
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership
Laurie Boyd

ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH – PART 2
Session 3

INTRODUCTION

2 Peter 1:5-7:

“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.”

The reason we want these things: (v 8):

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

V. PERSERVERENCE

“...and to self-control, perseverance;...”

- A. “Perseverance” means to keep living the Christian life, even when the times are hard.

- B. Suffering produces perseverance in us. (Romans 5:3)
 - 1. God does not promise that we will never suffer.
 - a. Elisha suffered with the illness from which he died. (2 Kings 13:14)
 - b. A woman suffered with bleeding for 12 years. (Matthew 9:20)
 - c. Job suffered the loss of children, possessions, and health. (Job 1:13-19; 2:7)
 - d. Paul suffered with a “thorn in my flesh.” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

 - 2. God uses trials to help us spiritually mature.
 - a. The testing of your faith develops perseverance. (James 1:2-3)
 - b. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete. (James 1:4)
 - c. All trials come to us for a purpose. (Romans 8:28)

- C. God calls us to stay faithful through the trials of life.
 - 1. Those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to God and continue to do good. (1 Peter 4:19; Hebrews 12:1-3)
 - a. Make it your goal to please God. (1 Corinthians 5:9 [1-10]; Philippians 3:12-16)
 - b. “Grief comes so that your faith may be proved genuine and result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus is revealed.” (1 Peter 1:6-9)

VI. GODLINESS

“...and to perseverance, godliness;...”

- A. “Godliness” means to have an attitude and lifestyle that reflects the changes God is making in you.

- B. Attitudes
 - 1. Jesus Christ had a humble attitude. (Philippians 2:5-8)

- a. Humility
 - i. Jesus left heaven's glory for us. (v 6)
 - 1) He was at the right hand of God: He was/is God. (John 1:1-3, 14)
 - 2) He came joyfully. (Hebrews 12:2)
 - 3) He came to do the Father's will. (Hebrews 10:7)
 - ii. Jesus made himself nothing. (Philippians 2:7)
 - 1) He emptied himself of the privileges of his deity (he set limits on himself), but he did not empty himself of his glory. (John 17:5)
 - iii. Jesus was made in the likeness of men. (John 1:14)
 - 1) He was born of the virgin Mary. (Luke 1:26-35)
 - 2) He grew up and became a man. (Luke 2:39; 42; 3:23)
 - 3) He ate food, slept, cried, and was filled with joy. (Mark 2:15; 4:38; John 11:35; Luke 10:21)
 - iv. Jesus came as a servant. (Philippians 2:7; Isaiah 42:1)
 - 1) He worked as a carpenter for 30 years. (Mark 6:3)
 - 2) He came to serve others. (Matthew 20:28)
 - 3) He was always obedient to the Father's will. (v 8)
 - (a) He came to do the work of God the Father. (John 4:34)
 - (b) He came to do the will of God the Father: "...that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life,..." (John 6:38-40).
 - (c) The sacrifice of animals was not enough. (Hebrews 10:11-14)
 - (d) He humbled himself to do the will of God the Father, even when it meant death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8; Matthew 26:39, 42, 44)
2. Our attitude should be like Jesus' attitude. (Philippians 2:5)
 - a. Be a servant of all. (1 Corinthians 10:24)
 - b. Serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)
 - c. Live for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1-2)

C. Our life should reflect God's way of living. (Ephesians 4:25-5:20)

1. Do not lie; speak the truth. (Ephesians 4:25)
2. When you are angry, do not sin. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

There are two types of anger.

 - o Righteous anger – an emotional response to something you think is wrong, but it is controlled by love. (Mark 3:5; Hebrews 3:10; Romans 12:19-21)
 - o Uncontrolled (sinful) anger – an anger that harms others. (Genesis 49:6-7; 1 Samuel 20:30-31; Isaiah 7:4-6)
3. Do not steal; work with your own hands to share with others. (Ephesians 4:28)
4. Do not let bad language come out of your mouth. Speak only what is helpful for building others up and giving thanks. (Ephesians 4:29; 5:4)
5. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. (Ephesians 4:30)
6. The Holy Spirit, like God and Jesus, has emotions (Luke 3:21-22; Luke 10:21).
7. Get rid of bitterness (intense hostility), rage (violent anger), anger (strong displeasure), brawling (a noisy quarrel), slander (a malicious, false statement), and malice (a desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another). (Ephesians 4:31)

Instead, be kind (a good, considerate nature [attitude]), compassionate (a deep feeling of sympathy and sorrow, with a desire to help), and forgiving (to cease to feel resentment). (Ephesians 4:32)

8. There should not be even a hint of sexual immorality (sexual acts that violate God’s standards for sex*), impurity (not morally pure and proper), greed (an excessive desire for possession or wealth). (Ephesians 5:3)

Note: * God’s standards for sex are as follows:

- a. One man and one woman [Genesis 2:24-25; 1 Timothy 3:2; 3:12; Hebrews 13:4]
- b. Do not look or think about another person who is not your husband or wife in a sexual manner. [Matthew 5:27-28]

VII. BROTHERLY KINDNESS

“...and to godliness, brotherly kindness;...”

- A. “Brotherly kindness” means to show your love for others through your actions.
- B. God is kind to us.
 1. He gives us rain and crops. (Acts 14:17)
 2. He leads us toward repentance. (Romans 2:4)
 3. He sent his son, Jesus, to us. (Ephesians 2:7)
- C. Practice kindness
 1. Help those who cannot help themselves. (Acts 4:9)
 2. Give to others as they have need. (Acts 2:44-45)
 3. Be hospitable. (Luke 10:38; Acts 10:32; Acts 16:15)
 4. Teach each other. (Acts 18:26)

VIII. LOVE

“...and to brotherly kindness, love.”

- A. “Love” means to have an unselfish, loyal concern for another person.
- B. Without love, you are nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
 1. Without God’s love in your heart for other people, whatever you do or say is just words (v. 1)
 2. Whatever your spiritual gift is (e.g. wisdom, knowledge, faith), it and you are useless in God’s work if you do not have a genuine love for others. (v. 2)
 3. Whatever you choose to do for others, love that person with the love God gives you so you can praise God through the action. (v. 3)
- C. The choice of love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
 1. Love is impossible without patience and kindness. (v. 4)
 2. Love does not envy others (v. 4); be content with what you have. (Philippians 4:11-13)
 3. Love does not boast [brag] selfishly (v. 4) (James 4:13-17); boast only in the Lord. (2 Corinthians 10:12-18)
 4. Love is not proud [self-important] (v. 4); be filled with humility. (1 Peter 5:5-6)
 5. Love is not rude [offensive] (v. 5); respect other people. (1 Timothy 6:2; 1 Peter 2:17)
 6. Love is not self-seeking (v. 5); it asks you to consider the reason you want to do something. (Psalm 4:4; Psalm 139:23)
 7. Love is not easily angered (strong displeasure) (v. 5); choose your reaction. (Proverbs 15:1; Proverbs 29:11; James 1:19-20)
 8. Love keeps no record of wrongs (v. 5); forgive, forgive, forgive. (Matthew 6:14; 18:21-22)
 9. Love does not delight in evil (v. 6); be holy. (1 Peter 1:14-16; Psalm 34:11-14)

10. Love rejoices with the truth (v. 6); the truth will set you free (John 8:32); Jesus is the truth. (John 14:6)
11. Love always protects (v. 7; Psalm 20:1; John 17:11)
12. Love always trusts (v. 7; Romans 15:13; 1 Corinthians 4:1-4)
13. Love always hopes (v. 7; Romans 4:18; Romans 5:5)
14. Love always perseveres (it keeps going) (v. 7; 1 Timothy 4:16; Hebrews 10:36)

D. The eternalness of love (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

1. Love never fails (v. 8);
 - a. God's love is eternal. (John 3:16)
 - b. You can't do anything that could stop God from loving you. (Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:4-6)
 - c. Nothing can separate us from God's love. (Romans 8:35-39)
 - d. Love each other like Christ loves us. (Ephesians 1:1-2)
2. The greatest gift is love (vs. 13)
 - Love is the greatest gift because it will outlast all the other spiritual gifts (e.g., tongues [the ability to speak other languages] will end {v. 8}, prophecy [we only know and prophesy in part] {vs. 9 and 12}, and knowledge will pass away {v 8}).

CONCLUSION

2 Peter 1:5-7: "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."

Adding all the elements of Christian growth into our lives is a life-long process. Sometimes God will work with us in a couple of areas. At other times he will focus on one area. When the day comes that we understand what He is trying to teach us, He will bring along the next thing He needs us to work on. The journey of learning is never over, but Christ said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Choose each day to follow Christ and learn to be more like him, "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What a blessing! What a journey!