

Basics of the Christian Life Series

The Blueprint for the Christian Life

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The Blueprint for the Christian Life

I. Introduction

A. Illustration: The Unplanned Reaction

1. While working as a Material Handler at Tyco Fire Protection Products my co-workers and I liked to have fun in the midst of the daily grind. In an area of the warehouse called “the small parts crib” or “the crib” for short, one of the jobs was to “pick orders”. Picking orders involved walking around the warehouse with the paperwork for an order (called a picking slip) while each part on the order was collected from the warehouse shelves and put into bins on the metal cart. Supplies were kept on these metal carts for this job. The person who was picking orders carried a hand held scanner which would be used to scan the shelf and the parts being collected for the order to make sure the right products were being shipped for the order.
2. Sometimes things got a little slow, people got bored, and they wanted to avoid just doing busy work. When there weren’t enough orders to go around for the group of “pickers” there would be a race to the location where the orders were placed when they came out of the office (called the picking tray). When it was slow, everyone wanted to have orders to collect so they wouldn’t be bored. As soon as the orders were printed off and placed in the tray, all the pickers would run over to the tray to get as many orders as they could.
3. On one such occasion, I had already finished collecting all of the orders I had on my cart. One of my co-workers, who wasn’t working as fast as I was (which was a common syndrome in the middle of a slow time) still had several orders on their clipboard which was placed on their cart. Jokingly, I walked past his cart and grabbed a few orders off his stack as he was getting a part off the shelf. I wasn’t actually going to take his orders because that would be rude, although, some people did do that. I grabbed the paperwork and started to pretend to walk away.
4. At that moment my co-worker saw me and reacted without thinking. He had a permanent marker in his hand and he reached out and drew a line on my shirt from my chest down to my stomach. Thankfully it was an old shirt that I didn’t care about. What happened next was very interesting. The reality of what my co-worker had done started to dawn on him. He realized what he had just done and I could see the surprise and shock come over his face. He immediately felt terrible. He apologized many times and he offered to buy me a new shirt. I told him not to worry about it, I didn’t care since the shirt was so old (even if it was new I wouldn’t have required him to buy me a different shirt).
5. He continued to mention the incident even months after it happened. It really bothered his conscience for a long time. My co-worker reacted to a situation without thinking, and he isn’t the only one who does this. We make uncontrolled responses all the time. In these moments a person’s heart is most clearly revealed. When he had a chance to process what was happening, his response completely changed. Social

norms kicked in, and he realized he shouldn't have done what he did. I had the chance to observe his immediate reaction, the realization setting in, and the aftermath of what happened.

- B. In the unguarded moments of our lives, the times we react before we think, our true hearts are revealed. The true content of our soul becomes visible and we are able to see ourselves for who we really are. The nature of our soul determines our unfiltered reactions to the circumstances of life. The goal of the Christian life is to shape our soul in such a way that our unfiltered, unguarded moments lead us to respond in Jesus-like ways. Spiritual growth occurs on the inside which then influences what comes out of us. It is a bad strategy to think that you can live like Jesus simply by using your willpower to make it happen; inner change is required first. Genuine discipleship doesn't just focus on behavior change; the spiritual transformation process is much deeper than mere behavior modification. It is the heart that God cares about and it is the heart that receives the attention when it comes to soul shaping.
- C. The process that gives shape to our soul is referred to as "spiritual formation". Spiritual formation focuses on the process of how a soul is formed with the goal of shaping it in such a way that the divine life God implants in us, grows and becomes prominent. Spiritual formation means being formed in our spirit—our soul.¹ An important passage on the topic of spiritual formation is 2 Peter 1:5-11.² In this passage, Peter provides us with a blueprint for the Christian life. We get a path to follow for growth that moves us toward spiritual maturity. Those who want to grow in their ability to follow Jesus, should model their life after this blueprint. When our efforts are directed according to the pattern of 2 Peter 1, spiritual growth happens. If a person persists over time according to the blueprint, spiritual maturity will eventually be reached. This blueprint for the Christian life will foster the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. This passage will provide you with direction for your Christian life.

II. The Biblical Blueprint for Soul Growth³

- A. The relevant details are found in 2 Peter 1:5-7, "5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love." We discover a list of virtues mentioned by Peter that will encourage the proper shaping of our soul. God desires much more than mere moral behavior. Although moral

¹ There are some Christians who make a distinction between the spirit and the soul (trichotomists) based primarily on 1 Thess. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12. On this view, humans are made up of three parts: body, soul, spirit. However, I do not hold this view (I used to) as I think there are insurmountable problems and (more importantly) the Bible doesn't teach it.

² For an excellent study on this passage and its relationship to spiritual growth see Jim Berg *Essential Virtues: Marks of the Christ-Centered Life*.

³ Other important and helpful resources on shaping our souls include Gary Thomas *The Glorious Pursuit: Embracing the Virtues of Christ*. I highly recommend this book for intentionally pursuing Christlikeness and gaining an understanding of where the Christian life is heading. For an excellent resource that provides an overview of different approaches to spiritual formation see Ken Boa's *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. This book is a great starting point for learning about spiritual formation since it includes many resources for further study. Also, Dallas Willard's *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* focuses on how various aspects of the heart (soul) change. Finally, a good starting point for understanding what the soul is, JP Moreland's *The Soul: How We Know It's Real and Why It Matters*. These resources will lay a strong foundation for a lifetime of spiritual growth and discipleship.

behavior and soul shaping are connected, they are not the same. Don't think that morality equals maturity; it doesn't. Followers of Christ should be after soul maturity. This pursuit of is summed up well by David Hazard, "Christians have understood that as God works around us, and in us, our part is to *respond* to Him so that we might be changed. How? By consciously, daily, giving Him fuller access to our core of attitude and will, that became misshapen around a core of self-centeredness."⁴ Using a familiar Greek method of communication, Peter provides his readers with a list of Christian virtues.⁵

- B. A virtue in connection with Jesus is, "a certain set of spiritual attributes, or heart attitudes, that describe the inner life of the Lord."⁶ It is better to think of virtues not as abstract ideals of goodness but rather as specific embodiments of goodness possessed by Jesus Himself. As our souls are shaped by the Holy Spirit, we develop and adopt these virtues as our own, we become like Jesus. Douglas Moo describes the process of developing the virtues of Jesus, "While God gives us the ability to become godly, it is our responsibility to use the power he has made available to us and actually work at becoming people who please God in every phase of life."⁷
- C. It is important to realize that this list of virtues is something we do. The term "applying" (v. 5) means to provide something in addition to what already exists⁸ which is supplied at our own expense; it is something we must do for ourselves.⁹ There is a difference of opinion about the nature of the relationship between these virtues. Some scholars believe the order is largely arbitrary, while others think the virtues are in a progressive order (the earlier virtues must be developed prior to the later ones). There does seem to be widespread agreement that the virtue of faith is the beginning of the Christian life and it culminates in love which are the first and last virtues listed. However, the virtues in between are debated. Whether Peter intends his list to be developed in order or not, these are the virtues of the Christian life and should be increasingly present in the life of a follower of Jesus. These virtues give shape to the Christian life and they reveal where our effort should be directed.
- D. The place where spiritual growth starts is by having a genuine faith, "in your faith" (v. 5). Faith is the firm conviction that Jesus is the Chosen One of God who provides His forgiveness for immoral actions to the point that this conviction produces a lifestyle of surrender to Jesus. It is impossible to positively shape your soul while staying disconnected from Jesus and His Spirit (1 Jn. 3:24). Only Jesus can produce the radical heart change that occurs in the new life that He offers. When a person has active trust in Jesus for the pardon available for their self-centered living, they begin the Christian life. Faith here does not refer to Christian doctrine but rather to

⁴ David Hazard, "[Introduction](#)," in *The Glorious Pursuit: Embracing the Virtues of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998), 13.

⁵ Other examples of these chain-saying virtue lists include Rm. 5:3-5, Jas. 1:3-4, Gal. 5:22-23, Mt. 5:3-12. Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 177. More specifically, Peter is using a literary technique called *sorites*: a step by step chain that culminates in a climax. Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 297.

⁶ Gary L. Thomas, [The Glorious Pursuit: Embracing the Virtues of Christ](#) (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998), 20.

⁷ Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 46.

⁸ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains](#) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 602.

⁹ William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 387.

personal trust in Jesus.¹⁰ All of the other virtues on this list flow from the foundation of faith. If you remove the faith, you remove the possibility of the virtues. Each virtue is Christ-like in its character which makes them distinct from the Greek versions of these virtues. Again the spiritual life is different from mere morality.

- E. Once eternal life is gifted to those who believe in Jesus, and they become a new person, the next step—the first Christian virtue mentioned by Peter is diligence “applying all diligence” (v. 5). A person who truly believes can’t be indifferent to the things of God, unlike those who are spiritually dead (unresponsive to God). Diligence refers to the expenditure of intentional concentrated effort on the pursuit of Jesus. It sees the need and the value of a committed pursuit of Jesus. Spiritual growth can’t be treated lightly, it deserves our best effort and a significant portion of our attention.¹¹ Since God has done something for us we can’t help but do something in response. This is what Paul was referring to when he said to “work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:12-13). A true follower of Christ can’t remain spiritually idle. They will invest in their spiritual growth; it will be important to them. If an individual mistakenly thinks that growth and maturity happens by itself, they will never see it. Spiritual growth and maturity require our time and attention. Disciples of Jesus do their best by putting all the energy they can muster into their own soul development. Peter Davids communicates this virtue well, “We do not automatically become more virtuous as if God infused virtue into us intravenously; we need to make plans and expend effort.”¹² All the energy we can manage should be directed toward our spiritual growth and the development of these virtues; shaping our soul should be our life’s passion. Someone who possesses diligence will value being like Jesus so that it becomes a priority in their life which strengthens their firm commitment to Him. These individuals take their faith seriously and are committed to Jesus and His kingdom building project. They are conscious of where they are spiritually and focus on going deeper.
- F. Next comes moral excellence “supply moral excellence,” (v. 5). Excellence refers to the proper fulfillment of something such as a knife that cuts or a horse that runs well.¹³ Moral excellence is the direction in which the diligence is pointed. The proper fulfillment of the Christian life is Jesus imitation (Rm. 8:29, 2 Cor. 3:18, Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:15). Since Jesus likeness is the proper fulfillment of the follower of Christ; moral excellence is therefore defined as living like Jesus in every area of life. The moral excellence toward which a disciple is moving is defined by the example of Jesus Himself (1 Pet. 21-24). Moral excellence leads not merely to morality but to God likeness; taking hold of the divine nature that God provides and moving away from immoral cravings (vv. 3-4). The Christian virtue of moral excellence is to chase after the

¹⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 298–299.

¹¹ Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 44.

¹² Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 179.

¹³ Michael Green, [2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 86–87.

character of God Himself (holiness).¹⁴ Followers of Christ who possess the virtue of moral excellence will become the person God has created them to be (Eph. 4:24).

- G. The third Christian virtue mentioned by Peter is knowledge “knowledge, and in your knowledge,” (vv. 5-6). Our effort and activity must be combined with information (2 Cor. 6:6, 8:7); effort needs to be directed wisely. Followers of Christ shouldn’t be ignorant about spiritual things or spiritual growth (Phil. 4:8, Jas. 3:17). The life of the mind matters to God and it is a tool He uses for spiritual transformation (Rm. 12:2). The virtue of knowledge is the attainment of practical discernment and wisdom through the experience of living life God’s way while being attached to Jesus (Heb. 5:14, Phil. 1:9, Jn. 7:17). Certainly this knowledge will be connected to the Scriptures, but this knowledge isn’t restricted to a knowledge of the Scriptures either. The knowledge Peter is referring to must be attached to practical know-how; it includes knowledge being lived out.¹⁵ An individual who possess knowledge, will have a personal acquaintance with the intellectual content. Their knowledge is not only known in theory; it is known as a personal reality. It is a knowledge they have lived out and walked through. A deep and rich perspective emerges as the teachings of Jesus are acted on and obeyed.
- H. The next virtue is self-control (v. 6) which means to control your desires instead of having your desires control you (1 Thess. 4:3). Self-control is the quality that maintains mastery of the self by holding oneself in and not allowing immoral desires to overpower them. This ability to say “no” to your desires is something the Holy Spirit must produce in you (Gal. 5:22-24). Once empowered by the Spirit, we put this virtue into practice. When a person is knowledgeable about how spiritual growth works-the destructive nature and power of sin, that which is truly good, etc.-they will be in a good position to develop self-control. Self-control allows a person to resist their desires in the face of temptation. Someone who continues to be infatuated with immoral desires will struggle with self-control; they may not even see the dire need for it. But when a person has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) and has put His teachings into practice (Jn. 7:17) they will be knowledgeable enough to know the importance of self-control. Self-control is the characteristic of holding oneself off from bad desires and impulses (Tit. 2:11-12). An individual who possesses this virtue will have the desire to please God in everything; they know how to live in their own body, with all its desires, in an honorable way (1 Thess. 4:4).
- I. Following self-control comes perseverance (v. 6). The virtue of perseverance is very prominent in early Christianity. Perseverance is endurance in the Christian life by demonstrating a reliable commitment over time even despite obstacles and hardships. When the going gets tough, perseverance presses on. Perseverance remains faithful under pressure no matter what the consequences. Perseverance remains faithful even in the midst of testing. Peter Davids again puts it well, “It is the virtue needed to stand firm in one’s commitment to Jesus over the long haul in the face of persecution (thus its prominence in James and Revelation) or other

¹⁴ 1 Peter 1:14-16

¹⁵ Richard J. Bauckham, [2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 50, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1983), 186.

hardships.”¹⁶ Perseverance doesn’t get distracted with other pursuits, it remains singularly focused on Jesus and His kingdom (Mk. 4:13-20). Perseverance doesn’t buckle under the pressures of their circumstances, it remains steadfast in doing what is right even when there is tremendous pressure to desist. They entrust themselves to God and continue to do what is right (1 Pet. 4:19).

- J. Next, godliness or piety should be developed.¹⁷ Godliness is a virtue of true and proper worship of God. Godliness is a well-directed reverence toward God that influences all of life due to a humility created by an understanding of the weightiness of God’s magnitude and glory. This virtue is proper conduct in relation to God.¹⁸ Followers of Christ seek after godliness with contentment as much as others seek after money (1 Tim. 6:10-11). Godliness is a respectful attitude that creates a life that is pleasing to God. Godliness will look different in different situations but at its heart is a humble and respectful attitude toward God. Obedience is motivated and carried out because of the attitude of godliness. This is the last internal virtue; the remaining virtues focus on our relationships with others.
- K. The first external virtue is brotherly kindness is an affection appropriate for and exchanged between members of a healthy family which is shared with those who are following Jesus (the church). There is a natural affection and commitment toward one another in the context of a long term sustained relationship (1 Pet. 3:8, Heb. 13:1, Rm. 12:10). This philadelphia love is sincere (1 Pet. 1:22). It is this family-like love that caused the early church to have everything in common (Ac. 2:44-45). A deepening of relationships with others in the church is a natural part of the spiritual growth process, the closer a person gets to God the closer they will get with His people (which is the main point of 1 John). A follower of Christ who is comfortable being disconnected from others who are also following Jesus is an oddity indeed. The virtue of brotherly kindness expresses a firm commitment to the relationship while taking a personal responsibility for the other person. Life is participated in together by sharing joys and burdens.
- L. The crowning achievement of the Christian life is God imitating love. While Christianity is not about love, it is the most important virtue in the Christian life. This love can be defined as, “a deliberate desire for the highest good of the one loved, which shows itself in sacrificial action for that person’s good.”¹⁹ This is an agape love that exists as part of the character of the one who is loving. Love is the habit of acting in ways that are in the best interest of others and the heart content that motivates such actions. It should be noted that too many followers of Christ simply try to be more loving because they know of the importance of love. However, heart groundwork must be done prior to the sincere and deep God-like love of the Christian life.

¹⁶ Peter H. Davids, [The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 181.

¹⁷ The term is used in 1:3, 1:6, 1:7, 3:11.

¹⁸ Werner Foerster, “[Σέβομαι, Σεβάζομαι, Σέβασμα, Σεβαστός, Εύσεβής, Εύσέβεια, Εύσεβέω, Άσεβής, Άσέβεια, Άσεβέω, Σεμνός, Σεμνότης.](#)” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 183.

¹⁹ Michael Green, [2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 90.

Other virtues contribute to the type of love God desires to exist in His people, it doesn't happen overnight.

- M. Also significant is understanding love not as an emotion (although in its ideal forms it includes genuine emotion) but as a virtue. The virtue of doing loving things in the best interest of others does not require certain emotions to be present before the actions are done. An excellent description of this virtue and its characteristics is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This virtue is expressed and grounded in Jesus, this is a distinctly Christian virtue, “³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (Jn. 13:34). Jesus defined, modeled, and commanded this virtue. The goal of the Christian life is not to have a bunch of Bible knowledge, although that is important, the goal of the Christian life is to be transformed to be like Jesus and its defining mark is the development of love (1 Tim. 1:5). Christian instruction moves toward life change, including a love flowing from a pure heart. The one who possesses a genuine love will possess the other virtues as well.

III. The Benefits of Following the Blueprint

- A. When these virtues are possessed and increasing, certain results follow. These virtues are never satisfied. The Christian life is a process, there are no shortcuts. God does not touch us and make us instantly holy. Spiritual growth happens over time. A follower of Christ will never stop pursuing these virtues because of contentment, these virtues will be constantly, “increasing” (v. 8). The work of the Christian life is never done (Phil. 3:12). This is the first benefit of pursuing these virtues: exponential spiritual growth.
- B. It is significant to note that the Christian life begins with a knowledge of Jesus (2 Pet. 1:3), is sustained in a growing knowledge of Jesus (2 Pet. 1:8, Phil. 3:10), and will culminate in a full knowledge of Jesus (1 Jn. 3:2, 1 Cor. 13:12). Christianity is from start to finish Jesus-oriented.
- C. The second benefit of these virtues, a person who possesses them will be productive in the spiritual life, “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.” (v. 8). Remember, God is looking for spiritual productivity, called fruitfulness (Mt. 3:10, Lk. 13:6-9, Jn. 15:2-8). God is not pleased with unproductive Christians. To be ineffective is to be wasteful and unproductive as a worker who stands around all day (Mt. 20:1-16). It is a faith that doesn't do anything (Jas. 2:20). To be unfruitful is to fail to produce anything of value or substance as in the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:18-23). The Word of God doesn't fulfill its intended purpose: lifestyle change that produces kingdom results.
- D. The third benefit is a wisdom and depth that others lack, “For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.” (v. 9). If a person is not developing these virtues, they will be spiritually blind and shortsighted. They will only be able to focus on what is right in front of them, what is currently going on in their life, and will miss the big picture and the depth of insight that God desires. Further, those who remain spiritually immature are likely to experience an identity crisis and question their salvation. They will forget who God has made them to be. They will lose sight of the fact that they have been purified from their former sins because they are not progressing, and most likely, still struggling with those same sins (1 Pet. 1:14). They do not see the way they should.

- E. The fourth benefit is a confidence of their position with Jesus, “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you;” (v. 10). The person who has obvious indicators of salvation evident in their life have confidence that they are saved and belong to God. This assurance is made visible through the effort they put forth and their growing virtue. If you want to confidently know you will be gifted heaven when you die, grow and live like you are part of that kingdom now. Christian virtues are the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) which makes visible His dwelling in them as a guarantee of their future inheritance of heaven (Eph. 1:13-14). No immoral person will inherit God’s kingdom (Eph. 5:5, 1 Cor. 6:9, Gal. 5:21), so if a follower of Christ looks very similar to those immoral people because of their continued attachment to sin and a lack of growth in virtue, there will be little confidence of their heavenly trajectory. Peter is telling us that if a person is not developing these virtues in their life, they give no evidence that their turning to Jesus (conversion) is genuine.²⁰ They haven’t provided proof of their faith (1 Pet. 1:7).
- F. The fifth benefit of growing spiritually is salvation security, “for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;” (v. 10). Peter doesn’t mean that a person who is developing these virtues will be sin free (1 Pet. 4:1-2, 8), but they won’t stumble to the point of destruction and missing out on the “eternal kingdom” (1 Pet. 2:8).²¹ A person who is developing these virtues will not walk away from Jesus (called apostasy).²² They may still turn their back on Jesus from time to time, but they are secure with Jesus, they will not leave Him altogether since they are protected by the power of God (1 Pet. 1:5).
- G. The sixth benefit of growth in these virtues is salvation, “for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.” (v. 11). God will generously gift you entrance into His kingdom. You will be saved on a future day. Even with all of the effort put into the production of these virtues, heaven still relies on God’s generosity, not our effort. All our effort in the Christian life still doesn’t merit heaven, but it is the way to secure a grand entrance into heaven. God Himself will throw a heavenly celebration parade for those who develop these virtues.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Our own personal spiritual growth and formation through the development of these virtues should be the highest priority of our lives exhibited by a willingness to expend physical, moral, temporal, and financial effort into the development of our soul. The goal and aim of the Christian life is to move toward spiritual maturity by being filled with the fullness of God through the power of God at work in us (Eph. 3:19-20).
- B. There are tremendous benefits experienced by those who develop these Christian virtues as they move toward spiritual maturity. A person who shapes their soul well and becomes spiritually mature will continually increase their Christ-likeness, they will be spiritually

²⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 303.

²¹ As it is used in Jude 24. Richard J. Bauckham, [2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 50, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1983), 191, Douglas J. Moo, [2 Peter, Jude](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 49.

²² Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 301.

productive, they will have a rare depth of insight and wisdom, they will be confident about their position with God, they will have spiritual security, and they are guaranteed salvation when they die or when Jesus returns. These benefits definitely make our effort worth it!

V. Questions For Further Thought

- A. How long have you been a committed follower of Jesus?
- B. When have you experienced the greatest times of spiritual growth?
- C. What do you think were the key factors in those times of growth?
- D. Describe what a spiritually mature disciple of Jesus looks like in two sentences or less.
- E. Would you say these virtues characterize your life? Why or why not?
- F. How might you develop these virtues in your own life?
- G. Which of these virtues do you find most challenging to develop?
- H. What might help you overcome the challenges hindering you from developing these virtues?