

3: Virtue (2 Peter 1:5)

Read 2 Peter 1:1-11.

Christian character is developed as you practice Christ-like virtues. The Lord desires to fully penetrate (and develop) your heart, mind, soul, and strength with His enabling power so that you may mature and be fruitful in your walk with Him. He desires that you dwell continually with Him so that *He* can show you what it means to think, act, and feel as He does. Therefore, be diligent in your walk with Christ. As Peter has said, "*But also for this very reason*" or because of this reason, "*add to your faith virtue*" (NKJV, emphasis mine).

Beginning in verse five, Peter lists seven attributes that the Lord desires and requires of you as a believer.

The Greek word for "add" implies that you must support or bring alongside your faith virtue, and alongside virtue knowledge, and so on. Peter is essentially saying, "Put into practice the divine qualities you have been given to make you more like Christ!" Be fruitful in your faith! As you walk with Jesus, it is important to keep in mind that there will always be room for growth in each of these areas.

Second Peter 1:8 says, "*For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (NKJV).

Moral Excellence

Second Peter 1:5 says, "*So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence*" (emphasis mine).

The Greek word for "virtue" in our text means moral excellence or goodness. It is conforming (being compliant) to a standard of what is right and good. Related words are conscientious, honest, honorable, just, scrupulous, upright, chaste, decent, modest, and pure. But can we be good apart from God? Read Romans 7:18.

In Matthew 19:17 and 26 Jesus says, "*No one is good but One, that is, God. With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*" (NKJV).

Read Ezekiel 36:25-27. Who places within you the desire and ability to be morally excellent?

The True Vine

As we take a closer look at these qualities, we will see that Christian virtues, or excellences, are really fruits of our unity with Christ. Read 2 Corinthians 9:10.

Philippians 1:11 says, "*May you always be filled with the fruit of righteousness—those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.*"

Read John 15:1-17. How is "fruit" produced?

Also read Psalm 1:3, Psalm 92:13-14, and Ezekiel 47:12.

Colossians 2:6-7 says, "*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and established in the faith, as you have been taught, **abounding** in it with thanksgiving*" (NKJV, emphasis mine).

What fruits are produced as we dwell continually in Jesus Christ?

- Review 2 Peter 1:5-7 _____
- Galatians 5:22-23 _____
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 _____
- 2 Corinthians 6:6, 8:7 _____

Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength

Galatians 5:25 says, "*If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us **follow** the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives*" (emphasis mine).

How do we practice moral excellence in the following areas:

Thoughts (Mind): Read 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8-9, and Colossians 3:2.

Actions (Strength): Read 1 Corinthians 9:24 and Colossians 3:17.

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Feelings (Heart): Read Exodus 20:3 and Psalm 119:10-11.

Read John 15:16.

In closing, Colossians 1:10 says, *"Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (NKJV).

Add to Your Faith: Virtue

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