



2 | 2 PETER 1:5-7

GROW IN YOUR FAITH

God's God wants us to be constantly growing in our faith and in a deep relationship with him by the Spirit. We do that by surrendering to his Spirit and his word, daily being conformed to his image.

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Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! ² Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! ³ From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised! —Psalm 113:1-3

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WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

Have you ever been **rock climbing**? Perhaps you've attempted the **indoor wall climbing**. I've done neither. I'm afraid of heights. If I ever did try to attempt to climb the face of a cliff, I would definitely **want a lifeline retracting security cable** as part of my gear. Imagine climbing to the top of a cliff, and you are just about to walk on solid ground, but **your foot slips**, and you find yourself pummeling to the ground like an episode of Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote. **Without a lifeline cable, certain death awaits.**

According to the apostle Peter, the **lifeline for Christians is the word of God**. The key to a fruitful life of progress up the cliff of life, is God's lifeline of truth. We grow into Christlikeness by the grace of God's word and Spirit. This is a passage with severe warnings. If we are not situated firmly with God's lifeline around us, or if we allow friends or circumstances or feelings to cut us away from God's lifeline, **we can become blind and fall away from our calling, "forgetting we were cleansed from our former sins"** (1:9).

We are called to grow and change into the image of Christ. We have a right standing before God so that we are **justified**. We are righteous in the sight of God because of faith in Christ's work. The ground is level at the cross (cf 1:1-4). **But that's not the end**. It's just the root system of righteousness. We need to see the trunk and the branches, the buds, the leaves, and the fruit. We need to add to this foundation of faith. That's what Peter tells us in this text. For this very reason, since we have a right standing and all the divine power for life and godliness, let's grow! Let's add to our faith!

2 Peter 1:5-7 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Perhaps a good illustration to show what is happening here is a staircase. You have the foundation, the hard work, and then the fruit of real Christian maturity.



Another way to think about Christian growth is **how an embryo develops in a mother's womb**. All the parts of the baby are developing **simultaneously**. The fingers are forming and growing while the lungs are developing along with the arms and torso, and so forth. Yet even though all the parts are developing at a certain rate all the time, there is a noticeable

developmental sequence as well. The brain must be constantly developing, ever regulating the growth of the whole body. So it is with our faith. We have everything we need the moment we are born again. At the same time, there is a process of growth for a child. There are stages of **progress** and growth. **There is the infant, then the toddler, then the adolescent, then the adult.** A child's growth is **both simultaneous and progressive.**

So it is for every child of God. Peter has just told us that we have everything we need to live the Christian life. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3). Paul also tells us that we are predestined for holiness in Christ (Eph 1:4; Rom 8:29). So how do we grow in our faith?

Key thought: God wants us to be constantly growing in our faith and in a deep relationship with him by the Spirit. We do that by surrendering to his Spirit and his word, daily being conformed to his image.

1. THE FOUNDATION OF GROWTH (1:5)

The first three qualities: faith, virtue, and knowledge, lay a foundation for change. Without **a faith commitment to Christ** and a desire to please him, we cannot change. These qualities are sequential with each increase by internal growth of the heart, each new grace springing out of, supporting, and perfecting the other.¹ Each subsequent quality balances and brings to perfection the one preceding.² **These are all aspects of the glory of the indwelling Christ**—his character shown in the Christian's character."³ Peter presents to us an ethical progression that builds toward a climax in Christlike character manifested in love.⁴

THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

2 Peter 1:5a | For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith.

Faith is the beginning of your relationship with Jesus Christ. We are to grow in and supplement our faith. We are to cultivate the faith we have in Christ. **Faith always has an object**, and for Christians that object is Jesus. When we repent and believe, we are born again. This is where transformation begins. We are called to believe on Jesus Christ.

The Object of our Faith

Acts 16:31 | Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.

The object of our faith and trust is the person and work of Jesus. We say with Paul, "**For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain**" (Phil 1:21). We believe he died for our sins and rose again that we might walk in newness of life. Through this faith we are "born again to a living hope" (1:3; cf Eph 2:8-9; Acts 16:31). **Saving faith is a free and unmerited gift, granted only to undeserving sinners**, according to God's sovereign grace, through which we personally receive an irrevocable share in the full salvation accomplished for us by the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8).

¹ J. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, 1886), 324.

² J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, 1773, quoted in Michael Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968), 71.

³ Stephen W. Paine, "The Second Epistle to Peter," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, eds. Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody, 1962), 1458.

⁴ J. Daryl Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 145–46.

Ultimately, saving faith is a commitment to trust and surrender to Christ, no matter how I feel and no matter how impossible and chaotic the situation may be. Our faith is not in our feelings or circumstances, but in Christ alone. We have to begin with our love relationship with Christ before we can have any hope of change.

The Reasonableness of our Faith

Hebrews 11:1, NLT | Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.

Faith in Jesus Christ is not blind faith. Our conscience, the complexity of creation, and the laws of morality and science demonstrate that faith in the unseen God is rational and reasonable. Indeed, there is no true atheist since God has revealed himself to all men through conscience and creation, so that all people are without excuse.

Romans 1:19-20 | What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Everyone on earth knows there is a God through the conscience that God gives, through the glory of creation. Faith is not to be blind. It is the **most rational and reasonable thing to believe in God** and in his Son Jesus Christ whom God sent to save us. In fact, I don't have enough faith to be an atheist, because an atheist's faith truly is blind.

The Outlook of Faith

Faith is a complete and radical change of outlook. We now see everything with Christ at the center. The Spirit gives us new spiritual eyes.

Acts 26:18 | To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God

We see everything differently when Jesus Christ is at the center. We see with new eyes. We hate the sin we used to love, and we love the God we used to hate or ignore. We stop trusting self and we start trusting Christ. This is repentant faith. With biblical faith, Christ is now at the blazing center of our lives.

The Diligence of Faith

2 Peter 1:5a | For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith.

True faith is an acting, living faith that brings us to real change in our life. It's important to **"make every effort to supplement"** the faith God has given us. **Things that grow need diligent cultivation.** Diligence is at the heart of faith. Faith has opened our eyes to who God is, so we want to diligently please God and love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Lk 10:27; cf Deut 6:5).

Making every effort implies urgency, eagerness, and determination. It means to apply ourselves as much as possible.⁵ God's call to salvation **brings with it the power of transformation.** He creates the moral excellence he demands. Therefore, it follows that the moral excellence of believers can only be attributed to God's grace. And yet New Testament writers never polarize divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Those whom God has effectively calls

⁵ Swindoll, *Insights on James and 1 & 2 Peter*, 271.

to virtue are also to practice virtue with energy and intensity.⁶ They are enabled by the Spirit of God who resides within them. Paul gives us an idea of how this works in his letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 2:12-13 | Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

James has told us that “faith without works is dead” (Jas 2:26). Faith works through love (Gal 5:6). Because we have this gift of faith, we work it out in an active and vital way. How? First, by adding virtue. The word to “add” is a fascinating one. It is a vivid metaphor drawn from the Athenian drama festivals, in which a very rich patron, would pay the expenses of choruses and plays.⁷ The idea is that we have all the virtue and knowledge and self-control, etc., that we need, because God has already given us “all things” that pertain to godly living (1:3b). Therefore, we should generously add or make a deposit of these godly characteristics into our lives. The first virtue we are to add is virtue itself.

THE FOUNDATION OF VIRTUE

2 Peter 1:5b | For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue.

Virtue is moral excellence, or the desire to please God and imitate him (Eph 5:1). It means that which is “pleasing to God.”⁸ This is the same word we find earlier where we are called to know the “glory and excellence” of Christ (1:3). The word “excellence” is the same as “virtue” (ἀρετή). The Christian who is growing in virtue desires to please God and reflect the virtue and moral excellence and goodness of Christ in all things. But it’s more than this. Because of the connection with the glory of Christ, “virtue” for the Christian is not just a desire to please God, but **“the manifestation of divine power.”**⁹

Virtue is our desire and empowerment to be more like Jesus—to think, act, and live like Jesus. We are called to lose our lives and to put on the life of Christ. That’s the essence of virtue.

Galatians 2:20 | I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

To be virtuous is to have a firm and **consistent Spirit-led desire to please God in all circumstances**, no matter what. It is not perfection but the sincere desire to do all that the Lord asks of you (Ruth 3:11). **In order to live out your faith**, you first must begin with **wanting to please him in all things**. That’s virtue.

Virtue is something we have immediately upon receiving our new nature in Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells us, and he gives us his desire, changing us to love what he loves. With moral excellence, we give in to the divinely empowered desires to please God This comes by the Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:27, NIV | I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 299.

⁷ Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 86.

⁸ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 743.

⁹ Ibid.

These new desires are holy and virtuous. They are desires for moral excellence, or we might more simply say **Christlikeness**. The Christian's greatest desire is to be like Christ, pleasing God in all things, more than a baby wants to breathe. The thing that keeps us from growing in Christ is that we get distracted with anger or anxiety, despair of foolish worldliness, and our growth gets stunted. **We need to “make every effort to supplement” our “faith with virtue.”** Yet virtue alone is not enough for the fully fruitful and mature life in Christ. It's wonderful to have the **desire and power to please God**, but we need to know how to please God. We have to research and add knowledge from the word of God to our lives.

THE FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE

2 Peter 1:5c | For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge.

Knowledge is the receiving the word of God and learning how to apply it. There are several Greek words for “knowledge.” One kind of knowledge means “I know as an expert—absolute knowledge.” Another means “I know accurately, as a scientific fact.” The word here translated “knowledge of God” means “I know by experience.” “Knowledge” here means “a deeper and more intimate knowledge and acquaintance.”¹⁰ We are **to store up that experience of walking with God** in his word. We are to treasure it up on our heart. We **hear God's voice through his word**.

Psalm 119:11 | I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

This is not mere intellectual knowledge, but a true fellowship with God. The revelation and illumination of knowing Christ is what the Spirit does for all God's children. The Spirit opens our eyes to God's will. Through his word we have all the spiritual wisdom and insight we need. This is that divine knowledge of Christ.

Ephesians 1:8-9 | In him we have ... the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will.

As we cooperate with the Lord in loving submission, God will manifest himself to us, and that manifestation will be the difference between a nominal Christian and a life radiant with the light of his face.¹¹ Moses' face shined because he knew the Lord. So does ours as we gaze at the Lord with unveiled face, and we are transformed into the image of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

Ecclesiastes 8:1 | A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the hardness of his face is changed.

It is that deep, personal knowledge of the Lord that shines through our countenance and our lives. We mirror the love and peace and wisdom of the Spirit. We have the wisdom to walk in his word, in his truth, in his love. This is the **knowledge of intimate acquaintance with God**.

That intimate knowledge is found in the word of God for all those who are determined to seek God. Listen to Job.

Job 23:12, NASB | I have not departed from the command of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

The psalmist David devoted the longest chapter in the book of Psalms to the priority of the Scriptures in his life. Listen to David.

¹⁰ Jim Berg, *Essential Virtues: Marks of the Christ-centered Life* (Greenville, SC: JourneyForth, 2008),

¹¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1993), 46.

Psalm 119:14 | I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies, as much as in all riches.

Are you diligently cultivating the intimate knowledge of Christ in your life by a tender-hearted study of God’s word? Is the Spirit speaking deeply into your life? This is not even advanced maturity in the Christian life. Peter says even little newborn babies in Christ are to “**desire the pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby” (1 Pet 2:2).

Knowledge completes the foundation. It’s the understanding of how to walk in the word by the Holy Spirit. **We must have knowledge to have mind-renewal** (Eph 4:22-26). It is impossible to gain transformational knowledge from the Bible without knowing its Author.

Knowledge comes from knowing the Bible through the revelation of the Holy Spirit of God. We also gain knowledge through fellowship with other Christians, church attendance where the Bible is taught, prayer for more insight, and even reading Christian books and biographies.

These first **three qualities** must work together to provide a strong **foundation** for our growth and maturity in Christ, and yet, we might call this **elementary school**. How do we get to high school? We need to put the knowledge and virtue that we’ve added to our faith into action. Peter calls that active living out of our faith self-control.



2. THE HARD WORK OF GROWTH (1:6)

Once the foundation is laid, there is a lot of hard work that needs to occur in order to put our faith into action.

THE HARD WORK OF SELF-CONTROL

2 Peter 1:6a | And knowledge with self-control.

Self-control is when **you have a thousand desires** and you choose the Spirit-controlled life, to please God. It’s a God-empowered mastery of internal desires.

Self-control is a fruit of God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:23) and means choosing to do God’s will from our heart, found in God’s word, no matter what I feel like.

Self-control is gained when we submit ourselves to God’s control by the Holy Spirit. It may be hard at first, but we become habituated to it.

DRIVING A CAR

Growing in self-control reminds me of when I first learned to drive a car. I was fourteen, living in Louisiana. I had the desire to drive the car. I had the energy. I had a little knowledge. The

first time I drove, I didn't know the **difference between the gas and the** break, but I learned that really fast. Then I put it into action. It was hard the first time, but **the more I practiced, the easier it got.**

So it is when we put our faith into practice. We are called to obey God, putting off the old life, and putting on the new life (Eph 4:22-24). We do what pleases God no matter what we feel like, how hard it is, or whatever the circumstances might be. We are not controlled by our emotions or circumstances, but by the Spirit working in us to apply the word of God in any given situation.

The principle of self-control is described by Paul in Ephesians 4:22-24 as the “put off, put on” principle. When we are “renewed in the spirit of our minds” we can be transformed from the inside out. For instance, if I am struggling with **anger**, I need to **put on forgiveness, tenderness, and kindness** (Eph 4:31-32). If I'm struggling with **anxiety**, I need to put off other things mastering me and put on trust in God (Mt 6:24-33). If I'm dealing with constant **despair**, I need to stop thinking God has forgotten me and start **believing his promises** (Psa 13). If I'm **depressed**, I need to stop listening to my fallen sinful flesh and **start counseling myself with the word of God** (Psa 42:5-6). If I'm struggling with **worldliness and foolishness**, I need to find **satisfaction and wisdom in Christ and his word** even though my situation may seem out of control (Pro 19:23; Psa 63:3; Pro 1:7). Wisdom comes through fearing the Lord by being intentionally aware of his glorious presence in every situation.

THE HARD WORK OF PERSEVERANCE

2 Peter 1:6b | And self-control with steadfastness.

Steadfastness or **perseverance is choosing to obey God** (self-control) over and over and over again. This steadfastness helps us develop a habit of self-control (1 Cor 15:58). This means we choose to please God over and over and over again.

Proverbs 24:16 | Though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.

We might define perseverance as clinging to Jesus with all your might and hanging on as long as it takes to be victorious. It doesn't mean we never fall. But it means we will never fall permanently away from him, because he upholds us.

Psalm 37:23-24, NLT | The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. ²⁴ Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.

THOMAS EDISON ILLUSTRATION

Here is an interesting question: who was the greatest failure in history? Let me give you a few hints: he **failed 14,000 times to invent Latex**. He failed **10,000 times to invent the incandescent lightbulb**. Now, I don't know about you, but I'm not aware of anyone else who has failed at anything 24,000 times-and those were just two of his experiments. Over the course of his life, he failed at more than 250,000 attempts at various inventions. Yet he is the most prolific inventor ever known. He patented 1,093 different inventions, including the lightbulb, the stock ticker tape, the phonograph, and the microphone. **His name was Thomas Edison.**¹² Edison said it well. “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”

¹² Bruce Loeffler and Brian Church, *The Experience* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2015), 162.

This is what Peter says is the key to spiritual growth. You don't have to be a genius to be committed to perseverance. Self-control and perseverance are the hard work of the sanctification process. They work together to conform us to the image of Christ. The key is: never give up.

Perseverance is a gift that all believers possess from the Spirit, since he will complete what he has begun (Phil 1:6), and he predestines us to be “conformed to the image of his dear Son” (Rom 8:29). We are chosen for holiness (Eph 1:4). **We have the “never give up” DNA inside us already!**

Understand though that endurance is not just passive acceptance of hard and difficult things. It has the idea of courageous endurance **that fully defies the obstacles of sin**, and thus, is active rather than passive.¹³ The Christian who perseveres has courageous and steadfast endurance in the face of suffering or evil, both internal and external.¹⁴

We are called to persevere in victory over indwelling sinful temptations. Keep getting up and going forward no matter what. We must begin here. We may feel like giving up and cry out to God, like Paul did.

Romans 7:24 | Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

It's answered many times in the following verses.

Romans 7:25 | Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 8:37 | In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 6:14 | Sin will have no dominion over you.

Romans 8:29 | Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Philippians 1:6 | I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:10 | If you practice these qualities, you will never fall.

We have so much hope! We are not bound to fail but predestined to victory. We are guaranteed holiness if we follow this way of growth. The key is the never-give-up attitude. It's yours in Christ.



¹³ J. Daryl Charles and Erland Waltner, *1–2 Peter, Jude* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999), 143.

¹⁴ Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 186.

3. THE FRUIT OF GROWTH (1:6-7)

Once the foundation is laid and applying the daily hard work of spiritual disciplines to your life, there is a payoff that results in three qualities: godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

Abraham Lincoln failed in business in 1831, suffered a nervous breakdown in 1836 and was defeated in his run for president in 1856. Lincoln was no stranger to rejection and failure. Rather than taking these signs as a motivation for surrender, he refused to stop trying his best and trusting the Lord. Of course, in 1861 **he became one of the most impactful presidents** of our United States. In this great man's words: "My great concern is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with your failure."¹⁵

How much more important it is to never give up in the Christian life. We may suffer various failures, but God guarantees success if we will persevere. We will develop the reward of Christlike character. Oh, to have the heart of Jesus!

THE FRUIT OF GODLINESS

There is indeed a payoff of sorts as we consistently apply God's word to our heart and life. As we walk in the word through self-control and perseverance, practicing the presence of God, walking in the Spirit day after day, walking in the word, we will develop a habituated Christ-like character.

2 Peter 1:6c | And steadfastness with godliness.

Godliness **is habituated Christlikeness**. It is the habit of being like God and like Christ, habitually responding in a Christlike way (1 Tim 4:7-16). It is the living out of the truth of God's word from a godly character (Titus 1:1), imitating Jesus Christ.

CAR STORY

We understand this kind of habituated behavior when it comes to earthly things, like the **car story I told earlier**. At one time I didn't know how to drive a car. When **I learned how to drive a manual transmission**, I needed to know the difference between the brake, the gas, and the clutch. When you drive a manual, you have to know the "sweet spot" in the clutch, so that when you are on an incline you won't go backward. Now I can not only drive a car, but I can tune the radio, eat a sandwich, and use the clutch at the same time. I can drive the car so well that I hardly need to think about it. It's muscle memory and habituated. When applied to how to live, godliness means **I don't have to think about godly living so much, it's the primary habit of my life**.

Godliness is the fruit of laying the strong foundation of faith, virtue, and knowledge and then doing the hard work of self-control and perseverance. A heart of godliness means we no longer need to think about how exactly to apply God's word because we've done it so many times it is **now habituated—it comes automatically**. We've treasured God's word in our heart (Psa 119:11), so there is a rich store to retrieve as we walk through the trials, troubles, temptations, and tribulations of life.

As we learn and grow in the Lord, and persist in forming new and godly habits, we respond more consistently and automatically in a way that reflects God's character.

¹⁵ Abraham Lincoln in Richard Stearns, *Unfinished: Filling the Hole in Our Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014), 157.

THE FRUIT OF COMMUNITY

2 Peter 1:7a | And godliness with brotherly affection.

Brotherly affection is the idea of being loving and useful to your brother and sister in Christ. **Loving and serving** the body of Christ is an evidence of the new birth.

1 John 3:14 | We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.

1 John 5:1 | Everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

It's no surprise then that the fellowship of brotherly affection is an evidence of **advanced spiritual maturity**. It means we are **serving others**. As we grow in Christ, we become more and more connected to our forever family in Jesus. The lessons we learn, and the heart changes God brings are not just for us, but we build up the entire body of Christ.

All Christians should be characterized by actively loving and serving one another (Jn 13:35). There should be kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness (Eph 4:31). We are to act toward others as Christ would adding “brotherly affection” to our faith.

THE FRUIT OF LOVE

2 Peter 1:7b | And brotherly affection with love.

Love (*agape*) is the evidence of advanced maturity in Christ. To **have a heart overflowing with love is to be like Jesus Christ**. Love is the mark of full maturity. Love toward God and others is our ultimate goal, and it marks us as true believers (Jn 15:12-13; 1 Jn 3:14-18). This proves God's love is really in us and that we have truly become like he is, for he is love (1 Jn 4:8). We love God by loving one another. Love is the ultimate expression of Christlikeness. Dear saints, we are **predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ** (Rom 8:29). If we are truly born again, this pathway of Christian maturity is unavoidable. It is the highest calling we have in life.



If we lay the right foundation (faith, virtue, and knowledge) and then continue in the hard work required to become godly (self-control and perseverance), the payoff (godliness, brotherly affection, and love) will surely come. We are to not become weary in doing what is right (Gal 6:9). He promises us in 2 Peter 1:10 that if we diligently live out these eight qualities we will never stumble! Let us be diligent to make progress on this **stairway for sanctification**. This process of growth is vital. In fact Peter says, **if you keep growing, you will never fall**.

2 Peter 1:9-10 | Whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

Conclusion

ANY GREAT MEN?

A group of tourists visiting a picturesque village walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked him, “**Were any great men born in this village?**” The old man replied, “Nope, only **babies.**”

That’s how we all start in the Christian life. We are all babies. We have everything we need to grow, but we need to eat, exercise, and learn. **Every person who is a born-again believer starts life as a baby in Christ.** Whether the new convert is six or sixty, that person is still a new Christian and needs to grow in the Lord. A baby who never grows is a tragedy. So it is in the Christian life. Those who remain spiritual infants are missing out on the richness of the spiritual food in God’s word.

Are you growing in the Christian life? Are you being diligent about your growth? We are told that God has “granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (1:3). So if you are stuck in your Christian life, feeling so nearsighted you are blind (1:9), then you need to apply the word to get unstuck.

Winter is coming, isn’t it? Most of us have our Christmas trees up now. One thing I don’t like about **cold weather is getting stuck in the ice and snow.** Don’t get me wrong, I love the snow. I just don’t like getting stuck. **I have figured out how to get unstuck.** The tires need something to grab on to. I’ve had to put my car mats underneath the tires. Maybe you have some sand in the back. But your car needs something to grab on to.

That’s how it is in the Christian life. If you want to go forward and grow, you’ve got to push the gas pedal of faith and grab hold on the word of God. Let the engine of the Holy Spirit empower you. Move forward with self-control and perseverance. The Holy Spirit through the word will get you to your desired destination: Christlikeness.