



ADDING TO YOUR FAITH

Session 2 • 2 Peter 1:1-15

OUTLINE

OUR PRECIOUS FAITH (vv. 1-4) [indicatives]

1. The source of our faith (v. 1b-c)
 - a. Our faith is given by God.
 - b. Our faith is equally privileged.
 - c. Our faith is accompanied by righteousness.
2. The substance of our faith (v. 2)
 - a. Our reality
 - b. Our richness
 - c. Our relationship
3. The sufficiency of our faith (vv. 3-4)
 - a. Divine power (v. 3)
 - b. Divine provision (v. 3)
 - c. Divine perception (v. 3)
 - d. Divine promises (v. 4)
 - e. Divine participation (v. 4)
4. The sign of our faith (v. 1a)
 - a. Our identity
 - b. Our calling
 - c. Our Master

OUR PRODUCTIVE FAITH (vv. 5-11) [imperatives]

1. The reason for faith's production (v. 5) [KP1]
2. The diligence of faith's production (v. 5) [KP1]
3. The expression of faith's production (vv. 5-7)
 - a. The groundwork for Christlike character (v. 5) [KP2]
 - i. Faith
 - ii. Excellence
 - iii. Knowledge
 - b. The backbone of Christlike character (v. 6)
 - i. Self-control
 - ii. Endurance
 - iii. Godliness
 - c. The trademark of Christlike character (v. 7)
 - i. Brotherly kindness
 - ii. Love
4. The result of faith's production (vv. 8-11) [KP3]
 - a. The result stated positively—production leads to spiritual fruitfulness and confidence (vv. 8, 10-11)
 - b. The result stated negatively—lack of production leads to spiritual blindness and forgetfulness (v. 9)

OUR REMEMBERED FAITH (vv. 12-15) [KP4]

1. Remembering as a way of life (vv. 12a, 15a): urgency
2. Remembering as long as life (v. 13): faithfulness
3. Remembering as necessary to life (v. 12b): mission
4. Remembering as a legacy of life (vv. 14, 15b): brevity

LESSONS

1. **Key Point 1 — Jesus has been diligent to add to you faith (vv. 1-4); so you should be diligent to add to your faith (vv. 5-6).**

• **Effort**

The word “effort” (Gk. *spoude*) means “earnest commitment in discharge of an obligation or experience of a relationship” (BDAG). It is translated “haste” (Mark 6:25; Luke 1:39), “zeal” (Romans 12:8, 11—ESV), “earnestness” (2 Corinthians 7:11-12; 8:16; Hebrews 6:11—ESV), and “eager” (Jude 3—ESV). It definitely carries the idea of being all-out and all-in, allowing this productivity to become a passionate focus of our daily activity (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:7; Hebrews 12:14-15).

• **Cooperation**

The word “supplement” (“add” in KJV, “supply” in NASB) or “*epichorēgō*...is a fascinating one. It is a vivid metaphor drawn from the Athenian drama festivals, in which a rich individual, called the *chorēgos*, since he paid the expenses of the chorus, joined with the poet and the state in putting on the plays. This could be an expensive business, and yet *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 cooperation. The Christian must engage in this sort of cooperation with God in the production of a Christian life which is a credit to Him.” Echoes Berg, “In the same manner, Peter is teaching us that we are to supply (through the provisions God has granted us in verses 1-4) or set the stage through proper responses for God to do His work of producing these characteristics of Christ in us...[we must] earnestly and wholeheartedly cultivate the conditions whereby God can and will work out these qualities in our lives.” Indeed, “The grace of God demands, as it enables, *effort* in man.”

There is no accusation of legalism here. Instead, we are licensed to be as aggressive as possible in our own sanctification. In this sense, then, “You are as godly as you choose to be.” There’s no question that God is already working; how earnestly are we cooperating? Cf. Philippians 2:12-13; 3:12-15

2. **Key Point 2 — Cultivate the virtue of excellence first, then self-control (vv. 5-6a).**

We’re going to translate this Greek word (*arete*) as “excellence,” since in our modern usage we would consider all the qualities of verses 5-7 to be “virtues.” And, instead of tracing the development of this term in Greco-Roman and then New Testament usage, we’re going to allow one commentator to provide us with a wonderfully simple understanding of this term.

It means ‘excellence’, and was used to denote the proper fulfilment of anything. The excellence of a knife is to cut, of a horse to run.

Building on this definition, Berg explains that “a warrior could be considered excellent [Gk. *arete*] only if he was brave and courageous in battle....A fishing boat was considered excellent only if it floated.”

So, we recognize now why “Peter would set this virtue first in his list [and tell us to think up on in Philippians 4:8]. None of the other qualities will be used for the right purpose until we decide what our purpose is and commit our lives to it. What then is the ultimate purpose for the believer?”

Peter hints strongly at the answer. For he has already used this word in verse 3, when speaking of the impact of Christ’s character on a man which leads him to commitment....In a word, his life must reflect something of the attractive character of Christ. For He was the Man par excellence, the proper Man. True human excellence, then, is...Christlikeness.

Peter uses the word another time in his epistles and clearly defines what is our purpose in life that we must conform to in order to manifest this “excellence” (Gk. *arete*). In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter writes, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies [Gk. *arete*] of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (NASB).

Here Peter is telling us that God has arete—something that should not surprise us since what makes Him God is that He is excellent in all things that make a being worthy of being God.

But since this verse is a purpose statement for the believer, we find also what makes us excellent.

Indeed, “True human excellence, then, is...Christlikeness.” Or, to quote Berg again,

We have one major purpose on this earth then. We are to become like Christ in our character and then by our manner of life to show others what Christ is like so that they will honor Him too. Cf. Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15-16; Titus 2:5, 8, 10

Therefore, put simply, “excellence” is “capturing the heart for Christ,” or “cultivating a God-mandated purpose to develop and display the excellencies [character] of Jesus Christ.” Consider that this is “normal Christianity when measured by Bible standards [cf. Matthew 7:24-27].”

Illustration: Two different days—one in which excellence was cultivated in the morning, another in which it wasn’t—when self-control had to be added

Application: (1) “Can you also see why a wholehearted, single-minded resolve to become like Jesus Christ [i.e., “excellence”] is the only remedy? Most believers try to deal with worldly influences piecemeal—fighting this or that temptation and arguing about this or that worldly element—and in the process lose the battle in their own souls. There is no standard to measure the influence of these elements unless one has determined to live an entirely Christ-centered life in the first place” (J. Berg). (2) A daily prayer — “Because of what He did in my place on the cross, what He has said to me in His Word, and what He will require of me at the judgment, I must live all my life under the lordship of Jesus Christ today.”

3. Key Point 3 — The cultivation of these virtues determines my spiritual fruitfulness, stability, and confidence (vv. 8-11).

4. Key Point 4 — Participate in the ministry of memory with one another (vv. 12-15).

The story is told of a new pastor who preached his first sermon at his new church. The next week, he preached the same sermon, and again on the third and fourth weeks. Finally, the deacons approached him and said, “That is a very good sermon but we would like to hear a new one.” He replied, “When you start living by that one, I’ll preach a new one!”

While this is certainly not the repetition that Peter has in mind or models, that story humorously highlights our need to constantly be reminded of truth in order that we might be grounded and obedient. Indeed, Peter says in a nutshell in verse 13, “Repetition is right!” God wants His people to be a remembering people, active in the ministry of memory.

Illustration: Michael Jordan will always be known for his incredible basketball abilities—that is his legacy. The legacy of Mother Teresa is her deeds of compassion and humanitarianism. Martin Luther King is remembered by his legacy of fighting for racial equality.

The legacy of this transformed disciple—the apostle Simon Peter—would be enjoyed by these scattered believers for years to come, for whenever they thought about this dear man, he had worked so diligently to guarantee that they would simultaneously think of the reminders that he shared and the truth that he reiterated. This is Peter’s legacy.

Application: (1) A ministry of memory should be scheduled. — Remembering and repetition go hand in hand; likewise, repetition and habit go hand in hand. You will be poor at remembering truth, unless you’ve established a habit of personal repetition (i.e., meditation and memory). Furthermore, the local church body must maintain scheduled opportunities to rehearse and learn truth (e.g., *Band of Brothers*). (2) The ministry of memory should be spontaneous. — Consider Isaiah 50:4, “The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning; He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.”

ESSENTIAL VIRTUES

		Loving God with My Whole Heart	Loving Neighbors as Myself
		THE GROUNDWORK FOR CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER (v. 5)	THE TRADEMARK OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER (v. 7)
ESSENTIAL VIRTUES		<p>Saving FAITH</p> <p>Being a “partaker of the divine nature” through the righteousness of Jesus Christ</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Pursuing the EXCELLENCE of Christlikeness</p> <p>Cultivating a God-mandated purpose to develop and display the excellencies (character) of Jesus Christ</p> <p>↓</p> <p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>Cultivating a God-taught understanding of the person, the work, and the ways of Jesus Christ</p>	<p>SELF-CONTROL</p> <p>Cultivating a God-empowered mastery of my internal desires</p> <p>↓</p> <p>ENDURANCE</p> <p>Cultivating a God-sustained faithfulness under external pressure</p> <p>↓</p> <p>GODLINESS</p> <p>Cultivating a God-honoring devotion to Jesus Christ that promotes righteousness and opposes evil</p>
		<p>BROTHERLY KINDNESS</p> <p>Cultivating a God-engendered affection for and service to those in the “household of faith”</p> <p>↓</p> <p>LOVE</p> <p>Cultivating a God-imitating mindset that scripturally and sacrificially meets the spiritual needs of others</p>	
CORE VALUES		<p>COMMITMENT to Christ</p> <p>These traits produce a whole-hearted disciple who chooses the appeals and ideals of Christ and rejects the appeals and ideals of the world.</p>	<p>COURAGE for Christ</p> <p>These traits produce a brave-hearted disciple who advances Christ and His ways and opposes evil in himself and others regardless of risk to himself.</p>
		<p>COMPASSION like Christ</p> <p>These traits produce a tender-hearted disciple-maker who seeks the lost and who by his example and effort disciplines others to live a Christ-centered life.</p>	