

BOOK OF 2 PETER
KEYS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH
ADD VIRTUE TO YOUR FAITH
2 PETER 1:5-7

Introduction

Someone has compared the **EPISTLE OF 2 PETER** to a **SPIRITUAL** pep talk. In a way that is a good comparison. As I said last week **PETER** was writing to **BELIEVERS** who were facing some very difficult circumstances. He wanted to **ENCOURAGE** them to **GET UP, STAND UP and MOVE OUT** for the **CAUSE** of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**.

We need to be **ENCOURAGED** in the same manner. It takes every bit of **DILIGENCE** and **EFFORT** a **BELIEVER** can muster, along with the **ENABLING POWER** of the **HOLY SPIRIT** in order to **PROPERLY GROW** and **MATURE IN CHRIST!**

We can't just sit idly by and expect the **LORD** to do it all. As we **GIVE ALL DILIGENCE**, the **HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES** us to **BE ALL THAT WE CAN BE FOR CHRIST!**

As we studied last week, **PETER** begins the challenge in *verse 5* by saying that we are to **"GIVE ALL DILIGENCE"** in this task of **ADDING TO OUR FAITH** these seven things. **DILIGENCE**—means **EFFORT**, it means **WORK**, it means **BEING ACTIVE** in **ADDING THESE SEVEN THINGS TO OUR FAITH**.

Basically every BELIEVER falls into one of three categories.

1. Some BELIEVERS Are BABES IN CHRIST!

Now the **BIBLE** mentions two types of **BABES IN CHRIST**.

a. One type of BABE is the person who has been recently BORN INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD.

A **BIRTH** is usually a joyous occasion. We should rejoice over the **BIRTH** of someone into the **FAMILY OF GOD** just as we rejoice over the **PHYSICAL BIRTH** of someone in our **FAMILY** or the **FAMILY OF FOLKS WE KNOW**.

There is nothing wrong with that kind of **BABE** or **BABY**.

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In fact the **NEW BELIEVER** should not be expected to be **MATURE** but to be a **BABE IN CHRIST**.

1. BABIES Have To Be Fed With Milk Early On.
They are not developed enough to be able to digest meat. *1 Peter 2:2—"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*

2. BABIES Are Not Born Knowing How To Walk Right, They Have To Be Taught.
First they have to learn how to crawl and then learn how to walk.

3. BABIES Are Not Born Knowing How To Talk Right, They Have To Be Taught.

4. BABIES Are Born Spitting Up.

5. BABIES Are Born Messing Up.

b. Another type of BABE is the person who has been BORN for some time, yet they still show forth the characteristics of a BABE because of their LACK OF MATURITY.

There comes a point where a **BABY** should **GROW UP and QUIT ACTING LIKE A BABY**. Have you ever told a child—"Now quit acting like a **BABY**"?

Now understand that a person's **DEVELOPMENT** and **GROWTH** as a **BELIEVER** may have been **STUNTED** for one of at least two reasons that I know of:

1) Some BELIEVERS have not been properly NURTURED into MATURITY. (i.e. That is, they have not been DISCIPLINED.)

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- 2) **Some BELIEVERS have REFUSED TO GROW UP INTO MATURITY.**
(i.e. They are CARNAL rather than SPIRITUAL.)
1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-13

Some BELIEVERS Are BABES IN CHRIST...

2. **Some BELIEVERS Are BACKSLIDERS FROM CHRIST!**
We don't like that word, but a "*backslider*" is one who has been **SAVED** and may have **MATURED IN CHRIST** at one time to some extent, but for some reason **THEY ARE NOT LIVING AS CLOSE TO THE LORD AS THEY ONCE WERE.**

We usually don't stand still in our **RELATIONSHIP** to the **LORD**. We are either **MOVING FORWARD** or we are **DRIFTING BACKWARD!**

*When Billy Sunday (the professional baseball player who became an evangelist) was converted, a saintly man told him ... he said, "Billy, if you never want to **backslide**, you do three things every day. You read the Bible and let God speak to you through His Word fifteen minutes every day. You talk to Him in prayer fifteen minutes every day. And you spend fifteen minutes every day telling somebody about Jesus Christ." He said, "Billy, you'll never have **backslider** written after your name."*

Billy Sunday said, "You know, I've been sliding into a lot of bases. I've been sliding into a lot of bases a long time. I don't plan to slide out of any."

3. **Some BELIEVERS Are BUILDERS FOR CHRIST!**
They are **DILIGENTLY** going about the business of **ADDING TO THEIR FAITH!**
I want to encourage you today to **BE A BUILDER!**

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Here in our text **PETER** tells us how **WE ARE TO BE ADDING TO OUR FAITH** and **WHAT WE ARE TO ADD TO OUR FAITH**. Here we find **SEVEN THINGS** that we should **ADD TO OUR FAITH**.

I want to focus on the **FIRST THING** that we are told to be **DILIGENT IN ADDING TO OUR FAITH**.

Look with me again at *verse 5*. Peter says that **we are to ADD TO OUR FAITH...VIRTUE!**

Again, **THE FOUNDATION IS FAITH, FAITH IN CHRIST** that results in our **SALVATION**. Then with **DILIGENCE** we **BEGIN THIS PROCESS OF ADDING TO OUR FAITH**. And we are to **ADD TO OUR FAITH...VIRTUE!**

Now if we are going to do that, we must clearly understand what **PETER** is talking about when he speaks of **VIRTUE**.

In defining **VIRTUE** let me emphasize two things:
I. VIRTUE IS AN ATTITUDE WE NEED TO HAVE!
The **ATTITUDE** we approach things with certainly makes a **DIFFERENCE** in what we achieve doesn't it?

VIRTUE is an ATTITUDE we need to have.

The term "**VIRTUE**" as used in this verse refers to **THE COURAGEOUS PURSUIT OF MORAL EXCELLENCE**.

The **OUTWARD EXPRESSION** of "**VIRTUE**" begins with an **INNER ATTITUDE** or **MIND SET** that says, **I WANT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT**.

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If we **NEVER DETERMINE** that we're going **TO DO THE RIGHT THING**, chances are very great that **WE WILL NEVER DO THE RIGHT THING BUT WILL DO WHAT COMES NATURAL—i.e. WE WILL WALK IN THE FLESH!**

So **PETER** basically is saying **WE NEED TO ADD TO OUR FAITH A DESIRE, OR THE ATTITUDE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT!**

Let me show you a **BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION** of this!
Turn with me to *Luke 19:1-10*.

Here we have the story of **ZACCHAEUS**. Let's walk thru this story together.

1) The DESCRIPTION of ZACCHAEUS. (Vs 1-3)
He lived in Jericho, he made his living as a chief publican (what we would call a tax collector), he was rich and short of stature. Zacchaeus' only friends were likely other publicans. He was looked at as being a traitor to his own people because he was being used by the Roman government to oppress his own people with burdensome taxes.

2) The DESIRE of ZACCHAEUS. (Vs 3)
He wanted to see **JESUS**...who **HE** was. He apparently had heard about this man named **JESUS**, and he wanted to size **HIM** up for himself.

However, he had a problem. The crowd got in the way! But he didn't give up!

3) The DETERMINATION of ZACCHAEUS. (Vs 4)
He exerted himself just to see **JESUS**.

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And then notice what it led to. It led to...
4) The DECISION of ZACCHAEUS. (Vs 5-10)
Now don't miss this! The **OLD ZACCHAEUS** was no more! He was a **NEW MAN** after he met **JESUS!**

Verse 8 is really important. It tells us of the **NEW ATTITUDE ZACCHAEUS** had. He had a desire to make restitution for what he had stolen.

That is VIRTUE! He had the DESIRE TO DO THE RIGHT THING!

And when he gave **TESTIMONY** of his **INTENTIONS** to **JESUS**, notice how **JESUS RESPONDED** in *verse 9*. **JESUS CONFIRMED** the **SALVATION** of **ZACCHAEUS**.

Listen, **VIRTUE is an ATTITUDE we MUST HAVE if we are going to MATURE as BELIEVERS and BECOMING EFFECTIVE SERVANTS of JESUS!**

VIRTUE IS AN ATTITUDE THAT WE MUST HAVE!

II. VIRTUE IS AN ACTION THAT WE MUST TAKE!
Inwardly, VIRTUE is an ATTITUDE that WE NEED!
Outwardly, VIRTUE is an ACTION that WE MUST TAKE!
Remember that "**VIRTUE**" is the **PURSUIT of MORAL EXCELLENCE!**

INWARDLY, WE DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT!
OUTWARDLY, WE DEMONSTRATE WHAT IS RIGHT!
It is **BEING HOLY** in an **UNHOLY WORLD!** (*1 Peter 1:13-16*)

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A little girl was spending some time with her grandma, and while she was sitting on her lap she said, " Grandma, I love you so much. You're so pretty!"

The thin and wrinkled grandma laughed and said, "Honey, that's sweet of you to say, but I'm not pretty." The little girl responded, "Oh yes you are. You're pretty on the inside."

GOD wants us to be PRETTY ON THE INSIDE. So PRETTY THAT IT SHOWS UP ON THE OUTSIDE!

We can't **GROW SPIRITUALLY** like we should if we play around with **SIN! SIN ALWAYS STOPS SPIRITUAL PROGRESS! WE MUST NOT PLAY WITH SIN!**

SIN may look appealing, but remember where it leads!
IT TRAPS, IT ADDICTS, IT ENSLAVES, IT DESTROYS!

Don't try to live life on the edge of **SIN!** Get as far away from it as you can. Those who live life on the edge are in danger of a fall!

Let's have a **PASSION FOR VIRTUE!**

Conclusion

Verse 3 says that GOD has CALLED US TO GLORY AND VIRTUE!

VIRTUE is **MORAL EXCELLENCE** and is something that people know about us.

Ruth 3:11– *"And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."* (Boaz to Ruth)

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Proverbs 12:4– *"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones."*

What do people know about us as they see us live the **CHRISTIAN LIFE?**
What do they see?

Do they see anything different about us?
Do they see us going in a different direction? They should!