

## Lists of Christian Virtues

2 Peter 1:5-7	Romans 5:3-5	James 1:3-4	Gal. 5:22-23
Faith	Suffering	Testing (of faith)	Love
Virtue	Perseverance	Perseverance	Joy
Knowledge	Character	Maturity	Peace
Self-control	Hope	Complete	Patience
Steadfastness	Love	Not lacking anything	Kindness
Godliness		Love	Goodness
Brotherly kindness			Faithfulness
Love			Gentleness
			Self-control

### Add to Your Faith

1. We have complete \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

2. We need to keep \_\_\_\_\_ on the Blind \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Take one \_\_\_\_\_ at a time.



#### 2 Peter 1:1-15

*Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:*

*<sup>2</sup>May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

*<sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*

**a faith of equal standing with ours:** Peter identifies his audience as fellow believers who have a faith of "equal standing with ours".

This term which could be translated: "who have received a faith as precious as ours", or "equally honorable" is found only here in the NT. Whose faith is this faith equal to? Peter's point is to put them on the same level as he is with respect to faith because the righteousness they all have comes from Jesus.

**His divine power has granted to all things:**

The focus of this section is on what God has given us: "all things that pertain to life and godliness". Peter is talking about a godly living and for him there is no excuse for not living a godly life, for believers have already received everything that is necessary to do so. **granted to us his precious and very great promises:** Through these unspecified promises followers of Jesus gain two benefits, the first positive ("partakers of the divine nature") and the second negative ("escape the corruption in the world caused because of sinful desires").

**become partakers of the divine nature:**

How? When believers share some characteristic quality of God, making us more like the divine world than like the world of

human beings. The second effect of being granted "all things" by God is an escape from "the corruption that is in the world." "Sinful desire" is at the root of the moral corruption in the world and because of this the world is subject to decay.

**make every effort to supplement your faith:** Because of what has been done for believers (our escape from corruption, v.4) is being done for them (participation in the divine nature) and will be done for them (promises that are yet to be fulfilled, see 1:11), we are to grow inwardly - to make "every effort to supplement". Peter now uses a literary device called 'sorites', in which each virtue leads to the next one in a stair-step structure. Peter's audience would have been familiar with this style. Virtue lists and vice lists (see chart), were common devices in Graeco-Roman rhetoric. Big point here: God does not infuse virtue into us intravenously; we need to make intentional plans, focus ourselves and "make every effort". In this passage, "The gifts of God are followed by our diligence, our diligence is followed by the entrance into the kingdom.(v.11)"

**your faith with virtue:** "Virtue or Goodness," refers to moral excellence (as in 1:3); when a Believer decides, because of the Grace they have received, to live a life of integrity and excellence. It's a readiness to do Godly things not do ungodly. It corresponds to the virtue of God, v. 4, which energetically repels all evil.

**virtue with knowledge:** The idea of knowing about God is preceded by the principle of living a life of integrity ("Virtue or moral excellence"), making the point that the disciplines of a faithful life lead to further understanding of God.

"Knowledge" then informs our perception of what is useful or harmful, godly and ungodly, of what is to be done and to be avoided. It preserves us from indiscreet zeal and exaggerations. Knowledge is "the wisdom and discernment which the Christian needs for a virtuous life and which is progressively acquired."

**and knowledge with self-control:** Self-government that brings abstinence from the lust of the world. "It abstains from the evil it knows to identify, and in Christian liberty steadily bridles the desires and lusts of the eyes, flesh and boastful heart.

**and self-control with steadfastness:** The practice of self-bridling (self-control) leads to inner "steadfastness", endurance (in battle), temperance or perseverance. In the Christian world the term appears thirty-two times in the NT, for example, in Pauline virtue lists (Rom 5:3-4; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:10; Titus 2:2), James (Jas 1:3, 12; 5:11). It indicates endurance, but in a spiritual battle rather than in a physical battle or an athletic contest. 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 hardships. In 2 Peter the need is to stand firm in their commitment in the face of the enticements of the teachers whom

<sup>5</sup> For this very reason,  
make every effort  
to supplement your  
faith with **virtue**, and  
virtue with **knowledge**,  
<sup>6</sup> and knowledge  
with **self-control**,  
and self-control  
with **steadfastness**,  
and steadfastness  
with **godliness**,  
<sup>7</sup> and godliness with  
**brotherly affection**,  
and brotherly affection  
with **love**.

<sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. <sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. <sup>13</sup> I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, <sup>14</sup> since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Peter opposes.

**and steadfastness with godliness:** Adding godliness (piety) means we consider God in control of our whole life, and hold him in such supreme honor, that we seek His approval in our actions and reactions. **and godliness with brotherly affection:** The first of the clearly horizontally focused virtues is "brotherly affection or kindness", which would be better translated as "familial affection." This virtue would also not have sounded strange in the Greco-Roman world. The term indicated acts of affection and generosity among physical kin. What is unique in Christianity is that this familial love was extended to the whole church family; that is, all believers were treated as if they were physical kin - brothers and sisters.

**and brotherly affection with love:** The final item in our list, "love" (agapē), flows naturally from "kinship/familial affection." In 1 Corinthians 13 it is presented as the chief virtue, even greater than faith (which heads our list here). The important point to keep in mind is that love is a virtue, not an emotion. Christians are not being encouraged to feel warmly about each other or even to like one another; they are instructed to act lovingly toward one another. Thus Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 speaks about what love does, how it acts, not how it feels.

**keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful:**

Having climaxed his virtue list in a distinctly Christian way with love, Peter goes on to describe the Christian life as a process. Thus he says, "If you possess these qualities in increasing measure" you will get a result.

**whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind:** Or more colloquially, "so short-sighted that they cannot see" (GNB).

**practice these qualities you will never fail.:** Virtue will keep one from the disaster of stumbling and never arriving at the eschatological home.

**to stir you up by way of reminder:** Thanks Peter, we need the reminder especially since you think it's one of your last communications to us.

Resources quoted, used and adapted for these notes and the sermon:

Davids, P. H. (2006). *The letters of 2 Peter and Jude*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. Barry, J. D., Mangum, ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. Lange, J. P., Schaff, (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 2 Peter*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.