



gracefellowship

Everything
September 1, 2019
Add to your Faith

:: 2 Peter 1:3-5

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith

We are in a new teaching series looking at what it takes to live a godly life. Peter tells us that God has given us everything we need for a godly life. We have been supplied with the necessary resources to move beyond casual Christianity to living fully devoted to God. Today we are going to start looking at the building blocks God has given us in order to live a godly life.

When Peter says God has given us EVERYTHING we need for a godly life he includes these three elements:

Everything we need for a godly life:

- 1. Knowledge of God**
- 2. Great and precious promises**
- 3. The way to participate in the divine nature**

Then beyond these things I love that Peter gives us a list of things that are necessary to live a godly life. Not only does it keep us from getting singularly focused on one thing and being out of balance in our lives, it also adds flavor to life following Jesus!

Illustration: Making brownies

Just dumping brownie mix into a bowl would not make anything you could enjoy eating! Brownie mix is the starting point and most important ingredient, but more needs to be added to it.

When you add oil and water and eggs and reese's pieces chips you get something extraordinary.

God has given us everything we need to be godly and to participate in the divine nature in this world while awaiting our eternal home in God's Kingdom. The ingredients, if you will, for living a godly life begins with faith. If the first thing you need to make brownies is brownie mix, the first thing you need to be godly is faith.

:: Hebrews 11:6

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.

If we are going to please God we must demonstrate faith- believing in Him and seeking after Him. So that causes us to ask the question:

What is faith?

:: Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

One of the early accounts of faith in the Old Testament came in the life of Abraham, whom God promised would inherit a great land, become the father of a great nation, and through him the entire world would be blessed. All of those promises came when Abraham was childless and had not land to his name. But Abraham's response to God's promise is what is key.

:: Genesis 15:6

6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Abraham had not seen God's promises fulfilled yet he believed Him anyway. In fact, that is what all of the Old Testament patriarchs were commended for- they believed God's promise to the end of their lives even though they didn't see the complete fulfillment of it. Look back at Hebrews 11 again.

:: Hebrews 11:13-16

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

In his book, *Doctrine*, Mark Driscoll said this about faith...

“Faith means taking God at His word and trusting our life and eternity to the truth of His revelation.” – Mark Driscoll

Many people who hear the word faith think that means we are just talking about walking in blind hope. But that isn't true. The Greek word for faith is *pistis*; it's a word that represents being loyal or having trust in something or someone. Faith isn't an absence of evidence, it's what results from the evidence God has given us. For the Patriarchs although they didn't see the end result of God's promises, they did see God keep multiple promises to them, resulting in them having faith to look forward and trust God to deliver on His unfulfilled promises. We don't have to see the whole picture to trust that based on God's past actions he will fulfill His future promises. Biblical faith isn't blind, rather, it's confident expectation build on evidence. I saw a video this week that said this better than I could, so I want to invite you to watch this short clip.

Illustration: <https://www.str.org/video/real-faith-isnt-blind>

Following Jesus' death and resurrection He gave visible evidence to the disciples of the fact He conquered death. But one of the disciples, Thomas, wasn't there when Jesus showed up the first time. When the disciples told Thomas about seeing Jesus, he was skeptical. Do you remember what he said?

:: John 20:25b

25 ... But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

When Jesus showed up again a week later, Thomas was in the room this time. Jesus went right to him and invited Thomas to touch his hands and his side. Instead, Thomas just replied, “My Lord and my God.” To which Jesus said, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have believed.” (John 20:29)

The faith we place in Jesus is built on evidence of His continuing life. We aren't blindly following Jesus and hoping in an unconfident way that following Him will result in eternal life, we believe in confident expectation based on the evidence we have seen affirming He will carry out His promises to bring us to be with Him forever.

But this brings us to a question:

Why is faith the building block of a relationship with God?

Why doesn't God bring salvation to those who demonstrate *love*? Or who show *joy*? Or *contentment*? Or *humility*? Or *wisdom*?

Why did God choose faith as the means by which we receive justification?

Wayne Grudem answers this question well in his book, *Systematic Theology*:
“It is apparently because faith is the one attitude of the heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves. When we come to Christ in faith we essentially say, ‘I give up! I will not depend on myself or my own good works any longer. I know that I can never make myself righteous before God. Therefore, Jesus, I trust you and depend on you completely to give me a righteous standing before God.’ In this way, faith is the exact opposite of trusting in ourselves, therefore it is the attitude that perfectly fits salvation that depends not at all on our own merit but entirely on God’s free gift of grace.” - Wayne Grudem (This may need to be two slides)

Peter tells us that the characteristics God gives us to walk in godliness need to be constantly increasing (if you possess these qualities in increasing measure...)
Paul says something similar to encourage the Thessalonians.

:: 2 Thessalonians 1:3

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sister, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.

To close up this morning I want to answer one more question:

How do I grow in my faith?

Let me give you 4 things to think on this week.

1. Renounce sin and deepen my understanding of spiritual matters.

:: 1 Peter 2:2-3

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Taste and see that the Lord is good- Peter describes it like an infant craving milk and says we should crave pure, spiritual milk. But don’t stay in that level of spiritual maturity. The author of Hebrews says we should move on to more meaty substance! He wrote this to the church:

:: **Hebrews 5:11-14 and Hebrews 6:1**

11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.

12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.

14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

1 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity...

If you want to grow in your faith spend time in the Word of God putting down deep roots into God's truth.

2. Fix my eyes on Jesus.

:: Hebrews 12:1-3

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Saving faith is enduring faith. The way to endure to the end is to set your focus on Jesus throughout the remainder of your life.

- Consider the opposition Jesus faced and the faith in God He maintained- even to death, so you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- Endure hardships and learn to trust God's provision for you through them.

- Surrender to Jesus daily.

Jesus is the pioneer (author) and perfecter of our faith. To grow in faith we must know Him intimately and follow His example daily.

3. Be consumed with living for God and His glory.

4. Add the right ingredients to your faith.

goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, and love

Faith is the building block for a godly life. If you have received the gift of God's salvation by His grace you have faith. It may be in small measure, but it's there! Faith grows as we learn to walk with God, grow in our knowledge of God and trust in God to meet our daily needs.

This morning let's close by praying for those who are not able to please God because they do not have a relationship with Jesus that brings the faith

necessary to be godly. You may have a family member, friend, neighbor or co-worker who doesn't know Jesus. Pray for them this morning to accept God's gift of grace and to trust in Jesus as their Savior.

If you don't have a relationship with Jesus, today can be the time you step into this relationship of faith. As we pray, thank God for His grace and ask Jesus to become your Savior. Then through faith, begin the life-long journey of following Jesus!

- Pray

Life Group Questions:

This week we talked about faith and how to grow in our faith in God. Take a few minutes to discuss anything that may have stood out to your group members from the sermon before transitioning to the story.

In our Life Group this week we want to look at two men who demonstrated great faith: Abraham and Isaac.

Read Genesis 22:1-9

Head Questions

- What do we learn about God from this passage?
- What do we learn about faith from Abraham? From Isaac?

Heart Questions

- Why is growing faith important in our journey following Jesus?
- What situations has God allowed you to go through that have tested or grown your faith?

Hands Questions

- * What kind of attitude/mindset do we need before God to have a growing faith?
 - Is there anyone you can share this story with this week?
 - Where do you need more faith in your life currently?

Reread the story of Abraham and Isaac from Genesis 22.

Leave time for prayer and ask if anyone in the group can quote any of the passage from 2 Peter 1:3-11