



GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Lesson 2: Growing in Faithfulness

Last Week: John 15:1-8

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

- ❑ Growing spiritually is a partnership between you and God.
- ❑ God uses His Word, His Spirit and the circumstances in our lives to cause us to grow spiritually.
- ❑ We must remain in Christ in order to grow.
- ❑ Our lives are to be fruitful, just like the vine is fruitful.
- ❑ If you remain in Him:
 - ❑ You will bear much fruit
 - ❑ He will give you what you ask for
 - ❑ You will glorify God
 - ❑ And you will show that you are His disciple.

Choose your thoughts carefully

- Spiritual growth is not automatic, we must make choices in order to grow
- So be careful what you choose to think about
 - ▣ Rom 12:2 - ...do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
 - ▣ Phil 4:8 - ...if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.
- What you think about influences how you feel and how you act



Today's Text: 2 Peter 1:3-11

- *“make every effort to add to your faith”*
 - ▣ Our Motivation for Wanting to Grow
 - ▣ Making Every Effort to Grow
 - ▣ Add to Your Faith
 - ▣ You Cannot Grow and Be Stationary
 - ▣ When We Forget the Cross
 - ▣ Memory Verse

2 Peter 1:3-4

- 3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

We have everything we need

- What has the Lord given you for life and godliness? (vs 3)
- We have been given everything we need:
 - ▣ knowledge of Him who called us (that is Jesus)
 - ▣ And God's very great and precious promises (the word of God)
- God has provided all that is necessary for our spiritual growth,
- Therefore we can live a life that is both productive and fruitful.

Our motivation for wanting to grow

- What does it mean to participate in the divine nature? (vs 4)
 - ▣ To grow to be more like Jesus
 - ▣ Our knowledge of Christ is what enables us to escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires
- In God's Word we find the promises that are our motivation
- What promises motivate you?
 - ▣ 2 Pet 1:10-11 - For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

List

2 Peter 1:5-9

- 5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

Making Every Effort (vs 5)

- The person who wants to excel in sports, in school, in music, etc. has to put forth effort.
- Nothing is achieved without effort.
- The same is true with our spiritual life
- We must put forth the effort to grow as we co-operate with God.
- There may be challenges or circumstances that make it difficult
 - ▣ Remember: God prunes the branches that bear fruit in order to make them bear more fruit.

Question:

- To what reason is Peter referring in verse 5?
 - “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith”...
 - In other words, what does the scripture say is the reason we are to add these virtues to our faith?
- There are several possibilities, what is your interpretation?
 - Because of what He has given us
 - Because He called us
 - Because He has given us His very great and precious promises
 - So that We may participate in the divine nature
 - So that We may escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires

List

Add to Your Faith (vs 5-7)

“make every effort to add to your faith...”

Goodness	The quality of being good; praiseworthy character; moral excellence. (Ex 33:19; Rom 2:4).
Knowledge	The truth or facts of life that a person acquires either through experience or thought. The greatest truth is that about God (John 8:31-32).
Self Control	Control of one's actions or emotions by will. The opposite of rage, hatred, anger, verbal abuse, etc.
Perseverance	Faithful to the end, single minded. The steadfast effort to follow God's commands and to do His will.
Godliness	Godly qualities. Piety or reverence toward God (1 Tim 2:1-2).
Brotherly Kindness	Having a love for all people. The love of fellow Christians for one another. (Rom 12:10, 1 Peter 2:17, 1 Peter 3:8).
Love	This is sacrificial love and is the mark of a true disciple (John 13:34-35)

Question:

□ You are to add these seven graces to your faith. How will you do that?

□ Remain in Christ (abide in Him and He will abide in you)

□ Choose to use the tools that God has provided to us:

■ His divine power (the Spirit)

■ His very great and precious promises (the Bible)

□ You can be more deliberate:

■ Effort – Set a schedule for study, prayer and practice

■ Study – Know what God's word tells us about these graces/virtues/fruit

■ Prayer – Must be an element of your plan

■ Practice – Try to practice using these virtues

List

Being Effective & Productive (vs 8)

- Can you be stationary in your use of these virtues?
 - ▣ We are to have these seven characteristics 'in increasing measure.'
 - ▣ We co-operate with God as He works in our life.
 - Phil 2:12-13 - ...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.
 - ▣ By adding these seven virtues to our faith and doing so in increasing measure brings astonishing results.
 - ▣ You will never be 'ineffective or unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

When We Forget the Cross

- What is it like if you do not have these qualities? (vs 9)
 - vs 9 – But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.
 - The blindness referred to here is figurative
 - The passage describes a person who does not look back to the cross
 - He has become so short sided that he is blind
 - The Christian who does not grow, who does not mature is one who has forgotten the wonder of His salvation.
 - He has forgotten the cross that demonstrates God's love, mercy and grace for Him.
 - When we lose sight of the cross we cannot expect to grow spiritually.

2 Peter 1:10-11

- 10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - ▣ We should be motivated to add these virtues to our life
 - ▣ By doing so we assure our calling and election as God's children
 - ▣ By doing these things we have 2 promises:
 - We will never fall
 - We will have eternal life

Summary:

“...if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”

- God has provided all that is necessary for our spiritual growth
- We participate in His divine nature by growing to be more like Jesus
- We must put forth the effort to grow as we co-operate with God.
- In order to add these graces to our faith, we must remain in Him and use the tools that God has provided
- We must add these virtues in increasing measure in order to be effective and productive
- If we do not have them, it is like we are blind
- By doing these things we have 2 promises:
 - ▣ We will never fall
 - ▣ We will have eternal life



Memory verse: Phil 2:12-13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.