

EXPOSITION OF II PETER

Message #4

II Peter 1:5-11

As probably most of you know, a few weeks ago we had a fire in our attic. The Schoolcraft Fire Department was outstanding and they put it out with minimal damage to our home. Someone heard about it and was having a hard time with some negative things that had hit them and said, “What are we doing wrong so God would permit these things to happen?” My response was, if this were based on what we had done wrong, God would have burned our whole house down and us along with it. We are all sinners who have all fallen short of God’s glory and none of us deserves God’s grace. But by grace He has saved us and by grace he gives us time to develop.

We are living in a lust-filled world of sensuality and greed. It is all around us and there is a part to every one of us that is drawn to this world. It tugs at us in one way or another. By virtue of the fact that God has called us to salvation, we are guaranteed that one day we will escape the corruption that is in this lustful world (1:4). But as we wait for God to deliver us, He wants us developing the kind of character He can use.

One of the saddest things you will ever see in evangelical churches is people who are totally satisfied with their level of spirituality. No believer should ever be satisfied with his or her spiritual character. If you are satisfied you are delusional. This Christian life is a struggle, and as this world gets darker and darker the struggle becomes more intense. Every one of us should be looking at our own lives, analyzing them, and making adjustments.

The Apostle Peter was a real flesh and blood man. He knew what flesh struggles were in a lustful world and he learned the secret to victory. It is clear when we come to this text that Peter says, in this evil world we do not want to be stagnant; we want to add godly things to our character. What he writes in these verses is this:

IN A LUSTFUL GREEDY WORLD WE NEED TO DEVELOP THE TYPE OF GODLY CHARACTER THAT REFLECTS OUR CALLING AND WILL MAKE US FRUITFUL ON EARTH AND GIVES US AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN.

I want us to notice how **verse 5** begins, “now for this very reason.” Because we have been given a divine nature that has the ability to escape the corruption of this lust-filled world, we need to go to work on developing this godly character. We need to develop certain virtues.

There are a series of qualities that are necessary for this kind of conclusion. There is a stepladder of virtues that God wants His people to have in this sensual world that will make a statement for God.

PART #1 – The step ladder of the qualities we must add to our character in a lustful world.
1:5-7

This is one of the longest and most extensive lists of virtues in the entire Bible. The verb “apply” (*επιχορηγησατε*) is an aorist imperative.

What this means is that this is a command that we are to obey starting at one point of time. **The word means to supply and provide something** (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 177). The assumption is that this is not an automatic development. J. H. Jowett said we are not to close our eyes and expect God to carry us like dead or blind logs (*The Epistles of Peter*, p. 228).

As a believer we need to go to work on developing these qualities in our own lives. Peter presents a chain-link of eight qualities that God wants developed in our lives. God expects us to honestly evaluate ourselves and say, “I lack that and I need to work on that.” Some may require more effort than others. We may be strong in some areas and weak in others.

Quality #1 - In a lustful world we need to apply diligence. **1:5a**

The word “diligence” (*σπουδῆ*), which shows up here and again in **verse 10**, is one that refers to have an earnest, diligent, eager zeal that pursues something with great speed (*Ibid.*, p. 415). Now the noun is qualified by the adjective “all.”

What I understand Peter to be saying is in everything we do as a believer, we should diligently, earnestly, and eagerly pursue it. There should be intensity to what we do. On our job, in our work, at our play, in our church we should be diligent people. A diligent, disciplined person makes a statement for God in an undisciplined, lustful world. People given over to sensuality are typically not diligent people.

Quality #2 - In a lustful world we need to supply moral excellence to our faith. **1:5b**

There are four things to point out here.

First, the fact that the challenge is to supply something to our faith assumes the person has faith. In other words, the Apostle Peter is challenging people who have believed on Jesus Christ to supply these things. The ladder of qualities ascends up in a specific order. After starting with faith, we start the process of moving up toward the same type of faith and apostolic godliness Peter had.

Second, the participle “supply” (*παρεισφερω*) is one that means to bring in and supply or add to something (*Ibid.*, p. 344). So once one has faith, he has the responsibility to add to it these virtues. Every addition we make will affect the totality of our character.

Third, every one of these qualities or virtues has an article which is repeated twice with the noun (i.e. “in **the** faith supply **the** moral excellence”); so Peter is referring to specific qualities that are godly and Biblical.

Fourth, each quality is prefaced by the preposition “in” (*ἐν*) which has a root meaning “within” (Dana & Mantey, p. 105). So these qualities need to be developed within us. We all need to work on ourselves as we move through this world.

The first one listed is moral excellence (ἀρετή). The word emphasizes what is morally virtuous (Smith, p. 59). As a believer we should supply moral excellence to everything we do.

This word was used of God in **verse 3**, so we are to pursue developing a morality that reflects the character of God. This is not just an absence of bad habits but a “vigorous pursuit” of what is Biblically moral. By virtue of the fact that we are to “add” this, means it requires effort.

As Christians we all need to add moral excellence to our character. If you are a businessman, moral excellence should characterize you. If you are a doctor or lawyer, moral excellence should characterize you. If you are a student or a housewife or a retired man or woman, moral excellence should characterize you. Moral excellence should characterize every believer. As we journey through this world, we need to make assessments to pursue moral excellence.

One way we reflect the glory of God is by demonstrating moral excellence in a morally corrupt world. It is a great quality.

Quality #3 - In a lustful world we need to supply knowledge in our moral excellence. **1:5c**

The word “knowledge” means God wants us growing in knowledge of the Word of God in a very discerning and discriminate way. God does not want us shallow or simple when it comes to His Word. It is impossible to develop this kind of character described here without the Scriptures. Focusing on God’s Word is the best way to transform our character.

Look, the only thing that can renew our minds and start the transformation process is the Word of God. We have a flesh nature and we live in a world that tugs at our flesh, and the only way to transform our hearts and minds is by the Word of God.

Quality #4 - In a lustful world we need to supply self - control in our knowledge. **1:6a**

The word “self-control” (εγκρατείαν) is one that refers to having mastery and control of self (Smith, p. 128). We could call this powerful self-mastery. When we are self-disciplined and self-controlled, we make a powerful statement for God to a lustful world that is getting more and more out of control.

Self-control is just the opposite of self-excess. Here is a big problem with a lustful, greedy world; people cannot control themselves and are consumed by their fleshly ambitions and lusts.

Quality #5 - In a lustful world we need to supply perseverance to our self-control. **1:6b**

What this means is we need to be self-controlled over a period of time. We need to stay focused on developing these virtues over time no matter what we face. We need a patient endurance. As we move up the ladder of virtues, we begin to persevere in our faith and in these qualities over time; day after day, month after month, year after year. By doing this, we make a great statement to a lustful world. Persevering will not be easy. There may be some moments of failure, but those moments should be spread out and less and less over time.

Quality #6 - In a lustful world we need to supply godliness to our perseverance. **1:6c**

The word “godliness” (*εὐσέβειαν*) means God wants us manifesting a godly reverence and devout piety when it comes to Him and worship (Smith, p. 189). The more our character is ascending up the ladder of virtues, the more reverent we will be in our attitude toward God and toward worship.

Quality #7 - In a lustful world we need to supply brotherly kindness to our godliness. **1:7a**

As you know, there are different words used for love in the New Testament and two of them are used in these next two virtues. The world knows “lust love” or “sensual love” (*ερος*). It knows very little about the kind of love we are to have toward one another.

We need to be reverent and pious, but we also need to be friendly and loving. We need to treat each other with a family-type of kindness and love. The word “brotherly kindness” (*φιλαδελφια*) means we need to have a mutual, family-type of love for each other as brothers and sisters in Christ (Smith, p.469). We need to cultivate good personal relationships. This word means we cannot be an isolated believer and finish a champion. Being a “loner” outside of church will not bring an abundant entrance into heaven.

Quality #8 - In a lustful world we need to supply love to our brotherly kindness. **1:7b**

As we move up the ladder we go from brotherly love to God’s kind of love. This is not the normal type of love.

One of the best descriptions of the difference between brotherly love (*φιλαδελφια*) and God’s love (*αγαπη*) is that “brotherly love is give-and-take” and God’s love is all give. Brotherly love is a friendship and love based on mutual likes and dislikes. God’s love is the highest kind of love that chooses to do what is best for the object regardless of any good in the object. God did not love us because we had mutual interests. He did not love us because He saw something in us He liked. Truth is He loved us in spite of what He saw in us. That is the highest kind of love.

A few weeks ago someone wanted to meet with me that I had no interest in meeting with at all. The person is a miserable example of a believer and is one of the most depressing people I have ever seen. I don’t like to be around depressing people who have nothing positive to say. My first reaction was, I don’t want to meet with this person, but then I thought of this quality right here. I am to love like God loved. So going against how I felt, I met with the person. I don’t know if the person felt better after the meeting, but I did because I had applied a Biblical principle of love.

When the believer climbs up the ladder of virtues to this level of love, he has reached the top.

PART #2 – The results of adding these qualities to our character in a lust-crazed world.
1:8-11

Notice that **verse 8** begins with a little conjunction “for” (*yap*), which gives explanations or reasons why our Christian lives need to progress with these qualities. If these qualities exist and are growing and increasing in our lives, there are **six results**:

Result #1 - We will not be useless. 1:8a

The word “useless” (*αργος*) is one that means inactive, idle, ineffective, and worthless (Smith, p. 57). The assumption of this word is that it is possible to be a worthless, ineffective Christian on this earth. If we are not blossoming in these virtues God views us as ineffective. As a believer we can be an effective instrument in the hand of God and God can use us to accomplish some wonderful things, or we can be ineffective and be used for nothing.

Result #2 - We will not be unfruitful. 1:8b

The assumption is if we are developing these qualities in our lives, God will use us to produce fruit. We will bear fruit. We will not be unproductive.

Now the idea of being useful and fruitful is in deep knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Don’t miss this point. In other words, the purpose of us developing a godly character is not so much so we may have some quality ministry usability, although that will happen, it is so that we may have a Christlike character. Jesus Christ manifested the very virtues just mentioned by Peter and as those virtues are developed in us, we will be effective and fruitful in a character that is like Jesus Christ.

Result #3 - We will not live like one who forgot we have been saved from our sins. 1:9

There are some believers who are useless and unfruitful, and you would never know they have been saved from their sins because they live a lustful, depraved life in sin. They live their lives almost forgetting the fact that they have been justified. Believers who lack these qualities are blind; that is he has his eyes shut to what God wants.

There will be moments in all of our lives when the flesh will get the better of us. When that happens we need to immediately go to God and confess it. We need to remember, not forget, that God has saved us from our sins and wants us coming to Him when we do sin.

Result #4 - We will make certain our calling and election. 1:10a

The verb “make” is middle voice, which means we have the responsibility in and of ourselves to make our calling and election certain. When we demonstrate these qualities in our lives, we show that God has called us and elected us.

In a lustful world God wants us manifesting the fact that we have been called and elected by Him.

Both of these terms “calling” and “election” mean God sovereignly called us and God sovereignly elected us. God wants us displaying the effects of our election.

Notice the chronology of Peter, calling first and election second. The reason why is because we have been elected in eternity past from before the foundation of the world, but we don’t know it until God calls us to salvation. We come to know we have been elected after we have been called.

Now how do we make our calling and election certain? By developing in the virtues he just mentioned. When we strive to implement these qualities into our lives in a lustful, greedy world, we become a firm and certain statement that we have been called and elected by God.

At one time Peter lived after the flesh, but as he pursued the implementation of these virtues in his own life, he became certain of his calling and election.

Result #5 - We will not stumble. **1:10b**

The believer, who is working on his or her life to implement these qualities, will discover he will not trip up or stumble in his relationship with God. He will maintain fellowship with God all the way through life. The Greek means you will in no way trip up in your Christlike character as long as you are working on applying these qualities.

Result #6 - We will have an abundant entrance into heaven. **1:11**

There are two ways one may enter heaven, by the skin of one’s teeth and by an abundant entrance. The actual outworking of this abundant entrance will be when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth.

You must wonder if Peter ever went back to the spot where he had betrayed the Lord. You must wonder if he ever walked past the palace of the high priest and had tears roll down from his eyes. We don’t know. But what we do know is that he went to work on a transformed character and God used him greatly.

You and I need to go to work on developing that same character, and if we do we will be used greatly by God too.