

"We Are To Diligently Strive After Godly Character"

This 2 Peter passage makes several contributions to the Christian. First, it shows that the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man are not incompatible. We need not choose one in place of the other. The sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man are interdependent truths. Man cannot contribute to his salvation. Though the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. All we must do is receive it, and even this occurs by divine grace. But once we have come to faith in Christ, we are to diligently strive after godly character—for God has provided the means for **"Life And Godliness."** We strive in our Christian walk because He has given us the means. The sovereignty of God should never be an excuse for passivity or inactivity; rather, His sovereignty is the basis for disciplined living. The Christian life is not: "Let go, and let God;" it is "Trust God, and get going!" We are not merely saved to be rescued from the torment of hell and enter into the blessings of heaven. We have been saved to **"Proclaim the excellences of Him Who called us out of the darkness and into His marvelous Light"** (1 Peter 2:9). We have been saved to become partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) and, by so doing, bring glory to Him.

"Love Is The Outcome Of Faith"

How interesting that Peter speaks of love as the end product of the Christian's striving and not the source of it. Many wait to **"feel"** love and then act upon it. Peter tells the Christian he or she has already received faith, and they are to act on it so the outcome is love. For Peter, love is a result and not merely a cause. It seems to me we must say from the Scriptures as a whole that love is both a cause and an effect. Peter would have us strive to obtain love by obediently pursuing the characteristics of the divine nature.

"Failure To Grow Means We Move Backwards"

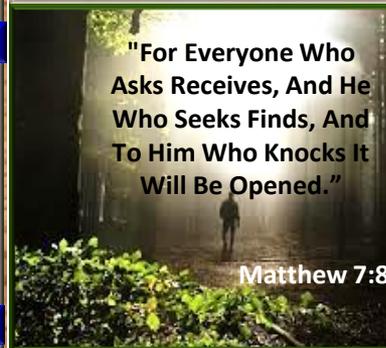
Christian growth is neither automatic nor is maturity merely a function of time. Some seem to think that time alone results in growth and maturity. This is not the case. Christian growth does take time, but growth occurs as believers diligently and obediently seek to grow, in the power of the Holy Spirit and through the provision of the Scriptures. The writer to the Hebrews rebukes his readers for failing to grow. Growth results from the application of biblical truth to daily living. Growth occurs when we employ the resources God has supplied through His Word. Failing to grow does not mean that we simply grow stagnant, never moving beyond where we are in our spiritual life. No; failure to grow means we move backwards. According to Peter, failure in striving toward Christian growth and maturity sets us up for a fall. That which we once possessed we can lose. This happened to the church at Ephesus, who lost their first love (Revelation 2:4). If we do not use what we have, we lose it!



(2nd Peter 1:5-11) **"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, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, 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 if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 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, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Peter wrote this epistle in 66 AD. Only one year before he died, and that he wrote it knowing that the time of his departure was hand. We will look at verses five to eleven as Peter now concerns himself in these passages with the outworking of our faith and the outworking of that knowledge.

"We Must Do Our Part"



"For Everyone Who Asks Receives, And He Who Seeks Finds, And To Him Who Knocks It Will Be Opened."

Matthew 7:8

2 Pet 1:5-11 speaks a lot of 'adding' to your faith. It talks a lot about being 'diligent' and other scary words. Now some people will love this! Some people only like to emphasize what man does in the 'Christian life. If you're one of those people you will probably enjoy this passage in Second Peter immensely! On the other hand, some people only emphasize what God does and if that is you, you probably won't enjoy these verses

very much. But like some sickly green health drink, it will do you a lot of good to slowly digest this passage. So Peter starts by saying **'make every effort'**, or other versions would say, **'applying all diligence' add to your faith.** So what does the word diligent mean? It simply means **'to apply earnest care, careful constant effort.'** For we should remember Hebrews 11:6 which tells us that **"God is 'a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.'** So you see that Peter said **'In your faith... add.'** Peter assumes faith amongst his readers, but he doesn't want it to end there. A B. Simpson once said; **'God has hidden every precious thing in such a way that it is a reward to the diligent, a prize to the earnest, and a disappointment to the slothful. The nut is hidden in its thorny case; the pearl is buried beneath the oceans wave; the gold is imprisoned in the rocky bosom of the mountain; the gem is found only after you crush the rock; so to truth and God must be earnestly sought – 'To Him That Knocks It Shall Be Opened.'**



We do not become a Christian on our own, and we cannot grow on our own. (Philippians 2:13) says that **"It is God Who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."** Every good thing we do is the Fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives.

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GOODNESS - Or as some versions put it 'Moral Excellence'. It has been said that this word also incorporates 'Spiritual Courage'. It is the ability and desire to stand up for, and display that which is right to a world that is rapidly declining morally.

KNOWLEDGE - The knowledge of the Most High God and of His ways as He teaches us through His Word and the events of our everyday life. In many ways what Peter is saying in these verses, is exactly the same as what Paul wrote when he said **'Work out your salvation with fear and for it is God Who works in you both to will and to do.'** (Philippians 2:12) Paul wasn't asking us to work for our salvation, **but to work out that which is within us.** In like manner, Peter is not asking us to add these characteristics for salvation, **but he wants to see an outward working of the divine nature within us. Both of these Apostles wanted those who profess the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, to also manifest something of His life through godly living.**

SELF-CONTROL - **'The ability to control oneself. It involves moderation, constraint, and the ability to say "no" to our baser desires and fleshly lusts'.** Peter tells us to add self-control to our faith. **One of the proofs of God's working in our lives is the ability to control our own thoughts, words, and actions.** Paul often compared discipline and self-control in the Christian life, to the same characteristics needed in the area of sports. Take to heart the words of Paul who said **'train yourself to be godly'**... For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (1 Tim 4:7-8)

PERSEVERANCE - Further exhortations to persevere in the Christian life come from James, who warns us **"But be doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves."** (James 1:22). Perseverance is the frame of mind and character which persists in doing what is right even though doing so may produce difficulties, suffering, and sorrows. **Perseverance is the commitment to suffer in the short term in order to experience glory for eternity.**

The sense here is that the Christian who perseveres in godliness and the spiritual disciplines will be blessed in the very act of persevering. James also exhorts us to persevere **"Under Trials"** because those who do will be blessed and will receive the **"Crown Of Life"** which God has promised (James 1:12). **GODLINESS** - Or, God like-ness. The new birth is spiritual and results in a change of heart that produces true godliness. The Greek word translated **"godliness"** in most English translations means **"a proper response to the things of God, which produces obedience and righteous living."** As He walked this earth, Jesus was the embodiment of pure godliness, which led Him to lay down His life for unworthy sinners (John 10:18). His life was dedicated to the glory of the Father, and He always did what pleased Him (John 8:29) **"And the One Who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to Him."** Christians pursue godliness when we follow the example of Jesus in dedicating every decision to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31) **"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."** **Godliness is not a suggestion; it is a command** (Hebrews 12:14) **"Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."**

BROTHERLY KINDNESS - the Greek word here is Philadelphia, from which we derive one of the words for love - 'phileo' (which means **'brotherly love'**). It is a simple, old-fashioned practical caring and kindness for others. We need far more of it today. Especially within the Church if we are to shine as a light to the world.

LOVE - This love is **"Agape Love,"** which might be called the highest love... an unconditional love. **God's agape is evoked not by what we are, but by what He is. This Agape might be defined as a deliberate desire for the highest good of the one loved, which shows itself in sacrificial action for that person's good. Thus the Spirit of the God Who is love is freely given to us, in order to reproduce in us that same quality.**

"Be Partakers Of The Divine Nature"



This is not a list of imperatives, duties, or activities. Peter is not writing about **"how to,"** but about the kind of person the Christian should strive to become. The character qualities we are to pursue are also the character traits of God. Peter has written in 2 Peter 1:4 **"By which have**

been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." These character qualities he then lists are the particular character qualities of God which should also be evident in our lives.