

## Moral Excellence

### 2 Peter 1:3-4

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

In a world growing more secular and less religious, I wonder if we've \_\_\_\_\_ something precious. What is it? Virtue! Today, we're going to explore the \_\_\_\_\_ for virtue. God gives us precious and very great \_\_\_\_\_ in His Word. We don't want to \_\_\_\_\_ a single one of those promises. Considering those promises, we must \_\_\_\_\_ the will of God and practice it in our lives. God wants His people to live virtuous lives to demonstrate God's love and holiness to a world that needs to see godliness and love in \_\_\_\_\_.

Many people are content to go along with the \_\_\_\_\_. One man recently revealed that he was \_\_\_\_\_ with his salvation and didn't feel he needed to do anything more than what he had already done many years ago. God expects \_\_\_\_\_ than a lazy, complacent faith. He wants us to "be all the more diligent to make your calling and election \_\_\_\_\_" (2 Peter 1:10). Wouldn't it be sad to presume we are right with the living God, only to find on Judgment Day we were \_\_\_\_\_ right with Him or we had fallen from His favor?

Instead of listening to what people think, turn to the Bible to find a \_\_\_\_\_ morality that comes from God. We should \_\_\_\_\_ what God requires morally, rather than falling for worldly ways that ignore God and lead to chaos and confusion. Instead of following popular opinions and conforming to this world, we should look to God's Word as our moral \_\_\_\_\_. Romans 12:2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may \_\_\_\_\_ what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." When people follow God's will found in Scripture they demonstrate a life that is indeed good and acceptable and perfect.

**Second Peter 1:3-4 provides our context.** God has given us everything we \_\_\_\_\_ for life and godliness through His Word, the Bible. God has called us by the \_\_\_\_\_ to His own glory and excellence. This message has granted us His precious and very great promises. Where else can you go to find the promise of eternal \_\_\_\_\_? Where else can you go to find the forgiveness of \_\_\_\_\_? Where else can you go to learn how to \_\_\_\_\_ as God desires? Where else can you go to \_\_\_\_\_ the corruption that is in the world?

Because this is true, God expects us to be diligent in our faith, to give it our \_\_\_\_\_ effort. We must make living our faith in God a \_\_\_\_\_. To do that we must \_\_\_\_\_ some virtues to our faith! Saying that we believe and demonstrating our faith are two different things. Sadly, many people profess faith but don't \_\_\_\_\_ it. We must do better than that!

First, we must add to our faith \_\_\_\_\_. Virtue is moral and ethical excellence. This is a comprehensive term that refers to our morals and ethics. It calls us to \_\_\_\_\_ what is right and to \_\_\_\_\_ what is wrong. It calls to the inner person to be everything he or she \_\_\_\_\_ to

be. This calls for moral thinking, moral attitudes, moral relationships, and moral behaviors. God \_\_\_\_\_ excellence from his people. Peter said, "But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, A holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). God is not mediocre but excellent, and He calls His people to \_\_\_\_\_ mediocrity to a moral and spiritual excellence!

Even in our everyday lives God expects us to \_\_\_\_\_ morally excellent thoughts rather than spend our days in worldly desires. **Read Colossians 3:1-4.**

Instead of complaining, coveting, and giving in to despair, God wants Christians to \_\_\_\_\_ on blessings and good things. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." People \_\_\_\_\_ those who have an exceptional character, virtue, uprightness, and righteousness. People appreciate purity and holiness. Employers want \_\_\_\_\_ people of character. Our society \_\_\_\_\_ people of integrity and character who live honest lives.

Second, we must add to our virtue \_\_\_\_\_. We need a true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, knowledge that comes from the Scriptures. If everyone knew and loved the Lord Jesus, we'd see a \_\_\_\_\_ world. Crime, war, chaos, and dishonesty would cease. People think ignoring God makes a \_\_\_\_\_ world, but they are wrong. The more people get away from God, the more confused and chaotic our society becomes. The prophet Hosea realized how devastating ignorance of God truly is. Hosea 4:6 says, "My people are destroyed for \_\_\_\_\_ of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

If we forget God and His laws, do you think we can count on God's continued \_\_\_\_\_? Let's not fool ourselves. If we ignore the moral laws of God, we'll have a life filled with \_\_\_\_\_. You may say, "I don't want to live by God's morals"; but I guarantee you will \_\_\_\_\_ everyone else to live by them. You want other people to be honest with you, fair with you, kind to you, and patient with you. If you think it is okay to ignore God's laws, then you have no \_\_\_\_\_ to complain when people treat you in an ungodly way. They are merely following your rules. Think about it. Don't you wish everyone followed the Lord's teaching?

Third, we must add to our knowledge \_\_\_\_\_. Self-control is the opposite of self-indulgence. First Peter 1:14-16 says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'you shall be holy, for I am holy.'" We must learn to say no and deny ourselves sinful \_\_\_\_\_ and place our hope in the Lord Jesus. The pleasures of sin do not \_\_\_\_\_; they will in time cause misery and ruin. The truth and the love of God give us courage and strength to find \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord teaches us self-control, so that we are able to overcome \_\_\_\_\_ and break the chains of sin.

Self-control leads to virtue. Self-control means I no longer allow what might hurt me to enslave me. I am no longer a child; I can and will do what is right and best.

Fourth, we must add to our self-control \_\_\_\_\_. Patience or perseverance enables us to keep on keeping on in our pursuit of a godly character, even though we may \_\_\_\_\_ for doing so. **Read 1 Peter 2:21-24.**

God sent Jesus to this earth to sacrifice His \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins; I cannot \_\_\_\_\_ how difficult and painful His trials and crucifixion must have been. I do know, through it all, Jesus did not call for twelve legions of angels or \_\_\_\_\_ His suffering. He suffered many \_\_\_\_\_ until He died. He never gave up on us. All the misery and insults didn't stop Him from fulfilling the Father's will. He patiently and lovingly endured the cross by entrusting himself to His Father. When we need patience, we too should entrust our \_\_\_\_\_ to the Father's hands.

Fifth, we must add to our patience \_\_\_\_\_. Godliness refers to our faith put into \_\_\_\_\_. Because we believe and take God \_\_\_\_\_, we live godly lives. Godliness is the devotion to God we \_\_\_\_\_ in our day-to-day walk. It's the attitude of reverence, which seeks to \_\_\_\_\_ God in all things. It desires a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with both God and others. Godliness leads to a holy life and sets us \_\_\_\_\_ from what is common or profane. Godly people work hard to be more and more like \_\_\_\_\_.

The apostle Peter wrote, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:14-16). Some folks think that because we're saved by \_\_\_\_\_ we don't have to worry about our salvation and can live any way we want and still go to heaven. This is not God's teaching; God expects us to \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins. Second Peter 3:9 speaks to Christians and says, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is \_\_\_\_\_ toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Grace doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ the door to sin; it \_\_\_\_\_ it! Titus 2:11-12 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to \_\_\_\_\_ ungodliness and worldly desires and to \_\_\_\_\_ sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age."

Sixth, we must add to our godliness \_\_\_\_\_. "Brotherly kindness" is the love saints should have for one another. The Lord Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). Brotherly love arises from our common \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ, our common \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven, and our common \_\_\_\_\_ for God. Love for Christ overflows into loving our brothers and sisters fervently from our hearts. This love, based on a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with Christ, can be sensed immediately even though two saints may never have met before. Peter wrote, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Peter 1:22).

Seventh, we must add to our brotherly kindness \_\_\_\_\_. First Corinthians 13:1-3 says, “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have \_\_\_\_\_, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am \_\_\_\_\_. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.” God is love, and we know how to love because the Father and the Lord Jesus loved us. Without love in our hearts and lives, we can \_\_\_\_\_ be what God wants. Loving God and others is our highest calling.

The Lord Jesus said, “But I say to you, love your enemies and \_\_\_\_\_ for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what \_\_\_\_\_ do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:44-48).

God loved us, even \_\_\_\_\_ we thought to love Him. “For God so loved the world, that He \_\_\_\_\_ His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). First John 4:19 simply says, “We love, because He \_\_\_\_\_ loved us.” We love God, because Jesus loved and forgave us. We love and forgive others, because God first loved and forgave us.

How are you doing on this \_\_\_\_\_ of seven virtues? Are you making your calling and election sure, or have you become \_\_\_\_\_ and forgotten how God forgave you?

Peter speaks clearly about these seven virtues. Peter said in chapter 2 verses 8-11, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who \_\_\_\_\_ these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make \_\_\_\_\_ about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you \_\_\_\_\_ these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.”

I suspect you want to be useful to God and fruitful. I suspect you want an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord in heaven. I know I do! I want to make \_\_\_\_\_ God’s calling and choosing me. I don’t want any \_\_\_\_\_ on Judgment Day. To do this we must be all the more diligent to make our calling and election sure. We don’t want to forget the great \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus paid for our sins. We want to add to our faith the virtues that God expects from His children.

To add these things to your faith, you must first come to the faith. You must become a Christian by placing your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, repenting of your sins, publicly confessing your faith, and being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. God washes us clean with the blood of Jesus when we’re baptized. He gives us newness of life and adds us to His church. After you become a Christian, remain faithful to the Lord. Don’t let anything keep you from serving the Lord all the days of your life. Make your calling and election sure!