The second Epistle of Peter is one of the most underrated portions of scripture in the Bible. I don’t know if it is because it is so far in the back of the Bible or that it is not one of the Pauline Epistles but for whatever reason it is not fully appreciated for its content and revelation about what Christianity is all about. Especially the first Chapter in which the Apostle lays out the context in which we are to live in Christ. After a brief greeting, he begins in verse 3 by saying, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” Notice the divine power is not given to us merely for our personal use. He is not talking about divine power to give us material things or make us rich. The Divine power is about supplying everything we need to live holy and righteous. The power is given so that we can access God for life and we can display Godlike qualities. Salvation affords us the capacity to receive everything we need to draw upon God as our source and operate in a way that is reflective of our relationship with God. The Twentieth Century New Testament states it, “For his divine power has given us everything that is needful for a life of piety.”
Piety means spirituality or holiness. Virtue is defined as moral goodness or excellence. It is the essential quality in the exercise of faith. (Look at Luke 6:19 “And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him and healed them all.” Or Mark 5:30 “And Jesus immediately knew within himself that virtue had gone out of him turned and said who touched me.”) For example God’s power is available to us to enable us to resist temptation, withstand persecution, endure trials, navigate through this evil world, maintain a righteous testimony, absorb vicious attacks and continue to witness in the name of the Lord just to name a few. It takes tremendous power to live the Christian life. Being a Christian is like swimming upstream. It is like going against the way of the world that is exerting pressure on us to be worldly or ungodly. Paul says in Romans 12 to not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Philipps Translations says, “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold but let God remold your minds from within.” I love Amplified Version which puts it this way, “Do not be conformed to this world this age, fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs but be ye transformed (changed) by the (entire) renewal of your mind by its new ideals
and its new attitude.” The word renewing in the Greek means “renovation” as in to restore to an earlier condition by repairing and remodeling.

To impart new vigor to or to revive is what is meant. We are in the world but not of the world. It is like we are living in an environment that lives by a set of values that we do not adopt. While all around us there is wickedness and evil behaviors being practiced and advanced, we are to practice holiness and conduct ourselves according to God’s standard.

At times we stick out like a sore thumb and the world can be very hostile toward us because we will not go along with the status quo. We get in their way and they resent the fact we are not acting and doing like everyone else is doing. But God provides us with power to exist in this hostile atmosphere. It takes a lot of power to live for God when all around you people are living worldly and wickedly. This is our calling to be a light in a dark world. Jesus said, “So let your light so shine that people may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.” The nature of our life on this earth is that we are to be the salt of the earth. That is to preserve and keep things from becoming too corrupt or evil. Our presence retrains and retains freshness from decay and spoiling. That is our job in this world and God carefully assigns us to be in places for the distinct
purpose of being the one who keeps things from going too far or from
deteriorating too much. God gives us power in the form of various spiritual
resources to do our job.

We have the resource of prayer in which we can literally pray changes in various
situations. We have the resource of confession where we can speak things into
existence and bind and loose in the earthly and heavenly realm. The weapons of
our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of
strongholds. We have the whole armor of God that enables us to stand.

We have the Breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the
preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God. We have the word of God that is quick and powerful
and sharper than any two-edged sword cutting asunder between the joints and
the marrow and is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This
power enables us to thrive and excel while in this world. We are not only to
survive this world but we are to be overcomers in this world. We are more than
conquerors in this world. We are triumphant in every situation, everything works
out for our good, and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.
All of this is possible he says through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. As He reveals more and more to us about Him, we more and more walk fully in our calling and fulfill our purpose to reflect His glory and show his splendor. We highlight His perfection and manifest His goodness.

We are His witnesses, His workmanship. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the Excellency may be of God and not us.

In order to do this, He has given us exceeding great and precious promises. Notice the promises are so we can do our job. These promises are not about merely to bless us so we can have things we want. The promises are so that we can fulfill our jobs. Miracles, signs and wonders are not so that we can be happy or get things we desire. They are so we can do our job in reflecting God in the earth. When you are doing God’s work, God will not allow anything to stop you. Anyone who opposes you will be mowed down. No weapon formed against you will prosper.

Then he says these promise are so that you can be partakers of the divine nature. Another translation says sharers in a divine nature or participants in the divine nature. Nature in the Greek means growth by germination or expansion. It means natural production or native disposition, constitution or usage. Vine’s
expository Dictionary of the Bible says it is “to bring forth, produce signifies the nature i.e. the natural powers or constitution of a person (kind of person).

This suggest there is to be this development inside us of a way of being, a disposition that comes forth from us. We are to evolve over time in a way where we take on the image of God. We literally assume his qualities and likeness.

The original purpose as stated in the beginning was to “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 3:18, we are now changed into the same image from glory to glory. Man is the image and glory of God...1 Corinthians 11:7

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Colossians 3:10

Romans 8:29

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. 1 Corinthians 15:49

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. John 1:13

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.
Hebrews 3:14

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

Hebrews 6:4

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

Faith is not merely about mindset but it is about being something. We are to embody faith. We are to have faith dictate what we are.

A lot of things make sense when you look at things this way. You realize that the primary thing I must focus on is my disposition. The word of God is intended to feed my faith disposition. The purpose of the word is to enrich my understanding so that I can be assured and certain within myself. As I receive truth my thinking becomes a means by which I secure myself. I manage myself by the applying of my mind to spiritual truth. I become a person who takes on a way of being reflective of what God’s word says is true about me. I literally have a new nature where I am a person of faith. I live by spiritual principles. I am motivated by spiritual pursuits. I have a way of processing everything through spiritual lenses of God’s word. It is like I have a spiritual orientation that dictates how I see things and what I do. To be carnally minded is death but to be spiritual minded is life and peace. My frame of mind is from a spiritual perspective. This
spiritual perspective allows me to find meaning in the things going on in my life. I find purpose in the things that I do according to the word. The word of God is the standard I live by. It is the basis of my expectations.

The Word provides me with guidance and direction. It is where I get hope. It is the word of God that I rely upon to give me a sense of security.

It is one thing to think something but advancement is when you become what you think. Progress is when your mindset is shown in the way you are. As great as it is to agree with what is true, it is not enough to merely agree with it, you need to take the further step of incorporating the truth in the way you are. Change is the measure of how much faith you actually have. The proof is in the pudding. It is not impressive how much you know, what is impressive is how much what you have come to know has been incorporated in the way you are. How different are you than you were before? How much better or more improved are you in various areas of your life? The question is, are there things that used to be a problem for you that by faith are no longer a problem? Can you point to specific things that you have overcome or been able to eliminate from your life?
To what extent have you overcome the experiences of your past? What are some fears you have had that you no longer have anymore? Faith is not about just getting God to do things for you or getting things from God. Faith is about taking on a way of being that makes you useable, spiritual and strong in your capacity to do things.

Faith is described as a quantity. You are to have faith in degrees. Jesus said of the Syrophoenician woman, "great is your faith." He said to the Centurion "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He told the woman with the issue of blood "Woman, thy faith hath saved thee." At the same time he talked about how people did not have sufficient faith. He told the crowd on the Sermon on the Mount, "O ye of little faith." He asked the disciples in the storm, "where is your faith?" When the disciples asked why they could not cast out the demon from the young lad, he told them because of their unbelief. I want to suggest to you that faith is growing. Faith is supposed to increase and expand. It is to become dominant and all-inclusive in your life. The indication of the existence of faith is the degree to which you become a person of faith. Faith becomes internalized to the point where you are shaped by your faith. As a result of your faith you become someone you were not before. You can do things you
could never do before. Faith causes this metamorphosis where you are literally a completely different person.

This is a challenging teaching because when you adopt a faith mindset, you become aware that there are things about you that have to change and you have to come up with a new way of thinking. My new way of thinking means I have to take on a new way of being. What I am, is reflective of how I think. Change comes as a result of the renewal of my mind. The power of truth is what makes me free. When you receive the truth, bondages are removed. Jesus said in his sermon at his hometown, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," and He has anointed me to preach deliverance to the captives. James says be ye doers of the word and not hearers only. He said show me your faith by your works. If you have faith it should be reflective in your works. Don’t tell me you have faith and your conduct has not changed! Your behaviors are not godlier! Don’t talk to me about how much faith you have when you have all kinds of fears and you are full of doubt? When you have faith you are not cynical, sarcastic and negative. When you have faith you are not critical of others, rude and hard to deal with. Faith helps to moderate your moods. Something is wrong when you don’t know from
day to day what your mood is going to be at any given time. It is as if you are Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

This is a pivotal moment in your life because this is a moment when it is time to turn the page on some things in your life. It is time to put some things behind you. It is time to become a different kind of person. A change in the way you go about things, the way you do things, and the way you are. You have to change in order to enter into this new phase of life. You are going to encounter things that require you to be something you have never been. You will be required to function in ways you have never functioned like before.

It is a drastic change because things you may have always seen as a weakness is now going to be your strength. Things that you used to dread are going to become things you enjoy or relish in. Things that were a source of shame and embarrassment are going to become the basis of your testimony to the goodness of God. You know you are delivered when what used to make you feel bad now provokes you to testify to God’s glory.

It is time to live a different way. It is time to be a brand new person. It is time to take a fresh approach. I am talking about becoming a brand new you. It is time to adopt a way of being that is empowering, liberating and satisfying. I am talking
about experiencing faith in a way where you are in command, overcoming and full of joy.

Get ready to do things you have never done before. Time to take on challenges you have never seen yourself do before. This has been a dark period in our history. It has been a gloomy and painful time in the history of our nation. But we are coming out of it and going to a new level of victory and power.

The way you are, changes the way you live. You take on a new way of being that enables you to thrive in all situations. You become a person of power when you impose your will on your situation. You cause things to conform to what you want and desire to be. It is time to live with high aspirations. It is time to have limitless aspirations. The strongest indication of your faith is in your ways.

Conversion is a change in your ways. One of the reasons why God would change their names is because he was programming them to take on a different way of being. I need you to decide to live a better way. Thinking is to change the rest of you.
Living by faith is to have my way of thinking and the way I am to dictate the way I live. To live by faith is to live with a way that enables me to overcome anything. There is a way of thinking and a way of being that makes everything possible.

Believing is not just a way of thinking it is a way of being. The Holy Spirit gives me truth to guide me and strengthen me.

I need you to focus on your ways. Most of what God says in the New Testament is about adopting new ways of being. Taking on a new and effective approach to things is what we are talking about. Having a better perspective on things is what is needed. Being more resilient, upbeat and capable, is what happens. Fruits of the Spirit are ways of being. Love is not just the way I think, it is the way I am. Ways are what I practice. It is my typical routine. It is the patterns I live by and the overall description of my nature, my tendencies and my inclinations.

Ways are the aspects of your character and what defines your identity. What is your essential quality and make up? Ways involve your personality, personal qualities and essence.