

Add to Your Faith Virtue

I. “GIVING ALL DILIGENCE”

- A. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;* (2 Peter 1:4-5)
- B. We have just looked at the first four verses of 2 Peter 1 and discussed the precious promises that have been given to us so that we might be partakers of the divine nature. Now let us look at verse 5 and discuss what Peter means when he says:
“add to your faith virtue;”
- C. It is interesting to note that Peter said: *“giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue:”*
1. This is an exhortation based on premises drawn from verse 4. ***“Because of the precious and exceeding great promises which are yours, be adding on your part all diligence.”***
 2. ***“Giving all”*** translates from a remarkable word (pareisenegkantes) occurring nowhere else in the Greek Testament, and meaning, literally, ***“bringing in by the side of,”*** The term indicates the comparative unimportance of man’s participation in his salvation by suggesting that his part is merely contributory, ***“brought in by the side of what God does,”*** and yet is absolutely essential, since God’s part is done only on condition that man complies with his part.
 3. In view of the absolute necessity of man’s contribution by the side of what God does, Peter admonishes ***“all diligence.”*** ***“Diligence”*** is from spoude, and it means ***to hasten***. All children of God are thus exhorted to hasten to or bring in their part, though small and insignificant compared with what God does for us, in order that they may avail themselves of the blessings which the Father has made available to them. That in which diligence is particularly enjoined follows.

II. “ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE”

- A. **“Faith”** is the foundation and the source from which all other duties spring. (Hebrews

11:6)

1. The word “**add**” (from the Greek epichoregeo) is highly suggestive and interesting in the implications which follow from its origin. Originally it meant to found and support a chorus, to lead a choir, to keep in tune, and then, to supply or provide. As here used, the graces which adorn the Christian’s character are to be chorused into a grand symphony to the delight and pleasure of him who fashioned and made us for his own good pleasure.
 2. It will be seen that there are eight of the graces, and that they thus form an octave of soul tones, the first being faith, the last love, an octave higher. When these are harmonized and played on by the divine Spirit, disharmony disappears and life’s discords vanish. We should rejoice that we have been privileged to provide such an instrument in the hand of our God!
- B. “**Virtue**” (arte) which faith supplies is courage and soul vigor, the manliness and the determination to do that which is right. It is the same word and meaning in 2 Peter 1:3
1. No single “grace” will make a Christian. Nor can one “grace” be completely added at a time. There must be a blending of all the graces. However, for the sake of this study, let us look at one “grace” at a time.
- C. When we look at “**virtue**” (courage and soul vigor, the manliness and the determination to do that which is right). Let us consider some Old Testament admonitions:
1. **Joshua:** When Moses died, God chose Joshua to take his place. (Joshua 1:6-9)
 2. God led the people through Joshua and gave them the land of milk and honey. In Joshua’s latter days he told all Israel what God had done for them and gave them an admonition. (Joshua 23:1-6)
- D. In the New Testament we also find admonitions for **virtue** or courage:
1. When Jesus was talking with his disciples, He told them: *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* (Matthew 10:28)
 2. The apostle Paul told the Corinthian brethren to: *"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong."* (1 Corinthians 16:13)
 3. Paul later told the Philippians to be strong in the faith and do not fear their

adversaries. (Philippians 1:27-28)

E. When do we need courage as a child of God?

1. **We need courage when we are in the minority.** It is easy to allow ourselves to be influenced by the majority if we lack courage. For that reason, Jesus promised that: *“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”* (Matthew 18:20)

a. A Christian must always recognize that the majority will usually be wrong.

1) Most of the cities of Biblical times had walls around them to protect them from their enemies. They had two types of gates for entry into the city. The wide gates opened into the main roads or streets in the city. But there were also some straight and narrow gates that led into the city. Few travelers found these gates and few travelers entered these gates. Finding them was worth the effort because they led directly to the part of the city that travelers desire most.

2) It took time, effort, and courage to search for these gates but it was well worth the effort. For that reason, Jesus said: *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 “Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”* (Matthew 7:13-14)

b. We learn from the Old Testament that strength is not always with the majority. (Leviticus 26:7-8)

c. What are some examples of courage when in the minority?

1) **Joshua and Caleb:** God told Moses to send twelve spies into the land of Canaan, Moses picked a leader from every tribe. Joshua and Caleb were two of the spies and they stood up against ten spies when Moses ask them for a report on what they found. (Numbers 13:26-33; 14:6-9)

- 2) **Gideon and the 300:** Another fascinating story of courage when in the minority is found in the book of Judges. When Gideon took 300 men and conquered a nation. Gideon and his men demonstrated great courage because they knew that God was with them. (Judges 7:1-12)
2. **We need courage when civil laws conflict with God's laws.**
 - a. The Apostle Paul told the church at Rome: *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities...."* (Romans 13:1) However, we cannot obey the civil laws of the land when they conflict with God's laws. Let's look of some examples where God fearing men refused to obey civil laws when it conflicted with God's law and we can see the courage that was displayed in each example:
 - 1) **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego:** Three men refused to worship idols of Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 3:14-19)
 - 2) **Daniel:** On another occasion, Daniel defied the king by praying three times to God and was thrown into the Lion's den by the king. (Daniel 6:7-13)
 - 3) Even the apostles were commanded to keep silent and obey the civil laws, but Peter stood up with great courage and said: *"... Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."* (Acts 4:19-20)
 3. **We also need to have Godly courage when we are under severe temptation.** Certainly James points out that temptation that is endured is for our own good. *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* (James 1:12)
 - a. Christians may have many temptations as noted in 1 Peter. *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,"* (1 Peter 1:6) The meaning here is that

Christians now endured many things which were fitted to try or test their faith. These might consist of poverty, persecution, sickness, or the efforts of others to lead them to renounce their religion, and to go back to their former state of unbelief. Any one or all of these would try them, and would show whether their religion was genuine.

- b. **Joseph** is an excellent example of refusing to succumb to temptation by a beautiful woman desiring to seduce him. (Genesis 39:7-9)
4. **We must have courage when reproofing those who sin.** It is easy to tell others about the sins of someone. However, it takes much Godly courage to tell a brother or sister that they are sinning and need to repent. (Luke 17:3; 1 Timothy 5:20)
- a. There are a number of examples in the scriptures where God fearing men and women rebuked those who were sinning. For example:
 - 1) **Nathan rebuked David:** King David had a man killed so that he could take his wife of which he had an adulterous affair. Nathan rebuked David for what he did and David repented. (2 Sam. 12:1-7)
 - 2) **Peter rebuked Ananias and his wife:** When Ananias and his wife lied to the apostles regarding the proceeds from their sold possession, Peter rebuked them. (Acts 5:1-5)
 - 3) **Peter rebuked Simon:** Peter rebuked Simon for attempting to buy the power that God gave the apostles. (Acts 8:20-23)
 - 4) **Paul rebuked Peter:** Even Peter sinned at one point and the apostle Paul rebuked him. (Galatians 2:11-13)
5. **We need courage when obedience to God may seem unreasonable.** Sometimes obedience to God may seem unreasonable and it takes great courage to stay the course and remain faithful to Him.
- a. God does not ask any more of us than what we are capable of doing. (Romans 12:1; 1 John 5:3)
 - b. **Abraham:** Abraham is a worthy example of demonstrating great courage

in obeying God even though it seemed unreasonable. (Genesis 12:1-4)

- c. **Abraham in offering Isaac:** Another story that is even more amazing to me is also found in Genesis when Abraham was prepared to offer his son as a sacrifice to God. (Genesis 22:1-14)

6. **We need courage when we preach the truth under persecution.** One final area that takes great Godly courage is when we preach the truth under persecution. It is easy to preach when there is no danger. However, we cannot let danger keep us from preaching the truth.

a. Some good examples of this kind of courage are:

- 1) **Stephen:** Stephen was preaching before the Jews and they stoned him to his death and yet Stephen prayed to God that he not lay this charge against them. Acts 7
- 2) **Paul:** Paul could not be moved when it came to preaching the truth. (Acts 20:22-24; 21:13)

F. What are the results of **courage** (virtue)?

1. Courage may get us into trouble here on this earth but we will receive a crown in the end.
2. Courage will prove our sincerity to others. (Acts 4:13)
3. Courage will mean much to us hereafter. (Revelations 2:10)

CONCLUSION.

- A. Proper faith in God will give us courage. (Proverbs 14:26; Ephesians 3:12)
- B. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens. Consider the example of the apostle Paul who wrote, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* (Philippians 4:13)