

Our faith in Jesus should not stand alone. There are things that go along with real faith in Jesus. It deserves and it demands to be accompanied by these things. As time goes by, our faith should be increasingly accompanied by the 7 things listed in 1:5-7.

The command comes in 1:5. We must **add** (“supplement”) the 7 things that follow to our faith. And going after this growth is not a lazy or laid-back pursuit. We are to give **maximum effort** (“make every effort”) as we go after the addition of these 7 things. We are to strenuously exert ourselves in our going after this growth.

This is a call to grateful, God-centered, God-empowered growth. The power is His (1:3). What God **expects** God **empowers**. God **energizes** the **effort we exert**. See also Philippians 2:12-13.

Notice how 1:5 starts: “For this very reason...” Drill Sergeants demand immediate and thoughtless obedience. “We make it so you do not have to think. We will tell you everything you need to know. We will tell you the who, the what, the where, and the when. You do not need to know the why.” *“YES, DRILL SERGEANT!”*

Unlike the way it works at boot camp with drill sergeants barking out orders which are to be mindlessly obeyed, our God often chooses to explain why we should obey Him. He is not obligated to explain anything to us. We have no right to demand an explanation from our Creator. But the fact is that our God often gives us the why anyway. He gives us reasons to follow His commands. He lays out the benefits of obedience. And He briefly does so in this letter in 1:1-4 before the command comes in 1:5, and He does so further in 1:8-11 after the command is given. It’s similar to what we find in Romans 12:1-2.

So, why should we care about this and go after this? What would motivate us to get serious about adding these 7 things to our faith in Jesus? What would push us to pursue these things in our everyday lives?

Here are just some of the reasons why from this letter and from others in the New Testament:

God has made big investments to bring us to himself and to change us. He has been extremely generous to us. He gave us His only begotten Son who then sacrificed himself for us. There is nothing cheapskate or half-hearted about Jesus’ death on the cross in our place for our sins.

Furthermore, He sent us His Spirit. He has chosen to give us the gift of genuine faith in Jesus (1:1). He has “called us to his own glory and excellence” (1:3). He “has granted to us his precious and very great promises” (1:4). He has provided us with power. He has supplied us with the Scriptures. He has fully outfitted us to fully become all that we ought to be.

We stand secure by faith alone in Jesus alone. We have been saved from sin’s just penalty by God’s great, lavish, shocking kindness through simple, genuine faith in Jesus Christ. Being forgiven of our sin, being declared righteous by God, receiving eternal life, being included in God’s spiritual family—none of these awesome changes are of our own doing. We did nothing to deserve or earn any of these blessings. We couldn’t and didn’t work for any of it. It’s God’s sheer grace. It is all the gift of God. See Romans 3:19-26 and Ephesians 2:8-10.

God has put us on His team. He has committed himself to us. We are protected from His wrath. We are safe in His love. We have His favor now. He will never kick us out of His family. He will never drop us from His team. He won’t give up on us or stop loving us. This is the truth.

That’s not all the whys, but that should be motivation enough for us to gratefully, eagerly respond to whatever He has called us to do. In this case, it is putting in maximum effort to add these 7 things to our faith.

You know, sometimes automobile manufacturing plants stop making automobiles. The factory basically shuts down. The assembly line doesn’t assemble anything. Cars stop being built. And it’s not because they ran out of steel or parts or paint. It’s because the employees who work there decided to go on strike instead of going to work.

And these 7 things won’t show up in our lives if we don’t “show up for work.” These 7 things won’t assemble themselves. We must exert effort with the energy that God supplies.

Could God make us godly without our personal, practical involvement? He could. He can do anything He chooses to do. But God has chosen **not** to sanctify us **without** us being involved in the process. So, if we do not cooperate and participate, it won't happen. Yes, God is **capable** of making these changes in our lives without our **cooperation**, but He has chosen not to. So, let's look at this list.

**"Virtue"** means moral excellence which reflects God's moral excellence. We are called to live in the way that displays His praiseworthiness (see 1 Peter 2:9-12). **"Knowledge"** may have to do with insight and understanding that we gain from studying the Scriptures with the help of the Holy Spirit. **"Self-control"** has to do with not being ruled by our passions, not giving ourselves over to greed and lust. This is in contrast to those described in 2:14. This self-mastery is specifically made by possible the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23). **"Steadfastness"** is the patient endurance/perseverance that is also found in James 1:3. It's not crumbling or quitting when adversity hits. It's not giving up or giving in while under the pressure of trials or temptations. **"Godliness"** is being rightly oriented toward God. It is a constant and proper recognition of God that affects our actions and our responses. **"Brotherly affection"** is a sincere, warm affection and concern for other believers in Jesus that turns into practical help when needs come up that we can and should meet. It is an affection that is heard when we speak to and when we speak about our brothers and sisters in Christ. See also 1 Peter 1:22. **"Love"** is seeking the good of others even when it's not easy or convenient for us. It often involves denying ourselves in some way and making a sacrifice of some sort.

This list (like other lists in the NT) is not exhaustive, but it is especially relevant given the danger that both the original recipients and we ourselves face. We live in the same kind of wicked world with the same sinful desires, and we face the same kind of external threat from the same kinds of folks that Peter gets to in chapter 2.

This is a beautiful list. Our faith in Jesus should be accompanied by all 7 things. Let's get to work at adding them to our faith!

All Scripture quotations taken from the ESV.

## What Goes Along with Faith

2 Peter 1:5-7

You know, as life goes on, there are some people whom we don't end up seeing for years at a time. They might be our distant relatives, some old neighbors, friends we had back in HS, or maybe some former coworkers. When we do finally see them again, they may say something like, "Oh, wow. I can't believe it! You haven't changed a bit! You are just the way I remember you!"

And that's **encouraging** if they are talking about our **physical** condition. If they are saying that we don't **look** older even though we **are** older, then we take that as a compliment!

But as someone else has pointed out, we **don't** want the same to be said of us when it comes to our **spiritual** condition. We should not be in the same spiritual condition that we were in five years ago. If there's not much observable evidence that we have changed to be more like Jesus Christ, that's not good. If we haven't matured spiritually and grown in godliness, that's a problem.

Some families keep track of the physical growth of their kids using growth chart rulers. The growth chart ruler hangs on a wall, and each birthday they mark the progress that the child has made. Some years it may be two inches of growth. Other years it may be more. But growth is expected. And if there is no or little growth, then parents get nervous. It's concerning when a child does not grow. We want to see our children grow and thrive.

And the NT calls us to think about our **spiritual** growth similarly. If a person has genuine faith in Jesus and has been born again (brought to life spiritually) by God, then there should be authentic growth in godliness. If a sinner really has been justified, then he or she should be making progress in the process of being sanctified. Therefore, those who know us should see that we are changing. They should see things showing up in our lives that weren't there before, or they should see those things showing up in our lives in greater ways.