

Giving All Diligence

Inspired by God, Peter provides us with divine instruction on how to develop a godlike character within us. He writes, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence..." (2 Peter 1:5). Giving all diligence simply means doing such with the very best of effort. We are instructed to do those things that God knows will make us exhibit the character He expects in His children. We are His lights (Mathew 5:16) and thus must shine so that He is illuminated. Our duty is to inspire others in such a way that they also may seek to glorify our Father as He most certainly deserves.

Peter furthers his thought by providing the specifics God has put in place that will guarantee the proper development of Christian character. The moral characteristics Peter presents should shine out from each one of us as we give all diligence each day of our lives toward honoring our Father. Therefore, the Christian should give all diligence to add virtue to an already existing faith. Peter helps understand how the word virtue is used here in 1 Peter 1:5 by what he stated in verse 1 Peter 1:3 - "As His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue." In other words, we do not settle for a moral life as described or exhibited by men, rather we strive for moral excellence by following the example set by God's beloved Son.

To virtue, we are instructed to add knowledge. The necessity for godly knowledge is a must for the Christian. We must always be at the ready to provide an answer for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15). We gain that knowledge by studying the very Truth that provides us all we need to be instructed, corrected, and thoroughly equipped as His servants while here on this earth (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

To knowledge, we are to add self-control. Given the understanding of God and the knowledge of how He expects us to conduct ourselves, there are things in life to which we will have to say, "No." The devil is fully aware of our weaknesses and will go to any length through temptation to lure us away. God promises a way of escape from the temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13), but we must have the character and courage to take it.

To self-control, we must put on steadfastness. According to W. E. Vine, steadfastness means to be "firm, secure; metaphorical of moral fixity." That which is steadfast is that which will not crumble under pressure. Perhaps Peter states steadfastness after self-control as it helps us to understand the need to develop the ability to say "No" to temptation.

To steadfastness, we affix perseverance. We must expect the devil to tempt us when we least expect it. Remember, the devil is compared to a lion (1 Peter 5:8). As such, the devil is always on the prowl and will go after the weak first. Why? The weak are the easiest to catch. That is why we must develop perseverance so that we can keep running away from the lion that is chasing us.

To perseverance, we are to add godliness. James Strong defines godliness as "reverence, respect, piety towards God." We need to fear, love, and stand in complete awe of our great God. We must strive to live our lives with an ever present consciousness of God. Our purpose should be to always do His will above our own, even as Jesus showed us by example (John 4:34; 6:38; Matthew 26:42).

To godliness, we are instructed to add brotherly kindness. This brotherly kindness is the love that we as Christians should have for one another as fellow children of God. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1). We are joined together through the same faith and hope.

Finally, to brotherly kindness we add love. This kind of love drives us to put others before ourselves. This kind of love is seen through God in His Son. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The benefits of adding the characteristics to our lives are obvious, as Peter explains. "For it these things are yours and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:8).