

## Growing in Virtues

### 1 Growing in Christian virtues

2 PETER 1:5-9

### 2 2 Peter 1:5-9 (KJV)

*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (2 Peter 1:5-9, KJV 1900)*

### 3 2 Peter 1:5-9 (LEB)

*And for this same reason, and by applying all diligence, supply with your faith excellence of character, and with excellence of character, knowledge, and with knowledge, self-control, and with self-control, patient endurance, and with patient endurance, godliness, and with godliness, brotherly love, and with brotherly love, love. For if these things are yours and are increasing, this does not make you useless or unproductive in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the one for whom these things are not present is blind, being nearsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his former sins. (2 Peter 1:5-9, LEB)*

### 4 Adding harmony to the melody

- ▶ Faith is the melody of our spiritual life
- ▶ Now Peter leads believer to add the harmony of seven Christian virtues which he lists without explanation or description.
- ▶ Remember that Peter says it is because we have received the exceeding great and precious promises of Christ that we are to make EVERY EFFORT to secure a RICH SUPPLY of spiritual virtues.

### 5 Add virtue

### 6 1 Corinthians 8:1

- ▶ Now concerning food sacrificed to idols, we know that "we all have knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. (1 Corinthians 8:1, LEB)
- ▶ You must have virtue before knowledge or knowledge makes you arrogant.
  - ▶ As people increase in academic learning or intellectual pursuits, it is easy for them to trust their intellect rather than the Word of God and accept human tradition instead of biblical revelation.

### 7 Add knowledge

### 8 What kind of knowledge?

- ▶ *Γνώσει* (*gnosei* in the New Testament) comes not from intellectual pursuits, but is spiritual knowledge which comes through the Holy Spirit and is focused on the person and Word of God.
- ▶ Spiritual knowledge always superior to academic knowledge or the philosophies of men.
- ▶ *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.* (2 Peter 3:18, LEB)
- ▶ The *γνώσει* that we need is based on understanding Jesus.

### 9 Good advice for all

- ▶ If you have never done it, spend 1 year reading only Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in your Bible reading time

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- Read it so often that you can start "seeing" Jesus and what he did
- J.Sidlow Baxter said that this was getting to know Christ photographically in the Gospels
  - Later you can get to know Christ interpretively in the epistles
  - All along, you should get to know Christ experientially in prayer

10  **A lack of self-control = ignorance**

- As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former desires you used to conform to in your ignorance, (1 Peter 1:14, LEB)
- The "former desires" were the lusts to which Peter's readers once were slaves. Their lack of self-control left them in a state of ignorance.
- Now they are obedient children so Peter warns them to practice self-control and never again be conformed to those fleshly desires again.

11  **Add self-control (temperance)**12  **Add patient perseverance**

- Peter's readers are about to endure persecution. To make wise decisions during trying times, they need self-control in order to persevere.
- This word *hypomenēn* means "staying under." It is frequently used in the New Testament to refer to constancy or steadfast endurance under adversity, without giving in or giving up.
- *but commanding ourselves as servants of God in every way, in much endurance, in afflictions, in distresses, in difficulties,* (2 Corinthians 6:4, LEB)
  - Our perseverance through persecution is a valid credential of our relationship with Christ.
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13  **Unswerving constancy**

- Patient endurance (*ὑπομονὴ*) = unswerving constancy
  - Not just a standing fast against evil
  - It is persevering to pursue the goal of God's will in our lives in spite of our opposition.
- *And not only this, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces patient endurance, and patient endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope,* (Romans 5:3–4, LEB)
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14  **1 Thessalonians 1:3-4**

- *Because we remember your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, knowing, brothers dearly loved by God, that he has chosen you,* (1 Thessalonians 1:3–4, LEB)
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15  **James 1:3-4**

- *Because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.* (James 1:3–4, LEB)
  - Testing – *δοκίμιον* = sterling coinage; silver with dross removed by fire
  - Results in endurance = unswerving constancy
  - That produces maturity and usefulness to the Kingdom of God
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16  **Romans 15:4-5**

*For whatever was written beforehand was written for our instruction, in order that through patient endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope. Now may the God of patient endurance and of encouragement grant you to be in agreement with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, (Romans 15:4–5, LEB)*

- We are to practice patient endurance because it is in the character of Christ

17  **False teachers (2 Peter 2:1-2)**

*► But there were also false prophets among the people, as there will be false teachers among you also, who will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, thus bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their licentious ways, because of whom the way of truth will be reviled. (2 Peter 2:1–2, LEB)*

- Came "among the people" – appeared to be "the good guys"
- They bring teachings that corrupt the grace that is all Christ and relies only on Him for salvation and all the blessings of the Spirit
- They destroy their own families
- They lead others from the true Gospel while gratifying their own egos or their own lusts.

18  **Some went astray (2 Peter 2:20-22)**

*For if, after they have escaped from the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and they are again entangled in these things and succumb to them, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment that had been delivered to them. The statement of the true proverb has happened to them, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and "A sow, after washing herself, returns to wallowing in the mud." (2 Peter 2:20–22, LEB)*

- They lacked spiritual knowledge
- They lacked unswerving constancy that kept them to the truth

19  **Add godliness**

- Godliness (*eusebian*, also used in 2 Peter 1:3 and 3:11 and 10 times [in the Gr.] in the Pastoral Epistles) refers to piety, man's obligation of reverence toward God.
- The fourth-century church historian Eusebius was named for this lovely Greek word.
- How unfortunate that the words "piety" and "pious" have fallen on hard times in current usage.
- *Because his divine power has bestowed on us all things that are necessary for life and godliness, through the knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence of character, (2 Peter 1:3, LEB)*

20  **The imperative stands on the indicative**21  **Add brotherly kindness**

- *Philadelphia* –
- The focus is on the love between fellow believers, on the family-like devotion that should characterize the Christian community.
- Peter used a word that is distinctive of the Christian community in the sense that all believers are brothers and sisters.
- *And finally, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, showing mutual affection, compassionate,*

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*humble, (1 Peter 3:8, LEB)*

### 22 We are commanded to love one another

- *Being devoted to one another in brotherly love, esteeming one another more highly in honor, (Romans 12:10, LEB)*
- *But concerning brotherly love, I do not have need to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another, (1 Thessalonians 4:9, LEB)*
- *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for sincere brotherly love, love one another fervently from the heart, (1 Peter 1:22, LEB)*
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### 23 A stark contrast with teachers of his day

*Being harmed as the wages of unrighteousness. Considering reveling in the daytime a pleasure, they are stains and blemishes, carousing in their deceitful pleasures when they feast together with you, having eyes full of desire for an adulteress and unceasing from sin, enticing unstable persons, and having hearts trained for greediness. Accursed children! (2 Peter 2:13–14, LEB)*

- False teachers characterized by selfishness, pursuit of fleshly pleasures, with an eye for covetousness and doing evil.
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### 24 Finish it off with love!

- ἀγάπην -- The opponents surely do not display such love (2:13–14, 17).
  - This love goes beyond mere love for the brethren
  - This love shows love for all people because it sees them as God sees them – sinners in need of a Savior
  - Concern for the lost and a desire to share Christ with them is the supreme evidence that one is a believer.

### 25 The goal of Christian instruction

- *But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a faith without hypocrisy, (1 Timothy 1:5, LEB)*
- *And to all these things add love, which is the bond of perfection. (Colossians 3:14, LEB)*
- Anyone who loves like this will also possess the other qualities Peter mentioned.
  - The false teachers are lacking in faith and love and hence are not genuine believers at all.
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### 26 Spiritual eye trouble

#### 27 Myopic Vision

- Focal point of eye is in front of the retina
- The person only see things clearly that are near to him

#### 28 Myopia (Spiritual)

- The person who is not growing in spiritual virtues only sees:
  - their own needs
  - their own problems
  - Their own desires
- They ignore others around them that need Christ's love

#### 29 Myopia (Spiritual)

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- Philippians 2:21 -- *For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.*
- 2 Peter 1:9 -- *But he that lacketh these things is blind (myopia), and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*

### 30 Spiritual growth results in Kingdom fruitfulness

- *For if these things are yours and are increasing, this does not make you useless or unproductive in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8, LEB)*
- You must POSSESS these qualities – these qualities must BELONG to you
- You must be INCREASING the measure of these qualities
- Grace and growth must go together
- Without growth, you are ineffective (idle, useless) and unproductive (unfruitful) in the full personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.
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### 31 Some Christians are not growing

- They lack growth and fruit in their lives
- *And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to fleshly people, as to infants in Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:1, LEB)*
- *For indeed, although you ought to be teachers by this time, you have need of someone to teach you again the beginning elements of the oracles of God, and you have need of milk, not solid food. For everyone who partakes of milk is unacquainted with the message of righteousness, because he is an infant. (Hebrews 5:12–13, LEB)*

### 32 Those who are not growing are missing out

- Believers who are not growing are myopic
- They live in their own little world and care only about their own needs and desires
- They can live their entire lives and not really count as a blessing to anyone else
- Are you ready to live in such a way as to make a difference?

### 33 Do You Have Spiritual Eye Trouble?

*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

### 34 Prayer & share

Who did you know that had spiritual fruit and influenced you to either receive Christ or to become more fully committed to Him?

### 35 Slides for next time

EYE TROUBLE CONTINUED

### 36 Hyperopia (Physical)

- Focal point is behind the retina
- Person is "far-sighted" only seeing clearly what is far away from them.

### 37 Hyperopia (Spiritual)

- A person with spiritual hyperopia sees many projects to do and many people to whom he can minister, but misses the needs of his own family or those closest to him

### 38 Hyperopia (Spiritual)

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►I Timothy 5:8 -- *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

►Matthew 7:3, 5 -- *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 5Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

39  **Strabismus (Physical)**40  **Strabismus (Spiritual)**41  **Strabismus (Spiritual)**

►James 1:8 -- *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

►Job 31:1 -- *I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*

►Proverbs 4:25 -- *Let thine eyes look right on and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.*

42  **Astigmatism (Physical)**

►Lumpy lens distorts image

43  **Astigmatism (Spiritual)**44  **Astigmatism (Spiritual)**

►We all suffer spiritual astigmatism because of our fallen nature.

►Adam and Eve's sight changed when they sinned (Genesis 3:7).

►1 Corinthians 13:12 – *"For now we see through a glass darkly. . . ."*

►The cure:

►James 1:25 – *Looking into the perfect law of liberty* (the Word brings true vision)

►Tears of true repentance -- *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.* (Psalm 51:17, LEB)

45  **Presbyopia (Physical)**46  **Presbyopia (Spiritual)**47  **Presbyopia (Spiritual)**

►Some Christians get off to a good beginning but become spiritually resistant to the Lord.

►They fail to obey instantly the promptings of God's Spirit.

►They fail to see biblical truth because they rely on their own intellect.

►Revelation 2:4 – They have lost their first love.

►1 John 3:17 – *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

48  **Cataracts (Physical)**49  **Cataracts (Spiritual)**50  **Cataracts (Spiritual)**

►When a Christian sets before his eyes the evil of the world, his spiritual vision becomes clouded and he will eventually be in darkness.

►For this reason David declared, "... I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes."