

"The Building Block of Virtue"

II Peter 1:3-9

Open: *A review of what faith is.*

- Faith is believing, faith is doubting, faith is choosing to act on the belief instead of the doubt.
- Faith is the foundation, not the apex, of Christianity. So many Christians never grow spiritually because they never step out by faith.
- God intended for you to grow in your spiritual life. **James 2:17** tells us that proof of an increase of faith is seen by an increase of works.
- We ended last week by discussing how growth in the Christian life is adding too; not just building and neglecting. **ILL:** *A balanced athlete*

Tran: *A look at the word virtue in the Bible*

- The word "virtue" or a form of that word, is used *only 10 times* in the Bible.
- Four times the word "virtue" is used as a positive description of a character trait in a woman.
 - **Ruth 3:11**
 - **Prov. 12:4**
 - **Prov. 31:10, 29**
- Three times the word "virtue" is referred to as something that left Jesus as He was healing people.
 - **Mk. 5:30; Lk. 8:46**
 - **Lk. 6:19**
- Three times the word "virtue" is discussed as a character trait or lifestyle that Christians should demonstrate.
 - **Phil. 4:8**
 - **II Peter 1:3,5**

I. **Understanding Biblical Virtue.**

A. **Virtue = A transforming of ones life** and conduct to a more ethical and more principled uprightness.

- **Rom. 12:1-2** *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."*

- Faith says, "I will not **Conform** [to the world]" = **The bonding of one object to another** on a molecular level.
 - Faith says, "I will not conform to the world's standards of how I should live my life; instead, I will yield my body to God's standards, since my body is His and He knows what's best for me."
 - Faith says, "I will not allow my body to be joined to that which is unholy, I will keep my body pure and separated for the use of something or someone that is a greater good." **I Cor. 6:15-20**
"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. [16] What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. [17] But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. [18] Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. [19] What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? [20] For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

- ii. Virtue says, "I will **Transform**" = **To change the appearance, nature, or character of something or someone.** [*ILL: Metamorphose.*]
- a) Virtue allows ones mind to be transformed from carnal to spiritual. **Phil. 2:5** "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*"
 - b) Virtue allows ones life to be transformed from the carnal to the spiritual. **Phil. 3:21** "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: {**or, we live or conduct ourselves as citizens of heaven**} [21] Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. "*

- *ILL: Faith says, "I'll join the Marines because I believe they can turn me into a better person."; While virtue says, "I'll choose to live the life they tell me to live so I can become that person."*
- Faith without virtue will result in a dishonorably discharged soldier; while virtue without faith will result in a soldier who will be killed in action [KIA] for not following orders.

II. Adding virtue to faith.

- We are not to leave faith behind to pursue virtue (a more principled life).
 - We are to continue to live by faith and add to our faith virtue.
 - We can not fall into the trap of believing that man can provide a more principled life with something that seems more intellectual than what God has already laid out for us in the Bible.
- A. Virtue is the result of acting upon the faith...a new life (direction, destination, and desires).
II Cor. 5: 17 "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*"
 - B. Because of my faith in Jesus, I'm a new Creature on the inside, and because of virtue I will not conform to the world. I will allow virtue to bring my inward newness to the outside.
I John 2:6 "*He that saith he abideth in him [God] ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*"
 - C. We are His by faith, but it isn't to stop there. There is to be a change...Virtue is the result of me acting by faith. **II Tim. 2:19** "*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal (Holy Spirit), The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, **let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.***"
 - D. Virtue is proof of faith in the Christian life, because it is a visible separation from things that will hinder that Christians relationship with God. **I Cor. 6:17-18** "*Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. [18] And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*"
 - I am not to refrain from conforming to the world to make myself look better than them; I am to be transformed by acting upon my faith, and depart from the iniquity of the world **so that I can grow into being a vessel of honor that God can use for His glory.** **II Tim. 2:21** "*If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*"

Close:

- Faith is not the pinnacle of Christian growth, but the basis or springboard for spiritual growth.
- Virtue says I will change my outward appearance by acting on faith, so I can be a vessel unto honour.

Phil. 2:5

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”

“Review Questions”

1. God didn't intend for you to remain at the same spiritual level your whole life, He intended for you to ?????. **Grow.**
2. What is Virtue? = **A transforming of ones life.**
3. What does it mean to conform? = **The bonding of one object to another.**
4. What does the word transform mean? = **To change the appearance of.**
5. What is the primary purpose of choosing by faith to allow God to transform us to a better lifestyle? **So I can grow into being a vessel of honor that God can use for his glory.**