

THE MULTIPLIED HARVEST

THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH “The Process of Spiritual Growth”

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:5-7

INTRODUCTION: In the exploration of these verses, “*growing in grace*” seems to be a sustaining theme throughout the Second Epistle of Peter. Chapter One introduces us to the **graces** necessary for productive Christian living. Chapter three repeats that proposition when Peter concludes, “*But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*” The source and supply of grace come from God. Diligence must be found in the heart of the believer as an attitude of cooperation. Two forces are at work to bring about this growth. First, there are the *Divine attractions (in essence, the foundation of spiritual growth)* mentioned in verses 3 & 4. Secondly, *man* is instructed to build upon the foundation of faith ... virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc., (verses 5-7). A multiplied harvest of spiritual fruit is for any reason. It takes a deliberate effort. Every believer has a responsibility in his or her own spiritual progress.

Quite naturally, man has a part in spiritual growth. Often in noticing the spiritual progress of a man or woman, the evidence we look for is in the serious desire or determination expressed by the individual. Like newborn babes, we are to have a desire (*to intensely crave possession of something whether it is lawful or unlawful. This speaks of the intensity of the desire*) for the sincere (*non-deceitful, truthful*) milk of the Word, (1 Peter 2:2). This reference not only points to a *pattern* for newly born Christians but a *part* that is inborn in every Child of God. Peter’s second epistle demonstrates an order that reveals God’s divine role in the foundation of Spiritual growth. Without the hand of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, man’s diligence and supply would only be empty reform.

There are 4 building blocks in this foundation for spiritual growth as we study Chapter One. ***It is not enough to simply “know” about Jesus, but to know Him personally! (Philippians 3:10).***

Continuing . . .

II. THE PROCESS IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH. 1: 5-7

A. The Causes (1:5a): “Besides this” – *on these grounds . . .* tells us to look back to the previous verses. “*For this very reason adding your diligence to the divine promises, employ every effort in the exercise of your faith to develop virtue [excellence, resolution, and Christian energy] and in exercising virtue develop knowledge [intelligence].* (AMP, verse 5)

1. The Person of Christ with His glory and virtue. v. 3b
2. The Precious, Prophetic Promises of Christ. v. 4a (fulfilled by Christ)
3. The Partnership as a Partaker of His Divine Nature. v. 4b
4. The Protection in the World. v. 4b

B. The Cooperation (1:5b): *giving all diligence, add to your faith*

Diligence literally means to “bring in by the side of” – a uniting of forces!

1. The **Practice** of This Unity
 - a. **Be aware** of what God is doing and has supplied the line yourself up beside it (His commands and promises) – Be, Know, Do.
 - b. **Be active** with your faith developing virtue . . . the exercise of virtue develops knowledge, etc. (Cf. [Proverbs 13:4](#) The desires of the diligent are fully satisfied - NIV) – daily routines.
 2. The **Provision** of This Unity – Add – (Gk. *Epichorēgein*). “It is a vivid metaphor drawn from the Athenian drama festivals, in which a wealthy individual, identified as the *chorēgos*, since that individual paid the expenses of the chorus, joined with the poet and the state in putting on the plays. This could be an expensive endeavour, and yet the *chorēgi* vied with one another in the generosity of their equipment and training of the choruses. Thus the word came to mean generous and costly co-operation. The Christian must engage in this sort of cooperation with God in the production of a Christian life which is a credit to Him.”¹
 - a. Originally, this word meant *bear the expense of the chorus*.
 - b. Used in the NT in a general sense of **supplying**, providing, ministering (2 Cor. 9:10; Gal. 3:5; Col. 2:19; 1 Pet. 4:11)²
- C. The Character to be added to Faith (1:5c) See the Appendix A. *Each new grace springs out of another. In your Christian faith supply virtue and in your virtue, supply knowledge, etc.*
1. **Dependence** – “faith” - **the foundation or root of the Christian life as it is ruled and energized by your faith in God.** Develop one virtue in the exercise of another.
 - a. Having no confidence in the flesh, one confesses Christ. The context is not a direct reference to saving faith but living faith.
 - b. The faith that *turned to God from idols*; when you become a new creature in Christ. Simply trust in God and His word – this

¹ Michael Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), pages 66-67.

² Marvin Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament, Volume One* (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, 1886), page 679.

faith endures (Gk. *Pistis*). [1 Thessalonians 1:3](#) Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

The work that faith produces is virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

- c. Faith is persuasion, evidence³, conviction and religious truth.
- d. The profession of one's faith and fidelity. From faith springs the other virtues listed.

God makes the selection of who is to be disciplined, it is up to me to recognize His choice – April 1982, Pastoral Renewal, page 73.

- 2. **Distinction – virtue (Colossians 3:8-10f and 1 Peter 2:9):** The Gk. Word is ἀρετή (*arête* – pronounced *ar-et'-ay*): excellence, valor; that which depicts the vigor of the soul, “the energy in the exercise of their faith.”³ As in Titus 2:14 be zealous of good works that which makes us different from the unconverted.

- a. **Chastity** of morals (moral excellence): in the exercise of your faith minister virtue.
- b. **Courage** to Stand for the truth.
- c. **Conviction** to Separate unto God.
- d. **Character training**.

Attributes of an Active, Intentional Disciple:

Ephesians 5:15 and 16 give us some insightful precautions for our Christian journey. We are to walk “circumspectly.” More precisely, the Greek word, ἀκριβῶς (*akribōs*)⁴ is translated “cautious,” persistent diligence, careful placement or intentional set. **Accuracy is the targeted outcome of such caution. The Christian is to walk cautiously because others are watching his manner of life.**

- **Biblical Influence:** allowing our minds, perspectives, and actions to be consistently shaped by the Bible.

³ Ibid.

⁴ akribōs—Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary – pronounced ak-ree-BOCE.

- **Pleasing God and denying self:** prioritizing God's desires over our own – be a living sacrifice.
- **Servant attitude:** Allowing our love for God and the needs of others to have a higher priority than our own.
- **Communicating the Gospel:** Knowing that sharing the gospel of Christ is necessary to lasting transformation.
- **Exercising faith:** allowing our lives to be characterized by faithful obedience to God's will.
- **Seeking God:** having a continuous hunger to know God more deeply and experience His work more fully.
- **Building Relationships:** developing our relationships with other people who are more important than projects.
- **Publicly Professing:** unashamed - openly presenting our lives as being united with Jesus Christ; our dependence is upon him for salvation, understanding our vital attachment to him in every proper manner for spiritual life and fruitfulness.

3. **Discernment – “knowledge” (Hebrews 5:14)** The Greek word here is γινώσκω (ginōskō - ghin-ocē'-ko) a verb defined as to know, perceive, have insight, experiential knowledge, and understanding.

Knowledge described:

- a. **Be a workman** – rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).
- b. **Have wisdom** – the experience and foresight that looks for the teaching behind the test (Prov. 9:1; Jas. 3:16ff).
- c. **Know the Will of God** (Romans 12:1-2)

4. **Denial – “temperance.”** The Greek word is ἡγκράτεια (egkrateia - eng-krat'-i-ah) meaning **self control**. Used in Acts 24:25; Galatians 5:23; 2 Peter 1:6 (2) for a total of 4 times. “The Old word (from egkratēs, en and kratos, one **holding himself in** as in Titus 1:8).”⁵ (Cf. Matthew 10:37; Romans 6:6)

- a. Self-control
 - Controlling the passions and keeping sexual desires in check.
 - “Mastering the [physical] appetites and having a restraint of sensual impulses.”⁶

⁵ Archibald T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1933), page 151.

⁶ George A. Buttrick, General Editor, *The Interpreter's Bible, Volume XII* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1957), page 176.

- b. The subjection of the flesh (1 Corinthians 9:25-27):
 “Temperance leads to steadfastness.”⁷ Self-control leads to [a] steadfast waiting for the promises.⁸
5. **Discipline – Patience.”** The Greek word is ὑπομονή (hupomonē: hoop-om-on-ay') meaning cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy: - enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting). This is staying power. *“The brave patience with which Christians contend against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall them in their conflict with the inward and outward world.”*⁹
- a. The Endurance and Perseverance of trials (Cf. James 1:12; Romans 15:5).
- b. Experiencing God’s Divine Power (1:3-4)
- Waiting upon God rather than rushing ahead and using the arm of the flesh.
 - Pressing forward rather than a cowardly retreat.
 - Self-control relates to pleasures while patience focuses on sorrows.
 - Not just waiting out a trial but contending to win.
6. **Devotion – “Godliness.”** This term is always used to describe man and never to describe God. The Greek word is εὐσέβεια (eusebeia: pronounced yoo-seb'-i-ah) From the root words, eu – well and sebomai – to worship, a show of awe and reverence [religious veneration¹⁰].
- a. J.I. Packer gave Five Basic Truths, five foundation-principles of the knowledge about God which Christians have. The fifth principle is as follows: **“Godliness means responding to God’s revelation in trust and obedience, faith and worship, prayer and praise, submission and service. Life must be seen and**

⁷ Ibid. page 177.

⁸ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), page 1012.

⁹ Richard C. Trench, *Trench’s Synonyms of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1880), page 209. He was quoting Ellicott commenting on 1 Thessalonians 1:3, “patience of hope.”

¹⁰ Bromiley, page 1010.

lived in the light of God's Word. This and nothing else is true religion." ¹¹ (Cf. 1 John 5:4)

- Godliness is a devout God-ward attitude.
- Godliness is a person doing that which is well-pleasing to the Lord.
- Godliness is a worship and admiration of God.

- b. The Christian's desire and commitment to be Spirit-filled.
- c. A Contrast to false religions and corrupt teachers. (the context of 2 Peter 2, 3)
- d. A practical awareness and worship of God (review the definition in number 6 above)

7. ***Dedication – "Brotherly Kindness."*** (Gk. *Φιλαδελφία* , *Philadelphia*) pronounced, *fil-ad-el-fee'-ah* meaning "love of the brethren." (Cf. Romans 12:9). In the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren – Thayer ¹²

- a. Broadcasting brotherly love from a servant's heart (public).
- b. Bearing one another's burdens (1:22) – "love of the brethren"
- d. Building up one another in the most holy faith (Cf. Eph. 4:12)

8. ***Desire – "Charity."*** (Gk. *ἀγάπη* *agapē*) pronounced *ag-ah'-pay*. It means sacrificial, unconditional love. Love [desire] always has an object.

- One of the greatest emotions (1 Cor. 13:13).
- God loves because of his character, this is who He is. We are capable of loving others because of God.
- Agape love desires the highest good for the object of our love.

¹¹ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, a Division of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1973), page 16.

¹² Joseph H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), page 653.

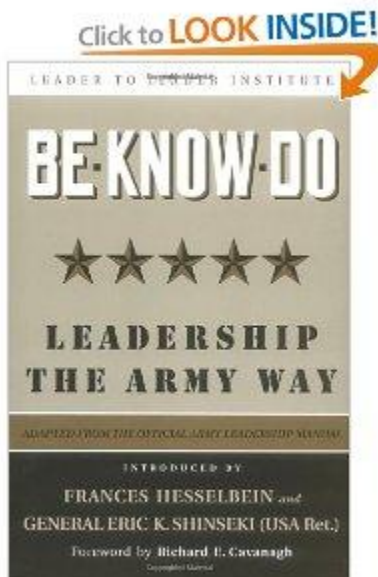
HOW IS THIS LOVE CONVEYED?

- a. Producing the characteristics of Christian love – **exemplify His character** (Gal. 5:17-22)
- b. Partnering with a company of fellow-believers as a family - **encourage and edify the body** (Eph. 4:11; Phil. 2:1-3)
- c. Proclaiming and feeding the compulsion to bear witness of God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ – **evangelize the lost** (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 9:16)
- d. Protracting and expanding your capacity to love the unloving – **express patience toward all men** (1 Thess. 5:14)

APPENDIX A

ILLUSTRATION: The Army Leadership Model

Being a former Army officer, the Army holds a special place in my heart. Additionally, they have been the premier leadership training organization in our country for the last couple of centuries.



The Army has a simple, but profound model for leadership: **Be – Know – Do.**

By the way, the Leader to Leader Institute (Peter Drucker) has published a great book on this called [BE-KNOW-DO, Leadership The Army Way](#).

The model is simply this:

BE – this is all about your character as a leader and is foundational to your ability to lead. It gives you the courage to do what is right regardless of the circumstances or the consequences. As part of BE, you should be aware of your personal core values as well as your organization’s values.

For the Army, their values are:

- Loyalty
- Duty
- Respect
- Selfless Service
- Honor
- Integrity
- Personal Courage

KNOW – This is about the knowledge and skill sets you need to be competent as a leader and cover four areas:

- Interpersonal skills
- Conceptual skills
- Technical skills
- Tactical skills

Your mastery of the knowledge and skills required for your role are essential to the success of your organization.

DO – Leaders act. They bring together everything they are, everything they believe, and everything they know how to do to provide purpose, direction, and motivation. ***This involves the following three leader actions:***

- Influencing
- Operating
- Improving

For me, it's a great model of leadership. You can either order an actual copy of [The U.S. Army Leadership Field Manual](#) or the book on the model, [BE-KNOW-DO, Leadership The Army Way](#). ***Hope you have a blessed week serving those the Lord has given you to shepherd at your place of work.***

BG Allen

Be, Know and Do

To assist soldiers aspiring to noncommissioned officer ranks, several senior NCO's who recently served on NCO promotion boards and junior noncommissioned officers who have recently competed for promotion collected their insight to offer the following tips. The tips for promotion are organized by the leadership paradigm of **BE-KNOW-DO**:

BE

- Believe in yourself, your mission, your unit, and the United States Army
- Select a role model and follow his or her example
- Find the best in others and emulate their attributes
- Display physical and moral courage; take the initiative and make things happen
- Show commitment; take charge at every opportunity
- Be a coach, leader, mentor, and trainer
- Be honest and truthful; be a person of your word
- Be receptive to constructive criticism
- Maintain a positive mental attitude in every circumstance, but especially when conditions are at their worst
- Do what it takes to get the job done right, but do it in accordance with laws, regulations, and orders
- Approach every problem as a challenge to be overcome and as an opportunity to learn and grow
- Thrive on chaos; be flexible and agile and be ready and willing to adapt to change
- Be decisive; use your judgment and don't be afraid to make a decision

KNOW

- Earn the reputation as a subject matter expert on your job; know the nuances of your assigned responsibilities better than anyone else in your outfit
- Constantly improve your speaking and writing skills
- Become an expert instructor
- Learn how to motivate groups of soldiers to perform a mission; master team development skills
- Know your equipment, vehicle, and weapons; be an expert on operator level maintenance
- Learn and know the history of our Nation and of our Army
- Stay abreast of current events by reading the newspaper daily
- Take courses or read technical manuals to remain current on the status of Army technology

DO

- Join a professional association [join AUSA now](#)
- Maintain your physical and mental health
- Always arrive early and leave late
- Maintain an impeccable appearance
- Listen, observe, learn, and always ask questions
- Seek a leadership position at the next higher level and do it well
- Volunteer for additional duties
- Pursue a rigorous personal physical training regimen
- Strive to max the Army Physical Fitness Test
- Develop and lead a vigorous training program for your organization
- Improve your marksmanship skills and scores (get your eyes checked annually) and assist your peers and subordinates in improving their marksmanship skills
- Reclassify into a shortage military occupation specialty, if appropriate
- Take CLEP and DANTES tests
- Take action to achieve a GT score of 110 or higher
- Build your military education portfolio by enrolling in correspondence courses
- Take college courses to get a degree; then continue to work on the next higher level degree
- Enhance your professional qualifications; earn the Expert Infantryman's or Medic's Badges or become a Master Fitness Trainer or Combat Lifesaver
- Strive for the tough jobs and do them well; volunteer for Ranger training/assignment, Airborne training/assignment, Drill Sergeant school/assignment, Recruiting course/assignment, or TO&E assignments