

BOOK OF 2 PETER
MATURING IN CHRIST
1ST ADDITION—“ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE”
2 PETER 1:1-10

Introduction

Someone has compared the Book of 2 Peter to a Spiritual pep talk. In a way that is a good comparison. Peter is writing to believers who are facing some very difficult circumstances. He wants to encourage them to **get up, stand up and move out** for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to be encouraged in the same manner. It takes every bit of diligence and effort a Christian can muster, along with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in order to properly mature in Christ.

We can't just sit idly by and expect the Lord to do it all. As we give all diligence, the Holy Spirit enables us to be all that we can be for Christ.

As we studied last week, Peter begins the challenge in verse 5 by saying that **we are to “give all diligence” in this task of adding to our faith these seven things.** *Diligence*—means **effort, it means work, it means being active in adding these seven things to our faith.**

Basically every Christian falls into one of three categories.

1. Some Christians Are Babes In Christ.

Now the Bible mentions two types of babes in Christ.

a. One type of babe is the person who has been recently born into the family of God.

A birth is usually a joyous occasion. We should rejoice over the birth of someone into the Family of God just as we rejoice over the physical birth of someone in our family or the family of folks we know.

There is nothing wrong with that kind of babe or baby.

In fact the new believer **should not be expected to be mature** but to be a babe in Christ.

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- 1. Babies Have To Be Fed With Milk Early On.**
They are not developed enough to be able to digest meat. *1 Peter 2:2—“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*
 - 2. Babies Are Not Born Knowing How To Walk Right, They Have To Be Taught.**
First they have to learn how to crawl and then learn how to walk.
 - 3. Babies Are Not Born Knowing How To Talk Right, They Have To Be Taught.**
 - 4. Babies Are Born Spitting Up.**
 - 5. Babies Are Born Messing Up.**
- b. Another type of babe is the person who has been born for some time, yet they still show forth the characteristics of a babe because of their lack of maturity.**
There comes a point where a baby **should grow up and quit acting like a baby.**

Have you ever told your child—“*Now quit acting like a baby*”?

Now understand that a person's development and growth as a believer may have been stunted for one of at least two reasons that I know of:

- 1. Some Christians have not been properly nurtured into maturity.**
(i.e. That is, they have not been disciplined.)

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2. **Some Christians have refused to grow up into maturity.
(i.e. They are carnal rather than spiritual.)
1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-13**

Some Christians Are Babes In Christ...

2. **Some Christians Are Backsliders From Christ.**

We don't like that word, but a "backslider" is one who has been saved and may have matured in Christ at one time to some extent, but for some reason they are not living as close to the Lord as they once were.

We usually don't stand still in our relationship to the Lord. We are either going forward or we are going backward.

When Billy Sunday (the professional baseball player who became an evangelist) was converted, a saintly man told him ... he said, "Billy, if you never want to backslide, you do three things every day. You read the Bible and let God speak to you through His Word fifteen minutes every day. You talk to Him in prayer fifteen minutes every day. And you spend fifteen minutes every day telling somebody about Jesus Christ." He said, "Billy, you'll never have backslider written after your name."

Billy Sunday said, "You know, I've been sliding into a lot of bases. I've been sliding into a lot of bases a long time. I don't plan to slide out of any."

3. **Some Christians Are Builders For Christ.**

They are diligently going about the business of adding to their faith.

I want to encourage you to be a builder.

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Here in our text Peter tells us how we are to be adding to our faith and what we are to add to our faith. Here we find seven things that we should add to our faith.

I want to focus on the first thing that we are told to be diligent in adding to our faith.

Look with me again at verse 5. Peter says that **we are to add to our faith....virtue!**

Again, **the foundation is faith**, faith in Jesus that results in our salvation. **Then with diligence we begin this process of adding to our faith. And we are to add to our faith...virtue.**

Now if we are going to do that, we must clearly understand what Peter is talking about when he speaks of *virtue*.

In defining virtue let me emphasize two things:

I. **VIRTUE IS AN ATTITUDE WE NEED TO HAVE!**

The attitude we approach things with certainly makes a difference in what we achieve doesn't it?

Virtue is an attitude we need to have.

The term "*virtue*" as used in this verse refers to **the courageous pursuit of moral excellence.**

The outward expression of "virtue" begins with an inner attitude or mind set that says, I want to do what is right.

If we never determine that we're going to do the right thing, chances are very great that we will never do the right thing but will do what comes natural—i.e. We will walk in the flesh!

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So Peter basically is saying we need to add to our faith **a desire, or the attitude to do what is right.**

Let me show you a biblical illustration of this attitude.

Turn with me to **Luke 19:1-10.**

Here we have the story of Zacchaeus. Let's walk thru this story together.

1) The Description of Zacchaeus. (vs 1-3)

He lived in Jericho, he made his living as a chief publican (what we would call a tax collector), he was rich and short of stature. Zacchaeus' only friends were likely other publicans. He was looked at as being a traitor to his own people because he was being used by the Roman government to oppress his own people with burdensome taxes.

2) The Desire of Zacchaeus. (Vs 3)

He wanted to see Jesus...who He was. He apparently had heard about this man named Jesus, and he wanted to size Him up for himself.

However, he had a problem. The crowd got in the way! But he didn't give up!

3) The Determination of Zacchaeus. (Vs 4)

He exerted himself just to see Jesus.

And then notice what it led to. It led to...

4) The Decision of Zacchaeus. (Vs 5-10)

Now don't miss this! The Old Zacchaeus was no more! He was a new man after he met Jesus!

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Verse 8 is really important. It tells us of the new attitude Zacchaeus had. He had a desire to make restitution for what he had stolen.

That is virtue! He had the desire to do the right thing!

And when he gave testimony of his intentions to Jesus, notice how Jesus responded in verse 9. Jesus confirmed the salvation of Zacchaeus.

Listen, **virtue is an attitude we must have if we are going to mature as Christians and be effective Servants of Jesus!**

VIRTUE IS AN ATTITUDE THAT WE MUST HAVE.

II. VIRTUE IS AN ACTION THAT WE MUST TAKE.

Inwardly, virtue is an attitude that we need. Outwardly, virtue is an action that we must take. Remember that "virtue" is the pursuit of moral excellence!

Inwardly, we desire to what is right. Outwardly, we demonstrate what is right. It is being holy in an unholy world.

A little girl was spending some time with her grandma, and while she was sitting on her lap she said, "Grandma, I love you so much. You're so pretty!"

The thin and wrinkled grandma laughed and said, "Honey, that's sweet of you to say, but I'm not pretty." The little girl responded, "Oh yes you are. You're pretty on the inside."

God wants you and me to be pretty on the inside. So pretty that it shows up on the outside.

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Listen you and I cannot grow spiritually if we play around with sin!
Sin always stops spiritual progress!

I heard a fable about a lamb. This lamb and its mother passed the pig pen every day on their way to the pasture. The lamb looked longingly at the pigs wallowing in the mire, and he asked his mother if he could go and play in the mud. His mother scolded him and reminded him that, "sheep don't wallow."

Oh but he wanted to play in the mud. It looked like so much fun. On hot days the mud looked so cool.

One day, as he and his mother were making their way to the pasture, he let his mother get ahead of him. He took off for the pig pen. he jumped over the fence and started playing in the mud. The cool mud felt good on that hot day. It felt good around his ankles, so he went in a little deeper. He got in up to his belly and was cooling down.

Wool and mud, however, don't mix well. It began to cake on his wool and eventually he realized he was stuck. He couldn't move, he couldn't get out. What he thought would bring him pleasure became his prison.

After crying for help, the farmer rescued him. His mother reminded him, "Sheep don't wallow!"

That's good counsel for Christian sheep too. Sheep don't wallow!
We must not wallow in the ways of the world! We must not play with sin!

Sin may look appealing, but remember where it leads!
It traps, it addicts, it enslaves, it destroys!

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Don't try to live life on the edge of sin! Get as far away from it as you can. Those who live life on the edge are in danger of a fall!

Oh dear believer, let's have a passion for virtue!

Conclusion

Verse 3 says that God has called us to glory and virtue.

1 Peter 2:9—the word “*praises*” is the same Greek word translated “*virtue*” in our text.

Virtue is moral excellence and is something that people know about us.
Ruth 3:11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. (Boaz to Ruth)

Proverbs 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

What do people know about you as they see you live the Christian life?
What do they see?

Do they see anything different? Do they see you going in a different direction? They should!