



“Life, Godliness & Christian Growth, Part 2” (II Peter 1:1-15)

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Read the text; brief Review from last weekend...

Benefits of Life & Godliness

- It will keep us from being ineffective and unproductive.
- Guard against nearsightedness/blindness.
- Make our calling and election sure.
- Assurance of a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- Will keep you from falling.

Last weekend we focused our attention on escaping the corruption in the world through “his very great and precious promises.” The corruption in the world is caused by “evil desires” (Isa.53:6; James 1:13-14). Other than the devil, I am my worst enemy. Jesus said to Peter when he first met him (John 1:42), “You are Simon son of John. You will be called ‘Cephas’ (which when translates is Peter).” How would this change come about? See Matt.16:21-25. Luke 9:23 records Jesus saying this must be done **daily**.

The Daily Battle

- I Cor.15:31 I die every day – I mean that brothers – just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Col.3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

This is the struggle of the Christian life, and it is a **daily** struggle!

Jesus’ great and precious promise that relates directly to us escaping the corruption in the world and partaking in the divine nature is that we must lose our lives, die daily to self, and we will become like Him. So the path to Christian growth is a daily cross. If we are not daily dying, we are not growing. It’s as simple as that.

Today our focus is on vv.5-8. Christian growth means that these character qualities (virtues) will be added to my faith, and as a result I will enjoy the five benefits mentioned above.

The Mystery of Christian Growth

Growth in the Christian life involves a bit of mystery. What I mean is it involves a work that God does in a person's life that is supernatural, but at the same time it also involves effort and cooperation on my part.

- My effort is not what changes me; Read from *The Changed Life*.
- The Spirit of God (I Samuel 10:6; 15:12, 17; II Cor.3:18); Saul did not continue to cooperate with the Spirit's work in his life. The NT tells us that we can grieve the Spirit, and we can quench the Spirit. Saul did both. See Gal.5:25.
- Daily self-denial
- Training for godliness

Virtues to Add to My Faith

1. Goodness

- This is ***moral excellence***; See II Cor.7:1.
- See John 8:11; 5:14; II Cor.6:14-18; Joshua 24:2; I Peter 4:3-4; Rahab; Mary Magdalene.
- Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread
- There are certain movies I refuse to watch, books and magazines I will not read or look at, websites I avoid, places I will not hang out, etc.
- I John 3:3

2. Knowledge

- The word here is "gnosis," which means a seeking to know, an inquiry/investigation of spiritual truth. This is especially linked to v.4, through His promises (His Word), we may participate in the divine nature.
- Growth in the Christian life is impossible apart from a regular diet of the Word of God.
- I Peter 2: 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- Rom.12:1-2; Acts 2:42
- Psalm 119: 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
- Jesus when tempted by the devil: "It is written..."
- Give us this day our daily bread.

3. Self-control

- The controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God; Gal.5:23. Once again, growth is a bit mysterious, and we certainly see that with this particular virtue. It is both a fruit of the Spirit, and at the same time something I practice and develop in my life.
- Read I Thess.4:3-8.
- I Cor.9: 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.
- Proverbs 25:28 Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.
- When I became a Christian I began to practice looking away from women, and pictures of women. I regular practice skipping a meal, try to not over eat, usually say no to dessert (If I can't say no to the Hostess Twinkie how am I am going to say no to the hostess?), exercise, etc.

4. Perseverance

- See Rom.5:3; James 1:4; I John 2:19; Prov.24:16.

5. Godliness

- The mark of God stamped indelibly on your life.

6. Brotherly kindness

- Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

7. Love (agape)

- See I Cor.13:1-8a.
- This is love that dies for its enemies, and this character quality is obviously the pinnacle of Christian growth and maturity.
- Verses from Thursday all staff message

Why Some People Never Grow (Luke 8:4-8, 11-15)

- Seed on the path
 - THE DEVIL is able to immediately steal the Word from their hearts. But he is able to do this only because they have allowed their hearts to become hardened. The only hope for this type of soil is for it to be plowed, become “broken.” Otherwise, it will become even more hardened.
- Seed on the rocky place
 - NO DEPTH; not an area with rocks on the surface, but rather a thin layer of soil covering a solid ledge of limestone a few inches below the surface. The heat from the sun makes this type of soil a hotbed that produces rapid germination, then a furnace that soon scorches and withers the tender plant.
 - These people start off with a bang. They may testify, lead people to the Lord, inspire others as a result of their own contagious zeal. But they last only “a while.” Why? Because they have no root. There is no depth. Plenty of emotion, but no real depth. So in the time of testing, they fall away.
- The seed among thorns
 - DISTRACTION; life’s worries include legitimate issues, but issues that are not submitted to the Lord. Priorities are lost as the focus now becomes worrying over all the cares of this life; see Matt.6:25-33.
 - DECEPTION; life’s riches; see I Timothy 6:9-10
 - DESIRES/PLEASURES; fishing, football, baseball, hot dogs and apple pie, The American Dream; Disneyworld, etc. These are things that, in and of themselves, are not ungodly. They become ungodly when they take priority in one’s life; see Luke 14: 16-20.

CONCLUSION

- Christian growth begins and ends at the cross. It is a daily dying to self, responding to the Word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Lord, help us to stay in step with Your Holy Spirit and allow Him to finish the work He began in our hearts.
- Prov.4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.