


CALLED TO BECOME

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DOING OR BECOMING?

“Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:1-11 ESV)



What Do You Think...

I would be a better Christian if I..."

The original title of this class/workbook was "Not Doing... Becoming". Upon further review and with some helpful advice, the title was changed. However, there's a point that needs to be made at the start. There can be no doubt that religion involves a lot of doing things (and a lot of not doing sinful things). But the danger is that religion can become a shallow system of check-lists. Our faith is to be much more!

The Israelites were given a Law and told that they needed to obey and keep it (see Exodus 19:5). However, in the midst of this Law was the injunction, "you shall be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45), i.e. become like their Father. Over the centuries would keep God's Law with varying levels of success, but relatively few succeeded in their true calling to be as their Father. By the time of Jesus' public ministry He would say of the Jewish leaders that they were children of the Devil because, "he who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God" (John 8:47).

We are part of the New Covenant and again there is great emphasis on doing: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18–20). But ultimately our keeping His commands has a purpose: to become like Him!

- "Therefore you are to be _____, as your heavenly Father is _____." (Matthew 5:48)
- "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the _____ of the _____, are being transformed into the same _____ from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- "and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new _____, which in the _____ of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (Ephesians 4:23–24)
- "but like the Holy One who called you, be _____ yourselves also in all your _____; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."" (1 Peter 1:15–16)

The focus of this class is on becoming. Not becoming a little bit better than we were or better than the next person. It's on becoming like our Lord and our Father. Everything we do (or don't do) is so that we may become.

DOING OR BECOMING?



In this class we will be using **2 Peter 1:1-11** as a template for how we can be more like God. The letter opens with a warm salutation from Peter to his brethren who “have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” While we were not part of Peter’s original audience, isn’t it wondrous to think that through Jesus we too have obtained a “like precious faith,” (KJV) with Peter, the other apostles and saints! Now note how Peter continued his greeting:

“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”
(2Peter 1:2 ESV)

These are not casual words of greeting, but contain a sincere desire on the part of the apostle, that grace and peace would be multiplied to us. Reflect on this for just a moment:

- Grace = the good-will, loving kindness and favor of God, even on those who are not deserving.
- Peace = “the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot.” (Thayer)

So, what was Peter desiring for us? That the favor of God and the accompanying assurance would be multiplied to us. What a blessing! But, how can we partake in this blessing? “In the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”

The Key To Becoming Like Him The “knowledge of God and of Jesus” is a key concept within **2 Peter 1:1-11**, but what does this mean? A couple of Greek words are translated “knowledge” in English. There is the Greek word *gnosis*, which is the more common word for knowledge. However, the word translated as “knowledge” in this passage is *epignosis*, a full and complete knowledge. In other words, Peter is saying that we must progress from a basic knowledge of God to an accurate and full knowledge of Him. Not only does Peter say we should have this kind of knowledge, but he ties every blessing to it! (see sidebar)

Why We Must Have A Full Knowledge Of God & Christ

- God’s divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness (i.e. our walk as Christians), but this is only available through the knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him. (vs. 3)
- God has granted to us precious and very great promises, but these are not ours without the knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him. (vs. 4)
- We can escape the corruption of this world and become partakers of the divine nature, but only through the knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him. (vs. 4)
- Through the knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him, we will never be ineffective or unfruitful. (vs. 8)
- Through the knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him, “there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (vs. 11)

So, what does it mean to become like Him? It means that we are putting off the corruption of this world and are becoming partakers of the divine nature. That is, we are becoming more and more like God. Never forget that this is why Jesus came: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were _____, you were _____ in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11, ESV) Jesus justified us by washing away our sins and by doing so He made us holy (sanctified us). However, “as He who called you is _____, you also be _____ in all your _____.” (1 Peter 1:15, ESV)

How do we become more godly? We become more godly by developing a fuller and more complete understanding of God. We come to understand the characteristics of God and look to His inspired word for guidance in emulating these characteristics.

The material for this class is divided into four sections, each aimed at helping us achieve a fuller knowledge of God and thus become more godly.

Section 1: Who We Are To Become Like

This section discusses the nature of God and His characteristics that should be present in our lives.

Section 2: How To Become Like Him

A discussion of the eight virtues listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7, virtues that, when applied, will make us more godly, i.e. partakers of the divine nature.

Section 3: Putting Principles Into Practice

In this section we will apply the virtues discussed in section 2 to our various roles, striving to be more godly in every walk of life. The class will be divided between men and women so that each group can freely discuss their respective roles.

Section 4: Staying Focused On The Goal

We finish our study by examining a few of Satan’s tactics to destroy godly lives.

SECTION 1: WHO WE ARE TO BECOME LIKE

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,”

(2 Peter 1:3, ESV)



WHAT DO YOU THINK...



1. What does it mean to be “holy”? _____

2. Why is God the standard of holiness? _____

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HOLY

The quality of holiness is attributed to God throughout the Old and New Testaments (compare Leviticus 11:44 & 1Peter 1:16). Note these definitions given for the Hebrew and Greek words that are translated “holy”:

» Hebrew: “The verb qādaš in the Qal connotes the state of that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred. Thus it is distinct from the common or profane... to be clean, pure, consecrated.” (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)


» Greek: hágios “set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint... Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration.” (Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament)


However, for our purposes this simple definition of “holy” will suffice: “It is essential, absolute purity.” (Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. God the Father, God the Son.)

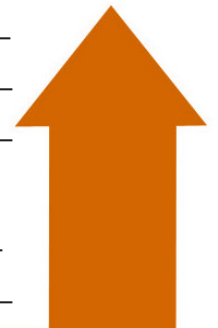
**“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”
(Exodus 15:11)**

Given that this is the fundamental nature of God, it is not surprising that creation is humbled by His presence.

1. What do the hosts of heaven continually say? (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8)  _____

2. How do men react to the holiness of God? (Exodus 3:5; 19:10-12, 18-21; 20:18-21; Isaiah 6:5; Revelation 1:17)  _____

3. Now read Hebrews 12:28-29. How does an accurate view of God’s holiness help us understand the passage?  _____



GOD IS HOLY



GOD'S HOLINESS & MAN'S SIN


For God to be holy means that He is absolutely pure, that He is absolutely without sin. "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is _____ and in Him is no _____ at all." (1John 1:5) Furthermore, since He is pure and without sin He cannot look approvingly at evil. That poses a problem for us. God created us in His image (Genesis 1:26) which means that we were holy, just as He is holy. However, "all have _____ and fall short of the _____ of God." (Romans 3:23)


- What did sin do to the first man's relationship with God? (Genesis 3:22-24) _____
- What does sin do to my relationship with God (Isaiah 59:1-2) _____

Sin ruins man's relationship with God! The story of the Bible is about how God planned to repair that relationship, to make man holy again. In the Old Testament an elaborate system of sacrifices was implemented to remove sin, but as those sacrifices could not truly forgive sin (see Hebrews 10:3-4). However, the story of man's redemption culminates with Christ, the offering of God's Son so that man could be forgiven of his sins and made holy again. It is this offering that can "purify our _____ from _____ works to serve the living God." (Hebrews 9:14) It is this single offering that has now "perfected for all _____ those who are being _____." (Hebrews 10:14).

"God is so holy, so utterly holy, that nothing but that awful death could make it possible for Him to forgive us. The cross is the supreme and the sublimest declaration and revelation of the holiness of God." (Lloyd-Jones)

APPRECIATING THE HOLINESS OF GOD

1. If I appreciate God's holiness, how will I view sin? How will I look at it? What will it do to me? (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 7:24)  _____

2. If I appreciate God's holiness, what will Jesus' sacrifice mean to me? (1Peter 1:18-19; Colossians 1:22)  _____

If I appreciate God's holiness, then I recognize that I am called to be like Him (1Peter 1:15-16) What kind of changes do I need to make in my life? _____

WHAT DO YOU THINK...

1. According to Psalm 97:2, what is the foundation of God's throne? 


2. What do you think this means? _____

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE RIGHTEOUS

The word translated as "righteousness" in Psalm 97:2 had an original meaning of "to be straight." (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament) A straight line does not deviate to the right or the left, and neither does God! A simplified meaning of our word "righteous" would simply be "doing what is right". A righteous person does right things, an unrighteous person either does unrighteous things or fails to do righteous things. As we noted in our last lesson,

"Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne." (Psalm 97:2, ESV)

"God is _____, and in Him is no _____ at all." (1John 1:5).
God is light, He never deviates into darkness, hence He is righteous.

The righteousness of God is seen in His actions. First, since He is righteous He never does evil. "For You are not a God who delights in _____; evil may not _____ with You." (Psalm 5:4). However,  we must not limit the righteousness of God to the absence of evil. Righteousness is a positive quality, it means that God does right things! What are some positive aspects of God's righteousness?

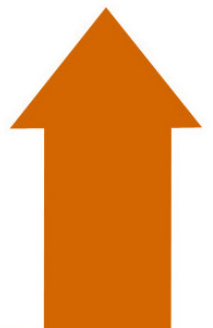


- Deuteronomy 32:4 _____
- 1Samuel 12:6-11; Psalm 71:2; 85:9-11 _____



- Isaiah 41:9-10; Psalm 37:39 _____

- Are there other aspects of God's righteousness and Scriptures that come to mind? _____






GOD IS RIGHTEOUS



GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS & HIS JUSTICE

It is significant that righteousness and justice are tied together in Psalm 97:2. For God to be righteous means that He does right things. For our King to do right things means that He must be just! God demanded this quality of the leaders in His people as is seen in the following contrast:









- How is David described in 1Chronicles 18:14? 
- How are the rulers of Israel described in Ezekiel 45:9? 

God is righteous, so He also must be just! What does this mean for us according to Romans 2:6-11; Psalm 7:11; 9:8; 96:13? 

Note that God's justice is sought for in a Psalm 5. He sets things right.

“The righteousness of God is God’s love of holiness, and the justice of God is God’s abomination of sin.”
(Lloyd-Jones, “God the Father, God the Son)

APPRECIATING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

1. According to Psalm 11:7, what does God love? 
2. Staying in Psalm 11:7, who will see God’s face? 
3. According to Proverbs 21:3, God desires righteousness more than 
4. A righteous person will develop the same attitude as God toward evil. What do Romans 12:9 & 2Timothy 2:22 say about that? 
5. A righteous person does right things. What are some right things according to Ezekiel 18:5-9? 
6. Righteousness is not subjective. According to Psalm 19:9; 2Timothy 3:6 how do we know what is righteous? 
7. Unfortunately, no one is righteous (Psalm 143:2). However, we can be righteous through  in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22). Our bodies will then be  for righteousness (Romans 6:13).

WHAT DO YOU THINK...

According to Psalm 89:14, ““Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You.” (NASB) In your own words, why is it so important that God be truthful? _____

THE TRUTHFULNESS OF GOD

The opening pages of the Bible establish the truthfulness of God. First, consider the Creation account. God gave man the command to NOT eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). However, Satan told woman that she could eat of it, that she and Adam would not die (Genesis 3:1-5). So, who was telling the truth: God or Satan? Sadly, as we know man and woman chose to believe Satan, but they would quickly understand that it was God who was telling the truth (Genesis 3:17-24).

The truthfulness of God is further seen in the Flood account. After announcing to Noah that the Flood was coming, that it would destroy “all flesh”, God promised Noah that “I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” (Genesis 6:18) God was promising to save Noah and his family from the destruction of the flood, but would Noah believe God? Would he do what God said? As we know, Noah did believe that God would keep His word, so he did what God commanded. The result? “Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.” (Genesis 7:23)

“For Your loving-kindness is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the skies.” (Psalm 108:4, NASB)



GOD IS TRUTHFUL

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD ALWAYS SPEAKING THE TRUTH


It means that all of God's promises are true!

» How do we know about the hope of heaven? (Colossians 1:5) 

» How can we believe that God will keep His word? (Titus 1:2) _____

» More will be said about this in our next lesson.

It means that all of God's commandments are true!



» "But you are near, O Lord, and all your _____ are _____" 
(Psalm 119:151)

» What value are true commandments to us? (Deut. 10:13) _____

"True Christians are people who acknowledge and live under the word of God. They submit without reserve to the word of God written in 'the book of truth' (Dan 10:21), believing the teaching, trusting the promises, following the commands. Their eyes are upon the God of the Bible as their Father and the Christ of the Bible as their Savior."

(J.I. Packer, "Knowing God")

APPRECIATING THE TRUTHFULNESS OF GOD

-  1. If I appreciate the truthfulness of God then I will obey His true commandments. After all, they are for my good (Deut 10:13). We should be longing for God to "send out your _____ and your _____; let them _____ me." (Psalm 43:3). We should acknowledge that obedience to the truth will _____ our souls (1Peter 1:22).
-  2. According to Psalm 15:1-2, who will ultimately dwell with God? Why do you think this is the case? _____

3. According to 1 Timothy 3:15 the church is the pillar and buttress of the _____.
4. Thought question: how does my personal honesty (or dishonesty) reflect on God and His church? Why is this the case? _____

WHAT DO YOU THINK...



1. Name one person that you trust. _____
2. Why do you trust that person? What makes them trustworthy? _____

OUR FAITHFUL GOD

The Hebrew writer exhorts us to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23) But what does it mean to say that God is faithful? Simply put, it means that God keeps His word (as we noted in our last lesson). That God not only exists, but He also rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Consider the example of God’s promises to Abraham. We read in Genesis 12:1-3 that “the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’” Now note when these promises were fulfilled:

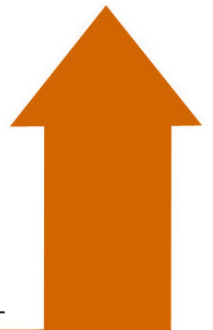
- ✓ Abraham’s descendants became a great nation 400-600 years after the promise (Exodus 1:7)
- ✓ Abraham’s descendants inherited the promised land 440-640 years after the promise (Joshua 21:43-45)
- ✓ The Promised Seed (Jesus) was born ~2,000 years after the promise (Matthew 1:1)

**“Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.”
(Psalm 36:5)**

The example of God’s promises to Abraham teaches us two fundamental truths about His faithfulness:

1. God is faithful to the promises He makes, not the things we want God to give us. For example, we may want God to give us prosperity and health, but He has not promised those things to us.
2. God keeps His promises in the time and way He chooses. God kept His promises to Abraham, even though Abraham died before they were fulfilled.

Why is it important to understand these truths? _____



GOD IS FAITHFUL



WHY SOME OF GOD'S PROMISES ARE NOT KEPT

To say that God is faithful means that God keeps His promises. So why do some promises go unfulfilled? Simply put, because man isn't faithful to God. God's promises are always in covenant relationships, meaning God enters an agreement with man. God promises blessings, but man must obey God for those promises to be kept. Israel serves as a prime example of a people that were in covenant with God, but the promises God made were not fulfilled.

- What promises did God make to Israel? (Exodus 19:5-6) _____

- For the promises to be kept, Israel would have to _____ (Exod. 19:5)
- Fast forward ~800 years: how faithful had Israel been to the covenant? (Jer. 11:1-10).

- What was God going to do to them? (Jer. 11:11-12) _____

So, we learn two more fundamental truths about God's faithfulness:

1. Many (if not most) of God's promises are conditional, they are part of a covenant.
2. For me to obtain God's promises, I need to be faithful and obey Him. If I do that, God will fulfill His promises.

“when you say that God is faithful you mean that He is one upon whom you can safely lean. It means one on whom you can absolutely rely; one upon whom you can depend... without ever being in any doubt that He will suddenly let go and let you go.”

(Lloyd-Jones, “God the Father, God the Son”)

APPRECIATING THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD (HEBREWS 10:19-39)

1. What has Christ provided for us? (vs. 19-21) _____

2. How are we to draw near to God? (vs. 22-23) _____

3. What should we expect if we are unfaithful? (vs. 26-31) _____

4. What is the benefit of having faith? _____


WHAT DO YOU THINK...

1. Think of someone who loves you... how do they treat you? _____

2. Think of someone you love... how do you treat them? _____


TRYING TO DESCRIBE THE LOVE OF GOD

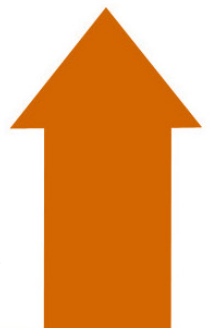
This is not an easy task, for as Paul says: “and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge...” (Ephesians 3:19). As the hymn goes, “Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parment made; Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade; To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho stretch’d from sky to sky.” (F.M. Lehman, *The Love Of God*) So, given that the task is impossible, the best approach to describe the love of God is to focus on how His love acts, what His love does for us.

First, God’s love is gracious. While there are many good definitions for grace, we will use this simple one: God’s grace is His doing for others what they cannot do for themselves. Read John 3:16; Ephesians 1:3-14; Titus 2:11-14. What has God done for us that we could not do for ourselves? 

“Not the labours of my
hand can fulfill Thy
Law’s demands. Could
my zeal no respite
know, Could my tears
forever flow, All for
sin could not atone.
Thou must save, and
Thou alone.”
(Augustus M. Toplady,
Rock of Ages)

Second, God’s love is merciful. If grace is God doing for us what we don’t deserve, His mercy is Him not giving us what we deserve!

- What do we deserve? (Romans 6:23) death
- In His mercy, God did not destroy us in the moment we sinned. His mercy, combined with His grace allowed Him to shower His blessings on those who deserve nothing but death. Read Titus 3:1-7. What was the result of God’s mercy? 



GOD IS LOVE

Third, God's love is patient. The whole scheme of redemption reveals the patience of God. In the days of Noah the whole world deserved destruction, but the patience of God allowed Noah and his family to be saved (1Peter 3:20). Israel's constant breaking of the covenant made them worthy of destruction, but God was patient so that the promised Messiah could come into the world. And God is patient with us today... why? (2Peter 3:9,15) _____



Finally, God's love is revealed in it's scope. Who can feel and benefit from His love? (John 3:16; Romans 5:8) _____



“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:7–11)

APPRECIATING THE LOVE OF GOD

22

1. If God loves me so much, then He deserves my love in return (Matthew 27:37-40). However, we are also told that we should fear God (Matt. 10:28). How can we both love God and fear Him? How can “perfect love cast out fear” (1John 4:18)? _____



2. If I appreciate God's love and love Him in return, should obedience ever be an issue? Explain. (John 14:15) _____

1John 4:11 says that “if God so loved us, we also ought to love on another.” Looking at the four qualities of love discussed in this lesson, how can we fulfill that command?

SECTION 2: BECOMING MORE LIKE GOD

“by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”

(2 Peter 1:4, ESV)



True knowledge of God has an aim: we are “called to His own glory and excellence.” We are called to “become partakers of the divine nature.” In the first section of our study we explored several key areas of the divine nature, that is the traits and characteristics that make God glorious and excellent. Now, our knowledge of God must progress from knowledge of who he is to how we also can partake of the divine nature.

“For this reason, make every effort to supplement...”

The word translated “supplement” in the ESV (“add” in the KJV & NIV, “supply” in the NASB) is a very picturesque word. The word is *epichorēgeō* and is taken from the noun, *chorēgeō*, which literally means, “the leader of a chorus.” One of the most famed and enduring contributions of Greek culture is the drama. The great dramatic plays of Sophocles, Euripides and others are still known and performed today. These dramas required large choruses in order for them to be performed. The *chorēgeō* was the man who provided for the chorus’ training and equipment. Naturally, the *chorēgeō* took great pride in his chorus, so no expense was spared. The verb *epichorēgeō*, came to mean “lavish provision,” such as a *chorēgeō* would provide for his chorus.

If we are to gain a complete knowledge of God, to become partakers of the divine nature, we must “make every effort to supplement” our lives with the virtues listed in **2 Peter 1:5-7**. No expense can be spared, no cost is too great!

GETTING STARTED...

How would you define “faith”? _____

How would you define “faith” based on 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1? _____

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your **faith** with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”
(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

Faith is one of the essential aspects of Christianity, but one that is hard to define for some and wrongly defined by others. For some it is “blind,” for others “seeing is believing.” Tragically, for many the idea of faith never moves beyond a mental acceptance that there is a God and Jesus is His Son. Regardless of what your idea of faith is right now, none of us can ignore this vital concept; it is far too important:

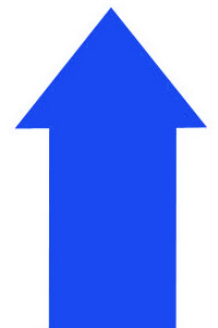
- Without faith, we cannot please God, Hebrews 11:6.
- Without faith, we cannot be righteous, Romans 3:22.
- Without faith, we cannot be saved, Ephesians 2:8-9.

The list of virtues found in 2 Peter 1:5-7 begins with faith. Our faith in God is the bedrock of our relationship with Him, it is the foundation of our becoming more like Him!

FAITH DEFINED:

The BDAG Greek - English Lexicon gives three main definitions for the Greek word *pistis*, the word that is translated as “faith” in our English bibles.

1. That which evokes trust and faith - the state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed.
 - “What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?” (Rom 3:3)
 - “But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.” (2Timothy 1:12)
2. State of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted.
 - “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)
3. That which is believed, body of faith/belief/teaching.
 - “I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 1:3)



SUPPLEMENT YOUR FAITH



UNDERSTANDING OUR FAITH:

To have faith in God, we must be able to trust God. As the Hebrew writer said, “whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him,” (Hebrews 11:6). But, how can we know that God rewards those who seek Him? Paul said that our faith is based on the word of God. How does the word of God allow us to trust Him? Give some specific examples. _____

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”
(Romans 10:17)

If we know we can trust God, we’ll do whatever He says. Hebrews 11 is called “faith’s hall of fame” for good reason. Each man and woman listed in this chapter came to realize that they could trust God, that He would grant the “heavenly country” to them if they would only be faithful to Him. They trusted in God that He would reward them, so they sought Him by being obedient to His will. Faith does not rule out obedience, faith demands obedience!

YOUR FAITH IN ACTION:

1. What promises has God made to you? (cf. John 3:16; 14:1-4; Mark 16:16) _____

2. How do you know that God will keep those promises? _____

3. If you have faith, will you refuse to obey any command that God gives? _____

4. If you have faith, do you have any excuse for sin? _____

**In your own words, why is faith necessary for you to
“become partakers of the divine nature”?**

GETTING STARTED...

In your opinion, what makes something
“excellent” as opposed to being simply “good”? _____

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with **virtue**, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”

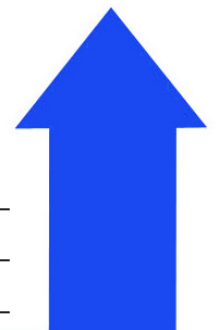
(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

VIRTUE DEFINED: MORAL EXCELLENCE (NASB), GOODNESS (NIV)

The word “virtue” in the ESV & KJV versions is translated from the Greek word *areté*. Defined, the word means anything that “**invites recognition, resulting in renown or glory**,” (BDAG). Originally, the word had no theological or moral connotations, so a fertile field or a productive animal could be described as *areté*. However, when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek this word was used to describe the splendor and glory of Jehovah God, along with the praises that men should give to Him.

- “His splendor (*areté*) covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.” (Habakkuk 3:3)
- “the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise (*areté*).” (Isaiah 43:21)
- “Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare his praise (*areté*) in the coastlands.” (Isaiah 42:12)
- “I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises (*areté*) of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.” (Isaiah 63:7)

This word also was used by Peter in 2 Peter 1:3 in describing God: “through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence (*areté*).” Why is God described as “excellent”? What about Him “invites recognition, resulting in renown or glory”? (Consider James 1:13; 1John 4:8; Titus 1:2; Lam. 3:22; 2Cor. 1:3) _____



BECOMING EXCELLENT

Peter's point in this section is that we are to achieve a full knowledge of God. Peter said in vs. 3 that God (*areté*) is excellent, so we should not be surprised to read in vs. 5 that we must supply virtue (*areté*, "moral excellence" NASB) to our lives. The Complete Word Study Dictionary gives an interesting definition for *areté*: "what gives man his worth." How true! Continuing to add virtue to our lives will give us worth before both men and God.

HOW CAN WE BECOME MORE EXCELLENT?

At Home, *Ephesians 5:22-6:4*

What other passages come to mind? _____

At Work, *Ephesians 6:5-9*

What other passages come to mind? _____

With Peers, *1 Peter 2:11-12*

What other passages come to mind? _____

With Brethren, *Philippians 2:1-11*

What other passages come to mind? _____

At All Times, *Philippians 4:4-9*

What other passages come to mind? _____

GETTING STARTED...

Percentage wise, how much of Christ's will do you understand? _____

What are some areas of Christ's will that you do not understand? _____

"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with **knowledge**, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love."

(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

KNOWLEDGE DEFINED:

At the beginning of our study we noted Peter's prayer in **2 Peter 1:2**, "may grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." At the time we noted that the word translated as "knowledge" in **vs. 2,3, & 8** is the Greek word *epignosis*, meaning "a full and complete knowledge." However, in **vs. 5** the more generic word, *gnosis*, is used for "knowledge." Note how this word is defined:

- "a right understanding... practical knowledge." (Pulpit Commentary)
- "emphasizes understanding rather than sensory perception." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)
- "the practical wisdom to deal with life." (Barclay)

As Christians our aim is to come to a full and complete knowledge (*epignosis*) of God and Christ. In order to accomplish this, we must understand (*gnosis*) the will of God and practice it in our lives!

GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH

Of all the apostles, Paul seems to have suffered the most from his Jewish kinsmen. As he travelled the known world preaching to Jew and Gentile alike, Paul would incite the wrath of zealous Jews because his message did not require adherence to Moses and it proclaimed that in Christ the Gentiles could achieve equal standing before God. The Jews would persecute Paul in one city and then follow him to the next in order to incite opposition. Yet, Paul still loved his Jewish kinsmen: "*Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*" (**Romans 10:1-2**) Paul knew that the Jews had great zeal for God in their devotion to Moses, but in rejecting the knowledge of Christ their zeal was fruitless.



WITH KNOWLEDGE



This is a cautionary tale for us and for all who live during these days of the “serve God any way you please” attitude. There are many good intentioned people, but if their zeal is without knowledge, their zeal is fruitless. Let your zeal be with knowledge! “*Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*” (Ephesians 5:17)

SOME THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW & UNDERSTAND

- Ephesians 3:19 _____

- 1 Timothy 2:4 _____

- 2 Peter 3:18 _____

- 2 Corinthians 4:14 _____

- 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 _____

- 1 Peter 1:17-19 _____

KEYS TO ADDING KNOWLEDGE:

1. **Identify the areas where you lack knowledge.** It’s difficult to learn when you don’t recognize a need.
2. **Focus on the Scriptures.** Spend the majority of your time reading what Jesus and His apostles said, not the comments of someone else!
3. **Find all that God has said on the matter.** Your knowledge of God’s word will be incomplete unless you consider all that God has said about the subject.
4. **Respect the context.** Every scripture has a context and if we don’t respect the context we may misuse the passage.

GETTING STARTED...

What aspects of your life do you have no problem controlling? _____

What aspects of your life do you have difficulty controlling? _____

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with **self-control**, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”

(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

DEFINING SELF-CONTROL

The Greek word *egkrateia* is translated as “self-control” or “temperance” in our English versions. This word was defined by Gerhard Kittel as “**having power over all things and the self**,” (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament). Generally speaking, we like to be in control of every aspect of our lives and we can become dismayed by all the things that are outside of our control. Yet, often times we have the most problem controlling the one thing that is always within our control: ourselves! So, Peter exhorts us to add self-control to our lives, to master all of our passions and desires.

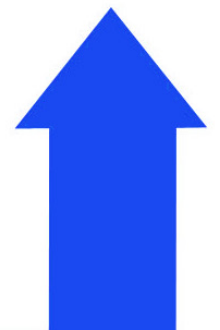
We read in Acts 24:24-25 how Paul preached the gospel to the Roman governor, Felix.

“After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, ‘Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.’”

(Acts 24:24-25)

This man was in control of an entire Roman province and ruled over thousands of people. However, history records that Felix did not control himself! He was a cruel man who did many things to incite the hatred of the Jewish people, including having Jonathan the high priest murdered. Felix’s wife Drusilla was actually his third wife. He divorced his previous two wives and persuaded Drusilla to divorce her rightful husband. So, we should not be surprised to read that when Paul preached the gospel to Felix, self-control was part of the message.

Even though Felix was alarmed by Paul’s message, there is no evidence that he ever changed his ways. However, we cannot overlook the importance of self-control in the gospel message. We cannot be righteous without controlling our passions and desires. Furthermore, in the coming judgment we will be held accountable for all that we say and do!



WITH SELF-CONTROL



HOW WELL DO YOU CONTROL...

Your Eyes? *Job 31:1; Matthew 5:27-28* _____

Your Ears? *Isaiah 33:15* _____

Your Mouth? *James 3:6-12* _____

Your Thoughts? *Philippians 4:8* _____

WE MUST CONTROL THESE THINGS!

“What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

(Mark 7:20-23 ESV)



STEPS TO GAINING SELF-CONTROL:

1. Realize that your eternal reward is on the line, *1 Corinthians 9:25*.
2. Recognize that it takes daily discipline, *1 Corinthians 9:27*.
3. Avoid situations where you are more likely to lose control, *2 Timothy 2:22*.
4. As you are ridding your life of “bad things,” pursue “good things,” *1 Timothy 6:11*.
5. Pray! *2 Thessalonians 1:11*
6. When you fall short, repent and determine to do better, *1 John 1:8-9*.

GETTING STARTED...

Have you ever felt that being a Christian is too hard? If so, why? _____

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with **steadfastness**, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”

(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

DEFINING STEADFASTNESS: PATIENCE (KJV), PERSEVERANCE (NAS,NIV)

The Greek word *hypomonē* is alternately translated as “steadfastness” in the ESV, “patience” in the KJV and “perseverance” in the NAS and NIV versions. It is a word of rich meaning and depth:

- “the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.” (Thayer)
- “refers to that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial.” (Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament)

So, the basic idea is that of **endurance**. A Christian has set his eyes on heaven, but Satan has determined to make our way difficult. A Christian must be steadfast and endure whatever attacks Satan launches at him!

WHAT KIND OF SOIL ARE YOU?

You are probably familiar with Jesus’ parable of the sower. Carefully read the parable and Jesus’ explanation in **Luke 8:4-15** and answer these questions:

1. According to Jesus’ explanation, why did the seed that fell on stony ground eventually wither away? _____
2. The seed that fell on good ground are “those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with _____.”

One major factor distinguished the good soil from the stony ground: *hypomonē*. The stony ground (heart) did not endure the times of trial, but the good soil (heart) produces fruit with patience (*hypomonē*). Peter exhorts us to add steadfastness, to endure whatever trials might come our way. What kind of soil are you?



WITH STEADFASTNESS



KEYS TO ADDING STEADFASTNESS:

1. **Fix your eyes on your hope.** “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5 ESV)
2. **Understand that good can come from trials.** “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4 ESV)
3. **Know that your reward is tied to endurance.** “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” (Hebrews 10:36 ESV)
4. **Remember that the Lord endured for you... now endure for Him!** “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.” (Hebrews 12:1-3 ESV)

EQUIP YOURSELF TO ENDURE, EPHESIANS 6:13-18

The apostle Paul understood that we are engaged in a spiritual war against Satan, but we have God on our side and He has supplied us with all that we need to stand. How can each article of God’s armor help us to stand against the devil?

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”

(Ephesians 6:11 ESV)

- Truth _____
- Righteousness _____
- The Gospel of Peace _____
- Faith _____
- Salvation _____
- The Word of God _____
- Prayer _____

GETTING STARTED...

Think of the person you respect the most. How do you treat him or her? _____


“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with **godliness**, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”


(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

DEFINING GODLINESS:

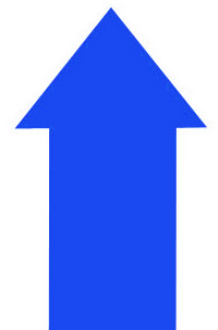
The Greek word *eusebeia* is translated as “godliness” in our English Bibles. Literally, the word means “to worship well.” To worship is to show reverence and respect to the object of worship. The term *eusebeia* seeks to impress upon us that reverence and respect must always be shown to God; He deserves that we worship Him well! Perhaps a more fitting definition for *eusebeia* is given by the Arndt and Gingrich lexicon: “**awesome respect accorded to God.**”

WHY DOES GOD DESERVE OUR RESPECT?

- He created us, *Genesis 2:7; Psalm 139:13-14.* 
- Every good and perfect gift comes from Him, *James 1:17.* Name some: _____

- He sent His Son to die for the ungodly (including you and me), *John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 Timothy 3:16.* 
- He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing *Ephesians 1:3-14.*

What are they? _____



WITH GODLINESS



IF I RESPECT GOD...

How Should I Treat His Commands? *Matt. 28:20; 2 John 9; 1 John 5:2* _____



How Should I View Sin? *Eph. 4:17-20; 5:1-4; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 3:1-3* _____



How Should I View Worship? *Acts 2:42, 46-47; Eph. 5:19-20; Heb. 10:24-25* _____

How Should I Treat My Brethren? *1 John 4:7-12* _____



How Should I Respond When Faced With A “Judgment Call”? (A judgment call is any situation where we lack definitive Bible instruction. For instance, when is something immodest or what kind of television programming should a Christians watch?) *1 Timothy 6:11*



WE MUST PURSUE GODLINESS NOW BECAUSE A DAY WILL COME WHEN THIS WORLD WILL NO LONGER EXIST!

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!” (2Peter 3:10-12 ESV)

GETTING STARTED...

If you have siblings chances are that sometime(s) they have done something to make you very angry, but you still love them. Why? _____

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with love.”

(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

DEFINING BROTHERLY AFFECTION:

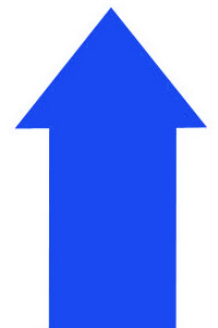
The Greek word *philadelphia* is translated as “brotherly affection” and “brotherly kindness” in our English translations. This word combines the Greek words for love (*phileō*) and brother (*adelphos*), so it literally means, “the love of brothers.” Originally the term was used to express the intimate relationship between siblings in the same family. Over time the term was extended to members of the extended family and eventually to members of the same nation. The Jews viewed *philadelphia* in this manner: all members of the Jewish nation were brethren and were thus due brotherly affection.

However, Jesus broadened the scope of brotherly affection even farther. Even though He had an earthly family, Jesus boldly stated that “*whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother*,” (Matthew 12:50 ESV). Since all disciples of Jesus are considered “brothers,” we should not be surprised to read commands such as this: “*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor*,” (Romans 12:10 ESV).

WHY WE ARE BRETHREN:

If you are familiar with your New Testament history you understand that the first major controversy in the church was over the acceptance of Gentiles in the church (see Acts 10-11, 15). For centuries the Jews viewed the Gentiles as unclean and unholy people, but within Christ’s church both Jews and Gentiles were brought together in a common brotherhood. But how? “*for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*,” (Galatians 3:26-28 ESV).

We will do well to remember this fact. Just as there are differences between siblings in a family, there are differences between brothers and sisters in



WITH BROTHERLY AFFECTION



the church and sometimes those differences lead to disagreements and hurt feelings. However, let us always remember that we are brethren because the love of our Father has made us His children, *1 John 3:1*. So, let us always remember our responsibility to love each other. “*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him,*” (1 John 5:1 ESV).

WHAT BROTHERLY AFFECTION WILL DO:

The Scriptures clearly reveal that “brotherly affection” is much more than how we feel about each other. Rather, it encompasses every aspect of how we behave towards each other. Read the Scriptures listed and describe what we will do and what we will not do if we have brotherly affection for each other.

Matthew 18:15-17

Matthew 18:21-35

Galatians 5:13-15

Galatians 6:1-2

Galatians 6:9-10

James 2:1-9

1 John 3:17-18

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Philippians 2:1-5

“NOW CONCERNING BROTHERLY LOVE YOU HAVE NO NEED FOR ANYONE TO WRITE TO YOU, FOR YOU YOURSELVES HAVE BEEN TAUGHT BY GOD TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

(1 THESSALONIANS 4:9 ESV)

GETTING STARTED...

Why do you love God? _____

Why does God love you? _____

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with **love**.”

(2Peter 1:5-7 ESV)

DEFINING LOVE: CHARITY (KJV)

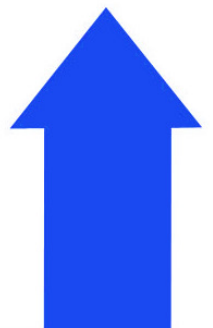
You may think it odd that the final two virtues in this list are brotherly affection and love. After all, we noted that *philadelphia*, the word translated as brotherly affection, has *phileō* as its root, a word that means “love.” So, you may be asking how that “love” is any different than this “love.” In this case it is the Greek word *agapē* that is translated as love, or charity, in our English versions. Note how this word is defined:

- “an attitude of appreciation resulting from a conscious evaluation and choice,” (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament).
- “love by deliberate choice,” (Robertson’s Word Pictures).

We love (*phileō*) our brothers and sisters because we have a natural attachment to them. Within the church we are to have this kind of love because of the common relationship we have with God. However, when we love (*agapē*) someone with whom we share no attachment, we have chosen to love him or her. So, the two words don’t necessarily imply a difference of feeling or even emotion, rather the two words emphasize the reason why we love someone.

THE LOVE OF GOD:

We should be impressed that when the Bible speaks of God’s love for us, the word used is *agapē* and not *phileō*. God chose to love us, even though we were not deserving of His love: “*God shows his love (agapē) for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,*” (Romans 5:8 ESV). How marvelous it is to comprehend that God gave His Son not because we deserved it, but because He chose to love us! “*For God so loved (agapē) the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life,*” (John 3:16 ESV). Can any of us truly comprehend that kind of love?



WITH LOVE




“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are,” (1 John 3:1 ESV).

“to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,” (Ephesians 3:19 ESV).

IF YOU LOVE GOD:

We should also be impressed that when we are exhorted to love God, the word *agapē* is used and not *phileō*. In other words, our love for God must be a conscious choice, and as we just noticed we always have reason to love Him! Also, let us not forget that God’s love for us prompted Him to act: He gave His Son. Our love for God must also prompt action.

- Matthew 22:37 
- John 15:9-10 _____
- 1 John 5:3 _____
- Revelation 12:11 _____

IF YOU LOVE OTHERS:

Just as we are exhorted to love (*agapē*) our Father we are also exhorted to love (*agapē*) our fellow man, both those inside and outside the body of Christ. Remember, God loves us even though we don’t deserve His love. Note who deserves our love according to these passages:

- Matthew 5:43-44 _____
- Luke 10:25-37 _____

But what does it mean to love others? Again, we must remember that God’s love for us prompted action. So, our love for others must prompt action on our part. Perhaps the fullest definition of love (*agapē*) was given by Paul in *1 Corinthians 13:4-7*. How can this passage help us to love others?

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

SECTION 3: PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”

(2 Peter 1:10, ESV)



The apostle Peter exhorted us both to know the virtues listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7, and to apply them to every walk of life. This is the only way we can be both effective and fruitful in our knowledge of Jesus; this is the only way we can come to a full knowledge (epignosis) of God. Furthermore, this is the only way we can be assured that the “entrance into the eternal kingdom,” will be provided to us!

In this section we will apply the principles already discussed to every facet of our life, aiming to live more godly lives. We will discuss:

- How to live more godly lives at home.
- How to live more godly lives in professional settings (work and school).
- How to live more godly lives in social settings.
- How to live more godly lives when with our brethren.
- How to live more godly lives during times of trial.

These sessions are meant to be discussions, so look over the material beforehand and reference what we have already covered. Seek to apply these timeless principles to your life! How can you be more like your God?

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A photograph of three people (two women and one man) holding hands and smiling. They are positioned against a background that is split horizontally into a red top half and a white bottom half. The number '36' is printed in a large, bold, black font on the white background, partially overlapping the people.

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- WITH VIRTUE
- WITH KNOWLEDGE
- WITH SELF-CONTROL
- WITH STEADFASTNESS
- WITH GODLINESS
- WITH BROTHERLY AFFECTION
- WITH LOVE

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A photograph of three people (two women and one man) holding hands in a line. They are positioned against a background that is split horizontally into a red top half and a white bottom half. The number '38' is printed in a large, bold, black font on the white background, partially overlapping the people. The person on the left is a woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark top and shorts. The person in the middle is a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and jeans. The person on the right is a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark top and jeans.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

- WITH VIRTUE
- WITH KNOWLEDGE
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- WITH LOVE

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

- WITH VIRTUE
- WITH KNOWLEDGE
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- WITH STEADFASTNESS
- WITH GODLINESS
- WITH BROTHERLY AFFECTION
- WITH LOVE

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



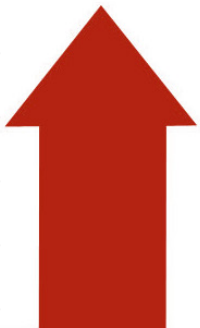
A photograph of three people (two women and one man) holding hands in a line. They are positioned against a background that is split horizontally into a red top half and a white bottom half. The number '42' is printed in a large, black, serif font, centered over the white section and partially overlapping the individuals. The person on the left is a woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark top and a light skirt. The person in the middle is a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and light jeans. The person on the right is a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark top and light jeans.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

- WITH VIRTUE
- WITH KNOWLEDGE
- WITH SELF-CONTROL
- WITH STEADFASTNESS
- WITH GODLINESS
- WITH BROTHERLY AFFECTION
- WITH LOVE

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SECTION 4: STAYING FOCUSED ON THE GOAL

“For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.”

(2 Peter 1:9, ESV)



The principles discussed in these lessons were written by Peter so that we may obtain the grace and peace offered by God. As Christians we have escaped “the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire,” (2Peter 1:4), but we must beware of going back to those same sinful desires. “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first,” (2Peter 2:20 ESV). Thus we are exhorted to adorn our lives with the virtues listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7, so that we can avoid falling back into a corrupt state. If we fail to apply these virtues, Peter refers to us as being “blind.”


The apostle understood that we are engaged in a spiritual war: “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour,” (1Peter 5:8 ESV). Satan has many tricks and schemes, so we conclude our study by examining several ways that Satan seeks to blind us from what is truly important in life.

DEFINING PRIDE

There are a variety of words used in both the Old and New Testament for pride, but the basic idea in all of them is an elevation of self while looking down on others. Before we move on to how pride is so prevalent in our lives, let's first note some things that are not pride:


- The danger of pride should not be combatted with false-modesty. If you do something well you shouldn't act as if you don't do it well.
- Likewise, taking pleasure in being praised is not pride. Doing things for the praise would certainly be a symptom of pride, but to do something well and be gratified by the praise is not pride.
- We often talk of "being proud" of those close to us: a child, grandchild, etc. Such is generally a term of admiration, not a way of looking down on others.

THE PROBLEM OF PRIDE:

Read Proverbs 6:16-17, 16:5,18; James 4:6; 1Peter 5:5. Describe God's attitude toward pride: 

It's little wonder that C.S. Lewis described pride as, "the ultimate sin... it is the complete anti-God state of mind." (Mere Christianity)

HOW PRIDE IS MANIFEST:

1. Pride issues from the _____, Mark 7:20-23. 
2. Pride is often seen in how we _____ at others, Proverbs 30:13.
3. Pride is manifest in how we treat others.
 - A proud person may is often insolent (Romans 1:30), meaning he takes pleasure in how others are afflicted.
 - A proud person may fail to help someone who needs their help (1Tim. 6:7) 17-18
4. Pride is seen in how we _____, Romans 1:30; 2Timothy 3:2.
5. Can you think of other ways that pride is manifest? _____

Impatience, unforgiving



OVERCOMING PRIDE

STEPS IN OVERCOMING PRIDE

1. Recognize that you have a problem.

- Pride is one of those things we detest in others, but rarely recognize in ourselves. Yet, the Scriptures would indicate that all of us suffer from this malady, 1John 2:16.
- CS Lewis, “If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.” (Mere Christianity)

2. Consider why God hates pride so much.

- Leads to enmity, Proverbs 13:10.
- Could result in your rejecting the council of God, Proverbs 14:12.
- Thus, obedience to the two great commandments becomes impossible! Matt. 22:34-40
- CS Lewis, “As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.” (Mere Christianity)

3. Remember your own failings. See 1Timothy 1:15.

4. Don’t apply double-standards. It is harder to look down on the flaws of others when you realize your own flaws, Matthew 7:1-5.

5. See people as God sees them. See them as God sees you! God places great value on each person. He gave His son to “redeem” us, Eph. 1:7; 1Peter 1:18-19. You only redeem something that is very valuable to you. He calls us to treat each other in the way that He treated us, John 15:12-14.

6. You are a child of God, and you need to act like Him! 1John 3:10-18.

DISCUSSION: SOCIAL MEDIA & PRIDE:

- In your experience, how does social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) fuel pride? _____

- Based on what we’ve studied, how can we use social media in ways that glorify God and help His cause? _____

TEN MEN: A LESSON IN GRATITUDE, LUKE 17:11-19

1. All ten men shared a dreaded and painful affliction: leprosy.
 - “This disease ‘begins with specks on the eyelids and on the palms, gradually spreading over the body, bleaching the hair white wherever they appear, crusting the affected parts with white scales, and causing terrible sores and swellings. From the skin the disease eats inward to the bones, rotting the whole body piecemeal.’” (Easton’s Bible Dictionary)
 - What did leprosy mean for these men socially? Leviticus 13:45-46 _____

2. All ten men pleaded with Jesus for mercy.
 - Note: according to the Law they should have cried out “Unclean, Unclean!” as Jesus approached. What did these men cry out? _____
3. All ten men demonstrated a measure of faith.
 - According to Leviticus 13-14, the priests were in charge of leprous cases. It was they who determined if a condition was leprous and only the priest could pronounce a man cleansed of his leprosy.
 - Jesus commanded them to go to the priest before they were cleansed. The fact that they went as Jesus commanded shows their faith that they would be healed.
4. Only one returned to show gratitude.

THE TRAGEDY OF INGRATITUDE

Ingratitude is an ugly trait. We marvel when we see it in others and recoil in horror when we see it in ourselves. However, ingratitude is more than just an occasional character flaw. Ingratitude can lead to a departure from God! Read Romans 1:21-23.

- Paul is describing how the world departed from God. How did that process begin? (vs 21) _____
- What did ingratitude lead to? _____

- In your opinion, how could ingratitude lead to further departure from God? _____




OVERCOMING INGRATITUDE



LESSONS IN GRATITUDE


1. Gratitude springs from an understanding of what has been done for me, an appreciation of the gifts that have been received.

- The Samaritan was grateful because he recognized the great mercy Jesus had on him.
 - Read Mark 10:45; Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:8-9; 2Cor 5:17-19. Based on these passages, why should we be grateful? 
-
-

2. Gratitude is transformative.

- When we are mindful of what God has done for us, following Him is no longer a matter of obligation, but of gratitude! 1 Peter 2:1-3.
- This is why it is possible to be slaves who love their Master! Romans 6:20-23.

3. Gratitude needs to be expressed.

- The Samaritan returned to express his gratitude, but the nine did not. No doubt, with a touch of sadness Jesus asked, “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?”
 -  • Jesus has cleansed us, so thankfulness should characterize the life of every Christian, Eph. ⁵6:20; 1Thess. 5:18.
 - Wouldn’t it be terrible for Jesus to say of us, “Where are you?”
-

SHOWING GRATITUDE THIS WEEK

- » If your zeal has waned, then renew your gratitude. Read the crucifixion accounts, Ephesians 2, etc. and remember what Jesus did that for you!
 - » Set aside some time daily to give thanks. Read and meditate every day. Pray, not just making petitions known, but truly giving thanks for what God has done.
 - » If needed, start thinking differently about gatherings of the church (worship services, gospel meetings). Don’t think of them as obligations, but as opportunities to express gratitude with your brethren.
 - » When faced with difficult decisions during the week, don’t think about what God has obligated you to do, think in terms of how you can show gratitude to the one who showed mercy to you!
 - » What other ways can you think of showing gratitude this week? _____
-
-
-

DEFINING MATERIALISM

The word “materialism” is never found in the Bible, but it is closely allied with the sin of “covetousness,” which is soundly condemned in the Scriptures. A simple definition of covetousness is “the desire to have more,” (Vine’s). Materialism has been defined by one Christian as, “the worship of finite things of this world rather than the infinite things of the Spirit of God.” So, a simple definition of materialism is **“to place improper emphasis on things.”**

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WHAT THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT MATERIALISM:

- **Exodus 20:17** “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”
- **Proverbs 11:28** “Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.”
- **Luke 12:15** “And he said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”
- **Ephesians 5:3** “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”
- **Colossians 3:5-6** “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.”
- **1 Timothy 6:17** “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.”
- **Hebrews 13:5** “Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

WHY MATERIALISM IS SUCH A DANGER:

Look again at Paul’s words in 1 Timothy 6:17, “*As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.*” Materialism is a great danger because it is Satan’s aim to have us place our confidence in the things we have rather than God. This is certainly a danger in a prosperous society where many view themselves as being self-sufficient. We must be on our guard lest we fall into Satan’s trap. “*So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.*” (Luke 12:21)



OVERCOMING MATERIALISM



**IN YOUR OWN WORDS DESCRIBE
HOW MATERIALISM CAN
DESTROY A GODLY LIFE:**

**SOME AFFECTS OF
MATERIALISM:**

1. Jealousy of what others have
2. Discontentment with what we have
3. Debt because we want what we cannot afford
4. Worry because of debt
5. Stress because of debt and worry.
6. _____
7. _____

**ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 6:19-33, WHO CAN BE
GUILTY OF MATERIALISM?**

TWO KEYS TO COMBATTING MATERIALISM:

1. According to Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6-8, what is one key to combatting materialism? How can you apply this to your life?



2. According to *Matthew 6:33*, what is the other key to combatting materialism? How can you apply this to your life?

**“Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, ‘Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.’”
(Proverbs 30:8-9 ESV)**

WHAT IS AN OVERCROWDED LIFESTYLE?

- Most likely, it is the schedule you keep on a daily basis

DO YOU HAVE AN OVERCROWDED LIFESTYLE?

- What commitments (work, family, social, church, etc.) do you have every week?

- How many times a week do you share a meal with your family (without the TV on)? ____

- How often do you miss a meeting of the church because of your schedule?

- How often do you go through a day without spending time in prayer or reading the Scriptures? _____

- Do you think your schedule is too crowded? _____

THE PROBLEM WITH OVERCROWDED LIFESTYLES:

Most Americans pride themselves over being “busy.” If we’re not going somewhere or doing something then we aren’t being productive. Sadly, we often don’t recognize how our overcrowded schedules are harming us. Our health deteriorates, but we’re too busy to eat right, exercise or see the doctor. Our families suffer, but we’re too busy to notice or to do anything about it. Most tragically, our spiritual lives are dying! Jesus warned us about this in the parable of the sower:

“As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.” (Matthew 13:22)



Too often, Christians lie to themselves saying that our schedules are not affecting us spiritually. Satan has truly blinded us into not seeing how our busy schedules are choking the spiritual life out of us!



BALANCING CROWDED LIVES



IS YOUR SCHEDULE AFFECTING YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE?

1. Has it affected your worshipping with the saints? Hebrews 10:24-25 _____
2. Has it affected your reading the Scriptures? 2 Timothy 3:14-17 _____
3. Has it affected your time in prayer? Luke 5:16; 1 Thess. 5:17 _____
4. Has it affected your time in meditation? 1 Timothy 4:15; Psalm 119:48  _____
5. Has it affected your evangelistic efforts? Romans 1:16 _____
6. Has it affected your ability to show hospitality? Romans 12:13 _____
7. Has it affected your ability to meet the needs of people? Galatians 6:10  _____

A CALL TO RE-FOCUS:

- Remember that our goal on this earth is to live quiet and peaceful lives. *“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”* (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- Remember that we are to live wisely and redeem the time we have. *“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”* (Ephesians 5:15-16)
- Remember you are called to be a living sacrifice. *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”* (Romans 12:1)
- Remember that your heart is to be pure, i.e. solely devoted to God. *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* (Matthew 5:8)
- Remember that your goal is heaven, not anything in this life! *“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 3:13-14)

“Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.’ But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.’” (Luke 10:38-42)

DEFINING RECREATION:

- “Rejuvenation so that we can return to productive work is the essence of re-creation.”
- Gary Henry

DOES YOUR IDEA OF RECREATION MATCH THE DEFINITION?

1. What activities do you pursue as recreation?

2. Giving your best estimate, how much time do you spend every week pursuing recreational activities? _____

3. How much time would you like to spend every week on recreational activities?

4. Do you feel entitled to some recreation every day? _____

5. Does your idea of recreation match the definition given above? _____

RECREATION AND PLEASURE ARE NOT WRONG:

- **Ecclesiastes 5:18** “Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot.”
- **Proverbs 15:13** “A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.”
- **Proverbs 15:15** “All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful of heart has a continual feast.”
- **Proverbs 17:22** “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”

According to the principles taught in these passages, recreation has a place in our lives. God wants us to have joyful and glad hearts, but that is hard to have if our lives are consumed with daily tasks and chores. There are times when we need to “re-create.” However, Satan can use recreation to our detriment. **This occurs when recreation, which should be a secondary part of life, becomes our primary focus.**



BALANCING RECREATION



THINGS RECREATION CAN CONSUME:

- **Our money.** How could this make living a godly life difficult? Proverbs 21:17;
1Timothy 6:17-19

- **Our time.** How could this make living a godly life difficult? Galatians 6:10;
Ephesians 5:16

- **Our interest.** How could this make living a godly life difficult? Colossians 3:1-2;
Luke 8:14

THE SOLUTION:

The only solution is to remember the role that recreation should have in our lives. Recreation is for our good, but it is not the purpose of life. Recreation should play a secondary role in our lives, finding time to enjoy life so that we can be “re-created” for the work we have to do, especially the Lord’s work!

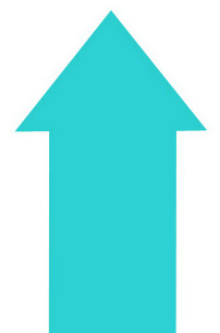
“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

(2 Peter 1:3–11)

OUR GOAL IS ATTAINABLE

The purpose of Peter’s words and of our class is to “become partakers of the divine nature,” that is to become more and more like God, i.e. Godly Men & Women. God has provided the guidance for how we can be more like Him, by supplementing our faith with the qualities listed in vs. 5-7. So, the promise in vs. 10-11 is significant: we can know that we are becoming the people God wants us to be! We can make our election sure! We can be confident that our “entrance into the eternal kingdom” is “richly provided”! Talk about Blessed Assurance!

God is for us, He wants us to be like Him, He wants us to be in His Eternal Kingdom! As we’ve discussed, putting the principles of the world away and adding godly qualities is a hard and painful process. But we can do it, God has said we can and that He will help us! Let that knowledge motivate and encourage you during any difficult times you experience.



**CONCLUSION: MAKE YOUR
CALLING & ELECTION SURE**



FINAL THINGS:

- What questions do you have about anything we've discussed?

- Identify the principles discussed in the class that have helped you.

- Are there areas that were not discussed that should be in future classes?
