

## SEVEN VIRTUES

“...for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence; and in moral excellence, knowledge; and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, perseverance; and in perseverance, godliness; and in godliness, brotherly affection; and in brotherly affection, love.” - 2 Peter 1:5-7

In this passage, we see a significant sequence of virtues that build upon one another, forming a spiritual ladder of growth and maturity for believers. These seven points outlined by Peter reflect an intentional progression, showing us the active role we as Christians must play in our spiritual development.

### Faith

Peter begins with faith as the foundation. Faith is the bedrock of the Christian life, the starting point of a believer's journey. This is a deep trust in God's promises and a commitment to follow His ways. Without faith, the subsequent virtues cannot take root, because faith opens the heart to God's life-changing work.

### Moral Excellence

Building upon faith, we are instructed to add moral excellence, or virtue. This term suggests courage and a resolute commitment to doing what is right, regardless of the cost. Moral excellence reflects a life that strives to embody God's righteousness, seeking purity of heart and action. It is not passive goodness but an active pursuit of godly character.

### Knowledge

Next is knowledge, which involves more than just accumulating information; it refers to a deep, experiential understanding of God's will. This knowledge comes through studying the Bible, prayer, and a daily walk with Jesus. It helps us discern right from wrong and make wise choices, guiding their moral excellence.

### Self-Control

Knowledge must be accompanied by self-control. As we grow in understanding, we must learn to master our impulses, desires, and emotions. Self-control is the discipline to restrain ourselves from sinful tendencies and to channel our passions in ways that honor the Creator. Without it, knowledge could lead to arrogance or reckless behavior.

### Perseverance

Following self-control is perseverance, the ability to endure trials and remain steadfast in faith. This virtue speaks to patient endurance, not giving up when faced with hardship. Perseverance demonstrates a trust in God's timing and a refusal to waver, even when the road ahead seems long and difficult.

### Godliness

Perseverance leads to godliness, a reverent awareness of the Lord in every aspect of life. Godliness goes beyond mere outward religious practice—it is a heartfelt devotion to God, seeking to reflect His nature in our thoughts, words, and actions. It creates a constant sense of God's presence, encouraging us to live in a manner worthy of our calling.

### Brotherly Affection and Love

Finally, Peter concludes with brotherly affection (*philadelphia*) and love (*agape*). Brotherly affection refers to sincere care and kindness toward fellow believers, cultivating strong bonds within the spiritual community. Love, however, transcends even brotherly affection—it is the selfless, unconditional love that mirrors God's own love for humanity. This highest form of love compels us to serve others, even at great personal cost.

**The virtues listed by Peter create a deliberate path of spiritual growth, starting with faith and culminating in love. Each step builds upon the last, forming a divine chain of character development. By diligently adding these qualities to our lives, we grow closer to God and reflect His nature more fully in the world.**