

2 Peter 1:2-15

If we know Christ, or have any eternal concern, spiritual growth and maturity should be a priority for us.

1. There are literally hundreds of strategies out there for spiritual growth, discipleship, and disciple making.
 - a. Some obviously better than others
 - b. Some overwhelming, others underwhelming
 - c. Most developed with good intentions
2. But here in 2 Peter 1, Peter gives us a Holy Spirit inspired pathway to maturity.
3. This was Peter's focus for the rest of his life. If he felt that understanding this pathway to maturity was that important, shouldn't we also carefully consider it as well?

Let's look at the text together.

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

1. God has provided you with every thing you need for life and godliness, along with precious and magnificent promises so that you can be partakers of the divine nature.

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

2. Because of these great graces, you must apply all diligence in your faith-walk to add to this faith moral excellence, and to moral excellence knowledge etc.

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

3. If these qualities become yours and are increasing...you will not be useless, unfruitful, blind, or at risk of falling away, but you will have the kingdom abundantly supplied to you!

Peter's goal was to pound these truths into the church with the remainder of his earthy days.

12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. 13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

We have been spending our time walking through the qualities Peter identifies in vs 5-7. So far, we have looked at faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self control, and last week, perseverance. You can go back and catch up on any that you missed through the church app, website, or on sermon audio.

This morning we come to the sixth quality that Peter lists: godliness. He said, *and in your perseverance, godliness.*

What is godliness?

1. Do we ever really have to ask ourselves what ungodliness is?
 - a. We know that ungodliness is the fruit of the ungodly.
 - b. The word ungodly is paired with sinner in 1 Peter 4:18 and 1 Timothy 1:9
 - c. So we know that the ungodly or the sinner produces ungodliness and sin.
2. We could turn that around and say that the fruit of the godly is godliness...the fruit of the saint is holiness.
3. Matthew 7:16-20 *You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their fruits.*
4. What is godliness? It is the fruit of the one who is godly!
 - a. Or we could say of the one who has been made godly
 - b. **3** *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*

Godliness is a general name for religious duties, for our duties in reference to God, in contra-distinction to our duties in reference to ourselves and our fellow men. It is descriptive of the right state of the individual with regard to God—the right state of his mind, of his heart, and of his life—of his thoughts, his affections, and his conduct—the right way of thinking, feeling and acting towards God. John Brown

Godliness manifests itself in at least three areas.

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I. Understanding

1. Godliness is a right state of our mind...It manifest itself in our thoughts in relation to God.
2. It is the right way of thinking towards God.
3. It really begins in our minds.
4. Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,*

The truth about God, known and believed in the mind, is the fundamental part of godliness.

1. This is unnatural. It is not something we just know.
2. 1 Timothy 3:16 *By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness*
 - a. Godliness is a mystery, not because it cannot be discovered and known
 - b. but because it can not be discovered and known without God revealing it to us!
 - c. How is godliness revealed to us? Notice...in a person!

He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

- c. Godliness is revealed to us...as we see in this passage of Scripture...in Jesus Christ.
- d. GOSPEL

3 His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

3. We need a true knowledge of Christ if we are to produce godliness.

II. Feeling

1. Godliness is not just a right state of mind, but a right state of heart.
2. It is not just our thoughts and right way of thinking towards God, but also our affections and feelings towards God.
3. Not just heady, a love of knowledge, but it is emotional, a love of Him.

a. Mark 12:28-30 *One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'"*

b. Revelation 2:2-5 *I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent.*

4. We need a true knowledge of Christ and a deep love of Him if we are to produce godliness.

III. Doing

1. Godliness is not just a right state of mind and heart, but a right state of life.
2. It is not just our thoughts and affections, but our conduct! Not just our thinking and feeling, but our acting.

Conformity to God is the idea which godliness most often implies—Godlikeness.

1. The godly man becomes the partaker of the divine nature v3

3 His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

2. The godly person is changed into God's image: Which is Jesus

- a. Colossians 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*
- b. Hebrews 1:3 *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature*
- c. So what we mean by godliness, ultimately, is Christ-likeness. Looking like Jesus!

3. *The Son of God became man, that men might through Him be made sons of God. And godliness in the present world is Christ made manifest in the lives of His servants.* BIG BAKER BOOK

4. We through a true knowledge of Christ and because of a deep love of Christ, begin to do what Christ did and would do.

Conclusion:

I don't want us to forget the dual nature of Peter's strategy for growth.

1. These qualities are supplied by God through faith.

3 His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness

2. But, at the same time, we must be diligent to pursue these qualities and seek to add them one by one and one upon another.
3. Godliness is no different.

1 Timothy 6:11 *But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*

How can we practically pursue godliness? 3 Practical steps.

1. Meditate on the person of Christ

- a. Remember, godliness manifests in the understanding...in the mind.
- b. So meditate with your mind on Jesus, the very definition of godliness.
- c. *If I have observed anything by experience, it is this: a man may take the measure of his growth and decay in grace according to his thoughts and meditations upon the person of Christ, and the glory of Christ's Kingdom, and of His love.* John Owen

d. *Cast thine eyes which way thou wilt and thou shalt hardly look upon anything but Christ. Jesus hath taken the name of that thing upon Himself. Is it day? And dost thou behold the sun? He is called the Sun of Righteousness. Or is it night? And dost thou behold the stars? He is called a Star, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob." Or is it morning?....He is called "the bright Morning Star." Or is it noon? And dost thou behold clear light all the world over? He is "that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Come nearer; if thou lookest upon the earth, and takest a view of the creatures about thee, dost thou see the sheep? "As a sheep before his shearer is dumb." Or seest thou a lamb? "Behold the Lamb of God." Seest thou a shepherd watching over his flock? "I am the Good Shepherd." Or seest thou a fountain, waters, rivers....? Isaac Ambrose*

e. Do you want to grow in godliness? Meditate on the person of Christ.

2. Stimulate a love for Christ

- a. That sounds almost funny to even say! Stimulate a love for Christ?
- b. Why on earth would we need to stimulate or excite a love for Christ?

*Jesus, priceless treasure, source of purest pleasure, truest friend to me:
Long my heart hath panted, 'Til it well-nigh fainted, Thirsting after Thee.
Thine I am, O spotless Lamb,
I will suffer nought to hide Thee, ask for nought beside Thee.*

Johann Franck

c. If we are really so cold as to need to stimulate a love for Christ, the best method is 2 fold

1. Think often upon the gospel: How holy and worthy God is, how sinful and unworthy you are and how Christ has laid down his life for you in spite of you in order to reconcile you to the Father!
 - a. Think upon your great sinfulness and unworthiness
 - b. And upon His great forgiveness and grace
 - c. Luke 7:47 *he who is forgiven little, loves little.*
2. Spend time with Him in prayer and in the Word.
 - a. It may sound elementary, repetitive, and too simple to be true
 - b. But, many if not most of us who need our love for Christ stimulated aren't in the Word and in prayer
 - c. What do you expect?

d. Do you want to grow in godliness? Meditate upon the person of Christ and stimulate a love for Christ.

3. Imitate the man Christ

Matthew 10:25 *It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher*

1. Charles Sheldon, in his book "In His Steps, What would Jesus Do?" wrote: "*Our motto will be, 'What would Jesus do?' Our aim will be to act just as He would if He was in our places, regardless of immediate results. In other words, we propose to follow Jesus' steps as closely and as literally as we believe He taught His disciples to do. And those who volunteer to do this will pledge themselves for an entire year, beginning with today, so to act*" Charles Sheldon

3. If we want to be godly, we must imitate the man Jesus Christ and seek to do what He would do...as we come to know what Jesus Did!

- a. Seek to think what Jesus would think: have the mind of Christ
- b. Seek to say what Jesus would say: allow Him to be Lord of our lips
- c. Seek to do what Jesus would do: we are his hands and feet...his body
- d. Seek to refrain from what He would refrain from.

4. Imitate Him! That is the pathway to godliness.

And that way has to begin all the way back at the very first quality Peter lists...faith. GOSPEL