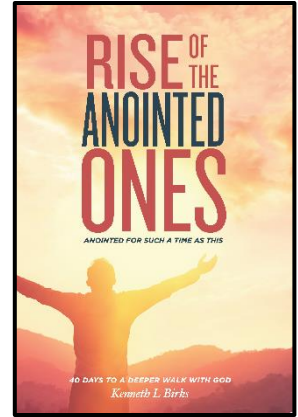


The Necessity of Fruitful Characteristics

When we think about essential qualities that are needed during difficult times, we cannot afford to miss the fruit of the Spirit. These are character traits, designed to keep us from stumbling and help us to hold firmly to the path no matter what season we may be experiencing.

2 Peter 1:5-8 *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*



The above passage mentions things we are to add diligently to our faith. These are character traits we must put some effort into if they are to become a part of our new nature. These attributes take root in our lives as we yield to God's Spirit. As we put on the new man created after Christ, it causes an agreement in the Spirit that allows God to clothe us with these excellent attributes. So Paul said, "To this end, I also labor, striving according to His working that works in me mightily."¹

For the Holy Spirit to work mightily on our behalf, we must be equally yoked to what He desires to do. Otherwise, we end up frustrating the grace of God, and He is unable to work on our behalf, which is why Paul said, "To this end, I also labor."

Have you ever been involved with another person on a project only to discover you must work equally together to complete the task? You were very zealous to get started and do an excellent job, but you soon realized the person appointed to work with you didn't care about the project nor pull their weight. As a result, you could not finish the project as a team with excellence. In the process, the only thing you accomplished was frustrating one another.

¹ Colossians 1:29

I think this often happens in the spiritual realm. In our laboring together with God, He desires to work mightily on our behalf while we are less than diligent and lack enthusiasm. As a result, we frustrate the grace of God, and the work He desires to do in us doesn't get done.² It's unfinished! Our lack of enthusiasm quenches or limits what He wants to do in and through our lives. To activate God's grace or supernatural ability, we must agree with Him by yielding wholeheartedly to His desires.

With this in mind, let's look at the attributes mentioned to understand why they are so essential no matter what season we may be going through.

- Virtue is voluntary obedience to truth and the strength that comes from straining, stretching, and extending.³
- Knowledge is understanding the truth of God's word applied to our lives. It follows virtue or willing obedience. When we obey His Word or Spirit, we receive further knowledge and understanding of His ways and purpose.
- Self-Control is the ability to control your emotions and desires or their expression in your behavior, especially in difficult situations. Self-control requires instant obedience to the initial promptings of God's Spirit.
- Perseverance is a continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition: the action or condition or an instance of persevering: steadfastness.⁴
- Godliness is Christian character and much more. It involves pure devotion to God, which results in a life that is pleasing to Him.
- Brotherly Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. It includes being thoughtful, compassionate, warmhearted, and unselfish towards others.

As Peter closes this section, he admonishes us to make our calling and election sure by diligently adding these fruitful characteristics to our lives. If we do, we assure ourselves we will never stumble nor lose our way but will be abundantly guaranteed and supplied an entrance into the everlasting kingdom. All this takes



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² Galatians 2:21 KJV I do not frustrate the grace of God: NKJV I do not set the grace of God aside.

³ Noah Webster's "Definition of Virtue"

⁴ Merriam Webster Dictionary

delighting in God, trusting in Him, and resting in Him as you allow these attributes to be worked out. We are to strain, stretch and extend in doing so.

1 Peter 1:10-11 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Looking to God in All Things

Looking to God in all things, we wait expectantly for what's promised.
Seeking to be diligent, we labor diligently together for what's needed.
Given wisdom from above, we yield to Him who supplies our need.
Looking to Him in His sufficiency, we strive accordingly as He adds.
Adding to our faith, He fills our vessels with fruit from above.

Looking to God in all things, we stretch forth in obedience for virtue.
Strengthened through stretching and straining, we rejoice in truth.
Giving ourselves freely to Him who fills all in all, we press forward.
As truth takes hold, freedom from that which once bound releases.
With freedom from past bondages, we're now free to run vigorously.

Looking to God for knowledge, His word guides and directs in all things.
With obedience to His word and Spirit, understanding enlightens.
Filled with the knowledge of His will, we're set free to pursue destiny.
In times of difficulty, we gain knowledge of His ways, leading to peace.
As peace and surety take hold, our hope in Him anchors our soul.

Looking to Him for self-control, our emotions and desires are kept in check.
Emotions and desires in check, we don't get bogged down in worthlessness.
Responding quickly to the Spirit's promptings, we flow freely into His purposes.
Filled with zeal towards His purposes and will, we delight in His working.
Expressing His character in all that we do, self-control leads victoriously.

Looking to God in all things, adding perseverance to our faith, we overcome.
With perseverance in place, difficulties, failures, and opposition won't hinder.
Pressing forward in opposition, we keep Satan in check, obtaining victory.
No longer bound by failure and insecurity we continually press forward.
Persevering under all pressure, His Spirit reigns in all liberality for gain.

Looking to Him alone in all godliness, we rise above all that defames.
With pure devotion, He sees those who are given wholly to His purposes.
Hearts purely devoted to His purposes; He embraces with His Sovereignty.
Given to His sovereign purposes with pure devotion, we sing His praises.
Fruitful in all that pertains to godliness, His gifts spill forth in abundance.

Looking to Him for brotherly kindness, our fruitfulness extends to all.
Compassionate and unselfish toward others, we rise in brotherly kindness.
Generous to all who come our way, our generosity extends His blessings.
Thoughtful and warm-hearted our brotherly kindness ignites others.
Looking upon all who pass our way, friendliness leaves a kind fragrance.