Growing in Life & Godliness

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Preacher: Josiah Ball

[0:00] Thank you, Pastor Bill. This is a bit of a bucket list thing for me, so we're going to do this. Let's see if I get this right. It's good to be in the Lord's house, on the Lord's day, with the Lord's people, because it's all about the Lord.

There you go. Cross that off the bucket list. Yeah, I know. And I'm so glad that that is true, that it's about the Lord and not me right now.
So, I'm nervous. I'm scared. The Lord knows I'm an introvert, not designed for this, but I feel like Jeremiah. When the Lord said he was going to use him as a prophet, he said, Jeremiah replied, Lord God, I don't know how to speak.
I'm only a youth. But the Lord says, Don't say I'm only a youth. For to all to whom I send you, you shall go. And whatever I command you, you shall speak. So that's my desire for you guys, is today to bring you guys the Word of God.
So, we're going to go to the Lord in prayer. And then we'll turn to 2 Peter, which is just a coincidence, actually. It's interesting that you guys are... You'll introduce us. Yeah, there you go. Stealing your thunder. Sorry about that.
[1:07] No, no, no. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, you know my need, my trembling needs, my weakness, my own sin, all the reasons, Lord, that my conscience and the enemy tells me, that, Lord, I have no right to be up here.

And, Lord, in one sense, he is right. I do have no right to be up here, except that I have a great, great Savior who has died for me, who has redeemed me, and who has given me his Spirit, that I might faithfully proclaim your gospel.
And so, Father, I come in that name, in that righteousness, and I ask you to give me your Holy Spirit. Lord, I want this congregation to be fed the Word of God. I want them to be stirred up to love and good works.
I want them, Lord, to have their eyes and their hearts drawn to you and be stirred up to love and good works. And so, Father, please use me to do that. Please anoint me with your Spirit and give me everything that I need to do this.
I cannot do it in myself. You know that, Lord. But may you be with us. May you encourage, Lord, Little Log Church. I love this church. I miss it in many ways, Lord. May you use your Word to accomplish your purpose in their lives.
[2:20] May they be encouraged. Lord, may you cause each one of us to draw closer to you and to grow in holiness through today. I pray this in the powerful, true name of our living God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen. Two weeks ago, I got a text from Pastor Bill. He asked me if I would be willing to come on by and preach one Sunday.
So I was terrified, but I did the godly thing and completely ignored him and pretended he never texted me. Until about a week later when he called me again and I realized I couldn't escape the Lord's will.
I was a little bit like Jonah. But eventually prayed, submitted it to the Lord and then the next task was to figure out, okay, what in the world am I going to talk about? The whole Bible, the whole counsel of Scripture opened to me.
So where to start? And I kind of took a step back and said, okay, Lord, what's my goal? My goal and my heart for you guys is to have every heart here, just like we read in our call to worship, that we would all look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, and that we would cast aside every sin and weight that clings closely to us.

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[3:29] That's my heart, is that every one of us would be pointed towards Christ and learn how to live in a manner fully pleasing to Him. The best way that I knew how to do that was not try to come up with something creative or anything, but just share what the Lord's been teaching me.

So if you will, please open your Bible with me to the book of 2 Peter 1. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's actually the same Bible as mine, so it should be page 1018.
It's convenient, but... And we're going to be going really through verses 1 through 8, and what I really want to get at is verse 8 ends, kind of this section ends with a promise, 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.
I want that to be my life. I want that to be me. I want my walk with the Lord to be like that, to not be ineffective or unfruitful. Paul Washer said it well.
The Lord often gives us so many blessings. He gives us blessings of family, provision, roofs over our head, and food, but the greatest blessing really that the Lord gives us is Himself, His presence, and victory over sin.
[4:49] That's one of the greatest blessings that God gives us. And so I want to know what these qualities are that He's talking about in verse 8 so I can know how this applies to me. So we're going to rewind, start from verse 1, kind of work our way through the text.

So background on 2 Peter. I know you guys will cover this in your Bible study, but anybody want to take a stab at who wrote it? 2 Peter? Peter, there you go.
Yeah, that's right. Yeah, yeah. That's right. And Peter wrote it. And this is the second letter that he's writing. And he's writing it just as he's about to die.
We learn that from chapter 1, verses 12 through 15. He wants to stir them up by way of reminder one last time as he's about to be martyred. And kind of the overall, and I don't know if Pastor Bill would agree with this, but I'd say the overall message of the book is essentially growing in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus, even in the midst of false teachers.
And we're going to see aspects of that, but that's kind of the big umbrella overview of the book. Now we'll jump into verse 1. So Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
[6:10] I'm going to pause there and go on a little bit of a tangent, go a little out of our way, and just realize that is an incredible statement. Peter, humanly speaking, is a pretty big deal.

He was one of the 12 disciples. More than that, he was kind of the leader of the 12 disciples. He was one of only three that got to see Jesus transfigured while Jesus was on the earth. He was one of three that got to go with Jesus into the garden while Jesus was praying.
He was the one who Jesus said he was going to give the keys of the kingdom to. And he was the one who the Lord used on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit fell and really the church was born. He was the one who the Lord used to first bring the gospel to the Gentiles.
If anybody could be considered a super Christian and on that kind of higher tier of Christians, it would be Peter. And there's a tendency for us to kind of view Christians in that light.
There's sort of the super Christians, the Peters, the Apostles, and the John MacArthur's, the R.C. Sproul's, depending on denominational differences and stuff, if you'd like them.
[7:12] But Peter abolishes that. Right off, right at the get-go of this letter, he says, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing. And I was talking to one of my, I was trying to encourage one of my friends with this and he kind of rebutted and said like, I always took that to mean that he's writing to a subsect of Christians who's sort of risen to that level.

And that's who he's writing to. But if you read 2 Peter, look at who his audience is. And verses 12 through 15, he's writing to Christians who need to be reminded of truth. That's me.
Chapter 3, he writes to those who find Paul confusing. That's definitely me. And in verse 9, he's even writing to those who are backsliding. He's not writing to some super Christian like the apostles and stuff.
He's writing to you and me. And he says to you and me that we are, we have a faith of equal standing with Peter, which is incredible. Especially if you come from a Catholic background where Peter is sort of the lineage of the Pope and the Pope is as good as you can get.
Peter says, you know, there's only two, there's only really two camps. There's number one, what we read in Ephesians 1. You're either dead in your sins and because of your sin under the

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condemnation of God or you've come to Christ and by nothing of your own works, by nothing of your own righteousness, been clothed by Jesus' righteousness.
[8:42] And that's exactly what it says. How can it be that we have an equal standing? The very next word is, by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. If we are Christians today, then we are clothed with that righteousness and that is the only thing that determines our standing before God.

I'm no more loved today when I preach and do all these holy things than I am last week when I just have, you know, terrible sin struggles in my life because my standing before God has nothing to do with my works.
but it's Christ and that's it. That's huge. So that's a tangent. Anyways, back to the text. Verse 2. May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
So now we're going to kind of turn into verses 3 through, really the thought, Peter's idea, really runs through verse 11.
But we're going to stop at verse 8 for the sake of time. But I want to give a summary of verses 3 through 11, kind of the whole section. There's sort of three movements. And this is in your bulletin.
[9:50] I wrote my little summary of verses 3 through 11. So there's three movements in this section. First one is God's divine power has gifted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

That's the first movement that Peter makes here. The second one is therefore pursue supplementing your faith. Pursue, I would maybe reword it, pursue growing in life and godliness. Since God has given you power to grow in life and godliness, pursue growing in life and godliness.
And then the third movement, which we won't go into because that's verses 9 to 11 is in so doing, prevent backsliding and confirm your calling.
So we're not going to go into that. So again, that's sort of the general idea. Now we're going to kind of walk through the text and just see what the Lord has for us, building up to verse 8 and that promise.
So verse 3. 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.
[10:59] So the first thing that I want to do is this whole section kind of revolves around the idea of life and godliness. God's power is given to us for life and godliness and then we're called to pursue life and godliness in the next verses.

So I want to define what does it mean? What is life and godliness biblically? So this is on your bulletin as well. The Bible defines what life is.
Whenever you see life in scripture or eternal life or everlasting life, think of John 17, 3 which says this, And this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
When you hear verses like John 3, 16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life or eternal life depending on your translation.
So what that verse is telling us is the end goal of the gospel is eternal life but we tend to think of that as just oh great, I don't have to go to hell. It's so much more than that. The end goal of the gospel is eternal life which means to know God and that begins right now.
[12:15] In your walk as a Christian we can know God, commune with God, be with God and that's what Peter in this section is, that's what this is all kind of talking about.

God's power is given to us so that we can grow in our relationship with God. So if you want a summary of what life is, I would just say relationship with God, to know God, knowing God and then godliness I don't necessarily have a scripture verse for this but I just say godliness is god-ly-ness. Being like God. You can think about it in terms of Christ-likeness or personal holiness. Being more and more conformed to God's image and being more and more like Him.
So this whole section is sort of centered on the idea of growing in your relationship with God and growing in personal holiness. And the question is well how do we do that?
And then so verse 3 tells us number one first insight is it happens by God's power not our own. His power has been given to us and there's a principle that we cannot and I'm sure many of us know this we can't overcome sin in ourselves.
[13:30] We do have struggles with whatever it might be gossip or pornography or whatever. If we try to kind of beat that in ourselves what usually happens?

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Not much. Maybe a little bit of you know do a little bit better one step forward and then two steps back that sort of thing. and this should be and I want this to be an encouragement to every one of you that God has promised to give you His power to grow in your relationship with God.
If you struggle to spend time with God and time with Him which is all Christians by the way in certain seasons of life especially if you struggle to have that devoted time with Him you struggle to connect with Him you struggle to overcome certain sins in your life God promises here His power and I want you to notice as well notice the tense I would expect if I were Peter and I were writing the Bible which would be a terrible idea I would write His divine power will give you everything that you need it's like a future tense like we're not there you know yeah you're not there yet but if you ask Him then He will give it to you but it doesn't say will what does it say?
has past tense and this is one of the most this is what again the Lord has been teaching me this that one of the most transformational lessons to learn is that growing in our relationship with God and growing in holiness has nothing to do with us trying to you know fast three times a week or you know trying to do all of these religious works to make myself more holy God's already given me His Holy Spirit within me who gives me everything I need for life and godliness so then the obvious objection though is what?
why do I still struggle? if I if God's power has already past tense been given to me why do I still struggle with these same sins over and over and over again and I'll just say two quick things about that number one as a fellow struggler takes time takes a lot of time and then the second thing that I want to say is a poem by John Newton many of you guys know John Newton he's the author of Amazing Grace incredible incredible hymnist and this is a poem or a hymn that he wrote it's called I Asked the Lord here's what he says I ask the Lord that I might grow in faith and love and every grace might more of His salvation know and seek more earnestly His face so he's saying I want to grow in relationship with God I want to seek more earnestly His face and I want to grow in personal holiness I want to grow in faith and love I'm continuing on t'was he who taught me thus to pray and he I trust has answered prayer but it has been in such a way as almost drove me to despair [16:29] I hoped that in some favored hour at once he'd answer my request and by his love's constraining power subdue my sins and give me rest John Newton's saying you know so I wanted to grow in my relationship with God I wanted to be more holy and I was hoping God would just kind of snap his fingers and boom magically I'm more holy instead of this he made me feel the hidden evils of my heart and let the angry powers of hell assault my soul in every part Lord why is this I trembling cried will thou pursue thy worm to death it is in this way the Lord replied I answer prayer for grace and faith these inward trials I employ from self and pride to set thee free and break thy schemes of earthly joy that thou mayst find thy all in me if you want to grow in your relationship with God and you want to grow in holiness

God will do it I'm sure many of us know he often uses suffering to do it he uses hard hard life circumstances hard things that happen depression whether it just be an internal one or an externally applied one and he uses that to break us free of our sinful desires and our comforts and make us more and more dependent on him so his power this is my encouragement to you guys it doesn't matter how long you've struggled with something God promises he will give you his power to overcome it it will take time it may take a lot of going through hard things in your life and again we're not going to be perfect until we die and then his power will be made completely perfect and we will be completely without sin in a perfect relationship with the Lord so I hope that that's an encouragement to you but the last thing that I want to note about verse 3 is similar to what we just said it's just this happens through the knowledge of him and whenever you see knowledge of God or knowledge of Jesus in scripture
I don't want you to think about necessarily just memorizing or kind of knowing facts about him is anybody here from a medical field anybody it's okay if not let's just help with the analogy okay that's fine that's fine but imagine there was a doctor sitting in the front row there or something like that now that doctor would be able to tell me more facts about my wife Carolyn probably he would be able to tell me about how her brain works and how one of the biggest mysteries to me is how we actually like get our arms and muscles to move and stuff like that he could probably tell me all these different facts about her but does he know her like I know her this is a relational knowledge the difference between knowing about somebody just knowing mere facts and actually knowing the person which means having a relationship with them spending time with them spending time talking to my beloved wife doing things together finding out what she loves and how I can love her best and

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things like that that's what it is to know God in the scripture so when you see here that this happens through the knowledge of God that's saying the power of God is applied to us to grow in life and godliness through relationship with God and this is something that we see elsewhere in scripture I think one of the most important verses in understanding how we grow as Christians is 2nd Corinthians 321 it says this and we all with unveiled face here's the key beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image of Christ from one degree of glory to another the way that that transformation happens according to 2nd Corinthians is we behold God we behold his glory we go to him in scripture we see him and we live life with him as well that's part of it we see how he works in our hearts and in our lives and we take all of the things in our lives to him in prayer and then we see him as well in fellowshipping with other Christians and as we behold his glory in doing that he transforms us so I want to note a common theme that we see here in 2nd Peter we see there in 2nd Corinthians this is on the back side of your bulletin notes it's at the very top there should be which is you can think of an analogy think of you know the verse in scripture where it says let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your fathers in heaven

I want to use that picture so imagine we're all like light bulbs and the light that comes out of us is good works our life and godliness well if I just hold a light bulb here is it ever going to light up I just hold it it needs power right it needs a power source outside of itself to get it to light up and so these lights that are on right now where do you know they're supplied by electricity where does that electricity ultimately come from I think from the power plant right I could be wrong I don't pay bills yet but yeah supposedly there's a power plant wherever Colorado Springs is the Colorado Springs power plant there you go the Colorado Springs power plant that's where the electricity is made that ultimately feeds these but how do they get here power lines or something something like that I want you to keep that picture there's that source there's the power plant there's a means by which the power gets transferred from the source to here and then there's the result which is light coming out there's a source there's a means and then there's a result and we see that here in our text in 2 Peter so for that first line we saw the source of our changes is God's power is God himself that's the source of how we change the means by which that power is brought to us is through the knowledge of him through knowing

[23:05] God through relationship with God and then the result is life and godliness and then we saw that same pattern should be the third line on that little part of your bulletin we saw that same idea there again we all and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed so the result is being transformed we become more like Christ that's the result there in 2 Corinthians 3 the source is God's glory and the means is us beholding him you see that same there's the source which is God himself the means which is us knowing him and then the result is a transformed life and we're going to see that cycle one more time here in 2 Peter so verse 3 going on to verse 4 so through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers in the divine nature there's that same structure of what's the result divine nature being a partaker in the divine nature that's the end result the means by which that happens through his precious promises through God's promises and then what's the source of all this by his glory just like we saw in 2 Corinthians

God's glory being the source of our transformation does that make sense you guys seeing that I'm not the only one I didn't I'm not that's not original me by the way I stole that from somebody online but yeah yeah sorry as I always say now that I've said it once I can say as I always say but um and then that's the pattern so now I just want to investigate each one of those three what does it mean that God's glory is the source of us changing how does God's glory become power for us to actually grow and practically overcome the sins like gossip or stinginess with our finances how does God's glory which seems so far off actually then impact my life in these very practical ways and yeah the best thing that I can do is try to quote somebody who can say it better than I can this is a quote from John Piper he says this the gospel would not be good news if it did not reveal the glory of Christ for us to see and savor it is the glory of

Christ that finally satisfies our soul we are made for Christ and Christ died so that every obstacle would be removed that keeps us from seeing and savoring the most satisfying treasure in the universe namely Christ who is the image of God so what I want to take out of that is essentially this our souls are made for Christ you will not be happy until our souls are made happy in him in Christ

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he is the only one that can satisfy our hearts so if our hearts are looking for happiness and for satisfaction some other way whether it's in building up again if you think about trying to get just a quick fix of pleasure through pornography or something like that or if it's again trying to get some kind of comfort or stability and keeping for yourself all your finances so you don't have to worry about financial instability those things aren't going to truly satisfy your heart and it's just going to lead you to do it more and more the only thing that will and if you just try to stop doing these bad things it's not going to work you have to fulfill those desires with God you have to satisfy those desires with him that is how
God's glory transforms us because we behold his glory we know him in relationship with him and then as we do that as our eyes are turned to him and we see him in scripture as he is being as glorious absolutely sovereign over everything that happens and at the same time completely loving to care about everything that happens in your life and you see the way that he works in the lives of people in scripture and you see his character and his heart and his love and you get outside of yourself and you get to see you my God is amazing and that will truly and that begins to satisfy your heart and there will be for those who know Christ there will be a joy that comes from that that is so much better than these earthly fixes that don't last very long that's how God's glory transforms us and I'd make a note as well on through the promises of God God's promises is a huge way that he sanctifies us this morning is a perfect example of that we parked in the
Carolyn and I parked in the elementary school is that the elementary school I'm still disoriented we parked in the elementary school parking lot and I cried this is so terrifying to me I don't I don't like this but I say okay Lord you've called me to do this I agreed to do it I want to be faithful please God strengthen me and then I go to his word and I preach to myself Isaiah 4110 fear not for I am with you be not dismayed for I am your God I will strengthen you I will help you I will uphold you by my righteous right hand and then I can say okay Lord that is a promise I trust that and I'm gonna go and here's the key trust God's word more than your feelings that will transform your life right there that's what I've kind of what we've been learning over the last six months is we tend to think like well God's promise isn't true because I don't feel at peace yet that's not how it works it's often it's okay [29:12] Lord I trust you in spite of what I'm feeling I'm gonna go I'm gonna walk I'm gonna go up there and preach even though I'm mortified I'm gonna trust you for power because you promised to help me and strengthen me and give me everything that I need and then I get up here and I don't well I shouldn't say that but I hope that he's answering he's giving power exactly see trust him even if you don't feel it and if you're sitting in the back cry anyways so and then the last thing that I want to note on this is the result and just ask what is the divine nature because I remember having conversations with some Mormons who use this as a biblical justification for when we die we're gonna be gods we're gonna each get our own universe are they right is that what this means you guys are good that's right that's not what it's talking about it's defined by the very next words having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire being a partaker in the divine nature doesn't mean that you're gonna be absolutely like

God in every single way that you're gonna suddenly be omniscient and omnipresent and be able to create things out of nothing that'd be super cool what it's talking about here is you become a partaker of the divine nature and that you become a partaker in his holiness you become like him you become totally free of sin that happens ultimately when we die and go to heaven if you ever wonder of a biblical reason for why we think when we die we're never gonna have sin again there you go we're gonna become a partaker in the divine holiness and the divine righteousness without sin but that also begins now incrementally just step by step little bit here little bit there as I said in 2nd Corinthians kind of our parallel passage from one degree of glory to another little bit little bit little bit just want to insert this script but we are strugglers our pastor at Calvary
Monument he was preaching and he said what do you say to somebody who says oh you Christians you're all hypocrites you act like you're all holy but I know what you guys are like our response should be oh my goodness you don't even know you don't know half of it you don't know how sinful I am let me tell you but then let me show you how wonderful it is that Christ died for me to forgive me of all that and he's growing me and it's taking time but he is doing it and that we as a church I mean I guess I'm not really like part of this church as a member of this church but we're all part of the universal big c church we're all brothers and sisters and we should be able to have that with one another we're strugglers every one of us it takes time it happens slowly let's be honest with each other not put up our facade of holiness like I'm I got my life together I don't none of us do we're

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all messy sinners who need the Lord amen so that's sort of the first half of the sermon if you will God's power in causing us to grow in life and godliness now the next words if you're like me are kind of surprising

I just talked about how it's God's power not our own right so then why does verse five start like this for this very reason make every effort wait a minute what you just said it was God's power that is growing what's all this make every effort talk and this is kind of one of those paradoxes are quite the right word tensions I guess you could say I like the analogy one of my professors used of it's like a laundry line or something there's something holding it on here and pulling it and there's kind of two opposing forces that are pulling it in opposite ways but holding the same truth up on the one hand you have God's power is what changes you but then on the other hand you have verses like this like make every effort we see this in Philippians chapter 2 verses 12 and 13 work out your salvation with fear and trouble he says work it out do it put effort in pursue this then he also says for or because it is

God who works in you both to will and to work so which is it is it God is it me some mixture of both and you know there's a lot of mystery that goes into that but I think this is helpful don't take it too far all analogies fail if you take them too far but I find this helpful this is from one of Carolyn's professors not original to me again but I'll take credit for it if you want some people view sanctification like a cruise ship where it's just all God's power you're just kind of there it's gonna go whether whatever you do whether you're sleeping or playing around or whatever you're just kind of sit back let go and let God and you're just there along for the ride but that doesn't necessarily fit with what Peter says here right as Peter says here make every effort so it's not a cruise ship then on the other hand then we can kind of go too far on the pendulum and say okay well then sanctification is like a rowboat I just gotta grit my teeth and do it and look up all these psychological methods to change the way that my brain works and all that sort of a thing but that doesn't work either because then that's your power your ingenuity and your work on it and that doesn't fit with what Peter said that it's his divine power so what's a good picture of what it actually is again don't take this every analogy fails eventually but I like the picture of a sailboat that at the end you know we are responsible if you want a sailboat to go what do you have to do put up a sail that's right if you don't put up a sail you're not going to go very far but at the same time if the wind doesn't blow you're not going anywhere it is the wind that pushes you it is the wind that ultimately gets you to go where you want to go but we still are responsible to put up that sail so I want that to be the picture that's in your mind and I even like the words that Peter uses for this very reason you can think about it like because the wind is blowing let's put up a sail and go somewhere the wind is blowing for every Christian

[35:34] God's power is there he's already given it to you and he will grow you then the more that we put up a sail the more that we intentionally call out specific sins in our lives and we attack them strategically and the more that the Lord will grow us and that's why he says make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self control and self control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love and it's like whoa that's a lot of stuff to grow and so what I'm going to do really quick is I'm going to just explain structurally what I think Peter is doing here because it's kind of a weird structure isn't it why does he say you know I would expect again if I were Peter writing this I would say to supplement your faith with virtue knowledge self control etc just say them once

I'm an efficient guy sure let's just say things once and be done with it why does he go through all the trouble of repeating every one of them and saying faith with virtue repeat virtue virtue with knowledge repeat knowledge knowledge and do that for all of them why does he mess with repeating that over and over again now some people brothers and sisters would argue that it's a progression that you you know you're starting with faith and then you go to virtue and then after virtue you kind of graduate to the next level which is knowledge and then you kind of go all the way through all the levels then you eventually kind of get to the pinnacle of love but I don't think that that can be the case for two reasons number one love is not something for mature Christians love is for every Christian in fact love is the most important thing for every Christian right the first two commandments are love God and love neighbor so if you have it at the end of your progression then what does that tell you yeah exactly yeah that's right that's right so and then the other reason why

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I don't think that it's a progression is raise your hand if you think you're as virtuous as can be if you think you've graduated virtue and you're good to go that's right none of us you can't ever yeah exactly yeah suck at first base until we die so I don't think it's a progression so then why is it this strange structure of faith with virtue virtue with knowledge and going on and on I mean I'm going to read a quote that I think does a good job of explaining it this is again from John Piper and he says this I think what Peter is saying in verses 5 through 7 is this true Christians do not stop pursuing growth in grace they go on they advance they apply themselves with diligence to increase in these things Peter calls us to a holy dissatisfaction with our present attainments I think I think that's right I could be wrong but I think that's right

I think what Peter is saying is you know when you yes you know you're starting wherever you're at today and then the Lord convicts you of a certain sin and then you work on that and then let's say the Lord gives you grace and you start to overcome that sin and you see fruits of godliness and then what's our tendency to do after that there you go exactly man I've done my battle I'm going to go home and rest for the next nine months until the next crisis but that's not but I think that's what Peter is saying here is don't do that don't just wait until these big crisis things come up or whatever but as soon as you start to see fruits of righteousness in this one area go to the next find other areas to grow in and a good way to do that by the way and this will be painful but really good ask people who know you well hey do you see any areas of my life that I could grow in do you see in my life that's right and be ready for their answers because it's going to hurt but always be progressing I think that's Peter's point in repeating them one after the other is as soon as the Lord starts giving you victory in this one look to the next area never be content with your holiness right now always be wanting to grow a little bit more so and then the second question that I want to ask about the way that it's structured I do think it is very significant that it begins with faith and ends with love the biblical pattern is never ever ever do works first and then believe the biblical pattern is always faith and then after there's faith after there's a true repentance after there's a true belief in Jesus and when there is that change of heart where God takes out your old heart and puts in a new heart then from that point pursue these good works it's almost a hesitancy to say good works because we want to be careful like okay well works have nothing to do with salvation but at the same time we are called as Christians to pursue good works but not for our salvation we are saved we are justified by nothing but just going to God as sinners and saying

[41:05] Lord I have nothing to offer you I'm just a sinner worse than I even know but Lord Jesus you died for me and that is everything that I hope in right there and then you go to him in that faith and repentance and then from that place being justified now you pursue virtue knowledge all those other things starts with faith and must start with a saving faith then going on to these things of growing in good works and then ending with love significant because what does Paul say the whole law is fulfilled in love love is the culmination of all of those good works of all of these if you love God and love your neighbor if we loved God and loved our neighbor perfectly we would be the perfect person except that we're not and we need to grow in that we want to get better so with that in mind kind of close us out what I want to do is for this progression of faith with virtue virtue with knowledge rather than if I were as gifted as

Pastor Bill he could probably make a sermon out of each one and it would be wonderful it would be awesome but I just want to paint a little practical vignette of what I think it looks like for each one of these what does it look like to supplement faith with virtue specifically and then what does it look like to supplement virtue with knowledge specifically and so on your bulletin sheet I wrote application for in all caps you meaning that what I want you to do is don't necessarily worry about writing all of these down because then you'll just be overwhelmed and yeah depressed for the next week but but just as you hear these vignettes just ask the Lord even right now Lord which one of these is for me which one do you are you calling and it might not be the exact anything that I say in particular but just whatever the Lord puts on your heart and then write that down and have that be your kind of what you're working on this week so I'll start with supplement faith with virtue so what does it mean to supplement faith with virtue the word virtue literally means according well I'm trusting people who actually know Greek

I don't but I'm trusting those who do the word literally means moral excellence so what I think it looks like to grow in moral excellence is essentially this is there any kind of glaring moral failure in your life this week and so the practical I mean that could be a whole host of things the practical one that I'm going to pick on just to kind of add flesh to this a little bit is gossip I think gossip is you know

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it's kind of one of those acceptable sins that you're like oh yeah I struggle with gossip or whatever but gossip really is an acid at the youth group at our church I mean it's amazing we started like two weeks ago and we've already had like four parents come to us saying like hey your kid was this kid was gossiping about these other kids and it's just destructive it totally destroys and more than that it's not even necessarily the actual act of saying oh my goodness did you see what she was wearing it's that heart inside of us that loves and just enjoys the misfortunes and the failings of other people it's that heart that says yeah
I like hearing about that I want to tear him down just a little bit subtly so what do you do then if that is your heart number one you go to God for power it must be his power that overcomes and you go to the Lord and you say Lord Jesus forgive me I confess this to you I've gossiped but I also have a heart that loves gossip please forgive me and thank you for sending Christ to forgive me so that I can be forgiven and still loved by you but help me to overcome this give me a heart that instead of loving to tear others down loves to build them up give me that kind of heart by your power by your spirit within me and then you say amen and then you supplement that plea for God's power with action just supplement that with you know for gossip maybe that looks like is there somebody in your life who you tend to gossip with is there a friend that when you get together it just kind of goes down the rabbit hole of gossiping and maybe go to them and say hey
I'm really sorry the Lord convicted me that I've been gossiping with you a lot and number one will you forgive me and then number two will you help me to not do that if you see me gossiping if you see my heart kind of going in that direction would you mind just pointing that out to me and have that conversation with them this week and see how the Lord works in that so that's one practical picture again it starts with going to God asking repenting of course and trusting in Christ and then asking him for power to overcome it and then supplement that with an action with something that helps you overcome that sin I think that's what it looks like to again ask God to bring the wind he will he promises to and then set up your sail the practical things to help that change happen so that's what I think it looks like for virtue what about knowledge so again knowledge as we said earlier knowledge is not just you know memorize a calculus book it's talking about specifically knowledge of God so how do you grow and supplement your faith with knowledge of God maybe this one would apply to you if again you just really struggle to have consistent time with the
[46:43] Lord and again that's every Christian at some point I know that was a big weight off of my shoulders and my wife's shoulders when we found out like man we're not just like second grade Christians because we struggle with this there are times in the Christian life where we do struggle to kind of get that consistent time so maybe that would be the application for you is to get a solid consistent time with God and so what does that look like to pursue that number one go to God in prayer ask him for self control as a fruit of the Holy Spirit and it's not something we can just come up with so say Lord give me discipline to be able I want to spend time with you please give me the discipline to pursue that and you say amen you!

open your Bible get into the but I've been told by people who have that when you're in that you can't spend two hours with God sitting down with your Bible but you still need time with the Lord that doesn't change so how can you specifically get time with the Lord maybe it looks like we had a friend who would just put a little earbud in and listen to the Bible or listen to sermons while do put little Bible verses up so that whoever is doing the dishes could just read the scripture verse and work on memorizing it things like that practical ways to get God's word into your life set up that sail whatever that looks like for you pursue knowing God knowledge with self control maybe this one applies to you if there's a particular addiction in your life and whether that be
I will for me one of the things I've been struggling recently is an addiction to entertainment and social media how many hours do I spend it's amazing you never think it is as much as it is until you get the weekly report on your phone of how much screen time you've had and it's like whoa whoa it's been that long and it's usually just doing what you know just scrolling through Facebook watching endless YouTube videos or whatever and that's what I've been struggling with recently so for me what that looks like and for you if that is you I'm not saying that those things are inherently bad I'm not saying necessarily that it's wrong to have social media or wrong to watch TV wrong to play video games or anything like that we are free in Christ praise God but what I am saying is that we don't want to be mastered by anything are you able to say no are you able is it something that's consuming your life and if that's you like it was for me where

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I was spending three hours a day apparently on YouTube and Facebook or whatever then go to God and say Lord forgive me for my wasting time in that way!
need your discipline I need your power to be able to replace that with something that's actually beneficial something whether that's spending more time with you which will actually satisfy my heart I'm looking to entertainment for some kind of rest but it's never actually restful I just usually end up feeling cruddy afterwards so Lord help me replace that with something spending time with you or something that will build me up or help me to replace it with something productive like loving other people man if I could have those hours back to be able to spend with other people imagine more times I could have gotten coffee with Zach would have been awesome so that's right and then you go and then you say amen and then maybe for me what it looked like is getting an internet filter to block social media websites block Twitter block Facebook even if it's just for a time that was the other thing for me fasting from sports just for one weekend and noticing how much my heart really is addicted to that it's hard but yeah spend that time fast just get rid of it for either long term or just get rid of it for a little bit of time and devote that to the
[51:02] Lord that's the setting up your sale next one self control with steadfastness so steadfastness in scripture I think always it could be wrong but I think always means steadfast through trials and if that's you coming here today with a heavy heart so much on your plate and you're hearing me say all these other things and it's just burying you even further hear me when I say this what it means to supplement your faith with steadfastness is just go to the Lord and say Lord this is too much for me right now I need your help I don't know this life is way too much if I start thinking about everything that there is I just get crippled it's too much but Lord help me to get through this one next thing that you've given me help me to just get through the very next step that's all I can handle right now it's just the very next thing that you have for me help me to just do that and then when the Lord gets you through that go to him again and say

Lord thank you you're so gracious help me to get through just the next thing and just take life all of life one thing at a time prayer and that is what steadfastness looks like one thing at a time so steadfastness with godliness as I said earlier virtue is moral excellence and the application was are there any moral failures or something that need to be taken care of this one kind of the opposite the inverse or converse or whatever of that which is logic I don't know if it's inverse or converse godliness is is there any aspects of your life that you want to grow in that you know maybe giving just isn't a huge part of your life right now by the way Pastor Bill did not tell me to preach on this right but maybe there's just something in the Lord might be stirring in your heart like Lord I want to be more generous with my money I want to be faithful with what you've given me and
I want to be sacrificial in that so help me to find a heart that says yes I get to give I get to give my money isn't that crazy some people are there that it's actually a joy for them to write a big check even if it hurts themselves financially because they've found it's true and it is true it is way more blessed to give than to receive and so if that is you then go to the!
Lord give me a cheerfully giving heart and say amen and find maybe what it looks like is finding expenses in your life that aren't necessary that you can cut out and then use that money not to just build up your bank account but intentionally take that money and invest it here a little log or somewhere if there's somebody who you know that's in dire straits giving it to them whatever it might look like all right and then last one that I'll cover is godliness with brotherly affection and this one's hard for me as an introvert because it is hard to love people I remember a pastor once told me and I think that this is true in broad sense and it's hard time is a four letter word or excuse me love I blew!
love is a four letter word time there you go that was better and so maybe what it looks like is Lord especially if you're an introvert like me Lord it's so hard it takes a lot of energy I always love it it's always good but it still takes so much energy and my selfishness I don't want to it's easier for me to stay home but Lord I want to grow in this I want to love my brothers and sisters well so help me to do that today give me love for them and give me strength and energy and then say amen and then text somebody hey can we get together for coffee this week or maybe it's a good friend who you've just been disconnected from or maybe it's somebody at the church who you know might just be lonely and things but don't leave Christ out of it ask hey how is your walk doing is there anything that the
[55:33] Lord has shown you is anything I can be praying for you pray together encourage one another in the Lord that's brotherly affection rather than just socializing when there is that element

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of in addition to talking about just the normal things of life also the supplement of can we pray together and then the last one is brotherly affection with love love again it's just the apex of all of that whatever one is your application is also an application of either loving God or loving neighbor or both so and then the last verse the one we started with 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 and I think what that promise is saying is that if you are putting your sail up and continuing to pursue and then when God gives you victory in this way you put another sail up to go in this direction and that's what it means when he said if these qualities are yours and are increasing and that will prevent you from being ineffective or unfruitful in your relationship with

Jesus Christ Amen Let's close in prayer Father I praise you Lord Jesus for any good Lord that you have done you know my weakness there are no great men of God there are no great sermons there are only weak pitiful sinful men of a great and merciful God and sermons given by weak pitiful men who have a great and merciful God for any good that is in this we give you the glory but Lord I pray for every person in this room that their application from this week would not just be something that they write down today and forget about by tonight but Lord that you would cause it to be a devotion in which we are willing to really take a fight against sin seriously and Lord I'm sure many of not all people here are but Lord that this would be a stirring up to remember to do that put up a sail and fight for holiness trust you for power and see how you work in our lives may you work in every person's life here may you amaze them by the power of the wind that you bring for the tiny little sails that we build and may you be honored and glorified in this church
Lord God I miss this church I do love this church church I was baptized at the church that I believe I was saved at which you brought me to yourself may you bless them may you bless the elders and pastor Bill and pastor Rick and may you be with them and all of the different things that come up may you be with the congregation filling them with love and grace and mercy for each other as fellow strugglers who sin against each other who say things that are dumb but Lord we also meet them with grace and forgiveness and just say we love you we're glad that you're here and pray together and that we're all here for the one common goal of loving you Lord Jesus may that be the spirit Lord that you continue in this church because I see it and it is so beautiful I bless this church in your name and I pray all this in your name Lord Jesus Amen

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