

Faith's Extension – Godliness

If endurance leads you to maturity, then the next step is obvious. Peter exhorts us to generously and abundantly supply to our faith “**godliness.**” Developing godliness is something we must purpose to do; God is not going to do it for us! After all, God doesn't need to develop godliness, He is Godliness personified.

Godliness is simply possessing Godlike qualities or attributes. As you begin to mature in Christ you develop godliness and this godliness continues to grow as you grow spiritually.

You are not meant to stay as a spiritual baby. Also, as a Christian, you are to take on the distinctive attributes and characteristics of your Heavenly Father. You should become blatantly like your Father since you are part of His family (the household of God).

Godliness is simply being like God and displaying all His wonderful attributes. His divine nature becomes part of you because you are His child, and His intrinsic characteristics and traits should be active in your life. I believe that in all of us there must be a sincere and deep desire to be just like Jesus. When we allow godliness to develop in us, and shine through us, there are incredible benefits, and we can live a life without guilt and condemnation (having a clear conscience at all times).

Godliness is conforming your mind and will to God's mind and will. Therefore, true faith and a godly life cannot be separated from one another. Yes, they are inseparable! What's more, godliness really influences people! A godly life will enrich and influence those you come into contact with. You can walk around saying we're Christian but if your life doesn't measure up everyone knows it. Your godliness is actually what people out there are looking for - not empty religion or eloquent words.

But, a godly life comes from an intimate relationship with your Heavenly Father. Many people claim to be His children, yet they do not know Him! If you spend quality time with God, your godliness will be evident to all. How much you really walk in godliness shows when the pressure is on. Godliness is either part of you or it isn't! You may be able to fool some people some of the time, however, you can never fool God! Your godliness will show when no one else is around. What are you really like when no one else is looking? Are you godly when you're alone? This is the mark of true godliness.

Faith's Extension - Brotherly Kindness and Love

The last two attributes of the true Christian character cannot be separated - **brotherly kindness** and **love**. They too must be added to your faith in abundance.

Brotherly kindness (philadelphia) - the love and consideration between brothers or sisters; the appreciation offered, and value placed on one another (in a special sense, all being children of the same Heavenly Father). In the Old Testament, Israelites were taught not to hate their brothers: “**You shall not hate your brother in your heart... but you shall love your neighbour as yourself**” [Leviticus 19:17,18]. This emphasis is continued and is made even more positive by Jesus Himself. In the New Testament, believers are exhorted to “*be tenderly affectionate to one another with brotherly love*” [Romans. 12:10]; “*to love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous*” [1 Peter 3:8].

As a Christian “*brotherly kindness*” should be your hallmark or calling card [John 13:35]. An expression of love is always the manifestation of spiritual maturity. The more you grow in Christ, the more kindness and love you will exhibit. But growing to maturity is a conscious decision - an act of your will. The Bible says, “**Let**

brotherly love continue,” which implies that you must make an effort for this to happen. Always be decisive concerning love and regard for others.

Brotherly love [*philadelphia*] describes the *love* you as believers should have for one another. *Philo* is human ‘love’; *adelphia* is ‘brothers’, and is often used in the context of a community made up of people united by a common interest or common calling. Have you noticed how difficult it is to connect with people whose value system is different to yours? The apostle Paul says this is being “unequally yoked” (2 *Corinthians* 6:14).

Brotherly love identifies us to those around us as Christ’s disciples: (followers of Christ) **“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you love [‘agape’] one another” [John 13:35]**. Loving one another will lead us to a sincere ‘love’ for all of mankind. As mentioned earlier, this is not primarily a matter of emotions but of the human will. It is not a mere sentimental exhilaration to be experienced, but a commandment to obey! *Agape* - the God kind of love - is supernatural and not of human source. An unbeliever cannot love as Jesus commanded because he has not had divine life imparted into his spirit. It takes divine life to love one’s enemies.

‘Agape’ love, always manifests itself in giving. For instance, **“God so loved the world, that He gave...” [John 3:16]**. **“Christ also loved the church and gave...” [Ephesians 5:25]**. You can show your love by giving your time, your talents, your hospitality, and your life for others. But remember, this kind of love is never selfish, it is totally unconditional. And this special kind of love will only be known by the actions it prompts. ‘Agape’ is seen - it’s conspicuous!