

STUDY NUMBER TWO

"HERE'S WHAT YOU DO" 1:5-11

Key Verse: (1:10) "Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble."

TEXT:

v. 5 Now for this very reason also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly in your faith the aforementioned virtue, and in the virtue, knowledge,

v. 6 And in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

v. 7 And in your godliness, brotherly affection, and in your brotherly affection, the divine love;

v. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they are rendering you neither unemployed nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 9 For he who is lacking these qualities is so short-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

* v.10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble.

v.11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

INTRODUCTION:

In Acts 20: beginning at verse 18 Paul is saying good-bye for the last time to the Ephesian elders:

"And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You yourselves know from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from

house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves, men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years, I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner, you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that He himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all; and they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship."

Peter is just a tough old bird who hung in there & finished strong. Overcoming countless numbers of obstacles along the way!!

The emotion one feels in hearing the apostle speak in his final address to the Ephesian elders is probably much the feeling that Peter is experiencing in the writing of this epistle.

Got A Cross Ahead of him but he Ain't Sad or Scared.

This writing is one of the final acts of a faithful man who has been steadfast in his stewardship and who is finishing his course with joy.

Turning in his final report to Father

HOW TO WIN IN THE GAME OF LIFE?

Written by one who did.

1. First, "Here's What You Have"

Through His divine power everything pertaining to life and godliness is provided.

Now we are going to consider "HERE'S WHAT YOU DO."

After you have checked out all the equipment, you then begin to develop a TRAINING SCHEDULE.

In these verses now we are going to be considering CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.

Jowett says it so well, "In our previous meditation we were considering the vast resources which are the inheritance of every believer in Christ Jesus. We gazed upon our bullion in the bank. We reverently contemplated the exceeding great and precious promises, and we bowed in awe before the overwhelming ministry of God's redeeming grace. And now, what shall we do with these stupendous resources. We must not allow the divine wealth to soothe us into slumberous and perilous impotence. The Lord makes us to lie down in green pastures. It is only that by the gracious renewal we might be enabled to walk in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

How Are You going to invest it?

But can we supply these additions at will? Ah, but the writer of this epistle is not beginning with ethical counsel. He began by taking us around the bank and showing us the mighty resources on which we can draw. And then after the contemplation of our wealth he

Post Game
Locker room
show of A
winner!!

What Have
we Got in
The Bank?

- ① Power
- ② Person
- ③ Promises
- ④ Partakers

-4-

assumes that we are taking possession of it by faith; and that in the strength of that faith, we are translating our strength into holy attainment in common life. Such lives are not idle--they are active. They are not unfruitful--they are efficient. Surely one could not find two words more descriptive of a worthy and positive life. It is active and efficient. The whole life being gloriously opened to the incoming of the divine. It is active and efficient in the ministry of impartation, communicating itself in rich currencies to the interest and affairs of the world. We become the best and the most active and the most efficient citizens when we contribute to the common life, the good of sweet and perfected dispositions."

* Weisiger says, "This passage makes it very clear that salvation begins with a divine initiative-- God's calling and election. God's promises and God's power precede individual experience. Yet salvation once begun in the believer calls for the most diligent effort. A Christian does not work for his salvation but he does work it out (Philippians 2:12,13). The great end of salvation is conformity to the character of God. This calls for the highest moral and spiritual development and usefulness, and it leads to unspeakable joys in the fellowship of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

John Brown says, "The sum of this statement is: If you would prove to yourselves or others that you are the called and elected of God, be and do what the called and elected of God are called and elected to be and do. If you would know that you are Christians, be Christians. In these words he shows what the called and elected of God are called and elected to be and do. He gives us a very brief and yet a very complete view of Christian disposition and conduct, and suggests much important instruction to the individual believer as to how he is to realize these in his own experience."

Lenski points out, "Here we have Peter's golden chain of Christian virtues. There are seven jewels and all of them are fastened to faith."

Bobby : Robert : Excellent Worth
Find your happiness in serving others and
making them successful !!

J. Vernon McGee points out that "we shall see that the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord is the foundation on which Christian character is built."

Oyler points out, "The POTENTIAL for Christian growth has been laid out in verses 3 and 4, and now in verses 5-7 Peter explains the PROCESS that must occur."

The potential is incredible Now how About The Process!!
The virtues are the primary focus.

Verses 3 and 4 prepare the way for them by showing the potential the believer has to develop them. Verses 8 and 9 follow with the reasons why the virtues should be developed and finally, Verses 10 and 11 demonstrate the results of growth in the virtues.

Thus the virtues were selected to reflect a godlike life-style in an ungodly environment. The structure of the virtues has been compared to a series of steps, a ladder, in a multi-floored building. However, there is a definite pattern to Peter's plan. He is presenting THE GOAL FOR GROWTH. It is a picture of perfection. The virtues move steadily forward, climaxing with the highest of all divine qualities. This structure could be visualized in a ROSEBUD. The bud is not designed to remain closed. The natural process is for each petal to expand and grow until it is whole or complete. The believer possesses the bud, faith, with the potential to partake in divine nature, the complete rose in bloom. The goal is complete expansion. As each virtue or petal develops, he moves toward the beautiful and intended end. If any virtue or petal is not growing, the process is incomplete. In a rosebud the inside petals cannot open until the outside ones do, giving them room to expand. What is presented is that process which leads to participation in the divine nature. Each virtue adds to the completeness of the process.

A Baby Born with All the Equipment! I Peter 2:2,3

Smith points out, "The words before us are therefore very significant. They have been called the divine garden of the Christian heart. Faith is the tree planted in a fertile soil, and upon it, if it is rightly cultivated, will grow the seven fruits which are here named.

Ps. 1 "He shall be like A Tree planted by the rivers
OF water that brings forth His Fruit in its Season"

Blossoming
OF Something
Beautiful!!

"By godliness St. Peter means here, not merely professional but practical godliness, or that godliness which consists in implicit obedience to the divine commands and cheerful submission to the divine will. These are the seven-fold fruits that grow upon the tree of faith, and each one contains the germ of the other, whilst all are perfected and confirmed in the last. It must not be supposed, however, that these fruits are to be brought forth in the order of time, one after another; that we must wait, for example, until we are perfectly courageous before we are patient, or perfectly godly before we are kind and charitable. They are to grow and to be matured together. And thus, the Christian character is to be rounded and complete, displaying all the virtues in their individual, but also in their collective power."

Lou Barbeiri points out, "The Christian life is like power steering on a car. The engine provides the power for the steering but the driver must actually turn the wheel. So the Lord provides the power to run our lives but we must turn the wheel. To a great extent the Christian determines the course of his life."

Like Power Steering: Lord Provides Power → we must turn the wheel

Westwood points out, "Here Peter is opening up before us the pathway that leads inevitably to abundant Christian living. There is no royal road to a life of victory. It must be pursued with diligence, along definite, practical lines. The difficulty with many of us in seeking to obtain what is often termed the abundant life is that we are inclined to be dreamers and to weave out of the flimsy threads of our visionary imaginings a pattern of life that will shine and glitter before our eyes. Such vain dreaming produces only disappointment and disillusionment, and turns many away from the Christian faith as if it were something impractical and visionary."

Nesbet points out, "The study of the growth whereof the apostle presses in the next place to the end that this saving work of grace described in the preface may thrive. The apostle here seriously exhorts gracious persons not to satisfy themselves with the sight of one or some few graces in themselves but to give more than ordinary diligence that they may see every grace drawn forth."

Psalm 2

Ironside points out, "As we thus act upon the truth of the Word, we will be prepared for that which follows in verses 5-7. A better figure, perhaps, is that of a growing tree. An acorn, for instance, falls into the ground. The seed germinates, strikes its roots downward and its branches shoot upward. And that acorn becomes an entire oak tree, with all its various parts. Faith is like the acorn, a living faith that should characterize us as devoted Christians."

Ironside points out, "In our last chapter we discussed the life of faith, but faith is only the beginning. We must build on it. These verses constitute one of the most meaningful sentences to be found in God's word. These beautiful graces, seven in number, begin with faith, then, like the scale, climb upward, ending in love. We feel that Peter is saying that the divine excellencies are like a rope, or like a cable with seven strands. They are intertwined and arise each out of the other. They are present in the newborn Christian when he is born into the kingdom of Christ. They are the genes of a beautiful Christian. As the babe grows into strength, and finally into maturity and manhood, these virtues also grow. They become * dominant in the beautiful Christian life."

Smedes says it so well, "If we do not match our own dreams, what about the dreams God has for us? God's dream for human life came true in Jesus Christ. He is the profile of God's sort of person. Forget now about His eternal deity; concentrate on the human person: working with fierce honesty through a hypocritical culture, with fine compassion through a heartless religious system, risking everything that ordinary people want out of life so He could minister to lost and hurt human beings, freely led by sacrificial love into the most untimely death in human history. What a person! And He is God's image for us. The word is: Be like Jesus if you want to be God's kind of human being."

when All else Fails Read the instructions!!

v. 5 Now for this very reason, also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly in your faith the aforementioned virtue, and in the virtue, knowledge,

Motivated by A deep desire to please the Lord..

Everything
For life & God.

Power
Person
Promises
Partakers

"Now for this very reason"--we ask ourselves, for what reason? And as we look back in the previous study, we find the reason being: "God has provided and generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through His divine power through the person of the Lord Jesus and through His precious and exceeding great promises which have made us partakers of the divine nature."

Since we have become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the destruction in the world caused by desire, we are now to add on our part, in light of this previous action, every intense effort.

Psalm 37 tells us:

"Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in Him and He will do it. And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noon day. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way."

Since we are considering the thesis "How to Win in the Game of Life," and in this particular study we are considering "Here's What You Do," we will want to give careful attention to these qualities that are to be added by intense effort on our part.

There is much teaching today about the adequacy of Christ and our waiting for Him to do everything. Peter seems to really hit hard on the fact that after we become Christians, there are things which we are to do on our part.

Jesus talks about this in John 15:4 -

"Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me."

Responsibility + Resources

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Because God has provided power and a divine nature, this is what you are to do.

Richard DeHaan points out, "It almost always happens, when you emphasize one side of a truth, somebody will either misunderstand or misapply what you say. Let a minister preach a sermon on the believer's security to comfort the fearful saints, and somewhere along the line you will encounter the reaction: This means I can curse and swear, rip and tear, but I'm just as sure of heaven as if I were already there."

Oyler points out, "The virtues define what growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ involves. Thus the virtues become the key to the whole structure and purpose of the book. They form the target at which Peter is aiming. It is the practice of these things that will prevent stumbling and falling from personal steadfastness. Note again that behavior is emphasized in the virtues, not only correct doctrine."

The book of 2 Peter cannot be understood apart from a clear understanding of the seven virtues in chapter 1:5-7. They are crucial to the concept of growth in 3:18. It has been demonstrated that the virtues form the target at which Peter is aiming his entire book. The virtues are the goals of growth for the Christian. The potential has been provided in the unlimited provisions that God has granted to every believer. This potential has been provided for a purpose: in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world by lust. This two-fold aim mirrors the two-fold purpose of the book.

"Now for this very reason also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly"--what Peter is saying here is really put yourself into this, really work at it in every way.

Tom Wolf in his book *The Right Stuff* tells about the frustration and failure of the early space programs. Two months after Sputnik I the Navy tried to launch the first American satellite with a Vanguard rocket. The first nationally televised countdown began. Ten, nine,

Here is
Your Job
description

eight, then ignition. A mighty surge of noise and flames. The rocket lifts some six inches. The first stage, bloated with fuel, explodes and the rest of the rocket sinks into the sand beside the launch platform. It appears to sink very slowly like a fat old man collapsing into a Barcalounger. The sight is absolutely ludicrous, if one is in the mood for a practical joke. Oh, Khrushchev had fun with that all right! This picture, the big buildup, the dramatic countdown, followed by the exploding cigar was unforgettable. It became the image of the American space program. The press broke into a hideous cackle of national self-loathing with the headline 'Kaputnik!' being the most inspired rendition of the mood."

This certainly illustrates some people's Christian experience. Everything gets on the launch pad and faith is exercised, but the life never really gets into orbit because there is no lavish provision. There is no intense effort to be obedient to that which Peter outlines here in the following set of virtues. *Xian life Never gets off the Ground*

Elizabeth Elliott has it correct in her book Discipline: The Glad Surrender when she says, "Strive to choose not that which is easiest but that which is most difficult. Do not deprive your soul of the agility which it needs to mount up to him. Discipline is the whole-hearted yes to the call of God. When I know myself called, summoned, addressed, taken possession of, known, acted upon, I have heard the Master. I put myself gladly, fully and forever at His disposal, and to whatever He says, my answer is yes."

"When I was in college, it was the custom when the yearbook came out to ask one's friends to autograph it. Usually they wrote a few words in addition to their signature, and when a girl asked for the autograph of a man she especially admired, she secretly hoped for some clue to his feelings toward her in the words he wrote. Jim Elliott signed his name in my Wheaton Tower and added only a scripture reference 2 Timothy 2:4 'A soldier on active service will not let himself become involved in civilian affairs. He must be wholly at his commanding officer's disposal.' The message was loud and clear. Any hopes I might have entertained, any feelings Jim himself might have had for me that he had not at that time expressed, must give way before the guiding principle of his life. He was not at liberty to plan the future,

being at the disposal of someone else. Any soldier, any candidate for Christian discipline ought daily to report to his commanding officer for duty. At your service, Lord. What the soldier does for the officer is not in the category of a favor. The officer may ask anything. He disposes of the soldier as he chooses. The very thought strikes horror to the modern mind. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. Nobody has a right to dispose of me! Salvation is a gift, purely a gift, forever a gift. It is grace and nothing else that obtains it for us. Discipline is not my claim on Christ but the evidence of His claim on me. I do not make Him Lord; I acknowledge Him Lord. To do this in honesty involves the full intention to do his will; that is, to live under the discipline of His Word."

"Now for this very reason also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly in your faith.."

Back in verse 1 he has already made mention of this faith by saying that he is addressing the letter to those "who have received a faith of the same kind as ours."

The apostle Peter now lists seven additions that we are to make every intense effort to provide for lavishly in our faith.

1. THE AFOREMENTIONED VIRTUE

M. R. James points out, "Can they take this in the general sense of virtue or give it a more special meaning of strength and bravery in the domain of morals?"

E. S. English points out, "The word 'virtue' speaks of manly courage, the courage whereby as Christians we are able to stand fast against rebuke and persecution and against all the attractions (for let no one say that it is not attractive) of the world."

John Brown says, "Add to faith, energy. Energy manifesting itself in the active performance of duty, and in bravely

meeting the trials of the Christian life. The Christian has much to do, much to suffer. His life has to be spent not of the world, but in it, in the midst of its activities. And it is expected that in his own sphere, none shall be more active than he. What his hands find to do, and it will find much, he must do with all his might. He is also exposed to numerous temptations amid which he is to stand fast; and afflictions, amid which instead of becoming weary and faint in his mind, he is to be patient and even joyful. Without energy, activity, fortitude, he cannot perform these duties, resist these temptations and sustain these afflictions. Any want of or deficiency in energy is a very serious defect in character."

Illustrations of the lack of virtue can be seen in ^①ABRAHAM when he lied about Sarah in telling the men that she was his sister. Also of PETER himself when he denied his Master. Who has not had reason to regret, how many opportunities of doing good, of honoring God, and promoting the best interest of mankind he has lost just for want of a little more energy and fortitude. The force of the apostle's exhortation may be thus given. You believe but you must act and suffer in that you may do either or both. To purpose you must be energetic and brave, active and courageous. Add, then, to faith, virtue. Work, be strong, have manly energy, and let it be manifested in prompt decision and resolute action. Behave like a man who believes, who has a clear fixed judgment of what is true and right; and who is determined to follow it to its fair, practical results. Do not look as if you are halting between two opinions. Be not weary in well-doing. Be not a double-minded man, unstable in all of his ways. Bear a bold front in opposition to the hazards connected with a consistent Christian profession.

Moses

③ Demas
④ John Mark
⑤ David

Halting
Weary. --
Double-minded

The importance of adding to faith, virtue or energy is strikingly exhibited in the very frequent repetition in the Holy Scriptures of the command to be strong:

"Only be strong" says Moses to the Israelites.

"Be thou strong and show thyself a man" says David to Solomon. "The Lord hath chosen thee to build a house to His name. Be thou strong and do it."

"Be strong," said the prophet Azariah to Asa and his army. "Be strong, and let not your hands be weak."

"Be strong," says God by Isaiah to those who are of a fearful heart.

"Be strong," says the prophet Haggai.

"O Zerubbabel, be strong!"

"O Joshua, be strong!"

"All ye people of the land, quit you like men be strong. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

"Be strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus," says the apostle Paul.

Gaebelein says, "It means moral courage, a courage which refuses the gratification of the old nature. It is the soldier's courage who stands manfully against all opposition. It is an energy by which the heart is master of itself. It is being able to choose the good and to cast aside the evil as a thing conquered and unworthy of one's self. Such courage to stand and withstand, this energy to deny one's self makes full communion with God possible."

Moses: "Choosing Rather". . . Paul: Counting All Things Loss. Dan.

William Barclay says, "The stoics insisted that in life there must continuously be what they called 'prokope,' which is moral progress. The word 'prokope' is a word that can be used for the advance of an army towards its objective.) In the Christian life there must be this ready moral advance. Moffett quotes as saying that the Christian life must not be an initial spasm followed by a chronic inertia. It is very apt to be just that. It is apt to be a moment of enthusiasm when the wonder of Christianity is realized and then a failure to work out the Christian life in this continuous progress."

"That brings us to still another basic idea here. Peter bids his people to bend every energy to do this. That is to say, in the Christian life the supreme effort of man must cooperate with the grace of God. As Paul has it, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.'"

ICW.9.17
ITime
Dan.
Lu. 14.34
The author's lecture notes incorporate quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to their respective authors. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of lecture notes to contain references that may prove difficult to locate. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional.

J. Vernon McGee points out, "It characterized the very finest of Roman manhood, strength, valour, courage and excellence."

Richard W. DeHaan says, "In the New Testament the Greek word translated 'virtue' usually has reference to moral excellence, but its usage in the classical Greek adds a significant dimension. When an ancient Greek wanted to describe something that fulfilled its designed purpose, he ascribed this word to it. For instance, an especially sure-footed, swift and smooth riding horse was called 'virtuous.' Land labeled virtuous was usually fertile and productive. This descriptive term was applied to anything that perfectly fulfilled its designed purpose. As we have a designed purpose to be like Christ, we are to have as our goal a perfect conformity to the image of His Son, beginning here and now. We can only make progress as we seek it in humble dependence upon the Lord. Then as we overcome the flesh and develop the qualities of Christ himself, we will grow in virtue, for we will be fulfilling the purpose for which we have been called."

Oyler points out, "The meaning of the word 'virtue' --As the first term in the list of virtues, it retains its broad sense of excellence, particularly in the moral area. The term is used in Philippians 4:8 to speak of anything that is good and excellent. That concept is personalized and embodied in the person of God. It is His nature that is excellent. All His attributes are incorporated in the term. In 2 Peter 1:5 there is a broad summary term that speaks of the overall character or quality of a man's life. It is not a specific virtue in and of itself but incorporates all that is virtuous. God's character should be the pattern for growth. Jesus said in Matthew 5:48 -

'Therefore, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Virtue is first in the list of virtues because in Peter's mind it reflects all that God is, and that is what he desires his readers to become, partakers of the divine nature.

"The term is used in much the same way as Paul uses 'above reproach' in the list of qualifications for eldership in 1 Timothy 3:2. It is a summary term that reflects the overall character of the man and incorporates

Finally My
Brethren,
Whatever Things
Are True, what
things are honest,
What things are
Just, what things
Are pure, lovely,
OF Good report,
If there be any
Virtue, if there
be any Praise,
Think of these things.

all the other virtues. As Barclay states, it is that virtue that makes a man a good and effective citizen and friend. It is that virtue which makes him expert in the actual art and technique of living well."

Blair points out, "The first grace believers are called upon to add to their faith is virtue, or moral character. A little girl was spending a few days with her grandmother. While sitting on Grandma's lap, she said, 'Grandma, I love you so much. You're so pretty.' Aged Grandma, thin and wrinkled, laughed and replied, 'That's very sweet of you, darling, but I'm not pretty.' The little girl paused thoughtfully then said, 'Oh, yes you are. You are pretty on the inside.' God wants you and me to be pretty on the inside."

Westwood points out, "In your faith, have virtue. Virtue is a splendid word. It is used twice in the same chapter. We are spoken of as being called by glory and virtue. It speaks of the exclusion of all that is extraneous and false and fitful as an initial habit of life. The same thing is stated in other terms by John in his epistle when he says, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (I John 1:9). When confession of sin is initially made to God, when we first come to Him, we receive two blessings, namely,

forgiveness and cleansing

This should be borne out in testimony in our practical lives, so that we should not only boast of the fact that God has saved us by His grace, but we should show to men around that we live cleansed lives. "Have in your faith, virtue."

Harry Ironside says, "The virtue of which he speaks here is not simply chastity, as some might think, but it is really valor, which is the outstanding virtue of a soldier. And we are called to be soldiers of Christ."

2. "Now for this very reason also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly in your faith the aforementioned virtue, and in the virtue, knowledge,"

The more you know Him, the more you are going to love Him; and the more you know Him, the more you are going to trust Him.

Precious Couple in San Antonio: She: I would never date a Guy like that! Cut offs, Beard, 6:00 A.M., Sandtes.

We have already run into the word knowledge back in verse 3

"Seeing that His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue."

Philippians 3:10

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

*Make every intense effort, provide lavishly...
How Paul?*

Colossians 1:29

"For which also I am toiling, striving according to (controlled by) His energy, which energy is operating in me in power."

Yes, we are making every intense effort. We are pressing toward the mark. "We are working the works of Him that sent us while it is day, for the night is coming when no man can work."

Here the apostle outlines the game plan for progress and growth.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."

On your part, "having added every intense effort, provide lavishly in your faith the aforementioned virtue, and in the virtue, knowledge."

Colossians 2:3

"In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Seek to get to know Him...

John Brown points out, "We are presented with this great truth, that it is by faith putting forth a powerful influence and by that powerful influence being directed as to its objects, and guided in its operations by ever-growing knowledge, and habitually considerate wisdom, that Christians are to afford satisfactory evidence to themselves and others that they are indeed the called and chosen of God.

The apostle Peter says, "Grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The apostle Paul says, "May your love abound, yet more and more in all knowledge and in all judgment that you may approve the things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense til the day of Christ, being filled with the fruit of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the praise and glory of God. May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling."

1 Peter 3:7 "You husbands, likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

Oyler points out, "The second virtue is knowledge. Here again the emphasis is upon knowledge that leads to a particular way of life. It is a knowledge that enables one to know how to act in particular situations. These seven virtues represent the goal of growth. Each virtue takes a step further toward completeness. Moral excellence is a general term and it must be defined. It is a general concept that refers to any excellent quality. Knowledge does for moral excellence what the entire list of virtues does for growth. Knowledge forms the framework for moral excellence. Knowledge must be added to morality to provide direction. It serves as the guidance system for the moral pursuit. The principle is illustrated in Romans 10:2

"For I bear of them witness, that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge."

If morality is to be moral, it must have a standard. The believer, if he is moving toward completeness in Christian growth, must be growing in that which is

right and pleasing in the sight of God. As growth occurs, conduct will reflect more and more of the divine nature and less of the world's corruption."

Westwood points out, "Then Peter adds 'in virtue, knowledge.' One might imagine that one hears the faint echo of someone intimating that knowledge puffs up. Knowledge that reaches only the head and not the heart will engender pride and conceit. But God and His Word reaches not only man's mind but he reaches man's heart. And there is no more humbling process than this. The meek will be guided in judgment. The meek will be taught his way. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. Let us never be afraid for a moment that we shall assemble too much knowledge of our Lord or of the truths which He has set forth in His Word. They affect our hearts. We shall be kept humble."

Ironside points out, "There can be no proper growth without a deepened understanding of spiritual realities."

Knowledge = Greater Grace, Peace, Wisdom, Love, Trust, Patience

v. 6 And in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

3.

Christ demonstrates virtue, self-control + patience in Matthew 5:20
The third virtue in the chain of virtues that are mentioned in these verses is SELF-CONTROL. "And in your knowledge, self-control."

This word occurs in Galatians 5:22,23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

The concept is demonstrated in I Corinthians 9:27

"But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."

- ① Run to win
- ② Discipline Produces Reward
- ③ Find Your Goal & Hit Your Mark
- ④ Extra Effort Produces Excellence.

John Brown says, "The word properly signifies self-command and denotes the right state of the mind, heart, and life in reference to those objects in the world which naturally call forth our desires, whether it be pleasure, profit, power or reputation. It is just another word for moderation, or self-control, and is descriptive of the right state of the thoughts, affections, and behavior in reference to things seen as temporal."

2 Corinthians 6:17,18

"Therefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

William Barclay says, "It is the ability to take a grip on one's self. It is the situation which reason fights against passion and prevails. The battle is still on but it is a winning battle. We call it self-control, or self-mastery. It pictures the situation in which a man's instincts and passions remain, but remain under perfect control and mastery; and so become his servants and not his tyrants."

Oyler says, "The third virtue is self-control. The inclusion of this virtue by the apostle Peter is most appropriate in view of the false teachers. They were self-willed and followed after their own lusts and sensuality. Self-control is the ability to take a grip on one's self. It is the virtue of one who masters his desires rather than be mastered by them. Reference here would not be to just the sexual drive but all the things that make for moral excellence, based on the knowledge of God and His Word."

The next petal to unfold in the progress of Christian growth after knowledge is self-control. There's a most significant relationship between the two. The addition of self-control to the believer's knowledge would protect him from the insipient danger of false teachers. As moral excellence necessitates knowledge, so knowledge makes self-control imperative. Knowledge without self-control is not knowledge at all, according to Peter. True knowledge abstains from the evil. It knows to

identify. Of little use is a trained mind in an ungoverned body. Throughout the Scripture knowledge is related to obedience. Jesus said in Matthew 7:24

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts upon them may be compared to a wise man."

Acquired knowledge must lead to appropriate action. Knowledge does not lead to liberty or license, as the false teachers proclaimed. For Christian progress, knowledge must be accompanied by self-control."

Hannah Whitall Smith in her book Religious Fanaticism writes, "A quiet, steadfast holding of the human will to the will of God and a peaceful resting in His love and care is of infinitely greater value in the religious life than the most intense emotions or the most wonderful experiences that have ever been known by the greatest mystic of them all."

Never See An Undisciplined Godly Man !!

Bob Richards in his book The Heart of a Champion says, "The first indispensable quality is self-control. If I have learned one thing in sports, it is that before a man ever scales the heights of greatness without, he must first of all learn to control himself within. Most of the great champions of the world learned to hold their emotions in check. They have a certain amount of emotional stability. On the other hand, I have seen some potentially great athletes miss their goals, missed reaching the top because they couldn't control themselves. I think of one athlete I knew who was endowed with a tremendous body, 6'4" tall, 195 pounds, supple and well-coordinated. He could run the 100 yards in 9.8; he could broad jump 25 feet; he could run the hurdles in 14 flat; and he starred in football and basketball. There wasn't anything he couldn't do. He was a natural if there ever was one. But while he had this tremendous physical development, he lacked one very important mental trait: he couldn't control his temper. I have seen this boy in competition after competition, way out ahead of everyone, his splendid body working for him, when, all of a sudden, he would raise a crossbar, wobble a discus throw; and then, as we say in track and field, he would blow his top."

Ann Kiemel in her book I Am Running to Win says, "I would have missed out on many things in life if I had not done them, things I did not feel like doing at the time but disciplined myself to do; and it turned out positive."

* "I really believe if we discipline ourselves in one area, it spills over and affects all the other areas. The more I am disciplined in my running, the more I am disciplined in my eating, in my Bible study, in my exercise habits, and my love for others. It all falls together. The more I look to God for obedience, to follow Him, not my physical desires or my ego needs, the more He is the fulfillment."

"And in your self-control, PERSEVERANCE."

4.

We now come to a consideration of the fourth key word or virtue in this section. We have looked together at

virtue
knowledge and
self-control

and now the fourth word is perseverance.

Hebrews 10:36

*

"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

Hebrews 12:1,2

*

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us; and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

"ΥΠΟΜΟΝΗ" "To remain under" (endurance - Passive)

Patience - Process - Passive

Perseverance - Suffer, Struggle, Hit the wall. I am focused on The Finish. Quit is not in my vocabulary.

49 Times

Romans 8:18 "yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will give us later" I Pe. 2:20,21

Romans 15:5 "Now may God who gives this (patience) and encouragement (παράκλησις) ^{υπομονή}

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James 1:2-4

Present Tense

υπομονή

* "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

1 Thess 3:5 "May the Lord bring you into a deeper understanding of the love of God and the endurance that comes from Christ."

Ephesians 6:10-12

① Fighting Satan
Eph. 5:8, 9

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

John 19:30 Τετέλεσται
it is finished!

I Corinthians 15:58

② Finishing

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

*** old song in W.W.II: "Though there's one motor gun coming in on a wing & we can still carry on A Prayer."

Gary Inrig in his book Quality Friendship, The Risks and Rewards says, "There is one other thing that we should notice about the word 'endure.' It is not primarily a negative or a passive quality. It does not mean that we submit ourselves to difficult circumstances with a spirit of resignation and defeat. The idea behind the word is that of a soldier staying in the heat of the battle, under terrible opposition, but pressing forward to gain a victory. William Barclay captures the sense of the word in this way. It is not the patience that can sit down and bow the head, and let things descend upon it, and passively endure, until the storm is passed. It is the spirit that can bear things not simply with resignation, but with blazing hope. It is not the spirit which sits statically, enduring in the one place, but the spirit which bears things because it knows that these things are leading to a goal of glory. It is not the patience which grimly hopes for the end but the patience which radiantly hopes for the dawn."

* "It has been called a masculine constancy under trial. It is the quality which keeps a man on his feet with his face to the wind. It is the virtue which can transmit the hardest trial into glory because beyond the pain it sees the goal."

Staying Power; Sticking under Stress.

Fighting Fortitude Staying After it! No Matter what!

"George Matthieson, who was stricken in blindness and disappointed in love, wrote a prayer in which he pleads that he might accept God's will, not with dumb resignation but with holy joy; not only with the absence of murmur, but with a song of praise. Only endurance can enable a man to do that."

It happened in Southwest Asia about 1372 A.D. Emperor Tamerlan's army had been routed, thoroughly dispersed by a powerful neighboring enemy. To save his own life, Tamerlan hid in a deserted, dilapidated old barn. Dejected and discouraged, Tamerlan watched an ant try to carry a grain of corn over a perpendicular wall. The kernel was larger than the ant. The job was impossible. Fifty-nine times in one day the ant failed. The next day it was back trying again. 60-61-62-63-64 times the ant tried, and 64 times he fell back. On the 65th try he pushed the grain of corn over the top. Tamerlan leaped to his feet with a shout. He too would give it another try. And he did. Reorganizing his troops and restructuring his strategy, the enemy was put to flight.

Bill Gaither in his hymn "Because He Lives" expresses it so well:

"And then one day, I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain.
And then as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory,
And I'll know He lives.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living
Just because He lives."

John Brown points out, "Patience, when distinguished from meekness (which signifies the right way of bearing afflictions from men), means the right way of bearing affliction from God. But when used singly as here, it includes both. It is a general name for the right way of enduring afflictions from whatever quarter they may come. It implies that the suffering is felt. It may be very painfully felt, but that it is, at the same time, willingly submitted to and cheerfully and thankfully borne.

"It is the Lord; let Him do to me what seemeth good to Him."

"Not my will but thine be done."

"Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt."

William Barclay says, "Christian steadfastness is the brave and courageous acceptance of everything that life can do to us, and the transmuting of even the worst event into another step on the upward way."

J. Vernon McGee points out, "Patience is being able to endure when trials come. Patience is endurance. It is built upon knowledge and courage, like a growing tree. A Christian should be developing courage, then knowledge, then self-control, and then endurance."

Oyler points out, "The two meanings of endurance under stress and perseverance in good deeds in early Greek literature are given purpose and motivation in the Old Testament concept of waiting for and hoping in God. Either the active or passive meaning could well fit into the context of these virtues, for both meanings are attributes of the mature Christian. However, the context of the virtues favors the more active sense of persevering in good deeds. The false teachers never cease from sin. Peter indicates the believer is not to cease from doing good works. Completeness in Christian growth necessitates perseverance. The list is progressing towards perfection of character in the believer. Should the progression stop at self-control, the process would be incomplete. Not only must there be action as a result of knowledge, there must be consistent performance of those actions. If the believer is going to partake of the divine nature, he must add the virtue of perseverance to self-control. The possession and increase of this quality would provide insulation against the persistent sinful attacks of the false teachers. Self-control must become a habit. True Christian growth involves staying power in doing that which is known to be right. Control yourself and keep on doing so. As perseverance is added to self-control and increases, there is progress toward Christian perfection and participation in the divine nature."

You Are Not Going to Fold in the heat of the Struggle!!

Blair points out, "Next to temperance, Peter mentions patience. Temperance has to do with the temptations that spring up from the inside of the believer, while patience faces those from the outside."

Tom Westwood points out, "This is one of the greatest needs of the Lord's people today. You remember what Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians. He said, 'You did run well. Who has bewitched you?' His intimation was that these Christians had set forth upon the path of faith with abundant energy and with great diligence. Then Satan had bewitched them into law-keeping, observance of Sabbath days and all those fleshly ordinances which had been outmoded when the old covenant gave place to the new covenant. They became lawkeepers and got out of the sunshine of God's wondrous grace. They needed endurance. How vain for a runner to start off on a race around a track with a spurt of energy that lags when the cheering dies down. He who will pass the finishing line to receive the crown, is one who maintains a steady pace throughout the course. This is the analogy given us in the Hebrew epistle. 'Let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the beginner and completer of faith.' The Lord Jesus himself is the great example. He endured to the end. There were no variations of faithfulness in the Lord's life. He was constant in His energy. Circumstances without may have come across his pathway in clouds of blackness but they found him just as energetic, as patient, as loving, as staunch, as when the crowd would have taken Him to the city of Jerusalem to crown him king. The great call upon us today is for endurance."

Fulton J. Sheen in his autobiography called Treasures in Clay says, "The intermittent cry of 'How long O Lord? How long?!' is impatience that belies what the tongue confesses: that every trial is in the hand of God. The keeping of the scoreboard of past wrongs, the chewing of the cud of resentment, licking of the wound and how we received them, the playing of the tapes of injustices, real or imagined, were so many proofs that I had not thoroughly digested what my faith taught me and my lips confessed, that all trials come from the hands of the loving God."

Langston Hughes says, "Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."

Col. Jack Broughton in his book Thud Ridge talks about perseverance, "The Geeno's problems were faster moving than Hannibal's, and the Sam's, the Migs, and the flak were all zeroed in and waiting for him that bleak morning when he headed north for the last time. And he knew they were waiting. Like the rest of the thud drivers, he never lacked in knowledge or appreciation of the forces aligned against him. But only a few flinched from the blanket of steel that waited, always active, always eager, never compromising.

"We had only four who couldn't hack it. Four only, whose fear overcame them and dealt them the gravest defeat man can suffer--to surrender to the cowardice that made them quit in the face of the enemy, while those they had lived with went forth to take their chances on dying or rotting away in prison in order to defend their supposed right to default on their brothers in arms, and still go forth unblemished. This is wrong, and our system is wrong to tolerate it. You try and change it if you will. I have already tried and been rebuffed. No matter what demands the leadership imposes, the combat soldier who falters and fails in the face of the enemy's fire, is an unspeakable wretch whose own insides must someday devour him. There is no telling what type may display the unpardonable sin of reneging under fire. Our four covered the spectrum. We had one who had been a professional fighter pilot for about ten years. He loved the travel, adventure and challenge of the peacetime forces. He liked his aircraft and thought well of her demonstrated prowess on the gunnery range with the practice bombs and shells. When the press of events called him to the day, when the gunnery range fired back, and airplanes exploded and people died, he crawled on his belly and surrendered his image of a man because he was afraid.

Another was a bomber guy who got caught up in the personnel conversion to this different machine. He was out of his element, almost as far out of his element as those poor slobos who have been rotting in Hanoi for over two years. So he fell on his face and cried, 'I can't take it!' He had been professionally raised under a banner that unfortunately says, 'Peace is our profession,' and he wasn't capable of transforming himself to the knowledge that war is our profession, as most of the rest of the bomber guys did.

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"Our third failure was a lieutenant, who almost cracked up earlier while pulling alert pad duty with nobody even shooting at him. Perhaps I should have spotted him then, but it took only a few lousy 37 millimeter shells bursting woefully out of range to surface this clever dodger in uniform. He decided that he would like to be a ground officer during the period of hostilities, and the last I heard, he was getting away with it.

Our fourth was our worst. He wears the U.S. Navy ring of an Annapolis graduate. I always knew the Navy was smart, but how they figured this clown out ten years ago and got him transferred to the Air Force is beyond me. He was the worst in that he knew better and had demonstrated the capability under fire to do the job. He quit around the half-way mark when he was approaching the stage where he would have been of real value to us. Among other things, he developed a fear of heights after ten years as a jet pilot. He learned all the rules and all the angles, and he played them to the hilt. When all else failed him, he managed a hardship discharge. Hardship indeed that this leach defaced the profession as long as he did."

Elizabeth Elliott in her book Discipline: the Glad Surrender says, "When I was in the sixth grade, one of our penmanship exercises was this verse, which has rung in my mind ever since: 'If a task is once begun, never leave it 'til its done. Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all.' We will finish our course with joy if we stick to the assignment. We will be able to say as Jesus did, 'I have finished the work you gave me.'"

Louis Smedes in his book How Can It Be All Right? says, "My third demon is in charge of making me inflate problems to the size of catastrophies. It makes me feel that every time I have a nasty problem, calamity has befallen. God turns catastrophies into problems. My demon tempts me to see mere problems as gigantic catastrophies. If you share my demon, we have a common killjoy. You overdraw your checking account and you face financial disaster. You learn that your daughter smoked pot and your children are ruined. You have one rousing fight with your spouse and you are ready for a divorce. When our demon prevails, we lose our balance. The demon unhinges us. Some of us are catastrophic hypochondriacs. Every pain in the chest is the coronary you were worrying about. Every case of the flu is probably deadly pneumonia. The

demon called hypochondria steals joy and sets panic in its place. My oldest son, when he was very young, tended to be a histrionic hypochondriacal problem-catastrophizer. He cut his cheek one day and saw the blood dripping to the floor, and he panicked, 'I'm dying! I'm dying!' Then with a sense of timing that would have done Bob Hope justice, he paused and cried, 'I'm already dead!'

Well, an interjection of rationality into the situation persuaded him that anyone with such a superb sense of the dramatic was probably in the land of the living. But the hypochondriacal demon gets into many of us; and when it does, it kills our joy."

5. "and in your perseverance, GODLINESS."

We have considered together:

virtue
knowledge
self-control
perseverance

and now the 5th of these virtues for us to concentrate upon is seen in the word 'godliness.'

Back in study #1 1:3 we read,

"Seeing that His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue."

We have all the tools necessary to the fulfillment of the pursuit of this virtue. It is just simply a matter of applying these things to see the godly life beginning to be produced in us and through us.

John Brown says, "It is descriptive of the right state of the individual with regard to God. The right state of his mind, of his heart, and of his life, of his thoughts, his affections and his conduct. The right way of thinking, feeling and acting towards God. To know and believe the truth respecting God. To love, trust, fear, believe, obey God. To submit to and worship Him. To seek and find happiness in Him. To be conformed to Him. To

Thinking → Feeling → Acting Toward God!
Result of Fellowship!!

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maintain fellowship with Him. Supremely to desire His approbation and steadily to seek the promotion of His glory. Habitually, to think of Him and to look on everything in its connection with Him. All this is included in godliness."

Richard DeHaan says, "The development of all of these virtues may seem to be an impossibility. Expressing faith, self-control, patience and brotherly love all the time isn't easy. There are many pressures. We feel that people don't understand us. We are only human, after all. Yet God wants us to be growing. He expects us to be more spiritually mature now than we were a year ago, more loving, more knowledgeable of God's Word, more self-controlled. We have been instructed to give all diligence to developing a God-honoring life. It requires a strenuous effort but it's worth it. Therefore, give all diligence. Get to work. Strive to develop godly qualities and you'll be surprised at the way God honors your sincere dedication and earnest efforts."

Oyler points out, "The word godliness has the idea of proper worship or proper conduct in relation to deity. The New Testament usage also reveals this two-fold aspect of an inward attitude that results in outward action. This particular manner of life must find its source in God's provisions. The lifestyle of godliness emanates from a God-ward attitude. Godliness in this context refers to that proper attitude toward God that results in behavior that is pleasing to God. The focus is upon the appropriate inner relationship to God. If any of the preceding virtues are to be virtues at all, godliness must follow. Godliness provides the proper motive for perseverance. In order for Christian growth to move toward completeness, godliness must be added to perseverance. Consideration of God must control all of life for the growing believer. Above all, he learns to seek His approval and please Him."

v. 7 And in your godliness, brotherly affection, and in your brotherly affection, the divine love;

6.

The 6th character trait or virtue that Peter talks about in the seventh verse is "in your godliness, BROTHERLY AFFECTION."

φιλαδελφία - "To love the Brother" John 21:

Romans 12:9,10

"Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine break with evil and a real devotion to good. Let us have real warm affection for one another, as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit."

Hebrews 13:1

"Let love of the brethren continue."

I Peter 1:22

"Since you have in obedience to the truth, purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart."

αγαπᾶν

It is sufficient to note here that love for the brethren seems to be a natural result of the salvation experience. The growing Christian must develop a warm, friendly attitude toward people, 'especially those of the household of faith' (Galatians 6:10). The word concentrates, as in the rest of the New Testament, upon a warm, friendly, affectionate quality of life. This love can be expressed to both believer and unbeliever, as indicated by the broader New Testament usage. The distinction between philadelphia and agape is not the object of the Christ versus non-Christian, but the source of a warm, affectionate, emotional response and an act of the will. The climax is beginning to build as Peter approaches agape. Philadelphia is placed after godliness and before agape, as a bridge to complete Christian growth. The goal is conformity to the divine nature. Godliness speaks of a God-ward attitude that results in a life pleasing to Him. True godliness is expressed in loving others. A friendly attitude toward other human creatures that God has made constitutes true godliness. If the virtues were to stop at godliness, they might have the potential to become a cold, religious coating, void of the warmth and concerns so characteristic of the divine nature. The previous virtues also imply qualities related to self and to God. Peter, however, lest he fall short of the goal of Christian growth, adds the element of concern for others. These final two virtues provide the ultimate fruitage of faith. Without them, Christian maturity would never be reached.

Sheldon Vanauken in his book *A Severe Mercy* says, "But if the best of life is, in fact, emotional, then one wanted the highest, purest emotions, and that meant joy. Joy was the highest. How did one find joy? In books it seemed to be found in love, a great love, though maybe for the saints there was joy in the love of God. He didn't aspire to that though. He didn't even believe in God, certainly not! So if he wanted the heights of joy, he must have, if he could find it, a great love. But in the books again, great joy, true love, seemed always to go hand in hand with frightful pain. Still, he thought, looking out across the meadow, still the joy would be worth the pain, if, indeed, they went together. If there were a choice, and he suspected there was, a choice between, on the other hand, some sort of safe, cautious middle way, he, for one, here and now, chose the heights and the depths.

Since then, the years had gone by, and he, had he not had what he chose that day in the meadow? He had had the love and the joy, what joy it had been, and the sorrow. He had had, was having, all the sorrow there was, and yet the joy was worth the pain. Even now, he reaffirmed that long past choice."

Grady Nutt in his book *So Good So Far* says, "My witness to you is only partly places and itinerary. It is largely persons who have laid hands on my soul and life to bless me. I've spent a heap of time as a heap for a time in some very real ditches. I have been passed by on the other side by folks with temple kinds of things to do. I am who, what, whatever I am today because of the Samaritans who have oiled my wounds and donkeyed me to help. Typically good Samaritans, they did not count the cost (and I cannot adequately repay). They never asked to be known or noticed, never used their concern as leverage or pressure on me. I can stand more nearly straight and tall because they stooped to help me. Like blind Bartimeus, now I see.

"Eleanor and I met in college. We had two years of courting, dating, courting, engagement, courting, waiting, courting, courting, courting. Through it all--no arguments, no fusses, no slammed down phones; more than harmony, unison. In Eleanor's words, 'We both loved Grady.' That's true."

Smedes in his book How Can It Be All Right says, "Thousands of unwitting lovers this June, while I write, will stand in front of a preacher, waiting for magic words that will lift them off into love's endless spaces, where happiness is the air they breathe. But for every couple ready to fly the friendly skies of love, there are a hundred couples whose flight was grounded years ago, when the power of love petered out and the inertia of boredom or the energy of hate set in. How they need a promise that things will be better tomorrow, even though they are rotten today."

Smedes points out, "Love is a power that flows into persons and drives them to move toward others. Love enables people to do loving sorts of things and be loving sorts of persons. That love is a power explains why Paul personifies it, talking as if love itself did things. 'Love believes,' he says, 'and love endures, hopes, and bears all things.' What he obviously means is that love is the power which enables people to endure, to believe and to hope. Knowing that love is a power can reduce the burden of love as a duty."

1 Cor. 13:4-8 15 Qualities of Love #15 Love is persevering All Things (Pres. Tenney)

7.

"and in your brotherly affection, the DIVINE LOVE"

Oyler points out, "The emphasis in the divine love is upon an act of the will, with the best interest of the other person in mind. The distinction of agape as love of choice and of the will is seen in the New Testament in God's relationship to man. The New Testament confirms the idea that agape is love of the will but desires the best for the object loved. The essence of agape is that it originates in the will and can be exercised apart from the emotions. The issue is not object of the love, but origin of the love. The ultimate in Christ-likeness is choosing to do and want the best for others, regardless of their desirability. This is the meaning of agape in the list of the virtues. The summit has been reached. The climax has concluded. The ultimate in Christian growth is agape. All the preceding virtues find their climax in love."

What is the relationship of agape and philadelphia? In what sense is there progress toward perfection? The key is found in the only verse in Peter's writings that includes both terms: in 1 Peter 1:22 Peter states:

"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love (phileo) of the brethren, fervently love (agape) one another from the heart."

Notice that Peter does not change the object of whom they are to love, but how they are to love. In both cases, it is the family of God or one another. However, Peter was concerned that they move from phileo to agape. There apparently was a warm, affectionate, emotional love, but they needed to learn to love with their wills. The sacrificial, giving love was lacking. The apostle desired that they move toward a love that was greater and broader than philadelphia. Believers can be as unloveable as nonbelievers, and thus require agape. For true Christian perfection to emerge, one must learn to love by an act of the will, as well as the emotions. If Peter had stopped at philadelphia, he would have left the list of Christian virtues far from its goal. Throughout the Scriptures, agape is presented as the climax of maturity. 1 Cor. 13:13

"But now abide faith, hope, love; these three but the greatest of these is love."

Colossians 3:14

"And beyond all these, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."

I John 4:7

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves, is born of God, and knows God."

It is the final virtue because it most appropriately reflects the divine nature. Love is what God is. It is the divine nature itself.

Smedes points out, "Love moved God to become a person like us. Love led Him as a man to use His power wholly as servant power. In love's power He gave himself in kindness. He washed dirty feet,

wept with grief-wracked people

empathized with a harlot

entered the lives of the disowned & distained.

All His life He was powerful in kindness. But ~~He~~ ^{They} hanged ~~them~~. [?] They pounded a rail into the ground, put a crossbar on it, and hanged Him til He died. God, who is love, was hanged to die, the center of power for the world was weakest of all men."

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One cannot ^{But} feel that Simon Peter has in mind, first of all, the Upper Room experience, when the Lord talked a great deal about agape love: John 13:34,35

#1 "A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another, even as I have loved you; that you also love one another. By ^{that} shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."

The play on words here are almost an actual recounting of what took place in John 21 when Peter and six other disciples met with the resurrected Lord on the shores of the Sea of Galilee for breakfast that morning --

John 21: beginning at v.15

#2 "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you agape me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I phileo you.' He said to him, 'Tend my lambs.

He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you agape me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I phileo you.' He said to him, 'Shepherd my sheep.'

He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you phileo me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you phileo me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, you know all things. You know that I phileo you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.'"

it was the lack of this virtue that turned his life around.

This is the first time in the biography of the apostle Peter that he admits that he is not capable of producing agape love.

Paul tells us in Galatians 5: that the fruit of the spirit is agape.

It is only as we are empowered by the indwelling Spirit, that we are capable by an act of our will to offer a self-sacrificing act of love to those in the world around us.

Good Summary!!

Oyler points out, "The fruits of faith begin with moral excellence. This general term that reflects excellency of a person's character must be given direction of knowledge. Simply knowing what is good and right does not imply doing it. Therefore, self-control must be added. This behavior needs to become consistent, so the believer supplies perseverance. All of these actions must be seen and carried out in a proper relationship to God to be truly Christian virtues. And therefore, godliness is the next step toward perfection. If God-likeness is the goal, love must be central. Philadelphia speaks of a warm, affectionate quality of life that is friendly towards others. Ultimately, true love will necessitate an act of the will, agape. If man were to be like God, what would characterize his life? No greater challenge confronts the believer today than the diligent effort required to add these seven virtues to his faith; and thus partake of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world by lust."

One of the things that is so important for us to recognize right now is that we are totally incapable of this kind of production. But how precious to know that it's already been recorded in verse 3 that

"His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue."

★★ The real secret is SURRENDER. As we surrender to the power of the Spirit of God, we will indeed begin to see these qualities of lifestyle showing up in our lives.

★★ Smedes points out, "The power of agape love drives us to a new beginning. Love lets the past die. It moves people to a new beginning without settling the past. Love does not have to clear up all misunderstandings. In its power the details of the past become irrelevant. Only its new beginning matters. Accounts may go unsettled, differences remain unsolved, ledgers stay unbalanced, conflicts between people's memories of how things happened are not cleared up. The past stays muddled. Only the future matters. Love's power does not make fussy historians. Love prefers to tuck all the loose ends of past rights and wrongs in the bosom of forgiveness and pushes us

into a new start. Letting go of the past and beginning here, now, where we are, to move again toward a reconciled life is one of the hardest things any human being is ever asked to do. Love is the power to do that."

v. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they are rendering you neither unemployed nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason the apostle has taken time to outline these seven spiritual disciplines is so that we would know what to do and also recognize what the Lord meant when He talked about bearing fruit and ultimately, for the Father to be glorified in much fruit from us.

"For if" (and, of course, this is a big 'if') "these qualities" (that is, the seven that have been listed, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection, divine love) "are yours and are increasing", (not only that you possess them but you are continuing to grow in these spiritual disciplines) the result is going to be two-fold:

"they are rendering you neither:

- ① Unemployed nor
- ② Unfruitful

in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Employed and fruitful are the opposites of unemployed and unfruitful.

We need to be employed and fruitful in the Lord's work. By growing into what we are to become, we are doing this.

There is a greater and greater display of these qualities as we grow toward maturity. They must become a part of our inward framework before they can ever be manifested authentically in the external world in which we live.

You won't be unemployed or unfruitful when you are developing character. Fellowship is really primary at this point. We see this demonstrated in Mary and Martha, as Mary has chosen that good part, to be sitting at His feet, learning of Him. The Scripture tells us that he chose 12 to be with Him.

John Brown points out, "The words of Dr. Watts are applicable to others besides children. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. He is contracting guilt by neglecting duty and laying up a subject for painful self-accusing reflection. Idleness has much that is bad in it, for it argues dissatisfaction either with our master, or with our work, or with both. Beyond all this, it is to be recollected that the final doom of the idle, unprofitable servant is a very dreadful one:

"Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gathered where I have not strawed; thou oughtest, therefore, to have given my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming, I should have received my own with interest. Take, therefore, the talent from him and give it to him that hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that has not, shall be taken away even that which he hath, and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Barclay points out, "May every heart confess thy name
and ever thee adore,
And seeking thee itself enflame,
To see thee more and more."

Lillie points out, "The Lord himself has spoken again and again of laborers standing idle in the marketplace, doing no useful work for God or man; and in another parable He has described the thorny ground, here in whom the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful, an image that frequently recurs in his discourses. Now we can well believe that Peter, having heard both these expressions from the lips of his Master, and remembering them still, intentionally availed himself of them in the present admonition to this brethren."

Oyler points out, "Growth in these seven qualities insures usefulness and fruitfulness in the Christian life. Fruit and usefulness are more what the believer is than what he does, when seen in light of the virtues. The first reason, our incentive to diligence in the development of the virtues, is an assurance of usefulness and fruitfulness."

Westwood points out, "The apostle Peter is probing deep down into our consciousness in this presentation of these truths. As we consider them, the Holy Spirit would shine the searching light deep into our hearts to see whether we are real or unreal. In the midst of a wide-spread profession of Christianity, it is very necessary that we should take stock of where we stand in the midst of the religious confusion all around us."

Elizabeth Elliott in her book Discipline: the Glad Surrender says, "here is a recipe for boredom and cynicism: if life is nothing more than a meaningless string of minutes threaded on hours, with no comprehension of God's work from beginning to end, the hillbilly song says it all:

AXX
→ 'Open the door and the flies come in,
Shut the door and I'm sweating again.
Life gets tejus, don't it?'

Paul, in speaking to the Thessalonian saints in 2 Thessalonians 3:11 we read:

"For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion, and eat their own bread. But as for you brethren, do not grow weary of doing good."

Proverbs 18:9

"He also who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys."

John 15:16

"You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you; and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

"They are rendering you neither unemployed nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is the third time the word 'knowledge' has occurred in these first eight verses:

1. Back in verse 3 it was "the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue."
2. and then we are to add to our virtue, knowledge, in verse 5.

v. 9 For he who is lacking these qualities is so shortsighted that he is blind, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

In verse 8 we have the person in whom these qualities are residing and increasing. They are the ones who are employed and fruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now we have the opposite in verse 9. We now have the one who is lacking these qualities, the qualities referring to the seven disciplines that have been outlined above.

V. 8 & 9
Are opposites

Whereas the two key words in verse 8 were unemployed and unfruitful the key words here are shortsighted and forgotten.

This is a person who is a Christian but he is out of fellowship with the Lord. He is folding his hands and ruining himself. He is the one who is building his life on the wood, hay and stubble, rather than the gold, silver and precious stones. ON THE SAND INSTEAD OF THE ROCK !!

I John 2:11

"But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

2 Corinthians 4:4

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

This is the condition of those who do not know Jesus Christ. Then, having been enlightened by the Spirit when we are walking in the light, we are having fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus is cleansing us from all sin.

When we walk out of that light into darkness, we are walking out of fellowship with the Lord.

When we are in this condition, we are very nearsighted, so much so that we are blind to the needs of those around us.

Harry Ironside says, "Spiritual myopia, nearsightedness, is a tragic affliction. For one who claims Jesus as Lord, to fix his eyes downward upon the baubles and trinkets of life, which shall turn to ashes in life's testing hours and to refuse to lift his face to the distant heights and the matchless glories beyond, is to render life cramped and constricted, and to deny one's godlike capacities and range expression or satisfaction."

Pride
Smedes hits real hard on why these qualities would be absent in our life, simply because we are not willing to allow the Spirit of God to produce this work in us. Like Peter in the Upper Room, our pride will not let the Lord wash our feet. And as a result, we are not having part with Him. We are not in fellowship with Him.

Pride, in the religious sense, is an arrogant refusal to let God be God. It is to grab God's status for one's self. In the vivid language of the Bible, pride is 'puffing yourself up in God's face.' Pride is turning down God's invitation to join the dance of life as a creature in his garden, and wishing instead to be the creator, independent, reliant on one's own resources. Never does pride want to pray for strength, ask for grace, plead for mercy, or give thanks to God. Pride is the grand illusion, the fantasy of fantasies, the cosmic put-on, the fantasy

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that we can make it as little gods leaves us empty at the center. Once we decide we have to make it on our own, we are attacked by the demons of fear and anxiety. We are worried that we cannot keep our balance as long as we carry no more inside our empty heart than what we can put there. We suspect that we lack the power to become what our pride makes us think we are, so we learn to swagger, to bluff, to use symbols to cover up our fears that we lack substance. The source of all the evils connected with self-seeking is that we turn our ideal self into an idol and expect other people to dance around it. We come to think our idol excuses everything. We exploit people and push them around. Lie to them, flatter them, put them down, when crudely or with artistic finesse, we treat them as irreplaceable supports for the ego we are trying to build into a self. This is the poison that so easily gets into all our love. We love others only so that they will become accolades at the altar of our divine self.

Shortsighted in the sense that they are living only for themselves, and living only for the now.

No long Range! Eat, Drink... Now!

John Brown says, "He is occupied with things near at hand. He sees them but not as they really are, and he is incapable of seeing distant objects. Consequently, he is not affected by them. He looks intently on the things seen, in temporal, but he does not see for he does not look at the things that are unseen and eternal. The man who lacks faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, while he is seeking worldly good, wealth, honor and pleasure, is blind indeed and does not see afar off, does not see to the end of these things. To be thus blind is a great misery, as well as a great fault."

Barclay points out, "The word here can have either of two meanings. It can mean shortsighted. It is easy to become shortsighted in life, to see things only as they appear at the moment, and to be unable to take the long view of things, to have our eyes so fixed upon earth that we never think of the things which are beyond. But this word can also mean blinking, or shutting the eyes. Again, it is easy in life to shut our eyes to that which

*Choosing
Rather*

we do not wish to see; to walk, as it were, in blinkers, which limit our view to the things that we wish to see about ourselves and about the world."

Lillie points out, "But all the while he knows not that he himself is blind, knowing nothing yet as he ought to know, as another apostle who says of the man, who, destitute of the one grace of brotherly kindness, hateth his brother. He is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and knows not whether he goeth because that darkness has blinded his eyes."

The second thing that is seen in this 9th verse of those who are lacking these qualities is that they not only have become shortsighted, 'they have forgotten his purification from his former sins.'

He's forgotten the three C's:

1. He's forgotten CALVARY
2. He's forgotten the COST involved
3. And he has forgotten the CLEANSING power that is available in the blood of Christ.

Jesus instituted the ordinance of the broken bread and the drinking of the cup for this very purpose: that it would be done in remembrance of Him on a regular basis. It's the purification from His former sins.

Titus 3:5

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds, which we have done in righteousness, but according to his mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."

Psalms 119:9,11

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

2 Corinthians 7:1

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness and the fear of God."

The Spirit of God, who dwells within this individual, is grieved by sin and quenched by some resistance. And as a result, the person has become shortsighted, and he has forgotten his purification from his former sins.

2 Timothy 4:10

"Demas hath forsaken me because of his love of this present world."

Ephesians 3:17-19

"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God."

In contrast, if you do not have these characteristics increasing in your life, you are spiritually sick, suffering from shortsightedness, blindness, and forgetfulness. Someone who is blind cannot see at all; someone who is shortsighted cannot see in the distance; and someone who has forgotten cannot remember the grace of God in their past. One interpreter points out, "In their blindness, short-sightedness and forgetfulness, they no longer understand their past sins, their present disobedience or their future condemnation." (StoH, 62)

v.10

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble.

Our verse begins with a 'therefore,' and in light of the previous commands and the outlining of the spiritual disciplines or Christian virtues, he now addresses the brethren. He gives them a command: "Be all the more diligent."

Back in verse 5 he said, "Having added on your part every intense effort." These are commands to believers. We are told to make certain about his, that is, the Lord's doing two things: calling and choosing us.

Again we are reminded of John 15:16

"You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit; and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you."

The reason for the command is seen "for as long as you are doing these things (that is, emphasizing the seven qualities that have been previously outlined), you will never stumble."

Therefore, in light of what has just been said, brethren, the command is "be all the more diligent to make certain about the calling and the choosing, for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble. We noted back in verse 8 that as these qualities are ours and increasing, we will not be unemployed nor unfruitful; and the third thing we learn is concentrating on these, we will never stumble."

Galatians 5:7

"You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?"

- ① unemployed
- ② unfruitful
- ③ never stumble

John 16:1

"These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling."

~~##~~ To stumble means to get sidetracked or out of fellowship with the Lord.

Legalism, Self-Righteousness, Seeking Experiences

Lord, wants A submissive spirit + An obedient heart

Psalm 37:23,24

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and He delighted in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with His hand."

If we have not concentrated on these qualities and we are out of fellowship, we have stumbled. When we stumble, we become shortsighted or blind, and we have forgotten the purification from our former sins. Now we have a problem in that there are some latter sins too, on a daily basis, that must be dealt with before the Lord.

James points out, "As Christians you are called and chosen, but that fact does not render exertion on your part unnecessary. 'You must walk worthily of the calling wherewith you are called' (Ephesians 4:1).

James 3:2

"For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect or mature man, able to bridle the whole body as well."

English points out, "Now this does not mean that our calling and election in Christ are not sure in God's sight. He keeps those that are His by His own power, sealed by the spirit until the day of redemption. What the apostle had in mind, I think, was that those who found in themselves no evidence of desiring to put aside the old life and its sinful connections, in order that they might give diligence to living unto Christ, had better search their own hearts. They had better be sure that their knowledge is heart knowledge and not merely

mental assent to the saving power of Christ's death. Occasionally, one runs across a Christian who doubts his salvation. Almost invariably, it is one who is living in sin, whose fellowship with the Lord has been broken, who no longer reads his Bible, who no longer is able to pray."

John Brown says, "They are to make their calling and election sure. They are to make it evident to themselves and others that they have been called and chosen."

The making sure refers not to the existence but to the evidence of the facts referred to. For a Christian to make his calling and election sure is to afford satisfactory evidence that he has been called and elected. The meaning is seek diligently to make it evident, both to yourselves and others, that you are indeed called and elected. It is necessary that those who profess to be called and chosen should inquire whether they are so indeed, for many suppose themselves called and chosen who have no satisfactory evidence that they are.

56th Anniversary last Friday - I don't lie awake wondering but I do work at it.

J. Vernon McGee points out, "I have been married for a long time, and I never lie awake at night and wonder whether or not I am married. But to make my marriage meaningful, I have to work at it. And I have been working at it for a long, long time."

Richard de Haan points out, "I wonder if Peter might have been thinking about that night many years before when he himself had stumbled. You will recall that on the eve of our Lord's crucifixion Peter had bravely declared that even if all others in the world would forsake the Lord Jesus, he would not. Just a short time later, however, at Pilate's judgment hall, Peter was heard vehemently denying three times that he knew the Lord. When Jesus looked at Peter, the faltering disciple went out and wept bitterly. If only he hadn't been so boastful. If only he hadn't lost his self-control. If only he hadn't been so afraid. If only-- Peter stumbled because he chose to protect himself rather than be identified before the world as a disciple of Christ. Perhaps that sad experience was uppermost in his mind when he wrote the words, 'If you do these things, you shall never fall.' As you yield to and obey the Holy Spirit, He will keep you from falling."

Barbieri points out, "By his entire argument, Peter urges his readers to exert themselves and to make certain of their calling and election. In verse 10 he repeats the call for zeal that he gave in verse 5. The tense of the verb in this passage stresses the urgency of his appeal. He again states clearly the need for cooperation of the human will with God's sovereign call. Election originates with God but man's behavior proves that election. Christian calling and Christian living must not be separated. The believer who confirms his calling by his life will be aware of two results:

1. The first result stated in verse 10 relates to his life. The believer will never fall or stumble. The Christian who progressively develops these virtues in his life will grow steadily. This growth will be obvious proof that he has been elected by God.
2. The second result is explained in verse 11 and it relates to the future. The believer will reach the goal of his lifelong journey, and he will make it with an abundant entrance.

This picture was borrowed from the Greek culture. Heroes from the Olympic games were welcomed back to their home cities in a spectacular way. They were not brought through the regular city gate but through a special one constructed for the occasion. Thus the believer who follows the Lord's program for growth will be abundantly blessed in the future. He will share in that everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ, which will one day be manifest upon the earth."

Blair points out, "A minister relates a story about Jacob Walker, a lighthouse keeper on Robbins Reef off the rocky shore of New England. After years of faithful service of minding the light, he became ill and died. His wife buried his body on the hillside above the shore on the mainland, in plain view of the lighthouse. Later she applied for and received the appointment as the keeper of the lighthouse. For 20 years she carried on alone, and then a New York reporter went out to get her story. She told him this, 'Every evening I stand in the door of the lighthouse and look across the water to the hillside where my husband's body is buried. I always seem to hear his voice saying, as he often said when alive, 'Mind the light, mind the light.'

"Across the troubled waters and the roaring breakers of the confusing age in which we live, there comes another voice to you and me. It's the voice of the Son of God saying, Mind the light, mind the light. This is the gospel light. We mind it by how we live and by what we say. Our Lord declared in Matthew 5:16

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Here we are told in this 10th verse to be concentrating on the conduct. It's what we are that really counts, more than what we do.

Harry Ironside says, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, that is, in the sense of manifestation. No one has any reason to believe that one is numbered among the elect of God unless he is characterized by faith which brings forth fruit unto God. But where this is true, there will be constant victory over tendencies toward evil."

Elizabeth Elliott in her book Discipline: the Glad Surrender says, "My little dog McDuff taught me many lessons. How simple life was for him. He trusted me. He lived his life one day at a time, wearing his one ragged black coat, provided by a heavenly Father, appropriate to all occasions, all year round. Supper was there in the dish, Ken-L-Ration, Gaines Burgers, table scraps, whatever. No decisions about the menu troubled him. He owned a house and a tremendous yard, and quite a few squirrels and rabbits that he felt responsible to chase and bark at. But he had no taxes or mortgage payments. Everything was taken care of. What he did naturally is a hard lesson we human beings have to work at.

I once heard a formula guaranteed to prevent boredom. It is to have :

1. Something to do.
2. Someone to love.
3. Something to look forward to.

Smedes points out, "What God expects of us, says St. Paul, is that we be faithful. He puts us on earth as caretakers. He puts each of us here to take care of something. And what he asks of us is that we be faithful in taking care of it. Something there is in life for each of us to care for. He does not ask that we be flawless, only faithful. Not fantastic, not fabulous, only faithful. Being faithful means to find out what you are here to take care, and then give it your best shot. And God is your critic. If you have trouble living with this critic, know this: Grace can set you free in the presence even of your divine critic."

v.11

For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

The reason now for being all the more diligent to make certain about the calling and choosing by emphasizing these virtues that have been described is not only so you will never stumble, but so that in this way you will have a richly provided entrance into the eternal kingdom.

From this way, that is, doing these things, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

Peter's entrance is going to be very soon, as he speaks of this in some of the following verses. The entrance will be richly provided when you will hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. I am well-pleased."

They will be expecting you and excited that you are coming.

Peter wants us to be happy when we get to the house.

Richard de Haan points out, "Rich spiritual rewards await the faithful Christian as he takes his place among the saints in heaven. But the disobedient believer's entrance into glory will be lacking in abundance. His reward will be smaller or nothing at all. He will be saved,

yet as by fire. The contrast between obedient and disobedient Christians as they enter heaven might be likened to the arrival of two ships into port after having encountered the same storm along the way. One is carelessly rigged, poorly manned and badly commanded, but it reaches the harbor. Its cargo is gone and its sails and mast have been blown away, a derelict hulk, towed along by a steamer.

The other vessel arrives in port properly captained, all sails are set and flags proudly waving. Everything is in order and the cargo is secure. Which vessel portrays your spiritual condition?"

The best is yet to be. Christians will meet Him again in heaven to enjoy forever the infinite perfection of God. What a prospect! As I reflect upon this glorious expectation, I am reminded of a story Charles Spurgeon, the famous 19th century preacher, often told. An aged man had just been examined by his physician, who said to the family, 'I'm afraid he's seen his best days.' They didn't think he heard but he did. Opening his eyes and speaking in a remarkably strong voice, he replied, 'Seen my best days, doctor? You're wrong. My best days are still ahead. I'm about to be given an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Don't say I've seen my best days.'

Smedes points out, "I bought a brand-new date book yesterday, the kind I use every year--spiral-bound, black imitation leather covers, wrapped around pages and pages of blank squares. Each square has a number to tell me which day of the month I am in at that moment. Each square is a frame for one episode of my life. Before I am through with the book, I will fill the squares with classes I will teach, people I will eat lunch with and everlasting committee meetings I will sit through. And these are only the things I cannot afford to forget. I fill the squares too with things I do not write down for me to remember--thousands of cups of coffee, some lovemaking, some praying, and I hope, gestures of help to my neighbors. Whatever I do, it has to fit inside one of those squares in my datebook. I live one square at a time. The four lines that make the squares are the walls of time that organize my life. Everything I do has to fit into one square. I cannot straddle the lines. Each square has an invisible door that leads into the next square. At a silent stroke the door opens and I am pulled through

it as if by a magnet sucked into the next square in the line. There I will again fill the time frame that seals me, fill it with my busyness, just as I did the square before. As I get older, the squares seem to get smaller. One day I will walk into a square that has no door. There will be no mysterious opening and no walking into an adjoining square. One of the squares will be terminal. I do not know which square it will be. A life insurance person can roughly guess the squares I may expect before I get to the last one. How many do I have left? Suppose I have exactly 1,029 squares left. What difference will it make to me now as I fill up this square. The only one that holds me today. The difference depends not so much on how many squares are left but on what really is going to happen to me when I get to that final square. Two things can happen. Which of the two does happen tells pretty much what life is and what our world is all about. So we ought to face the two possibilities with utter honesty. This is not time for make-believe. The first possibility is that when I walk into the last square, the one with no door, I will be suffocated inside of it. The walls of the square may close in on me, as it were, to choke me. All my yesterdays may have only vomited me into this dark room with no exit. I may have strutted my petty pace through each day only to be seduced into this blank square that silences my sounds forever. I have pretended in all the squares to be somebody special. Now I may share my bed with dead rats. This could be what happens to me 1,029 squares from now. And if it happens to me, it likely happens to everybody whenever he slides into the final square of his datebook.

The second possibility is that when I walk into the last square, I will discover that the reason it has no door is that it has no walls for a door to fit into. The four unmoveable lines that sealed me inside all my other frames are erased. The last day of my life turns out to be the beginning of life in new dimensions, free somehow because the walls of regulated time have fallen away. The last square is not death. It is a new dimension of life."

CONCLUSION:

What are the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Peter sees the Christian life as an intense effort on our part, providing lavishly in our faith a number of character traits.

LESSON #2: As you examine yourself in these seven areas, do you feel comfortable with the present condition of your spiritual walk with God?

LESSON #3: We are to be employed and fruitful in seeing that these qualities are increasing in our lives.

LESSON #4: If these qualities are not becoming increasingly manifest in our lives, it's because we are out of fellowship with the Lord.

LESSON #5: We are commanded to be all the more diligent about these things so that we do not stumble.

LESSON #6: As we provide lavishly for these qualities in our lives, so we will be richly provided an entrance into the eternal kingdom.

Peter sees the Christian life as a growing, maturing, progressing development in a relationship.

Charles Jones in his book Life Is Tremendous says, "You know what growing means. Growing means growing pains. It means changing. When two people come together and don't let each other change each other, they may wind up exchanging each other.

If you're learning to say something positive to everybody, about everything all the time; if you're disciplining your mind to see something positive in everything that happens, and if you're learning to see it big and keep it simple, you have a foundation on which to build a steady, expanding life.

Rebecca Pippert: Out of the Salt Shaker + into the World

Too many people have stopped at the door that leads to conversion. Door so we can go through & get involved in life on the other side. Some see conversion & discipleship as a revolving door that will allow them to stay there. They have come to glorify their experience of the door when it was meant only as an avenue of passage to a new life. In fact, it is not our "door experience" but our new life that demonstrates whether we have been converted.

William Pannell: "its
paint — or get off the ladder."

"Time to put your money where
your mouth is."

Paul says it so well in Philippians 3:12-14

"Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on, in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

In a courage born of accepting love, we can look love's ideal full in the face, admit we do not measure up to it, and yet yield ourselves again and again to love as the power that pushes us very gradually toward it. With this courage we can cope with the unending job of finding our way through the complex network of our duties, demands, and drives, through life's criss-crossing desires and needs toward a life increasingly disposed to love others without demanding a return on our investment.