

Intro:

We are in a series of messages on Christian Growth. For some time we have been talking about Christian living in our afternoon messages. These messages have come to us under various Series headers in my mind.

We had some messages under the header “Our Church”. Those messages were not just about how things are done in our church, nor merely about our philosophy of church life. They indeed were messages about Christian living.

We also had some messages out of Galatians 5, primarily. Those messages focused on the negative aspect of Christian growth. Jay Adams in his writing speaks of something he calls the “Put Off, Put On” dynamic. There are things in life that you need to Put Off in order to live a life glorifying God.

But there is also the Put On side of the equation. Lately we have been talking about that with four message from 2 Peter 3 organized around the “Beloved Be’s of 2 Peter 3”. These exhortations point us in the direction of Growing in Grace:

- Beloved, be mindful *of the Word*
- Beloved, be not ignorant *of the nature of God*
- Beloved, be diligent *of your walk with God*
- Beloved, beware *of your self and the potential for spiritual distortion*

Now we are going to turn to 2 Peter 1 and be in a few of its verses for some time. I’d like to read our passage and announce our theme for this message.

Read 2 Pt 1.1-11

Our theme today is this:

Add to Your Faith

How do you add to your faith?

What do we mean by this exhortation? That is what this message is about.

Proposition: In addition to faith in Christ, God expects us to give diligence to developing spiritual qualities of godliness in our life.

I. Not a matter of making any change to our faith

A. Not a matter of growing strong or more mature in our faith

1. The Lord admonished his disciples concerning their little faith

a. Five times – ὀλιγόπιστος

b. Mt 6.30, 8.36, 14.31, 16.8, and Lk 12.28

2. The disciples prayed to 'increase our faith' (Lk 17.5)

This kind of development of faith is a matter of strengthening or maturing your confidence in the Lord.

- Something that is necessary
- Something that will develop in the course of the Christian life

But this is not what we mean by 'add to your faith'

B. Not a matter of developing our understanding of 'the faith'

1. Jude called on us to contend for 'the faith' (1.3)

- a. Jude is referring to a body of belief taught by the apostles
- b. The things we are doing in our Bible study session in *Basic Theology* are the contents of 'the faith'

2. But we aren't talking about adding to the doctrinal body of Christian thought.

You should grow in your understanding of doctrine, but we don't mean that by 'add to your faith'

C. Not even a matter of persevering in our faith

1. Paul, on the homeward stretch of his first missionary journey instructed the people in the new churches to 'continue in the faith' (Ac 14.22)

- a. He means to challenge the believers to give diligence to maintaining a faithful testimony
- b. He means to encourage the believers to stand fast in the face of trials

2. This is getting closer, but we aren't merely talking about 'hanging on till the end' when we say 'add to your faith'

II. Understand what we mean by faith in our context

Look closely at 2 Peter 1.1

A. Addressed to 'them that have obtained like precious faith with us' KJV

'To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours' NAU

- B. This faith is obtained 'by the righteousness' of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

It is this faith that Peter is speaking about in our text, v. 5.

It is the faith we have been describing these many months in our exposition of Romans:

- Not a reliance on our own pride and self-righteousness
- But a reliance on Christ and Christ alone to provide the righteousness necessary to save us from our sins

III. Consider Peter's exhortation and expectation in our context

- A. Peter's greeting follows the apostolic pattern of a sincere prayer for the readers (1.2-4)

1. A modification of the standard 1st century letter-writing practice
2. Grace to you and peace be 'multiplied'
 - a. Peter's standard greeting, see 1 Pt 1.1
 - b. NAU of 1 Pt 1.1: 'May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.'
3. This multiplication is to be brought about by or in 'full knowledge' of God and of Jesus our Lord

So a matter of an increasingly intimate understanding of our God.

4. This prayer for multiplication of Grace and Peace to us is natural 'since' ('according as' KJV; 'seeing that' NAU) God has granted everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pt 1.3)

Obtained through the full knowledge of God

5. These things are given to us by His exceeding great and precious promises: *i.e.* the written assurances found in God's word
 - a. By these you may 'partake of the divine nature'
 - b. By these you may 'escape the corruption in the world through lust'

This is that 'Put off / Put on' dynamic

Your apostles pray for your growth in grace and peace since you have all you need for your growth by God's great and precious promises found in His word.

- B. Peter's greeting forms the foundation for the exhortation, 'add to your faith' (1.5)
1. 'Now for this very reason also' NAU – *i.e.*, the fact that God has given you 'these things' in His Word
 2. Add to your faith – 7 qualities, virtues, 'ingredients' of the Christian life

'Additional supplies'

'Ingredients' as those elements needed in a good recipe, added in, mixed together and producing something better than the sum of its parts: a cake is flour, leaven, sugar, egg, etc., but is far richer and pleasant than any one of those ingredients by itself.

- a. Requires diligence (1 Tim 6.11-12; 2 Tim 2.2)
- b. Diligence in developing these qualities is 'the most basic requirement for experiencing effective Christian growth'¹
 - 1) Diligence called for at the end of the list (1.10)
 - 2) Diligence committed to by the apostle in providing these written exhortations so that believers can 'call these things to mind' (1.15)
 - 3) Diligence called for by you, beloved: (Beloved be diligent *of your walk*) (3.14)

Conclusion:

We are exhorting you to Christian growth. What we are after is an increase in the qualities in your life that make up a Christian.

We call men to faith in Christ for the righteousness from God that comes 'without-law', but we exhort men to *add to your faith* the ingredients, the virtues, the qualities that make up a glowing Christian life.

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*, 2 Pe 1:5 (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003).