

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, October 18, 2015

Give Diligence to Make Your Calling and Election Sure (Part 1)

Today I would like to begin an analysis of Peter's exhortation to 'give diligence to make your calling and election sure', primarily focusing on how, and why we are to do that. We find these wonderful, foundational instructions, that apply to every aspect of our lives, in the first part of Peter's second epistle.

2Peter 1:1-12 "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. 12 ¶ Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."

Just prior to his ascension, our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with Peter – you will find that intense, emotional exchange at **John 21:15-18 "15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest**

all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” Feed my sheep! We each have that responsibility commensurate with our lot, and the particular gifts that God has given to us in this life. As an Apostle and later, an Elder of a particular church (**1Peter 5:1**), Peter had many gifts, and much wisdom from the Holy Spirit, and many opportunities to feed the sheep. I submit to you that you will be hard pressed to find more substantive manna for the sheep than the words that I just read you – words supplied to Peter by the Holy Spirit, and miraculously preserved, and delivered to the sheep throughout the past 2000 years. Feed my sheep, indeed! Thank God for these words of instruction that he delivered to us through our brother Peter, just prior to the end of his life (around 68 AD). This exhortation is of great value, and is worthy of close study, and continual review, as it is a summary of all of our duties as Christians.

To get our arms around Peter’s exhortation, we will consider: *Who* is being addressed; *What* we are instructed to do; *How* we are instructed to accomplish it; and *Why* it is so critical for us. Today, we will look at the “Who”, “What” and begin to delve into the “How” aspects of this exhortation. Lord willing, next week, we will conclude our examination of the “How”, and consider the “Why”.

Who are these instructions for?: The “brethren”; “them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”; those who are in possession of “grace and peace”, and have great need that it be “multiplied”; those to whom God has given “all things that pertain unto life and godliness”, and have been “called to glory and virtue”; those who have received “great and precious promises”, and have “escaped the corruption that is in the world” by the Righteousness of Christ, and the Mercy of God. This manna is for the sheep - it’s not for the goats! If the Lord God has not given you that rare, precious gift of faith, then this discussion is not for you!

What are we instructed to do?: “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure”.

Romans 9:11 “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)”

Romans 8:28-30 “28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 ¶ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Here is our election, and our calling. Elected – chosen – by the sovereign God, before the foundation of the world, when he purchased us again to himself through the Covenant of Grace, by the blood of Christ. Called - with the effectual, irresistible calling of the Holy Spirit; called out of darkness, into light; called from the flesh to the Spirit, and to bring forth the fruits of that calling. These are both free gifts of God – before we were born, and therefore NOT OF WORKS. Seeing that these are free gifts, why are we then told to make them sure? The *fact* of the calling, and the election of the people of God is absolute, and unchangeable – they ARE elected, and they ARE called. It was a done deal, when the Covenant was struck – it cannot be made more sure than it already is, and there is no way to gain it, maintain it, or lose it, by the diligence of the flesh. Since that is clearly not the meaning, then what is Peter telling us to “make sure”?

John Brown: “A Christian is to afford satisfactory evidence that he has been called and elected. Seek diligently to make it evident, both to yourself and others, that you have indeed been called and elected.”

We are to make sure of the evidence or the fruit of our calling and election, not the fact of our calling and election. Many believe themselves to be called and chosen, who have no satisfactory evidence that they are – more often, they have ample strong evidence that they are not, if they would simply examine that evidence in light of the clear words of scripture! For example, look at the teeming masses that call themselves “Christians” in this country, while both their doctrine, and their behavior is exactly opposite of what the scriptures teach. A person who is in that state is deceived – delusional – they believe a lie! If they continue in that lie, having become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, then they will perish without hope. Great peril! We must be continually comparing our own understanding, and our own behavior against the plain words of the scriptures – the plumb line – lest we be found to be hypocritical professors!

On the other hand, when we can lay hold on good evidence of our calling and election, then it is of GREAT value, and brings us the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, and keeps our hearts and minds (**Philippians 4:7**). To have that kind of surety in our hearts and minds serves to enliven our hope, enlarge our hearts, and encourage us to run to do the bidding of our God.

Furthermore, it is of great value in our testimony to the world that we diligently endeavor to bring forth evidence of our calling and election.

Brown: “The world does not believe either in the calling or the election of Christians. But it understands well enough that Christians profess to have been led, by a divine influence to embrace certain views, and prosecute certain objects – views and objects which necessitate

their separation from the great body of their fellow-men in a variety of respects, and different from the “course of the world;” and when the world sees men laying claim to the Christian name, behave no better – sometimes worse, than those who make no such claims, it naturally enough comes to the conclusion that either these men are hypocrites, or, if not, Christianity is but a name.”

To the contrary, when the world sees Christians behave themselves according to their calling – which is behavior that is inexplicable to the flesh, because it is NOT OF the flesh – then they MUST give glory to God, much like Balaam did when he went to curse the Israelites, and was restrained of God, such that he could only bless them (**Numbers 22 & 23**). They can curse us and hate us all day long, but in their heart of hearts, they KNOW that they are seeing the effects of the Holy Spirit dwelling in his people. There is no other explanation!

1Peter 2:12 “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

How are we to make our calling and election sure?: “giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.”

We will not be able to find evidence of our calling and election by directly inquiring into the mind and secret will of God, or by peeking between the folded leaves of the book of life to see whether our names are written there. These things are closed to us. We also will not get any satisfaction by merely examining our own hearts, which are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! (**Jeremiah 17:9**) While we must have self-examination, we must take great care that we are not using our own human standards, and the light of our own heart and conscience, which can NEVER be the source, or grounding of our hope. Standing alone, our hearts are liable to either excuse our sinfulness, or else bring us into hopeless despair.

Instead, we must give all diligence to earnestly, continuously, laboriously make use of these appropriate means that Peter lays out in order before us. By adding these things and bringing forth the fruit of them, we make our faith active, and we produce evidence – both for ourselves, and others, that our calling and election are sure!

Brown: “As the glorious finished work of Christ is the only ground of hope, the best evidence that I am resting on it, is not the recollected, but the present faith of that truth – and that present faith, manifesting its existence and power in working by love, purifying the heart,

overcoming the world. It is by following out the faith of the Gospel to its natural results on the mind, the heart, and the conduct – the giving ourselves up to its influence, that we are sanctified, and made to know that we are sanctified; it is thus that we make our calling and election sure.”

Before we dive into an individual examination of each of these seven moral attributes, I think it is instructive for us to consider the nature and construction of this list. This is not some incomplete, hodgepodge list of randomly ordered, fluffy, feel good words, to be used as fodder for bumper sticker theology and self-righteousness.

Brown: “These words contain a very condensed, yet a very comprehensive, summary of Christian morals, exhibiting in a striking point of view, that character of connection, consistency, symmetry, and completeness, by which the morality of the Bible is so palpably and so favourably distinguished from all worldly ‘morality’ and ‘philosophy’.”

I recall the first time that I got any clear understanding of this passage – it was about 12 years ago, when Tim stood in this pulpit and preached to us about it. He explained to us how complete this list is, and how each of the attributes in this list are intimately connected to one another, and that they build upon one another. The members of this body have spoken often about these attributes, and many of us refer to this list as the “daisy chain”, or “stepping stones”, or “building blocks” – referring to the way that these things are connected to, and built upon one another. I love those characterizations, and I think that those are excellent visuals to help us to grasp the concept. I also love the fact that many of the members of this body are diligently seeking to understand, and perfect these spiritual graces, and the fruit of each of them. Given that, I know that some of what I have for you will not be new, but I’m going to take a slightly different approach, and use a different visual – the building of a house, which I hope will bring some additional light to this instructive topic.

Consider first the word translated as “add” in this passage. We are to “add” each of these attributes. This is not a random, disorderly process.

Strong’s defines that word as “Minister, furnish, supply, assist”. This Greek word only appears 5 times in the Bible, and this is the only place that it is translated as “add”.

Trapp: “One grace strengtheneth another, as stones do in an arch.”

Brown: “The leading idea is to supply that which is needed. It is the word used to signify the effect of all the parts of the body doing each of their particular functions.”

This is a building process. It is an edification process (to build up, to erect a house or building). We must begin with the unmovable foundation of Christ, and particularly our Faith in Christ, and then build, perfect, and maintain our spiritual house on that foundation.

Colossians 2:6,7 “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

Peter would have been well acquainted with this metaphor of building a spiritual house on the foundation of faith – no wonder then that he would allude to it in his epistle.

Matthew 16:15-18 “15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Peter makes a plain profession of faith, which Jesus calls out as a supernatural thing, and a gift of God, which he then declares as the foundation of his church – his people - in the earth. Thou art Peter (which literally means rock), and you have just identified THE ROCK upon which the church is built – Christ, faith in Christ, and the profession of that faith in the earth. How absurd, that the Catholics would pervert this verse into an excuse for something as vile and antichrist as a Pope!

1Peter 2:4,5 “4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians 2:19-22 “19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Matthew Henry: “Observe, Not only the universal church is called the temple of God, but particular churches; and even every true believer is a living temple, a habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Each of these attributes that are to be added to (built upon) our faith is a peculiar material to be used in this building, and they must be supplied in their proper order, and used in their proper way. You don't start at the roof, you start at the foundation. You don't use sheetrock to make a bath tub.

Matthew 7:24-27 “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

Think about the process of building a house. You study, budget, blueprint, plan, procure and arrange materials and manpower, etc. It's laborious and time consuming before you even begin to swing a hammer. Once the work begins, all things must be done in order. Once a thing is in place, it is fastened, braced, and supported, until it has become an integral part of the structure. Each component supports the components that come next, and each is support by the component that came before it ... all the way back to the foundation. If a component is installed improperly, then it will be to the detriment of everything that follows it. If the walls aren't level, then the ceiling will lean. Often we find that something is out of whack, and we have to go back to the drawing board, re-plan, and re-build that part. Such is this spiritual house that we are to be building upon the foundation of our faith.

Once the house is complete, the work is never done! The homeowners among us are painfully aware that this is a never ending process, called maintenance. Some issues arise simply from the passage of time, and the daily grind of usage. Other issues arise because of an acute problem – a storm, a broken pipe, etc. Likewise, things arise in our lives - either in normal course, or because of some acute affliction - that require us to repair, remodel and improve upon our spiritual house. There even arises a time when the Lord gives us new light on a thing, such that we see that we have been walking in error, and we must tear down some aspect of our spiritual house, and build it anew. If you don't do this active work – if you don't maintain your house, then it will start to crumble, leak, rot, stink, sag, become infested, etc.

Ecclesiastes 10:18 “By much slothfulness the building decayeth;”

Being a Christian is hard work! There is no shortcut to be taken! Take up your cross daily! Our loved ones just bought a house, which gave us all a stark visual for this hour – when a house is left without maintenance, it is ruined! When a Christian is in that condition, he is in great peril! The only thing to do at that point is to tear down all that has gone to rot, and begin again to build upon our faith. There is no way to guild it with human wisdom – find the problems, rip them out, and then begin again. This process plays out over the course of our entire lives. We might see it clearly one day, and in one circumstance, and then not see it on the next day, in a different circumstance.

Add to your Faith

Notice that Peter does not tell us to add Faith itself, but rather it is set out as the foundation upon which to construct everything that follows.

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Jude 1:20,21 “20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Brown: “They are not exhorted to have faith, but to take care that it be the right faith – the belief of the right truth, based on the right evidence. If it be faith, it is not meant to be alone, it cannot be alone. The faith that is alone is dead, and good for nothing. Wherever this foundation of faith is truly laid, there is ‘a growing unto an holy temple in the Lord, a habitation of God through the Spirit.’ Faith is the first step in the road to heaven; but were the believer to stand still and do nothing but believe, do you think he would ever reach heaven? If he really believe he CANNOT stand still.”

These graces that are to be supplied (added) are spiritual attributes; things that only God’s elect, operating under the influence of the Holy Spirit, are even truly *able* to possess. People can bring forth all kinds of phony fruit, for a time, but that doesn’t mean that they have these graces operating in their spirit. Consider also that these are all nouns, not verbs. These are things that we are, and things that we have in us, not things that we do. That’s not at all to diminish the actions that **MUST** necessarily flow from each of these attributes – we clearly know that faith without works is dead (**James 2:20,26**) - but be clear that the actions themselves are **NOT** the attribute, but rather the fruit that gives evidence of the attribute. For instance, despite what you hear all around you in this world, Charity is not something that you “do”. Charity is something that you have in your heart, and it brings forth actions that prove it. This underscores the fact that these

are gifts that the Holy Spirit supplies to us, and we must be continually, diligently seeking that the Lord will give us these things, and cause them to bear fruit in us.

Philippians 2:13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Calvin – “When, therefore, the Apostle requires these things, he by no means asserts that they are in our power, but only shews what we ought to have, and what ought to be done. And as to the godly, when conscious of their own infirmity, they find themselves deficient in their duty, nothing remains for them but to flee to God for aid and help.”

Finally, consider that there are 7 attributes of grace that are to be added to our faith – which speaks to their fullness and sufficiency, seeing that 7 is the number of perfection and completeness throughout the scriptures.

Add to your Faith, Virtue

I have read and heard many opinions on what this virtue is – Here are the definitions that I believe to be supported by the context, and the other places that this same word is used in the scriptures: Moral goodness and vigor which brings forth a pattern of good works, proving out the regenerated heart of the Christian – Energy and Zeal. Moral courage, especially in the face of adversity - Boldness, Fortitude and Steadfastness.

Simply put – moral energy and moral courage.

Hebrews 4:11 “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

1Corinthians 9:24 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”

Brown: “This virtue is energy, manifesting itself in the active performance of duty, and in bravely meeting the trials of the Christian life. Who has not had reason to regret how many opportunities of doing good, of honoring God, and promoting the best interests of mankind, he has lost, just for want of a little more energy and fortitude? The force of the Apostle’s exhortation may be thus given – you believe, but you must act and suffer; and that you may do either or both these to purpose, you must be energetic and brave, active and courageous.”

Gill: “Where there is true faith in Christ, there should be a holy boldness to profess it, and constancy in it, and courage to fight the good fight of faith, and firmness of mind to stand fast in it, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements;”

Henry: "By virtue here we may understand strength and courage, without which the believer cannot stand up for good works, by abounding and excelling in them. The righteous must be bold as a lion (#Pr 28:1); a cowardly Christian, who is afraid to profess the doctrines or practice the duties of the gospel, must expect that Christ will be ashamed of him another day."

Work! Do what your hand finds to do, with your might! (**Ecclesiastes 9:10**) Behave like a person who believes, and who has a clear, fixed judgment of what is true and right, and who is determined to put that belief into action. Do not halt between two opinions (**1Kings 18:21**); do not be weary in well doing (**Galatians 6:9**); do not be double-minded, and therefore unstable in all of your ways (**James 1:8**). Rather, be bold in the face of the opposition and hazards that will necessarily accompany your Christian profession (**Acts 4:29**). Fear not the world, or the god of this world; fear only God! (**Matthew 10:28**) Be strong, both to DO and to SUFFER.

1Corinthians 16:13 "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

Isaiah 40:31 "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

When do we need this energy? This boldness fortitude, and courage? This steadfastness, that we will not be moved, and blown about by every wind of doctrine? When we are in the midst of affliction and trials. When the battle is raging around us, and Satan is looking to scare us with his lion's roar, so that we will fear men, and obey men, rather than God. Consider the virtue displayed by those that have come before us:

Hebrews 11:33-37 "33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

We need this energy equally as much, when there is a lull in the battle - when Satan is tempting us into sluggishness and slothfulness.

Hebrews 6:11,12 “11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Proverbs 6:6 “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.”

Slothfulness and cowardice are the opposite of this virtue. A lazy Christian is a Christian whose armor is laying in a rusting heap on the ground. A lazy Christian has left their spiritual house to disrepair. When we find ourselves in a lazy rut, we must seek the Lord for this virtue, and GET TO WORK! Likewise, when the fear of man is creeping into our minds, we must sow to this virtue. We’re not talking about hoo-rah human courage here – this is supernatural courage that is provided by the Holy Spirit. It must be sought, and human notions of courage must be actively suppressed. American style “bravery” and heartland “work-ethic” are the product of a works-righteous, phony “Christian” corruption of this virtue. It is a worthless, human shadow of this glorious energy.

This virtue is a glorious energy that is like a fire shut up in a Christian’s bones, and must be present and active in the exercising of all of the subsequent graces that Peter tells us to add. This virtue must be sown to, and sought after. It is a wonderful thing to see that energy and boldness in our brothers and sisters; it is disheartening and quenches the spirit when we see it lacking. Quench not the Spirit! (**1Thessalonians 5:19**)

Without adding the remaining 6 graces to our virtue, that virtue is bound to become error: Our boldness can become a license for rebellion, and an excuse not to control our spirit. Our moral goodness can turn into works righteousness. Our energy can be like a nuclear missile with no guidance chip. We can go with great energy and boldness down the WRONG road. Therefore we must now build upon our virtue, with knowledge.

Add to your Virtue, Knowledge

Brown: “Mere energy and courage, though under the influence of genuine faith, may be misdirected. They may lead a man to engage in labours which it would be wise to leave alone, and to expose himself to dangers and perplexities which he would do well to avoid. It is not enough that our efforts spring from faith – they must be directed by knowledge and wisdom. It is an enlightened faith which produces that steady, principled courage by which alone the world can be overcome.”

Job 28:28 “And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

There must be knowledge of Christ, and a reverential fear of the Lord, before we can have, or profess faith. But there is much more of the revealed will of God that we are to continually seek after – it is an entire lifetime worth of work – it will never be completed while we are in this flesh. We should walk according to the light that we have today – be obedient to what we know today – and yet continue to seek the Lord to make that light to shine brighter, and to instruct us in the scriptures, such that we can more perfectly understand his will, and be obedient to it.

Proverbs 4:18 “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

Study the scriptures, and seek wisdom from the Lord as to how we ought to apply that knowledge to our lives with wisdom and prudence.

2Timothy 2:15,16 “15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.”

This is not a process of osmosis – it is labor! It cannot be laid at someone else’s feet. Put away childish things (**1Corinthians 13:11**); move from the sincere milk of the word, to spiritual meat (**1Peter 2:2**). It takes time, and effort! That virtue – energy – that we have laid down, now supports the activity required to add knowledge! Be an energetic workman in studying the word of God! As we have new experiences, and reach new stages in our lives, the scriptures must be sought after afresh, so that we can have appropriate wisdom for the hour.

Psalms 1:2,3 “2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

This is individual work, but it is also social work! While we must privately, individually seek to add this knowledge of the scriptures – we must also continually be speaking of these things with one another, and building up each other’s knowledge!

Brown: "Christians should make such progress in the knowledge of divine truth that, in the course of time, they should be qualified to be teachers. It is highly discreditable to them, and makes their calling un-sure, if, when the time comes, they are found still to 'have need that someone teach them what be the first principles of the oracles of God.'"

Malachai 3:16 "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."

If we can help each other build our earthly houses, how much more valuable is our labor in building up each other's spiritual houses? Do it with even MORE energy!

1Thessalonians 5:11-13 "11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another [build up each other's spiritual houses!], even as also ye do. 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."

Beyond our knowledge of the scriptures, which is clearly paramount, we are to add knowledge in general.

Brown: "I would extend it to all kinds of knowledge within the Christian's reach, which can be turned to account in the way of improving his own character, and gaining the great ends of his Christian calling in reference to the glory of God and the good of the church and the world. A Christian should be an intelligent, a knowing, a wise man. Real Christianity and real knowledge in all its forms are mutual friends. There is no field of knowledge – whether history, or literature, or science – from which a Christian may not derive advantage. The works of God throw light on the word of God. And all His works are worthy of being inquired into. The Bible cautions not against science, but science falsely so called; not against knowledge of any kind, but that which, with a show of knowledge, is ignorance and error; not against philosophy – the love of wisdom, but against that vain deceitful thing which assumes its name; not against instruction, but only against 'the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge'. True Christians should seek to have their spiritual senses so exercised about the subjects of knowledge, that they shall discern the things that differ, or approve those things that are excellent. This practical knowledge, this turning of all we know to its appropriate use, requires habitual consideration. It requires a man to be looking constantly both inward into his own heart, and outward to the church and world around him; and both in his looking inward and outward, to look at everything in the light of God's word. Without a growing knowledge both of the world and of ourselves, as well as

of our Bibles, we will make little progress in gaining the great ends of our Christian calling, either to ourselves or to others. We must know the peculiar character of the times we live in – mark events as they arise, and be ready to do what is requisite at the proper season and in the proper way.”

2Corinthians 10:5 “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

Bring all knowledge into subjection – every thought into captivity – to the obedience of Christ. Science – at its best – can only hope to partially describe the marvelous works of God, as seen in the things which he has made in the physical realm – and even that, is limited by what our our senses can comprehend. From that perspective it is a wonderful thing, to be lawfully enquired after, while continually looking to the source and governor of it all. Using science to describe the **means** of God’s creation is a good thing. Corrupting science, in order to replace God in the work of his creation, is the work of Satan. Humans only ever get a partial view and a partial understanding of the created world – but in their pride, humans presume that their myopic view is the entire view, and that all things will rise and fall upon that view. All things bow to the wisdom of science (falsely so-called) as defined by humans, rather than humbly viewing science (our understanding of the natural world) in the light of the Creator of all things. The natural laws that God has put in place, are his to utilize, suspend, or entirely dispose of – as he pleases! See what your false science will benefit you, when the elements begin to melt with a fervent heat!

I love you all. Amen.