

Lesson 2

Fruitful Growth in the Faith

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:5-11

Following his introduction, the first weakness Peter addresses is a lack of growth in Christian living...

Discussion



Before even looking at Peter's instruction, discuss...

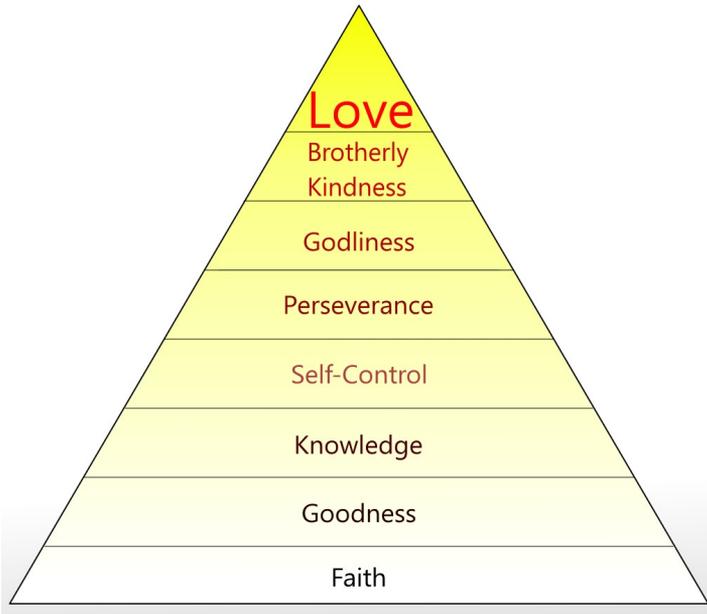
- 1) What causes lack of growth in Christian living?
- 2) How does lack of growth show itself?
- 3) What promotes growth in Christian living?
- 4) Why is a lack of growth such a serious matter?

Add-ons to Faith — Growth (v. 5-7)

"...He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that...you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (v. 4 NIV 1984)

*For this very reason (motivation and source)...
Giving all diligence (earnestness, zeal)...*

Add to your faith...



Virtue/goodness: moral goodness, moral power, moral energy, vigor of soul (cf. 2 Peter 1:3)—letting God define for us what is right, how to treat people, what is valuable.

Knowledge: a seeking to know, coming to know, insight, understanding. (A different word for “knowledge” than what appeared in vv. 2-3.)

Perseverance: Self-control, one “holding himself in” — this is particularly challenging in a culture which promotes instant gratification, self-indulgence, surrender to passion, and even when God is added into the mix a belief that “God wants me to be happy” on my terms. Caving-in to Satan and flesh today makes me weaker tomorrow.

Patience: a “remaining under,” “staying power”

James 1:3—knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience

Godliness: a “God-ward” attitude that does what is well-pleasing to Him / attitude of respect toward God’s will and ways, an attitude of thankfulness to God for His greatness and goodness, an awareness of God in everything we do

Love of the brethren (*Philadelphia*): brotherly kindness (cf. 1 Peter 1:22, John 13:35)

Love (agape): (cf. 1 Corinthians 13)

2 Thessalonians 1:3—*your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you abounds toward each other*

Consider these similar verses:

Galatians 5:22—*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*

Romans 5:3—*tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character; and character, hope*



While God directs a “building upon” faith and a faith that bears abundant fruit, Martin Luther points out that this is *not* rightly pursued by prescribed laws, rather Christians exercising their faith out of love for Christ.

St. Peter does not want to prescribe any rule, measure, or limit concerning moderation, as the monastic orders have undertaken to do. They desired to achieve all by rule, and they framed statutes which were to be exactly observed. It is not to be tolerated in Christendom that men should establish by laws a generally applicable standard of moderation. For people are different; one is strong, another of a weaker nature, and the condition of no person is in every respect and always the same as that of another. For this reason everybody should keep an eye on himself in order to determine what his condition is and what he is able to bear.
[WLS 1284]

Fruitful or Blind (vv. 8-9)

For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

Fruitful Trees:

Lack of Growth = shortsighted (seeing only the near—the here and now) even as far as being blind

Lack of Growth = forgotten (having received forgetfulness) the gift of God

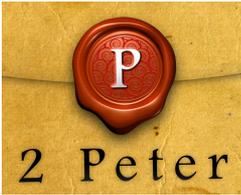
See also: *James 2:17-18*

Conclusion (vv. 10-11)

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter's words intentionally address Christians grown lazy and careless, lulled by empty talk of the grace of God into a false sense of security...some Christians were starting to think that Christianity was merely a matter of giving intellectual assent to the message of God's great deeds, that since God did it all, growth in their spiritual lives was unnecessary and maybe even impossible...God's expensive grace grew cheap, and God's claim on the redeemed lives grew faint. This was dangerous. They needed to grow in their efforts to live what they believed! [Mark Jeske, People's Bible]

See: *Philippians 2:12-13 / Matthew 25:31-46*



Bible Study Lessons

- 1 *2 Peter 1:1-4*—Introduction and Greeting
- 2 *2 Peter 1:5-11*—Fruitful Growth in the Faith**
- 3 *2 Peter 1:12-15*—Peter’s Approaching Death
- 4 *2 Peter 1:16-21*—The Trustworthy Prophetic Word
- 5 *2 Peter 2:1-3*—Destructive Doctrines
- 6 *2 Peter 2:4-11*—Doom of False Teachers
- 7 *2 Peter 2:12-17*—Depravity of False Teachers
- 8 *2 Peter 2:18-22*—Deception of False Teachers
- 9 *2 Peter 3:1-9*—God’s Promise Is Not Slack
- 10 *2 Peter 3:10-13*—The Day of the Lord
- 11 *2 Peter 3:14-18*—Be Faithful