

Fruitful Foundations: Building Godly Qualities in Our Christian Life by God's Grace

Pastor Adam Hall ☞ Dryden First Baptist Church ☞ Nov 19, 2023

2 Peter 1:5-8 English Standard Version

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ 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.

Introduction and Background

- there is a wild and crazy book written by a Scottish author called "The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner"
- by the title alone it would appear to be a best seller in the Christian world and a theological powerhouse book
- but in actual fact, this book was a novel about an individual who claimed to have experienced God's grace but did not apply it to his life
- this individual claimed that he was a Christian and that all his sins were forgiven, but he also foolishly claimed that he could do what he wanted to and did not need to submit to Jesus Christ as his Lord
- this individual got drunk, indulged in all sorts of sexual immorality and even tried to justify murder
- he claimed that he could do this because he was a Christian and would be forgiven

- this sounds like a theological and pastoral nightmare
- I hope that none one listening could ever be accused of living such a nightmare
- the author wrote this book to speak about the dangers of cheap grace which means grace without discipleship
- this means that you are only professing to follow Jesus in words, but your heart, desires and life are very far from Jesus
- in other words, you claim to follow Jesus, but you are not actually following Jesus Christ

- we need to be ultra-clear today about the message of salvation and I will do this by quoting Ephesians 2

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- we are saved by grace and we receive the grace of God through faith
- we are NOT saved by works, because if we were saved by works we could do some boasting
- but the grace of God saves us, forgives all our sins, we pass from death to life and are made new
- but another part of the good news of Jesus is that we are saved and given grace so that we can live out good works
- if we are saved by Christ, we progress to become more like Jesus Christ by His grace as well
- we are saved by Christ so that we can be zealous for doing His good works
- if you are saved by the grace and work of Jesus Christ, I hope you live like you are saved by God's grace

- today, we are in now in the next section of 2 Peter 1:5-8, where Peter talks about putting on godly characteristics in the life of the Christian

- the book of 2 Peter is the 2nd book written by Peter in the New Testament

- 2 Peter was written to encourage these Christians in the gospel and holy living
- 2 Peter was written to warn the church about the false teachers who were in their midst teaching a false gospel and distorting Jesus Christ
- 2 Peter was written to encourage these Christians because of the promise of the hope of eternal life

1) (1:5a) God's Grace – the Foundation

(1:5a) For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith

- the phrase "for this very reason" reminds us of what Peter has been teaching us in 2 Peter 1:3-4

2 Peter 1:3-4 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, ⁴ 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.

- do you remember the 5 amazing truths that are found in 2 Peter 1:3-4?

1) the divine power of Christ grants us everything we need for life and godliness

- because of the work of Jesus on the cross and the power of His salvation given to sinners, we have been given life and we are to live for the glory of Jesus Christ

- also the divine power refers to the work of the power of the Holy Spirit

- because Christians have been given the Holy Spirit, they are able to live Spirit-filled lives to the glory of God

2) we are called by God so that we can know Him

- knowing the Lord refers to the intimately knowing Jesus and being in union with Jesus Christ

3) we are given precious and very great promises

- in the book of 2 Peter, we see many promises that are very great and precious

- for instance, we are given eternal life with God which is the promise of the new heavens and the new earth

4) by God's grace, we can partake of the divine nature of God

- this means that we can have an intimate union with God and have fellowship in the Holy Spirit

5) we escape the corruption in the world caused by sin

- we escape the corruption of the judgment of sin

- we also escape the corruption of the sorrow that sin brings when we rebel against God

- these are amazing and deep truths that ought to encourage us to live a holy life

- because of these truths that Peter records, we are to "supplement our faith"

- we see in this passage that faith in Christ is at the foundation of everything

- our trust in Christ is the start of our Christian life, but by God's grace we are to progress daily in these godly characteristics Peter is about to list

- do you also notice the intensity which we are to add these characteristics to our faith?

- we are to make "every effort"

- this is not a half-hearted attempt

- this is not like how the Maple Leaf's have played hockey for over the last 50 or so years

- this is not laziness

- with our whole heart and with our whole being we are to add these characteristics to our life

2) (1:5b-7) 7 Godly Characteristics to Add to Our Faith

- Peter gives us a list of qualities that are to be evident and daily practiced in our lives

- there are many different characteristics that we are to put on daily so this list is certainly not exclusive

- this list is similar to the other virtue lists in the New Testament

- do you remember the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5?

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

- also Paul in the book of Colossians, called these Christians to put on godly characteristics like one would put on clothing

Colossians 3:12-14 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

- something else we should know about these 7 characteristics is that we are to progress with all of them

- we do not start with virtue and then work on knowledge when we have perfected virtue
- these are all godly characteristics that we are to put on daily with our whole heart

(1:5b) faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

1) Virtue

- to live a virtuous life means that you have integrity in accordance to God's word
- this would mean that your commitment and devotion to Jesus Christ is admirable
- a virtuous Christian is someone who follows the Lord even when the pressure is on
- this virtuous Christian lives for the Lord and has a zeal for the Lord
- the commands of God are at the forefront of the heart and life of the virtuous Christian

- this same word is used by Paul in Philippians to speak about our thought life
- the ESV translates this word in Philippians 4:8 as "worthy of praise"

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything **worthy of praise**, think about these things.

- because of God's grace, let us make every effort to live a life that is worthy of praise from God

2) Knowledge

- we are called by Peter to grow in knowledge – which in this context refers to growing in the knowledge about Jesus Christ
- this would mean, that daily we are attempting to fill our minds with the knowledge of Jesus Christ

- we get into and study the word of God
- we ponder what the Bible says about the Lord Jesus Christ
- but we also store in our hearts the commands of God

- because of God's grace, let us make every effort to live a life of knowledge, growing in Jesus, who He is, what He has done for us and what He demands from us

(1:6) and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

3) Self-control

- we are to be self-controlled and this means that we are restraining our impulses and our desires
- the false teachers that Peter addresses in chapter 2, were completely out of control with their desires and were living lives of rebellion against God

- if we have self-control, it will be evident because our whole life will in submission to Jesus Christ

- "self-control" is a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:23

- this means that if we are followers of Jesus, we have been given the Holy Spirit and thus we are

to live lives that reflect the Holy Spirit dwelling in us

- if we are following Jesus Christ, when we are tempted to sin, we are to exercise self-control and avoid that sin through the help of the Holy Spirit
- because of God's grace, let us make every effort to live a self-controlled life and not give in to the sinful, selfish and wicked desires that we are often tempted to indulge in

4) Steadfastness

- to be steadfast means that you are bearing up in the face of adversity
- this means that you persevere with the Lord even when things are not going your way
- think of Terry Fox who ran under much physical adversity, he was a great example of how we should live our Christian lives
- we must keep pressing on even when it is hard
- when you persevere even when difficult things happen to you that is the attitude of steadfastness
- when you are hot and cold with God based upon the circumstances of your life that is the opposite of steadfastness
- the Christians that received this letter needed to be reminded of the character of steadfastness because they were enduring challenges from inside the church and outside of the church
- these Christians were facing dangerous false teachers and they needed to keep pressing on with the Lord Jesus
- but they were also facing a wicked and evil society that did not encourage them in the Lord
- in fact, these Christians were likely facing persecution from society
- because of God's grace, let us make every effort to live a steadfast life with the Lord

5) Godliness

- godliness is a life that is characterized by the fear of God

- this means that you are devoted to God in your thoughts, actions, words and attitudes
- when you are living a godly life, it means that your life is characterized by obedience to the Lord

- since the world will be destroyed and a new heaven and earth will be created, how ought we live?

- Peter addresses this topic at the end of the book – we are to live holy lives and godly lives

2 Peter 3:11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,

- because of God's grace, let us make every effort to live a godly life to the Lord

(1:7) and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

6) brotherly affection

- we all know this Greek word because it is pronounced "philadelphia"
- Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love
- this is the attitude of treating the people of God as family
- because God has adopted His people into His family, this means that Christians are truly family
- because of God's grace, let us make every effort to show brotherly love to each fellow believer

7) love

- love is shown best by the love that Jesus Christ has shown us
- Jesus loved us by laying down his life for us

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

1 John 4:10 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.

- since Jesus Christ has loved us by His death, we are called to love each other in the self-sacrificial love

- Paul explains this self-sacrificial love in 1 Corinthians 13

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- because of God's grace, let us make every effort to live a life of love to each other

2) (1:8) Effective and Fruitful Faith

(1:8) 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.

- if these qualities are yours and increasing, you will not be ineffective or unfruitful

- if you have virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love and these characteristics increase in your life, then you will be effective in your knowledge of Jesus Christ

- if you have virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love and these characteristics increase in your life, then you will be fruitful in your knowledge of Jesus Christ

- I remember when we had the peach orchard, sometimes, peach trees would just die, and then of course they were not fruitful

- when a peach tree died, we would cut off the branches and rip out the root system

- we did these because the tree was no longer fruitful or effective for producing peaches

- let us always have these qualities and increase them in our lives

Application

1) Is God's Grace at the Foundation of Your Christian Life?

- sometimes Christians can fall into two traps in their Christian life

1) the hammock model

- this is where we abuse God's grace and have no regard for God and His ways

- we might even say, "let us continue in sin because God is gracious and will forgive us"

- this is the attitude of living without reference to God or reverence towards God because we think we are forgiven

- but this attitude only leads to more sorrow and guilt

- it could also reveal that we do not even know the Lord

2) the treadmill burnout model

- this means that we are depending on our works and what we do so that God will forgive us

- this is where we neglect God's grace and think that we earn grace and mercy from God because we do this or that

- both the hammock and treadmill burnout models are serious errors in doctrine for Christians

- first, they are both against God's clear Biblical teaching on Christian living

- second, they both deny the grace of God at the foundation of the Christian life

- God's word clearly teaches us that we are saved by grace and we progressively become more like Jesus Christ by grace

- Peter makes this clear in 1 Peter 1:5 "for this very reason" and that reason is the grace of God given to the Christian

- in your Christian life make Jesus and His grace the center of it

- do you remember what Peter said about the grace of Christ in 1 Peter 2:21-25?

1 Peter 2:21-25 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in

return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- Jesus is without sin and is holy, therefore, He can be the perfect sacrifice for sin
- Jesus suffered in place of sinful people so that we could experience the grace of God
- Jesus bore our sin on the tree – which points us to the work of Jesus on the cross, when He bore the anger of God for sin
- because of Christ and His grace, we died to sin so that we could live for righteousness
- by the death of Jesus, He brings healing to us, and thus the forgiveness of sins
- all humans sin we are described as lost sheep but God calls us to turn to Jesus and trust His work so that we have our sins forgiven

- because Jesus accomplishes our salvation and empowers our growth in holiness and godliness we must keep Jesus Christ and His grace at the foundation of our Christian life

- many Christian songs teach this, like the hymn “The Church's One Foundation”

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord; she is His new creation, by water and the word.

From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride; with His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.

- let us make sure that Jesus Christ is the sure and only foundation of our life
- if you are outside of Jesus Christ and His grace, today is the day to look at the wonderful grace that Jesus gives sinful people

- see His mercy and grace that He gives to people who do not deserve it
- ponder His death and resurrection that was accomplished so that you could experience God's grace
- turn to the Shepherd (Jesus Christ) who died for you and trust in His work!

2) Be Fruitful and Effective in God's Grace

- if you have received God's mercy and grace through Jesus Christ then put on these qualities mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-7
- if you know that Jesus has forgiven all your sins, then put on these godly characteristics
- if you know that God has made you alive, even though you once were dead, then put on these godly virtues
- God commands that we make every effort and increase in virtue or goodness
- God commands that we make every effort and increase in the knowledge of God
- God commands that we make every effort and increase in self- control – putting to death our sins
- God commands that we make every effort and increase in steadfastness- persevere in holiness even though times get tough
- God commands that we make every effort and increase in godliness – living in reverence toward God
- God commands that we make every effort and increase in brotherly love towards one another
- God commands that we make every effort and increase in love towards one another

- Christians, let us keep Jesus and His grace always before us, in our hearts and minds and flee sin and pursue holy living

- Paul gives this command to Timothy

1 Timothy 6:11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

Divine Power and Grace are the Foundation

of Christian Living -- 2 Peter 1:5-8

Introduction and Background

1) (1:5a) God's Grace – the Foundation

a) 5 amazing truths that are found in 2 Peter 1:3-4?

1. the divine power of Christ grants us everything we need for life and godliness
2. we are called by God so that we can know Him
3. we are given precious and very great promises
4. by God's grace, we can partake of the divine nature of God
5. we escape the corruption in the world caused by sin

2) (1:5b-7) 7 Godly Characteristics to Add to Our Faith

a) other lists of godly characteristics in the New Testament

1. Galatians 5:22-23
2. Colossians 3:12-14

b) Peter lists 7 godly characteristics

1. Virtue
2. Knowledge
3. Self- control
4. Steadfastness
5. Godliness
6. brotherly affection
7. love

3) (1:8) Effective and Fruitful Faith

Application

1) Is God's Grace at the Foundation of Your Christian Life?

a) two traps Christians can fall into

1. the hammock model
2. the treadmill burnout model

b) the errors of these models

1. both against God's clear Biblical teaching
2. both deny the grace of God

c) the foundation of the Christian life

1. Jesus Christ
2. Grace of God

2) Be Fruitful and Effective in God's Grace