

Make Every Effort to Add to Your Faith (*Part 1*)

2 Peter 1:5-7

Thought for the Day: A true follower of Jesus Christ will make every effort, in cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit, to grow in Christlike character.

In 2 Peter 1:3-11 Peter explains to us the necessity of growing in Christlike character. Just as a physically healthy baby will grow and mature physically, so a spiritually healthy Christian will grow and mature spiritually. God has provided everything we need to live a holy, godly life. If we are not growing spiritually, it is cause for some serious introspection on our part concerning our relationship with the Lord. In verses 5-7, Peter gives us some specifics of what our growth should look like.

5 For this very reason...

Why should we be committed to growing in the Christian life?

- Because of God's power to us (vs. 3). God is committed to our spiritual growth and He's given us everything we need to grow.
- Because of God's precious and very great promises to us (vs.4). God has given us His Word, the Bible. In addition to the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, the Bible is the most important resource we have for spiritual growth.
- Because we are partakers of the divine nature through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 4). We have been born again into the family of God by the Spirit of God through faith in the Son of God. We have been given a new nature, the divine nature of God, and more and more, we are to live in accordance with that new nature.
- Because we have the power to overcome our sinful desires through faith in and obedience to the Word of God (vs. 4). As we grow and become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, we will increasingly "put off the old self, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24).

...make every effort...

- *NKJV*– giving all diligence.
 - Peter is exhorting us to make a conscious effort; to make a serious attempt; to give steady, earnest, and energetic effort; to give devoted and painstaking effort at growing in our Christian life.
 - "To give due diligence is to pay close attention to the matter at hand." (*Sproul, 1-2 Peter, p. 194*) It is to apply yourself as fully as possible.
- "In light of all of God's blessings, the Christian must be totally dedicated and make a maximum effort to live for God." (*MacArthur, 1 & 2 Peter, p. 71*)
 - Biblical Christianity is serious business; there is nothing casual, convenient, or comfortable about it!
 - It requires a radical commitment and an all-out effort to be a genuine follower of Jesus Christ! (Luke 9:23-24)

...to supplement (add to) your faith...

- This is the precious faith that is of equal standing with that of the Apostles (vs. 1).
- It is the faith in Jesus Christ for salvation which is a gift from God. (Eph. 2:8-9)

- This saving faith is the foundation of the Christian life. But, it is only the beginning! Saving faith, biblical faith, is also a growing faith.
 - If you are a child of God, God means for you to grow and develop in your Christian life. (1 Peter 2:2)
 - “Where there is life, there must be growth. The new birth is not the end; it is the beginning. God gives His children all that they need to live godly lives, but His children must apply themselves and be diligent to use the ‘means of grace’ He has provided. *Spiritual growth is not automatic.* It requires cooperation with God and the application of spiritual diligence and discipline.” (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, p. 23*)

...with virtue... (moral excellence; goodness)

- “When anything in nature fulfills its purpose, that is ‘virtue—moral excellence.’ . . .The land that produces crops is ‘excellent’ because it is fulfilling its purpose. The tool that works correctly is ‘excellent’ because it is doing what a tool is supposed to do.” (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, p. 24*)
- We add virtue to our faith when we begin fulfilling the purposes for which God created us. Why did God create us? What is our purpose in life?
 - Our Church Mission Statement: Our church exists to Glorify God and Advance His Kingdom. That is the purpose of our church, but it is also God’s purpose for your life!
 - How do we fulfill our Mission? By pursuing the three Spiritual Priorities of the Christian life:
 - a. To know and love the Lord by pursuing intimate fellowship with Him.
 - b. To grow and become like the Lord by cultivating Christlike character and conduct.
 - c. To go and show the Lord to others through faithful and fruitful service.

...and virtue with knowledge...

- Genuine faith will cause us to pursue virtue and virtue will help us to develop knowledge.
- “The word used here suggests *practical* knowledge or discernment. It refers to the ability to handle life successfully. . .This kind of knowledge does not come automatically. It comes from obedience to the will of God.” (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, p. 24*)
- This is very close to the Old Testament idea of wisdom. (Proverbs 1:7)
- “Practical wisdom is obtained by dedicating ourselves to learning God’s truth in the Scriptures and putting that truth into action.” (*NKJV Study Bible, p. 2130*).

6 and knowledge with self-control...

- “The false teachers whose views Peter was exposing believed that knowledge freed people from the need to control their passions.” (*NKJV Study Bible, p. 2130*)
- Peter says it’s exactly the opposite: True knowledge, godly knowledge will manifest itself in self-control. True knowledge will keep the bodily appetites under control. (Gal 5:19-23)
- If you’re giving in to the evil desires of your sinful nature, you’re living like a fool, and not like a child of God!
- Without self-control we are defenseless against the attacks of Satan and our own fallen sinful nature. (Proverbs 16:32; 25:28)