

2 Peter 1:1-5
August 13, 2017

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

If you've been with us for the study of 1 Peter, you know that Peter emphasized the grace of God (1 Peter 5:12), but in this second letter, his emphasis is on the **knowledge of God**. The word *know* or *knowledge* is used at least thirteen times in this short epistle. The word does not mean a mere intellectual understanding of some truth, though that is included. It means a living participation in the truth in the sense that our Lord used it in John 17:3—"This is life eternal, that they might *know* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent" (italics mine). You will see that the knowledge of God through Jesus is the overarching theme throughout this second epistle. But in order to help us *know* God, Peter begins his letter with a description of the Christian life. So to help us wrap our mind around the truths of the Christian life, we will focus on faith.

We know that faith is both a noun and a verb. We have faith and we exercise faith.

Q: Let's start with faith as a noun. Where did we get faith? [It is a gift from God (Eph 2:8-9)]

Q: Let's look at faith as a verb. How do you exercise faith? [Let people engage]

Transition: Many of us take the time to read God's Word, pray and worship Him. When we engage with the Lord at this basic level, we are certainly exercising our faith. But Peter is going to up the ante. We are going to discover that the gift of faith we rec'd from God is foundational in our love relationship to God, but we are supposed to **build** on this foundation with certain qualities that will strengthen our faith. Our goal today is to explore those qualities such that we CAN grow our faith BY cultivating these seven QUALITIES Peter describes in today's passage.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.1:

- Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who **through** the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

V.2:

- Grace and peace be yours in abundance **through** the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

V.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.

V.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.

V.5:

- For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.1: I don't want to gloss over Peter's salutation. There are some doctrinal nuggets that show up in this verse that we should not forget. What do you see?

- It is through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ that we have received the gift of faith. X-Ref Eph 2:8-9
- When we trust Him as our Savior, His righteousness becomes our righteousness and we are given a right standing before God (2 Cor. 5:21). We could never *earn* this righteousness; it is the gift of God to those who believe. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). The only standard God gives us for salvation is faith in Christ.
- Peter affirmed the deity of Jesus Christ. "God" and "our Savior" are not two different Persons; they describe one Person, Jesus Christ. Paul used a similar expression in Titus 2:10 and 3:4

Q V.2: How do we obtain grace and peace? [Through the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus]

Q V.3: So we already know from the first two verses that the Christian life begins with saving faith, faith in the person of Jesus Christ. But when we know Jesus Christ personally, what else do we receive? [We experience God's power]

Q: What does God's power produce? ["life and godliness"; When we are born into the family of God by faith in Christ, we are born complete. God gives us everything we will ever need "for life and godliness." Nothing has to be added! Col 2:10 says, "And you are complete in Him"]

Observation: Christ **called** (cf. 1 Peter 1:15) **us** to this life of godliness **by His own glory and goodness** (*aretē*, "moral excellence"; "praises" in 1 Peter 2:9 and "goodness" in 2 Peter 1:5).

Q V.4: When Peter writes "through 'these,' what is he referring to? [His glory and goodness.]

Q: What do we receive through his "glory and goodness?" [very great and precious promises! God has not only given us all that we need for life and godliness, but He has also given us His Word to enable us to develop this life and godliness. These promises are *great* because they come from a great God and they lead to a great life. They are *precious* because their value is beyond calculation.]

Q: What do these promises help us do? [participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires]

Q: What does it mean to "participate in His divine nature and escape the corruption of the world?!" [The lost sinner is decaying because of his corrupt nature, but the Christian can experience a dynamic life of godliness because he has God's divine nature within. Mankind is under the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:21), but the believer shares the freedom and growth

that is a part of possessing the divine nature. We have “completely escaped” the defilement and decay in this present evil world.]

Transition: After laying this foundation of how we received salvation and having received all that we need for life and godliness through His divine power, Peter now emphasizes the importance of growing our faith in Christ because spiritual growth is not automatic. For the remainder of this lesson, let’s try to get a handle on the QUALITIES we should cultivate to grow our faith.

Q V.5: What is the first thing we need to add to our faith and with what level of intensity? [“make every effort” (“all diligence” or “all zeal”) to add goodness]

FYI: “Goodness” in the original language means “moral excellency,” or “virtue.”

Q: How do we add “goodness or moral excellency?” What does that look like? [A Christian is supposed to glorify God because he has God’s nature within; so, when he does this, he shows “excellence” because he is fulfilling his purpose in life. True virtue in the Christian life is not “polishing” human qualities, no matter how fine they may be, but producing *divine* qualities that make the person more like Jesus Christ.]

Q: Faith helps us develop virtue, and virtue helps us develop the next QUALITY. What is it? [knowledge]

Q: How do we cultivate “Knowledge?” [The word used here suggests *practical* knowledge or discernment. It refers to the ability to handle life successfully. It is the opposite of being “so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good!” This kind of knowledge does not come automatically. It comes from obedience to the will of God (John 7:17)]

LOOK:

It is impossible for fallen human nature to manufacture these seven qualities of Christian character. They must be produced by the Spirit of God. To be sure, there are unsaved people who possess amazing self-control and endurance, but these virtues point to *them* and not to the Lord. *They* get the glory. When God produces the beautiful nature of His Son in a Christian, it is God who receives the praise and glory.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 436–438). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

KNOWING AND GROWING

2 Peter 1:1–11

If anybody in the early church knew the importance of being alert, it was the Apostle Peter. He had a tendency in his early years to feel overconfident when danger was near and to overlook the Master's warnings. He rushed ahead when he should have waited; he slept when he should have prayed; he talked when he should have listened. He was a courageous, but careless, Christian.

But he learned his lesson, and he wants to help us learn it too. In his first epistle, Peter emphasized the grace of God (1 Peter 5:12), but in this second letter, his emphasis is on the knowledge of God. The word *know* or *knowledge* is used at least thirteen times in this short epistle. The word does not mean a mere intellectual understanding of some truth, though that is included. It means a living participation in the truth in the sense that our Lord used it in John 17:3—"This is life eternal, that they might *know* Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (*italics mine*).

Peter opened his letter with a description of the Christian life. Before he described the counterfeits, he described the true believers. The best way to detect falsehood is to understand the characteristics of the truth. Peter made three important affirmations about the true Christian life.

The Christian Life Begins with Faith (2 Peter 1:1–4)

Peter called it "like precious faith." It means that our standing with the Lord today is the same as that of the Apostles centuries ago. They had no special advantage over us simply because they were privileged to walk with Christ, see Him with their own eyes, and share in His miracles. It is not necessary to see the Lord with our human eyes in order to love Him, trust Him, and share His glory (1 Peter 1:8).

This faith is in a person (vv. 1–2). That Person is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour. From the very outset of his letter, Peter affirmed the deity of Jesus Christ. "God" and "our Saviour" are not two different Persons; they describe one Person, Jesus Christ. Paul used a similar expression in Titus 2:10 and 3:4.

Peter reminded his readers that Jesus Christ is the Saviour by repeating this exalted title in 2 Peter 1:11; 2:20; 3:2, 18. A *savior* is "one who brings salvation," and the word *salvation* was familiar to the people of that day. In their vocabulary, it meant "deliverance from trouble," particularly "deliverance from the enemy." It also carried the idea of "health and safety." A physician was looked on as a savior because he helped deliver the body from pain and limitations. A victorious general was a savior because he delivered the people from defeat. Even a wise official was a savior because he kept the nation in order and delivered it from confusion and decay.

It requires little insight to see how the title "Saviour" applies to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is, indeed, the Great Physician who heals the heart from the sickness of sin. He is the victorious

Conqueror who has defeated our enemies—sin, death, Satan, and hell—and is leading us in triumph (2 Cor. 2:14ff). He is “God and our Saviour” (2 Peter 1:1), “our Lord and Saviour” (2 Peter 1:11), and “the Lord and Saviour” (2 Peter 2:20). In order to be our Saviour, He had to give His life on the cross and die for the sins of the world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has three “spiritual commodities” that can be secured from nobody else: righteousness, grace, and peace. When you trust Him as your Saviour, His righteousness becomes your righteousness and you are given a right standing before God (2 Cor. 5:21). You could never *earn* this righteousness; it is the gift of God to those who believe. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5).

Grace is God’s favor to the undeserving. God in His mercy does not give us what we do deserve; God in His grace gives us what we don’t deserve. Our God is “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10), and He channels that grace to us through Jesus Christ (John 1:16).

The result of this experience is *peace*, peace *with* God (Rom. 5:1) and the peace *of* God (Phil. 4:6–7). In fact, God’s grace and peace are “multiplied” toward us as we walk with Him and trust His promises.

This faith involves God’s power (v. 3). The Christian life begins with saving faith, faith in the person of Jesus Christ. But when you know Jesus Christ personally, you also experience God’s power, and this power produces “life and godliness.” The unsaved sinner is dead (Eph. 2:1–3) and only Christ can raise him from the dead (John 5:24). When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said, “Loose him, and let him go” (John 11:44). Get rid of the grave clothes!

When you are born into the family of God by faith in Christ, you are born complete. God gives you everything you will ever need “for life and godliness.” Nothing has to be added! “And ye are complete in Him” (Col. 2:10). The false teachers claimed that they had a “special doctrine” that would add something to the lives of Peter’s readers, but Peter knew that *nothing could be added*. Just as a normal baby is born with all the “equipment” he needs for life and only needs to grow, so the Christian has all that is needed and only needs to grow. God never has to call back any of His “models” because something is lacking or faulty.

Just as a baby has a definite genetic structure that determines how he will grow, so the believer is “genetically structured” to experience “glory and virtue.” One day he will be like the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2). We have been “called ... to His eternal glory” (1 Peter 5:10), and we shall share that glory when Jesus Christ returns and takes His people to heaven.

But we are also “called ... to virtue.” We have been saved so that we might “show forth the praises [virtues] of Him who hath called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). We should not wait until we get to heaven to become like Jesus Christ! In our character and conduct, we should reveal His beauty and grace today.

This faith involves God’s promises (v. 4). God has not only given us all that we need for life and godliness, but He has also given us His Word to enable us to develop this life and godliness. These promises are *great* because they come from a great God and they lead to a great life. They are *precious* because their value is beyond calculation. If we lost the Word of God, there would be no way to replace it. Peter must have liked the word *precious*, for he wrote about the “precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1; cf. 1 Peter 1:7), the “precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4), the “precious blood” (1 Peter 1:19), the precious stone (1 Peter 2:4, 6), and the precious Saviour (1 Peter 2:7).

When the sinner believes on Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to impart the life and nature of God within. A baby shares the nature of its parents, and a person born of God shares the divine nature of God. The lost sinner is dead, but the Christian is alive because he

shares the divine nature. The lost sinner is decaying because of his corrupt nature, but the Christian can experience a dynamic life of godliness because he has God's divine nature within. Mankind is under the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:21), but the believer shares the freedom and growth that is a part of possessing the divine nature.

Nature determines *appetite*. The pig wants slop and the dog will even eat its own vomit (2 Peter 2:22), but the sheep desires green pastures. Nature also determines *behavior*. An eagle flies because it has an eagle's nature and a dolphin swims because that is the nature of the dolphin. Nature determines *environment*: squirrels climb trees, moles burrow underground, and trout swim in the water. Nature also determines *association*: lions travel in prides, sheep in flocks, and fish in schools.

If nature determines appetite, and we have God's nature within, then we ought to have an appetite for that which is pure and holy. Our behavior ought to be like that of the Father, and we ought to live in the kind of "spiritual environment" that is suited to our nature. We ought to associate with that which is true to our nature (see 2 Cor. 6:14ff). The only normal, fruit-bearing life for the child of God is a *godly* life.

Because we possess this divine nature, we have "completely escaped" the defilement and decay in this present evil world. If we feed the new nature the nourishment of the Word, then we will have little interest in the garbage of the world. But if we "make provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14), our sinful nature will lust after the "old sins" (2 Peter 1:9) and we will disobey God. Godly living is the result of cultivating the new nature within.

Faith Results in Spiritual Growth (2 Peter 1:5)

Where there is life, there must be growth. The new birth is not the end; it is the beginning. God gives His children all that they need to live godly lives, but His children must apply themselves and be diligent to use the "means of grace" He has provided. *Spiritual growth is not automatic.* It requires cooperation with God and the application of spiritual diligence and discipline. "Work out your own salvation ... For it is God which worketh in you" (Phil. 2:12–13).

Peter listed seven characteristics of the godly life, but we must not think of them as seven beads on a string or even seven stages of development. The word translated "add" really means "to supply generously." In other words, we develop one quality as we exercise another quality. These graces relate to each other the way the branch relates to the trunk and the twigs to the branch. Like the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22–23), these qualities grow out of life and out of a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. It is not enough for the Christian to "let go and let God," as though spiritual growth were God's work alone. Literally, Peter wrote, "Make every effort to bring alongside." The Father and the child must work together.

The first quality of character Peter listed was *virtue*. We met this word in 2 Peter 1:3, and it basically means "excellence." To the Greek philosophers, it meant "the fulfillment of a thing." When anything in nature fulfills its purpose, that is "virtue—moral excellence." The word was also used to describe the power of the gods to do heroic deeds. The land that produces crops is "excellent" because it is fulfilling its purpose. The tool that works correctly is "excellent" because it is doing what a tool is supposed to do.

A Christian is supposed to glorify God because he has God's nature within; so, when he does this, he shows "excellence" because he is fulfilling his purpose in life. True virtue in the Christian life is not "polishing" human qualities, no matter how fine they may be, but producing *divine* qualities that make the person more like Jesus Christ.

Faith helps us develop virtue, and virtue helps us develop *knowledge* (2 Peter 1:5). The word translated “knowledge” in 2 Peter 1:2–3 means “full knowledge” or “knowledge that is growing.” The word used here suggests *practical* knowledge or discernment. It refers to the ability to handle life successfully. It is the opposite of being “so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good!” This kind of knowledge does not come automatically. It comes from obedience to the will of God (John 7:17). In the Christian life, you must not separate the heart and the mind, character and knowledge.

Gangel, K. O. (1985). 2 Peter. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 863-865). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

I. Introduction (1:1–2).

A. *The salutation (1:1).*

1. THE AUTHOR (1:1a)

1:1a. The author is identified as **Simon Peter**. It is ironic that this letter, whose authorship has been so disputed, begins with a textual problem concerning the spelling of its author’s name. Some manuscripts have the common Greek spelling (*Simōn*), whereas others have the direct transliteration of the Hebrew (*Symeōn*). The best textual evidence supports the more unusual Hebrew spelling, used elsewhere only in Acts 15:14. This detail provides support for the authenticity of Petrine authorship, for an impostor probably would have used the more widely accepted spelling.

“Peter,” the Greek translation of “Cephas” and the name given to Simon by Jesus, is discussed in the *Introduction* of 1 Peter (see also 1 Peter 1:1).

Peter’s combining these distinctly Hebrew and Greek names may be an indication of the mixed audience (Hebrew and Greek Christians) he addressed.

Peter adds the term **servant** (*doulos*, lit., “slave”; cf. Matt. 23:11) to his title **apostle of Jesus Christ** (cf. Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1). Near the close of his life, at the apex of his apostolic authority, he was Christ’s servant first, and His apostle second.

2. THE AUDIENCE (1:1b)

1:1b. The recipients of the letter are described only in general terms (cf. 3:1). They are **those who ... have received a faith as precious as ours**. “Received” is from the unusual verb *lanchanō*, “to obtain by lot” (cf. Luke 1:9; John 19:24). This implies God’s sovereign choice rather than anything they might have done to deserve such a gift. The words “as precious” translate the compound word *isotimon*, used only here in the New Testament. It comes from *isos* (“equal”) and *timē* (“honor, value”). The word *isotimon* was used for foreigners who had been granted the privileges of citizenship which were equal to those of the native born. The faith given them by God was of equal honor or privilege with that of the apostles’ faith. Here Peter foreshadowed his purpose by stressing that the faith of the apostles was no different from the faith of any believer. This contrasted with the pre-Gnostic doctrines of the false teachers who spoke of an inner circle of special knowledge attainable by and available only to a privileged few.

The word “faith” (*pistin*) is used without the article; thus it could refer to the objective content of faith (cf. Jude 3) or, more likely, to the subjective ability to believe. This faith is given **through** (or, on the basis of) **the righteousness** (*dikaiosynē*, “justice” or “uprightness”; cf. Rom. 1:17; 3:22) **of our God and Savior** (Peter called Jesus Savior [Acts 5:31]) **Jesus Christ**. The grammar here clearly indicates that “God and Savior” are one Person, not two (i.e., there is one Gr. article with two substantives). This passage ranks with the great Christological passages of the New Testament which plainly teach that Jesus Christ is coequal in nature with God the Father (cf. Matt. 16:16; John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13). “Savior” is used of Christ five times in this short epistle (2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18).

B. *The blessing (1:2).*

1:2. The first half of this verse corresponds exactly with 1 Peter 1:2b: **Grace and peace** (*charis ... kai eirēnē*; cf. Pauline usage in Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; etc.) were the characteristic Greek and Hebrew greetings (*eirēnē* Greek version of the Heb. *šālôm*). The verb translated **be ... in abundance** (*plēthyntheiē*; also used in 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 2) is in the optative mood, thus stressing a sincere, prayerful wish for his readers.

This blessing of grace and peace is more than a mere formula of greeting. These virtues come **through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord**. In each of his first two verses Peter mentioned God and Jesus as equal. “Knowledge” (*epignōsei*, “full [*epi*, additional] knowledge”) implies an intimate and personal relationship. It is the means by which God’s grace and peace may be received and experienced. Peter used this term *epignōsis* again in 2 Peter 1:3, 8; and 2:20. The shorter form (*gnōsis*) is found in 1:5–6 and 3:18. Christians are urged to take advantage of the “full knowledge” available to them through Christ Jesus (each occurrence of *epignōsis* in 2 Peter is related to Christ). In this way they could combat false teachers who claimed to have special knowledge (*gnōsis*) but who openly practiced immorality (cf. Paul’s usage of *epignōsis* to combat incipient Gnosticism: Col. 1:9–10; 2:2; 3:10).

II. The Christian’s Nature: The Work of God (1:3–11)

Peter challenged believers to take full advantage of the divine power and promise of God which made it possible to *participate* in the divine nature and thus overcome the corruption caused by evil desires (vv. 3–4). Based on this promised power, Peter further challenged Christians to *practice* the characteristics of the divine nature so that they would experience the assurance of eternal rewards (vv. 5–11).

A. *The fact of the divine nature (1:3–4).*

1. DIVINE POWER (1:3)

1:3. Christ’s **divine power** has provided **everything** believers **need for life and godliness**. “Divine” translates *theias*, which is from *theos* (“God”) and is used only three times in the New Testament (here and in Acts 17:29; 2 Peter 1:4). “Power” (*dynameōs*) is one of Peter’s favorite words (cf. 1 Peter 1:5; 3:22; 2 Peter 1:16; 2:11). All that believers need for spiritual vitality (life) and godly living (*eusebeian*, “godliness,” “piety”; cf. comments on 1:6; 3:11) is attainable **through our knowledge of Him** (Christ). An intimate “full knowledge” (*epignōseōs*; cf. 1:2) of Christ is the source of spiritual power and growth (cf. Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9–10; 2:2).

Christ **called** (cf. 1 Peter 1:15) **us** to this life of godliness **by His own glory and goodness** (*aretē*, “moral excellence”; “praises” in 1 Peter 2:9 and “goodness” in 2 Peter 1:5). Christ attracts people enslaved by sin (cf. 2:19) by His own moral excellence and the total impact of His glorious Person.

2. DIVINE PROMISES (1:4a)

1:4a. **Through these**, that is, Christ’s “glory and goodness” (v. 3), **He has given** believers **His very great and precious promises**. The Greek verb translated “has given” (*dedōrētai*) means “to bestow, to endow.” Not the usual word for “give,” it carries with it the idea of the worth of the gift. Peter used the same verb in verse 3. In Mark 15:45 the word is used to describe Pilate’s “giving” of Jesus’ body to Joseph of Arimathea.

The word for “promises” (*epangelmata*, from *epangellō*; used only in 2 Peter 1:4 and 3:13) implies an emphatic public announcement. The promises are appropriately described as “very great and precious” (*timia*, from *timē*, “value”). Peter used “precious” to describe a Christian’s faith (1 Peter 2:7; 2 Peter 1:1), Christ’s blood (1 Peter 1:19), and here, Christ’s promises. The promises Peter had previously written about related to a believer’s inheritance (1 Peter 1:3–5) and the return of Christ (1 Peter 1:9, 13).

3. DIVINE PARTICIPATION (1:4b)

1:4b. These promises enable Christians to **participate in the divine nature**. “Participate” is literally “become partners” (*genēsthe ... koinōnoi*). “Participate” in 1 Peter 4:13 and “share” in 1 Peter 5:1 are from the same word *koinōnoi* (“partners” or “sharers”). “Divine” is *theias*, also used in 2 Peter 1:3. Believers take on God’s very nature; each one is a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Because they are “partakers” of God’s nature, Christians can share in His moral victory over sin in this life and share in His glorious victory over death in eternal life. Because of the promise of the new birth (1 Peter 1:3), the promise of God’s protecting power (1 Peter 1:5), and the promise of God’s enabling power (2 Peter 1:3), believers can “participate in the divine nature,” that is, become more like Christ (cf. Rom. 8:9; Gal. 2:20). In addition they can **escape the corruption** (*phthoras*, “moral decay”) **in the world** (cf. 2 Peter 2:20; 1 John 2:15–17) **caused by evil desires** (*epithymia*, lit., “lust”).

In 2 Peter 1:3–4 Peter employed graphic vocabulary borrowed from the false teachers he warned against. His language must have arrested his readers’ attention as he invested words from the pagan and philosophic worlds with new Christian meaning: “godliness” (*eusebeia*), “virtue” (*aretē*), “nature” (*physis*), and “corruption” (*phthoras*).

B. The function of the divine nature (1:5–9)

In this beautiful paragraph Peter orchestrates a symphony of grace. To the melody line of faith he leads believers to add harmony in a blend of seven Christian virtues which he lists without explanation or description. A carnal Christian has spiritual myopia (v. 9), but a spiritual Christian is both effective and productive (v. 8) in his understanding of the Lord Jesus and his application of biblical principles to daily life.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FUNCTION (1:5–7)

1:5–7. Peter referred back to the divine nature by beginning this new paragraph with the words **for this very reason**. The words **make every effort** translate a participle (*pareisenekantes*, “applying, bringing to bear alongside of”; used only here in the NT) and *spoudēn pasan* (“all diligence” or “all zeal”; *spoudē* in Rom. 12:11 is rendered “zeal”). It takes every bit of diligence and effort a Christian can muster, along with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, to “escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:4) and to bring in alongside of his faith a complement of virtue. He should work hard at cultivating the seven qualities Peter listed in verses 5–7. As a Christian does so, he becomes more like Christ, participating more fully in God’s divine nature.

The word **add**, in the imperative, translates *epichorēgēsate*, from which come the English words “chorus,” “choreograph,” and “choreography.” In ancient Greece the state established a chorus but the director, the *chorēgys*, paid the expenses for training the chorus. Then the word came to be used of one who provides for or supports others or supplies something for them in abundance. A believer is to “furnish, supply, or support” his life with these virtues. (The same word is “supplies” in 2 Cor. 9:10 and “supported” in Col. 2:19. Peter used it again in 2 Peter 1:11 where the renders it “receive.”)

Faith in Jesus Christ is what separates Christians from all other people. *Pistis*, trust in the Savior which brings one into the family of God, is the foundation of all other qualities in the Christian life.

1. **To** his faith each believer should add **goodness** (lit., “moral excellency,” or “virtue”). In Greek the word is *aretēn*, which Peter also used at the end of verse 3 and in 1 Peter 2:9 (“praises”).

2. **Knowledge** (*gnōsin*; cf. 2 Peter 1:2; 3:18) comes not from intellectual pursuits, but is spiritual knowledge which comes through the Holy Spirit and is focused on the person and Word of God.