

GODLINESS AND LOVE

2 Peter 1:3-8

2 Peter 1:3-8 reveals that Jesus has granted us everything needed to become like Him in character, values, attitudes and actions.

But to what end? For what purpose?

We have also discovered that becoming partakers of the divine nature; of possessing the character, values, attitudes and actions of Jesus Himself, requires effort on our part. Thus, to become partakers of the divine nature, to become like Jesus, we must make every effort to add to our core faith in Jesus virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love.

There is a logic to Peter's list. From Jesus we learn how to live the new life of His Spirit and Kingdom. We put away the attitudes and actions of the old life driven by fleshly desires. Putting away the old requires self-control, putting on the new requires steadfastness, continually doing and thinking the new over time. Over time, new habits of mind and body form and through them we are transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

Remember this saying:

Sow a thought, reap an action.

Sow an action, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character.

Sow a character, reap a destiny.

This sounds like a rather linear process i.e., first get knowledge, then bring all your urges and impulses under control and then be steadfast. The process is not linear. All of these steps are in play all the time as we let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly and we respond to the movement of the Spirit in our lives.

The good news is this: if practiced over time, knowledge, self-control and steadfastness will lead to transformation. Notice the progression:

2 PETER 1:5-7 (ESV)

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with **godliness**,

⁷ and **godliness** with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Godliness is the quality that knowledge, self-control and steadfastness, practiced steadily over time, will produce in each of us. What is godliness?

Godliness is a life wholly given to Jesus in love and service.

The focus of godliness describes the profound reorientation we undergo from self-centeredness to God-centeredness.

True godliness, true God-likeness, will always result in the final two qualities found in verse 7.

2 PETER 1:7 (ESV)

⁷ and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**.

Love is the ultimate manifestation of godliness. If we do not love we are not godly; we are not partaking of the divine nature. God is love. If we do not love, we are not like Jesus. Love is the ultimate goal of our transformation, of our sanctification. Peter writes of two expressions of love.

The first is brotherly affection which comes from the familiar sounding Greek word, *philadelphia*.

Brotherly affection is tender fondness for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

If we love someone, what is precious to them will be precious to us. If we love Jesus, what is precious to Jesus will be precious to us. How can we love Jesus and not have brotherly affection for the members of His family? But partaking of the divine nature will transform us to love as God loves – as God agapes.

Love (agape) is the genuine inner readiness and longing to secure the good for others.¹

Agape is the supreme attribute of God. Philippians 2 captures the readiness and longing of Jesus to secure our good (Philippians 2:5-11).

Jesus emptied and humbled Himself readily and willingly because agape is the essence of the divine nature.

Through steady, patient practice of these disciplines/qualities of 2 Peter 1:5-7 we will, in increasing measure, be transformed into the character of Jesus. The supreme characteristics of our lives will be brotherly affection and love (agape).

And isn't that a hopeful thought!

Grace News & Needs

Men's Ministry – Pickleball today, 4PM, Estates Courts.

John Thompson Memorial Service & Luncheon – next Saturday, Nov. 9th, 11AM.

Operation Christmas Child - begins next Sunday, Nov. 10th.

Family Business Meeting – Sunday afternoon, Nov. 17th, 4PM.

November VOM – Disposable Antiseptic Wipes (individually wrapped).

¹ Dallas Willard, Renovation of the Heart, p. 24.