

### 9.12.21 ~ 2Peter1:5-11, Essential Virtues of Our Faith

Last week (**2Peter 1:1-4**) we studied how, through faith in Christ, we have been granted God's face and peace; in fact, we have been given everything we need for life, on earth, and in heaven. This has been accomplished through the righteousness of God our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Today's passage records Peter's instruction concerning the faith we have been granted as "partakers of the divine nature," in reference to our diligence in applying effort toward working out our faith in our lives.

**Read 2Peter 1:5-7...** Peter says, that because of God's "precious and magnificent promises," we must make diligent [*eager, zealous, urgent*] effort to live obediently and honorably for Christ, "supplying moral excellence [virtue]" because our faith sets us apart as God's children and bondservants of Christ.

But what does that mean? This means we are to give fully of ourselves, as new creations in Christ, to exemplify all the virtues (character traits) of one who has been born-again by God's Spirit (**John 1:13**), as those "who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

**2Corinthians 5:17**, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

**Galatians 2:20**, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Back in **2Peter 1:5-7**, we are to give to the pursuit of the virtues mentioned here. Firstly, to *moral excellence* [virtue], i.e., we are to exhibit virtue by the way we live: our thoughts, our words, our actions.

**Philippians 4:8-9**, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

**Colossians 3:15a**, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." **16a**, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you." **17a**, "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

The next virtue to pursue is *knowledge*, referring to the true knowledge of God applied to our lives through spiritual discernment.

**2Corinthians 4:6**, "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

The next virtue is *self-control*, because of our knowledge of God and of our own sinful nature, we must earnestly seek to keep our flesh under the control of God's Word and God's Spirit.

**1Peter 1:13-16**, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were

yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" **Galatians 5:16-17**, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

The next virtue to pursue is *perseverance*, this means to patiently endure during times of trials, temptations, and hardships, just like our Lord did.

**Philippians 2:8**, "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

**Hebrews 12:3**, "Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

**1Peter 2:21-23**, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."

The next virtue to pursue is *godliness*, this could be translated "true religion" or "true worship," and it means to express reverence for God. There are several passages that help illuminate the meaning of this virtue for a better understanding:

**John 4:23**, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

**1Timothy 4:8b-10**, "godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life [physical/mortal] and also for the life to come [spiritual/eternal]. It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers."

**James 1:26-27**, "If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

Out of our heartfelt and expressed reverence for God will flow the next virtue we are to pursue, *brotherly kindness*. Love for God will invariably be demonstrated by our love for others.

**1John 4:20-21**, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."

For a person to say that they love God and yet, hold hatred in their heart toward a brother or sister in Christ, is totally antithetical to the teaching of God's Word.

**John 13:34-35**, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The highest virtue of all is *love* [agape]. This is the uncompromising, sacrificial, willful, and selfless love of intent. This is not about feelings, but is the actual doing of what is required, even at great cost to ourselves.

**John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

**John 10:11**, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

**1John 4:7-8**, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

**Read 2Peter 1:8-9...** God's desire is for us to grow increasingly more Christlike, so that through our lives we might be Christ's witnesses in this world. In **2Peter 1:4**, we were told that all of the "precious and magnificent promises" of God, allow us to "become partakers of the divine nature," so that we would show Christ in us.

We are not to be *useless* [inactive, idle, inoperative] or *unfruitful* [barren], for we have the Word of God in us.

**Matthew 5:13-16**, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

**1Peter 1:25**, "'The word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word which was preached to you."

As Christians, we are to pursue those virtues that lead to productive spiritual lives. If you have received "the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," you have what you need to live honorably for God; but according to **2Peter 1:9**, if a (so-called) Christian is not growing in their relationship with Christ, he/she is "blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins."

**Matthew 1:21**, "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

**Hebrews 1:1-3**, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

**1John 1:8-9**, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

When a believer ceases to live in a manner that is pleasing to God, in obedience to God's Word, that person may become unsure, causing them to doubt that they are genuinely saved..

**2Corinthians 13:5**, "Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?"

**Read 2Peter 1:10-11...** Because of all that God has done to save us and provide for us, we should be eager and zealous to demonstrate that we genuinely belong to God through Christ, made effectual by His Spirit, as we display love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Peter says (2Peter 1:10b), "as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble." Practice makes perfect! Well, not really, because nobody is perfect; but practice does often lead to better performance and control, so that we don't forget or lack the assurance that we have been saved and we will be victorious.

**Joshua 1:8**, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

**James 1:22-25**, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

See again **2Peter 1:11...** The assurance of forgiveness and eternal life will be continually and increasingly provided to those who belong to God, to those who serve God and pursue holiness.

**Romans 12:1-2**, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

**1John 5:11-13**, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

**1Thessalonians 3:11-13**, "Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."

*Pastor Mike ~>'((((><*