

**2 Peter 1:6-7**  
**August 20, 2017**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

We began our study of 2 Peter last week and learned that the gift of faith we rec'd from God is foundational in our love relationship to God. However, we are supposed to **build** on this foundation with certain qualities that will strengthen our faith. Last week we covered the first two qualities: goodness (aka moral excellency or virtue) and knowledge. Today, our goal today is to explore the remaining five QUALITIES so that we CAN cultivate them in order to grow spiritually.

**Transition:** Let's make sure that we understand what these qualities are, and more importantly, HOW do we cultivate them on a daily basis. Let's begin

**BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read 2 Peter 1:6-7]**

V.6:

- and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;

V.7:

- and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q V.6: What QUALITY comes next? [Self-Control]

Q: How do we cultivate self-control? ["He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls" (Prov. 25:28). Paul often compared the Christian to an athlete who must exercise and discipline himself if he ever hopes to win the prize.]

Q: Next QUALITY? [Perseverance] What does this mean and how do we cultivate this? [It is the ability to endure when circumstances are difficult; to have steadfast endurance under adversity, without giving in or giving up.]

Q: Next QUALITY? [Godliness] What does this mean and how do we cultivate this? [*Godliness* simply means "God-likeness." It described the man who was right in his relationship with God and with his fellowman. He seeks to do the will of God and, as he does, he seeks the welfare of others. The godly person makes the kinds of decisions that are right and noble. He does not take an easy path simply to avoid either pain or trial. He does what is right because it is right and because it is the will of God.]

**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. 438–439)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

*Temperance* is the next quality on Peter's list of spiritual virtues, and it means self-control. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls" (Prov. 25:28). Paul in his letters often compared the Christian to an athlete who must exercise and discipline himself if he ever hopes to win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24–27; Phil. 3:12–16; 1 Tim. 4:7–8).

*Patience* is the ability to endure when circumstances are difficult. Self-control has to do with handling the *pleasures* of life, while patience relates primarily to the *pressures* and *problems* of life. (The ability to endure problem people is "long-suffering.") Often, the person who "gives in" to pleasures is not disciplined enough to handle pressures either, so he "gives up."

Patience is not something that develops automatically; we must work at it. James 1:2–8 gives us the right approach. We must expect trials to come, because without trials we could never learn patience. We must, by faith, let our trials work *for* us and not against us, because we know that God is at work in our trials. If we need wisdom in making decisions, God will grant that wisdom if we ask Him. Nobody enjoys trials, but we do enjoy the confidence we can have in trials that God is at work, causing everything to work together for our good and His glory.

*Godliness* simply means "God-likeness." In the original Greek, this word meant "to worship well." It described the man who was right in his relationship with God and with his fellowman. Perhaps the words *reverence* and *piety* come closer to defining this term. It is that quality of character that makes a person distinctive. He lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. He seeks to do the will of God and, as he does, he seeks the welfare of others.

We must never get the idea that godliness is an impractical thing, because it is intensely practical. The godly person makes the kinds of decisions that are right and noble. He does not take an easy path simply to avoid either pain or trial. He does what is right because it is right and because it is the will of God.

*Brotherly kindness* (*PHILADELPHIA* in the Greek) is a virtue that Peter must have acquired the hard way, for the disciples of our Lord often debated and disagreed with one another. If we love Jesus Christ, we must also love the brethren. We should practice an "unfeigned [sincere] love of the brethren" (1 Peter 1:22) and not just pretend that we love them. "Let brotherly love

continue” (Heb. 13:1). “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love” (Rom. 12:10). The fact that we love our brothers and sisters in Christ is one evidence that we have been born of God (1 John 5:1–2).

But there is more to Christian growth than brotherly love; we must also have the sacrificial love that our Lord displayed when He went to the cross. The kind of love (“charity”) spoken of in 2 Peter 1:7 is *AGAPE* love, the kind of love that God shows toward lost sinners. This is the love that is described in 1 Corinthians 13, the love that the Holy Spirit produces in our hearts as we walk in the Spirit (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22). When we have *brotherly* love, we love because of our likenesses to others; but with *AGAPE* love, we love in spite of the differences we have.

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.

Because we have the divine nature, we can grow spiritually and develop this kind of Christian character. It is through the power of God and the precious promises of God that this growth takes place. The divine “genetic structure” is already there: God wants us to be “conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:29). The life within will reproduce that image if we but diligently cooperate with God and use the means He has lavishly given us.

And the amazing thing is this: as the image of Christ is reproduced in us, the process does not destroy our own personalities. We still remain uniquely ourselves!

One of the dangers in the church today is imitation. People have a tendency to become like their pastor, or like a church leader, or perhaps like some “famous Christian.” As they do this, they destroy their own uniqueness while failing to become like Jesus Christ. They lose both ways! Just as each child in a family resembles his parents and yet is different, so each child in God’s family comes more and more to resemble Jesus Christ and yet is different. Parents don’t duplicate themselves, they reproduce themselves; and wise parents permit their children to be themselves.

**Raymer, R. M. (1985). 2 Peter. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, p. 866). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

6. The first five virtues pertain to one’s inner life and his relationship to God. The last two relate to others. **Brotherly kindness** translates the Greek *philadelphian*, a fervent practical caring for others (1 John 4:20). Peter already urged this attitude on his readers in his first epistle (1 Peter 1:22; cf. Rom. 12:10; 1 Thes. 4:9; Heb. 13:1).

7. Whereas **brotherly kindness** is concern for others’ needs, **love** (*agapēn*) is desiring the highest good for others. This is the kind of love God exhibits toward sinners (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:9–11).

Interestingly this “symphony” begins with faith and ends with love. Building on the foundation of faith in Christ, believers are to exhibit Christlikeness by supplying these seven qualities that climax in love toward others (cf. faith and love in Col. 1:4–5; 1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Thes. 1:3; Phile. 5).