

2 Peter 1:6-7 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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2 Peter: True and False Prophecy
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Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

2 PETER TRUE AND FALSE PROPHECY

Cultivation of Christlike Character			Condemnation of False Teachers			Confidence in the Return of Christ		
Greeting to Saints 2Pe 1:1-2	Growth in Christ 2Pe 1:3-14	Grounds of Belief 2Pe 1:15-21	Danger of False Teachers 2Pe 2:1-3	Demise of False Teachers 2Pe 2:4-9	"Decor" of False Teachers 2Pe 2:10-22	Mockers in the Last Days 2Pe 3:1-7	Manifest Day of the Lord 2Pe 3:8-10	Maturity in light of that Day 2Pe 3:11-18
	Know Your Salvation	Know Your Scripture		Know Your Adversaries			Know Your Prophecy	
	True Prophecy (True Knowledge)			False Prophets (False Teachers)			Final Prophecy (Day of the Lord)	
	Holiness			Heresy			Hope	
	Development of Faith			Denunciation of False Teachers			Design of The Future	

2 Peter 1:6 and in your [knowledge](#), [self-control](#), and in your [self-control](#), [perseverance](#), and in your [perseverance](#), [godliness](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [en de te gnosei ten egkrateian, en de te| egkrateia ten hupomonen, en de te hupomone ten eusebeian,](#)

Amplified: And in [exercising] knowledge [develop] self-control, and in [exercising] self-control [develop] steadfastness (patience, endurance), and in [exercising] steadfastness [develop] godliness (piety), ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

NLT: Knowing God leads to self-control. Self-control leads to patient endurance, and patient endurance leads to godliness. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: your knowledge by self-control, your self-control by the ability to endure. Your endurance too must always be accompanied by devotion to God; that in turn must have in it the quality of brotherliness, and your brotherliness must lead on to Christian love. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: and in the experiential knowledge self-control, and in the self-control patience, and in the patience godliness ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: and in the knowledge the temperance, and in the temperance the endurance, and in the endurance the piety,

IN YOUR KNOWLEDGE, SELF-CONTROL : en de te gnosei,ten egkrateian

- See [THE UNFOLDING OF CHARACTER](#) - James Hastings
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- **Self-control** - Acts 24:25+; 1Co 9:25+; Gal 5:23+; Titus 1:8+; Titus 2:2+

THE LADDER OF VIRTUES

"In" (**en**) means "in connection with" the preceding.

How is **self-control** related to **gnosis**? Obedience is the key. Doing what you know to be true (ultimately only possible with the enablement of the Spirit).

Gnosis involves a diligent study and pursuit of truth in the Word of God and then a dutiful obedience to that truth out of love for the one Who has made us partakers of His divine nature.

Self Control - Gal 5:23-see notes on this component of the fruit of the Spirit.

Self Control ([1466](#)) (**egkrateia/enkrateia** from **en** = in + **kratos** = dominion, mastery, power to rule <> the stem **krat-** speaks of power or lordship) means literally dominion within. The idea is *holding oneself in* or the ability to take a grip of oneself. It is self-control proceeding out from within oneself, but not by oneself, and for the believer is only possible by depending on the power of the indwelling Spirit (cf "fruit" - Gal 5:23).

This meaning is similar to our modern expression "Get a grip" which speaks of the ability to get a grip on oneself. As discussed below this virtue was highly regarded by the great secular Greek writers such as Aristotle.

Egkrateia has reference to restraining passions and appetites. It points to the inner power to control one's own desires and appetites, and in context is a fruit of "true knowledge" (**epignosis**). As with **meekness**, however, this grace (self control) does not apply to God, Who does not need to restrain Himself for everything He does is perfectly righteous. In His incarnation Christ was the epitome of self-control. He was never tempted or tricked into doing or saying anything that was not consistent with His Father's will and His own divine nature.

Egkrateia refers to self-control especially in the area of one's sexuality (although it by no means is restricted to sexual desire) and the loss of sexual self-control leads to the opposite effect which is immorality and impurity. For example we find idea in secular Greek writings like Xenophon (Mem.i.2, 1) speaking of Socrates, who was (*egkratestatos*) **most temperate** as to sexual pleasures and pleasures of the appetite.

Here is a secular use of a word related to **egkrateia** - Philostratus, Gym. 25: The trainer must know whether or not the young athlete

is self-controlled or not, *ei egkratos kratos*, if he is a drinker or a glutton; 52: "If athletes have just yielded to the pleasures of Venus, it is better not to exercise them. Are they perhaps men who will take shameful pleasure rather than wreaths and the proclamations of heralds?"

The Theological Lexicon of the NT says that *egkrateia* is

from **kratos**, "force"; the *enkrates* is the person who is master of himself; the **akrates** is the one who cannot contain himself, who is lacking in power. From the time of Socrates, who made *enkrateia* the basis and foundation of all the virtues, and Aristotle, who distinguished between the perfectly chaste person who knows no impure desires (*sophron*) and the continent person (*enkrates*) who feels their power but resists them (Eth. Nic. 7.1–11; pp. 1145a–1152a), this control over impulses and this tempering of the passions are considered among the Greeks as an element of prudence-temperance (*sophrosune*), and consequently an essential virtue for the honest person.

The people of the end-times will not have it (2Ti3:3-note, **akrates**); it is not so much that they lead a dissolute life, but rather that they cannot control themselves, and so they no longer act as human beings—they are amoral beings.

In the first century ad, self-control is especially a virtue of the religious, who master their passions, and of the leader, who cannot direct others unless he is *sui compos*. According to Onasander 1.2–3, the first quality of a good general is to be *sophron* (so as not to be distracted from duty by sensual pleasures) and **enkrates**, because slavery to the passions would cause him to lose all authority.

Among the Essenes, the candidate had to supply evidence of his temperance during a trial period (Josephus, War 2.138; cf. 120: "These men hold temperance and restraint of the passions to be virtues"). It is through temperance that the worshipers of Isis reached God (Plutarch, De Is. et Os. 2), as also the magi and Brahmins (Dio Chrysostom, Or. 49.7; cf. Hippolytus, Haer. 1.24.1–4) or the Egyptian priests after the model of Cheremon (Porphyry, Abst. 4.6–8; cf. A. J. Festugière, Hermès Trismégiste, vol. 1, pp. 30ff.). (Spicq, C., & Ernest, J. D. Theological Lexicon of the New Testament. 1:60. Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson)

NIDNTT says that "*egkrateia* denotes more the power and control one has over oneself, whereas *sophrosyne* (in classic Greek. one of the four cardinal virtues) describes more strongly the proper moderation which does not overstep the set limits. *egkrateia* and *egkratēs* contain the root *krat-* which means power or control. *egkratēs* accordingly denotes a man who has power in the physical or intellectual sense (the opposite being *akrates*). *egkrateia* is also used absolutely of having power over oneself. It then means self-control in the sense of perseverance, steadfastness or restraint with reference to sexual matters (the opposite being *akrasia*). The idea of **egkrateia** is first introduced into ethics by Socrates as one of the chief virtues (cf. Xen., Mem. 1, 54). Plato and Aristotle adopted it in turn. For Plato *egkrateia*, the control of the sensual drives, is basically a popular expression for *sophrosune* (cf. Phaedr., 256b; Rep., 403e). According to Aristotle, the one who is *egkrates* has strong desires but is able to suppress them, whereas the one who is *sophron* is elevated above all such fierce drives (Magna Moralia, 2, 6, 1203b 13 ff.). Among the **Stoics** ([Stoicism](#)), **egkrateia** was taken as a sign of human freedom. It was part of being truly human to moderate one's desires, particularly one's sexual drive and enjoyment of food and drink. The Neo-Pythagoreans developed a dualistic system: the body must be kept in check through asceticism, so that the soul may rise to God. In making one fit for cultic worship, asceticism also played a large part in the ancient world (Pure, art. aJgnov"). Philo praised *egkrateia* as transcendence over one's desires and passions (Spec.Leg., 1, 149, 173; 2, 195; 4, 112). The Essenes at the time of Jesus are known to have recommended celibacy, and also to have lived ascetically in various other ways, e.g. in regard to possessions, food and vigils (Josephus, War, 2, 120, 138, 150; cf. H. Ringgren, The Faith of Qumran, 1963, 139 f., 237 f.). (See further W. Grundmann, TDNT II 340 f.) ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Wuest says that **egkrateia/enkrateia** means "holding the passions and desires in hand. The word was used of the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites. The Greeks used it of the one who had his sex passions under control. The papyri (Moulton and Milligan) quote the phrase, "a trusty dispenser of continence." One can see what a blessing the fruit of the Spirit is when it provides the saint with a mastery of his sex passions (Ga 5:23, temperance, *egkrateia*, self-control)...**The Christian is a free moral agent, not a machine, and is expected by God to exercise self-control by a free act of his will, doing this however in the energy which the Holy Spirit supplies to the yielded Christian. It is a happy combination and interworking of the free will of the believer and the grace of God.** ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

MacArthur writes that **Egkrateia/enkrateia** "was used of athletes who sought self-discipline and self-restraint, even beating their bodies into submission (cf. 1Co 9:27). They would also abstain from rich foods, wine, and sexual activity in order to focus all their strength and attention on their training regimen. False theology (such as that propounded by the heretics of Peter's day and

discussed in chapters 2 and 3) inevitably divorces faith from conduct because it cannot deliver the soul from sin's harmful effects and forces its followers to battle for self-control on their own and indulge their lusts (cf. 1Ti 6:3, 4, 5; 2Ti 2:14, 16, 17, 18, 19; 1Jn 4:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Jude 16, 17, 18, 19). ([MacArthur, J: 2 Peter And Jude. Moody](#))

Egkrateia is used only 3 times in the NT (Acts 24:25; Gal 5:23; 2Pe 1:6 - no uses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint) and is translated temperance in the KJV and self-control in the NASB.

Egkrateia points to an inner power to control one's old desires and cravings (Jas 1:14-note) inherited from Adam (Ro 5:12-note). Sometimes saints forget that even though they have been crucified with Christ (Ga 2:20-note; Ro 6:6-note) and are dead to the power of Sin in their life (Ro 6:11-), the old desires are still latent and able to be activated in our mortal bodies as Paul clearly taught writing...

But I say, **walk** (present imperative) by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the **flesh** (Gal 5:16-note; cf Ro 6:12, 13-note where the command to not let Sin reign implies that it will still try to reign as king if we let it.)

Observe: (1) The old **flesh** is still an active force the believer must learn to contend with (see Piper's depiction of the **flesh** as a **dragon**). (2) Paul outlines the plan for victory over the flesh in this verse: **(a)** First submit to the Spirit's control and empowerment. This is not a suggestion but a **command** and calls for a dependence that the believer never outgrows no matter how old we are in Christ! **(b)** And when we yield to the Spirit we will not submit to the flesh.

Caution: Don't "reverse" the order- don't first "try" **not** to do the things your old flesh is tempting you to carry out (Jas 1:14-note), thinking that if you subdue the flesh you are thereby "walking by the Spirit." Paul stated Spirit first for a reason. If you try to suppress the flesh it is a subtle (or overt depending on what you do) form of legalism and places you under the law which will only arouse the flesh (See Ro 7:5-note).

William Barclay - Aristotle distinguishes four states in life. There is **sophrosune**, in which passion has been entirely subjugated to reason; we might call it perfect temperance. There is **akolasia**, which is the precise opposite; it is the state in which reason is entirely subjugated to passion; we might call it unbridled lust. In between these two states there is **akrasia**, in which reason fights but passion prevails; we might call it incontinence. There is **egkrateia**, in which reason fights against passion and prevails; we call it self-control, or self-mastery. **Egkrateia** is one of the great Christian virtues; and the place it holds is an example of the realism of the Christian ethic. That ethic does not contemplate a situation in which a man is emasculated of all passion; it envisages a situation in which his passions remain, but are under perfect control and so become his servants, not his tyrants...Plato uses **egkrateia** of self-mastery. It is the spirit which has mastered its desires and its love of pleasure. It is used of the athlete's discipline of his body (1Co 9:25 - uses the verbal form **egkrateuomai**) and of the Christian's mastery of sex (1Co 7:9 -uses the verbal form **egkrateuomai**). Secular Greek uses it of the virtue of an Emperor who never lets his private interests influence the government of his people. It is the virtue which makes a man so master of himself that he is fit to be the servant of others. It was Paul's belief and experience that the Christian died with Christ and rose again to a life, new and clean, in which the evil things of the old self were gone and the lovely things of the Spirit had come to fruition. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press](#))

TDNT writes...

1. This group takes its sense from the stem krat- denoting power or lordship. Thus enkrates means "having power over all things and the self," enkrateia means "dominion over the self or something," with the nuances of "steadfastness" and "self-control" (opposite akrasia), and enkrateuesthai means "to compose oneself."
2. enkrateia is an important term in philosophical ethics. Socrates regards it as a cardinal virtue, and Aristotle and the Stoics discuss it fully, though the latter subordinate it to sophrosune. The idea is that of people who freely control all things, maintaining freedom in self-restraint.
3. Philo has a high regard for enkrateia as superiority expressed in self-restraint. He links it to an asceticism deriving from dualism. The Essenes, too, value it highly, and it has religious significance in the Hermetic writings. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

The Greek word **egkrateia** has the idea of to get a grip on one's self and one's passions! Many of the early Christian heresies taught that since the body was evil (they claimed) it was not necessary to curb fleshly lusts, only to think correctly.

The writer of proverbs addresses this issue of "self control" writing that

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. (Pr 16:32)

Paul uses **egkrateia** in his appearance before Felix, and in this context apparently referring to self-control in the area of sex. When Paul spoke before Felix and his wife Drusilla,

“discussing righteousness, **self-control** and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, ‘Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you’ (Acts 24:24,25).

Comment: Felix had stolen Drusilla from her former husband and was therefore living with her in an adulterous relationship. The sexual self-control of which Paul spoke pertained to lustful passion and Felix understood what Paul was saying. The message to the governor was that he was living contrary to God’s righteousness by refusing to discipline his sexual desire, and thus was subject to God’s judgment.

In Galatians Paul writing of the fruit of the Holy Spirit says that there is no law" against "gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:23note)

Plato uses **egkrateia** to refer to self-mastery. It is the spirit which has mastered its desires and its love of pleasure. Secular Greek uses **egkrateia** of the virtue of an Emperor who never lets his private interests influence the government of his people. It is the virtue which makes a man so master of himself that he is fit to be the servant of others.

In Peter’s day, **self-control** was used of athletes who were to be self-restrained and self-disciplined and was crucial to victory in the intense competition of the Olympic Games. Greeks used this term especially to describe one who had his sexual passions under control, but the NT extends the meaning to all areas of life where the discernment between good and evil is important (cf 1Th 5:21, 22).

Socrates regarded it as a cardinal virtue and Philo described it as superiority expressed in self-restraint. A Christian is to control the flesh, the passions, and the bodily desires, rather than allowing himself to be controlled by them (1Co 9:24,25, 26, 27).

It is critical to understand that **self-control** is not a legalistic abstinence, but is an attitude only possible by divine enablement. Now because believers are partakers of the divine nature (2Pe 1:4), as our we learn to submit to the Spirit (**the fruit of the Spirit is...self-control** - Ga 5:22-note; Ga 5:23-note), He empowers us to bear the fruit of self control when we are tempted to commit sin. The believer manifests an exemplary life on the outside because he has chosen to yield to the Spirit’s control on the inside.

Self-control means mastering one’s emotions rather than being controlled by them. Lack of self control played a significant role in shameful, dishonorable deeds of the false teachers Peter exposes Chapter 2. Their claims to "liberty" led to licentiousness (cp Jude 1:4) rather than life as it was meant to be lived. These men instead of exhibiting **self control** were **controlled by self**, and self’s sensuality, greed and fleshly desires. These false teachers believed and taught the damning lie that knowledge freed people from the need to control their passions. Peter stamps as false any "spiritual" doctrine or system that claims that knowledge emancipates men from the obligations of morality. Biblical Christianity says that freedom is not the right to do as you please, but the power to do as you should!

Holman Bible Dictionary on **self-control** - Modern translations' term for several Greek words indicating a sober, temperate, calm, and dispassionate approach to life, having mastered personal desires and passions. Biblical admonitions expect God's people to exercise self-control (Proverbs 25:28; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 3:3; Galatians 5:23; 2 Timothy 1:7; Titus 1:8; 2 Peter 1:6). Freedom in Christ does not give believers liberty to cast off all moral restraint as some members in Galatia and other churches apparently believed. Nor does it call for a withdrawal from life and its temptations. It calls for a self-disciplined life following Christ's example of being in the world but not of the world. ([Self-Control - Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

Hiebert quotes Barnett on the interrelationship among these traits "Where virtue (moral excellence) guided by knowledge, disciplines desire and makes it the servant instead of the master of life, self-control may be said to supplement faith.

The OT gives a dramatic picture of **self-control** where Solomon writes

Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit. (Pr 25:28)

Comment: The city states of those days were walled for protection from marauders. No wall meant no protection. No **self control** by analogy means one is wide open to attack from the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**! Such a person is an easy victim when attacked by strong desires and impulses. **This begs the question -- Are there any breeches in the walls guarding your heart? Men, is there anything you are watching that is questionable?** (cp Ro 13:14-note)

Remember that when you take time off from "disciplining yourself for godliness" (1Ti 4:7, 8-note) for several weeks you don't just remain static spiritually...just as cessation of physical exercise results in loss of muscle mass, endurance level, readiness level so too the same thing occurs in the spiritual realm. And when you start re-training you're a little sore at first and you definitely aren't at the spiritual level you were at when you took a break. The longer you resist the Holy Spirit, the more difficult it becomes to return to

where you should be.

John Blanchard has the following quotes on self control (from his excellent resource *The Complete Gathered Gold* (if you are a pastor looking for excellent quotes, this is the best one I've found to date)...

Never expect to govern others until you have learned to govern yourself.-Anon.

Conquer yourself and you have conquered the world.-Augustine

It is impossible to be a follower of Jesus without giving diligent attention in our lives to the grace of self-control.-Jerry Bridges

There is a form of self-control that says 'yes' to what we should do as well as that which says 'no' to what we shouldn't do.-Jerry Bridges

The beginning of self-mastery is to be mastered by Christ, to yield to his lordship.-D. G. Kehl

True spiritual self-discipline holds believers in bounds but never in bonds; its effect is to enlarge, expand and liberate.-D. G. Kehl

The man who disciplines himself stands out and has the mark of greatness upon him. -D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

No man is free who cannot command himself.-Pythagoras

[\(The Complete Gathered Gold A Treasury of Quotations for Christians - Recommended Resource for excellent Christian quotes - the best in my opinion\)](#)

Wayne Barber discusses "*self control*" - Remember that this **self-control** arises from and is accompanied by our knowledge which comes out of obedience to the Word of God. It comes right out of that faith that God gives us. The definition of self control means to be able to hold one's self in. 1Co 9:25 Paul is talking about an athlete and how he has to have self-control (Ed Note: not *egkrateia* but the related verb *egkrateuomai*) ("*And everyone who competes in the games exercises **self-control** in all things...*") This would include control over his appetite, his temper, his schedule (an athlete needs priorities or he will become undisciplined). If you wanted to play on the basketball team in college, you had to have discipline or self-control. Remember that **the definite article** ("the" in the Greek) is before each godly characteristic so Peter is talking about **the** self-control, the very self-control and self-restraint that Jesus had, even as He Himself was tempted as all men are. And yet He gives us access to that same self-control! So that's where the analogy breaks down...**it's not human energized self-control** Peter is talking about but that which is available by faith (obedience) from Christ in us. The Christian ought to have control over his appetite." Wayne goes on to make the point that when he is in the Word of God, he is a controlled person. "How many diets have you been on? You lose some but then you gain it right back. Remember that Scripture repeatedly links idolatry and immorality (Nu25:1,2). Immorality and a person with an uncontrolled appetite is closely related all the way through Scripture. Believers because of Christ within them, possess the potential to control our temper, to exercise control over our desires, the power to say "no", the power to set godly priorities, the power within us so that we can turn off the television so that we can go to bed early so that we can arise early to be fresh with God in the AM, the self control to get out of bed in the morning to be alone with God, etc. And all of this self-discipline comes out of our faith. We don't have to go to a course or read a book on how to become self-disciplined! That discipline is within us and if we are diligent to see results, then we will see God work it out in our life and move us into His victory." (Bolding added)

For additional insights on this issue of **self control**, you might want to read John Piper article entitled '[**Fierce Fruit of Self-Control**](#)'

Barnes writes that temperance or **self control** "means, properly, self-control, continence. It is derived from *en* and *kratos*, strength; and has reference to the power or ascendancy which we have over exciting and evil passions of all kinds. It denotes the self-rule which a man has over the evil propensities of his nature. Our word **temperance** we use now in a much more limited sense, as referring mainly to abstinence from intoxicating drinks. But the word here used is employed in a much more extended signification. It includes the dominion over all evil propensities; and may denote continence, chastity, self-government, moderation in regard to all indulgences, as well as abstinence from intoxicating drinks. The sense in Gal 5:16 is that the influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart make a man moderate in all indulgences; teach him to restrain his passions, and to govern himself; to control his evil propensities, and to subdue all inordinate affection. The Christian will not only abstain from intoxicating drinks, but from all exciting passions; he will be temperate in his manner of living, and in the government of his temper. This may be applied to temperance properly so called with us; but it should not be limited to that. A Christian must be a temperate man; and if the effect of his religion is not to produce this, it is false and vain. Abstinence from intoxicating drinks, as well as from all improper excitement, is demanded by the very genius of his religion; and on this subject there is no danger of drawing the cords too close....other things being equal, **he is the most under the influence of the Spirit of God who is the most thoroughly a man of temperance (self control)**. (Albert Barnes. Barnes NT Commentary)

Vine writes that the term "**self-control** is to be preferred because **temperance** has been limited in modern times to self-control in a

particular direction, whereas enkrateia is self-control in all things; it is the responsibility that attaches to a creature with a will, or power to choose his own course. God in His wisdom has endowed man richly in many directions, and each of his powers is necessarily capable of abuse as well as of use. The right use of this endowment demands the exercise of the will, and this is called self-control; see Acts 24:25 (where "righteousness" = the claims of God upon man, "self-control" = the responsibility of man to respond to those claims, "the judgment to come" = the inevitable day of account, when God shall call upon man to answer for his failure to respond to the divine claims). For man, trusting to his own wisdom and strength, has failed in this as in all other items of the list (referring to Gal 5:22, 23), which, therefore, are possible only as men become the subjects of the operations of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ. **Self-control** follows **knowledge** in Peter's catalogue, 2Peter 1:6, as though to suggest that what the Christian learns he is responsible to put into practice, for the operation of the Spirit in the believer demands the cooperation of the believer himself; only in him who submits to be led by the Spirit can the fruit of the Spirit be borne. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Related Resources:

- Holman Bible Dictionary [Self-Control](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Self-Control](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Self-Control](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Self-Control](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Self-control](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Self-Control](#)
- Study of self-control in Galatians 5:23
- [Exercising self-control so you can run to win!](#)

AND IN SELF-CONTROL PERSEVERANCE: en de te egkrateia ten hupomonen

- Ps 37:7; Lk 8:15; 21:19; Ro 2:7; 5:3,4; 8:25; 15:4; 2Co 6:4; Col 1:11; 1Th 1:3; 2Th 1:4; 3:5; Heb 6:12,15; 10:36; 12:1; Jas 1:3,4; 5:7, 8, 9, 10; Re 1:9; 2:2; 13:10; 14:12)
- See Torrey's Topic "[Patience](#)"
- See [THE UNFOLDING OF CHARACTER](#) - James Hastings
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Perseverance ([5281](#)) (**hupomone** from **hupo** = under + **meno** = stay, remain, abide) literally means abiding under. The root idea of **hupomone** is to remain under some discipline, subjecting one's self to something which demands the submission of one's will to something against which one naturally would rebel. It portrays a picture of steadfastly and unflinchingly bearing up under a heavy load and describes that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial. The picture is that of steadfastness, constancy and endurance. It has in it a forward look, the ability to focus on what is beyond the current pressures (eg Jesus "Who for the joy set before Him [endured](#) [verb form hupomeno] the Cross despising the shame" see notes on Hebrews 12:2).

And so **hupomone** does not describe a grim resignation or a passive "grin and bear" attitude but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of evil God guarantees good. It is courageous gallantry which accepts suffering and hardship and turns them into grace and glory. For believers, it is a steadfastness, especially as God enables us to "remain under" (or endure) whatever challenges, trials, tests, afflictions, etc, He providentially allows in our life.

THOUGHT - How are you doing beloved? If you are like me (and most saints), you are experiencing manifold trials (1 Peter 1:6+)! Are you bearing up under them, leaning hard on the strengthening of the Spirit (the only way we can supernaturally remain under the "load.")?

Related Resources:

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Perseverance](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Perseverance](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Perseverance](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Perseverance](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Perseverance](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Perseverance of the Saints](#)
- Spurgeon's Illustration Collection [Children: Perseverance Heeded in Teaching Perseverance](#)

- Holman Bible Dictionary [Perseverance](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Perseverance](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Perseverance](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Perseverance](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Perseverance](#)

Hupomone is used 32 times in the NASB and is translated: endurance, 7; patient enduring, 1; perseverance, 21; steadfastness, 3.

Luke 8:15 "And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with **perseverance**.

Comment: What is needed in order to bear fruit in the Christian life? Where is the power for such perseverance? The indwelling Spirit is our Source, not self effort!

Luke 21:19 "By your **endurance** you will gain your lives.

Comment: This could be misinterpreted to mean that our self efforts merit salvation of our souls. No. The fact that we endure to the end indicates we are genuinely saved! We have the indwelling Spirit, Who Alone can enable such supernatural endurance.

Romans 2:7 (note) to those who by **perseverance** in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

Comment: This could also be misinterpreted to mean that our self efforts we merit salvation but like above, our perseverance in doing good indicates we are genuinely saved! We have in the indwelling Spirit, Who alone can enable such an good deeds (cp John 15:5).

Romans 5:3 (note) And not only this (What? Ro 5:1-2!), but we also exult (rejoice - try this in your own strength! This is a supernatural, Spirit enabled response) in our tribulations (pressing, even crushing circumstances or life events), knowing that tribulation brings about **perseverance**; (cp James 1:2-6, 2Cor 4:17-18)

Romans 5:4 (note) and **perseverance**, proven character; and proven character, hope;

Romans 8:25 (note) But if we hope for what we do not see, with **perseverance** we wait eagerly for it.

Romans 15:4 (note) For whatever was written in earlier times (refers to the Old Testament) was written for our instruction, that through **perseverance** and the encouragement of the Scriptures (refers primarily to the Old Testament) we might have hope.

Comment: This truth begs the question -- are you studying the OT (not just quickly flying through in your through the Bible in a year program)?

Romans 15:5 (note) Now may the God who gives **perseverance** and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus;

2 Corinthians 1:6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the **patient enduring** of the same sufferings which we also suffer;

2 Corinthians 6:4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much **endurance**, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,

2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all **perseverance**, by signs and wonders and miracles.

Colossians 1:11 (note) strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all **steadfastness** and patience; joyously

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (note) constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and **steadfastness** of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father

Comment: Hope is absolute assurance that God will do good to me in the future. It follows that focusing upward, on the eternal things to come, will cultivate and grow our hope and this eternal perspective in turn will allow us to bear up under whatever temporal, passing load God allows/sends our way!

2 Thessalonians 1:4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your **perseverance** and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the **steadfastness** of Christ.

1 Timothy 6:11-note But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, **perseverance** and gentleness.

2 Timothy 3:10 (note) But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, **perseverance**,

Titus 2:2 (note) Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in **perseverance**.

Hebrews 10:36 (note) For you have need of **endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Hebrews 12:1 (note) 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,

James 1:3-note knowing that the testing of your faith produces **endurance**. **4** And let **endurance** have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 5:11 Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the **endurance** of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

2 Peter 1:6 (note) and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, **perseverance**, and in your **perseverance**, godliness;

[Revelation 1:9](#) (note) I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and **perseverance** which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

[Revelation 2:2](#) (note) 'I know your deeds and your toil and **perseverance**, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

[Revelation 2:3](#) (note) and you have **perseverance** and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.

[Revelation 2:19](#) (note) 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and **perseverance**, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

[Revelation 3:10](#) (note) 'Because you have kept the word of My **perseverance**, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.

[Revelation 13:10](#) (note) If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the **perseverance** and the faith of the saints.

[Revelation 14:12](#) (note) Here is the **perseverance** of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Hupomone is found 9 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (1 Chr. 29:15; Ezr. 10:2; Job 14:19; Ps. 9:18; 39:7; 62:5; 71:5; Jer. 14:8; 17:13)

Hupomone is the ability to endure when circumstances are difficult - not a passive sitting down and bearing things but a triumphant facing of them so that even out of evil there can come good, a bearing up in a way that honors and glorifies our heavenly Father.

The difficulties in our lives,
The obstacles we face,
Give God the opportunity
To show His power and grace.

We need to distinguish another closely related Greek word **makrothumia** [**word study**] (**makro** = long + **thumos** = temper), literally "long-temper" or the idea of a "long fuse" before it explodes. It is a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to passion. Although there is some overlap in meanings, in general, **makrothumia** has to do more with difficult people than with difficult circumstances. **Hupomone** has to do with the circumstances of life (trials, difficulties, hardships)

Paul explains that the source of a believer's perseverance in his prayer for the Colossians that they be "strengthened (passive voice = literally **being** strengthened = the effect comes from an outside source, ie, the grace God supplies) with **all** power (**dunamis**), according to His glorious might (kratos), for the attaining of **all steadfastness** (hupomone) and **patience** (makrothumia); joyously

(Col 1:11-note) (Note the "all's")

The point is that both the steadfastness and the patience called for in the life of a believer cannot be lived in the sphere of mere human strength but requires His (supernatural) strength. Therefore Paul prays that the believers might know the power of the risen Son of God ("resurrection power fill us this hour"). Note that from this text, there is no power shortage because it is "according to (not a portion of but proportional to) His glorious might". In other words, His power available to us to remain steadfast and be patient offers limitless power. As **Peake** writes: The equipment with power is proportional not simply to the recipient's need, but to the Divine supply. ([Colossians 1 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Perseverance is that spiritual staying power that will die before it gives in. It is the virtue which can endure, not simply with resignation, but with a vibrant hope.

Perseverance involves doing what is right and never giving in to the temptation or trial. It is a conquering patience or conquering endurance. **Hupomone** is the ability to deal triumphantly with anything that life can do to us. It accepts the blows of life but in accepting them transforms them into stepping stones to new achievement.

Self-control has to do with handling the **pleasures** of life, while **perseverance** relates to the **pressures** and **problems** of life.

Hupomone describes that spirit which **remains under** (hupo = under + meno = remain) trials in a God-honoring way so as to learn the lesson they are sent to teach, rather than attempt to get out from under them in an effort to be relieved of their pressure.

Hiebert adds that **perseverance** "fosters the ability to withstand the two Satanic agencies of opposition from the world without and enticement from the flesh within. This quality was especially important in view of those who doubted Christ's return because of its seeming delay. (2Pe 3:4-note).

Morris says **hupomone** "is the attitude of the soldier who in the thick of battle is not dismayed but fights on stoutly whatever the difficulties.

Thayer says that hupomone is "the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.

Trench says that **hupomone** - does not mark merely endurance, or even patience, but the perseverance, the brave patience with which the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and outward world." He adds that **hupomone** is "that temper of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting....We may now distinguish makrothymia and hypomone in a way that will be valid wherever they occur. Makrothymia refers to patience with respect to persons, hypomone with respect to things. A man is makrothymeif he has to relate to injurious persons and does not allow himself to be provoked by them or to burst into anger (2 Timothy 4:2). A man is hypomeneif he is under a great siege of trials and he bears up and does not lose heart or courage. Therefore we should speak of the makrothymia of David (2 Samuel 16:10-13) and the hypomone of Job (James 5:11). Although both virtues are ascribed to the saints, only makrothymia is ascribed to God. There is a beautiful account of God's makrothymia in Wisdom of Song of Solomon 12:20, though the word itself is not used. Men may tempt and provoke God, and he may and does display an infinite makrothymia with regard to them. God allows men to resist him; he respects their wills, even when they are used to fight him. Things, however, cannot resist God or be a burden to him. Therefore hypomone is not a characteristic of God nor is it ascribed to him. When God is called "the God of patience" (hypomones, Romans 15:5) this does not mean "God whose own attribute is hypomone" but "God who gives hypomone to his servants and saints." In the same way "the God of grace" (1 Peter 5:10) refers to God who is the Author of grace, and "the God of peace" (Hebrews 13:20) refers to God who is the Author of peace. ([Long suffering - Trench's Synonyms of the New Testament](#))

Barclay has many notes on **hupomone** - The following excerpts are from his Daily Study Bible online (there is considerable duplication)...

([Hebrews 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) In the Christian life we have a means. That means is steadfast endurance. The word is hupomone which does not mean the patience which sits down and accepts things but the patience which masters them. It is not some romantic thing which lends us wings to fly over the difficulties and the hard places. It is a determination, unhurrying and yet undelaying, which goes steadily on and refuses to be deflected. Obstacles do not daunt it and discouragements do not take its hope away. It is the steadfast endurance which carries on until in the end it gets there. (v) In the Christian life we have an example. That example is Jesus himself. For the goal that was set before him, he endured all things; to win it meant the way of the Cross. The writer to the Hebrews has a flash of insight--despising the shame, he says. Jesus was sensitive; never had any person so sensitive a heart. A cross was a humiliating thing. It was for criminals, for those whom society regarded as the dregs of humanity--and yet he accepted it. St. Philip of Neri bids us "to

despise the world, to despise ourselves, and to despise--the fact that we are despised" (spernere mundum, spernere te ipsum, spernere te sperni). If Jesus could endure like that, so must we.

(In [Romans 5 Barclay writes](#)) The word he uses for fortitude is hupomone which means more than endurance. It means the spirit which can overcome the world; it means the spirit which does not passively endure but which actively overcomes the trials and tribulations of life. When Beethoven was threatened with deafness, that most terrible of troubles for a musician, he said: "I will take life by the throat." That is hupomone. When Scott was involved in ruin because of the bankruptcy of his publishers, he said: "No man will say 'Poor fellow!' to me; my own right hand will pay the debt." That is hupomone. Someone once said to a gallant soul who was undergoing a great sorrow: "Sorrow fairly colours life, doesn't it?" Back came the reply: "Yes! And I propose to choose the colour!" That is hupomone. When Henley was lying in Edinburgh Infirmary with one leg amputated, and the prospect that the other must follow, he wrote *Invictus*.

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul."

That is hupomone. Hupomone is not the spirit which lies down and lets the floods go over it; it is the spirit which meets things breast forward and overcomes them. ([Romans 5 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

(**Hupomone**) is the triumphant adequacy which can cope with life; it is the strength which does not only accept things, but which, in accepting them, transmutes them into glory.

Hupomonē is not simply the ability to bear things; it is the ability to turn them to greatness and to glory. The thing which amazed the heathen in the centuries of persecution was that the martyrs did not die grimly, they died singing. One smiled in the flames; they asked him what he found to smile at there. "I saw the glory of God," he said, "and was glad." Hupomonē is the quality which makes a man able, not simply to suffer things, but to vanquish them. The effect of testing rightly borne is strength to bear still more and to conquer in still harder battles.

([James 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) If we meet this testing in the right way, it will produce unswerving constancy (or steadfastness as the Revised Standard Version translates it). The word is hupomone, which the King James Version translates as patience; but patience is far too passive. Hupomone is not simply the ability to bear things; it is the ability to turn them to greatness and to glory. The thing which amazed the heathen in the centuries of persecution was that the martyrs did not die grimly, they died singing. One smiled in the flames; they asked him what he found to smile at there. "I saw the glory of God," he said, "and was glad." Hupomone is the quality which makes a man able, not simply to suffer things, but to vanquish them. The effect of testing rightly borne is strength to bear still more and to conquer in still harder battles. This unswerving constancy in the end makes a man three things. (i) It makes him perfect.... ([James 1](#))

([James 5 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) The word used of (Job in James 5:11 "Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the **endurance (hupomone)** of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.") is that great New Testament word **hupomonē**, which describes, not a passive patience, but that gallant spirit which can breast the tides of doubt and sorrow and disaster and come out with faith still stronger on the other side. There may be a faith which never complained or questioned; but still greater is the faith which was tortured by questions and still believed. It was the faith which held grimly on that came out on the other side, for "the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning" ([Job 42:12](#)). There will be moments in life when we think that God has forgotten, but if we cling to the remnants of faith, at the end we, too, shall see that God is very kind and very merciful.

The keynote of **hupomone** is not grim, bleak acceptance of trouble but triumph. It describes the spirit which can not only accept suffering but triumph over it....As the silver comes purer from the fire, so the Christian can emerge finer and stronger from hard days. The Christian is the athlete of God whose spiritual muscles become stronger from the discipline of difficulties.

([2 Corinthians 6 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) He begins with one triumphant word of the Christian life--endurance (hupomone). It is untranslatable. It does not describe the frame of mind which can sit down with folded hands and bowed head and let a torrent of troubles sweep over it in passive resignation. It

describes the ability to bear things in such a triumphant way that it transfigures them. Chrysostom has a great panegyric on this hupomone . He calls it "the root of all goods, the mother of piety, the fruit that never withers, a fortress that is never taken, a harbour that knows no storms" and "the queen of virtues, the foundation of right actions, peace in war, calm in tempest, security in plots." It is the courageous and triumphant ability to pass the breaking-point and not to break and always to greet the unseen with a cheer. It is the alchemy which transmutes tribulation into strength and glory.

Hupomonē never means simply the ability to sit down and bear things but the ability to rise up and conquer them. God is He who gives us the power to use any experience to lend greatness and glory to life. God is He in whom we learn to use joy and sorrow, success and failure, achievement and disappointment alike, to enrich and to ennoble life, to make us more useful to others and to bring us nearer to himself.

(**Hupomone**) is victorious endurance. "It is unswerving constancy to faith and piety in spite of adversity and suffering." It is the virtue which does not so much accept the experiences of life as conquers them.

([Romans 15 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) The Christian fellowship should be marked by fortitude. Fortitude is an attitude of the heart to life. Again we meet this great word hupomone . It is far more than patience; it is the triumphant adequacy which can cope with life; it is the strength which does not only accept things, but which, in accepting them, transmutes them into glory.

([2 Timothy 3 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) Paul completes the story of the things in which Timothy has shared, and must share, with him, by speaking of the experiences of an apostle; and he prefaces that list of experiences by setting down the quality of endurance. The Greek is hupomone , which means not a passive sitting down and bearing things but a triumphant facing of them so that even out of evil there can come good. It describes, not the spirit which accepts life, but the spirit which masters it. And that quality of conquering endurance is necessary, because persecution is an essential part of the experience of an apostle. Paul cites three instances when he had to suffer for Christ. He was driven from Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:50); he had to flee from Iconium to avoid lynching (Acts 14:5-6); in Lystra he was stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19). It is true that these things happened before the young Timothy had definitely entered on the Christian way, but they all happened in the district of which he was a native; and he may well have been an eyewitness of them. It may well be a proof of Timothy's courage and consecration that he had seen very clearly what could happen to an apostle and had yet not hesitated to cast in his lot with Paul.

([Colossians 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) Fortitude is hupomone and patience is makrothumia (Greek #3115). There is a distinction between these two words. It would not be true to say that Greek always rigidly observes this distinction, but it is there when the words occur together. Hupomone is translated patience in the King James Version. But it does not mean patience in the sense of simply bowing the head and letting the tide of events flow over one. It means not only the ability to bear things, but the ability, in bearing them, to turn them into glory. It is a conquering patience. Hupomone is the ability to deal triumphantly with anything that life can do to us. Makrothumia (Greek #3115) is usually translated long-suffering in the King James Version. Its basic meaning is patience with people. It is the quality of mind and heart which enables a man so to bear with people that their unpleasantness and maliciousness and cruelty will never drive him to bitterness, that their unteachableness will never drive him to despair, that their folly will never drive him to irritation, and that their unloveliness will never alter his love. Makrothumia (Greek #3115) is the spirit which never loses patience with, belief in, and hope for men. So Paul prays for hupomone , the fortitude which no situation can defeat, and makrothumia (Greek #3115), the patience which no person can defeat. He prays that the Christian may be such that no circumstances will defeat his strength and no human being defeat his love. The Christian's fortitude in events and patience with people must be indestructible.

([2 Thessalonians 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) A constancy which endures. The word Paul uses is a magnificent word. It is hupomone which is usually translated endurance but does not mean the ability passively to bear anything that may descend upon us. It has been described as "a masculine constancy under trial" and describes the spirit which not only endures the circumstances in which it finds itself but masters them. It accepts the blows of life but in accepting them transforms them into stepping stones to new achievement.

([1 Timothy 6 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) Third, there comes the virtue which looks to the conduct of life. It is hupomone , The King James Version translates this patience; but hupomone never means the spirit which sits with folded hands and simply bears things, letting the experiences of life flow like a tide over it. It is victorious endurance. "It is unswerving constancy to faith and piety in spite of adversity and suffering." It is the virtue which does not so much accept the experiences of life as conquers them.

[\(2 Peter 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible\)](#) To this self-control must be added steadfastness. The word is hupomone . Chrysostom called hupomone "The Queen of the Virtues." In the King James Version it is usually translated patience; but patience is too passive a word. Hupomone , has always a background or courage. Cicero defines patientia, its Latin equivalent, as: "The voluntary and daily suffering of hard and difficult things, for the sake of honour and usefulness." Didymus of Alexandria writes on the temper of Job: "It is not that the righteous man must be without feeling, although he must patiently bear the things which afflict him; but it is true virtue when a man deeply feels the things he toils against, but nevertheless despises sorrows for the sake of God." Hupomone does not simply accept and endure; there is always a forward look in it. It is said of Jesus, by the writer to the Hebrews, that for the joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12:2). That is hupomone , Christian steadfastness. It is the courageous acceptance of everything that life can do to us and the transmuting of even the worst event into another step on the upward way.

[\(2 Corinthians 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible\)](#) The answer to this suffering lies in endurance. The Greek word for this endurance is hupomone . The keynote of hupomone is not grim, bleak acceptance of trouble but triumph. It describes the spirit which can not only accept suffering but triumph over it. Someone once said to a sufferer, "Suffering colours life, doesn't it?" The sufferer replied, "Yes, but I propose to choose the colours" As the silver comes purer from the fire, so the Christian can emerge finer and stronger from hard days. The Christian is the athlete of God whose spiritual muscles become stronger from the discipline of difficulties. (iii) But we are not left to face this trial and to provide this endurance alone. There comes to us the comfort of God. Between 2 Corinthians 1:3 and 2 Corinthians 1:7 the noun comfort or the verb to comfort occurs no fewer than nine times. Comfort in the New Testament always means far more than soothing sympathy. Always it is true to its root meaning, for its root is the Latin fortis and fortis means brave. Christian comfort is the comfort which brings courage and enables a man to cope with all that life can do to him. Paul was quite sure that God never sends a man a vision without the power to work it out and never sends him a task without the strength to do it.

(In [Revelation 1 Barclay writes](#)) Steadfast endurance is hupomone . Hupomone does not describe the patience which simply passively submits to the tide of events; it describes the spirit of courage and conquest which leads to gallantry and transmutes even suffering into glory. The situation of the Christians was this. They were in thlipsis and, as John saw it, in the midst of the terrible events which preceded the end of the world. They were looking towards basileia (Greek #932), the kingdom, into which they desired to enter and on which they had set their hearts. There was only one way from thlipsis to basileia, from affliction to glory, and that was through hupomone , conquering endurance. Jesus said: "He who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13). Paul told his people: "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). In Second Timothy we read: "If we endure, we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:12). The way to the kingdom is the way of endurance. But before we leave this passage we must note one thing. That endurance is to be found in Christ. He himself endured to the end and he is able to enable those who walk with him to achieve the same endurance and to reach the same goal.

Perseverance is not something that develops automatically; we must work at it. James ([Ja 1:2-8](#)) provides the template we need to follow, writing we must "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Amy Carmichael in [Candles in the Dark](#) writes that "The best training is to learn to accept everything as it comes, as from Him whom our soul loves. The tests are always unexpected things, not great things that can be written up, but the common little rubs of life, silly little nothings, things you are ashamed of minding (at all). Yet they can knock a strong man over and lay him very low.

Writing to the Thessalonians **Paul** commends them for their "**steadfastness** of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1Thes 1:3-note)

So here we see that **steadfastness** (hupomone) is related to **hope** (remembering that Christian hope is different from the world's hope for our hope reflects an absolute certainty of future good and is manifest by a desire of some good with the expectation of obtaining it). What is the source of their steadfastness? The context clearly teaches it is "in our Lord Jesus Christ" In (1Th 1:10-note) we find that the Thessalonian believers are expectantly waiting for Jesus which is a clear manifestation of their steadfastness even in the face of persecution as a result of their valiant stand for Christ. No cracks had appeared in what Phillips calls their "sheer dogged endurance." And so we are enabled to endure when we fix our hope completely on Christ Jesus, Who is our eternal Hope. Paul explains this same truth and association between hope and perseverance to the Romans writing

if we **hope** for what we do not see, with **perseverance** (hupomone) we wait eagerly for it. (Ro 8:25-note)

In other words we know that we will be delivered from the presence of sin and its awful consequences (this is our sure hope) because of the precious and magnificent promises of God and because this truth is as certain as if we had already received it (our future glorification), this renewed mindset gives us the Spirit wrought inner strength to hupomone or bear up under our present difficult circumstances. Beloved, what are you bearing up under today? As I write I am heavily burdened but greatly encouraged by the truths about hupomene. You too be encouraged dear persevering saint.

Here is a powerful secular illustration of the meaning of **perseverance**:

Sir Winston Churchill was invited back to his alma mater, Harrow, to address the students near the end of his storied life of public service, which included guiding Britain through her darkest and finest hours. When the five-foot, five-inch bulldog of a man took the platform, everyone waited breathlessly upon his words—and they would never forget what they heard:

“Young gentlemen, never give up.
Never give up.
Never give up!
Never! Never! Never!”

With that Churchill sat down. That's what Peter is calling believers to diligently live out in their faith. Are you about to give up beloved? Don't do it! Never give up! Never! Never! Never! He Who promised is faithful to fulfill His promise that He would never, ever, no never leave you nor forsake you. The Christian life is not a sprint, but a marathon. Over the years we have been repeatedly saddened by acquaintances who did not persevere and who dropped by the wayside of this world.

The writer of Hebrews charges us that in view of the fact that in Hebrews 11,

"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** (hupomone) the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus..." (He 12:1, 2, -see **notes** He 12:1 12:2)

Commenting on this verse **George Matheson** wrote that "We commonly associate **patience** with lying down. We think of it as the angel that guards the couch of the invalid. Yet there is a patience that I believe to be harder—the patience that can run. To lie down in the time of grief, to be quiet under the stroke of adverse fortune, implies a great strength; but I know of something that implies a strength greater still: it is the power to work under stress; to have a great weight at your heart and still run; to have a deep anguish in your spirit and still perform the daily tasks. It is a Christlike thing! The hardest thing is that most of us are called to exercise our **patience**, not in the sickbed but in the street." To wait is hard, to do it with "good courage" is harder!" As one author has wisely noted regarding perseverance, "it is important to make "the Perseverance of the Saviour" our watchword rather than "the Perseverance of the saint."

Keep this thought in mind as you read the following true illustration = **RUN WITH ENDURANCE** - In 1992 the Summer Olympic Games were held in Barcelona, Spain. One of the runners in the 400-meter race was an English athlete named Derek Redmond. He had trained for years to compete in the Olympics. But while sprinting in a qualifying heat, he suddenly pulled a hamstring and crumpled to the track in pain. Determined to go on, Derek struggled to his feet. He was hobbling toward the finish line when his father scaled the retaining wall and jumped onto the track. Before anyone could stop him, Jim Redmond reached his son. The young runner leaned on his father's shoulder as he staggered to complete the race. The entire crowd stood and cheered the two men on. When they crossed the finish line, it was as if the runner, his father, and the spectators had done it together. The writer of Hebrews encourages us to run the race of faith and persevere to the end, following the example of those who have gone before us. It takes all of our spiritual stamina to complete it, but we don't run the course alone. Christ Himself helps us toward the finish line. Therefore, "let us lay aside every weight, and . . . run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb 12:1).

We need to expect and even exult in trials, because without trials we could never learn patience. Paul explains that

through (Christ) also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also **exult in our tribulations**, knowing that tribulation brings about **perseverance**; (hupomone) and **perseverance**, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (see **notes** Romans 5:2; 5:3; 5:4; 5:5)

Trials put the pressure on us and what comes out of us in these times of pressure prove what is in us...either flesh or Spirit. As a boxer engages in bout after bout, he toughens and becomes wiser and stronger. After a time he develops such fortitude, perseverance and staying power that he can take on the best. There is no way a fighter, or any of us, can develop toughness without trials!

Perseverance relates to the other qualities because in all the others we must keep on keeping on. Is there an area of your life in which you are failing to persevere? Perseverance is a critical Christian virtue. Unless we have patience, we can never learn many of the truths that God wants us to learn, truths that will lead us into a deeper life (think of our spiritual roots going deeper into Christ in the diagram click here for schematic of a believer rooted in Christ and bearing fruit) and a more fruitful ministry. The KEY is learning to walk in that potential "energy" you already possess because of Christ in you (Col 1:27-note).

When you begin to discover who you are in Christ and that you have everything you need for life and godliness (2Pe 1:3-note), it takes away the excuse you've used all these years for living carnally. When you use the empty excuse 'I'm only human', you are showing your ignorance of Who and what God has already placed within you. You now have the ability to **persevere** because Christ lives within you. Christ in us transforms ordinary saints into people capable of extraordinary feats (like persevering when the world would say why don't you just "throw in the towel".) The reason perseverance is not being worked out in many of our lives is our own hard-headedness & unwillingness. The genuine believer who says 'I can't' is really saying 'I won't'. Remember that mushrooms spring up overnight, but they are usually poisonous. The best fruits require time, cultivation, perseverance. A precious and rare plant called "**godliness**" grows wonderfully when "fertilized" with **perseverance**. (modified from a lecture by Dr. Wayne Barber)

Hupomone describes **endurance** when circumstances are difficult. It is not a passive acceptance but a strong fortitude in the face of opposition or difficulty. It is the opposite of despondency and is never used in reference to God, for God does not face difficult circumstances. Hupomone describes that spirit which bears things not simply with resignation, but with a blazing hope. In other words, if something happens in your life that is hard and painful and frustrating and disappointing, and, by grace, your faith looks to Christ and to his power and his sufficiency and his fellowship and his wisdom and his love, and you don't give in to bitterness and resentment and complaining, then your faith endures and perseveres.

We need to remember that SMOOTH SEAS DON'T MAKE SKILLFUL SAILORS. It is better to persevere and bear up through the storm with Christ than to have smooth sailing without Him.

Jesus taught that

"the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with **perseverance**." (Lk 8:15)

Perseverance proves the soil of one's heart is good (genuine believers) and results in fruit in the believer's life.

Puritan preacher **Ezekiel Hopkins** once said that...

Patience is the ballast of the soul, that will keep it from rolling and tumbling in the greatest storms; and he that will venture out without this to make him sail even and steady will certainly make shipwreck and drown himself, first in the cares and sorrows of this world, and then in perdition.

Perseverance to the end of one's life proves that is a genuine believer [Mt 24:13, 2Ti 2:12-note, He 3:6-note, He 3:14-note]. Persevering does not save a person but does show them to be saved and possessors of an inherent supernatural power (Christ in us) to hold on to the end. What is an alternative to perseverance in the Christian life? Is it not a subtle drift with the tide, especially the "tide" of time? Many today who were at one time professing Christians imperceptibly have drifted from their earlier professions. They kept up appearances, but time carried them far away from their devotion to Christ. And though they may not have overtly disowned Christ, they have drifted far from their original faith. And not surprisingly their children have no understanding or interest in Christianity. This is a tragic end, an end which **Dr. Robertson McQuilkin** prayed against in his haunting poem...

*I fear the Dark Spectre may come too soon—or do I mean, too late?
That I should end before I finish or finish, but not well.
That I should stain your honor, shame your name, grieve your loving heart.
Few, they tell me, finish well...
Lord, let me get home before dark.
(“Let Me Get Home Before Dark,” 1981)*

Perseverance is a trait the man of God will pursue. ("But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. 1Ti 6:11--note) Before we were saved, we chased after sin. Now sin chases after us! (cf 2Ti 2:22-note) Faith mixed with perseverance allows us to inherit the promises (He 6:12-note, 2Pe 1:4-note "promises") Testing of one's faith (Jas 1:2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7, 8-note) works out perseverance in our character which in turn allows us to reach our goal in Christ which is to be complete (mature) and lacking in nothing. (Col 1:28-note; Col 1:29-note).

R Kent Hughes gives the following illustration of **perseverance** writing that - Perseverance is the key to God's treasure, just as it often proves to be with earthly treasures. When Howard Carter, the British archaeologist, peered wide-eyed into an ancient Egyptian

tomb in 1922, at first he saw nothing. For more than twenty centuries archaeologists, tourists, and tomb robbers had searched for the burial places of Egypt's pharaohs. It was believed that nothing remained undisturbed, especially in the Royal Valley where the ancient monarchs had been buried for over half a millennium. With only a few scraps of evidence Carter carried on his pursuit, privately financed because nobody felt there was anything left to be discovered. But he was convinced there was one remaining tomb. Twice during his six-year search he came within two yards of the first stone step leading to the burial chamber, and finally he found it. "Can you see anything?" his assistants asked, as Carter's eyes adjusted. He was seeing, but he had difficulty speaking because he saw what no modern man had ever seen. Wooden animals, statues, chests, chariots, carved cobras, vases, daggers, jewels, a throne - and a hand-carved coffin of a teenage king. It was the priceless tomb and treasure of King Tutankhamen, the world's most exciting archaeological discovery. Howard Carter's great perseverance brought him King Tut's treasure. How much greater our rewards when we persevere in seeking God's spiritual treasures! King Tut's treasures brought him no happiness; and if you were as rich as he, the effect would be the same. Besides, King Tut left it all behind. The treasures Christ gives are eternally ours and eternally satisfying. But perseverance is the key. We may wonder why God wants us to persist intensely for things He surely wants to give us. The answer is, He wants to give us great spiritual treasures, but He will not give it to us until we are ready. Persistent prayer prepares us for those treasures. (Hughes, R. K. [Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom. Crossway Books](#))

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An Elusive Virtue - In 1404, twenty-five-year-old Lorenzo Ghiberti won a commission to build and adorn a pair of bronze doors for the north side of the baptistery in the cathedral of Florence, Italy. He took twenty-one years to design and cast the masterpieces, dividing the doors into twenty-eight New Testament panels. They cost \$550,000. The donors then asked him to make corresponding double doors for the baptistery's east side. This endeavor took twenty-seven years and featured the Old Testament in ten panels. He spent forty-eight years on just two projects, but his time and effort left artistic masterpieces for generations to admire. Building spiritual lives challenges us to a perseverance that defies even Ghiberti. The free will, prejudice, stubbornness, and pride that mocks God are all obstacles to change and growth. The life produced by the Spirit in the Word seldom comes easily or quickly. People are never as easy to mold as bronze and wood. Although a skilled craftsman can predict how basic elements will react under given stimuli, the spiritual leader never masters the moods and reactions of people. (Hurley, V. [Speaker's sourcebook of new illustrations](#))

AND IN PERSEVERANCE GODLINESS : en de te hupomone ten eusebeian:

- 2Pe 1:3, 3:11; Ge 5:24; Isa 57:1; 1Ti 2:2,10; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3;6:6; 6:11 2Ti 3:5; Titus 1:1
- See [THE UNFOLDING OF CHARACTER](#) - James Hastings
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Godliness (**eusebeia** from **eú** = well + **séboimai** = worship, venerate, pay homage) (**Click for more on godliness**) (Click study of **eusebeia**) is literally "**well worship**" which reflects an attitude of one's life to live with a sense of God's presence (Latin "Coram Deo" before the face of God) and a desire motivated by love (which equates with obedience Jn 14:15) to be pleasing to Him in all things we say, do and think. Christian endurance is motivated by godliness.

Godliness is the inner response in human beings (really only believers can exhibit true godliness) to the things of God which works itself out in godly reverence. These individual express a reverence for those things God calls sacred or worthy of veneration.

Barclay - godliness, eusebeia is one of the great and almost untranslatable Greek words. It describes reverence both towards God and man. It describes that attitude of mind which respects man and honors God. Eusebius defined it as "reverence towards the one and only God, and the kind of life that he would wish us to lead." To the Greek, the great example of eusebeia was Socrates whom Xenophon describes in the following terms: "So pious and devoutly religious that he would take no step apart from the will of heaven; so just and upright that he never did even a trifling injury to any living soul; so self-controlled, so temperate, that he never at any time chose the sweeter in place of the bitter; so sensible and wise and prudent that in distinguishing the better from the worse he never erred" (Xenophon: Memorabilia, 4, 8, 11). Eusebeia comes very near to that great Latin word pietas, which Warde Fowler describes thus: "The quality known to the Romans as pietas rises, in spite of trial and danger, superior to the enticements of individual passion and selfish ease. Aeneas' pietas became a sense of duty to the will of the gods, as well as to his father, his son and his people; and this duty never leaves him." Clearly eusebeia is a tremendous thing. It never forgets the reverence due to God; it never forgets the rights due to men; it never forgets the respect due to self. It describes the character of the man who never fails God, man or himself. Godliness, eusebeia is the reverence of the man who never ceases to be aware that all life is lived in the presence of God. ([1 Timothy 2 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Godliness brings the sanctifying presence of God into all the experiences of life. It keeps the believer from becoming hard and

defiant toward opponents or succumbing to the temptation of a mere stoical endurance. The godly person lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. The godly man or woman seeks to do the will of God (Ro 12:2-note) and, as they do, they seek the welfare of others, making the kind of decisions that are right and noble, not taking the "easy" path simply to avoid either pain or trial, and doing what is right because it is right and because it is the will of God. That's Biblical **godliness**! This character trait distinguishes the true believer from the ungodly false teachers in Chapter 2.

Godliness describes a lifestyle (1Ti 4:7, 8-note) of showing reverence for God as we live before others, especially the lost. We may say we worshipped God on Sunday but what was Monday like? Did you give in to the pagan darkness around you or did you express the fact that you are serving a higher King than the one who is over this world of darkness and you are willing to take the heat because you are worshipping by your life. First, recognition. Then, the lifestyle. Finally, the worship. **Godliness** is living one's life in the conscious presence of the holiness of God. This consciousness comes from devotion to the Word of God, prayer, self-denial, discipline, accountability, worship, communion, and all the other means God provides for bringing one's heart captive to Christ. (modified from a lecture by Dr. Wayne Barber)

True spiritual knowledge gives us the means of growth, the means of discernment, an urgency that will constrain our behavior and make us live godly. Knowledge that doesn't renew our minds and cause us more & more to long for the things above has the dangerous potential of making us arrogant hypocrites.

Dr. Wayne Barber's thoughts on **godliness**

"Remember though that **Worship** is NOT an feeling! As we act upon the Truth we have learned in the Word, the Spirit begins to develop His character within us (sanctifies us) and the spiritual knowledge (**gnosis**) becomes so practical that God begins to meet every need of your life. Paul had to learn this truth too (Php 4:11, 12, 13-see **notes** Php 4:11-12,13). You begin to find yourself experiencing self-control in areas you never thought possible and you can bear up under things that before were seeming impossible circumstances. Godliness comes out of this quality of obedient faith and one result is the ability to worship well. Jesus "worshipped" His Father...not My will, but Thine be done. The essence of real worship is when we say "No" to our flesh (Ro 6:12-note) and "Yes" to God (Ro 6:13-note). Paul explains well worship in Ro 12:1 (note)

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, [which is] your spiritual (= reasonable, Greek word "logikos" for "logical") service of worship.

Worship is not a feeling you get when someone sings a wonderful song at church. Worship is a verb, a response to what God has done in my life. Not my will but thine be done is the essence of genuine worship.

There is a pseudo-godliness Paul warns Peter to avoid describing those in the last days who are...

holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power (2Ti 3:5note)

What is the power of real godliness? It's the power to lay my life down in order for Christ to be glorified in me. As Paul warns, many ostensibly very "religious" people have a form of godliness, going through the motions of religion, but they don't have the power to truly lay down their lives. Out of this process and grounded in faith, comes a god-likeness. We begin to become like Jesus, conformed to His image, enabled by His Spirit to manifest His character summed up in John's gospel...

Greater love hath no man but to lay down his life for his brother. (Jn 15:13)

This is essence of a benevolent good -- when a person is willing to lay down his own life for the benefit of another. How can you be like this? If Christ is in you, Peter says you can do it as you apply all diligence.

Biblical Godliness...

(1). **Necessitates effort on our part** (1Ti 4:7, 8-note)

Discipline yourself (present imperative) for the purpose of Godliness

Notice that while it is **our responsibility** to discipline ourselves, it is God's provision which allows us to do this. Is this "divine-human synergism" somewhat mysterious? To be sure it is but the the fact remains that the **ONLY** way we can obey this command (or ANY of the 880 or 762 aorist imperative commands -see listing of all NT commands and explanation of how we can obey them!) to make this our habitual practice is by continual dependence on the indwelling Spirit Who gives us the desire and the power (Phil 2:13NLT-note) to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil 2:12-note), so that we walk in a manner pleasing to God.

(2). **Must be pursued:** (1Ti 6:11-note)

Flee (present imperative - see comment above for how we can continually flee...and pursue) from these things, you man of God; and **Pursue** (present imperative = command to continuously make the volitional choice to press hard after, as the habit of your life) righteousness, **godliness...**" where "**pursue**" means to follow or press hard after with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain

(3) **Can be faked:** (2Ti 3:5- note) "holding to a form (morphosis - outward form) of **godliness**, although they have denied its power" (where "**denied**" is perfect tense = denied at some point in time in past with that denial & the results/effects of that denial persisting) How do you know? Watch their life. They have denied the transforming power of grace manifest by the true gospel What makes false teachers so dangerous? They may manifest a form of godliness and so appear to be Christians (Mt 7:15, 21, 22, 23-see **notes** Mt 7:15, 21, 22-23). Mark it down a profession of truth which is associated with an individual living in ungodliness is a spurious profession & that person is woefully deceived. Godly belief always produces a godly life. (Titus 1:1-note and compare Titus 1:16-note)

Spurgeon in his devotional **Morning and Evening** has this note on 2Peter 1:5, 6...

If thou wouldst enjoy the eminent grace of the full assurance of faith, under the blessed Spirit's influence, and assistance, do what the Scripture tells thee, "Give diligence." Take care that thy faith is of the right kind—that it is not a mere belief of doctrine, but a simple faith, depending on Christ, and on Christ alone. Give diligent heed to thy courage. Plead with God that he would give thee the face of a lion, that thou mayest, with a consciousness of right, go on boldly. Study well the Scriptures, and get knowledge; for a knowledge of doctrine will tend very much to confirm faith. Try to understand God's Word; let it dwell in thy heart richly.

When thou hast done this, "Add to thy knowledge temperance." Take heed to thy body: be temperate without. Take heed to thy soul: be temperate within. Get temperance of lip, life, heart, and thought. Add to this, by God's Holy Spirit, patience; ask him to give thee that patience which endureth affliction, which, when it is tried, shall come forth as gold. Array yourself with patience, that you may not murmur nor be depressed in your afflictions. When that grace is won look to godliness. Godliness is something more than religion. Make God's glory your object in life; live in his sight; dwell close to him; seek for fellowship with him; and thou hast "godliness"; and to that add brotherly love. Have a love to all the saints: and add to that a charity, which openeth its arms to all men, and loves their souls. When you are adorned with these jewels, and just in proportion as you practise these heavenly virtues, will you come to know by clearest evidence "your calling and election." "Give diligence," if you would get assurance, for lukewarmness and doubting very naturally go hand in hand.

2 Peter 1:7 and in your godliness, [brotherly kindness](#), and in your [brotherly kindness, love](#). (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [en de te eusebeia ten philadelphian, en de te philadelphia ten agapen.](#)

Amplified: And in [exercising] godliness [develop] brotherly affection, and in [exercising] brotherly affection [develop] Christian love. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

NLT: Godliness leads to love for other Christians, and finally you will grow to have genuine love for everyone. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Wuest: and in the godliness an affection for the brethren, and in the affection for the brethren the divine love ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: and in the piety the brotherly kindness, and in the brotherly kindness the love

AND IN GODLINESS: en de te eusebeia

- See MacArthur's studies on [Essentials for Growth in Godliness Pt 1; Part 2](#)
- See [THE UNFOLDING OF CHARACTER](#) - James Hastings
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Godliness (2150) (**eusebeia** from **eu** = well + **sebomai** = reverence. Sebomai is in turn derived from "seb" which refers to sacred awe or reverence exhibited especially in actions) (**Click** for a more in depth word study of **eusebeia**)

Eusebeia describes reverence or awe that is well directed. **Eusebeia** is true religion that displays itself in reverence before what is majestic and divine in worship and in a life of active obedience which befits that reverence.

Eusebeia describes the person who is characterized by a Godward attitude and because of that attitude seeks to do that which is well-pleasing to His Father in heaven. True **godliness** does not permit the Christian life to be a "sullen solitary habit" (as Alford phrases it). Neither does it condone a hostile attitude toward fellow believers (1Jn 4:20, 21)

John MacArthur writes that...

Godliness is a right attitude and response toward the true Creator God; a preoccupation from the heart with holy and sacred realities. It is respect for what is due to God, and is thus the highest of all virtues. ([MacArthur, John: 1 Timothy Moody Press](#))

Godliness is a practical awareness of God in every aspect of life.

Godliness is not talking godly but living godly.

Godliness reflects an attitude centered on living out one's life in God's presence with a desire motivated by love for Him and empowered by His grace to be pleasing to Him in all things.

Godliness refers to having the proper attitude and conduct before God in everything.

"**Godliness**, to the Puritans, was essentially a matter of conscience, inasmuch as it consisted in a hearty, disciplined, 'considerate' (thoughtful) response to known evangelical truth, and centered upon the getting and keeping of a good conscience." (Packer, J. I.. A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan vision of the Christian life. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books. 1994)

Godliness refers to the true reverence toward God which comes from knowledge. It is a right attitude toward God and His holiness, majesty, and love

Godliness, as denoting character and conduct determined by the principle of love or fear of God in the heart, is the summing up of genuine religion. There can be no true religion without it -- only a dead "form" (2Ti3:5-note). (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:1915 edition J. Orr, Ed)

Godliness is "the whole of practical piety. It supposes knowledge, veneration, affection, dependence, submission, gratitude, and obedience." (Easton's Bible dictionary)

"**Godliness** means correct behavior and genuine Christian faith, first in the heart but also in visible expression according to the standard of God's Word. It takes self-control, continual work, and commitment day by day as we strive to please God despite our sinfulness and weaknesses. But as we can train our bodies for physical feats, we can approach the various aspect of our spiritual life as training in godliness." ([Barton, B, et al: The NIV Life Application Commentary Series: Tyndale](#))

Godliness means more than religious profession and godly conduct; it also means the reality and power of a vital union with God.

Godliness refers to behavior that reflects the character of God and presupposes a desire to please God in all the relationships of life.

Godliness embodies reverence toward God, a genuine, heartfelt acknowledgment of His holiness.

"**Godliness**...means a love for the things of God and a walk in the ways of God." (John Piper)

"**Godliness** is godly living, living according to the will of God. It is the kind of obedience that results from walking in the Spirit (Ro 8:4-note)" (See 12 page article entitled "The Sufficiency of Scripture for Life and Godliness 2 Peter 1:1-4" by [Meisinger, George: Chafer Theological Seminary Journal Volume 1:2 Page 8](#))

Godliness is that inner attitude of reverence which seeks to please God in every thought, word or deed.

Godliness desires to be rightly related to both God and men, and brings the sanctifying presence of God into every relationship of one's life.

Godliness is living one's life with a "Coram Deo" mindset, ever as before the face of God.

Godliness is a practical awareness of God in every area of life—a God-consciousness.

The godly man or woman lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. The godly individual seeks to do the will of God making the kind of decisions that are right and noble, not taking the "easy" path simply to avoid either pain or trial. That's Biblical godliness!

BROTHERLY KINDNESS : ten philadelphian:

- Jn 13:34,35; Ro 12:10; 1Th3:12; 4:9,10; Heb 13:1; 1Pe1:22; 2:17; 1Jn 3:14,16
- See [THE UNFOLDING OF CHARACTER](#) - James Hastings
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Brotherly kindness (5360) (**philadelphia** from **philos** = beloved, dear, friendly + **adelphós** = brother) means "fraternal love", brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren. Brotherly love normally referred to the love members of a family held for each other (this was the way it was used in secular Greek) and would not normally be used to describe the love between members of different families.

In the NT **philadelphia** is used to describe the love that believers possess for one to another, for even though they were members of different natural families, they were united in Christ and were recipients of family love originating from the Father Who had bestowed His great love on His spiritual children (1John 3:1, cp 1Pe 1:22-note). The idea is that one expresses a warm, affection (like brothers should exhibit) with those who are spiritual relatives in the family of God and it manifests itself in acts of kindness (Gal 6:10).

Philadelphia describes a love which calls for an affection for one another like that one expressed between natural family members (Ro 12:10-note where **devoted** or "loving warmly" = *philostorgos* from *philos* = beloved, dear + *storge* = family love, the love of parents and children). Remember that Christianity forged a radical relationship in Christ wherein believing Greeks and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, Scythians, slaves and freemen, men and women were now all one in their Lord (cp Gal 3:28, Col 3:11-note, Ep 4:3ff-note). Such a diverse cultural community would have continual need for emphasis on **love of the brethren**. As Christians we have become brothers and sisters in the community of faith and Paul refers to them as **brothers** (sisters is clearly implied) some nineteen times in 1 Thessalonians alone. Our love is not just a passive disposition of fondness but manifests itself in overt acts of kindness toward the brethren.

Phileo love is the love of belonging, of friendship. It is a love we have for brothers because of our likenesses. It was this affectionate relationship in the early Church among Christian converts, in spite of their diverse status and varied backgrounds, that amazed the pagans. But brotherly kindness must be cultivated (diligently) for it entails difficult duties, such as a willingness to bear one another's burdens and to forgive shortcomings and failures. The first five virtues pertain primarily to one's inner life and his relationship to God. The last two relate to the outward life. **Brotherly kindness** is a fervent practical caring for others (1Jn 4:20, 21) and thus is closely linked with **godliness**

IN BROTHERLY KINDNESS LOVE : en de te philadelphia ten agaphen:

- See [THE UNFOLDING OF CHARACTER](#) - James Hastings
- [2 Peter 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PINNACLE AGAPE LOVE

Love (26) (**agape**) is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+).

It is not surprising that Greek literature throws little light on its distinctive NT meaning. Biblical **agape love** is the love of choice, the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice) and not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that true **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation.

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily

fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35).

Agape is used 115 times in the NT in the NASB Matt. 24:12; Lk. 11:42; Jn. 5:42; 13:35; 15:9f, 13; 17:26; Rom. 5:5, 8; 8:35, 39; 12:9; 13:10; 14:15; 15:30; 1 Co. 4:21; 8:1; 13:1ff, 8, 13; 14:1; 16:14, 24; 2 Co. 2:4, 8; 5:14; 6:6; 8:7f, 24; 13:11, 13; Gal. 5:6, 13, 22; Eph. 1:4, 15; 2:4; 3:17, 19; 4:2, 15f; 5:2; 6:23; Phil. 1:9, 16; 2:1f; Col. 1:4, 8, 13; 2:2; 3:14; 1 Thess. 1:3; 3:6, 12; 5:8, 13; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2:10; 3:5; 1 Tim. 1:5, 14; 2:15; 4:12; 6:11; 2 Tim. 1:7, 13; 2:22; 3:10; Tit. 2:2; Phlm. 1:5, 7, 9; Heb. 6:10; 10:24; 1 Pet. 4:8; 5:14; 2 Pet. 1:7; 1 Jn. 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16f; 4:7ff, 12, 16ff; 5:3; 2 Jn. 1:3, 6; 3 Jn. 1:6; Jude 1:2, 12, 21; Rev. 2:4, 19

Agape is translated in the NAS as "beloved, 1; love, 112; love feasts, 1; love's, 1." The KJV translates it 27 times as "charity". Since the following analysis only references a few of the 115 verses, a more fruitful study would be to study the 115 NT uses inductively and in context.

Agape in the Greek classics spoke of a love called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved. This is the idea inherent in the Father's proclamation "This is My **beloved** Son..." **Agape** is the love that was shown at Calvary. Thus **agape** is God's love, and is the love that God is. It is not human affection but is a divine love, commanded by God, produced as fruit in the heart of a surrendered saint by the Holy Spirit (God Who is at work in us to will and to work to His good pleasure) (Ro 5:5-note Gal 5:22-note), self-sacrificial in nature seeking the benefit of the one who is loved, a love which means death to self and defeat for sin since the essence of sin is self-will and self-gratification, a love activated by personal choice of our will (working out our salvation in fear and trembling) not based on our feelings toward the object of our love and manifested by specific actions (1Co 13:4-8-note is an excellent source definition of "love in action") not just to fellow believers but to all men everywhere.

Agape may involve emotion, but it **must** always involve **action**. **Agape** is unrestricted, unrestrained, and unconditional. **Agape** love is the virtue that surpasses all others and in fact is the prerequisite for all the others. Jesus when asked

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" replied "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." "This is the great and foremost commandment." (Mt 22:36, 37, 38)

John MacArthur explains that "**Agape love** is the greatest virtue of the Christian life. Yet that type of love was rare in pagan Greek literature. That's because the traits agape portrays—unselfishness, self-giving, willful devotion, concern for the welfare of others—were mostly disdained in ancient Greek culture as signs of weakness. However, the New Testament declares agape to be the character trait around which all others revolve. The apostle John writes, "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1John 4:16)". (SEE [The Power of Integrity: Building a Life Without Compromise - Page 133](#) (Bolding added))

Wuest has several comments on agape love writing "**Agape** is a love that impels one to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the object loved...(it) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in the object loved, an apprehension of its preciousness." Wuest adds that **phileo** love is "an unimpassioned love, a friendly love. It is a love that is called out of one's heart as a response to the pleasure one takes in a person or object. It is based upon an inner community between the person loving and the person or object loved. That is, both have things in common with one another. The one loving finds a reflection of his own nature in the person or thing loved. It is a love of liking, an affection for someone or something that is the outgoing of one's heart in delight to that which affords pleasure. The Greeks made much of friendship, and this word was used by them to designate this form of mutual attraction."..."We gather, therefore, that **agape** is a love of devotion, while phileō is a love of emotion. There is another distinction we must be careful to note, and that is that **agape** is love that has ethical qualities about it, obligations, responsibilities, where phileō is a non-ethical love, making no ethical demands upon the person loving. In contrasting **phileo** and **agape** love, we might say that the former is a love of pleasure, the latter a love of preciousness; the former a love of delight, the latter a love of esteem; the former a love called out of the heart by the apprehension of pleasurable qualities in the object loved, the latter a love called out of the heart by the apprehension of valuable qualities in the object loved; the former takes pleasure in, the latter ascribes value to; the former is a love of liking, the latter a love of prizing. (**Agape** is) a love that denies self for the benefit of the object loved. (**Agape** describes the) love of the Spirit-filled husband, purified and made heavenly in character. (**Agape** is) the love which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the heart of the yielded believer (Ro 5:5+)....The saint is to order his behavior or manner of life within the sphere of this divine, supernatural (**agape**) love produced in his heart by the Holy Spirit. When this love becomes the deciding factor in his choices and

the motivating power in his actions, he will be walking in love. He will be exemplifying in his life the self-sacrificial love shown at Calvary and the Christian graces mentioned in 1Co 13:4-7- see notes 1Co 13:4; 13:5;13:6; 13:7." (It is) a love that is willing to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of that brother, a love that causes one to be long suffering toward him, a love that makes one treat him kindly, a love that so causes one to rejoice in the welfare of another that there is no room for envy in the heart, a love that is not jealous, a love that keeps one from boasting of one's self, a love that keeps one from bearing one's self in a lofty manner, a love that keeps one from acting unbecomingly, a love that keeps one from seeking one's own rights, a love that keeps one from becoming angry, a love that does not impute evil, a love that does not rejoice in iniquity but in the truth, a love that bears up against all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. That is the kind of love which God says one Christian should have for another."...(Agape love) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved. (In Jn 3:16+) God's love for a sinful and lost race springs from His heart in response to the high value He places upon each human soul. Every sinner is exceedingly precious in His sight. "Phileo" which is another word for love, a love which is the response of the human spirit to what appeals to it as pleasurable, will not do here, for there is nothing in a lost sinner that the heart of God can find pleasure in, but on the contrary, everything that His holiness rebels against. But each sinner is most precious to God, first, because he bears the image of his Creator even though that image be marred by sin, and second, because through redemption, that sinner can be conformed into the very image of God's dear Son. This preciousness of each member of the human race to the heart of God is the constituent element of the love that gave His Son to die on the Cross. The degree of the preciousness is measured by the infinite sacrifice which God made. The love in Jn 3:16+ therefore is a love whose essence is that of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the one loved, this love based upon an evaluation of the preciousness of the one loved. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Agape is volitional

Phileo is emotional

Agape does not condone or gloss over sin in the one loved but actively, purposely seeks the welfare of the one loved.**Philadelphia** "love" springs from personal warmth and affection and God teaches it (1Th 4:9). **Agape** love does not derive its motivation from the desirability of the object of one's affection but gives with no expectation of return (unconditional) so that if given and not returned then you don't stop giving it.

John MacArthur has numerous excellent comments regarding **agape** love...

We have no capacity to generate (**agape love**) on our own. The Greek word for that kind of love is agape, and it is characterized by humility, obedience to God, and self-sacrifice. ([MacArthur, J. Drawing near: August 3, 2002. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books](#))

Biblical **agapē love** is not an emotion but a disposition of the heart to seek the welfare and meet the needs of others. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends," Jesus said (John 15:13). And that is exactly what Jesus Himself did on behalf of those God has chosen to be saved. In the ultimate divine act of love, God determined before the foundation of the earth that He would give His only Son to save us." ([MacArthur, J. Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

"(**Agape**) **Love** is an attitude of selflessness. Biblical agapē love is a matter of the will and not a matter of feeling or emotion, though deep feelings and emotions almost always accompany love. God's loving the world was not a matter simply of feeling; it resulted in His sending His only Son to redeem the world (Jn 3:16). Love is self-less giving, always self-less and always giving. It is the very nature and substance of love to deny self and to give to others...We can only have such love when Christ is free to work His own love through us. We cannot fulfill any of Christ's commands without Christ Himself, least of all His command to love. We can only love as Christ loves when He has free reign in our hearts...When the Spirit empowers our lives and Christ is obeyed as the Lord of our hearts, our sins and weaknesses are dealt with and we find ourselves wanting to serve others, wanting to sacrifice for them and serve them—because Christ's loving nature has truly become our own. Loving is the supernatural attitude of the Christian, because love is the nature of Christ. When a Christian does not love he has to do so intentionally and with effort—just as he must do to hold his breath. To become habitually unloving he must habitually resist Christ as the Lord of his heart. To continue the analogy to breathing, when Christ has his proper place in our hearts, we do not have to be told to love—just as we do not have to be told to breathe. Eventually it must happen, because loving is as natural to the spiritual person as breathing is to the natural person. Though it is unnatural for the Christian to be unloving, it is still possible to be disobedient in regard to love. Just as loving is determined by the will and not by circumstances or other people, so is not loving. If a husband fails in his love for his wife, or she for him, it is never because of the

other person, regardless of what the other person may have done. You do not fall either into or out of **agape love**, because it is controlled by the will. Romantic love can be beautiful and meaningful, and we find many favorable accounts of it in Scripture. But it is **agape love** that God commands husbands and wives to have for each other (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; Titus 2:4)—the love that each person controls by his own act of will. Strained relations between husbands and wives, between fellow workers, between brothers and sisters, or between any others is never a matter of incompatibility or personality conflict but is always a matter of sin...Loving others is an act of obedience, and not loving them is an act of disobedience. ([Ibid](#))

"The absence of (**agape**) **love** is the presence of sin. The absence of love has nothing at all to do with what is happening to us, but everything to do with what is happening in us. Sin and love are enemies, because sin and God are enemies. They cannot coexist. Where one is, the other is not. The loveless life is the ungodly life; and the godly life is the serving, caring, tenderhearted, affectionate, self-giving, self-sacrificing life of Christ's love working through the believer. ([Ibid](#))

"**Agape love** centers on the needs and welfare of the one loved and will pay whatever personal price is necessary to meet those needs and foster that welfare." ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press; MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

"**Agape** is the love that **gives**. There's **no taking involved**. It is completely unselfish. It seeks the highest good for another no matter what the cost, demonstrated supremely by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf." ([MacArthur, J. Saved Without A Doubt. Wheaton, Ill.: May, 2006. Victor Books](#))

Forbearing love could only be **agape love**, because only **agape love** gives continuously and unconditionally. Eros love is essentially self-love, because it cares for others only because of what it can get from them. It is the love that takes and never gives. Philia love is primarily reciprocal love, love that gives as long as it receives. But **agape love** is unqualified and unselfish love, love that willingly gives whether it receives in return or not. It is unconquerable benevolence, invincible goodness—love that goes out even to enemies and prays for its persecutors (Mt. 5:43,44). That is why the forbearance of which Paul speaks here could only be expressed in **agapē love**." ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Giving of oneself to others is the epitome of **agape love**. Biblical love is not a pleasant emotion or good feeling about someone, but the giving of oneself for his welfare (cf. 1 John 3:16). Divine love is unconditional love, love that depends entirely on the one who loves and not on the merit, attractiveness, or response of the one loved. Christ did not simply have a deep feeling and emotional concern for mankind. Nor did He sacrifice Himself for us because we were deserving. God's love, and all love that is like His, loves for the sake of giving, not getting. With conditional love, if the conditions are not met there is no obligation to love. If we do not get, we do not give. But God's makes no conditions for His love to us and commands that we love others without conditions. There is no way to earn God's love or to deserve it by reason of human goodness. Romantic, emotional love between husband and wife ebbs and flows, and sometimes disappears altogether. But loss of romantic love is never an appropriate excuse for dissolving a marriage, because the love that God specifically commands husbands to have for their wives is **agape love** (Eph. 5:25; 3:19; cf. Titus 2:4; etc.)—love like His own undeserved love for us, love that is based on willful choice in behalf of the one loved, regardless of emotions, attraction, or deserving. Romantic love enhances and beautifies the relationship between husband and wife, but the binding force of a Christian marriage is God's own kind of love, the love that loves because it is the divine nature to love. It is the love of giving, not of getting; and even when it ceases to get, it continues to give. Where there is the sacrificial love of willful choice, there is also likely to be the love of intimacy, feeling, and friendship (philia)...Those who are given God's nature through Jesus Christ are commanded to love as God loves. In Christ, it is now our nature to love just as it is God's nature to love—because His nature is now our nature. For a Christian not to love is for him to live against his own nature as well as against God's. Lovelessness is therefore more than a failure or shortcoming. It is sin, willful disobedience of God's command and disregard of His example." ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Agape is impossible for unconverted to manifest this divine love & in fact it is impossible even for a believer to demonstrate it in his own strength. It can only be exhibited by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. A believer has this love (divine nature) within ([Col1:27](#)) and it is progressively manifest more and more as fruit by the Holy Spirit ([Ga5:22](#)) as we obey God's truth. **Agape** love willingly engages in self-sacrificing action to procure the loved one's highest good.

F B Meyer has the following description of **agape love** -- Wherever there is true love, there must be giving, and giving to the point of sacrifice. Love is not satisfied with giving trinkets; it must give at the cost of sacrifice: it must give blood, life, all. And it was so with the love of God. "He so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son." "Christ also loved and gave Himself up, an offering

and a sacrifice to God." (Ep 5:2+) We are to imitate God's love in Christ. The love that gives, that counts no cost too great, and, in sacrificing itself for others, offers all to God, and does all for His sake. Such was the love of Jesus--sweet to God, as the scent of fields of new-mown grass in June; and this must be our model. Not to those who love us, but who hate; not to those who are pleasant and agreeable, but who repel; not because our natural feelings are excited, but because we will to minister, even to the point of the cross, must our love go out. And every time we thus sacrifice ourselves to another for the sake of the love of God, we enter into some of the meaning of the sacrifice of Calvary, and there is wafted up to God the odour of a sweet smell. ([Devotional Commentary on Ephesians](#))

THOUGHT: Beloved, are you contemplating breaking your covenant bond of marriage? Then take some time and meditate on the profundity of the truths inherent in agape love and please reconsider, for the sake of your testimony and for the sake of the glory of the Lord and His Kingdom. (see also Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage)

Love's perfect expression on earth is the Lord Jesus Christ and He defines this **sacrificial love** for He left heaven, came to earth, took on a human form, was spit on and mocked, was crowned with a crown of thorns, nailed to a cross, abused, and had a spear thrust into His side. He loved the church enough to die for her. **That's sacrificial love.**

Donald W. Burdick gives the following excellent summary of *agape love*: "**It is spontaneous.** There was nothing of value in the persons loved that called forth such sacrificial love. God of His own free will set His love on us in spite of our enmity and sin. **[Agape] is love that is initiated by the lover** because he wills to love, not because of the value or lovableness of the person loved. **[Agape] is self-giving.** and is not interested in what it can gain, but in what it can give. It is not bent on satisfying the lover, but on helping the one loved whatever the cost. **[Agape]** is active and is not mere sentiment cherished in the heart. Nor is it mere words however eloquent. It does involve feeling and may express itself in words, but it is primarily an attitude toward another that moves the will to act in helping to meet the need of the one loved." (Burdick, D W: The Letters of John the Apostle. Chicago: Moody, 1985, page 351)

As noted below Barclay has labeled **agape** as **unconquerable benevolence** for nothing the other person can do will make us seek anything but their highest good and to never feel bitterness or desire for revenge. Though the one loved even injure us and insult us, **agape** will never feel anything but kindness towards him. **Agape** gives & gives & gives. **Agape** takes slaps in the face and still gives even as Jesus did saying Father forgive them. **Agape** is not withheld. That clearly means that this Christian love is not an emotional or sentimental thing. It is the ability to retain unconquerable goodwill to the unlovely and the unlovable, towards those who do not love us, and even towards those whom we do not like. **Agape** is the badge of discipleship and the landmark of heaven for "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love (**agape**) one for another." (Jn 13:35).

William Barclay notes that **agape** indicates an...

"...unconquerable benevolence, invincible goodwill...If we regard a person with **agape**, it means that no matter what that person does to us, no matter how he treats us, no matter if he insults us or injures us or grieves us, we will never allow any bitterness against him to invade our hearts, but will regard him with that unconquerable benevolence and goodwill which will seek nothing but his highest good."...In the case of our nearest and our dearest we cannot help loving them; we speak of falling in love; it is something which comes to us quite unsought; it is something which is born of the emotions of the heart. But in the case of our enemies, (**agape**) **love** is not only something of the **heart**; it is also something of the **will**. It is not something which we cannot help; it is something which we have to will ourselves into doing (**Ed note:** enabled by the Spirit Whose "fruit" in yielded believers is "agape love"). It is in fact a victory over that which comes instinctively to the natural man. **Agape** does not mean a feeling of the heart, which we cannot help, and which comes unbidden and unsought; it means a determination of the mind, whereby we achieve this unconquerable goodwill even to those who hurt and injure us. **Agape**, someone has said, is the power to love those whom we do not like and who may not like us. **In point of fact we can only have agape when Jesus Christ enables us to conquer our natural tendency to anger and to bitterness, and to achieve this invincible goodwill to all men.**

"**Agape**, is that unconquerable benevolence, that undefeatable good-will, which will never seek anything but the highest good of others, no matter what they do to us, and no matter how they treat us. That love can come to us only when Christ, Who is that love, comes to dwell within our hearts..."

(**Agape**) ...will never dream of revenge, but will meet all injuries and rebuffs with undefeatable good will. **Agape** is that quality of mind and heart which compels a Christian never to feel any bitterness, never to feel any desire for revenge, but always to seek the highest good of every man no matter what he may be. If a man has **agape**, no matter what other people do to him or say of him, he will seek nothing but their good. He will never be bitter, never resentful, never vengeful; he will never allow himself to hate; he will never refuse to

forgive.

Love, **agape**, is the virtue of the man who, even if he tried, could not forget what God has done for him nor the love of God to men.

Agape is the word for Christian love. **Agape** is not passion with its ebb and flow, its flicker and its flame; nor is it an easy-going and indulgent sentimentalism. And it is not an easy thing to acquire or a light thing to exercise. **Agape** is undefeatable goodwill; it is the attitude towards others which, no matter what they do, will never feel bitterness and will always seek their highest good. There is a love which seeks to possess; there is a love which softens and enervates; there is a love which withdraws a man from the battle; there is a love which shuts its eyes to faults and to ways which end in ruin. But Christian love will always seek the highest good of others and will accept all the difficulties, all the problems and all the toil which search involves. ([Daily Study Bible The Westminster Press](#))

Tertullian the early disciple wrote, "It is our care for the helpless, our practice of lovingkindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Look!' they say, 'How they love one another!' Look how they are prepared to die for one another."

**People do not care how much we know
until they know how much we care.**

Hiebert summarizes this section writing that ""Peter's portrayal of the various facets of a developing Christian character presents **faith** as its **foundation** and **love** as the **culmination**. The order in which he names these qualities is rhetorical; all are inherent in maturing Christian character. Not all may be equally developed in any one believer, but they cannot be compartmentalized and one quality selected to the disregard of the others. In the words of Paine "Their presentation here seems to observe an order from the more elemental to the more advanced, but they are all of them facets of the Spirit's work in the life of a believer, aspects of the glory of the indwelling Christ, His character shown in the Christian's character." (Bolding & colors added)

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

O THOU MOST HIGH,
In the way of Thy appointment I am waiting for Thee,
My desire is to Thy Name,
My mind to remembrance of Thee.
I am a sinner, but not insensible of my state.
My iniquities are great and numberless,
but Thou art adequate to my relief, for Thou art rich in mercy;
the blood of Thy Son can cleanse from all sin;
the agency of Thy Spirit can subdue my most powerful lusts.
Give me a tender, wakeful conscience
that can smite and torment me when I sin.
May I be consistent in conversation and conduct,
the same alone as in company,
in prosperity and adversity,
accepting all thy commandments as right,
and hating every false way.
May I never be satisfied with my present spiritual progress,
but to faith add virtue, knowledge, temperance, godliness,
brotherly kindness, charity.
May I never neglect

what is necessary to constitute Christian character,
and needful to complete it.

May I cultivate the expedient,

develop the lovely,

adorn the gospel,

recommend the religion of Jesus,

accommodate myself to thy providence.

Keep me from sinking or sinning in the evil day;

Help me to carry into ordinary life portions of divine truth

and use them on suitable occasions, so that

its doctrines may inform,

its warnings caution,

its rules guide,

its promises comfort me.

[The Valley of Vision \(Banner of Truth, 1975, p109\)](#) Recommended