

Faith's Extension – Virtue

In the opening verses of the second epistle of Peter you will find a lofty prayer written for all his readers. In it, the apostle expresses a sincere desire that grace and peace might be multiplied to them in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord. Implying that the better they got to know God, the more they will experience His grace and supernatural peace.

Then in the next passage is a call to develop Christian character, something that should be of immense interest to every Christian because it reveals how we can keep from falling in this life and how we can be assured of a triumphant entry into the next.

Firstly, we are assured that God has made full provision for us to live a life of holiness, and this provision is evidence of His glorious power. **“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness”** (verse 3). God's power energises us to live holy lives because we've been given all the necessary things that relate or apply to it.

But this ability comes through the knowledge of Him who called us - nothing else! The method of knowing Him is progress toward holiness. The more we get to know Him, the One who has laid out a plan and purpose for our lives, the more we will become like Him. God has called us by revealing to us the wonders of His divine Person, in order that we may know Him more!

Included among the “all things” which God's power has provided in order to promote a life of holiness are His **exceedingly great and precious promises** (verse 4). There are an estimated 30,000 promises in the Bible. There are certainly enough to equip us to be partakers of the divine nature. Whatever direction you take, I'm sure there will be a promise of God awaiting you.

In the development of true Christian character, Peter commandeers *faith*, and what is necessary is that *faith* be supplemented by seven key elements (verses 5, 6). These elements should not be operating one after the other but manifesting all their qualities all of the time. Collectively they ought to become **faith's extension**. A minister once read this passage to his sons as follows:

“Add to your faith the courage of David; and to the courage of David the knowledge of Solomon; and to the knowledge of Solomon the patience of Job; and to the patience of Job the godliness of Daniel; and to the godliness of Daniel the brotherly kindness of Jonathan; and to the brotherly kindness of Jonathan the love of John.”

2 Peter 1:5 states, **“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence (earnest zeal), add (generously and abundantly supply) to your faith virtue.”**

Peter is telling us to *generously* and *abundantly* supply to our faith “virtue.” But what exactly is virtue? This may mean piety, goodness of life, or moral excellence, though these seem to be covered later by “godliness.” In the Greek this word has many different meanings and applications as diverse as *excellence, moral goodness, strength, courage, energy, and miracle working power*. When used in classical Greek it described any quality in a person that commanded or procured others to hold them in great esteem. Later the word signified *intrinsic value and eminence*. It is a grand word and would only be used in reference to one who is *renowned, excellent and praiseworthy*.

Excellence means or implies something with a valuable quality. It is not like cheap merchandise which does not hold up or last very long. In a similar way, Christians should not be individuals that come over as having

inferior quality of character. Jesus paid a high price for us, and therefore, we are to be people with intrinsic value - people of *excellence of character*.

However, from the outset, Peter has specifically told all believers to generously and abundantly supply to their faith such grand qualities as *excellence, moral goodness, decisive strength, courage, energy and power*. But note, to add or supply means - to be doing something! This is an active and wholehearted action, to be performed "**with all diligence and earnest zeal.**" James says our faith without works is *dead* [James 2:17]. It's not enough to just sit around making faith confessions without doing something positive. By supplying *virtue* (excellence, courage, energy, or power) to your faith, it will make your faith more effective, and in turn, cause others to hold you in great esteem.

Jesus set you free for a reason. And it's not to just sit around making faith confessions all day. If you were to genuinely add or supply *energy, courage or power* to your faith, you'd be bent on extending the kingdom of God. You have a powerhouse living inside of you and He's called the Holy Spirit, and He will quicken or energise your mortal body so that you may become excellent, courageous and praiseworthy in your faith.

Romans 8:11 "But the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, and He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you."

However, for the Holy Spirit to do His work, you need to always maintain a high level of energy by fortifying your inner man with the Word of God. The Holy Spirit loves to quicken your mortal body by dipping into the Word that has been sown in your heart. We often see commercials about new fortified cereals. Well, you need fortification for your spiritual man just as much as you need it for your physical body. The word of God is energy, and this supernatural power will keep you well fortified and strong. It helps develop abundant strength so that when the enemy comes you can rise to the challenge strong and courageous. Any soldier will tell you, in battle it is vital to keep your energy levels up.

When motivating yourself by the Word of God, and with the Holy Spirit assisting you every step of the way, supernatural energy shall manifest in your mortal body. This is the very enthusiasm that equips you for service. There may be another aspect to faith's extension. The word for *virtue* is used and translated as "*power*" in the story about a sick woman with the issue of blood [Mark 5:27-30]. It was only when the sick woman touched Jesus that He knew *virtue* had gone out of Him. This woman touched Jesus, but she touched Him in a different way, and He knew it. She touched Him with a special kind of faith, believing for a miracle, and the moment she did, *virtue* was released from Jesus' physical body. But what was this virtue? I believe it was *inherent power*! Inherent power was released from Jesus. That's how He knew she had touched Him.

This very same power, the inherent power of Jesus Christ, is in you and me, and it's also referred to as *resurrection power* (Romans 8:11). Therefore, the "virtue" that was released through a sick woman's faith, and caused a miracle to happen, is probably what Peter has told us to add or supply to our faith. Can you see something here? Most of us are always looking for something powerful to manifest *as a result of our faith*. Energy following faith! But this may be putting the cart before the horse. It is the *power or energy* that you **add or supply** to your faith which causes miracles to happen. So where is this divine power located? It is in your inner man, constantly being nurtured by the Holy Spirit and ready to be released if you add it to your faith.

Imagine this power is already within us! All we must learn to do is cause it to rise up in good supply and add it to our faith – *generously*. This must be the way to a dynamic life and Christian ministry. Jesus Himself always used what He already possessed - what was in Him. He had absolute trust in His Heavenly Father, which is the foundation of all faith, but He also generously added or supplied inherent power when it was needed. Shouldn't be doing the same?