

"All Things..."

MacDonald, William The Berean Call

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ACCORDING AS HIS DIVINE POWER hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.... (2 Peter:1:3-10)

Just as [God's] power saves us in the first place, so His power energizes us to live holy lives from then on. The order is—first life, then godliness. The gospel is the power of God to save from the penalty of sin and from its power, from damnation and from defilement. The "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" include the high priestly work of Christ, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the activity of angelic agencies on our behalf, the new life we receive at conversion, and the instruction of the word of God.

The power to live a holy life comes through the knowledge of Him who called us....To know Him is eternal life (Jn:17:3) and progress in knowing Him is progress in holiness. The better we get to know Him, the more we become like Him....

Included among the "all things" which God's power has given to promote a life of holiness are His exceeding great and precious promises in the Word. It is estimated that there are at least 30,000 promises in the Bible. John Bunyan once said, "The pathway of life is strewn so thickly with the promises of God that it is impossible to take one step without treading on one of them."

Because [God] has given us all that is necessary for the divine life, we must be diligent in cultivating it. God does not make us holy against our will or without our involvement. There must be desire, determination, and discipline on our part.

In the development of the Christian character, Peter assumes *faith*What is necessary is that faith be supplemented by seven elements of holiness, not adding these one after another, but manifesting all the graces all the time....

The first characteristic is *virtue* . This may mean piety, goodness of life, or moral excellence....It may also be that virtue here means spiritual courage before a hostile world, the strength to stand for what is right....

Courage is to be supplemented with *knowledge* , especially the knowledge of spiritual truth. This emphasizes the importance of studying the Word of God and obeying its sacred precepts....

God calls every Christian to a life of *discipline* [temperance].... the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God....in prayer...in Bible study...in the use of time...in curbing bodily appetites...in sacrificial discipline (1 Cor:9:26-27)....

[Temperance] should be supplemented with *perseverance* [patience], that is, patient endurance of persecution and adversity. We need to be constantly reminded that the Christian life is a challenge to endure. It is not enough to start off in a blaze of glory; we must persevere in spite of difficulties. The idea that Christianity is an unending round of mountaintop experiences is unrealistic. There is the daily routine, the menial task, the disappointing circumstance, the bitter grief, the shattered plan. Perseverance is the art of bearing up and pressing on in the face of all that seems to be against us.

The next virtue is *godliness* . Our lives should be like God, with all that means in the way of practical holiness....that others will know we are children of the heavenly Father....Paul reminds us, "...godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tm 4:8).

Brotherly kindness identifies us to the world as Christ's disciples: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn:13:35).

Love of the brethren leads to love [charity] for all mankind. This is not primarily a matter of the emotions but of the will. It is not a sentimental exhilaration to experience but a commandment to obey. In the NT sense, love is supernatural. An unbeliever cannot love as the Bible commands because he does not have divine life. It takes divine life to love one's enemies and to pray for one's executioners. Love manifests itself in giving. For instance, "God so loved the world, that He

gave..." (Jn:3:16). "Christ also loved the church and gave..." (Eph:5:25). We can show our love by giving our time, our talents, our treasures, and our lives for others....

These seven graces make a full-orbed Christian character. There is either advance or decline in the pathway of discipleship--no standing still. There is strength and security in moving forward; danger and failure in retreat. Failure to persevere in the development of Christian character leads to barrenness, unfruitfulness, blindness, shortsightedness, and forgetfulness....

Barrenness : The guidance of the Holy Spirit eliminates barren activity and insures maximum efficiency. Otherwise, we are shadow-boxing, or sewing without thread.

Unfruitfulness : It is possible to have considerable knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet to be unfruitful in that knowledge....Inflow without outgo killed the Dead Sea, and it kills productivity in the spiritual realm as well.

Shortsightedness : ...The form of blindness in which man lives for the present rather than the future. He is so occupied with material things that he neglects the spiritual.

Blindness : Whoever lacks the seven characteristics listed in verse 5-7 is blind....He lacks discernment of true spiritual values. He lives in a dark world of shadows.

Forgetfulness : Finally the man who lacks the seven virtues has forgotten that he was cleansed from old sins. The truth of his redemption has lost its grip on him. He is going back in the direction from which he was once rescued. He is toying with sins that caused the death of God's Son.

Peter exhorts his readers to confirm their call and election....By manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, we can provide unmistakable evidence that we truly belong to Him. A holy life proves the reality of our salvation.

Living a holy life will not keep us from stumbling. It is not a question of falling into eternal perdition; the word of Christ delivers us from that. Rather, it refers to falling into sin, disgrace, or disuse. If we fail to progress in divine things, we are in danger of wrecking our lives. But if we walk in the Spirit, we will be spared from being disqualified for His service. God guards the Christian who moves forward for Him. The peril lies in spiritual idleness and blindness.

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