



What God Is We Should Be Also

Likely the most damaging thing that can happen to a tender soul that has obeyed the gospel, is to come up out of the watery grave—only to be left alone by the church to “fend for themselves”. Repentance is required before baptism, and too many are confused or outright deceived that because one repents—they are now altogether “fixed” after being raised up to walk a “*newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4). As for “*newness*”, twice Paul used a Greek word [καινότης (kahee-not'-ace)], found in Romans at verses 6:4 and 7:6. This noun defines a different way to walk, a different way to live. From Paul we're instructed “*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*” (Col. 3:1-3). In other words, seek those things which are above as opposed to the old ways. This newness of “*life*”—life according to Thayer's is “*figuratively spoken of a new mode of life, dedicated to God, Romans 6:4*”

Peter wrote, “*3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the [a]corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control [b]perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither [c]barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*” 2 Peter. 1:3-8.

Peter said, “add to your faith virtue” (v.5): Virtue is the quality of being morally good. God is the source and standard for all that is moral or virtuous. Man, because of his lack of faithfulness may indeed be unbelieving and immoral, but the faith each child of God has—is the power for change. Note, assuredly, that our lack of character doesn't change God. Paul wrote, “*If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself*” (2 Tim. 2:13). We cannot lay aside what Peter said, for God has revealed to man how man ought to live based on His own character; “*Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence*” (2 Pet.1:3), through the true knowledge of Him, by His own glory and excellence—what could be more clear? This discussion cannot be complete without inclusion of God's Son, our Lord and King, Jesus the Christ. He came into this world and gave us an example of moral living. Of this John wrote, “*He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked*” (1 John 2:6). The marvelous example of the Lord is “*no sin*” and no “*deceit*” (1 Pet. 2:21-22). The apostle Paul said, “*Therefore be imitators of God as dear children*” (Eph. 5:1). Once more, “*What God is, we should be also*”.

Now we have discussed knowledge of God and Christ, to this **Peter also said add, “self-control” (v.6):** God's character includes self-control? After Adam and Eve sinned in the garden (Gen. 3:1-8) did God just destroy everything in anger? What did Jesus do just before He breathed His last? He said “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*” (Luke 23:34). What would a man have done if he had the power of God? I shudder to think—for I believe most would have just destroyed everything. Paul writing of the qualification of overseers in the church said they must be “*self-controlled*” (Titus 1:8), and this is a trait that every Christian must acquire and then possess. What is self-control? It is the ability to control oneself, in particular one's emotions and the expression of them especially in



“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified”

difficult situations. Solomon wrote, *“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city”* (Proverbs 16:32). We do not benefit from a powerful tongue, strong will, or pressing our rightness upon others. Just the opposite! Our lack of self-control will cause men to turn from us, and likely they will not tell us why. James says, *“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God”* (James 1:19-20). The secret is found in the words *“swift”* and *“slow”*. Be ready to hear others, but don’t let their words provoke you, rather chew on them, and if it is troubling, don’t talk till your spirit is right. Add to this what Jesus taught us, *“...love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you”* (Matt. 5:44).

These are the traits every Christian must strive for spiritually. Paul said, *“Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head”* (Romans 12:20).

Everyone who allows themselves to be without self-control, opens the floodgate of animosity, and people won’t want you around. But then the opposite is true when you love your enemies, control your anger, practice doing good to every person regardless of how they treat you—your enemies sometimes become your friends. Be better than they are. Again, I say, *“What God is, we should be also”*.

Peter concludes with adding *“perseverance...godliness...brotherly kindness”*, and *“love”*. In short, every child of God seeking to be like God, will press on to godliness, be kind to each other, and filled with the great gift of love.

The fact is that the faithful must grow in Christ. We have been given every spiritual tool needed to accomplish this. God never once has commanded mankind in a way that would be impossible. Never have we been asked by God to do something that cannot be done. So, when it comes to man—relying on himself—apart from the *“divine nature”*, he’ll never be able to reach heaven. But, when we rely on God’s divine power—*“all things are possible”* (Matt. 19:26). What this means is, trusting and obeying God connects us to the *“exceedingly great and precious promises”*, and will separate us from the *“corruption that is in the world through lust”* (2 Pet. 1:4).

We have been given everything we need to become godly in every respect. Not one Christian is left without the ability to repent which is a *“godly sorrow”* that *“produces repentance leading to salvation”* (2 Cor. 7:10).

Everyone who has not obeyed the gospel, is also able to repent and be baptized, for God is *“not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Pet. 3:9).

These thoughts are offered in love, and respect for God’s will and purpose. We all can be transformed by the powerful word of God if we receive it in faith.

In Love

Dave Scarpino

