

# PREPARED TO LIVE IN VICTORY

## THE TWO OPTIONS: GROW OR DECLINE

Houses of Light Church • September 16-17, 2023 • Pastor Netz Gómez

2 Pet. 1:5-7

***“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”***

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **v.1a “For this very reason...”** This command is based on v. 3 and 4 that we saw last time. The power of God has given us all the resources we need to live the Christian life through the knowledge of Jesus Christ and for this very reason we put all our efforts to live our Christianity in all its fullness.
- B. In today's verses (5 to 7) Peter exhorts us to equip our lives with all these virtues; which should **not be limited to the minimum necessary, but always strive for more.** The same Word constantly encourages us not to be content with anything less than the most precious and splendid life that culminates in Christian love. Christian growth has no limits, we can always grow more and more in the different areas of our life.

**Prov. 4:18 “But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.”**

- C. In the Christian life there must be constant progress. Peter calls us to have a holy dissatisfaction with our current achievements. **Not from a desperate attitude to see if God loves us when we reach a certain level of growth, but rather we strive with all our being to respond to that great love that He already has for us.**
- D. Someone has said: “The Christian life should not be an initial excitement followed by inertia that has stopped.” Unfortunately, that is what sometimes happens: When one realizes the wonder of a relationship with Christ, it begins with a moment of enthusiasm but then due to various factors the desire to maintain continuous progress is lost.

**Lk. 8:14 “And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.”**

- E. **v.1b “make every effort...”** In the Christian life, personal effort is to cooperate with the grace of God. It is true that everything is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8); but a faith that does not lead to practice is not true faith (Jas. 2:17). The truth is, growth depends on both the gift of grace that comes from God and our personal participation. We do not earn Salvation by works but at the same time we do demonstrate that we are saved by applying all our effort to advance our growth..

**Phil. 2:12b “...Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.” (NLT)**

- F. One commentator compares it to the parable of the Ten Virgins, and says:  
*"The flame is what God imparts to us without any effort on our part; but the oil is what each person must bring to life through their own dedication and effort." faithful, so that the flame may be fed and grow."*

## II. THE JOURNEY OF GROWTH

**v.6b-7 "...supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love."**

- A. It is important to note that it is not that these virtues have to be added precisely in this order but rather that true Christians throughout their journey in life do not cease to grow in grace (3:18).
- B. **Peter mentions FAITH (Gr. *pistis*) first; everything starts from faith. Trusting God's promises is how we connect with the power of God.** According to all Scripture, faith is the conviction that what Jesus Christ says is true (Heb. 11:1) and that we can surrender to His promises and dedicate ourselves to His commandments..
- Heb. 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."**
- C. **VIRTUE (Gr. *areté'*) must be added to faith**, which means excellence in the way of doing things and the results it gives. This Greek word can be used both to talk about a land that is fertile and also to talk about the virtue that makes a person a good citizen and friend. This word also means courage. In this passage both meanings are there. **Faith must lead, not to a passive life, but to an effective life in the service of God and others; and it must lead to the audacity to always show who one belongs to and serves.**
- D. **PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE must be added to virtue;** It is the ability to apply knowledge to commonly experienced situations. It is the knowledge that allows a person to decide correctly and act honorably and effectively in the circumstances of everyday life.
- E. **To practical knowledge we must add SELF-CONTROL.** Which literally means the ability to be in control of oneself. The ancients distinguished three states in life: 1) passion that has been totally subjugated to reason; It can be called **perfect temperance**. 2) The opposite is true when reason is totally submitted to passion; It can be called **uncontrollable lust**. 3) **And between these two is the reason that fights but prevails; We could call it self-control.** It is not that we are totally free from all sinful passion, because the passions remain, but we grow to keep them under control and do not allow them to dominate us.
- F. **PATIENCE must be added to self-control.** (Gr. *hypomoné*) The word translates as patience; but 'patience' is too passive a word. In its original meaning it translates as **"The voluntary and daily suffering of difficult things for the sake of honor."** It is not that the just man should not have feelings; rather he should patiently endure everything that afflicts him. It is

not just about accepting and suffering; but about looking ahead. **That is Christian perseverance.** It consists of courageously accepting everything that afflicts him. can come in life and transform even the worst event into another step forward, that's what Jesus did.

**Heb 12:2b "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame,"**

- G. **GODLINESS must be added to firmness** (Gr. *eusébeía*). This Greek word is difficult to translate, because it sounds like self-righteousness. **The person who has godliness always worships God correctly and gives Him what is due; but he also serves his fellow men and correctly gives them what is due them.** The godly person is in proper relationship with both God and his fellow men. When a person becomes a Christian, he assumes a double obligation: towards God, and towards his fellow men.

**Matt. 22:37-39 "Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself."**

- H. **To godliness we must add BROTHERLY AFFECTION** (Gr. *philadelfta*) which literally means love between brothers. What Peter is saying here is that there is something wrong when in the Christian life God's demands regarding relationships with others are considered annoying.
- I. **Growth must culminate in CHRISTIAN LOVE.** Affection for brethren must aspire to a love that is as broad as the love of God who makes his sun rise on the just and the unjust, and sends His rain on the evil and the good. **The Christian must show everyone the love that God has shown him.**

### III. GROW OR DECLINE: YOU DECIDE

- A. **In summary, Peter is telling us:** since you have obtained faith in Christ, now dedicate yourself diligently to advancing in moral excellence; and do not be content with that but continue to increase the knowledge of the will of God; and do not feel satisfied with that but be diligent to enlarge your capacities to control the passions; and in that, do not remain satisfied, but cultivate every form of patience and allow devotion, piety and sweet love towards God to prosper; to culminate in an affection for other believers and for all men. In other words: **Keep moving forward!**
- B. **No living being remains static or grows or decays. Believers who just float in the Christian life never stay in the same place because there is a current that drags them away..**

**Eph. 2:2 "in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."**

- C. **Christians who do not obey the invitation of these verses and do not diligently dedicate themselves to growth find themselves adrift. We must make an effort because the tide of temptation is very strong. As John Piper says: 'We don't judge a person's authenticity by how close he is to Heaven, but by how hard he swims.' The evidence that the power of God has been**

*given to you by faith is that you are now striving to advance in the qualities of Christ.'*

- D. V.8 Peter gives the clear warning: "***For these virtues, being in you and abounding, will not allow you to be idle or barren in the knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ.***" Let us remember that it is through "the knowledge of Christ" that we receive all the resources to live the Christian life because it is possible to begin a life with Christ but then become indifferent, insensitive and negligent by failing to use the means of grace and end up worse. that as we were before.

#### IV. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Do you consider that you are advanced in your growth in the Christian life? Explain
2. In what areas do you need to continue growing and what plan do you have to carry it out?
3. Do you think there is something that is preventing your growth? Share it with your Friendship Group and pray for each other.

#### THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Affirming Your Steps and the next quarter of Discipleship School begins this Monday, September 18 for those in Level 1 and 2. Level 3 begins October 9. Register today online or at the table outside.
2. The English courses will be combined with the Spanish courses. All youth ages 13 and up can register today at the table outside or online.
3. The Leadership Summit and the Passion for Jesus Conference are approaching September 28 to 30. Register today at the table outside or at [www.pasionporjesus.la](http://www.pasionporjesus.la) These events are bilingual and are aimed at the entire church. You cannot miss them!
4. The service on Saturday, September 30, 6:00 p.m. It is part of the Passion for Jesus Event; If you do not have a ticket, we invite you to come to either of the two, we serve on Sunday, October 1, 8:30 or 11:00 a.m.