

A BOUQUET

Scripture Reading: Read 2 Peter 1

In verses 3-4 of today's chapter reading, the apostle Peter points out the lavish provision God has made available to the saints by way of his grace and power. We have been given **everything** we need for life and godliness. There is no lack in his provision. No limit to his resources. There is nothing that can ultimately hinder a child of God who wants to be all that God wants him or her to be and presses in to Jesus.

Based on the Lord's unlimited provision, we are called to action, as the verses that follow make clear: *"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."* By virtue of God's work and provision, we now have both the motivation and obligation to grow up in Christ.

So, what does growth look like? According to Peter, it begins with faith and ends with love. In between, it includes goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness and brotherly kindness. Each is a virtue that is to be added to our lives and to those that precede it.

At first glance, this may look like a ladder of virtues. You start with faith and, once that one is done, you move up a rung on the ladder to add goodness. Then, once goodness is done, you move up another rung to add knowledge, until you work your way to the top of the ladder and reach the highest rung which is love. But, this may not be the best analogy to use. Wouldn't we want to keep growing in goodness, self-control, and perseverance, etc.? If God is infinite, wouldn't we need to grow continually in knowledge of our Lord?

The answer to these questions, of course, is yes. We are to grow in grace continually and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus (2 Peter 3:18). The virtues are to be developed, as Peter notes in verse 8, in increasing measure. It's not that we get one done and move on. It's that all of them are to be cultivated simultaneously in our life with the goal of moving from faith to love. Given this image of cultivation, then, perhaps a better analogy is to see the virtues as flowers in a bouquet. The flower of each virtue is to be present in the bouquet of our life that we present to God. As we grow in each of the virtues mentioned by Peter, we add more and more flowers to our bouquet.



Action Step & Prayer Focus: Go back through Peter's list of godly virtues and make sure each is being cultivated in your life. If any virtue is missing, ask the Lord to show you how to plant and nurture that "flower" in your life. If all are present, then pray for the Lord to increase the size of your flower bed so that the bouquet you offer to the Lord may grow.

Take-a-way: *Each day add to God's bouquet.*