Diligent Spiritual Determination

2 Peter 1:5-11
1/18/09

Introduction:

- ***If you claim to be His, make up your mind to be spiritually determined!***

When you are deeply concerned about your spiritual life, you will…

I. **Be determined to <u>PILE UP</u> Christian Graces upon your <u>faith</u>** (v.5-7)



II. **Be determined to <u>be USEFUL & FRUITFUL</u> in your <u>knowledge of Christ</u>** (v.8-9)

III. **Be determined to make <u>ABSOLUTELY SURE</u> that you are <u>truly God's child</u>** (v.10-11)

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The emphasis in verses 5 – 11 is found in the word: **"diligence"** (v. 5, 10)

All of us are diligent about one thing or another.

Some are diligent regarding their pursuit of wealth; others over their physical appearance; others over their personal pleasure, etc.

We need to be spiritually conscientious!

We put great effort into many secular things that do not matter nearly as much as our Christian character.

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I. Be determined to PILE UP Christian Graces upon your faith
(v.5-7)

v. 5
"Add to your faith" – Faith is the foundation of the Christian life. Everything builds from faith. Without faith in Christ as revealed in God's Word, you do not have anything to build on. Faith is the bottom line essential.

Note: Peter does not ask his readers to supply faith (Hiebert, p. 52); he is appealing to those who already profess to have faith.

But "faith" is not to be left alone. Faith is to be exercised. Faith is to produce. Faith is not to be lacking in virtue. Faith is to produce works and good fruit (James 2).

"This faith is the seedbed out of which Christian character grows. A vital orthodoxy produces a willing orthopraxy" (Hiebert, p. 52).

"Besides all this" – God gave to us His precious promises (v. 4) (contained in the gospel) that we might share in the divine nature and escape the world's corruption. Also, it was for that very same reason that we might add Christian characteristics to our faith so as to grow and mature in our Christian life.

"Giving all diligence" - bringing in every effort (alongside of what God has done), every ounce of determination we can muster (Rogers, p. 581).

All of us with total resolve are to spare no expense and to go all out to add character to our faith.

This is to be our goal, our aim, our purpose.

The Christian life is not meant to be an entirely passive life (certainly, we are taught to wait upon god, to rely upon God, to yield passively to God).

However, Peter here clearly delineates our active role in pursuing Christian excellence, striving after Christian character.

Some things just will not happen all by themselves.

We need to "give all we have" to make sure we lavishly add on top of our faith the following qualities:

1) **"Virtue"** (*aretei*) – moral energy. "In classical times the word meant God-given power or ability to perform heroic deeds – whether military, athletic, or artistic accomplishments" (Rogers, p. 582).

   "Virtue" refers to excellence of character. Let's invest our best for our great God! He is worthy of our heroic effort.

2) **"Knowledge"** (*gnosis*) – spiritual knowledge is in view here. Biblical knowledge, theological knowledge, and most importantly the personal knowledge of Christ (the emphasis of 1:2-4). To attain academic knowledge is admirable, but to be an "expert" in God's Word is to achieve the supreme knowledge.

Make every effort to spend time with God. Overcome every obstacle to get to know God!

"The knowledge of the Holy is understanding" (Prov. 9:10).

v. 6

3) **"Temperance"** (*egkrateia*) – self-control. Lit. to hold oneself in; to have strength over one's passions and desires. To be able to say "No" to oneself is to have great character. What kind of effort do we give to restraining our lusts? We ought to exert great effort in holding in the reins of our appetites.

Proverbs 25:28
He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls.

4) **"Patience"** (*hupomone*) – endurance or perseverance. Lit. the ability to "remain under" the pressure without blowing up or blowing out. It is the character trait of not quitting; to keep on keeping on. Learn to never raise up the white flag and quit on what you know to be God's will. The example if Jesus Christ –

Hebrews 12:2
Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

5) **"Godliness"** (*eusebeia*) - from *"eu"* = well or good; and *"sebomai"* = to be devout. To have good piety, to be reverential or God-fearing. Make extreme effort to be well-pleasing to God!

v. 7

6) **"Brotherly kindness" –** (*"philadelphia")* brotherly affection; deep affection for your fellow brother or sister in Christ.

7) **"Love"** (*agape*)- the pinnacle attribute; the premiere characteristic (1 Cor. 13). Agape love is that attribute of unconditional giving to meet the needs of others, as demonstrated by God's gift of His Son (John 3:16) and the Son's sacrifice of His life (Rom. 5:8).

If faith is the <u>foundation</u> of the Christian life, love is the <u>apex</u>!

II. Be determined to <u>be USEFUL & FRUITFUL</u> in your <u>knowledge of Christ</u> (v.8-9)

v. 8

For if these seven characteristics or qualities of verses 5-7 exist in your life and "abound" (or overflow in excess).

You and I can never do enough good. We can never say, "I've reached my limit and do not need to expand these graces." Our goal ought to be to overflow in these qualities.

"To fervent Christianity there can be no excess of good" (Mayor, cited by Rogers, p. 582).

"Barren" - inactive; idle; useless (like a womb that produces no offspring).

"Unfruitful" - to be unproductive, to bear no fruit.

"In the knowledge *(epiginosko*) **of our Lord Jesus Christ" -** i.e. in the direct, personal, relational knowledge of our Savior. If we have come to know Him, such knowledge should not be unfruitful and barren, but full of fruit and good works.

Is a knowledge of Christ of any practical benefit if it is not accompanied by fruit?

The world is looking at you. Is there enough evidence to convince them that you could really belong to the Savior you claim to know and love?

v. 9

One who lacks the graces or character traits of verses 5 – 7.

Note the phrase **"these things"** (v. 8). . . **"these things"** (v. 9) . . . **"these things"** (v. 10).

"Blind. . . and cannot see afar off" – here Peter describes one who has <u>lost his vision</u> of what <u>Christ has done for him</u>. He has forgotten the cleansing he received when he first had a "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8).

Peter here describes one who not only suffers from short-sightedness but also from spiritual amnesia (he can't see and can't remember).

When any believer loses sight of what Christ did for him/her, they will fail to attain the seven qualities God expects us to add to our faith. Such failure should cause one who claims to be saved to re-examine his claim (v. 10).

III. Be determined to make ABSOLUTELY SURE that you are truly God's child (v.10-11)

v. 10

"The rather" = even more; of greatest importance is to make sure of your calling and election by god. Make absolutely certain that you are in the faith. Do you genuinely believe on Christ? Did you respond to His invitation (His calling)? Are you one of His chosen (elect) ones?

How does one know? He will bear fruit!

The fruit mentioned in verses 5 – 7. There will be a desire to add to your faith, and a practice of those character traits.

"Give diligence" – be eager; be in a hurry; exert all of your effort to speedily start examining the reality of your salvation. This matter of salvation is the most urgent matter in the world.

"If ye do these things" – if you practice the "things" mentioned in verses 5 – 7.

"Ye shall never fall" – you will absolutely never stumble in any way.

"The holy life is the guarantee demonstrating one's calling and election" (Rogers, p. 582).
The proof is in the evidence. "By their fruit ye shall know them."

Note: Practicing those seven character traits is not the means by which one is saved, but is the evidence or proof of salvation.

"<u>Never</u> fall" - a double negative (*ou mei*) – meaning: absolutely, by no means whatsoever will one who practices those things ever stumble and fall away from Christ.

Those who stumble so as to fall away entirely from Christ were never saved (never called and elected) to begin with.

Paul said to the Corinthians: *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be <u>in</u> <u>the</u> <u>faith</u>; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. 13:5*

> **"Examine yourselves" –** put yourselves to the test to see whether or not you are genuinely in the faith (i.e. in Christ and His saving Gospel). This is an examination none of us should avoid.
>
> It would be better for a man to examine himself now than to find out later after death that he was never really in the faith.
>
> Many in the Corinthian church who had succumbed to the sins of 12:20-21 had ample reason to examine their true spiritual status.
>
> Can you imagine how foolish it would be for a man who has all the signs of stomach cancer or ulcers to do nothing about it; to have constant abdominal pain and to be spitting up blood and to go on his way thinking he's okay would be the height of folly. So, to be living in sin with no remorse or divine chastisement and to assume you're on your way to Heaven anyway is foolishness.
>
> Some might say: "But Pastor, you're making me to doubt my salvation." Some of you have adequate reason to doubt your salvation.
>
> I'd rather have you doubt your salvation but have it, than to never entertain a doubt and not have it.
>
> The little book of 1 John is given for the purpose of the professing believer to examine himself so that he might know that he has eternal life

Evidences of Genuine Salvation from the Epistle of 1 John

1. Obedience to God's Commands
   1 John 2:3; 1 John 2:5; 1 John 3:24

2. A Lifestyle of Righteousness
   1 John 2:29

3. A New Nature which does not practice sin
   1 John 3:9; 1 John 5:18

4. A Love for the Brethren
   1 John 3:14-15; 1 John 3:18-19; 1 John 4:7

Some of the evidences of true salvation are:

1) Love of God and His people

2) Spiritual desire for God's Word

3) Grief over sin accompanied with chastisement by God

4) Obedience to God and a desire to be more obedient

Those who practice God's seven character qualities will have a wide open door into His everlasting kingdom.

This does not mean that they earned or merited their entrance, but that their faith in Christ was real and their life proved it.

Their godly lifestyle was the authenticating seal that they shared in the "like precious faith" that Peter and the other apostles had (v. 1). Their godly lifestyle is evidence that God's divine power truly did give them everything necessary for life and godliness(v. 3).

Not just an entrance, but an **"abundant**" entrance, i.e. a rich, wide-open way into Heaven. You are not merely squeaking in through a tight door, but walking in through a wide opening.

Conclusion:

Our goal, our quest, our aim is to have diligent spiritual determination for our Lord!

What we all need is a dose of DSD ------ Diligent Spiritual Determination!

"Spiritual growth in the Christian life calls for the strenuous involvement of the believer" (Hiebert, p. 50).

Beware of spiritual slothfulness!

This message is a wake-up call for all of us to abandon our lazy, sluggishness when it comes to our Christianity!