

Christ's All-Sufficient Sanctification

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[0 : 00] Well, friends, it's on my heart to bring you this final installment of what I've been wanting to give to you. This was going to be another Wednesday night study, and it was the final one to wrap everything up.

And I want so much to bring this message to you because it's an encouragement to you in the greater glory of God in your sanctification. The greater glory of God in his all sufficient sanctification. And boy, what I was texting with Terry Ragg, Pastor Terry Ragg in Florida this morning. He just out of the blue sent me a text to encourage me in my preaching this morning.

And I thanked him and told him what I was preaching. And I told him, boy, Terry, that I need this message this week myself. God's greater glory in sanctifying us through trials. You know, what a coincidence. The Lord is so good in this. So this is the title that I'll work from. And we're alive now, right?

[1 : 02] We're all good. Christ's All Sufficient Sanctification. Or I could have titled it very easily what I've said, God's greater glory in our sanctification.

In the second Peter, if you'll turn there with me. Peter is going to end his letter. If you'll turn to 2 Peter 3.

And look at that final verse. He says, after referring to them as the beloved of God in verse 17. And just encouraging them to remain faithful and to stand against unprincipled men who would try to lead them astray.

He says, instead of that, instead of following your own flesh, instead of following the fads of the day, as it were. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[2 : 01] So that is Peter's paramount concern here. Is that these precious souls, these beloved of Christ Jesus, would grow in Him.

They would grow in His power, His grace. That is His undeserved favor. And that they would grow in their knowledge of His love for them. His wisdom for their life.

They need to understand that Jesus desires their growth more than they do. Now think about that with me. Jesus desires your spiritual growth more than you do.

Now that's a good thing. And Jesus never gets discouraged in that. Jesus never gets distracted in that. And Jesus never gets deceived in that.

Very much unlike us. And so Jesus is the anchor, isn't He? In our growth, Jesus is the anchor. So this is why you hear Pastor Greg and I tell you constantly, make it about Jesus.

[3 : 05] Make what about Jesus? Whatever. Everything she said. Make it about Jesus. And we're trying to model for you and also instruct you in our pastoral ministry what making it about Jesus looks like in everything.

It's quite the challenge, isn't it? I think it's a good thing that Peter concludes his second and final letter to these wonderful people in the way that he does.

And now, if you go back to 2 Peter 1, we're going to see that he instructs them in a very similar way in the front of the letter.

So he bookends this letter with this wonderful encouragement and instruction about growing in this process of sanctification or holiness or becoming like Jesus in their life with the Lord.

The passage that I want you to focus on will be 2 Peter 1, 5 through 8. However, we're going to start in chapter 1, verse 1 and see what that's all about.

[4 : 14] Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith, received a faith, that's salvation, y'all. That's another way of talking about our salvation.

Of the same kind as ours. We've all received this faith that leads to salvation by the gift of the Lord. And this comes by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Remember, salvation is only in Him. He says, grace and peace, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us, has favored us with everything pertaining to both life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him.

There's that knowledge of God again. Who called you, called me, called us, by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by evil desires or lusts.

[5 : 38] Now, this is where our passage picks up for this morning. Now, for this very reason also, applying all diligence, that is, applying all diligence in your own personal walk with Jesus, in your faith supply these things as well.

Moral excellence, in your moral excellence knowledge, in your knowledge self-control, in your self-control perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness.

And then in your godliness, verse 7, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, notice how He ends, love. 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.

Now, you can see several times that He's mentioned this true knowledge of the Lord. So, this is salvation knowledge. This is the wisdom of God in your salvation.

It's the kind of wisdom that you can tap into, that you can make use of in your Christian life, because you have come to know Christ as your Savior and your Lord.

[6 : 55] This is not the wisdom of the world. This isn't the wisdom of psychology. This isn't the wisdom of the latest fad coming down the pike. This is a wisdom that is grounded in who Jesus Himself is as He lives in you.

And so, you're tapping that wisdom in your relationship with Jesus. It's a both-and proposition. You get Jesus, you get His wisdom. This is a true knowledge that leads you in living for the greater glory of God as you pursue a life of holiness in the Lord.

Now, if I ask for a show of hands at this point, how many of you find it difficult in your walk with the Lord not to sin? I hope every hand would go up in this room.

So, whenever we bring these messages that speak to the issue of making the main thing the main thing, Jesus, it should resonate with every one of our hearts. And so, it is that we want to talk more about this all-sufficient sanctification that Jesus provides for us as our Lord and Savior.

So, God revealed to Peter that He is about to be executed. You see this in chapter 1, verse 14.

Knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

[8 : 23] That's just a fancy way of saying, I'm about to die. And Jesus has made that clear to me, that my life in ministry here on this planet is coming to an end.

His pastoral heart then reaches out to His readers and He expresses these concerns for their continuing growth and becoming more like the Lord. And you see that in verse 15.

And I will also be diligent. See, that's His heart. I want to diligently express to you these things because I know that after my departure, you're going to need to call them to mind and camp out on them.

You know, I quickly thought to myself in the moment that I was studying this and dealing with this, I thought, alright Jeff, if you knew, if you had the occasion where you were laying in a hospital bed or something, and you knew that you were about to take your final breaths, you knew that was happening, I was cognizant enough to know that, and I thought of you, because I would be thinking a lot about my wife, obviously, and what I would say to her, assuming she was there, but I know exactly what I would say to her to tell you.

I know exactly, I didn't even hesitate. And I would say this, tell them, make it about Jesus. They will know what I mean.

[9 : 52] Because Pastor Greg and I say this so often in so many different ways, that's what I would tell you. Don't miss the point of being saved. You were saved to make it about Jesus, not about you.

Because I know the more you make it about you, the more miserable you're going to be, because you make a terrible God. And so do I. And so do I. And so this is what Peter is telling them.

He's telling them to make it about Jesus. Grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we have a problem. And I've alluded to it, we have a problem in this confronting of sin

and self.

that confronts us in the growth process. And it can be summed up in a verse from Proverbs. I'll put it up here just to make it more simple for us. It's Proverbs 19.27.

Here is the problem confronting us in this pursuit of holiness or Christ-likeness. Cease listening, my son, to discipline, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

[11:01] Now remember what Peter is emphasizing in this passage is what? The knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ that is a salvation knowledge. It's a saving knowledge. It's the knowledge that leads us in a wise life so that we are living to make Jesus the main thing.

And so this verse speaks to that very reality. You cease listening, my son, to the discipline of the Lord and you will stray from the words of knowledge. That is the wisdom of God.

You'll stray from God's wisdom. Now we cannot grow in the Lord if we don't listen to and obey the Lord. You see this in your raising your kids.

You see this in life as an employee around other workers. People who don't listen to the boss and obey the boss make problems for everybody. Kids who don't obey their parents make problems for the family.

Bratty Christians who don't listen to Jesus make problems for themselves and those around them.

We cannot grow in the Lord if we don't listen to and obey the Lord.

[12:06] So straying, this concept of straying is the result of not listening to the wisdom of God in your life. You want what you want when you want it.

That is the opposite of listening to and obeying God's wisdom. Now straying from God's wisdom is a very dangerous proposition for you and for me.

But it's a very real and constant threat to Christians as well. To Christians. So that no Christian is immune to straying or drifting from the wisdom of God's truth.

In fact, pastor and professor John Street who was part of the program that I studied under out at the Masters University. He's now at the Masters Seminary working there.

He wrote this. There is a natural drift to the human heart and it is a sinful drift away from the truth.

[13:05] Now that should be alarming to us and it should be a great red flag warning. He's right. Now let me show you some scripture that deals with this along two parallel lines.

It's in Hebrews. So you turn back to the book of Hebrews. Hebrews. That's before 1 and 2 Peter. Before James. Hebrews chapter 2.

We're talking about this natural drift or this sinful drift. That's the way it's been referred to. That is the idea of what it means for you not to listen to the Lord and to stray from the words of knowledge. Hebrews 2 verse 1. For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what? What we have heard.

That is the truth of God. Why? So that we do not drift away from it. My Bible says. That's my translation. For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we've heard in the way of God's truth and salvation and wisdom the teaching of the word of God so that we do not drift away from it.

[14:27] Now this is being said to believers. This is instruction for believers. Now does this tell you by inference that it's possible for you as a Christian to drift away from the truth?

Now the Bible is telling you up front this is a problem and you're going to face it and you've already experienced it in your life. Now I want to give you the other side of how we understand this particular issue.

It's in chapter 3 and we'll begin in verse 12. Take care brethren or brothers and sisters that there not be in any one of you an evil unbelieving heart.

Now catch that part of the verse an evil unbelieving heart that does what? What does an evil unbelieving heart do with regard to what he's talking about?

It falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day as long as it is still called today so that what purpose do we do that?

[15:39] None of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end that is the end of your life while it is said today today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me for who provoked him when they had heard indeed did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses and with whom he was angry for forty years was it not with those who sinned whose bodies fell in the wilderness and to whom he did swear that they would not enter his rest but to

those who were disobedient so we see that they were not able to enter because of what?

What is it? Unbelief now that's why I read down to that final verse the issue here then is an evil heart and unbelief they go together right?

so who are we talking about in this passage? Believers or unbelievers? what is it? Unbelievers right? so now you have two different passages speaking to a similar phenomenon that affects both believers and unbelievers unbelievers by their very nature are apart from God and so he's basically telling believers here don't be deceived and start living like an unbeliever again you can do that you can be a believer and be deceived by sin and for a season or a situation be pulled into activities or a thought life that is more indicative of what you were before you were saved than being saved that can happen that's the drift and so what does he tell us to do to combat that but encourage one another day after day see you have a ministry folks you have a ministry you don't have to have the title pastor to do what is being said here this is a command on you to say across the aisle parallel side by side you have a ministry say what do you do to serve the church what function do you play what part do you play at

Grace Church Williamsburg and you may have a particular thing Michaela can say well I play the keyboard some of these guys can say well I help with the sound system some of you can say well I help clean the church some of you deacons can say well part of my ministry is going out ministering to our widows and making sure that members in our congregation's practical needs are met and so we inform the pastors about situations like that so that we can you can say a number of different things that I know you're involved in but here's something that all of us are called to in our ministry in this local fellowship you are supposed to serve each other by encouraging each other day to day to walk with Christ lest you stray lest you allow yourself to become distracted and you stray from the truth and what straying from the truth leaves you is it leaves you not listening to wisdom so when you don't listen to God's wisdom what's the alternative listening to Satan let's add another S self self and Satan right that's those are your options they're the same options that I face in my life and so now this is the reality of what Peter is presenting to us as we think about the greater glory of God in our sanctification we tend to halt the process when we get into suffering or trial and focus on the problem and work the problem and we want the thing to change and get out but what we need to understand is the attack that's coming at us has a greater priority a greater goal that is to discredit the work of God in our life during that trial isn't this exactly what Satan wanted to do with Job didn't he tell the Lord you let me get at him and I'll cause him to turn and what God did with Job was he told Satan he taught Satan and showed Satan my grace is greater than sin when I save somebody

[20 : 16] I keep them saved they may struggle they may whine they may complain they may turn away in a season and follow what is not wise but in the end they will will submit to me and I will be glorified in their life now that should make us hopeful so that I can even say in my season of trial right now this season has a purpose in the Lord and as I told my wife with tears this morning I said Suzanne this will pass this will pass it's not going to pass as quickly as we want it to but it will pass right and this is the way the Lord works and so he's ending his letter and he's beginning his letter with these brackets of encouragement about what it means to fight against this terrible drift we need to heed this warning from Proverbs 19:27 if you don't listen to God's wisdom you will stray from God's truth and leave you with one alternative you will listen to lies whether those lies are being told to you by yourself your own wicked heart or the devil himself now let me ask you this question as we deal with this that I let me see if I what kind of listening does

Proverbs refer to what kind of listening because you know unbelievers can read the Bible or unbelievers could hear this message that I'm preaching listening involves hearing and then responding in conformity with what you hear this is what I would ask my children I would get down and I would say are you listening to me and they would look at me and I'd be like no you're not your heart's not listening to daddy right now you're still standing up on the inside kind of thing so this is a response to the Lord so you need to hear heed and obey so here's how we can capture that you are hearing to obey you are hearing in order to obey that's how we will characterize this discipline here in this particular verse that we're talking about from

Proverbs particularly discipline is the Hebrew word musar and it's used as a warning for correction instruction reprove discipline the sense behind this is training to improve your strength or your self-control so this is very important this is the kind of listening that strengthens you in the ability for you to maintain self-discipline self-control and what is right you become spiritually weak and make

yourself vulnerable to spiritual deception and discouragement and then create issues for yourself in your control self-control in sin if you stop hearing God's truth heeding that wisdom for godly living and if you stop responding in obedient faith that is a three-part process hear heed that is resolve yourself and then move forward to respond in obedience isn't this what you want your kids to do that when you teach them right from wrong listen to what daddy says listen to what mom says heed what we say and put it into practice don't bop your sister over the head with that bat again right it doesn't do any good for them to shake their head and five minutes later you hear the next scream and you run up to find another not on the other side of her head right

I raised three of them I know so your failure to hear and heed God's instruction will mean that you sacrifice God's wisdom for strengthening you in holy living there's a lot at stake you'll forfeit perceiving and knowing and discerning God's wisdom for your life so listen folks how you listen and who you listen to matters it matters so you be careful who you're giving your attention to through the television and music and other mediums what you who you read and what they're saying to your heart keep in mind Satan's design is to draw you away from God's truth and then replace it with something else and he wants to do that in a way where he disguises it he counterfeits it so that you're not recognizing what's going on he wants to deceive you with false helps and false hope that's what he that's his currency that's what he does he wants to keep you from listening to the Lord now here's another question I want to do with you how do we listen to

God how are we guided by God it is not by impressions you're not waiting to hear some impression from the Lord that's so terribly unreliable and unbiblical!

[25 : 44] that's not how the Lord works he doesn't leave you to your impressions look again I'd use my this kid raising kids because God's raising us up in the Lord I don't look at my kids and tell my kids to just live their life by their impressions I don't I have never said to any of my three children raising them up and even as adults I never say to them well you just you do what you think is right there's the bat again well I think it's right when she doesn't give me my toy that I whack her and then when I've incapacitated her and she's on the ground bawling her eyes out guess what I do I pick the toy up and walk away I don't want you to live by your impressions you can't trust your impressions I can't trust mine so we're not listening for a still small voice if you hear the still small voice run we have something a lot more reliable God has spoken to us in his word and so we need to know the truth of his word and we need to become skilled in applying it by principle what God doesn't speak to in direct manner he will speak to in principle how do you know that Jeff because Peter told us that God has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness he didn't give us

Jesus and leave anything out he didn't give us the truth and leave anything out pastor Greg and I constantly remind us of these realities so here on the screen you see Jesus said if you do what if you live by your impressions is that what it says if you keep my commandments that's right here isn't it I'm holding up the Bible if you keep my commandments you will abide in my love just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love you are my friends if you do what I command you people people in Christendom they can put a lot of negative connotation on obedience but we're not obeying out of a legalistic mindset we're not obeying trying to convince God to save us we're obeying out of love for the Lord isn't that what this passage tells us obey out of love for the

Lord so listen listen to how this abiding in his love is the heart of our walk with him abiding in the love of God is the heart of our walk as Peter begins this letter he gets right into it and he lays out his primary concern for their worthy walk with the Lord Jesus and so through a true knowledge of Christ we are blessed with a and I outline it here for you a sufficient savior you see that a sufficient scripture and a sanctification now I could have said and if I preached this again in terms of verse by verse through second Peter I would include there in verse one a sufficient salvation and then number two would be a sufficient savior and then scripture and then sanctification yeah because I think that's that's being clearly borne out here when he talks about saving faith a sufficient salvation in a sufficient savior brought to us through a sufficient scripture and in the process of a sufficient sanctification another one

I might add would be a sufficient spirit that is the Holy Spirit ministering God's grace to us for a lifetime now in first second Peter back there again in second Peter 1 5 through 8 I told you that's where we're going to center and I'll run through these rather quickly with you Peter outlines you'll see here on the screen how I explain it Peter outlines some spiritual qualities or virtues or characteristics of a grace given progressing sanctification remember when we use sanctification

we're talking about the process of God making you more like Jesus in terms of the character of the Lord Jesus living in you you take on more and more of the gentleness of Jesus the kindness the patience the long suffering the love of Jesus all these different qualities of his character in you growing in you so they're useful the Bible says and Peter here these qualities are both useful and fruitful virtues for growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus they're not this list isn't all the virtues of godly living but they're what Peter wanted to highlight for us to pursue and apply in our walk with Jesus now the first of these that I'm going to outline not all commentators did it this way but I'm going to do this one because I think it's important to include it in the list is faith faith that's the first one that we see in this list of Christ character virtues that we are to strive in that we are to supply and live in look at verse 5 with me now for this very reason also applying all diligence in your faith supply then moral excellence you need to do the following things for this very reason also is another way that he might say to you alright listen if you're going to grow in the Lord

[31 : 47] Jesus Christ over the course of your life if you're going to become more like Jesus in these qualities that he himself possesses then what you're going to do is for these reasons you're going to follow these things what reason for the reason of God's loving provision of salvation in your life by his sufficient son the Lord Jesus Christ his sufficient word the Bible God has done and he is doing his part now we are called on by Peter you do your part you step up to the plate in your Christian living and you provide a maximum personal effort in living this kind of life yes these are the qualities of Jesus who lives in you now you need to strive to work these qualities out in very practical ways in your life it's not going to happen by you sitting around and thinking about it it's not going to happen by you waiting for

God to give some impression to you about them these qualities are going to be born out in your life as you strive in them as you do the holy sweat of bringing these things out in the way!

In Jesus and his word God has given us all we need to live a godly life so Peter encourages us to supply that maximum effort one commentator said it like this hang on to this and I hope it helps you with these others this is kind of the baseline even though the initiative in salvation comes from God he works out our sanctification our growing Christ likeness by putting us to work so you need to get to work you need to get to work in your marriage every one of us that are married why why do we need to get to work in our marriage what did I say earlier because you'll drift you will drift you need to get to work in your personal life while whether you're married or not why because you will drift you will drift from God's wisdom and you will replace it with something else until you go to heaven that is going to be a constant battle in your life saving faith is

God's gift it's a persevering faith alright and it is the root of all spiritual fruit it is the root of all spiritual fruit faith it's one of those blessings we can always be thankful for believing faith is trusting faith so we start there we start with God you made a promise that you'll work everything to my good and your glory in my life no matter how it feels you did not tell me to live on my feelings you tell me to live by faith that is so!

different isn't it? and that's what we're called to trusting God then is the root from which all the other virtues spring that's why I'm starting here those who rely on God and his promises begin to live a new way a new emphasis now it's no surprise that Peter's theology is in accord with the apostle Paul's Paul said that faith expresses itself in love faith expresses itself in love that's Galatians 5 6 all the godly virtues in the Christian life find their source in faith in Christ as Savior and Lord see this is why we keep telling you make it about Jesus he's the source of all of this saving faith trusts God for everything and the culmination and climax of such faith is love love being expressed in your life so your saving faith is expressed in your sanctifying follow through how do

[35 : 57] I know that I'm loving the Lord Jeff how do I know well a lot of that love that you think you have is given in evidence by how you follow through in your walk with the Lord and that looks a lot like what your relationships look like what do your relationships look like that's how you begin to measure the love of your heart what kinds of things do you say and do when you're being taxed in a relationship so that the relationship isn't giving you what you expect the relationship isn't giving you what you thought you wanted or what you think you deserve or just simply what you want now you start to get taxed in terms of what love really looks like in your life is it really love well it is as long as I'm getting what I want it is as long as I'm getting my share of the proceeds but let that start to dry up and my part starts to dry up that is not love that is not the cross right you see why!

Peter this is all about you walking with the Lord Jesus and then those around you benefiting from that walk being blessed by that walk you turn in on yourself for any reason and you drift and they're going to start paying the price along with you that's the way it works the new American standard uses the word here in this verse!

supply do you see that your verse may say supply use add to or supplement but this is an imperative it's a command here's how it reads now for this very reason also applying all diligence in your faith supply in your faith add to in your faith supplement that's a command and here that word supply listen we get our words choir and choreography from the word the Greek word that is rendered here in English supply in ancient times the state established a choir and when they would do that the choir master would join with the state to provide everything that the choir needed in doing their performances so it was the state and the choir master who came together to make sure that everything was supplied for the choir to function in the way that it needed and so this is the concept for you and for me as

Christians we supply we become the choir master in the sense of we are giving our all for the provision of these qualities to be worked out in our life now you can start thinking with me right away what kinds in my life well the biggest one is spelled S-E-L-F right self did I spell that right yes yes because God has supplied you with all you need for life and godliness and your salvation now you make every effort to lavishly put your faith in Jesus to work and how you live your life for his glory that's what I just said put it up on the screen now the question comes how how what do you set your heart and your spiritual sights on what are you called to strive in in the

Lord the first quality that he mentions here in this list is moral excellence moral excellence this is something that the world hates and does not understand the word that's used here meant performing virtuous acts of valor this was a word that you would use for heroism or for bravery it speaks of an excellent moral character for doing the highest good this is a person who gravitates constantly to the high road given the choice of the low road the medium road and the high road this is the heart that always chooses the highest good the high road no matter the cost that's moral excellence you understand the word excellence takes us to next levels right you can't call something excellent that's average so this is a person whose heart is set to take the high road [40 : 57] I do the right thing because it's the right thing I do the right thing because it pleases the Lord I do the right thing because it blesses others no matter what it costs me so this is heart integrity heart integrity no surprise that all of this starts with your heart listen to this verse I will give heed to the blameless way when will you come to me oh Lord I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart that's Psalm 101 verse 2 the psalmist says I will give heed to you see how we're back there now I will behave wisely prudently I will behave sensibly and we have a good example of giving heed to all of this in King David's life just after he killed Goliath if you go to 1 Samuel 18 I'll just show you this real quickly 1

Samuel 18 verse 5 so David went out wherever Saul sent him and prospered and Saul set him over the men of war and it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and all also in the sight of Saul's servants go down to verse 14 David was prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him David went out wherever Saul sent him and prospered again down in 14 David was prospering here we have this idea of prospered prospered but he was prospering as in listen he was acting wisely David was not going against anything in the Lord David was ordering his life and tracking with God that God might then bless him

David didn't live for David and then expect God to bless his life oh Lord I know that that wasn't in keeping with your wisdom but could you still rubber stamp it for me because after all I'm trying you see that doesn't work it's an all or nothing proposition we're either living in the moral excellence of heart integrity or we're not King Saul in this example is so impressed with David in terms of David's willingness to do the right thing no matter what that he takes David into his house and into his care so David went out wherever Saul sent him and prospered lived wisely he was acting wisely prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him so David is pledging I will behave wisely in the way of my integrity I will walk in my private life within the blamelessness of my heart that's where it starts

Psalm 101 verse 3 is an application of this heart integrity I'm going to put this up here on the screen this is a man being careful to follow Proverbs 423 watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life let me go to Psalm 101 verse 3 this is rich rich stuff that helps establish us in what it is that we're talking about as Peter encourages us to walk in the faithfulness of the Lord

Jesus he says I will set no worthless thing before my eyes in fact I've come to hate the work of those who fall away all of that what they prioritize in sin and in self I'm not going to go that way I'm not going to let any of that fasten its grip on me because that's what it's wanting to do it's wanting to get a grip on your soul and

David said no I don't want any of that in my life I want to guard my heart now the next characteristic that we have is knowledge knowledge you see this in the scripture now for this very reason applying all diligence in your faith supply moral excellence and in your moral excellence knowledge now folks not all of us have the same intellectual level that's not what we're talking about this is spiritual knowledge it's a knowledge by and of the Holy Spirit in his ministry to you as a Christian so here's what it refers to up on the screen it refers to the practical discrimination of good and evil this is intelligent appreciation of what is the will of God in each detail of practice so this is you knowing God's word and being willing to obey it it's the declared wisdom and understanding of God's will for your life in the

[46 : 08] Bible it's where we gain the true knowledge of God and his ways so that we can gain an understanding in the truth and have the ability to apply that wisdom to daily life so let me ask you now husbands do you want to know how to husband God's way do you want to know how to live in the wisdom of God as a husband or do you want to just keep doing it your way because you know after all I'm a decent fella no you're not I'm not a decent fella either apart from Jesus I'm going to follow myself and I'm going to demand that you do that with me but with wisdom of Jesus or do you want to do your own thing do you want to raise your kids in the wisdom of Jesus that's what we're talking about when we talk about knowledge are you receiving and heeding and putting into practice the wisdom of

God because you're walking with the Lord in his truth self control is next we see that in verse 6 you take that knowledge and that knowledge helps you in your life of self control a lack of self control means that you can trace it back to a lack of the knowledge of the will of God and a willingness to apply it that's where it's breaking down this self control is the gift of the spirit that's mentioned in Galatians 5 22 and 23 self control is a fruit of the spirit it's what we need self control helps us with that how does it do that Jeff well self control is something that you and I would lean into as we are tempted to think thoughts that will run off with themselves and take you into fear worry anxiety punishing other people with silent treatment or with some kind of manipulative controlling attitude all of that depicts a lack of self control and

Satan loves this in contrast to all of that what the world offers us in wisdom for dealing with life's issues is of no value in fighting against sin you see that in Colossians chapter 2 20 and 23 a true knowledge of God fosters self discipline self!

restraint self control and the reason this is critically tied to true knowledge is that we speak and behave from what our hearts desire most so where your treasure is there your heart will be also when you see somebody struggling with self control through anger or temper or thoughts that spin them off into all kinds of different behaviors when you see that happening you can put it down that they have desires in their heart that are ruling against the desire to see Jesus honored that and they're losing the battle so where do we do the work we bring them back to the heart and we ask them what is it that you really want because you're pursuing what you really want no matter what your mouth says you're pursuing what you want perseverance perseverance in this text has to do with patience steadfast endurance under the difficulties of life hupomone is the

Greek word that we're talking about here hupomone and it doesn't simply accept and endure there's always a forward look in hupomone in perseverance there's always a forward look it's said of Jesus for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross despising the shame Hebrews 12 2 even Jesus in the most critical suffering that he ever endured he was looking forward to looking toward that is looking at ahead at what the joy the joy that was set before him and so it was it enabled him to despise the shame to put that behind him because he knew what I'm doing is pleasing to God sometimes that's all you have to hang on to folks because the situation isn't changing you don't see the problem getting better there is no resolution coming like you would like you work the problem and the problem is not going away

[51 : 02] God will keep you where you need to be so that he can grow you and show you what you need to see God will keep you in the trial where you need to be so that he can show you what you need to see and if you don't cooperate and obey and heed guess what will happen you will circle around and hit the same trial again and he'll keep because he loves you because he loves you he'll

keep disciplining you there is no letting you off the hook he knows as long as you're chasing idols you're not pursuing him and he's not going to let someone he loves live like that so back back to the woodshed you go all right that's hupomone hupomone is

Christian steadfastness it's the courageous acceptance of everything that life can do to us and the transmuting of even the worst event into another step on the upward way wow you see why I needed to hear this see why this preached to me you remember that Jeff you you need to be courageously accepting of everything and you need to make sure that your heart is transforming all of that into the reality that this is the Lord working in you and it's one more step on your upward path to heaven wow now that's hope the world can't give you that amen the world doesn't understand any of this what about godliness in this list did you see that in your!

knowledge self-control and your self-control perseverance and your perseverance godliness godliness is simply the word godlikeness probably enough said it's living a life that is like god it is a god pleasing life in peter's time people were concerned with godliness they were concerned with living like and for their gods whatever the god was they wanted to please that god and be like that god if it was the god of war be a warrior if it was the god of harvest then get into the flow of the harvest kind of thing and they began to form their life around whatever god it was in that season peter peter peter borrows this word and uses it for the christian god and for his people what god has given us in christ life and godliness we can pursue and express with joy and thankfulness in our hearts that brings you to brotherly kindness now you're going to move out the focus is on the love between fellow believers it's a family like!

devotion that you're committed to and that should characterize the christian community so here peter used a word that's distinctive of the christian community in the sense that all believers are brothers and sisters in christ we're all related by the blood of the lord so you're sitting in a room with your kin folk you're about to have a meal!

with your kin folk literally I'll put it up! brotherly love Peter spoke of this in his first letter since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren fervently love one another from the heart are we doing that here at grace are we fervently loving one another from the heart or are we just too busy for that we're just too busy to be part of the church we're too busy to be involved in the church to sum up he says all of you be harmonious sympathetic brotherly kind hearted and humble in spirit not returning evil for evil or insult for insult but giving a blessing instead chapter 3 verse 8 finally he ends with this he ends with love it's the love of Jesus and coming to earth as a human being for us living a sinful life going to the cross providing new life so folks listen this kind of love is sacrificial and self denying at its root that's what defines it it's the kind of self defying love that says

[55 : 52] I always want the highest good for you whatever it costs me I want the highest good for you that means I need to put behind me my fear I need to put behind me my worry my agenda my needs I can't allow those things and what I think I should have to dominate because that's going to squelch a love toward you I need to be thinking about the highest good for you and as long as I'm putting me ahead of you I'm!

not going to love you not in the way that we're being commanded here love is an active force of doing the highest good for another love is an active force a heavenly force of doing the highest good for another it's why Jesus said love one another it's the greatest commandment it's the highest way it's the goal of Christian teaching and God's love binds together all the other virtues of Christian living I'm working on a message now where I'm going to do more with this love during this season he ends in verse 8 saying for if these qualities are yours and increasing they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus!

The idea of being yours means they're discernible visible characteristics of your life are yours they belong to you you own them!

So this is our emphasis on what I've said to show the character of Jesus working in us we grow in order to show the Lord Jesus at work!

Then he says to be! And so people see this!

[58 : 17] And so people see this! They characterize you this way! These qualities of our spiritual growth are going to help us be useful and fruitful in the true knowledge of Jesus!

Now folks I'll end with this! Did you hear Peter conclude this by saying this? And these virtues are going to be useful and fruitful in helping you solve these problems and get everybody else on your page!

No! You didn't hear that because that's not what it says! It says that they're going to be useful and fruitful in a true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!
In other words they're going to be useful and fruitful in your walk with the Lord! As you seek to apply these characteristics to how you actually relate to other people!
So that they come to define more and more of who you are and how you live! This is why Peter started with this list! He wanted them to understand that this all-sufficient salvation, this all-sufficient Savior, this all-sufficient Scripture has everything to do with Him providing for you an all-sufficient growth in Christ-likeness or sanctification!
[59 : 43] Well beloved, thank you for your kind attention! Let me ask us all to bow our hearts! I'll pray! And we'll sing and Greg will come and then you'll receive some final instruction about our meal today.

You'll forgive me for sliding out a bit on you here as I go home to Suzanne. Let's pray together. Father God, we thank you. We truly do thank you for your word and for these wise words that lead us in holy living because you are changing our heart. You are training our hearts to love you, to put the priority of our heart on a life of diligent serving as we seek to honor Christ.

Lord, this is a high calling. This gets us out of ourself. This turns us to what we call the Gospel, the good news that Jesus has come to take on our sin on the cross so that we can be freed from the death penalty that our sin demands.

So by faith in Jesus, we can be forgiven and freed from that which would overwhelm and overcome us and send us to a devil's hell. Father, we thank you that in this Gospel of grace we find divine favor at work for us so that we can live a life that counts for heaven.

[61 : 11] And that's what we want. So in this Christmas season, help us to be reminded that this joy and this peace that are so precious to us came at great cost.

The greatest cost that you could have paid and given in the sacrifice of your Son for each of us. Let us take to heart this blood kinship that we share together and I pray that you would make each one of us committed to the ministry of serving each other in this wonderful love. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.