

Doctrinal Summary of Spiritual Development & Maturity-The Believer's Necessary Supplication

In 2 Peter 1:5-7 Peter identifies a sequence of characteristics that believers are to diligently supply for their spiritual development.

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

The word “applying” is translated from the Koine Greek word παρεισενέγκαντες (“par-eis-en-en-kan-tes”) which more literally means, “performing the action in a point in time as a matter of principle to bring in an additional component to bear the weight or needs of something, based on your own initiation.” It identifies that something is added to what is already present that will play a role in fulfilling something. What is being fulfilled is the believer's spiritual development (becoming “partakers of the divine nature” from v. 4). What is being supplied by the believer to play a role in this is diligence. Thus, believers are to perform the action to add to God's “precious and magnificent promises” (v.4) diligence so that they may become partakers of the divine nature. This is a principle that believers are to operate by.

The word “diligence” is translated from the Koine Greek word σπουδὴν (“spou-daen”) which more literally means, “eager readiness toward accomplishing a task with steady devotion and effort, based on response.” It identifies a mentality that is ready to put in the work necessary to accomplish something because of commitment and devotion to the result. Diligence is based on response to the believer's recognition of God's precious and magnificent promises which have been given to him by grace in Christ. When the believer recognizes the extent to which God has made it possible for him to partake in the divine nature, he is motivated to be diligent in his spiritual development. While applying all diligence the believer is to personally provide eight characteristics that build upon each other.

The word “supply” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἐπιχορηγήσατε (“ep-i-chor-ae-gae-sa-te”) which more literally means, “you are commanded to perform the action in a point in time to provide something at your own expense.” As a command, the believer's free will is challenged to choose to obey God's instruction. He is the one who must perform the action to provide something at his own expense. This means it is his responsibility, his decision, and his effort which are required in order for what he is to provide to be brought to the table. He must do this in a point in time and repeat this action whenever he stops providing what God has instructed him to provide at his own expense.

In all, Peter lists eight characteristics that God instructs the believer to provide to the process of his spiritual development. These characteristics begin with faith being provided by the believer, then morality being added, then knowledge, then self-control, then perseverance, then godliness, then brotherly kindness, then finally love. Each characteristic listed is to be added to the one before it. Thus, they build one upon the other, beginning with faith and culminating with love.

God will do His part to grow the believer spiritually. Yet, God has commanded believers to diligently play their part in their own spiritual development by supplying these necessary characteristics to the process.