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Always Moving Upward

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When you read 2 Peter 1:5-7 it is very easy to picture a set of stairs. Stairs you climb to help you increase your faith. With each step your faith is growing stronger and your direction in life is moving closer to God.

The thing about these stairs however is that you do not conquer one step before you can reach the next one. In other words you couldn't move on to knowledge until you master virtue. For that reason you are always growing in each addition to your faith while moving towards heaven.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God..." Hebrews 11:6 You must add to faith however. What you are adding is godly character to your solid belief in God. Faith can be observed (James 2:18). Jesus observed "little faith" in Peter (Matthew 14:31) while observing "great faith" in the centurion (Luke 7:9). And the "just shall live by faith" because "our faith" "is the victory that overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4). So upon our faith we build our character to please the Lord.

Virtue is living life in a most excellent way. To be virtuous is to be morally upright. The Greek word also conveys courage and boldness.

Knowledge is always needed to improve one's self but certainly not knowledge in worldly things but in heavenly. It is knowledge that we learn from the Word of God. "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, For I believe Your commandments. Psalms 119:66"

What Christian doesn't need to learn self-control. How do you navigate life in a godly manner if you can't control your tongue, your temper, your thoughts? I can't so I must learn how to control myself. The reason we must learn how to rule over our being is because we will give an account of our words, thoughts and actions. This is why Felix was afraid at the preaching of Paul Acts 24:25) One day he would be held accountable for his actions.

Perseverance is a must with all of the ebb and flows of life. There are going to be rough days during life and a Christian will have to learn how to stay the course. "Tribulations produce perseverance and perseverance character" (Romans 5:3). Keep climbing upward while remaining oh so humble which is piety or...

Godliness is taking each step with God at the forefront of my life. Peter earlier in the text says that God has given us "all thing that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His glory and virtue." God is the source of all that is good and we must always honor Him with every act of our being.

What good is any of this if we hate our brother. (1 John 3:15) Loving fellow Christians and showing them kindness as kin has to be added to our faith. If you want to get an idea of what brothers and sisters in Christ mean to one another, read Paul's closing remarks to the church at Rome (Romans 16) One cannot underestimate the value and blessings of their spiritual family.

Faith without love is just a bunch of noise (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). "Love is the bond of perfection" (Colossians 3:14) Is one truly a disciple of Christ if they do not love? Without it lives fall apart; congregations divide; families are destroyed. This is why the greatest of faith, hope and love is LOVE (1 Corinthians 13:13).

All of these words will keep you motivated and climbing. If I can add these to my faith, will grow, I will bear fruit, much fruit to the glory of God. If I lack these things I am “shortsighted, even to blindness,” I have “forgotten” that Jesus Christ paid the price for my sins and my sins were washed away. (2 Peter 1:9)

Keep climbing upward in your faith. The end of our faith is “the salvation of your soul” (1 Peter 1:9).

For What Are You Working?

Philip Mullins

When your life is over, what do you hope to have accomplished?

Droves of people believe that by becoming wealthy that they accomplish much. Yet, have you considered what is at the end of the road for a wealthy person? Ecclesiastes 2:18 says, “Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me.” Pile up all the cash and things that you can, but in the end you will leave it all behind.

For some, leaving something for posterity is exactly the thing for which they are working. Yet, speaking of the one who inherits wealth, Ecclesiastes 2:19 states, “And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled...” Leave a fortune behind and the odds are is that it will be ruined in a few years.

Then there is a more noble approach. Instead of possessions that will rust, what about leaving behind ideas and knowledge that people will treasure for decades to come? Again, Ecclesiastes 2:16 tells us, “For there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever, since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come. And how does a wise man die? As the fool!” Many people have died believing their words or works would live on. Yet, very few people in history are remembered and what few who are remembered are often misrepresented or misunderstood.

The bottom line is that you cannot count on accomplishing anything in this world which will really last. Yet, there is something that will last for which we can work and hope. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19-20). There is something permanent for which we can all labor. It is eternal life with God in heaven for eternity. Are you looking for something that will really last? Then look to Christ, He offers everlasting life.

Does it sound too good to be true? For certain it sounds too good not to investigate to see whether it is true or not. Open the Bible and see for yourself.