

## HOW TO ADD TO OUR FAITH THE INGREDIENTS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Part 2)

I want to start out this morning by turning to the book of Galatians; Galatians 5:16. Notice what it says, “Walk in the Spirit.” What happens when we “walk in the Spirit”? We will not fulfill the **lust of the flesh**—our sinful, selfish nature. In **vss 19-21**, we have a list of “the works of the flesh,” followed by the fruit of the Spirit in **vs 22-23**. Notice now **vs 25**. To walk in the Spirit, then, means to have a life that is characterized by this **list of qualities**—known as the fruit of the Spirit—in our lives.

Now turn to Colossians 3:12-14. Again, we have a **list of characteristics**... of ingredients ...of qualities that we are to strive to “put on” in our lives. The point I’m emphasizing is this—Peter isn’t the **only one** who gives us a list of spiritual qualities that we are to strive to attain!

Now let’s go back to II Peter 1 and follow along as I read vss 5-7. In the way of a reminder, Peter’s list is **God’s** list—and God through Peter **commands** us to supply these ingredients to our spiritual lives so that we grow in Christlikeness. Although we are not specifically told **how** to add each one, we are given the **mind-set** we are to have. **First**, “giving all diligence” means we are to strive **earnestly**—whole-heartedly—at “adding” these things. **Second**, “adding” means to **lavishly supply**—not just do a little “sprinkling” of these things. Putting these two thoughts together, we are to be “working hard at lavishly supplying to our faith”—meaning our Christian life—these qualities. But **how** are we to do that?

Last week, I started out by sharing with you some **general principles** that apply to all 7 of these characteristics. To hopefully help us remember them better, I gave 3 general principles in the form of the acrostic: **M-A-P. 1. The MAP for adding spiritual qualities to our lives**

**M** is for Motivation. We won’t work on adding them if we **don’t want to**, will we?

**What** should motivate us to add these things? God gives **us two reasons** we should be motivated.

1) Because He **commands us!** That’s really the only reason we **should** need!

2) Because He **will reward us!** We see that in vs 11. We will have an **abundant** entrance—a rich entrance—into heaven if we whole-heartedly work at adding these things. It will be a “Well done; thou good and faithful servant” kind of entrance—not a “saved, yet so as by fire” kind of entrance.

**A** is for Awareness. Because God wants us to have these qualities, He will be **bringing opportunities** into our lives to develop them. We need to work at **being aware** of those opportunities as they are happening—not **after** the fact. **Push-ups** in the military seem like **punishment**, but they actually prepared the “push-ees”—or “push-up-ers”—for their Physical Fitness Test!

**P** is for Prayer. These are **spiritual** qualities—not something we can manufacture on our own. And since they are God-given and God-grown, we need to ask God to produce them within us.

Last week, we looked at virtue, knowledge, and temperance, so this morning we are going to begin with “patience.” Notice again vs 5: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and **to temperance patience...**”

Similar to last week, I will be sharing with you a short **definition** of the quality, followed by **an example** of someone who demonstrated that quality, followed by some helpful verses that go along with the quality.

### **2. Add to temperance, patience**

#### A. The definition of patience

As stated a couple of weeks ago, “patience” in the Bible carries a slightly different idea than what we usually think of when we hear the word. It means more than just “counting to 10” when you discover your preschooler couldn’t find a coloring book and used your wall instead! And it means more than not getting angry at your wife when she discovers after you’ve been in the car for 15 minutes that she forgot her phone!

Instead, it carries the idea of steadfastness, constancy, and a “stick-to-it-ness” regardless of the difficulty. It is the perseverance that drives a person to be loyal to their faith—and to their God—regardless of the **suffering and trials** that come their way.

### B. Paul and Silas demonstrated patience

Notice on your outline **James 1:2-3** “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

<sup>3</sup> Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh **patience**.” Although **James**—not Paul—was the **human writer** of these words, Paul certainly “practiced” what James “preached!”

One notable example is when Paul and Silas were thrown into prison. We see that in Acts 16; let’s turn there. Look at **vs 16**. This young lady—because of this evil spirit that was in her—brought her masters “much gain” by soothsaying. That means she foretold the future or told people how to protect themselves from having bad things happen to them. In **vs 18**, Paul casts the demon out of her and in **vs 19**, the masters of this young lady realize their **source of income** is now gone so they have Paul and Silas brought before the city authorities. Although their only “**crime**” was preaching the gospel—and casting out this demon—they are beaten “with many stripes” and “cast into prison” we see in **vs 23**.

Now **vs 24**. Here’s the picture: Their back has just been whipped probably 39 times—the law prohibited going over 40—and they are sitting on the ground with their legs spread apart and their feet secured to a large piece of wood by a rope or chain. They are in the **inner** prison where it is obviously quite dark—and probably cold.

Their response? **Vs 25**: “And at midnight Paul and Silas **prayed**, and **sang praises** unto God...” They were “counting it all joy” when they “fell into” this very difficult trial! Their perseverance—their steadfastness in the face of trials—is not just seen in **their singing**, though. When released from prison, they went to Thessalonica **to preach**—and were run out of town by a mob there. They then went to Berea—and also **preached there**—before they were again “run out of town.” That, my friends, is perseverance!

What about us? Do we “keep on keeping on” for the Lord—do we remain faithful to Him—when trials come into our life? That’s where the “rubber meets the road,” right? Don’t just follow God when “things are good”—**follow Him always** because He is God...and good...and does good!

C. Helpful verses about patience: Rom 5:3-5; II Cor 12:8-10; Heb 12:1; James 1:2-4; I Pet 1:6-7; 2:19-21.

## **3. Add to patience, godliness**

### A. The definition of godliness

What is godliness? Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines it as “reverence, respect, piety toward God.” Another on-line dictionary put it like this: “someone’s inner response to the things of God which shows itself in godly reverence.” (HELPS Word Studies; Biblehub.com)

One example that comes to mind—especially this time of the year—is Mary, the mother of Jesus.

### B. Mary demonstrated godliness

Although only a **young** woman—she was probably a teenager when God chose her to be the mother of Jesus—Mary was a **godly** woman. Her **reverence and awe** toward God are impossible to miss in what is sometimes called the “Magnificat”—her poem of praise to God. We find that in Luke 1, beginning with vs 46. Please turn there.

Mary’s proclaiming of her praise to God goes from vs 46 through vs 55. Although only 10 verses, there is a lot here. We **may** come back to this next week, but for now I just want to point out Mary’s **reverence** for God as seen in her desire to **praise** God.

**Vs 46** “My soul doth magnify the Lord.” The Greek word that “magnify” comes from is “mega-loo’-no.” You can see—even in English—the word “mega”—which means “large.” Mary’s soul—**her whole being**—wants to make it known that God **is great**—and greatly to be praised! She wants to “enlarge” our view of who God is!

**Vs 47** “And my spirit hath rejoiced in God **my Saviour**.” God was **her** Savior. If Mary needed a Savior, she was obviously a sinner! **Vs 48** “**He** hath regarded....” **Vs 49** “**He** that is mighty....”

**Vs 50** “**His mercy** is on them that fear Him....” **Vs 51** “**He** hath shewed strength....”

**Vs 52** “**He** hath put down the mighty....” **Vs 53** “**He** hath filled the hungry....”

**Vs 54** “**He** hath holpen [helped] His servant Israel....”

Hard to miss all the “He’s,” isn’t it? Mary wanted to **promote** God and did so by **praising** Him.

And I think you’d agree that this desire to praise God shows her reverence toward God.

What about us? Are we like that? Do we exalt Him...do we magnify Him...do we make known His greatness to others? Do we have a reverence...and awe...and an appreciation for who God is—and what He has done?

#### C. Helpful verses about godliness:

Notice on your outline **II Peter 3:10-11** “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and **godliness**,”

Based on the fact that the heavens shall pass away some day—and the earth will be burned up—we ought to be holy, God-reverencing people! The same word is used a number of times in Paul’s first letter to Timothy (I Tim 2:2; 3:16, 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11).

### **4. Add to godliness, brotherly kindness**

#### A. The definition of brotherly kindness

What is brotherly kindness? It is brotherly—and/or sisterly—love—but not necessarily for our **physical** siblings! It is having an affection...a fondness...a kindness toward **fellow believers**—our brothers and sisters **in Christ**. **Why** should fellow believers have a special place in our hearts? Because we share the **same Father**—God; and the **same future**—heaven!

#### B. Barnabas demonstrated brotherly kindness to Paul

Let’s turn now to Acts 9; please follow along as I read vs 1-2. **Saul**—who later was known more commonly as **Paul**—was both a Christian **hater** and a Christian **hunter** before he got saved. He was a staunch Jew—and counted the early Christians as enemies of the Jewish faith.

--We see in **vs 2** that he was driven by the desire to find those of “this way”—referring to the followers of Jesus—and bring them bound to Jerusalem for imprisonment.

--In **vs 3-6** we see that Saul is confronted...and convicted...and converted by Christ.

--In **vs 10-14**, God tells a man named Ananias to go meet Saul. Ananias was reluctant to do so because of Saul’s reputation—and the fact that Saul had authority from the chief priests to bind (arrest) Christians!

--In **vs 15**, God reassures Ananias that Saul is now the servant of God.

--In **vs 19-21**, we see that Saul joined himself with the disciples at Damascus—and was preaching Christ!

--Now **vs 23**. “And after that many days were fulfilled...” How many days? We aren’t told...here! But if you study this out—and compare it to Galatians 1—it was probably **3 years**—which is obviously “many days!”

--**Vs 26**. We can hardly blame the disciples for **being skeptical** about Saul’s conversion. What better way to find out who the Christians are than to pretend to be one of them!

--Now **vs 27**. “But Barnabas...” Good ole Barnabas—whose name means “son of consolation” and “encourager”—took Saul the former persecutor under his wing. **Barnabas did** what God later had Paul himself **write** to the Roman believers in **Romans 15:7** “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” Barnabas **received** Paul—and serves as an example to us.

What about us? How do **we receive** visitors here at church? Are we slow to accept people—to receive and welcome them—if they don’t **dress** the way we think they should...or **smell** the way we think they should...or **talk** the way we think they should? Please don’t **misunderstand me**. It would be wrong—and naïve of me—to think that everyone who **visits here** is born again and **in the family** of God. But...we should do what we can to make our visitors **feel welcome**. For the most part, I think we do a pretty good job of that.

But brotherly kindness is **more than** just about how we treat **visitors**. How do we treat **one another** as brothers and sisters in Christ? Besides Romans 15:7, here are some...

#### C. Helpful verses about brotherly kindness

**Romans 12:10** “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;”

**Phil 2:3** “...but in lowliness of mind let **each esteem other better than** themselves.”

Are we doing that? Are we esteeming **others** ahead of ourselves—**or ourselves** ahead of others?

Here's a practical way we can esteem others better than ourselves. We have this thing called "snack time." I absolutely love it that most of you stay after the morning service and visit with one another around the table.

But...should the **same** 5 or 6 people (which in reality is probably closer to 3 or 4) clean up each Sunday? Let's try and do a better job of pitching in and helping out! A couple more verses that remind us of our responsibilities toward one another—and the care we should have for one another—are Romans 12:15 and I Corinthians 12:25-26.

Lastly, God through Peter instructs us to... **5. Add to brotherly kindness, charity**

#### A. The definition of charity.

What is charity? As mentioned a couple of weeks ago, **charity** is the old English word for "love" and comes from the Greek word "ag-ah'-pay." It refers to the kind of love that led God to come to earth in the person of Jesus to die for our sins. It is driven by **the will**—not by **emotions**. It results **in action**—not **just words**. And it is a self-sacrificing, unconditional commitment that **seeks the good of the one** who is loved—even if the one loved is undeserving ...and unlovable...and unresponsive. It is the John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 kind of love.

Who—besides Jesus—demonstrated this kind of love? B. Stephen demonstrated undeserved love  
We're in Acts 9; turn just a few pages to Acts 7. The entire chapter—all 60 verses—are about Stephen. We obviously can't go through the whole chapter, however, so let's pick it up at vs 54. In the way of context, Stephen had just told them that they always **resisted the Holy Spirit**—and that they were the **betrayers and murders** of the Just One—referring to Jesus! Needless to say, that didn't go over too well!

--Vs 54. They were beyond angry—they were infuriated—and "gnashed on him with their teeth." They weren't physically biting him, of course, but they were probably baring their teeth in anger and hurling hateful insults at him. It didn't end there, though.

--End of vs 57 says they "ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him..."

--In vs 59—as they are stoning him—he is looking up into heaven with his eyes fixed on Jesus, it says in vss 55 and 56.

--Now vs 60: "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep." To "fall asleep" means that Stephen's **body died**. His soul, however—the eternal part of us that continues forever—was in heaven with Jesus!

--Stephen's words—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"—sounds a lot like what Jesus said as He was being nailed to the cross. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34).

--Not only did Stephen basically **say what Jesus said**, he had the **same kind of love** that Jesus had!

1) It was **unconditional**. Stephen didn't say, 'I'll pray for your forgiveness, but under **one condition**—stop throwing stones!' Instead, he said: "Lay not this sin to their charge." In other words, 'Lord, forgive them!'

2) It was **undeserved**. People who are killing you don't deserve to be prayed for—or forgiven! But forgiveness—and mercy—is what they **needed**. Love gives what is **needed**—not what is deserved.

3) It was **not responded to**—at least, not in the right way. He **loved them**—that's why he prayed for their forgiveness—and yet, they **did not respond** to his Christ-like love. Instead of stopping—and sparing his life—**they finished** what they had set out to do: throw stones at him—and on him—until he was knocked unconscious, then suffocated to death!

Stephen demonstrated real, genuine, Christ-like love, didn't he?

What about us? Do we have that kind of love? We'll dig into that a little bit more as we look at...

#### C. Helpful verses about loving others

1) Do we love our **enemies**? Jesus did—and so did Stephen! **But do we?** We're supposed to! Jesus said in **Mt 5:44** "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

--Do we love those who curse us...and hate us...and use us...and persecute us? Our natural desire is to **treat them the same way they treat us**—but that is not what we are called to do! We are to love them! But loving them **does not mean we have to agree with** what they believe and what they do!

Let's not forget that both Jesus and Stephen **spoke the truth** of God's Word to them—and that is why they were hated! People should hate us for our **beliefs**—not our behavior; our position—not our disposition!

2) Do we love **neighbors**? Jesus taught us to do that in the parable of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10. **Who** is our neighbor? Those whom God brings into our lives that have needs! There are people all around us that have all kinds of needs—and all the time! We need discernment and guidance from God on who to help.

3) Do we love **the brethren**—our brothers and sisters in Christ? We already talked about that, but here's a few more verses regarding that:

1 Thess 3:12 “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in **love one toward another**, and **toward all men**, even as we do toward you:”

1 Peter 1:22b “...see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

4) Do we love our **family members**—our spouse and our children?

Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25)—and the older women in the church are to teach the younger women “to love their husbands” and “to love their children” (Titus 2:4)

I said it once, but I'm going to say it again: Don't forget that when we love someone, we will want to **share truth** with them!

--We will want them to know that **God decides what sin is**—and has declared what sin is in the Bible!

--We will want them to know that **they are sinful**—and that their sin will keep them out of heaven and land them in hell!

--And we will want them to know that Jesus came into the world **to save sinners**—and wants to be **their** Savior.

May God give us a kind of love that longs to share the truth of God's Word to everyone—enemies, neighbors, and family members!

So what would God have us do in light of what we've heard this morning?

1. First, are you born again? Jesus said you need to be. Jesus also said that if you are not born again, you will not enter heaven. The Bible says in Heb 3:7-8, “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart...”

2. Are you growing in your Christian life? The best way to do that is to spend time in God's Word every day—with a desire to obey what He says. As you are in His Word, you will see how God wants you to be—and examples of those to follow. And that will get you to praying and asking God to change you and grow you.

3. Are you burdened for the unsaved? The message of the Christmas season is that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Are we sharing that message?