

# Giving Thanks for our Growing Faith

2 Peter 1:5–8

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To be born again is to believe in God's many promises, specifically about Jesus. One of those promises is that we are in God's family, we are Kingdom people. I'm thankful that I'm in God's kingdom. But not just because I've been saved. In the God's family I'm given the opportunity to be with other kingdom people. We help one another. We encourage one another. We bring comfort to one another. We hold one another accountable.

***In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5–8 (NLT)***

**Our salvation is free, growing our faith takes effort: thank you Jesus.** You may be tempted to read this scripture and think you are saved by works. If people think about being saved they think about working hard. If they're thinking about getting to heaven they make a list of the good things they have done. They talk about being moral. They aren't thieves, liars, or cheaters.

People may talk about how much they know. It might not be education, but they speak confidently about the knowledge they possess. There are individuals who might think they deserve to be in heaven because they aren't out of control. They do what is right. They don't fight and argue.

I've meet people who look toward heaven with the attitude that they have endured one hardship after another with patience. They didn't let the problems of life get them down. A few people think that getting to church, or giving to the poor is their ticket to salvation. Some folks look so kind and so loving that they will most certainly be saved.

You have been saved by grace only if you are trusting Jesus. Jesus made it possible for you to forget about trying to earn your salvation and your way into heaven. Jesus opened the gates of heaven when He became your sin. He died on the cross and rose from the dead so anyone who believes in Him is saved. Nothing earned, no work to be accomplished, no trying harder and harder simply grace.

Since you are trusting Jesus then you are saved from your sins, redeemed from the punishment of sin, and delivered to a new life. When you buy a new car, you are the owner of the car. That is unless you got a loan, the bank owns it, they let you keep it at your house. You don't leave the car sitting at the car dealership. You get in and drive it home. Once you get home you don't put it in the garage and leave it. You get in and drive it. You get to know all about the car. You want to know how to turn on the lights. You try to figure out how the A/C works. You program in your phone, and all your music options.

Jesus is not a car.

But some Christians spend more time with their car than they do with Jesus. Don't be one of those Christians. Some Christians like being saved and redeemed, but aren't too interested in starting a new life. They don't want to add anything to their faith. They see no need for great knowledge of Jesus. They don't want to be under control, or kind, or loving. It's not that they want to be bad people, they don't want to change. So as a result they don't produce fruit. Jesus is helpful in their lives, but they aren't impacting the world around them.

***2 Peter 1:5 Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge.***

**Give God the glory if you know you might be idle or content in our faith.** I say give God the glory because this means you are aware. We've all had the spiritual blahs. We aren't reaching out to God, we aren't spending time in His word, we don't recognize Him in our lives. When you recognize you are in the midst of the spiritual blahs give God the glory. The Holy Spirit has finally gotten through to you. Your layers of apathy have been peeled away.

Honestly, I've had the spiritual blahs. I've had those times when everything else in my life was moving at the speed of light, but I wasn't in touch with Jesus. Don't be frightened or angry that your pastor admits his spiritual condition. I am not Jesus. My life isn't on the mountain top. I'm not immune to the challenges of being a person living on this planet.

I was so busy teaching for two years, that my spiritual journey seemed to be in crisis mode, and not growing mode. I've been disappointed by the challenges of life and wallowed in self-pity, not calling on Jesus. I've had the sense of burn-out more than once. I've been slow to hear the Holy Spirit. I've tried to do my own thing and forget to talk to other believers or to Jesus.

Through all my experiences I've learned that my faith is either declining or growing. There is no treading water. Life is like a raging river. If I'm treading water the current is sweeping me away. You've been there, right? Give God the glory.

You're showing up every week to fellowship with other believers, to seek God's guidance, and to dig deeper into your relationship with Jesus. Give God the glory.

Scripture has given us seven character qualities to help us look at our spiritual lives: moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, patient endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Until you get to heaven not one of these will be perfected. Jesus was the only perfect person. His life can be measured on each one of these qualities. Somedays you will be morally excellent, but not patient. The Holy Spirit is still working on you.

The faith that saved you needs to be supplemented by these qualities or you are easily drawn back into sinful behaviors. We've all heard stories about moral failures, right? We've had moments when we haven't controlled ourselves. There have been times that you didn't love your brothers and sisters in Christ. We all have people we don't like. Give God the glory, you still have room to grow.

The Holy Spirit is going to help you. As your faith is supplemented with these qualities you will draw nearer to Jesus. You will find yourself being aware of your growth. You will give God the glory.

***2 Peter 1:6-7 Supplement your knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.***

**Christians who are working hard at growing their faith are impacting the world: Amen.** You aren't just living for yourself. In the immoral and deceitful world in which we live those who seek moral excellence stand out. Maybe we aren't flashing red lights, but moral excellence is what others look at. It's hard for me or anyone to trust a liar. Once the trust has been broken it's hard to rebuild. While everyone wants to be known for moral excellence, Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit helping them to grow their faith.

We live in the age of instant information. I was talking with a friend about a song from back in the seventies. While we talked about it the friend looked up the lyrics and corrected me. Information is everywhere. But that is not knowledge of Jesus. That only comes from talking with Jesus, reading the Bible, and sharing with other believers. It's not whether it's trivia or the knowledge that builds computer chips, it's knowing Jesus changes lives.

Self control is not about me, but about the Holy Spirit being in control. Which has been better in your life, when you are in control or when the Holy Spirit is in control? Be careful how you answer, your answer will reveal the truth. No doubt it's when the Holy Spirit is in control. Thank you Jesus.

Patient endurance is more than merely praying for patience. I often advise people not to prayer for patience. Patience only comes from facing trials. Let me encourage you to pray for Jesus to bring you through the trial whatever it takes.

Brotherly affection was taught to Peter after Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus was fixing breakfast for the disciples after they had been fishing all night. Jesus asked if Peter loved Him. The word Jesus used was Phileo or brotherly love. Jesus responded to Peter to feed His sheep. Which meant to have brotherly love for other believers. Jesus asked the question three times, the first two using Phileo. The third time Jesus used the word Agapeo or God's love for people. This time Jesus was calling Peter to love even the sinners.

So it's no wonder in Peter's list of seven character qualities he mentions that Christians need to love everyone. We have a hard time getting there unless we let each character quality grow upon the others. Thank you Jesus for a growing faith.

Give thanks to Jesus that He knows the spiritual path we need to take. Praise Jesus that He has planned out this path for your life. You may think your life is random. You may think like the rest of the world, that the world is out to get you. Your life is under the careful guidance of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Praise Jesus. There is nothing in your life or my life that surprises Jesus. There is nothing in our lives that Jesus can't use for good. You don't get to define good, Jesus does. There is nothing happening in our lives where Jesus isn't present. Thank you Jesus.

***2 Peter 1:8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

**With thanksgiving work hard at growing your faith.** Your salvation is free, a growing faith is hard work. Not one of the things listed in these verses is normal for us. We will fail the test of each one through out our lives more times than we count.

Jesus loves you even when you fail. Jesus won't let go of you. Jesus won't stop these things from coming against you until you learn to trust Him with each character quality. The devil knows my weaknesses and yours. The devil doesn't want you to grow in your faith, but destroy you.

Jesus sees every trial, every hardship as an opportunity to turn what is bad into what is good. If you believe in Jesus then you will come to believe that Jesus is working in your life for what is good. He is growing your faith. He is bringing out His character traits in your life.

Jesus wants to see Himself in each one of us. Let that sink in. Jesus wants to see Himself in each one of us. We think in terms of ego and selfishness. We might think that Jesus is arrogant to want to see Himself in you.

There is no ego in Jesus. There is nothing selfish about Jesus. You were created in the Image of God. You were created to be in a right relationship with God. You were created to reflect the image of Jesus to others.

Your salvation was free. Jesus offers salvation from sin, redemption from it's power, and deliverance to a new life and life in heaven. You don't have to work at any of those promises. Give God the glory.

On the day Jesus returns you will be in heaven. Being like Jesus is hard work. Growing your faith is hard work. Facing the trials, hardships, and mishaps of life is hard work.

Jesus' promises are true. If you have been born again, you are in His Kingdom. He will give you the power and the grace to live for Him and to become like Him. Then you will give His grace to other believers and even sinners.

Now, is the time. Give God the glory for saving you. Thank Jesus that He lived our lives without ever sinning. Praise Jesus that He took upon Himself ever sin and paid the penalty for it: death. Rejoice all the time that you are empowered to be like Jesus. Rejoice all the time that you are empowered to live like Jesus. Rejoice all the time that you are empowered to share His grace.

Go and work hard in the name of Jesus, your Savior and your Lord. Amen.