyond just our intimate circle of people who like us, that extends to even our enemies, that causes us to act on their behalf, to reach out to them, to love them, to share the gospel with them. It's like we're never more like Jesus than when we're actively engaged in sacrificially loving someone else.

Those are the qualities Peter says that we're to seek to add to our life in cooperation with God's power and presence. And notice what he says in verse eight that **...if these qualities are ours and are increasing, then we are not going to be useless or unfruitful**. What we do learn from verse eight is that it's possible for us to possess these qualities—never fully—never will we fully arrive at any of these things, but we can possess them. These things can become true in your life and in my life. We can be like Jesus and grow in these things and be increasing in these things and, if we are growing, actively growing in our Christian life, he says, *"You're not going to be useless; you're not going to be benched in the game of life. You're not going to be watching from the balcony; you're going to be highly engaged in what God is doing in this world. You're going to have a role to play in what God's doing in this life. He'll use you. And you'll be fruitful; you'll actually have something that will be eternal that will come out of your life; your life will make a difference in this world."*

Verse nine says if you **...lack these qualities, then you're blind or shortsighted and have forgotten your purification from your sins**. In other words, if you're not pursuing these qualities in your life, then evidently you've forgotten what God's done for you. He's made it possible for you to become like Jesus. And we're blinded if we're not growing; we're blinded to the larger reality of who God is and what he wants to do in our life. And we get nearsighted because we can see no further than ourselves and our immediate circumstances. We get tunnel vision and we kind of hunker down and just survive life. But God has this grand big vision for your life—ways that He wants to use you!

But you have to be actively involved in growing and that's how he concludes this first section of Peter in verse ten: **Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you...** In other words, the real evidence of God's working in your life and God's presence in your life is that you will be aggressively seeking to grow. You will be intentionally building these qualities into your life in cooperation with God. He says and if you **...practice these things you will never stumble**. We all would love to have that be true wouldn't we?...that we would never stumble...that if we're continuing to grow and pursue God and build these qualities in our life, that we'll never fail, because God is going to be in that journey with us.

And he concludes by saying in verse eleven: **...for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly [or lavishly] supplied to you.**

In other words, when we get to heaven we'll hear, "Well done, good and faithful servants. Enter into this incredible, eternal kingdom that I've prepared for you." It'll be a lavish and rich welcome. We'll be excited to go and meet Jesus—not fearful, not wondering whether anything in my life will have actually mattered. We'll have confidence to go and enter into the presence of Jesus in an excited way because we've given ourselves to pursue what God wants us to pursue. And that's our hope and dream for each one of us in this new year—that we would be consistently, methodically pressing ahead to add these qualities to our life. In just a minute the worship team is going to come up and the instruments are going to play for a little bit and we want you to take a couple of minutes this morning to ask God which of these qualities would He want to build into your life in 2010? Where should you put the focus in this progression of becoming more and more like Christ? What does God want to do in you in 2010? As they come, I'm going to just pray and ask God to show us specifically what He wants us to do. And then we're going to come back in just a few minutes and give you some practical ideas of how you might actually take steps to grow in some of those areas.

Father, I pray this morning that You would just put the finger—Your finger—on those particular qualities that You want to develop in us in this coming year. Lord, we can grow in all of these things and indeed we should. But this morning You may want particularly to highlight, by Your Spirit, one or two things that You most desire to see changed in us in 2010. Give us ears to hear and listen well, as we think about that over these next couple of minutes. In Jesus' Name.

You know nothing is more important to us as a church than that you and I are in a process of growing to become more like Jesus. We work very hard to provide the kinds of opportunities for you to be engaged actively in that process of growing. Ryan has talked about what the process of change looks like. First we have to understand, to get understanding. A lot of times there are just things we don't even know what we don't know. We just want to learn more about who God is and we provide a lot of opportunities for you to do that. This morning we put in your hands the brand new Atlas for this coming five months. I want you just to pull it out because there are literally dozens of opportunities for you to engage in actively learning more about God. Some are around just sort of that core understanding of who God is in our core classes—the study of Romans, a study of Genesis, of walking by faith. There are opportunities in men's ministry and women's—in all of these pages—learning more about family and what it means to love your wife or your husband, to be doing the right thing with your children. It may be something this morning, as you've identified a quality: See I just need to learn more. I need to understand more of what God wants and these opportunities could be really helpful for you in gaining that understanding and coming to think the way God would want us to think about the various aspects of our lives. So I really want to challenge you to think about which of these opportunities could be useful in your own growth process. Ryan, what's another opportunity to move forward?

(Ryan) Well we know that just part of the way that God has hardwired each one of us is that we're wired for community. The Christian life is not meant to be lived alone. In fact it's really hard to live the Christian life alone. And so one of the great opportunities for community here, that we talk about often, and that we really encourage people to get involved with, is LifeGroups. LifeGroups is what we call our small groups. It's an opportunity to gather together with like-minded believers, who come together and they really come together with one purpose and it's to become more like Jesus—to support one another, to hold one another accountable, to encourage one another. One of the things in the group that I'm in we talk about often is how do we come to the point where we actually start to yearn for the other person to become like Jesus? So I look at the other people in my

group and I think, “Man, I just want to see them grow!” And I want to help them in that process. So LifeGroups are one place where, if you’re looking for the next step, if you’re looking for a chance to gather with other believers that have the same desire that you have, LifeGroups are a great opportunity.

(Mark) Yes, I think the important thing with that as well is that you move beyond just understanding to saying, “Okay, how do we help one another actually live this out? How do we really engage with one another to begin to practice what we already know? I know our LifeGroup takes the study questions from the weekend messages and we talk about that and try to figure out, “Okay, how are we going to live that out this week?” And it’s so important that we not just come and hear, but we take that next step to engage with the truth, and I think that’s where those kinds of groups can be helpful. Another important part of making the process work, that we can do, is develop the spiritual disciplines—the disciplines of prayer, meditation, memorization. And again we need to be careful that we’re not legalistic about these things that in and of themselves—reading the scripture and praying and meditating—do not make us spiritual, but they do give the Spirit access to our lives. And so the more we spend time in the Word reading and studying and meditating, the more time we spend praying about those qualities that we want to develop in our lives, the more we’re inviting God to be a part of that transformation within us and it just focuses our attention and our energy on that. For me, memorization has been a huge thing—just these verses alone that I memorized years ago have played a huge role because when I memorize scripture, it’s there for me in that moment when I need it. You know the Spirit can bring it to mind and I’ve got it. I don’t have to go and try to run back home and grab my Bible and say, “Now where would be a helpful truth to have?” Because I don’t have that kind of time when, you know, that driver is in my face, out on the road. I’ve got to say, “Okay, God, how should I respond?” And memorization gives me the opportunity to do that. You know prayer’s one of the disciplines for me that’s very challenging. My mind wanders all over the place when I get down on my knees, so I’ve used this journal to be a huge part of my prayer life. I write out what I’m asking God to do. It keeps me focused. It gives me this written reminder of what I’ve asked God to do and how He’s shown up and that’s a huge and important thing for us!

One of the things that is important I think, that if we’re stuck and we really just feel like we can’t move forward from where we’re at, we have some incredible Support Recovery Ministries and Celebrate Recovery and I want Sue to come up for just a couple of minutes and talk about those opportunities that may be exactly what God wants you to be this year.

(Sue) Good morning. My name is Sue Hundley and I’m director of the Support Recovery Ministry here and Ministry Leader of Celebrate Recovery. Since you have your Atlas’s out, if you could turn to page thirteen and fourteen, that’s where we have all of those groups listed. I want to take a minute and tell you how those groups can help you maybe this coming year. If you want to work out and get mentally, emotionally and spiritually fit, these are the groups to consider. By using some recovery phrases that are in the recovery movement, let me explain how this works. One of the phrases is, “We’re as sick as our secrets”. When we keep secrets inside, we remain sick. But all of our support recovery groups and those that celebrate recovery, they are the safest place where you can come and tell others what you’re struggling with. I personally had a secret twenty-five years ago that I was a drunk; I was addicted to sugar; but the minute I took that first step and told somebody else in a support recovery group that that was my struggle, God began to transform my life. So you may be sitting there this morning with your own secret. Maybe you’re hurting because you had an abortion or you were molested as a child or you’re going through a divorce or you may have the hang-up of anger or worry and you’re embarrassed by that. But all of our groups are a safe place to go. The next phrases are: “If you want more, do more” and “It takes one to help one”. It

seems to be God's model in helping people recover is, "Alcoholics help an alcoholic"; "Somebody struggling with worry can help somebody else who struggles with worry." And all of our support recovery leaders, all of them have struggled and they've been where you're at, but they're further down the road. They have some recovery under their belt, some knowledge and experience and they're willing to walk along with you. Kind of like a personal trainer, you go work out at the gym and you want a personal trainer to come along side, kind of kick you when you need to keep going, challenge you and encourage you. That is the same thing our Support Recovery and Celebrate Recovery leaders can do. The next phrase is "Keep coming back; it works." On those pages that you're looking at in the Atlas, all of our Support Recovery Groups and Celebrate Recovery meet on Friday nights. The door is always open—ongoing, never shuts down. You're always welcome to come. That's why it works: because it doesn't take just one trip to the gym to work out one time and then you think, "Hey, I'm fit for the year". No, it's the same thing with recovery from any struggle. You keep coming back and working it and in working it, group after group, before you know it, your life is beginning to change. I'd like to say one thing too about Celebrate Recovery on Friday nights. We have provided free childcare for infants all the way up to high school activities. We're trying to make it as easy as possible for you to keep coming back and keep working out emotionally, mentally and spiritually—to overcome your hurts, hang-ups and habits. And then my last two little phrases are: "If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time," and then, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again—expecting different results." I don't know about you, but if you look at those groups on those pages in Celebrate Recovery, we are so blessed here at Berean to have some places to go where we can talk about real life struggles. But here's the deal: Mark and Ryan are talking this morning about being diligent and making every effort. Well let me just put it in another frame of saying it: In the recovery movement we would say, "Stop blaming; stop making excuses; stop complaining; stop sitting at home thinking that something magical is going to happen, because you can't do it alone. Recovery is here, but it's up to you to come and take advantage of it. So thank you.

(Ryan) So the journey we've walked through has gone like this: We've walked through what God has done—the lavish goodness He's poured out upon us and the promises He's given us. And then the encouragement by Peter to step into that, to step into the life that He's made available to us. So, in these last few moments, we're going to give you some time. It's just going to be a time of silence, where you can pull out your pen and just kind of talk with God about: What action steps should I take? Maybe it's a class; maybe it's joining a group; maybe it's going to Celebrate Recovery or Support Recovery. So the question for you now is, "What would God have you do to start to take active and diligent steps towards the life that He's promised to us?" In just a few moments the worship team is going to come up. Before that we're going to provide you with some silence, so that time is yours—now.

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