

Chapter 1, verses 5 through 7. If you've been keeping up, we've got three sermons into the book and a total of seven verses. We're going to get through this book in no time. But these are a particularly full set of verses, this first 11 verses or so. So we're going to take our time and try by God's grace to understand what he is teaching us in them.

As you turn there, 2 Peter, as you know, is written by the apostle Peter, and you perhaps will recall, according to verse one, it is written to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours. Now those to whom this letter is written, those people are facing false teachers.

And the false teachers are saying that there is no coming day of judgment, that Christ is not going to return. And this has catastrophic consequences for how they are to live their lives. Because if Christ is not returning, there is no judgment. And if there is no judgment, there is no accountability. Therefore, the false teachers are saying, live however you want, because there's no coming day of judgment. It leads to lawlessness. And it is against this backdrop that Peter is writing, and he says in our verses, make every effort. This is in contrast to the attitude of live however you want. He is saying, no, make every effort to live for God.

With this in mind, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading and the preaching of his word. Almighty God, bless now, we pray, the reading of your word, as well as the preaching of the word, by the power of your spirit, in Jesus's name, amen. This is the word of God, beginning in verse five of chapter one. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. Blessings reading of God's word. May he bless now the proclamation of it to our lives.

We saw in verses 3 and 4 that the Christian has been granted divine power and promises to live the Christian life. And this word granted is very important. The Christian hasn't earned divine power and divine promises by his performance, so that he could then live the Christian life, but rather this divine power and these divine promises have been granted to him as a sovereign free gift of God so that he might live for God. That word granted was used in verse 3 and in verse 4 of chapter 1. Look at those verses again.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. And then again, verse four, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises. And so in Christ Jesus, the Christian has been granted this divine power and these divine promises. And he has received these great gifts of God for a purpose. And that purpose is what he begins to talk about in verse five. He has granted you these graces to stir you up and spur you on to live the Christian life. That is why he begins in verse five with the words, for this reason.

For the reason that you have received these graces, these gifts, this divine power and these promises, for this very reason then, make every effort. The argument is essentially this, the divine power is yours in Christ, the promises of God are yours in Christ. Therefore, make every effort. Effort.

Live as if you were spiritually wealthy because in Christ you are spiritually wealthy. Live a life of godliness for Christ because in Christ you have been granted the power and promises to live a life of godliness in Christ. So this morning we see this call to effort in the Christian life. And we see two things, the reason for effort in the Christian

life and the fruit of effort in the Christian life. The reason for effort and the fruit of effort in the Christian life. So first, the reason for effort, verse five.

Peter begins here, for this very reason. Of course, when he says for this very reason, he is building on what he's been already saying in verses three and four. The reason that you make every effort to live for God is because God has given you everything you need to live for him. That is the reason you live for him, because he's given you everything you need to live for him.

Oftentimes, even as believers, You might be tempted to think, I don't, I've not been granted or given what it takes to live for Christ. And that's actually not true. He has indeed granted you what you need to live for him. Obviously, it's not true in yourself.

It's very clear Christianity doesn't teach that you have what it takes in yourself, but the believer actually has been given what it takes to live for Christ. He has been granted what is necessary to live for the Lord. You remember in 1 John 4, verse 19, we are told, we love because he first loved us.

And the logic of 1 John 4.19, we love because he first loved us, is very important because it says the reason you love God is simply because he first loved you. Your love for him is a response to his love for you. Well, this is similar to the logic of our passage.

You make every effort to live for God because he has first given you everything you need to live for him. That is why you make the effort. You don't make the effort so that you can get what you need to live for him. You make the effort because you have been given what you need to live for him. You should not try to live your Christian life as if you're in spiritual poverty. You actually are not.

You are blessed in Christ Jesus. You have been given great riches in Christ Jesus. And it is really a work of the sin, the flesh, and the devil that wants to make you think that it's actually holy to live like you don't have any strength in Christ. That's not holiness. Holiness is living with zeal because you've been given all that you need in Christ to live for him. You get to live a life because you've been granted the strength in Christ to live for him.

That's why verse three is so pivotal to, even though I know that's not our sermon text, but it's so pivotal for understanding our verses because it talks about his divine power, which has been granted to us. God has not just saved us for eternity, God has saved us for time. God wants you to live for him today in time, not just in glory at the consummation.

And so it's for all these reasons that Peter says, make every effort. He's building all of this in verses five through seven. All of the exhortations of verse five through seven are being built on the theological and doctrinal foundation of verses three and four. Live a life that is anchored in these doctrines. Live a life that is anchored in these doctrines, he is saying. Live a theology-shaped life. Live a life in which what you believe about God impacts how you behave because of what you believe.

And what does it look like to make every effort? Well, it's comprehensive and it is difficult. It's comprehensive and it's difficult to make every effort. The word every implies that it's comprehensive. This means that in every single area of your life, you are to be making an effort. You fight the temptation that says, I will live for the Lord tomorrow. You fight that temptation. You live for the Lord today.

You fight against the temptation that says, no one will see this sin in my life, so it's not really a big deal. You fight against that. You make every effort against that temptation. You fight against the temptation that says, everyone else is doing this particular sin, so I can do it too. No, you say, I will make every effort. You fight against the temptation that says, my life is about my pleasure and my happiness. That's a lie. You fight against that temptation, you make every effort. You fight against the temptation that I've had a long week, I've worked so hard, I've earned a little self-indulgence. No, you haven't, you fight against that temptation.

Particularly to the young people in the room, there's that temptation that's gonna say to you, I'll live for the Lord when I get older. What happens when you say that now, and then you say it in a year, and then you say it in 10 years, and then you say it in 20 years? All of a sudden, you're inching towards eternity. You live for the Lord today. You make every effort now to live for the Lord.

But it also implies difficulty. It's not just comprehensive, it's also difficult. And that's found in this word effort, isn't it? Now, the Christian has been called to live a life of ease. The Christian has been called to live a life of difficulty. How do you see that in this word effort?

Well, you don't have to tell people to make every effort to do the things they already want to do. Let me give you an example. I was at a pastor's conference this past week and they had a freezer full of free ice cream bars. You didn't have to tell me to make every effort to get one or two ice cream bars each day I was there. Why didn't you have to tell me to make every effort to do that? Because it's exactly what I wanted to do. I didn't need a command.

But the reason he has to say to you, make every effort, is because he's calling you to difficult things, which in your flesh you are not going to want to make an effort to do. As he will go on, he will list things like exercising faith and virtue, godly knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love. Those are things which you need commanding to do because if you don't get a command to do it, you will not desire, you do not desire to do it and you won't desire to do it. And so he knows this. He says, it's going to be difficult. You need to make every effort. It's going to be hard. But again, that's why verses three and four are so important to understanding verses five through seven.

Because he's not telling you to make every effort in yourself. He is saying make every effort because God has given you all you need to make every effort. He has given you that divine power. He has given you the promises of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, out of that reality, you make every effort to live for God. And think about it.

Hasn't God made every effort for you? Hasn't God made every effort to redeem you, to draw you out of darkness into his marvelous light, to extinguish his wrath upon his very own son, the Lord Jesus Christ? You see, if God did

not make every effort to make you his own, You could not begin to make every effort to live for him, but since he has made every effort to make you his own, shouldn't you want to make every effort to live for him? Sure, you fall short and you fall short, but that ought to be the desire, the heartbeat of your life as a Christian. I want to make every effort to live for him. I desire that because he's made every effort for me in Christ Jesus. But secondly, having seen the reason for effort in the Christian life, let us consider the fruit of effort in the Christian life.

And this is where we get these traits listed in verse five. Your faith with virtue and your virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love. Now some of you may remember or know the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians chapter 5. There we read the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And it's often pointed out when people are preaching or teaching through Galatians 5 that those are fruit of the Spirit. They are Holy Spirit-produced fruit. You can't produce these fruit apart from the Holy Spirit working in you.

And when we come to our passage, we actually see a similar sort of logic. Because this is all, again, building on what he's already said. You exercise your faith. with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. Why? Again, because his divine power has been granted to you so that you have all that is necessary for life and godliness.

Verse three, it's all building out of that divine It's a power. It's a fruit of the spirit. The evidence of divine power at work in you, beloved, is not that you can perform miracles. If that's the evidence of divine power and you claim you have it, I suggest you do not. The evidence of divine power at work in you is that you live a godly life.

That's supernatural. You know, it's interesting. If you look at Deuteronomy 13, and I wasn't planning on saying this at all, You know, bear with me. But if you look at Deuteronomy 13, it's interesting. It talks about how you can know that somebody is a false prophet. Now, some of you might be thinking of Deuteronomy 18 right now, where it says you test them by seeing if what they say is going to come true.

But is that the only test of true prophecy? What if a prophet says something that is true and it happens? Could that not happen? Is that not theoretically possible? Somebody comes in here and they say, you know, X is going to happen next week, and then it happens, well, is that a true prophet?

Well, Deuteronomy 18 isn't the only place that talks about what to look for in a false prophet. Deuteronomy 13 tells you, even if what they tell you comes true, if they ignore the revealed will of God, the word of God, if they break the law of God, they're a liar. It doesn't even matter if it comes true if they don't proclaim the truth about who God is. A godly life, in other words, is supernatural. That's not something that just anybody gets to do.

It's something that God has to work in you. Let's take a moment to consider these eight traits of the Christian life that he lists. Faith. Faith is foundational. You cannot live for Christ if you do not believe in Christ. And it's not just a mere belief in the sense of you as sent that he is God. It's a belief that he is your God, that he is your Redeemer, that he has shed his blood for your sins. It's a personal trust in Christ alone for your salvation. And flowing out of

this faith comes the other seven virtues or traits that are listed. So faith is this foundational gift of God from which the other gifts are exercised.

He goes on to mention virtue. Virtue is not the first time we've seen this word in our books. It's actually used back in verse three, but there it was translated in verse three as excellence. We read that it's through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. That's our word virtue. This word excellence is getting at the idea of moral beauty, moral loveliness. What we're seeing then is this very helpful pattern.

In verse three, we learn that you are called by Jesus to his own glory and excellence. You are called by Jesus to bask in his divine glory and his beautiful virtues, to marvel at who he is. And then, He says now, using the same word, though translated perhaps differently in your Bibles, same word in the original, he says, you've been called to him, now look like him. The first one is an indicative. This is the one to whom you have been called. Marvel in who he is. And the second one is an imperative. Now start to look like Jesus. Resemble him in your moral excellence.

Then he goes on and says knowledge here. Now, of course, we should remember that knowledge is an important theme in this book. So it's virtue and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge is an important theme. Knowledge throughout this book is always, I believe it's always, at least the vast majority of the time, it is more than just any head knowledge, right? It always carries this relational aspect to it, at least, again, the vast majority of the times. It's like you see that in verse two, verse three, verse eight, All three of those recent times in this area, right around here, are always carrying that idea of relational knowledge. It's deep, it's personal.

And this knowledge of God, not just of random things, is so important because how are you going to live for God if you don't know who God is and what he asks of you? You cannot resemble these virtues or these moral excellencies if you do not know who he is or what he demands of you. So knowledge is critical to holiness.

Then he goes on, self-control. This word gets at an idea of moderation with your pleasures. Moderation in relationship to your pleasures. Someone suggested that self-control here carries with it the idea of being spirit controlled because it's the last of the nine fruits of the spirit, self-control. It's something the spirit works in you.

And this looks like not doing whatever you want all the time. not doing whatever impulses come to your heart. Why shouldn't you do whatever impulses come to your heart? Because the scriptures tell us that our heart is deceitful and wicked above all things and so we shouldn't just give in to all of our impulses. Now self-control is a virtue that is largely lost in Christian communities. Saying no to yourself and not indulging in something that you desire is Not something that, at least in Western Christianity, we are very accustomed to actually practicing.

If you want it, you get it. You just do whatever you want to do. And we have to repent of that. We have to acknowledge that it's not okay to just give in wholesale to whatever my heart desires. Now, that doesn't mean when we're at the next fellowship supper tonight, go, well, I heard that sermon today, I was going to get a piece of chocolate cake, but not anymore.

But what it does mean is sometimes you might do that. It does mean sometimes you might ask yourself these questions. Should I do this? Sometimes we have to ask ourselves that question. Is it a wise use of my time to scroll on my phone right now? Is it a good use of my time to watch a fifth episode of this thing that I probably shouldn't have watched the first three episodes of, right? We have to really be willing to ask ourselves hard questions.

Self-control is spirit produced. It's not just saying buckle up and do it. It's saying, ask yourself, is this honoring to God? And if the answer is no, then ask him to give you restraint or to at least moderate the pleasures which you have. Pleasure is not the problem. It's the abuse of it that is the problem. It's making it an idol. But then he goes on and mentions steadfastness. So self-control is moderation in relation to our pleasures.

Steadfastness is patience under pressure. It's when you're being hit again and again and again with temptation and you endure. When you're wanting to just throw down the towel and you press on, that steadfastness, it's when you fall and you do sin and you do break God's law, you repent and you keep going.

The Lord Jesus Christ says in Mark 13, 13, the one who endures to the end will be saved. What does it mean to endure to the end? Does it mean that you are perfect to the end? No, it doesn't mean that you do not sin. To endure to the end means that when you do sin, you repent and you press on. What it means not to endure means when you sin, you don't repent and you live in it. You know, Thomas Watson somewhere said, it isn't falling into water that drowns, it's lying in it. And then he said, it isn't falling into sin that damns, it's lying in it without repentance.

That's the idea of steadfastness. It's endurance. It's pressing on. It's I did it again, but I hate it and I want to fight it. That's endurance. That's steadfastness. And then godliness here. Godliness might be defined as reverence and love towards God in all of life.

Reverence and love toward God for all of life. Now the whole of our life is to be lived for the glory of God. Godliness concerns both what we believe about God and how we behave because of what we believe about God. The whole of the Christian life is to be one that is God-centered, God-entranced. Now how can you live a God-centered life? How can you live a God-centered and God-entranced life?

Well, This word godliness has been used before. Verse three, his divine power is granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. He gives you all you need for godliness according to verse three. Then in verse six, he calls you to godliness. He grants that which he commands. He grants you power to live a godly life in verse 3, and having granted you that, he then commands you to exercise that. He gives the very thing he commands you to strive for.

And then he moves on to brotherly affection. The godly person The God-centered person doesn't use that as an excuse not to love his brothers. The godly person doesn't say, I am just so busy with the things of God, I don't have room for brotherly affection. I don't have room in my life for love for the brethren. That's an excuse for neglecting God's law. That's not godliness. The godly person does still exercise and must exercise brotherly affection towards his brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now what's interesting about this word, brotherly affection, it's that word Philadelphia, right? The city of brotherly love, same word, brotherly love, Philadelphia, brotherly affection. What's interesting is this word was not used outside of familial contexts in the ancient Greek language. You didn't use Philadelphia to describe your relationship with anyone other than your literal kin, your physical, biological kin. Those are the ones to whom you had Philadelphia, brotherly affection. And then the New Testament comes along and it starts using Philadelphia to describe your relationship with people who are not your biological kin, but they are your brothers and sisters in Christ.

That is how deep and profound is your union with your brothers and sisters in Christ, that this word takes on an expanded use in the New Testament. And of course, it can be used that way for us because we are brothers and sisters, we are family, we have an elder brother, his name is Jesus, we have a father, our heavenly father, we have the same spirit, the Holy Spirit, and so we are to exercise brotherly affection.

Now in what ways does brotherly affection differ or brotherly love differ from simply love? Because he goes on to say brotherly affection and then he literally says with love. So he sees them as being similar perhaps but not identical. He was brotherly affection and then love. So what are some of the perhaps differences between brotherly love and just love? Well, thinking about brotherly love, you might think of it as being especially unifying and loyal, unifying and loyal.

Brotherly love is unifying because it remembers even amidst disagreements that I'm disagreeing with someone who is in my family. This is a family disagreement. We have a unity that is deep and real. We have the same father, the same elder brother, the same Holy Spirit. We are clothed in the same righteousness. Me and this person with whom I'm having this disagreement, we're still united in Christ.

Also, brotherly love is especially loyal because it is the love that is only found within a family. And love within a family is generally very loyal. You will go above and beyond to help your kin because you have that familial unity. Even if you don't always like them, you will be loyal to them at some measure, perhaps, because they have that kinship to you.

And so too should ours be in Christ. And then this last word, just love, agape, love, here in verse seven. And this is the love that goes beyond just brotherly love. It is a wider love. It is the love that you have not just towards your brothers and sisters in Christ, but even to those who are outside of Christ. It is sacrificial love and commitment. Jesus Christ speaks of this love very often in John 13 through 17. There he's preparing to die and he's giving his upper room discourse and he uses this word love and other words for love very often in John 13 through 17. He says, greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. He says, if you want to see what love is, see what I have done. I lay down my life. I give it up. I take on God's wrath for my friends.

And you think that's profound love. I could never love like that. Well, Jesus says, just as I have loved you, you also love one another. He says, I love this way. I am giving myself up. And then he says, and you know how you're supposed to love? Exactly the way I've loved you. How are you supposed to love one another? You are supposed to love one another the way that Christ has loved you. He died for you. How do you think?

Well, that's impossible. There's no way I can even begin to resemble that love. And there's an element of truth in that statement. There is an element of impossibility to it. None of us will ever attain to that perfection of the love of Christ for us.

But at the same time, you know, there's another word that Jesus uses a lot in John 13 through 17. He uses it a lot, but another word he uses, spirit. He tells them that the spirit is coming and he will be their helper. And the conclusion ought to be this, by the power of that spirit that he is sending, We can love one another at some level in some way that really does resemble the love of Christ for us. I dare not say perfectly, but really and truly you can love one another in that way because of the spirit. And that's the same logic that Peter is exercising here, always going back to verse three, his divine power has granted to us. all things that pertain to life and godliness.

By that divine power, you can love in this sort of way. Now you cannot do it apart from the spirit. You do not naturally want to die to yourself. You do not naturally want to love people in this way. You naturally want to do whatever you want to do. You naturally want to sin. You naturally want to be selfish. You naturally only want to love people insofar as you get something from them in return. But this sort of love is the self-sacrificial sort of love you have received in Christ.

And by the Spirit, he says, go and do likewise. So today we have looked at the reason for effort in the Christian life and the fruit of effort in the Christian life. If you are a Christian here this morning, you must seek these sorts of fruit in your life. But the encouragement for you to do it again is this. The spirit of God is at work in you so that you really can begin to see these fruit at work in your life. You can grow in virtue. You can grow in self-control. You can grow in knowledge. You can grow in steadfastness. You can grow in godliness. You can grow in brotherly affection and love. And you do all of this knowing that God is at work in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure.

But what if you're not a Christian here this morning? Should you try to produce these fruit, you will fail and you will be miserable because these fruit cannot be produced apart from the Holy Spirit. What you need to do is to repent because nothing in your life has resembled these fruit and you need to begin to produce by the Spirit the fruit that are in keeping with repentance.

That is the calling of scripture. Let us pray. Dearly father, we do ask that in all of our lives you would increase in us true zeal for these fruit because of the spirit that is at work within us. We are empowered by this divine power of verse three and we have set before us all of these glorious promises of scripture as they are mentioned in verse four. Therefore, for these reasons, we ask that we would be producing these fruit, that we would make every effort. Oh Lord, the heart of man is prone to laziness. The heart of man is prone to make excuses and not want to be challenged.

And Lord God, we want to want to love these fruit and see these fruit in our lives. And we ask that you would stir us up and spur us on to this very thing, that we would grow in these fruit, and that every point we would say, not I, but the power of God at work in me. Pray this all in Jesus's name, amen.