

Partakers of the Divine Nature II (Go To Meeting)

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In the first part, we started with this passage in 2-Peter 1. We read all of that introduction to 2-Peter and then we got here to this portion that is talking about the nature.

2-Peter 1:5 is after establishing and reading, reading all of the things and all the great promises that God has given us, then we have seen what the Apostle Peter is exhorting us to do. He's telling us for that reason--because we have been given these wonderful promises—in order that we may become partakers of the Divine nature—we have to do certain things. There are certain things that that we have to be diligent to do.

2-Peter 1:5: “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge.”

We talked about faith and virtue:

- What is our faith?
- What is that virtue?

Just to summarize of what we saw last time, *our faith is really our beliefs!*

It is our faith in God, in the Bible, the Word of God. Then we talked about virtue, that desire to do good, those good intentions! But not just of our own, but it's really more of *a virtue of quality inside!*

One of the things that we were talking as we were concluding part one was how many people in the world in all religions really have or strive to have virtue. They have this desire to do good and they also have a faith. It might not be founded on the Truth or completely on the Truth, or on the Rock, but they have faith in what they believe and they act according to what they believe. They have virtue and they have this desire to do good. They have this desire:

- to be transformed
- to be different
- to bear fruit

We have a lot in common with them in that regard, but then we have to continue with what it says here, because the next thing that the Apostle Peter tells us to do in applying to, *adding to our virtue knowledge* is very important. It's absolutely critical. It's the third thing that we have to have, that we have to add to our faith virtue and to that virtue—to those good intentions—to that faith and

belief—we *have to add knowledge!* This is very important.

It's not just doing whatever we feel in our heart, just whatever we think is right or sounds right, because there are a lot of things that sound right, *but they're not good!*

A lot of things that sound profitable and sound good, *but they may not be!* That's what happens many times when there's traps from Satan—especially in religion, especially with well-intentioned people—that they end up going a certain route because of these desires of wanting to do what's right from having a strong zeal or strong faith.

But the knowledge is not where it's supposed to be; it's not necessarily complete. Sometimes it might be because God is not deciding to open their eyes at this time, that He's not doing that.

But for us, and coming back to 2 Peter 1 in this portion, what God is telling us is through the Apostle Peter is that *we have been called. So, this is a group that he's addressing!*

We have to add to our faith of virtue and to our virtue knowledge. We're going to study some of the things that the Bible says about knowledge. We're going to read some basic things about knowledge.

Then we're going to be thinking about how adding knowledge to our virtue and our faith all goes together. Knowledge is mentioned a lot in the Book of Proverbs, and obviously, throughout the Bible in different contexts.

Proverbs 19:2: “**For a man to be without knowledge, it is not good,** and he who is impetuous sins.”

That's also, for example, another thing where God said that for a man to be without a wife is not good. That's one case. That was just as another example. But God is saying here that it's not good for a man to be without knowledge. In the counterpart, which the Proverbs often have, is “...he who is impetuous sins”—*meaning:*

- being impulsive
- without thinking
- without that knowledge
 - we have to have that knowledge
 - God wants us to have that knowledge

We're going to see what else the Bible tells us about knowledge.

Proverbs 18 is not talking about knowledge, just in general, like the world, ***it's talking about the true knowledge that is in the Word of God.***

Proverbs 18:15: "The heart of the prudent gets knowledge..."

This is kind of what we saw in Prov. 19. The impetuous doesn't have any prudence, it's just impetuous in the impetuous often sins, because of not having this knowledge, because of not thinking things through or thinking before acting.

Verse 15: "The heart of the prudent gets knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge."

- the prudent gets knowledge
- the wise seeks knowledge by hearing

"...the ear of the wise seeks knowledge"; *so do we!* We have to do these things, as well.

- we have to be prudent
- we have to get knowledge
- we have to seek knowledge

because we want to be wise, but not with the wisdom of this world!

There are a lot of people that go to the most prestigious universities and colleges, and people think that they have a lot knowledge and they do in one realm and in one area. But in other things, when it comes to the Word of God, they might be very ignorant! That's the true knowledge that is going to last for eternity. That's what we have to focus on!

That when Peter says "...Add your faith, virtue and to virtue, knowledge..." *that means:*

- the knowledge of the Word of God
- the knowledge of God Himself

not just of the Word of God! That's the progression, knowing the Word of God so that we can get to ***know God*** and to have a relationship with Him.

This is very evident in Prov. 1. We're just reading what some of the basic things about knowledge, *what the Bible says about knowledge!* The Apostle Peter is encouraging us to add to our faith *virtue* and to our virtue, *knowledge*.

Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the LORD ***is the beginning of knowledge***, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Let's remember that this is in the context of the Truth. The Word of God is the Truth, and this is the Truth. So, whenever the Bible calls somebody

fools—the ones who despise wisdom and instruction—it is in the context of the Truth, the Word of God!

- it's not according to what the world considers as wise
- it's not what the world considers as knowledgeable

This is very important because the fear of the Lord is really an attitude! The fear of the Lord is just the beginning of knowledge:

- it starts with an attitude
- it starts with an approach
- it starts with a relationship toward God
- it starts with an attitude toward God

It's very important that we keep these things in mind:

IF we're going to add knowledge, ***it has to start with the fear of the Lord!*** It has to be ***in the fear of the Lord***, because there are a lot of people who gain a lot of knowledge, *even about the Bible!* They can quote Scriptures and they can quote them correctly.

But ***IF*** they don't have the fear of the Lord, ***that may not amount to the knowledge that God really wants to give to everybody who's seeking Him.*** The fear of the Lord ***is the beginning of knowledge***, not just to recite a verse by memory or just to quote it. *It's:*

- to have that relationship with God
- to understand what the Word of God says
- to have that kind of knowledge

But it has to start with the fear of the Lord! It's a relationship, because at the end of the day, ***what God wants is to work with us and to dwell in us!*** In order to do that:

- we have to yield to Him
- we have to really let go of ourselves
- we have to fear the Lord and pay attention to His instructions

1-Sam. 2—this is when Hannah prayed when she was not able to bear children; God hears her prayer

1-Samuel 2:3—*Hannah says:* "Talk no more so very proudly. Remove arrogance out of your mouth, for the **LORD is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.**"

So, the focus is more on ***God has knowledge; He has all knowledge***, obviously! He has knowledge of what we do:

- He sees what we do

- He knows what we do
- He knows us
- He weighs those actions

Let's continue to remember that ***we are His workmanship. We are the ones being shaped after the image of His Son Jesus Christ!***

He is a God of knowledge and He weighs the actions.

What He wants is for us to fear Him; for us to love Him, for us to have that relationship with Him.

Jeremiah 4:22—*this is what God says of Israel: “For My people are foolish; **they have not known Me**; they are stupid children, and **they have no understanding**. They are wise to do evil, **but to do good they have no knowledge.**”*

- Do we have knowledge, brethren? *We definitely have knowledge!*
- Do we have the knowledge of the Word of God to do good? *That's what God delights in!*

The ones who are foolish are the ones who don't know God!

So, it's not just knowledge of the things about God or the Bible. ***It's to know God!***

He says, v 22: “For My people are foolish; they have not known Me...”—*that is the ultimate goal of knowledge!*

That is the ultimate goal of the fear of the Lord is to really get to know God.

He says, “...they are stupid children, and they have no understanding...”

Isn't that true today of the children of Israel, the physical descendants of the children of Israel at large?

It's people—stupid children—that have no understanding as a nation or group of nations! We're running after foolishness. All kinds of pleasures in the world! ***All kinds of evils are happening to us because of these things:***

- we have not known God
- we have not repented and come back to God as nations

But we who have been called, we have to have knowledge to do good. We know and understand a lot of the things about the Bible, yet, we have to put them into practice. The Apostle Peter is telling us that ***it's not just*** your faith, belief, your good intentions or your virtue, your desire to do well.

- you have to acknowledge to do those things
- you have to know what is right and wrong, what is good and evil
- you have to know, understand and distinguish the clean from the unclean, the Holy from the profane
- you have to understand these things
- you have to have knowledge

It starts with ***a relationship*** with God! ***The beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord, which is an attitude, a mindset!***

What God is saying is the problem is that they don't know. God can give us the knowledge that we need, and He will add these things to us, but we have to know Him. We have to want to get to know Him.

It's a reciprocal thing, because the more we obey, the more we know Him, and the more we know Him, the more we trust Him. And the more we trust Him, the more we obey Him and it continues to grow.

That relationship continues to grow and deepen, because that's what God wants. He wants a deep relationship with us, that it's a matter of the heart of the mind based on the Truth, based on His Word, based on the knowledge. *That's what God wants!* He wants for us to have knowledge, to know Him, to do good, to have knowledge of what God really delights in.

1-John 2:20—*this really applies to us: “But you have the anointing from the Holy One, and you have knowledge of all things pertaining to salvation.”*

We do have the knowledge of all things pertaining to salvation. Maybe there's more things that we still have to do, But we also have the anointed from the Holy One.

Verse 21: “I did not write to you because you do not know the Truth, but because you know it, and *you understand* that not one lie comes from the Truth.”

This is important that we remember that we do have the knowledge of all things pertaining to salvation. ***But we have to internalize this knowledge:***

- it has to become who we are
- it has to become our personality
- it has to become what we do
- we have to develop habits of doing all these good things

the things that pertain to salvation, it's keeping the commandments of God! It's not just his Sabbath, Holy Days and tithes, it's everything in the Word of God it's:

- loving our enemy
- blessing those who curse you
- it's repaying good for the evil that others may do to us

This continues to increase as we move ahead in the times that we're living in. But we have to remember that *all of those are also commandments of God!*

It was Jesus Christ that spoke these words in the New Testament. He was the same One Who spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai.

We do have the knowledge of all things pertaining to salvation. That is the key difference. That is the key difference. It's not to puff ourselves up. It's just to be established and be thankful to God:

- that we have this knowledge
- that ***He is giving*** us this knowledge
- that we have the knowledge of things pertaining to salvation
- that we have hope

Just like Paul also said, 'I don't wish you to be ignorant, brethren, like those who have no hope.' *He wants us to have hope!*

The Apostle John is saying here, "...you have knowledge of all things *pertaining to salvation.*"

- you know the Plan of God
- you know that God loves those who repent
- you know that God loves everyone because he included everyone in His Plan

That doesn't mean that He's going to give salvation to everyone in the end, but He's going to give an opportunity to all of those, to everybody, basically. It's only those who willingly reject Him that they are going to end up in the Lake of Fire.

But all things pertaining to salvation, and that is critical, because we have to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. In order to have knowledge, in order to worship Him in Truth, we have to have the knowledge of the Truth, the knowledge of the Word of God, and be studying, diligently studying to show ourselves approved, all of us.

We do have this knowledge and John is testifying of it here. That's the reason he's writing to us.

This is because you know it, you know the Truth and you understand that not one lie comes from the Truth. So, nothing, *nothing* in the Bible is a

lie. ***It's the Word of Truth!*** God inspired it to be that way.

Don't let anybody tell you that this is all just manmade, that the Bible was written by men. That's not true. Not one lie comes from the Truth.

- these are not myths
- these are not allegories
 - this is the Truth
 - this is the Word of God

We do have that knowledge. We have to add that knowledge to that virtue and that faith.

We're going to read a few more Scriptures about knowledge and see what else, because there's more things that we have to keep adding ***to be partakers of the Divine nature!***

Prov. 8 is all wisdom personified. It's the speech of wisdom, and wisdom is telling all of us:

Proverbs 8:10: "Receive my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold."

That's how important this is. This is the most important thing. It says there's nothing more important than this. That's why if you're looking for gold, it's becoming more and more expensive and more and more important to have in these times.

But ***knowledge is better than even choice gold!*** If you're going to invest your time in something, invest it in knowledge, ***but the knowledge of the Truth,*** and it has to be in an attitude of humility, it has to be in the fear of the Lord! That's the beginning of knowledge.

If we don't have the fear of the Lord, we may have a lot of information. ***But that's not knowledge! Knowledge is when it is in the context of a relationship with God!***

- that's the *true knowledge of wisdom* is wisdom is talking about
- that's *the true knowledge* that God is talking about

1-Cor. 8—this is a warning to all of us! It's not just about head knowledge. It's not just about words or just knowing certain things. I don't want to take this out of context. Obviously, it's talking about sacrifices to idols, and Paul is talking about this:

1-Corinthians 8:1: "Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge...."

We know that we have knowledge. What he was referring to is like, *we know that the idol is nothing, We know that!* We know that there is

nothing that is really a matter of conscience. *We know that!*

“...Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies”
(v 1). *It’s important that we remember this!*

So, the true knowledge is in the fear of the Lord, because if we have the fear of the Lord and He’s teaching us all things pertaining to salvation, **He’s giving us the things:**

- **of wisdom**
- **of knowledge** in this frame of mind where we are:
 - ✓ thankful
 - ✓ appreciative
 - ✓ humble

Instead of puffing us up with knowledge, it really should humble us when we learn more things. It makes us realize how ignorant we have been up to the point that we learned something new.

So, it should humble us and it should make us thankful, as well, because God, *‘in Whom is hidden, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!’*

God has all those treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He allows us to see a little bit more, And opens our eyes a little bit more. But it’s not just this knowledge by itself, because knowledge by itself puffs up.

We cannot say we’re just going to listen to like five sermons and that’s it. *NO!* If you have brethren and you are to not forsake the assembly, go with your brethren, because the knowledge is only going to puff you up.

Love edifies; the love of God and you have to go and do it and you have to add things, you have to add knowledge to this virtue and to this faith. You have to demonstrate your faith by your works. It’s not just what you know it’s:

- What you do with what you know?
- What do I do with what I know?

It’s not just knowledge. Knowledge is good; it’s very important, *but knowledge by itself puffs up, but love edifies!*

Then Paul gives us a warning; v 2: “But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know”—*meaning there’s always more to learn!*

But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. In that relationship with God knows you and you love Him and you love His Word. That’s when God is going to continue to open your eyes continually to the things that you don’t yet know, because this is true.

This is from the Apostle Paul. When he was saying these things, I’m sure he was thinking about himself, too, about knowledge being like puffing up and he’d seen so many people.

Right there in Greece he started talking to all the Athenians and about all their gods and all of it. He knows all the philosophers, *and knowledge puffs up!* He has seen it, been there and done that.

Paul’s knowledge puffed himself up, too, because what he was a Pharisee of Pharisees at the feet of Gamaliel and all of this and that. What was created in him? Knowledge puffed him up before and he knows!

Then can you imagine when Jesus was teaching him in Arabia for three years, like all of the things that He was teaching him and he wrote this:

Verse 2: “But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know.”

If God comes and starts teaching you personally, you’re going to be ‘flooded’ by all the things that you don’t yet know! That’s the attitude that we have to keep for the rest of our lives, that we want to add this knowledge. ***But it has to be in the context of our relationship with God!***

That He will teach us:

- for His glory
- for His plan
- for the development of the character that He wants to build in us
- for us to realize that we know nothing, yet, to the degree that we ought to know

But that we are continuing to study and learning!

He didn’t say this to discourage us. He just said this to not get puffed up. Knowing the knowledge by itself is not enough. But that what is most important is love. God’s love edifies. If we love God, then we are known by Him, as well, and that’s what we have to do.

Hosea 4:1: “Hear the Word of the LORD, children of Israel, for the LORD *has* a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, ‘There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.’”

That is the problem that we’re facing right now. That’s exactly why it’s so important that we all are adding to our faith *virtue*, to our *virtue knowledge*.

That we focus on the knowledge not for knowledge’s sake in that relationship with God.

But that we focus in the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of knowledge. That we

would come into this relationship that God may teach us and give us knowledge:

- for Himself
- for His glory
- for edification
- for building us up

Because that's what we need!

We are the few that God is working with right now. He wants the knowledge of God being at least in His Church, in the Body of Christ.

In the land there is no truth. Isn't this more true than ever before? *There is no truth!* There is so much confusion about all kinds of things, but there is no truth, even about basic things

- there is no truth
- here is no mercy
- everybody is a hater
- everybody is this, that or the other thing
- name calling here and there
- just so much division
- there is no mercy
- there is certainly no knowledge of God in the land

That's what we're living in right now; ***but God wants for us to have knowledge! This is what God desires!***

Hosea 6:6—*God says, "For **I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than** burnt offerings."*

God wants us to ***know*** Him. That's what He desires. ***He desires mercy and not sacrifice!*** But we cannot have the true mercy, until we get close to God and we see how merciful He has been with us.

But once we understand that, and once we get close to God and we see His goodness and we understand His mercy toward us all the time. Then that's what's going to move us to be merciful to others, and that's what God desires.

Mercy and the knowledge of God. Those are two of the most important things: ***the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His Word is what's going to give us that relationship with Him!***

The prayer, the constant communication, the constant prayer with God; that's what we need to do. That's truly what God desires.

Jeremiah 9:23: "Thus says the LORD, 'Do not let the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might; do not let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I *am* the LORD, exercising loving kindness, justice,

and righteousness, in the earth; for in these I delight,' says the LORD" (vs 23-24).

How are we going to know that He exercises loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth:

- ***IF*** we don't read the Word?
- ***IF*** we do not understand what righteousness actually is?
- ***IF*** we don't understand what true justice is
- ***IF*** we do not understand these things?

We're not going to know God! But:

- ***IF*** we read His Word
- ***IF*** we understand His laws and His commandments
- ***IF*** we understand His judgments
- ***IF*** we understand the way that He thinks

THEN we're going to have a strong relationship with God!

We're really going to understand that that's what He delights. That is the true knowledge:

- the knowledge of righteousness
- the knowledge of justice
- the knowledge of loving-kindness

That's exactly what God wants! He says, that the one "...who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me..."

The one that truly knows Him and understands Him; *this is not a glorying in vain*. This is not a glorying to get puffed up, ***it's a glorying to give credit to God*** and to speak of His goodness and to speak of His wonderful works toward the children of man because He is good. His heart is good. Everything that He does is good. That's what He means to ***add knowledge to virtue!***

It's not just the desire, but it's to have the knowledge of:

- what Is right
- what Is just
- what is correct
- what He delights in

and

- to fear Him
- to love Him
- to have this relationship with Him

So that He can really guide that virtue, that He can establish that faith on the Rock who is Jesus Christ, ***Who is the Truth!***

Let's see what is the next thing that we have to add:

2-Peter 1:5: "...add to your faith, virtue; and

to virtue, knowledge; **and to knowledge, self-control...**" (vs 5-6). *We have to add self-control to knowledge!*

- What is self-control as far as the Bible is concerned?
- What is this self-control the Bible is talking about?

It's only mentioned seven times and they're all in the New Testament, this word 'self-control.' Honestly, almost half of them are right here, because it mentions self-control a couple of times. So, it says self-control. What is self-control?

The first thing that we know about it is that it's one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, because self-control is one of those fruits.

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, **self-control**" (vs 22-23).

Here in this listing is the last one after meekness and everything else. It's interesting because it talks about all the fruits of the Holy Spirit and it starts with God; it starts with love, 'agape.' That's what it starts with; it starts with love and then joy, peace, and all the others.

But *self-control is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit!* In some of the times that it's mentioned here, it really comes in relation to controlling our desires, our impulses.

1-Cor. 7 is what it's talking about here when it mentions self-control, it's in the context of controlling our own impulses, emotions, and drives of the flesh. Talking about the relationship between husband and wife, it says:

1-Corinthians 7:5: "Do not deprive one another *of conjugal dues*, except it be by consent for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to fasting and prayer; and *then* come together again as one, so that Satan will not tempt you through your lack of self-control."

That's what it's talking about, the impulses of the flesh. Self-control implies that *you can actually understand and rise above that pull of flesh*, and you're able to:

- control those desires
- control those feelings
- control those emotions

Talking about the unmarried, that they would remain as He is:

Verse 9: "But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; because it is better to marry than to burn *with sexual desire*."

Meaning, if they do not have self-control, let them marry. If they cannot control themselves in that regard.

But self-control is obviously more than this. These impulses are just in relationship with sexuality, which is a big problem or a big part that we have to exercise self-control in. But there's more. It's really about everything, about our attitudes, about our emotions. Having self-control is really understanding all of this.

Why do we have to add self-control to faith and virtue and knowledge? It's because we have a desire to do what's good, that virtue. We may even know what's right; we can have the right knowledge from the Bible. But it's still a struggle to control ourselves.

How many times do we fall into sin? *We know that we shouldn't be doing whatever it is that we do, or that we still fall into!*

That's because we still have to work on self-control. We're learning that self-control. That's nothing that just comes from one day to the next, or is something that is just granted and then now you have it, and you'll never fall again for the same thing.

But we can exercise this self-control and continue in it. It's one of the most important things.

We're going to see how critical self-control is because this is one of the things that even Paul was preaching. This is when he was sent to the Governor Felix.

Acts 24:24: "Now, after certain days, Felix appeared with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess; *and* he sent for Paul and listened to him *speak* about the faith in Christ."

That's the first thing that we have to add, according to what we're reading in 2-Peter. Then it says about, He spoke about the faith in Christ.

Verse 25: "And as he reasoned concerning **righteousness**, and **self-control**, and **the judgment** to come,"

There's three things. And one of these three things is self-control. It's very interesting that he says that because then after reasoning about these three things,

"...Felix became fearful *and* answered, 'You may go now, and when I find an opportunity, I will call for you'" (v 25).

He became fearful, basically, 'I don't want to hear anything about this anymore,' *because we all know that we're accountable for what we know!*

Deep down inside, we all do. Felix did. That's why He became fearful. 'Oh, I'm learning about these things now. I'm responsible to keep them or I'm going to be held accountable, especially with his wife there: Drusilla.

But like no better person in our lives, right, than to call us into account lovingly for the things that we lack or that we are learning about and now we're held accountable to.

But that's what it is. It says self-control. This is one of the things: righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come. It's almost like the nutshell of the Plan of God *and how key is self-control!*

It's righteousness, because we have to first understand what's good and differentiate between what's good and what is evil. Then it's self-control and then the judgment to come, meaning it's:

- the truth
- our conduct
- the Plan of God

It's almost like those are the three bubbles here that is reasoning concerning these three things with Felix who didn't want anything to do with it. 'I'll call you later.'

This is just to illustrate how important self-control is. If you want to encapsulate almost like our part in this or one of the big parts is self-control. It's kind of at the center. It's at the center of these things that we have to be adding: to faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, self-control, *to be able to do these things, to do according to the knowledge!*

Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. God is love. God wants us to do what's right and to exercise this self-control.

Titus 1—this is talking to Titus about what are the qualifications for an overseer. This is very important. Ministers, elders, anybody that is preaching the Word of God—teaching—has to be accountable to these things. Self-control is one of these qualities.

Titus 1:7: "For it is obligatory that as God's steward an overseer be blameless, not self-willed... [but in the fear of the Lord] ...not quick tempered... [we talk about the impetuous sinning] ...not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not a bully, not greedy for material gain; **but hospitable, a lover of good, sound-minded, just, Holy, self-controlled**.... [it's that important] ...holding steadfastly to the faithful Word..." (vs 7-9).

But really, like, on these characteristics, self-control, again, can come last, but it's because

we cannot have self-control unless we have knowledge.

- What are we supposed to do?
- What's good and what's evil?
- What are we supposed to do?
- What does God desire?
 - to have this fear of the Lord, the beginning of knowledge
 - to have this virtue, this desire to be good, to have this faith
 - to all of these be founded upon that faith, upon the rock, and then to add to all these things self-control

We can exercise self-control and grow in this self-control!

2-Tim. 3—this is one of the problems This is one of the characteristics of the people that are living right now, that we're living in the midst of.

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; for men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control..." (vs 1-3).

This all goes together because all these things are the things that we've been seeing. We saw:

- knowledge puffs up
- there are braggarts
- there are proud
- there are blasphemers
- the ones that don't have the fear of God
- disobedient to parents
- unthankful
- unholy

It says, "...without self-control... [and there are more characteristics]: ...savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; **having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of true Godliness**..." (vs 3-5).

Because true Godliness is what the Word of God says. True Godliness is, we're going to talk about this later, but here one of the characteristics of these perilous times is people that have no self-control, without self-control. They just do whatever they feel like. *We cannot do that!*

We have to add self-control to knowledge and to virtue and to faith. It's one thing to exercise self-control once. It's almost like:

Okay, now I know there is a God. That's my faith. I know the Word of God is true. I have good intentions. I want to do what's right. I want to be changed. I want to be transformed. I believe these promises of God.

Knowledge, this is a big part of what we're calling Truth.

Because sometimes, like, if we did not grow up in the Truth, we had faith and we had virtue, but we had no knowledge. We had no knowledge that we were supposed to keep the Sabbath or that we were supposed to keep the Feasts or what they pictured or any of these things.

Now we have knowledge. But now that we have that knowledge, now we have to add self-control. In order to really walk in God's ways, we have to exercise the self-control. It's one thing to do it one time, but to do it constantly, that's why it's the next thing that we need that he says here in:

2-Peter 1:6: "And to knowledge, self-control; and **to self-control, endurance...**"—*the next characteristic, the next attribute that we need to add!*

We talked about the other ones leading up to this, and self-control is very important. But not only once, it's constantly self-control. Because it has to do—not just with the desires of the flesh—it has to do with:

- what we speak
- what choices we make
- what is our mind
 - Do we have more and more of the mind of Christ?
 - What kind of choices are we making?

That takes endurance to have self-control constantly! That's endurance. Endurance is only in the New Testament, and it's referred to 27 times

Endurance one of the things, it's one of the essential things that we need, as well. The Apostle Peter tells us ***we need to add endurance to self-control***, and to knowledge, to virtue, to faith.

Luke 8:15—this is when Jesus is explaining the Parable of the Sower. And then Jesus explains:

Luke 8:15: "And those that *fell* on the good ground are the ones who, in a right and good heart, hear the Word *and* keep it, **and bring forth fruit with endurance.**"

Endurance is needed to bring forth fruit. We're not going to bring forth fruit immediately. ***But:***

- when we start learning the ways of God
- when we're practicing something
- when we're working on something
- when God is showing us something

*It's not going to be immediate! **We have to have endurance in order:***

- to do the self-control
- to add endurance to the self-control
- to be able to do that self-control
- to exercise the self-control continuously

because that way will become who we are! It will form habits, and that's what we will become. That will become our nature:

- the way that we think
- the way that we act
- the way that we respond

We have to bring forth fruit with endurance!

We're going to see how we develop endurance. Let's see how we get into the meat of these matters.

James 1:2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (vs 2-3).

What was the first thing that the Apostle Peter said that we have to add to? *Faith, add to our faith, virtue! **But it's the testing of that faith!***

- Do you really believe what you say you believe?
- Do you really believe it?

Let's see when it comes to a trial, when it comes to a test. That's why he says, "...when you are beset by various trials" ***is the testing of our faith through the trials that produces endurance!***

So if you're suffering, it's good. It's really hard to deal with it, but that's why James tells us:

Verse 2: "**Consider it all joy....**"

So, in the middle of the trial, in the middle of the test, pause for a second and remember: ***God is building your endurance!***

It's just like an exercise. When you're exercising and you're building endurance. whether you're running, lifting weights or whatever, you're building endurance, but you don't build it with one lift of the weight. You don't build it with one mile that you run or half a mile, whatever it is. You don't build endurance one time. ***We have to build endurance over time, little by little.***

That's why it says, "...various trials."

“Consider it all joy....”

So in the middle of your trial and affliction—because we’re all going through things—***stop and think and view it from a different angle and just remember:***

God is working on my endurance; He wants to see what I’m made of. He wants to see what’s in my heart, if I’m going to love Him, if I’m going to believe Him! He’s testing my faith!

That’s exactly what He’s doing! Think about that; think about ***the testing of our faith produces endurance!*** There’s no other way. There’s no other way to develop this endurance and to apply this self-control, this knowledge and this virtue!

We have to do this. We have to go through it. In another place it says, ‘do not be surprised at the trial as if something strange was happening to us.’ ***This is part of the plan!*** This is part of what God is working in you and in me.

These trials are testing our faith and producing endurance. We will bring more fruit with endurance, just like Jesus was explaining in the Parable of the Sower.

They all understood this. James understood this, Paul understood this, and we have to understand it, too; internalize it and make it our own to understand, really.

Not just like, ‘Yes, I know it is, but I don’t want this.’ Sometimes that’s as we act somewhat like children, spiritually speaking, because we act like a child and it’s like, ‘I know this is good for me. I know I need to do this, but I don’t want to.’ It’s hard! It’s hard!

Romans 5:3—the Apostle Paul says: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope.”

That’s what we’re talking about. We’re talking about this endurance of having this self-control based on the knowledge of God in that relationship with that virtue, with that desire to do good, based on that faith.

Adding all these things. It’s an amazing thing to see how they all come together, because when we’re talking about endurance and we see then that the tribulations bring forth endurance and endurance brings forth character, that’s exactly what we need.

At the end of the day, that’s what this is all about, building that character of Jesus Christ. It says ***character brings forth hope***, because that’s the goal.

That’s the plan that God has for you and me, that we will develop this character. But ***endurance brings forth character***, and endurance takes time.

It takes the various trials and tribulations, they use a little different words, but it’s the same thing. A lot of heartache, a lot of difficult things.

So in the midst of your affliction, your trial, your tribulation, remember, ***put this in your head:***

God is building my endurance. It’s not pleasant, but it’s good. It’s going to bring something good.

Romans 15:4--*Paul is saying*” “For all the things that were written before were written for our instruction...”

And this goes together with knowledge that was written for our instruction.

“...so that through **patient endurance** and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (v 4).

See how important it is. ***Patient endurance together with the encouragement of the Scriptures;*** it goes back and forth. We need the encouragement of the Scriptures to get us through that endurance, but we have to be patient because endurance is built over time.

It’s not pleasant, *it’s difficult, it’s challenging*, but that’s the whole point. We always like to look at athletes admire their qualities and how strong they are, how fast they are, and all these things. But really what we don’t see is ***all the effort that they had to put in to get there!*** All the hours, sweat, tears, all of the things that they had to put in to get there. *They paid the price!*

Sometimes we look at them and like, oh wow, look how much money and the glamour and the houses and all the things that they have. Yeah, that’s great, but they had to pay for it. ***Spiritually speaking, so do we:***

- to develop that character
- to be in the Kingdom of God
- to be his sons and daughters
- to be reigning with Christ for a thousand years

It’s all worth it.

It’s so much better, so much beyond what any athlete or famous person or singer or whatever. All of the things that they have combined doesn’t even compare.

Knowledge is better than choice gold. It’s so much better what God is offering us. But we also

need to pay the price just like they do physically. ***We have to do that spiritually to pay that price!***

Not that we get ourselves into trouble. Not that we bring upon ourselves trouble just so that we say, ‘Yes, I’m going to make foolish decisions.’ That’s not what I’m talking about. *Obviously not!*

- God knows
- He knows what we can endure
- He knows the trials are going to come

God is in charge! He’s not going to allow us to go through something that we cannot endure. It’s a promise, as it says in Hebrews. *But this is all part of the plan! None of this is taking God by surprise!*

2 Corinthians 6:4: “But in everything we are confirming ourselves as servants of God...”

That’s what we are! We are servants of God! All of us are servants of God!

“...**in much endurance**, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings” (vs 4-5).

In all of these things, we are servants of God! No matter what you’re going through, we are still servants of God and we are in much endurance, ***because we have to endure all these things:***

“...tribulation, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults...” *We have to do this!* This is what God wants us to do:

- He wants us to focus on the goal.
- He wants us to focus on this endurance

that He’s building endurance!

It’s not just going to be one-time self-control, it’s going to be self-control as a way of being. It’s going to develop characters, as we read in James, that character is going to develop that hope. That’s what we want. That’s why we have to ***add endurance to self-control, to knowledge, to virtue and to faith!***

Colossians 1:9: “For this cause we also...”

This is what he’s talking about, that they learn from Epaphras, the fellow servant (v 7), and inform them of their love and the spirit of the Colossians (v 8).

Verse 9: “For this cause we also, from the day that we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; **that you may walk worthily of the Lord**, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; being

strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, **unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy**” (vs 8-11).

Did you catch that? It says “... **that you may walk worthily of the Lord...**” unto all of these things. That we are

- being fruitful in every good work
- growing in the knowledge of God
- being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory

and to all of these things unto all endurance!

- we need these things
- we need the knowledge of God
- we need the good works
- we need the power of God, which is the Holy Spirit, and we have it
 - ✓ we need the Holy Spirit
 - ✓ we need the knowledge of God
 - ✓ we need all the good works

This is to be able to have all endurance, because those trials, believe me, *they’re going to take everything out of us!*

They’re going to require everything that we have within us. We have to be prepared. It’s not all by ourselves. ***God is going to take it step-by-step.*** It’s just like back to the analogy of exercise, right? A good trainer builds that endurance little by little and doesn’t push too much the person, the athlete, because he knows he might break him or her.

God is the same! He’s not going to break us; He’s not going to give us more than what we can handle. But He’s going to build that endurance little by little.

We’ve been going through some very difficult years recently, some very tough trials. But that’s what He’s building. He’s building all of these things. We’re being strengthened with all power by His Holy Spirit.

- we are being given good works
- we’re being given the knowledge of God
- we are being built up

“...**unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy**” so that we can actually count it all joy like we read.

We count it all joy when we’re beset with various trials so that we know that the purpose of the trial is to build endurance. You will build endurance ***because if we don’t have trial, we do not build endurance!***

We will not be able to add endurance to our self-control, to our knowledge, to our virtue, to our

faith. **We're not going to be able to add those things unless we go through trials and to difficulties!**

That's why it's important to be adding and building all these things because it's having

- that faith
- that virtue
- that knowledge
- that self-control
- that endurance

not do it all the time!

Next time we're going to finish, probably finish these Partakers of the Divine Nature in the last part, talking about the last three things that we have to add.

We have to still add to our endurance. We have to add Godliness and to Godliness, brotherly love and to brotherly love, the love of God.

But for tonight, we're going to leave it here, **adding endurance and reflecting on endurance, on self-control and on knowledge.**

EE: bo/po
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- 22) Romans 5:3
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- 25) Colossians 1:9-11

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