

Enhancing Your Faith

love

brotherly kindness

godliness

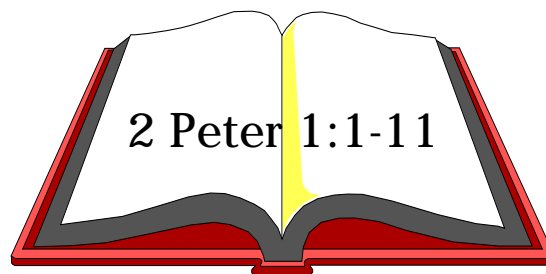
perseverance

self-control

knowledge

moral excellence

applying all diligence, supply . . .



Ron Adams

ENHANCING YOUR FAITH

SIMON PETER, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has **granted to us** His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence**, in your faith supply **moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, **knowledge**; and in your knowledge, **self-control**, and in your self-control, **perseverance**, and in your perseverance, **godliness**; and in your godliness, **brotherly kindness**, and in your brotherly kindness, **love**. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

2 Peter 1:1-11

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None of These 'Qualities'
Can Survive Alone

Quotations from New American Standard Bible
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Granted to Us

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Peter 1:1-4

Written to Christians Who Had a Faith Just Like the Apostles

Escape from the Corruption That in the World by Lust

by Becoming Believers in Christ Jesus, Savior

He Has Given Us Everything That Pertains to Life and Godliness

by His Divine Power, His True Knowledge, His Glory and Excellence

He Has Granted to Us Precious and Magnificent Promises

Pardon from Sin

Guidance, Strength and Support

Forgiveness of Sins

Glorious Resurrection

Immortality

However, One Must Not Continue the Practice of Sin

As faith precedes baptism, and baptism comes before salvation,
so obedience must follow baptism.

One is saved by (active) faith.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand,
that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

Partakers of Divine Nature

The Lord has made this possible for those who live by faith.

Believers must see the importance of enhancing one's faith.
A strong faith is necessary to cope with the various trials that will
test each follower.

Partakers of Divine Nature

Divine nature contrasted with “corruption that is in the world by lust”

One must escape pollution that is in the world in order to partake of the divine nature. The “Christian graces” are added to support one’s faith. The divine order is, pardon first, then holiness (consecrated living). Saved persons are to be good; however, goodness alone does not and cannot save.

Nature of the Inner Man

Made in the likeness of God.

The spirit within man is in conflict with the flesh: carnal verses spiritual.

The tendency to yield to carnal desires must be overcome.

Fellowship with Christ

Fellowship is joint participation (sharing with), association, fellowship, communion.

Set apart for God exclusively (saint, sanctified).

Fellowship with Christ involves sharing in His holiness.

Fellowship with other believers involves working and worshiping together.

Fellowship with the Divine Life

Life in Christ Jesus.

God rules in our hearts.

Self-life is replaced with Christ-life in conversion.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. Galatians 2:20

A new creation (creature) in Christ Jesus.

Christianity Is More Than

Soundness in doctrine.

Church membership.

Religious services, classes.

It is life: real, joyous, complete life.

One needs to be a partaker of the divine nature, not a holdout.

One needs to be a participant, not a spectator.

One needs to be a follower of the Lamb, growing in His grace and knowledge.

Giving All Diligence

Diligence (Greek, *spoude*) to exert oneself; earnestness, zeal

In view of all that God has given us, we need to bring forth all effort and zeal to develop these qualities in us. God has provided the means and the instructions whereby we may become partakers of the divine nature. It is up to each individual who has put his or her faith in Christ to develop them. The result of such diligence will be a stronger faith.

Growth Is of Primary Importance

The amount of growth is in direct proportion to the amount of diligence.
Growth is never accidental.

“... work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Philippians 2:12

Lack of growth can be the cause of failure.

“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Hebrews 6:11-12

Purposeful Living

Nothing constructive is the result of chance.

Buildings, literary works, great lives are created with a purpose.

Life without purpose is akin to driftwood: shattered planks of noble vessels ruined.

Broken lives and homes are never planned.

Spiritual ruin is never the result of planning.

Christians must swim against the tides and currents of worldliness.

Setting Priorities

Spiritual things must come first.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”
Matthew 6:33

Each and every Christian has the responsibility of adding these qualities to their faith. It requires diligent effort, but it must be done. It is not optional. The result will be a faith that enables you to endure.

Moral Excellence

Moral excellence (Greek, *arte*) comes from the root word *ares*, the Greek god of war.

Moral excellence (virtue) is used here in a specific sense: manliness, courage, vigor. It is the vitality that gives tone, dignity and force. It is defined as force, strength of mind or body. It is "enjoined as an essential quality in the exercise of faith." [Vines]

Faith Needs to Have Strength

Be strong in the Lord . . . Ephesians 6:10

Put on the whole armor of God [for strength and protection]. Ephesians 6:11

Faith is found in the way of the Lord.

The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the upright. . . Proverbs 10:29

Faith Needs to Be Supported by Courage

The moral excellence (courage) is referred to in Hebrews 11.

The Lord enjoined Paul to have courage during his trials.

". . .the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also." Acts 23:11

It takes courage not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

It takes courage to confess Christ in a sinful world.

It takes courage to fight "the good fight of faith."

It takes courage to "turn the other cheek."

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. Proverbs 17:32

Moral Excellence (Virtue) Is a Mark of Maturity

One must not be weak and vacillating.

"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." 1 Corinthians 16:13

Strength, courage, and vigor are qualities that need to be developed by every Christian. It shows to others, and to God, that we stand for truth and right.

Knowledge

Know (Greek, *gnosis*) means a seeking to know, inquiry

Moral excellence is defined as “force, strength of mind or body.” Such force needs to be directed. Force can be productive or destructive. It is imperative that Christians add knowledge to their faith, in order that the moral of moral excellence might be properly channeled.

Knowledge

Not general knowledge, but specific knowledge: Christian enlightenment.

“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32

Having gained knowledge of him, we are to gain knowledge from Him.

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me . . .” Matthew 11:29

Knowledge of Christ

Knowledge of God and His truths are found only in the Bible.

Desire to know the truth about Christ and His Way.

Labor to understand what is revealed.

Mental industry is part of discipleship.

Examine everything carefully.

Knowledge gives us insight.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Ephesians 1:18

Truth is truth, no matter who says it, or who opposes it.

The Bible contains all we know about Christ; and we have all we need to know.

Knowledge Is to Be Applied

Knowledge without application is as worthless as faith without works.

. . . understand what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:17

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. Philippians 4:9

Avoid being “barren, unfruitful,” not for God’s sake, not for the sake of church, but for your soul’s sake!

“Think-so” is not a substitute for “know so.” If truth has been communicated to us, and the Lord expects Christians to be guided by it, it is imperative that each and every Christian seek to know the truth of the Gospel.

Self-Control

Self-control (Greek, *egkrateia*) temperance, especially continence

Moral excellence (virtue) gives one's faith the force or motion necessary. Such motion is to be directed by the knowledge found in the Word of God. Self-control (temperance) is the quality that keeps one moving according to knowledge; not allowing it to stray. Briefly stated, moral excellence is force; knowledge directs that force. Self-control contains that force.

Self-control

Mastery of sensual appetites.

Contrasted with greed, sensuality (as found in chapter 2:1-3 and 3:3)

In a broad sense: to bring one's mind and body under control of the spirit.

... but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13

The Goal Is to Please God, Not Self

Jesus commands it.

Jesus gave us an example of it.

Apostles admonished all Christians to do it.

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. 1 Thessalonians 4:1

The Christian Belongs to Christ

Both mind and body belong to Him.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

One cannot serve God and mammon.

One is must not be under the power of anything that usurps His authority.

Lawful actions must be regulated (tempered) by what is best.
Unlawful acts must be avoided at all cost.

Perseverance (Patience)

Perseverance [Greek, *hupomone*] cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy:--enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting)

Self-control is that quality which helps one hold back (containing oneself). Perseverance (patience) is that quality which causes one to hang on when difficult times come. Persecutions, afflictions and tribulations are part of the Christian life. Perseverance is needed so one may be able to hold on to faith. For without faith it is impossible to please God.

Patience Is Needed

Difficult times will come.

“And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

2 Timothy 3:12

It is impossible to always avoid difficulties.

Patience is developed through practice

Jesus is our supreme example.

Trials Can Be Endured

Trials will not last forever. They can't last more than a lifetime.

Trials pale when compared with our eternal reward

God has promised trials will never be more than we are able to bear.

Perseverance Is Not:

Passive resignation (offering no resistance); giving in.

Patently enduring difficulties brought on by an attitude that stirs up opposition.

Enduring trials while whining and complaining.

It is easy to become discouraged by what besets us. We must realize that through faith and patience we will inherit the promises. Trials are the hammer blows that shape our character and strengthen our faith.

Godliness

Godliness (Greek, *eusebeia*) reverence towards God; pious, devout

Faith needs moral excellence; moral excellence needs knowledge for guidance. Which is to be coupled with self-control (a holding back), plus perseverance (a holding on). It is not just an incentive based on mere determination, but a sense of divine purpose in everything in our lives.

A Personal Attitude

One that sees God's hand in all things, as:

Moses "seeing Him who is unseen."

Joseph seeing that God sent him into Egypt to preserve Israel.

Christians knowing that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him.

A sincere feeling of the heart towards God, in view of His character and nature.

Cornelius is said to have been godly (devout).

Characteristics of Godliness

It is dynamic, not static.

It gives incentive for action.

It affects all of one's life.

It has substance, not just "form."

It is "inward."

Developing Godliness

Digest the facts concerning God.

Consider God and His mighty works

Draw near to Him and he will draw near to you

Seek things above; seek first His kingdom.

Seek to know the "doctrine of godliness" as found in the Word.

Discipline yourself.

. . . discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7-8

Godliness enhances our faith. Without it, faith is incomplete, immature. We need to stand in awe of God's greatness and great power; seeing His hand in our lives. We must have a God-ward attitude.

Brotherly Kindness

Love of brothers (Greek: *philadelphia*) fraternal, family love

Adding these qualities to enhance faith is likened to a chorus in which the addition of each voice adds something to the whole. One voice adds depth, another brilliance, a third harmony. Likewise, as we add these qualities to our faith it becomes deeper, brighter and more pleasing to God. But we are not the only ones who have faith—there are others, millions of others. Thus the necessity of brotherly kindness.

It Is an Integral Part of Discipleship

It is the adhesive that binds brethren together.

It is loving others as the Lord loves us, without distinctions.

By loving brethren, we show our love for God.

Features of Brotherly Love

Not a new concept.

For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1 John 3:11

Fervent love, from heart (not feigned).

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Romans 12:10

A matter of debt (not an option, but an obligation).

A mark of true discipleship.

It presupposes that brethren are in contact with one another.

Jesus' Life Is An Example

He had active love for others.

He showed compassion for the afflicted, the downtrodden, those enslaved to sin.

He went about doing good.

You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him. Acts 10:38

It Is Necessary for Unity in the Church

Oneness in doctrine is the basis for unity.

Brotherly love is the bond of unity.

Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Philippians 2:2

It motivates members to work for and with one another.

Members must understand that oneness in doctrine is not enough to bond members together—it is brotherly love that binds hearts and souls together .

Love (Charity)

Benevolence, charity; to love in a moral or social sense (Greek: *agape, agapao*)

As we practice brotherly kindness to those of like faith, we must be careful not to let it be a narrow and exclusive love. Love is to be shown to God and to all men. Love is active good will; it is seeking another's good even to the point of sacrifice. It is not an impulse from one's feelings, nor does it always concur with natural inclinations. It is not directed only toward those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all.

Agape: God's Kind of Love

God is love. He is the personification of love.

His goodwill toward us prompted by His goodness, not ours.

Imitation of God's Love

Love is the crowning virtue of God—and the child of God.

When we love, we reflect the love of God.

Our Love of God

Shown by our affectionate reverence.

Rouses us to prompt obedience.

Shown in our grateful recognition of benefits received.

Our Love of Others

Our love is to be based on what is best and right.

We demonstrate our love by "doing good unto all men."

Love is worthless unless expressed in actions.

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 1 John 3:17-18

Characteristics of love:

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The Samaritan was 'good' because he did something good for a stranger.

Love (agape) is to be free and spontaneous, arising from a good heart attuned to the will of God. God is love, and the goal of faith is to be God-like. The one who loves has let faith have its perfect work.

None of These ‘Qualities’ Can Survive Alone

In Order to Be Spiritually Healthy (Sound in Spirit) All Are Needed

A concerted effort needs to be put forth by each member.

Development takes time and effort.

The consequences of not developing them should be a wake-up call.

Each Quality Lends Support to the Others, and All Support Faith

Cannot be selective as to which ones we will develop.

Refusing to develop any of the qualities will have an adverse affect on the others.

Each Member Will Be Saved by Their Own Faith

It is imperative that every member work on developing all of them.

Help One Another Develop Them

By assisting others we strengthen our own faith.

2 Peter 1:8-11 (remainder of text)

“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.”



Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

These qualities are to be ours. They need to be increasing.
(If we lack them, we are blind or short-sighted.)
We are to be all the more diligent. We are to practice these things.