

Recipe. 2 Peter 1:3-8 Sunday 23 October 2011

“seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. ⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:3-8

Beloved in The Lord,

Those of you that know me, know that I have a passion for cooking. I find meal preparation very satisfying. For most of my creations in the kitchen, I use a recipe. Someone else has done the experimenting and worked out the quantities and so forth. Usually, if I am diligent in keeping to the recipe, the resulting dish is good.

In His Word, the Bible, God gives us a recipe for the Christian life. If our goal is to love with God’s love (which it should be) then today’s text gives us a clear recipe for achieving that goal.

The foundation of everything is faith. Without faith we cannot please God. We read in Hebrews 11:6: ***“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”***

So then faith is the foundation of our relationship with God. When we place our faith in Jesus alone, then His blood cleanses us from sin and through Him we can draw near to our Heavenly Father. When we approach Him in faith in Jesus we are on the right road.

So then faith is the foundation and our goal is to live in God’s love. In order to reach the goal and in order to live lives that bear fruit for God’s kingdom, and that bring Him glory then there are six steps that we must take to reach the goal.

Peter writes: ***“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.”***

The six steps are: moral excellence – knowledge – self-control – perseverance- godliness – brotherly kindness.

Before we take a closer look at each of these please note that Peter writes that we are to apply all diligence for this very reason. Some translations read Therefore applying all diligence. When we see a therefore we need to stop and ask what it is there for. The answer is in the preceding verses: ***“His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”***

Peter is telling us that God’s grace and power has granted us everything we need through Jesus Christ. In His love He provides for us. He has saved us and granted us eternal life. Therefore we are to be diligent and not lazy in our Christian walk. We should be seeking to ever grow and improve and mature. We are to be a tree that is growing and not a stake driven into the ground that slowly rots.

God desires and expects that we would bear fruit for His Kingdom. Our life is to be a living testimony of His love. Our light is to shine brightly and our salt is to be salty.

Much the same as we have to put in effort to ensure that our gardens grow, so too in our Christian walk. We weed, fertilise and water our gardens. Without any effort the only things that grow are weeds.

Let us now take a closer look at the six steps or things Peter mentions.

The first ingredient we are to add to our faith is moral excellence. We strive to be morally without reproach in all areas of our lives. Our behaviour at all times is to reflect who we represent, namely The Lord Jesus Christ. It is vital that we remember that very often our actions speak louder than our words. The Christian message has suffered greatly over the years because of a lack of moral excellence amongst Christians.

God’s standards are perfect and higher than mans. God never compromises and neither should we in matters of faith. We must strive to live so that we are morally beyond reproach. We can only do this if we stay close to Jesus.

The next ingredient is knowledge. Knowledge comes from God’s Word. The more we read and study the Bible, the greater our knowledge will be. God’s Word is Truth and when we know the truth it sets us free. It is not so important which part of the Bible we read because all Scripture is God’s Word and teaches us about Him and His ways. Paul wrote to his son in the faith Timothy: ***“¹⁴ You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so***

that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. “ (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Did you notice Paul wrote “All Scripture”? Every single Word is God inspired by His Holy Spirit.

The next ingredient in our recipe is self-control. That is not a popular concept in our modern day culture. People like to follow their desires when they want, how they want, as much as they want.

But we are to exercise restraint – self control. Jesus clearly taught:

“MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.”)(Matthew 4:4)

Self-control is an important discipline. It teaches us to live by the Spirit and not by our carnal nature – the flesh. Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians:

¹² All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. “ (1 Corinthians 6:12-13)

Self-control helps us to be free from the things that control us and keep us in bondage.

To self-control we are to add perseverance. We need to remind ourselves that God works to a different time-table than we do. We need to patiently run the race of life with perseverance. Life is a marathon, not a 100 metre sprint.

Many times we must force ourselves on. If we keep our eyes firmly focused on Jesus then we can and will persevere. We read in Hebrews: ***¹ Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. “ (Hebrews 12:1-2)***

If we keep our eyes on Jesus then we will persevere and finish the race.

The next ingredient is godliness. Godliness can be defined as a temperament controlled by the Holy Spirit. This is something that is sadly missing in many Christians. We have to a great degree lost the awesome wonder of God’s holiness. God is Holy. We are able to approach Him only because of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus we are made God’s children, yet even though He is our Father, He is also the Holy God. We are to live in Holy fear all the time. When we do then that keeps us humble and helps us to give God the glory for all things.

To godliness we are to add brotherly kindness. Remember the cross has two beams. The vertical and horizontal. The vertical is our relationship to God and the horizontal our relationships with each other. We cannot claim to love God, and yet hate our brother. The greatest commandment has two parts:

“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.”³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment.³⁹ The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ (Matthew 22:37-39)

You see love for God and love for neighbour go hand in hand.

These six steps or ingredients added to faith, produce Love. Godly love – Agape.

All of the ingredients are vital. You cannot skip a few and expect a good result. When you bake a cake you cannot say oh well I’ll skip the butter and sugar. I’ll just use the other ingredients. It won’t be a successful cake.

In closing let me reiterate the six steps or ingredients. To faith add: : moral excellence – knowledge – self-control – perseverance- godliness – brotherly kindness. The result then is LOVE.

May God help us to love and bear fruit for His Kingdom and glory.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible