

Some Assembly Required – Part 1, Goodness

A mile upstream from Niagara Falls, the Welland River joins the Niagara River. Right where those two rivers meet, a passenger bridge arches across the Welland. Boaters can navigate beneath this bridge and enter the wide flow of the Niagara. But just before they do, they pass under a large sign posted on the bridge's pylon. It asks them two questions: **Do you have an anchor? Do you know how to use it?**

So many Christians commend to others a life they don't seem to live themselves, posing as tour guides to territory on which they've never set foot. The life they actually live seems to be only a cruel parody of the dreams they've dreamed. They've told themselves a thousand times that it won't happen again. They've repented so many times that it's beyond counting. They struggle often ... regularly ... constantly ... and they ask themselves "why isn't my faith in God enough?"

2 Peter 1:1-11 ¹ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, ³ **According 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:** ⁴ Whereby 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. ⁵ **And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;** ⁶ **And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;** ⁷ **And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.** ⁸ 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. ⁹ But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. ¹⁰ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: ¹¹ For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The answer is simple – and irritating. Peter makes a pretty bold claim in these verses: "You already have everything you need for life and godliness!" You already have the anchor, you just need to know how to use it. Faith is the foundation, yes – but it is just the foundation.

Here's the secret – **"GIVING ALL DILIGENCE, ADD TO YOUR FAITH."** Some assembly is required. You have all the pieces you need, and all the necessary instructions – now, just put them together right!

ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE

WHAT IS GOODNESS? (AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION)

Many of the new translations use "goodness" or "integrity" here, and they are quite accurate. Add to your faith goodness. Add to your faith integrity.

The word "virtue" is seldom used anymore, and even the word "goodness" has become quite nebulous. During Bill Clinton's White House sex scandal with his young intern Monica Lewinsky, a countrywide poll was taken in which Americans were asked their thoughts on the president. Most deemed him "a good leader but not a good man." What they meant is that Clinton was competent but corrupt, a man of ability, just not integrity.

Is it possible to be a good leader and not a good man? The Bible doesn't think so! Scripture renders judgment on the kings of Israel and Judah based on one single trait – moral goodness. Many competent leaders are denounced because they lacked such goodness, while others we would evaluate as weak are praised because they had pure hearts.

Without GOODNESS, faith alone is ineffective. We have to add it! Our problem is that we really don't know what goodness is!

- We want to LOOK good.
- We want to FEEL good.
- We even want to DO good.
- But God requires that we BE good.

BEING good often results in DOING good, but we have to be careful here, because an evil person can do any of these actions. Hitler's favorite camera pose was with furry animals and little children. Even the wicked know how to DO good, but they lack the capacity to BE good.

Peter's word for goodness ("arete") depicts a goodness that lives in someone even when he's sleeping, even when no one is around to see or benefit from his goodness. It is what a man is in the dark. It is something we ARE before it is anything we DO, or look, or feel. This kind of goodness is literally the CHARACTER OF GOD actively living in us.

2 Peter 1:3 According 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**:

Peter uses the same word in verse 3, pairing God's GLORY with His GOODNESS. Moses asked God, "Show me your GLORY." God replied, "I will make my GOODNESS pass before you." They are the same!

Exodus 33:18-19 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

Peter had the same experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, and it was no doubt his deepest memory outside of Calvary ...

2 Peter 1:16-18 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

“Add to your faith goodness” is more than just “Christian hygiene” – it is nothing less than an invitation to **“partake of the divine nature”** (v. 4). The old Anglo-Saxon word for “good” was the same as the word “God,” because **GOD IS GOOD!** The Scriptures overflow with references to the goodness of God. The Psalmist declared, “The Lord is good to all” (Psalm 145:9). When God was on the earth in the person of Jesus, the Bible says simply that He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

Matthew 19:16-22 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, **what good thing shall I do**, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, **Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God:** but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Typically, Jesus answers this man’s question with another question. The man wants to know what good things to DO to inherit eternal life – because DOING good is usually more attractive and more manageable to us than BEING good.

Jesus is not denying His divinity here; in fact, He’s proving it! He’s basically saying, “Do you understand what you just said, because only God is good! If I’m good, then I’m God!”

And only then does Jesus answer the man on his own terms, giving him a tedious, intricate, unwieldy list of things to do – pious duties to fulfill, religious feats to accomplish. And once He has given the man all these rules for good behavior, the man walks away, sad with defeat. Why? Because he can’t possibly do it all! Of course not.

Apart from God, no one does good.

Romans 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Apart from God, nothing good lives in us.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

IT TAKES GOD IN US FOR US TO BE GOOD! We don’t “get good to get God,” we “get God to get good!” The only solution to our sin problem is the power of the Holy Ghost, producing the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives!

Our most accurate modern word for “goodness” would be the word **“INTEGRITY.”** Integrity comes from the same root as the word “integrate” and that’s what it means – **the heart and the actions are integrated.**

Our public image must match our private reality, or we do not have “integrity” – WE HAVEN’T ADDED GOODNESS!

Our words must match our actions, or we do not have “integrity” – WE HAVEN’T ADDED GOODNESS! Your words aren’t contagious, but your lifestyle is. That’s why many times, those closest to you have the most problem with you – because of your hypocrisy and inconsistency!

Paul gives us two practical principles for being good ...

Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Paul is saying, **HOLD TIGHT TO YOUR INTEGRITY!** He’s admonishing, **OVERCOME EVIL WITH INTEGRITY!** The only way you can beat the devil is to be the same in private as you are in public. The devil is not afraid of your WORDS if you don’t have a WITNESS! He’s not afraid of your PRAISE if you don’t PRAY!

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED! Add to your faith GOODNESS.