

Slide 1 Title

Devotional Service for Austin Bible Students Convention
November 13th 2021

Slide 2 2Pet 1:4

We will begin tonight with and a slight modification to fit this occasion.

2Peter 1:1-3 ¹[Greetings dear brethren whom} have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: ²Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, ³According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

2Peter 1:4 ⁴Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Slide 3 & 4-read by Sr. GloryBeth

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROMISES

Angels of His mercy—His promises exceeding great and precious—minister unto us and strengthen us. R2412,c2,p3

As we fill our minds with God's promises, the whole character, the whole life, becomes more transformed. R5739,c1,p1

In proportion as the promises are before our minds, in that proportion we have strength and courage to run the narrow way. R5095,c1,p4

The Lord's people should so thoroughly apply the precious promises of Divine care that their hearts would be entirely free from anxiety. F572,p2

Those who can and will exercise full confidence in all the Divine promises, may go from victory to victory, from blessing to blessing, from joy to joy, from one attainment to another, and have a glorious victory in the end over the world, flesh and Adversary, through the imputed merit and continued assistance of Him who loved and bought us. To this class the giants of opposition and despair lose their power, even as did Goliath before the sling stone of David.
R4046,c2,bottom

Slide 5 thru 12 Hymn 242] Precious Promise

Slide 13 – 2 Peter 1:5-8

These words of Peter precede a further discussion of the necessary elements for the development of our characters essential in the attainment of the Divine Nature

For purposes of our Devotions we thought we would consider these building blocks of character, these fruits of the spirit so necessary for our development as fully mature Christians.

The theme of this convention contains two very important thoughts ie. “building up yourselves” in the most holy faith and “Keeping ourselves in the love of God. And as these precious promises are an integral part of our most holy faith we find that putting on these graces adding to the superstructure of our characters which God approves will assist us in keeping ourselves His love.

⁵And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. ⁸For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For those running for the prize of the high calling, knowing that the way is hard and narrow, we have special promises which have been given us as Peter declares. We must claim these as our own. Claiming them in faith !

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We read in Ephesians the first chapter Paul’s words: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [i.e. the Holy where our Minds are privileged to continually dwell] in Christ ⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

This realization of God’s rich blessing to us along with the realization that his power is pledged on our behalf gives us great assurance as to the fulfillment of his promises to us that he is both able and willing to complete the work in us. It is that same power that raised Jesus from the dead to the Divine Nature that is now promised to aid us in our effort to be like him as we strive to make our calling and election certain. Eph 1:13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

Slide 15

Let us again look carefully at Paul’s words:

Eph 1: 18-20: ¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, :¹⁹ And what *is* the **exceeding greatness of his power** to us-ward who believe, according to **the working of his mighty power**, ²⁰ Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,”

Is it not tremendously amazing and does it not thrill our hearts that he should pledge ‘the exceeding greatness of his power...the working of his mighty power’ to those that believe His promises?

Faith

Slide 16 with diligence add

Peter tells us to with all diligence add to this faith.

The thought behind the greek word ”spouden” translated “diligence” is (a) speed, haste, (b) diligence, earnestness, enthusiasm, despatch, eagerness,.

Thus with haste we are to “add” and this word “add” also has a powerful thought behind it, which is to furnish, i.e. Fully supply. So we must with haste run this race, with haste fully furnish and supply to completeness this faith all these elements of a perfect character.

Slide 17 Faith

We start then with Faith for Without this faith it is impossible to please God. Any

Faith is both a Fruit of the Spirit, a Part of the Present Inheritance of the New Creation and exists at the beginning of our walk, yet must be developed and increased.

[F688 -689] Faith must be ours before we can become children of God at all – yea, before our justification – for we are "justified by faith" ... This faith which we had before we received the holy Spirit cannot, therefore, be the faith which is the fruit of the Spirit – the gift of the Spirit. Faith is the operation, the exercise, of our minds in respect to God and his promises. ... The call of this Gospel age is to those who can and who will walk by faith, not by sight – and whoever cannot or will not so walk cannot now walk with God. ... [Heb. 11:6] ... unless it grows and develops he will lack the power of being an overcomer; because "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4

Faith is defined as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen.

What is this substance? The thought in the Greek is that it is what's underneath, it is a foundation i.e. basis and we find this foundation this base for our faith in the precious promises that has been given unto us.

R5717 FAITH A REAL SUBSTANCE

So the Christian who walks closely with the Master finds the truth of the Apostle's words that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [proof, conviction] of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1.) Faith is not only a groundwork, or basis, for our hopes (itself also having a groundwork in proven facts), but it is a real substance – a mental substance, so to speak, which stimulates and clarifies the mind. Faith is not a substance that we can hold in our hand or walk on with our feet. But it becomes a strength to our minds as we progress in the knowledge of God and of the things which God has to give to those who love Him above all else and who seek to render Him loving, devoted service. **Faith becomes as real and tangible to us as any material substance** – even more so; for the things upon which our faith lays hold are eternal.

Brethren it is on this faith's foundation that will enable us to be more than conquerors. It is by these promises claimed before the throne of grace and held fast that we can have the full assurance of faith, enabling us to be hourly victorious, daily victorious and finally victorious through all the experiences of life.

Slide 18 thru 23 LETS SING HYMN 197

Slide 24 Virtue

Virtue

Having then established this solid foundation then the first element of character to supply is "Virtue"

What is Virtue?

Virtue (Latin: virtus) is moral excellence. A virtue is a trait or quality that is deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being. In other words, it is a behavior that shows high moral standards: doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong. The opposite of virtue is vice.

Etymology: The ancient Romans used the Latin word virtus (derived from *vir*, their word for *man*) to refer to all of the "excellent qualities of men, including physical strength, valorous

conduct, and moral rectitude." The French words *vertu* and *virtu* came from this Latin root. In the 13th century, the word *virtue* was "borrowed into English".^[3]

This seems to be confirmed when we look at the Greek word here translated virtue. It is the Greek word Arete (a re' tee) and properly is manliness (valor) i.e. excellence

The diaglott translates this word as "Fortitude"

Fortitude definition, mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously.

This compares well with the thought of manliness or valor.

valor: [noun] strength of mind or spirit that enables a person to encounter danger with firmness : personal bravery. As Meriam Webster defines it.

Br Benjamin Barton has this to say: What does this quality of fortitude mean? It means the courage of our faith.

R4808 (re: a Virtuous Life) This, to the child of God, consecrated to be a living sacrifice, .. It implies living truthfully, that is, *true to his covenant*, ... It is *fortitude*, strength of character in righteousness. It implies the cultivation of the strictest integrity in our dealings, both with God and with our fellowmen, scrupulous honesty, justice and truth being the only standards.

R3089 Add to your faith virtue – true excellence of character, such excellence of character as will mark you as separate from the world and its spirit. In all such the world will see those moral qualities which they must approve, however they may oppose our faith. Add sterling honesty, truth and fair dealing in all business relations; moral integrity, in all social relations; manifestly clean hands and a pure heart, and a bridled tongue that works no ill to a neighbor. All of these the world has a right to expect from those who call themselves Christians; and all of these are indispensable features of that virtuous character which must be added to our faith. The clean hands will not dabble in anything that is not virtuous: they will have nothing to do with unrighteous schemes or projects in business. The pure heart will not devise evil things, or harbor evil thoughts, or plot mischief. And the bridled tongue will not be given to evil speaking, but will hold its peace when it cannot speak well and wisely. But the promptings of virtue go further than merely these negative features which refuse to do anything which would work ill to a neighbor; they incite not only to passive, but also to active, goodness – in benevolent

charity which seeks to alleviate suffering, to sympathize with sorrow, to comfort those in distress and to elevate and bless others – to assist "all men as we have opportunity."

See Psa. 15:1, 2;(HCSB) ¹LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? ²The one who lives honestly, practices righteousness, and acknowledges the truth in his heart —

The Christian is to attain this moral excellence, this strength of character and courage, practicing purity of heart and mind continually. It becomes "habitual excellence." What a thought is here contained. That which is pure is indeed excellent. "Blessed are the pure in heart." As we read **Php 4:8** **Finally**, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue [moral excellence], and if *there be* any praise [praiseworthy], think on these things.

Slide 25 thru 28 Hymn 198] More Likeness To Thee

Slide 29 Knowledge

Knowledge

Next we are to supply knowledge. How is knowledge a fruit and element of character? The pursuit of knowledge is praiseworthy. As we know from the scriptures.

R2037 And when he says, "Add to your fortitude knowledge," we understand him to mean that if faith be held firmly, and fortitude of character result, this, under the Spirit's guidance, will bring the faithful one to deeper and wider expanses of knowledge; or, as the same Apostle suggests (2 Pet. 3:18), the faithful one will grow in both grace and knowledge, and the holy Spirit, through its begetting, will enable such to know (appreciate) the deep things of God, the things freely given unto such by God, the knowledge of God resulting from our experience in the school of Christ. It is concerning this knowledge, not merely concerning the intricacies of doctrinal matters, but the heart sympathy and communion with the Lord himself, that the Apostle Paul exclaimed, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." – Phil. 3:8.

This addition is the knowledge of God and of his righteous will concerning us (as revealed through his Word, by the holy spirit).

And as we read in R3090 [it is Also] the knowledge of God's character, [which can only be attained with an in depth and thorough appreciation of His plan] that we may the more thoroughly imitate it, and [knowledge] of his truth, that we may more fully conform to its teaching

R2155 Neglect of this divinely appointed means for obtaining this knowledge is equivalent to setting up our own imperfect standard of righteousness and ignoring the divine standard. It is therefore important that we give all diligence to the study of the divine oracles that we may be fortified in faith and works accordingly.

Slide 30 thru 33 [Hymn 74] Divine Wisdom

Slide 34 Temperance -self-control

Temperance

Next we supply temperance, and it means 'self-control'. If we lose our temper, we lose our self-control. "He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32)

R2155 Self-control has to do with all our sentiments, thoughts, tastes, appetites, labors, pleasures, sorrows and hopes. Its cultivation, therefore, means a high order of character-development. Self-control, accompanied by faith, fortitude, knowledge from on high, implies increased zeal and activity in divine things and increased moderation in earthly things, in judgment, in conduct, in the regulation of temporal affairs, etc. "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

R5487 To yield ourselves to passion, to allow it to sweep over us and master us, is disastrous, whether we are weak-minded or strong-minded. The weak-minded have their limitations; the strong-minded have the excess of power and are more potent for evil. We hear a great many say when they have lost control of their temper or have been petulant, morose, ill-natured, or discourteous, well that is my way I do not mean any harm. They acknowledge the matter and seek to justify themselves by saying that it is natural to them. **But no human being should live according to what is natural to his or her fallen nature.** A being created in the image of God and still retaining some traces of his original Godlikeness, should live above the plane of the lower animals, which follow merely their natural instincts and passions.

As we probe deeper, we find the temperance also implies moderation in all things. It suggests to us a balanced mind, a sound mind. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." (Phil. 4:5) That is in everything we do we are to use good judgment, as to how we eat, drink, dress, use our time talents, energies, our bodies, etc. all belong to him. Recognizing that all has been given up and we own nothing, we are to appreciate our stewardship. Good stewardship will require self-control

R4808 Self-control, accompanied by faith, fortitude, knowledge from on High, implies increased zeal and activity in Divine things, and increased moderation in earthly things. In judgment, in conduct, in the regulation of temporal affairs, etc., Let them see by our thoughtful (not rash and hasty), careful and considerate demeanor, in every affair of life, that we honor our profession.

[One of the more obvious evidences of lack of self-control is evident when one "loses his temper", he or she thus lacks self-control.]

Slide 35 & 36 -Temper read by Sr. Rosalie

TEMPER by Br. Daniel J Morehouse

What? Lost your temper did you say?
Well dear, I wouldn't mind it.
It isn't such a dreadful loss;
Pray not try to find it.

It drove the dimples all away
And wrinkled up the forehead,
And changed the pretty smiling face
To one just simply horrid.

It put to flight the cheery words,
The laughter and the singing
The clouds upon the shiny sky
It would persist in bringing.

And it is gone!

Then do my dear,
Make it your best endeavor
To quickly find a better one
And lose it never, never.

Slide 37 Patience

Patience

Patience. How closely connected to self-control is patience. Without self-control it would be hard to see how patience could be exercised.

How many here have mastered this characteristic? "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:4) Here is an element of character that we have need of throughout our entire walk in the narrow way. The meaning of the word patience in our text is 'cheerful endurance.' **hupomone** (hī-po-mo-nee' **endurance** (cheerful or hopeful), **constancy**

How can we endure the often-painful trials which often sweep over us as a flood? And how can we do so cheerfully pleasing the Lord? All things begin as we start each day. . Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof and we must endure even the smallest of experiences in preparation for the larger trials.

If our faith is strong, if our love of God supreme, and we trust in his promises than we will gladly suffer wrong for his name's sake. This character of patience..." represents ... not merely a temporary condition or restraint of feeling or action. It signifies that development of heart and character which manifests itself in an **endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment**, [godliness with contentment is great gain] so contently we endure without rebellion of will, with full acquiescence in the Divine Wisdom and Love..."

R4910 This grace of patience smooths the way for every other Christian grace, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. Not a step of progress can be gained without this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or **[most importantly] glorifies the God of all grace whose Truth inspires it**. It is [an] enduring meekness striving to stem the tide of human weakness and endeavoring with painstaking care to attain to the Divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of righteousness, and prompt to walk in them; it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

We can ask ourselves Am I patient under trial and discipline, keeping my feelings always under the control of enlightened reason, letting patience have its perfect work in cultivating the character, no matter the severity of the trying circumstances [in which] we might find ourselves?

Slide 38 Poem read by Kathy

POD [page 185] PATIENCE.

THE purple grape must be crushed
To make the sweet, red wine,
And furnace fires must fiercely burn,
The drossy gold to refine;
The wheel must cruelly grind,
Else where the jewel's light?
And the steel submit to the polishing,
Or how would the sword grow bright?
How then, my soul, wilt thou
The Spirit's fruits possess,
Except thou lovingly yield thyself
To the Hand that wounds to bless?
Then patiently let the fire
Consume all earthly dross--
Thou canst not hope to wear the Crown,
If thou refuse the Cross!

Slide 39 Godliness

Godliness

Next we need to add a good supply of Godliness. i.e., Godlikeness.

Lev. 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God.

1Pet 1:15-16; ¹⁵But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

¹⁶Because it is written, **Be ye holy; for I am holy.**

R5956 The word saint stands for one who is holy. The word holy has the significance of the word whole – that which is entire, lacking nothing. God, who is holy, calls His children to be holy, saying, But we were by nature unholy;...Born in sin, shapen in iniquity? So how can we be holy as God is holy? **Let us remember that it is not the old man that is being called to holy for that is impossible given our fallen condition, rather, it is the New Creature that is being instructed.**

CR453 It is the New Creature that must be all the time holy, ...

In Jesus' case it WAS POSSIBLE for His flesh also to be holy, because His flesh was perfect.

Therefore, He could maintain His perfection of the flesh as well as the spirit; but in the case of

the Church, we who are so fallen, .. sinners even as others and [yet we] are invited to walk in His steps and be His disciples and present our bodies living sacrifices, we are told when we are begotten of the holy Spirit, even as we make our consecration, and we become New Creatures in the same manner that He did, that we, as New Creatures, are heirs of glory, honor and immortality with our Lord on the other side the veil.

It is the New Creature that grows in grace, grows in knowledge, grows in the various fruits and characteristics of the holy Spirit.

It is this New Creature which is under development from its embriotic state that through the holy spirit guided by the truth will attain completeness in Christ. “

Slide 40 All things unto life and godliness

R2136 The Apostle, ... assures us that through ...[the] knowledge of God that is imparted to us ..by divine power "***all things that pertain unto life and godliness.***" (2Peter 1:3)

What an assurance! This statement [shows] the importance of knowledge for our Christian development in every direction.

"This is life eternal; that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." ([John 17:3.](#)) To ***know God***, as the Apostle here explains, signifies an ***intimate acquaintance*** with "him that hath called us by his own glory and virtue." It is only as we realize something of the greatness and perfection of the divine character that we are properly able to estimate our own littleness and imperfection; only as we see the beauties of his gracious character can we become intimately acquainted with God, ***familiar with his graces and virtues.*** **The influence of this knowledge and fellowship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own hearts, and has a cleansing and sanctifying effect.** Thus, the Apostle prays for some that they might grow in the knowledge of God so as to be able to "comprehend with all saints what is **the length and the breadth, the depth and the height of the love of Christ** which passeth [human] understanding." ([Eph. 3:14-19.](#)) Those beholding the divine character, even though but dimly, as through a glass, are thereby changed from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord. --[2 Cor. 3:18.](#)

Slide 41-43 [Hymn 267] The Beauty of Holiness

Slide 44- Brotherly Kindness

Brotherly Kindness

Now we come to Brotherly Kindness and let us put in a good supply. This is Philadelphia, fraternal affection, brotherly love. This is also the third quarter mark condition, i.e.. An advanced stage of development.

We are to love our brethren as we would our own family **and even more if our earthly family is not in the truth**. The Apostle tell us as much in 1 Pet 3:8 where he declares “love as brethren”. Cultivate among yourselves that kind of affection which properly belongs in a family, where the blessing or honor of one member signifies the blessing honor and advancement of all.

R1845 "A new commandment I give unto you, --that ye love one another." "Love as brethren; be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing." "Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." "Respect all men, love the brotherhood." "Love one another with a pure heart fervently." "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; love seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil." ([1 Pet. 3:8,9](#), [1:22](#); [Rom. 12:10](#); [1 John 4:8](#).) "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue [merely], but indeed and in truth [sincerely]. And hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before the Lord."-- [1 John 3:18,19](#).

March 16th Manna tells us that ONE of the final and most searching tests ... and the one under which the most of those once awakened and armed will fall, will be--love for the brethren. Many will fail at this point and be therefore accounted unworthy of an abundant entrance into the Kingdom on this score.

Remember where faults are thick love is thin.

Slide 45 thru 50 [Hymn 23] Christian Fellowship

Slide 51

Charity (Love)

The last element to which we are to add and fix in our hearts is Charity – Agape Love. This is the highest form of love. This is “--a love which is ever ready to manifest itself in wise and helpful activity for saint and sinner; a love which pities, helps, comforts, cheers and blesses all within its reach...” It is a love that **longs for the blessed opportunity of blessing others**, when the work

of perfecting their character is complete. It is on this character element of perfect love that all the other graces find their full and complete expression. It is “--the bond of perfectness which unites all the other graces, and as a name stands for all of them”

Peter finishes his point on these graces of character by telling us that if these abound in us, we will be fruitful and develop the greater the knowledge, acquaintance, and intimacy with our Lord Jesus.

It is a love that is a Holy H.O.L.Y. Love that is Wholly W.H.O.L.L.Y. Unselfish. It is of Divine origin

Other parts of love, include, humility, meekness/submissiveness, sympathy, mercy, purity of heart, peacemakers etc. All these graces are summed up in this most important grace i.e. love.

Slide 52, 53 Christ Within

POD [page 27] CHRIST WITHIN.

A LIVING Christ, of wondrous birth,
Who trod the dreary paths of earth,
Shedding abroad His holy light
Through the deep gloom of sin's dark
night.

A dying Christ, whose precious blood
Seals the poor sinner's peace with God;
And fills the soul with fullest love,
Like to the joy prepared above.

A Christ ascended—all is done,
A world redeemed, a victory won.
With angel hosts, a glorious throng,
We'll sing with joy salvation's song.

A living Christ our spirits need,
A loving Christ our souls to feed;
A dying Christ, our ransom He,
A risen Christ to set us free.

This, too, our need—a Christ within,
A life with God, afar from sin,
A Christ whose love our hearts shall fill,
And quite subdue our wayward will.
Close with Hymn 172 Theme Hymn

Slide 54 2 Peter 1:8-11

In closing we will read 2nd Peter 1:8-11

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Slide 55-62 Closing Hymn 172