

## Text – 1 Peter 1:5-11

*<sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue,<sup>[e]</sup> and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*

*<sup>8</sup> For if these qualities<sup>[f]</sup> are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers,<sup>[g]</sup> be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*

## Main Point

Maturing and Assured in Christ

Your Habits – God's Grace

Efforts in Grace

## Introduction (300)

[Read 1 Peter 1:5-10]

[Pray]

## Hook

If I told you I have a great relationship with my wife, but I hardly ever talked to her what would you think?

If I told you that I love my wife, but I never listened to her, would you believe me?

If I told you that our marriage is thriving, but I never made any effort to nourish our relationship, you would have every reason to doubt, question and confront me.

Today I want us to think about an even greater relationship than a marriage. I want us to think about our functional relationship with Jesus our Lord.

Are we talking to Him regularly, are we listening to him regularly, are we making efforts to nourish our relationship? Today's passage talks about these things

With this new year ahead of us, it is good for us to think about these things.

What is your goal for the new year? Is it to live a life worthy of your Calling?

Is it to have a closer relationship with Christ? A relationship rich and vibrant, full of colour and flavour?

Is it to grow in knowledge of Christ and in Christlikeness?

Is it to grow in greater confidence and peace of mind in Christ?

Is it to be effective and fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ?

If any of these are your goals you are in a good direction and this passage helps us in to put that into motion. Not by giving us more rules to follow, but by showing us how to follow our Lord.

## Outline

To work through this passage, we are going to break our time up into three parts:

- 1) Qualities to Strive For (v5-8)
- 2) Your Habits – His Grace (Getting Practical)
- 3) The warning and the Joy (v9-10)

## Part 1 – Qualities To Strive For v5-8

### Exposition

#### It begins with Faith

So let us begin with our first section. Looking at the Qualities to Strive For.

Our passage starts with *“For this very reason, make every effort”*.

Before we dig into where we are called to place our effort, let us just remind ourselves what reason Peter is talking about.

And we don’t need to go far.

In verse 3-4 Peter basically summarizes the new position of a believer. In a couple of lines Peter reminds his listeners that God has granted them *“all things that pertain to **life and godliness.**”* That God has *“called us to<sup>[a]</sup> his own glory and excellence”* and that God *“has granted to us his **precious and very great promises**, so that through them you may become **partakers of the divine nature.**”*

Peter is talking to Christians.

- Christians who have already been transformed by the Holy Spirit into new creations.
- Christians who have been justified by God and Adopted by God.
- Christians who have been given Faith to believe the great promises of Christ.

We have to lock this into our minds to make sense of the rest of the passage. Because in this passage will see that we are called to: make every effort, to be diligent and to practice certain things, but this comes as a result of becoming a Christian.

First Jesus does, then second, we do.

There are some who think that to **become** a Christian you must display certain qualities and virtues, such as patience and Love, etc. But that is not true.

To become a Christian, you must simply believe that Jesus died for your sins. Once you have believed that Jesus died for your sins and submitted to him as your Lord, then you are a Christian.

And as a Christian, wit Jesus as your Lord, you live to please him.

To try to live out these qualities without being a Christian is like trying to farm without a farm. You must first be provided the land and the tools and then you can farm. Then you can cultivate, or tend to stock and can be productive.

Seems obvious, but many, many people try to live like Christians without being Christians, which is just as impossible as farming without a farm.

## **Takes effort to supply**

So, with it clear in our minds that Peter is talking to Christians, let us dig into our passage.

The start of verse 5 says

*<sup>5</sup>For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith*

These Christians have been given Faith from God and they are to supplement it with a list of qualities. We will discuss these qualities soon, but let me say a few words about this word “supplement” first.

This word “supplement” or “supply” comes from a term used for a Greek choirmaster. The Greeks loved their plays and theatre, and the play would have a choir to accompany it. The choirmaster would be in charge of providing everything necessary for a perfect performance. The choirmaster would be a wealthy citizen who would organize, train and fund the choir out of his own good will.

So, this term we have translated as “supplement” talks of lavishly providing everything necessary for a perfect and balanced performance in the desire of getting the best result.

There is also a sense of urgency. There is a deadline. It will require an effort to provide these necessary things. There will be cost and sacrifice, but it has to be done in a timely manner.

## **The Qualities**

So, what is Peter instructing? What is he instructing Christians to Supplement to their Faith?

He lists seven qualities, seven traits that Christians are to lavishly add to their faith. Seven qualities that represent a balanced, mature Christian life.

These seven qualities can be divided into three groups to help us grasp them. The first two characterize the Faith, the third and fourth talk of inward disposition and the last three talk of relationship to others.

So let us take a closer look at these qualities.

### **Virtue (v5)**

First off, we have virtue. Supplement your faith with Virtue.

Now when we hear the word virtue today we think of a list of qualities and good characteristics. But the word virtue has changed over time. The idea behind this word is more along the lines of energy, activity, courage, vigour and zeal. As opposed to lethargic, lazy or apathetic.

Peter is saying, as we live out our faith, we are to be full of zeal and fervour, not mediocre or sluggish.

Our faith is to be characterized by a certain amount of life and enthusiasm.

### **Knowledge (v5)**

But this zeal is not without direction. It is not mindless passion or activity for the sake of being busy. We must add knowledge to our zealous faith.

We must learn what is right and wrong. We must learn what is useless and useful. We must learn what is good and what is better. We must learn what is important and what is ultimately important. All this must be learned from God's word.

We meditate on it, and the Holy Spirit illuminates our hearts. By reading and understanding God's word we grow in knowledge about God, about Christ and the Christian Faith and that directs our enthusiasm and zeal.

We must have zeal with knowledge.

### **Self-control (v6)**

But what else are we to add to our Faith?

The next two qualities talk about inward disposition.

First, we have self-control. The control of our self. This is a key component to maturity. It is a quality you hold inside you, but the lack there-of is so clearly displayed by everything you do.

At its origin it is an athletic word, but its meaning is much broader than that. The idea of self-control is very simple:

Self-control is the ability to neglect a pleasure for the sake of the Goal.

That pleasure to neglect will be different for all of us, but the ability to say NO to that desire is the sign of maturity.

Display of self-control ranges from a child learning to eat all their vegetables to a father learning to make sacrifices for his wife and his children.

In those cases, and all cases in between saying **NO** to your own pleasures, desires, wants and comforts is the key to maturity.

So, we are to lavishly include self-control to our Faith.

### **Steadfastness (v6)**

Next comes steadfastness. Endurance, grit, perseverance, and patience all carry the idea of steadfastness. It is talking about the ability to continue to do what is right regardless of toil and hardship. Regardless of how you feel, you continue on. Regardless of the pressures, you continue on. Regardless of the difficulty you continue on.

When there is no pressure from parents or from the boss, do we endure till the end? That is steadfastness.

### **Godliness (v6)**

Next in Peter's list of a mature believer is Godliness.

Now this fits in the category of relationships to others. The most important relationship we have is with God.

A mature believer will have a reverence for God, a heart of worship and a deep loyalty for God. Being in right standing with God, not only legally speaking, but relationally too.

Zeal, knowledge, steadfastness and self-control are no good for their own sake, but only make sense when used for the glory and worship of God. A mature believer has their eyes set on God and His purposes. God is the centre of their life. They love the Lord with all of their body, heart, soul and mind.

### **Brotherly affection (v7)**

From a love for God flows out a love for God's people. This is the next relational quality: Brotherly affection.

In John 13:34-35 we read

*<sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love*



*one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

Love for the brethren is specifically highlighted from all other earthly relationships. This is a key part of being a mature disciple. To show love to the other disciples.

And sometimes this seems harder because we expect more from fellow believers, holding them to a higher standard than ourselves, and thinking they should be more sanctified and should know better. We can be slow to extend grace and quick to notice fault.

And so, we need to lavishly add to our faith brotherly affection.

### **Love (v7)**

The last quality Peter lists is Love. This can be seen to affect the wider circle of relationships. Love must characterize our dealings with everyone that we meet. The word used here is Agape. The sacrificial, selfless love. A love of choice and action, not necessarily a love of emotion and feeling.

Loving actions and decisions must characterize our interactions with those around us. Being kind, patient, not boasting, nor being envious, nor irritable or resentful.

Ultimately this is not to make people feel comfortable and at ease, but because we must see all of those around us as image bearers of God who are captive to sin and death.

### **A balanced Life**

It is an impressive list, and even individually each of these qualities convict us when we compare our own

life to them. Each needs great effort to attain, as we are instructed here. But the way Peter lists them implies that they are all working together in a balanced way. This list is not a ladder with Love at it's top.

No, all these qualities all work together like the instruments of an orchestra working together to make beautiful music. Having one or more instruments out of proportion will create a cacophony instead of a symphony.

And likewise having one or more of these qualities out of proportion will not create a mature Christian.

- Emphasis on zeal will drive you very quickly in the wrong direction.
- Isolating Knowledge will puff you up with pride.
- Emphasis on Self-Control and Steadfastness will produce reliance on Human strength.
- Isolating Godliness will minimize interactions with others
- Emphasis on Brotherly Love will lead to apathy.
- Isolating Love will lead to watering down truth of God.

Extremes are never biblical, and here we have a tension, a balance presented for us. Like a seesaw with seven points of movement that must be held in perfect equilibrium. Each quality having it's place. Each quality necessary to be effective and fruitful for Our Lord.

## Exposition v8

### Being fruitful

Virtue (or Zeal), Knowledge, Self-Control, Steadfastness, Godliness, Brotherly Affection and Love. All to be added to the gift of faith. All in perfect balance.

And these qualities are not just an arbitrary list. They are pointing to one who lived these out perfectly and whom we are to imitate and to serve.

Verse 8 says

*<sup>8</sup> For if these qualities<sup>[f]</sup> are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

If we make every effort to supplement these qualities to our faith, we will be effective and fruitful followers of Jesus.

There is a twofold fruitfulness which interact with one another here. On the one hand these qualities allow us to do genuine ministry work. Genuine work to serve our Lord. Work which is pleasing to God and beneficial to his church and his purposes.

But on the other hand, the qualities themselves in our lives are genuine fruit. These are fruit of the Spirit. The result of the Spirit's work in our own lives. To grow in these qualities **is** to be effective and fruitful.

### Qualities increasing and Knowledge of Jesus increasing

The goal of a Christian is to know Jesus more and more.

This happens by becoming like him, as we see described in the list of qualities, but the focus is on him, not on us. We see his virtue, knowledge and self-control and we adjust our lives to match him. We see his steadfastness, his godliness and his unconditional love and we let that shape us. The drive for our sanctification should not just to be a better human, but to grow in relationship with our Saviour and Lord, Jesus the messiah.

## Part 2 - Getting real practice

### How?

So how do we grow in each of these qualities? And how do we balance them in a biblical way? How do we become fruitful and effective for Christ? How do we grow in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How do we supply these things to our Faith?

Where do we make the effort?

As mentioned before, these qualities we are to add to our faith are fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives. We only produce this fruit by Grace through the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

So how do we grow in grace and how do we allow the Holy Spirit to direct and fuel us? We put ourselves in the path of Grace. We put ourselves under the fountains of Grace. We make use of what is known as the means of Grace or the Habits of Grace.

God is at work and he brings the increase, but he wants you to make every effort and to be diligent in the means He has chosen to use. There are a few

means of Grace, but the two I want us to focus on are Personal Bible Reading and private prayer time.

There are many more such as singing, giving, evangelising, fellowshiping, sitting under preaching, corporate worship and many more.

But this morning, at the very start of this new year, I want us to think specifically about our own personal bible reading and private prayer.

I want to focus on these because they are foundational and you are the only one who can control these. The most basic way to grow in these qualities listed by Peter is to develop, maintain, and persist in your personal quiet times with the Lord. To neglect that is to cut yourself from the vine and expect to bear fruit.

So let us just take a bit of time to think about our personal times of reading and prayer.

## **Read**

Let us think about reading first. Reading may be easier to some of us than others. Reading can seem like an impossible chore, but that is why we are instructed to make every effort.

The key is to be systematic and diligent. Working through books as they were intended to be read. Working through a book and picking up where your left off.

Most of us benefit from reading plans which pave out our reading for us. I have printed a number of copies, which you are welcome to make use of.

The target could be to read the whole bible in one year, or the NT in one year. Or to read a proverb for each day of the month. I have personally found

beneficial to do one psalm and one chapter of the NT every day.

Much more can be said about the details of personal reading time. How long to read for? The use of study material. Using notebooks. The use of meditating on scripture and memorizing scripture.

But the key is that we have the Word of God in our hands and we must hear from him every day. We must allow his word to stir our soul, and we should not be satisfied until it does.

## **Pray**

Another fundamental means of Grace God gives us is Prayer. And specifically private prayer. As we desire to grow in these qualities listed in our passage, and grow in our knowledge of Jesus, private prayer is a means to do that.

God Speaks to us as we read his word and we speak to him as we pray.

We must make this a daily habit if we want to grow in his Grace.

And like reading it is so helpful to have a plan. To have an idea of what you would pray for.

Using the Lord's prayer as a structure is great.

Or the Acronym ACTS which follows the same pattern is very helpful.

Start with Adoration, followed by confession, then Thanksgiving and finish off with supplications.

I have found it helpful to develop lists for each of these categories and to pray for one or two each day. And then update the lists regularly as things change.

This helps to not just pray for your favourite people but to remember that person you said you would pray for, but never thought about again. It also helps you to bring up other sins and realise how much you do need to confess.

Making these lists and maintaining them takes time and effort, but that is exactly what we are instructed to do *“make every effort”*.

Of course, the lists are just a framework, but they can be most helpful if our praying feels repetitive and introspective. Using the church directory can be great. Asking people what you can pray for them and then systematically praying for one or two people every day. Journaling can be very helpful too to keep your thoughts on track and to look back to see how God has answered prayers.

Private prayer is one of the means of Grace, and we have the responsibility to make it a habit in our lives.

## **Just do it**

If it is already your habit to read and pray every day, then let this be an encouragement to continue on. The new year may be a good time to evaluate your habit. Are your personal quiet times vibrant and life giving? What are some ways you could adjust to make them more life giving?

But if reading and praying is not a habit for you currently, hear the instruction here and make every effort to make it happen, but start small. Little and often is the key here. Give yourself an achievable goal based on your season of life and start there. It won't be all that it could be initially, but start somewhere.

In the new year we often have great motivation. Motivation is great to start something, but we need more than motivation to continue on. Use that motivation to make a plan and then persist through that plan even when the “new year motivation” is gone.

Choose a time. Something that will work every day. Think of it as a meeting that you cannot miss. This is the time between you and God so choose the best time. The time in the day you are most alert, most awake and less distracted. Think of it as preparing for the day ahead, sharpening your tool, or tuning your instrument.

When you read and pray you are putting yourself in the path of Grace, under the fountain of Grace. You are getting prepared to be effective and fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we move on from thinking of the nitty-gritty of our personal quiet times, the thing I want to stress it to **just do it**. Keep it simple and start. Do a system for a couple of months and then adjust it.

- Make every effort to do it.
- Make every effort to place yourself in the way of Grace.
- Make every effort to daily make use of the means of Grace.
- IT is his Grace but it is Your Habit.



## Part 3 – The Warning and the Joy (v 9-10)

### Exposition – v 9-10

Before we bring our study to a close, let us have a quick look at verses 9 and 10 of this passage where we find a warning, but also a deep joy which comes from making these efforts.

### **Blind to the Past and the Future**

Verse 9 says

*<sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*

If we are not growing in these qualities, if we are not making use of the means of grace, if we neglect our personal readings and our private prayer time, we might as well be blind and we show we have forgotten from where we came.

We become so nearsighted that our lives become about ourselves and our pleasures, instead of God and his Glory and the real joy of enjoying Him forever.

Not only blind to the purpose of the future, but whoever lacks these qualities also shows that they have forgotten the seriousness of their sin, and the cost Jesus paid to rescue them.

When you remember your former sins, the idea of sinning again is repulsive. You want to make every effort to never sin again. You want to make every effort to grow in grace, through the means God has given.

## Confirm your election

So that is the warning, but notice the deep joy in verse 10

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers,<sup>[9]</sup> be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*

When we practice these qualities, when we are diligent to acquire them, when we place ourselves in the path of Grace and make every effort to grow in Grace, we will confirm to ourselves our calling and election.

We will find deep assurance of being saved. We will know for certain, beyond any doubt that when we die God will say *“well done good and faithful servant”*.

God has not only saved us, but He want's us to know we are saved. To be assured of our salvation.

This deep joy of assurance comes from what we do each day. From our diligence in the means of Grace. We don't look back to an event in our life for this confidence, we look at our life today.

## Never Fall

*“if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*

Never fall in the sense that you will not doubt if you are truly saved. As you practice these qualities you continually see the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, knowing you could never do these things in your own strength, and so you know deep down in your soul that you are His.

This is the further joy that comes form making every effort in the means of Grace: A deep seated confidence in your calling and election.

Of course the basis of your salvation and the objective assurance is found in the finished work of Jesus on the Cross. Your subjective feelings will never change that. But God want's you to know both objectively and subjectively that you are His and nothing can separate you from His love.

## Conclusion

So as we bring our time together to a close let us hear God's call to us as He speaks through the Apostle Peter.

*"<sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith"*

Our efforts do not save us, but since we are saved, we can make every effort.

We can supplement to our faith zeal, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love.

The balance of these qualities describe a mature Christian. They describe the qualities we should imitate in our Lord Jesus Christ.

These qualities describe the fruit of the Spirit which will be seen growing in our lives as we make use of the means of Grace. These fruits grow as we establish habits of grace in our lives. Placing ourselves in the path of Grace again and again.

There are a number of means God uses to give us Grace, but two of the foundational ones for each of us as individuals is to daily read God's word and daily pray to God.

We must make every effort to make these things a priority in our lives. To carve out the time and to be diligent. To make a plan and stick to the plan. To pray about our prayer life and read about reading.

And as we are diligent and as we practice these qualities we will receive a deep joy of confirming our calling and election. We will not only know the bear facts of Jesus' work, but we will know deep down in our souls that we are his and we will never fall.

Let us Pray