

2. Learning to Develop a Godly Life

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand the promises that God has given to us. We saw that The Lord has given us the Holy Spirit so that at every moment that we are yielding to Him that we are able to please God in our lives. In our topic today, we are going to see how to develop our spiritual lives so that we are learning to act in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of our own strength.

In 2 Peter 1:5-7, we read, “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” Because of the promises that God has given to us in verses 3 and 4, we see that this is the reason why we want to live to please the Lord. The word that is translated “diligence” means *to put forth much effort to accomplish something or to do something in haste*. The faith that we received was a gift from God. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Our efforts are not the source of faith. The faith that we received was received as a gift from God.

However, God does tell us to add certain things to the faith and the promises that He has given to us. This is where we have the opportunity to be obedient to the Lord so that we carry out the will that He has for us. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” God created us for good works and the things that we are to add things in our lives so that our lives reflect our faith and the promises that God has given to us as we carry out the works that God has prepared for us.

In these verses, we see that we are to add seven things. First, we are to add virtue to our faith. The word that is translated “virtue” means *moral goodness*. In verse three, we saw that Christ has called us to glory and virtue. Here, we see that moral goodness is the very first thing that we want to add to our faith. God has made this moral good possible because He gave us a new nature that has a desire to do good. As we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to do those things that are pleasing to God. Second, we are to add knowledge to our faith. The word that is translated “knowledge” means *knowledge and understanding of what is right*. 2 Peter 3:18 says, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.” We have a desire to grow in our knowledge and understanding of Christ and how He wants us to live.

Third, we are to add self-control to our faith. The word that is translated “self-control” means *we ask the Lord to give us His strength to master our sensual desires and passions*. This word is only used two other times in the New Testament. Acts 24:25 says, “Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.” Then, it is also listed in Galatians 5:23, as part of the fruit of the Spirit. Fourth, we are to add perseverance to our faith. The word that is translated “perseverance” means *patient endurance in doing what is right*. Hebrews 12:1 says, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside

every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” Like a long-distance race, we are to run with endurance.

Fifth, we are to add godliness to faith. The word translated “godliness” means *to live in obedience and reverence toward God*. 1 Timothy 6:6 says, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” Sixth, we are to add brotherly kindness to faith. The word that is translated “brotherly kindness” means *the love that Christians show to one another*. 1 Thessalonians 4:9 says, “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.” Here we see that God teaches us how to have this kind of love. Seventh, we are to add love to faith. John 13:34-35 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Here, we see that we are to learn to love with the same love that Christ loves us.

Then, 2 Peter 1:8 says, “For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The word that is translated “abound” means *to increase or to be in abundance*. If the seven things mentioned in the previous verses are increasing and growing in our lives, we see that we will not be barren or unfruitful. The word translated “barren” means *to be idle or to be lazy*. The word translated “unfruitful” means *to be without fruit*. Titus 3:14 says, “And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.” The fact that our lives will not be barren or unfruitful means that our lives will be useful and bear fruit for the Lord because we are continuing to grow in our knowledge of Christ.

The word translated “knowledge” means *to know thoroughly or to come to a correct knowledge and understanding of Christ*. Colossians 3:9-10 says, “Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.” As Christians, we have been given a new nature which makes it possible for us to grow and mature in our knowledge and understanding of Christ. The Holy Spirit gives us His power so that our lives can become more and more like Christ. As a result, every Christian has the potential to be fruitful as we learn to grow in Christ and follow His example in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In contrast, 2 Peter 1:9 says, “For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.” Here, we see a description of a person that is a carnal Christian or only a professing Christian that has never received true faith. The word translated “shortsighted” means that a person can only see what is very close. The word translated “blindness” can refer either to physical or spiritual blindness. Here, the word is talking about spiritual blindness. A carnal Christian is described in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, where we read, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere men*?” Here, we see that a carnal Christian acts like a person that is not even a Christian. Such a Christian will continue to live in fear because

that person is uncertain of his or her salvation.

A professing Christian is one that has never repented of sin and placed his or her faith in Christ. Such a person may go to church and spend time around other Christians. However, such a person has never received spiritual life. Ephesians 2:1-3 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” Since the person has not received spiritual life, that person is still a part of those who face eternal judgment.

That is why 2 Peter 1:10-11 says, “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Here, we see what those who are either carnal or professing Christians need to do. They need to examine their lives so they can know that they have really responded to the call to salvation and placed their faith in Christ. 1 John 2:12 says, “I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.” When a person matures spiritually beyond a carnal Christian, and becomes a spiritual child instead of a spiritual babe, we see that such a person now knows that his or her sins are forgiven. Such people are adding the seven things mentioned in verses five through seven to their faith. This gives each Christian the assurance of salvation.

We see that Christians who are adding these things to their faith will not stumble. The reason for this is due to the fact that they have made it their goal to glorify the Lord by the things that they say and do. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” We want to show our physical and spiritual children why it is important to learn to glorify God by all that they do and say so that they can experience that assurance of their salvation.

Christians that are growing in their spiritual lives can look forward with great eagerness to their entrance into heaven because they will receive a great reward for their service as Christians. 1 Corinthians 3:11, 14 say, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ...If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.” All Christians who have faithfully served the Lord on this earth can look forward with great eagerness to the day when the Lord will take them to heaven and they will receive their rewards. Those rewards will be eternal and will be enjoyed in the presence of the Lord forever. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to develop a godly life.