

## The Growth of the Saints

2 Peter 1: 5-8

Following his introduction and reminder of the glorious benefit of salvation, Peter immediately extended a challenge to the believers who would read this letter. While salvation is an act of God's marvelous grace offered to those who are underserving, received by faith in the finished work of Christ, apart from any works of our own, our new relationship with Christ comes with particular responsibilities. Peter sought to challenge the believers to embrace these responsibilities and live according to the plan and will of God.

While I fully embrace the teachings of Scripture regarding our salvation, especially what Paul revealed in [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), I also realize our salvation needs and demands good works and holy living. We are not saved by our works, but we are saved unto works. Saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will compel us to labor for Him while in this life. I am also settled on the doctrine of eternal security, but our security in Christ is not a license to sin – nor is it a blank check totally separate from Christian responsibility. Genuine salvation will not produce laziness or a desire to continually engage in a sinful lifestyle. Those who walk with Christ will be motivated to live in a way that pleases Him, continually striving to grow and mature in the faith.

As we examine these verses today, we need to consider the [attributes](#) that Peter revealed should be found within believers. I want to preach on: [The Growth of the Saints](#).

**I. The Duty of Believers** (5-7) – Here Peter emphatically described the duty and responsibilities that accompany our salvation. While these are simple verses, they reveal profound truth that needs to be taught and heeded today. Consider:

**A. The Exhortation** (5) – [And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith...](#) Having spoken of the gracious gift of salvation and the blessed assurance it affords, Peter goes on to challenge the believers in their walk with the Lord. While salvation is a free gift, given of the Lord, following salvation we are expected to add certain attributes to our faith. The Lord provides our salvation, but that does not absolve us from any responsibility. We are responsible for our growth and maturity, striving for Christlikeness in this life.

- Peter does not speak of a casual endeavor that will be accomplished with little effort of our own. We are challenged to give all diligence to add these attributes to our faith. The Lord will provide the wisdom and guidance necessary, but we are responsible to take the initiative. This presents the challenge to "*Hasten, jump, act now to add them; don't wait. Be energetic and earnest, strenuously work to add these things to your faith and salvation.*"<sup>i</sup>

**B. The Expectation (5-7)** – Following the challenge to be earnest in their endeavors for growth, Peter listed several attributes that are necessary and expected in the Christian life. These include:

➤ **Virtue** – This speaks of moral excellence and character. It refers to living our lives in a way that would honor the Lord and bear a positive witness for Him, seeking the most excellent path in life. *1 Thes.4:1-7 – Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. [2] For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. [3] For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: [4] That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; [5] Not in the lust of concupiscence (sinful desires and passions,) even as the Gentiles which know not God: [6] That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. [7] For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

➤ **Knowledge** – This speaks of practical intelligence, knowledge and insight. It refers to knowing how to handle day to day situations, knowing what to do and how to respond to particular circumstances in life. We are admonished to add knowledge to our faith. I think you will agree that knowledge is lacking for the most part in our culture. Most react to situations instead of responding with knowledge obtained through walking with Christ. *Prov.15:14 – The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.*

➤ **Temperance** – This speaks of mastery and control over the body, regarding the desires and lusts of the flesh. It deals with our self-control and the ability to resist the sensual cravings of the flesh. This is one of the fruits of the Spirit and is available to the believer. However, we must walk in close fellowship with the Lord in order to possess and maintain self-control. (Clearly this is lacking in our world, and even among professed believers. We live in a culture that caters to the flesh and encourages indulgence.)

➤ **Patience** – This speaks of the believer's endurance, steadfastness, fortitude, consistency, and perseverance. One's consistent endurance is active, not passive. As we grow in our faith, adding patience, we no longer are willing to set idly by, merely enduring whatever we face. Godly endurance encourages courage in the face of adversity, actively seeking to overcome in Christ. We are not content to languish in defeat, but actively seek to conquer the temptations and trails that come against us. *James 1:2-4 – My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; [3] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. [4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

➤ **Godliness** – Peter also challenged the believer to add godliness to their faith. We discussed this attribute in our last study. It speaks of living in a way that pleases God. It is life lived in reverence and awe of our Lord and Savior. A life of godliness creates a desire within the believer to seek the very nature and characteristics of God. This is a transformed life, seeking Christlikeness in every aspect of life. [2 Peter 3:11 – Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation \(conduct and behavior\) and godliness?](#)

➤ **Brotherly Kindness** – This is the Greek word philadelphia and speaks of phileo love, brotherly love for one another. It refers to that special bond of love that exists between family members. It binds us together, with an unbreakable union, that nourishes one another, seeking the well-being of others.

It is interesting to note that “brotherly” actually refers to “*coming from the same womb.*” Clearly, we are not physically from the same womb, but spiritually we are all born of the same source, through Christ Jesus our Lord. We are all part of the family of God, placed there through the gracious adoption of the Father. Family is expected to show love for one another. [John 13:34-35 – A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.](#) <sup>[35]</sup> [By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.](#) [1 John 3:14a – We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.](#)

➤ **Charity** – The last attribute Peter challenged believers to add to their faith was charity. This speaks of the agape love of God, love that includes the mind, reason, and will. It is absolute love, without condition. It is love that exists regardless of feeling or merit. It is a selfless and sacrificial love, seeking the good of another above our own. Such love can only be known and expressed by those who possess a relationship with Christ. Apart from Him we cannot truly love. [1 Cor.13:13 – And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.](#) Although Peter mentioned this attribute last, it is essential to possessing all the others. Apart from love we cannot live the life Christ calls us to live. Love is one element that cannot be absent in the Christian life!

**II. The Diligence of Believers (8)** – [For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#) Having discussed the attributes we are to possess, Peter revealed the benefit of their presence and challenged the believer to ensure they abide. Notice:

**A. The Abundance (8)** – [For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#) We discover Peter’s emphasis on

obtaining these attributes. They are expected within the life of believers. If they are not present, or lacking in measure, we are responsible to enhance these attributes. They are not to exist in limited fashion, but actually to abound. This speaks of existing in abundance, literally possessing more than enough.

- When we pause to consider this statement, it is quite convicting. I would agree that we possess the attributes of which Peter spoke, but do they exist in abundance? Do we possess more than enough of these attributes? Are they so evident in our lives that others readily see and experience them through our day to day activities and conversations? I am sure we all could seek to improve the abundance of these attributes in our lives.

**B. The Appropriation** (8a) – *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Finally, we discover the benefit of these attributes within our lives. While others will benefit from them, we can and do as well. When these attributes exist, in abundance, we are promised a productive spiritual walk. We will not be barren (idle, slothful, empty, or useless,) nor will we lack fruit for Christ.

- That too is quite challenging isn't it? If we aren't careful, we tend to get lax and lazy in our walk with the Lord. We tend to rest in His grace, enjoying the benefits of salvation, but put forth little effort in kingdom work of Christian witness. Peter has described the solution to spiritual laziness and inactivity. If we will diligently seek to possess and portray the attributes he has described, we are promised a productive life in Christ. Increase your Christian attributes and your fruitfulness will automatically follow!

**Conclusion:** If you are a believer, you possess these attributes, but they may not be as apparent as they should be. Do you sense the need to increase their abundance in your life? Has the Spirit revealed areas that need attention? If so, why not come and seek the Lord to increase your faith and commitment so you can add these to your faith in abundance? If you are yet unsaved, respond to the Lord in repentance and faith. He desires to save you by His grace and add these attributes to your life as well.

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<sup>i</sup> Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2 & 3 John; Jude.