

KEYS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH
ADD TEMPERANCE TO KNOWLEDGE
2 PETER 1:5-7

Introduction

In order for us, as **BELIEVERS**, to become effective for the **LORD** we must **GROW** or **MATURE SPIRITUALLY** in our **CHRISTIAN WALK!**

Our points of emphasis thus far have been:

- 1) Making Sure We Have A **FIRM FOUNDATION OF FAITH IN CHRIST TO BUILD ON!**
 - a. God's Divine Power Has Given Us All That We Need To Mature. (*Vs 3*)
 - b. God's Promises Tell Us That Maturity Is Possible. (*Vs 4*)
 - c. God's Nature Within Us Makes Maturity Possible. (*Vs 4*)
- 2) We Must **PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE** In **ADDING TO OUR FAITH!** (*Vs 5*) It is not something that just happens!
- 3) We Must First **ADD VIRTUE TO OUR FAITH—We saw that VIRTUE is THE DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT!** (*Vs 5*)
- 4) Next We Saw That We Must **ADD TO VIRTUE KNOWLEDGE—THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS RIGHT!** (*Vs 5*)
God's Word Teaches Us What Is Right— Doctrine!

And today we are going to see the third thing that we must **ADD:**
WE MUST ADD TEMPERANCE TO THAT KNOWLEDGE. (*Vs. 6*)

The word translated "*TEMPERANCE*" refers to *having self-control, self-restraint, or self-discipline in our lives.*

So, what does **TEMPERANCE** have to do with us **ADDING TO OUR FAITH?** Note the progression...**PETER** builds on the previous ideas.

VIRTUE is the DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT!
KNOWLEDGE is KNOWING WHAT IS RIGHT!

The problem is, that a **DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT**, and then **KNOWING WHAT IS RIGHT** are insufficient of themselves as we **ADD TO OUR FAITH!**

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We need **TEMPERANCE!** We need **THE SELF-DISCIPLINE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT!** That is, we need to have our **FLESHLY DESIRES** and **OUR PASSIONS UNDER CONTROL!**

So first, let's understand that **there is a matter of TEMPERANCE that relates to our SALVATION experience!** (*e.g. Acts 24:25—FELIX didn't have the SELF-DISCIPLINE to DO what he KNEW was RIGHT...that is TO TURN FROM HIS SIN and TO THE SAVIOUR!*)

SALVATION is a matter of FAITH—i.e. BELIEVING GOD and the TESTIMONY of what HE has given us—IN OUR CONSCIENCE, IN CREATION, IN CHRIST, IN THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE!

SALVATION is a matter of VIRTUE—A DESIRE TO DO THE RIGHT THING!

SALVATION is a matter of KNOWLEDGE—COMING TO KNOW THE GOSPEL AND WHAT ONE NEEDS TO DO WITH IT! KNOWING THAT ONE MUST REPENT AND TRUST CHRIST!

SALVATION is a matter of TEMPERANCE—DOING WHAT ONE KNOWS THEY NEED TO DO! (REPENT OF SIN and TRUST CHRIST ALONE FOR SALVATION!)

Let me illustrate this matter of TEMPERANCE:

Let's say for instance that I want to lose a few pounds—which I really **DO** have the **DESIRE TO DO.** (I would like to lose about 25-30 lbs. That's not the problem.)

I may even **KNOW** that in order to accomplish losing weight, I must do certain things—Things such as **EXERCISE** and **WATCH WHAT I EAT** (The dreaded **DIET!**—a 4-letter word I don't like!)

But the **DESIRE** to lose weight, and the **KNOWLEDGE** of how to lose weight **WILL NOT** make me lose any weight!

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In fact, I could read **ANY AND EVERY BOOK** on the subject of losing weight and that might give me **KNOWLEDGE** of how to lose weight, but that **KNOWLEDGE** is **NOT** going to get the job done alone! Is it?

What I'm going to **HAVE TO HAVE** is the **SELF-DISCIPLINE (TEMPERANCE)** to actually **DO WHAT IS NEEDED TO LOSE THE WEIGHT— BOTH THE EXERCISE AND DIET TAKE SELF-DISCIPLINE!** And they both go against my **FLESHLY DESIRES!** (e.g.)
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Well, guess what else goes against our **FLESHLY DESIRES? LIVING A LIFE THAT IS PLEASING TO THE LORD!** Even though we are **SAVED** and on our way to **HEAVEN**, we all still have to deal with our **FLESH!**

That is why this matter of **ADDING TO OUR FAITH** or **GROWING SPIRITUALLY**, requires **TEMPERANCE** or **SELF-DISCIPLINE** as well as **KNOWLEDGE!**

Our FAITH WILL NOT GROW in an **ENVIRONMENT OF US LIVING OUR LIVES ACCORDING TO THE PASSIONS OF OUR FLESH!**

When we DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, then we **COME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS RIGHT**, then we **MUST HAVE THE SELF-DISCIPLINE (TEMPERANCE) TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT!**

Look at *1 Corinthians 9:24-27* (e.g. *An Olympic athlete!*)

GROWTH happens only when we **DIE TO SELF** and **WHAT IT WANTS TO DO**, and **SUBMIT OUR WILL TO THE WILL OF GOD!** *James 1:22* commands us, "*But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*"

So how can we build the "**TEMPERANCE**" (**SELF-DISCIPLINE, SELF-CONTROL**) into our **SPIRITUAL LIVES?**

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2 PETER 1:5-7**

Understand that **TEMPERANCE** is a **FRUIT** of the **HOLY SPIRIT** and as we **WALK IN THE SPIRIT HE** will manifest it in our life so that we don't fulfill **THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH!** (*Galatians 5:16-25*)

I. TEMPERANCE REQUIRES A CERTAIN FOCUS!

e.g. *Ted Williams was one of the greatest hitters of all time. In fact, he was the last baseball player to end the season as a .400 hitter.*

*What made Ted Williams a great hitter? Some said he had **great eyesight!** Others said it was **great eye-hand coordination?** But when he was asked, he said that **it was his ability to block out all distractions and concentrate on the pitched ball.***

One time while taking batting practice at Fenway Park in Boston, some of his teammates wanted to put his concentration to the test.

*As a pitch was thrown, several of them threw lit firecrackers at his feet. As the story goes he didn't flinch a bit as he hit the ball. He...was... **focused!***

CONSISTENT OBEDIENCE to the **LORD REQUIRES** that we **NOT** allow **DISTRACTIONS** to keep us from doing what we **KNOW** we are to do!

Many of the **BASICS** of **CHRISTIAN LIVING** require that we **FOCUS** on the things the **BIBLE** tells us we are to do.

For instance....

BIBLE STUDY, PRAYER, CHURCH ATTENDANCE, GIVING, WITNESSING...

These are just a few things in the **CHRISTIAN LIFE** that require **INTENTIONAL OBEDIENCE**. There are a lot of things that will try to **DISTRACT** us from **OBEYING THE LORD** too!

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We can get wrapped up in **OUR SCHEDULES** or **OUR CIRCUMSTANCES**, and sometimes we allow **OUR PRIORITIES** to get out of wack. And then what happens is that we **LOSE THE FOCUS** that we need to **LIVE FOR JESUS!**

So, to build **TEMPERANCE** or **SELF-CONTROL** in our lives it **REQUIRES A CERTAIN FOCUS** on the right things!

II. TEMPERANCE REQUIRES A CERTAIN FORGETFULNESS!

If we are going to **LIVE CONSISTENTLY OBEDIENT LIVES**, then we must have some **SELECTIVE** and **DISCIPLINED FORGETFULNESS!** For example...

A. We Need To Forget Our Failures.

PETER had some **FAILURES** in his life just as we all do. He was quick to allow his mouth to engage before his brain! *“Open mouth, insert foot, Peter!”*

No doubt his most obvious **FAILURE** was his **DENIAL** of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** shortly after **CHRIST’S** arrest.

After denying the **LORD**, and even after having already seen the **RISEN SAVIOUR** twice, **JOHN** records in *John 21* that **PETER** decided to go fishing and seven of the other disciples decided to join him. *(BTW...they caught nothing! That was reminiscent of the fishing trip just prior to PETER’S call recorded in Luke 5! That flashback probably didn’t help his self-esteem any!)*

JOHN wrote that they were coming back to the shore in the ship and **JESUS** was standing on the shore but none of these **DISCIPLES** recognized him immediately.

JESUS asked if they had any meat, and they answered *“No.”*

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2 PETER 1:5-7**

(Can you sense the feelings of **FAILURE** welling up in **PETER** once again?) **JESUS** told them to cast their net on the right side of the ship and they would find fish. They obeyed by doing as **JESUS** said and caught 153 fish!

PETER most likely had in mind that he was a wash out when it came to the ministry and then he couldn’t even do what he knew how to do! However, **JESUS** expressed **HIS** desire for **PETER** to be **RESTORED** to **SERVICE!**

But it took the **SAVIOUR** telling him three times before **PETER** got it!

One of SATAN’S STRATEGIES is to get us to **WALLOW IN OUR DEFEAT AND FAILURE!**

Don’t misunderstand me. I am not minimizing our **SINS**. **When we SIN we need to deal with our SINS Biblically.**

JOHN RECORDS in *1 John 1:9* that if we will **CONFESS OUR SINS**, **GOD** is **FAITHFUL** and **JUST** to **FORGIVE US OUR SINS** and to **CLEANSE US** from **ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS!**

If we have **CONFESSED OUR SINS** the **BIBLE** says that **GOD HAS FORGIVEN** us and will remember them against us no more! **So, we need to put our FAILURES behind us and MOVE ON FORWARD** for the **LORD!**

If we can **LEARN** and **GROW** from **PAST FAILURES** then an occasional **LOOK BACK** may be helpful, but when we **FOCUS ON THE PAST**, we can become **FILLED WITH DESPAIR AND DEFEAT!**

It takes DISCIPLINE to FORGET OUR FAILURES!

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B. We Need To Forget Our Successes.

That may have been what got **PETER** in trouble to begin with. **PETER** was the **DISCIPLE** that had walked on the water. Also, **PETER** had rightly identified **JESUS** as **THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD**, when **JESUS** inquired as to who others believed **HIM** to be.

PETER was a **LEADER**. He was both the **MOUTH** and **EAR** of the **DISCIPLES**. **PETER**, in spite of his **FAILURES** also had some **SUCCESSSES**.

The night of **JESUS**' arrest, **HE WARNED HIS DISCIPLES** that they would all be offended because of **HIM**. Remember **PETER'S RESPONSE?**

Matthew 26:33-35—“...Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.”

PETER fell into the **SUCCESS TRAP!** **SUCCESS** should make us **GRATEFUL**, but often it makes us **PROUD and VULNERABLE TO DEFEAT!**

So we need to understand that **TEMPERANCE** requires that we have a **certain FOCUS** and it requires that we have a **certain FORGETFULNESS—FAILURES+SUCCESSSES**.

III. TEMPERANCE REQUIRES A CERTAIN FOLLOWING!

Of course we are to be **FOLLOWING JESUS!**

PETER again illustrates our point for us. (*John 21:14-22*)

A. We Are To FOLLOW JESUS Regardless Of The Circumstances.

From this point forward that is exactly what **PETER** did!

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B. We Are To FOLLOW JESUS Regardless Of The Consequences.

We read part of **PETER'S** story that's recorded in the **BOOK OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**.

PETER answered the challenge and let the **LORD** use him greatly. Just in the first few chapters of the **ACTS** we have a record of **PETER'S PREACHING** being used to bring thousands into the **KINGDOM OF GOD!**

We know also that the **LORD'S PROPHECY** of **PETER'S** death did come true. He eventually surrendered his very life for the **CAUSE OF CHRIST!** He too was crucified!

Conclusion

Let's draw this to a close...let me ask...

If you are a BELIEVER, are you GROWING in your CHRISTIAN WALK like you should be? If not, maybe its because you're **NOT FOCUSED on SPIRITUAL THINGS as you should be.**

Others of you may be hindered **because of being tripped up by some PAST FAILURE or slowed by some PAST SUCCESS!** Or perhaps your problem may be that you have just **stopped FOLLOWING JESUS as closely as you should.** Your **SPIRITUAL LIFE** will **SUFFER if you go your own way instead of the LORD'S WAY.**

Why not **DECIDE TO ADD TEMPERANCE TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE!** Develop a *“Just Do It!”* attitude in your **CHRISTIAN WALK!** **WALK IN THE SPIRIT WHO** will bear the **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, including TEMPERANCE into your life!**

Now make sure that you first have that taken that step **FAITH in CHRIST—That's FOUNDATIONAL!** You can't **ADD** anything or **GROW SPIRITUALLY** if you haven't!