

young. Each of the girls had been given a gift of twenty-five dollars. We opened savings accounts for them and I deposited their money in those accounts. I was issued a savings passbook for each daughter, and I brought the passbooks home and showed our girls where the amount was recorded. I told them that their money was safely in the bank. That was an objective certainty. I also told them that they could be sure that their money was really there simply by looking at their passbooks and seeing the balance written on the page. Subjectively, they could be sure and feel sure because the bank had given them a small book stating that the money was there. If they sometimes wondered where their money was or had doubts about it, that didn't change the facts. It was an objective certainty that the money was there; and the passbook was always available to help give them subjective assurance or certitude.

So it is with making our calling and election sure. We can't make them objectively more certain than they already are, but we can become more sure in our minds and hearts about their certainty. How can we do this? As far as this passage is concerned, we can become more sure in two ways: first, by believing, laying hold of, and trusting ourselves to, God's promises regarding salvation; and second, by moving forward in sanctification, adding godlike qualities to our character, and exerting ourselves toward spiritual maturity. If we are trusting in Christ and Him alone for our acceptance with God, if we are getting victory over our sins, and if we are growing toward spiritual maturity, we can have genuine assurance that God has chosen us and called us by His marvelous grace!

This brings us to the third question of this lesson:

### III. WHAT ASSURANCES DOES GOD GIVE US AS WE GROW TOWARD SPIRITUAL MATURITY?

As we take hold of God's wonderful provisions for life and godliness, and as we exert ourselves toward spiritual maturity, we receive assurances that we are sharers in God's grace in three specific areas. These are expressed in the form of conditionals (i.e., "if you do this, then this will happen"), and are found in verses 8 and 10-11. Peter says:

8 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. . . . 10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.