

KNOWING AND GROWING ~ Part 2

Read 2 Peter 1:5–11

Spiritual Growth is Not Automatic

Peter tells us to make every effort, to be diligent to grow.

WHAT EFFORTS DO YOU MAKE TO ENSURE YOUR GROWTH AND HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THEY?

Peter lists seven qualities that create a hot house of growth. They're not so much seven stages as qualities to develop. We develop one quality as we exercise another.

Goodness, Virtue, Moral Excellence

People are designed to glorify God because we have God's nature within; so, when we do this, we show "moral excellence" because we are fulfilling our purpose in life.

Knowledge

Knowledge in verses 5 & 6 suggests *practical* knowledge and discernment. It refers to the ability to handle life successfully.

Self Control

Self control helps us focus, cutting out the noise of life. Self control enables us to handle the pleasures of life, the excesses of life. We develop Self Control so that we are not mastered by our thinking, our emotions, our will, our temptations!

Perseverance

Perseverance is the ability to endure when circumstances are difficult. Self-control has to do with handling the pleasures of life, perseverance relates to the pressures and problems of life. Often, the person who "gives in" to pleasures is not disciplined enough to handle pressures either, so he "gives up."

Godliness

Godliness simply means "God-likeness." It describes someone who is in right relationship with God and others. It's that quality of character that makes a person distinctive. Godly people live above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. You seek to do the will of God and, as you do, you seek the welfare of others.

Mutual Affection

If we love Jesus Christ, we must also love those around us not just pretend that we love them. Loving our brothers and sisters in Christ is evidence that we are born of God (1 John 5:1–2).

Sacrificial Love

There is more to Christian growth than mutual affection; we must also have the sacrificial love that Jesus displayed when He went to the cross. The kind of love spoken of in 2 Peter 1:7 is *agape* love, the kind of love that God shows those who do not have relationship with Him.

IS THERE EVIDENCE OF THESE 7 QUALITIES IN YOUR LIFE, AND IF SO CAN YOU SAY THEY ARE GROWING?

Spiritual Growth Brings Practical Results

If these seven qualities are growing in your life there are three practical results that occur.

Fruitfulness

Christian character is an end in itself, but it is also a means to an end. The more we become like Jesus Christ, the more the Spirit can use us.

The power of these seven qualities, if they are increasing, is to keep us from being ineffective and unproductive in our lives.

Vision

If we forget what God has done for us, we will not be excited to share Christ with others. Through the blood of Jesus Christ we have been purged and forgiven! God has opened our eyes! Let's not forget what He has done! Rather, let's cultivate gratitude in our hearts and sharpen our spiritual vision. Life is too brief and the needs of the world too great for God's people to be walking around with their eyes closed!

Security

If you walk around with your eyes closed, you will stumble! But growing Christians walk with confidence because they know they're secure in Christ.

It is not our profession of faith that guarantees that we are saved; it is our progression in the faith that gives us that assurance.

Peter admonishes us to "be diligent" to "make every effort."

The Christian who is sure of his election and calling will never "stumble" but will prove by a consistent life that he is truly a child of God. He will not always be on the mountaintop, but he will always be climbing higher. If we do "these things" (the things listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7), if we display Christian growth and character in our daily lives, then we can be sure we will one day be in heaven.

THE PROMISES GIVEN IN THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE ARE PROFOUND. SPEND TIME DISCUSSING HOW YOU WILL APPLY THESE TRUTHS TO ENSURE YOU DO NOT STUMBLE AND CONTINUALLY INCREASE SO THAT YOU ARE EFFECTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE IN YOUR FAITH!