

Basic Training Bible Ministries

presents

“Are You a Friend of God?” **The Biblical Qualities and Qualifications**



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Are You a Friend of God?

The Biblical Qualities and Qualifications

CLASS ONE

Introduction

There are two extreme views about being a friend of God:

1. Very few exist in history, and
2. Every believer is a friend of God.

Extreme views tend to dominate in theological circles (think Pharisees vs. Sadducees; and Shammai vs. Hillel—two famous Rabbis—the first, very legalistic; the second, more liberal).

Jesus' Three Major Discourses

1. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).
Here, Jesus presents Himself to Israel as King and presents the platform of His kingdom. This message ultimately relates to the Kingdom Age.
2. The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25).
In this message, Jesus anticipates the seven-year Tribulation and His Second Coming. Again, this message is primarily directed to Israel.
3. The Upper Room Discourse (John 13–17).
The message of the Upper Room is directed to believers in the Church Age. The doctrines contained in this glorious message cover, in seed form, all the great truths contained in the epistles.

The Grand Invitation (John 15:9–15)

Jesus and His disciples have just left the Upper Room (John 14:31b). They passed through vineyards on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is illustrating from viticulture methods, which they knew and understood.

1. The figure of the vine and branches (John 15:1–8) presents four great truths:
 - a. Jesus is the source of spiritual life, which the Father cultivates (v. 1). The branches represent true believers.
 - b. The Father works to bring increasing “fruit” in believers’ lives (vv. 2–3). This fruit comes from His Word abiding in us (vv. 3, 7).
 - c. Every believer has the relational duty to volitionally “abide” in the vine—a picture of fellowship. Jesus uses “abide” (Greek word, *meno*) ten times in the first ten verses. The word occurs 40 times in the Gospel beginning in John 1:32 and 39, 24 times in 1 John, and three times in 2 John.
 - d. The immediate goal is to “abide in Christ” (vv. 4, 9); the secondary goal is to “bear fruit” (vv. 2, 4–5, 8); and the ultimate goal is to “glorify the Father” (v. 8).

2. The friendship of the Lord Jesus to us is unconditional (vv. 9, 15). Our friendship to Him is conditioned on “abiding” (vv. 1–10).
3. The call to be a friend of God is to all who believe (v. 15), “*I have called you friends.*” This is both an **identification**, and a **calling**.
4. Our qualification for this title is obedience (vv. 10, 14). The “**if**” is a 3rd class condition, which may or may not be met.

Note: It has been calculated that there are 1,050 commands in the New Testament. When the same commands are collated, it is reduced to about 800. If all similar commands are grouped, it comes down to about 70 or 80. Do you know them? Have you kept them?

Paul summarizes them all in Romans 13:8, 10.

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law ... Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.”

5. The key to outward obedience is inward abiding (vv. 4–6).

“He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit” (v. 5).

6. The results of consistent abiding are five in number:
 - a. Fruitfulness (v. 5). Note that by abiding in Him, He is the source of all spiritual power.
 - b. Effective prayer (v. 7). Note that we abide in Him when His Word abides in us.
 - c. Joy (v. 11)
 - d. Obedience (vv. 10, 14).
 - e. Knowledge/wisdom (vv. 7, 15).

Principle: All of the above are but details of the promise in John 14:21, 23:

*“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is He who loves Me. and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him ... if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him and We will come and **make Our home** with him.”*

Dr. Earl Radmacher stated that he believed the above promise to be the greatest ever given in the Bible!

Point: In the abiding life of the believer, the Father and the Son are “at home” in our life.

Two Great Examples (James 2:20–25)

The book of James as a whole, and the preceding section (vv. 14–20), has been grossly misunderstood throughout Church history. We must take the book as a unit and accept James' own parameters for interpretation.

1. The recipients of the book are genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. James uses “*brethren*” in some form 15 times; the phrase “*among you,*” seven times; and “*one another*” four times.
2. The theme of the book is the attainment of spiritual maturity (1:4; the word “perfect” occurs eight times in the epistle).
3. The fundamental challenge of James is to “*Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*” (2:22).
4. In the book, there are at least 20 examples of how believers fail to be doers of the Word. Most of us have committed them all.
5. The two most misunderstood words in the book are “**saved**” and “**dead.**” The first is used only in the sense of daily, temporal deliverance; the second is used in opposition to the word “*profit*” (2:14, 16), and thus refers to a faith that is of no spiritual profit to others. James uses the word “*dead*” here in the same way ancient Greek philosophers, such as Epictetus, used it to mean “of no profit,” or “inoperative.”

The Example of Abraham (James 2:21–23)

1. James links the story of Genesis 22 with Genesis 15 to show that Abraham's faith “*was made perfect*” (mature) by means of his works. “*Justified*” here is used in the sense of “vindicated,” as used by Jesus in Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:35.
2. The word “*accounted*” in v. 23 is *logizomai* and refers to the imputation of righteousness to Abraham's faith. Here, we have the life of Abraham from beginning to end regarding his spiritual growth, from initial saving faith to ultimate victory in maturity.
3. James says that growth demands the testing of faith (1:2–4), and we will see the many tests and triumphs of Abraham later.

The Example of Rahab (2:25)

1. The word “*likewise*” applies what has been said of Abraham to Rahab as well.
2. Her faith, gained some time before the spies came, was vindicated by her actions in hiding them, and sending them out safely.

Principle: One commentator has said: James and Paul are not fighting against each other over the issue of salvation. Rather, they are standing back-to-back, defending against two heresies. Paul, against the idea that works are essential for eternal salvation; James against

the claim that works are not essential in the life of faith. Both of these heresies are with us today, along with many others.

2 Peter 1:1–11

Peter was with Jesus and the disciples in the Upper Room (John 13–17). The very next day he committed the worst sin of his life: denying his Lord three times. Could such a man ever become a friend of God? We will see this in a later class.

Here, he gives us a roadmap from salvation to maturity—from the cross to the crown.

Special notice should be given to the fact that this section deals with the provisions God has made in **the past** (vv. 1–4); what we are to be doing in **the present** (vv. 5–7); and what God will yet do in the **eternal future** (vv. 8–11).

Provisions for the Journey (vv. 1–4)

1. He is writing to those of “*like precious faith*.” The word *isotimos* speaks of equal standing and equal provision from God.
2. We all have the potential for grace and peace to be “*multiplied*.” The word used here means “to grow, increase, and abound.”
3. This comes by means of “*knowledge*,” which is *epignosis*—that which is experiential. As James would say, “not hearers only but doers also” (James 1:22).
4. This knowledge is directed to “*Him who called us by [His] glory and virtue*.” Peter writes much about the “call” or “calling” of God (1 Pet. 1:2, 15; 2:4, 6, 9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3, 10). “Calling,” or “election,” consists of a two-fold call (Matt. 11:28–30): to salvation and to service, which we can only respond to by faith.
5. This “*glory and virtue*” is imparted to us by means of “*exceedingly great and precious promises*,” which are designed to have both a purifying and a transformative effect on our lives. We become “*partakers of [His] nature*” as we are “conformed to the image of Christ” (Rom. 8:29; 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Our personal Jacob’s Ladder (vv. 5–7)

There are eight spiritual “steps” to be added to our initial faith in Jesus Christ. These can be seen in couplets, very much like the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1–12). Eight is the biblical number of new beginning, and every day, the “*Today*” of Hebrews 3:7, 15, is a day to “*press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:14).

The Promise of Blessing and Reward (vv. 8–11)

We will come back to this passage in our last class to develop the relationship of our daily walk to our eternal standing in the kingdom.

CLASS TWO

An Example of Diligence and Virtue

2 Peter 1:5

1. “*Giving all diligence ... add.*” The triple-compound verb used here (*pareisphero*), speaks of going beyond our initial faith: “to bring in beside.” The aorist active participle precedes the command to “*add.*” In other words, spiritual diligence makes the addition of the following qualities possible. We are adding the “doing” to our “hearing.” The word “*add*” (*epichoregeo*) is an aorist imperative and comes from a word that spoke of a benefactor who richly supplied a chorus with garments and instruments so that they might perform.
2. “*Diligence*” is the same word translated “*study*” in 2 Timothy 2:15. It speaks of strong inner motivation resulting in making every effort.
3. “*Virtue*” is the same as used in v. 3, thus the context would suggest it is the power of God. This word was used in the ancient world for athletic power—the ability to perform and excel on demand. Here, it is God’s power, and I take it to refer to a reliance on the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18).

Ruth, an Example of Diligence and Virtue

The book of Ruth is one of the most fascinating books in the Old Testament. It is a history, a prophecy, and a romance, all in one. Orthodox Jews linked it to the Feast of Pentecost. According to Chuck Missler, many scribes placed it in the section of the prophets. Our time permits us only to hit the highlights, but there is much valuable instruction for us here.

Story Background

1. The Historical Setting

The main setting is Bethlehem (“the house of bread”), beginning during a time of famine—a sure sign of divine discipline on the nation (Lev. 26:18–20, 26; Deut. 28:24).

2. The Main Actors

- a. *Elimelech*: “My God is King.”
- b. *Naomi*: “Pleasant” (Israel = the “pleasant land,” Dan. 8:9).
- c. *Mahlon*: “Sickly.”
- d. *Chilion*: “Pining, wasting.”
- e. *Orpah*: “Fawn, gazelle.”
- f. *Ruth*: “Friend.”
- g. *Boaz*: “In him is strength.”
- h. The unwilling kinsman: “The unfaithful friend.”

3. The Prophetic Significance.

The book of Ruth is a historical record of events that prophetically mirrors the doctrinal format of Romans 9–11.

- a. In Romans 9, Israel rejects her Messiah, but the Gentiles embrace Him.
- b. In Romans 10, the Gentiles become the messengers and witnesses to unbelieving Israel.

- c. In Romans 11, Israel is grafted in again, after the Gentile bride is taken away.

This little book is full of hidden treasures!

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.” Proverbs 25:2

The Laws of Israel in the Book

1. Ruth 1: The Law of National Discipline (Lev. 26; Deut. 28), which was ultimately expulsion from the land.
2. Ruth 2: The Law of Gleaning for the poor and the “stranger” (Lev. 19:9–10; Deut. 24:19–21).
3. Ruth 3: The Law of Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5–10).
4. Ruth 4: The Law of the Kinsman-Redeemer (Lev. 25:23–25; 47–55).

Ruth Believing (Ruth 1:15–17)

In chapter one, the stage is set, with death, loss, and sorrow—for the hand of God to bring joy and blessing, as Ruth takes shelter under His wings.

1. Naomi has to be outside the land to meet Ruth (vv. 1–2).
2. By verse 5, we have three widows and three graves.
3. Before this, Ruth comes to faith in the God of Israel.
4. Her faith leads Ruth to “cleave” and serve aged Naomi (v. 14).
5. Ruth takes a seven-fold “death vow” to become a servant to Naomi.
6. Naomi is bitter, blaming God (Almighty = *El Shaddai*, the all-sufficient One), but God’s providence brings them to Bethlehem “*at the beginning of barley harvest*” (v. 22)—the time of Pentecost.

Ruth Serving (Ruth 2:1–3)

In this chapter, we see the contrast, yet the working in concert, of Ruth’s commitment to become a servant to Naomi, and God’s hidden plan to bring blessing to both Ruth and, through her, to Naomi (Rom. 8:28).

1. We are now introduced to Boaz, the hero of the story (v. 1). The phrase “*a man of great wealth*” is literally “a hero/mighty man of virtue” (*Ish Gibor Chayil*). Many believe he was an unnamed Judge—a village protector.
2. Ruth’s humble service blessed by God’s providence. “*She happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz*” (v. 3).
3. The greeting of Boaz (v. 4) is important. “*The LORD be with you!*” He is a spiritual man; Jewish Rabbis say he was a scholar of Torah. This would fit with the school of the scholars just outside Bethlehem, in the village of Jabez (1 Chron. 2:54–55; 4:10).

4. He shows special kindness to Ruth (vv. 8–12), with special attention to her faith, “*The LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge*” (v. 12), a favorite phrase of David (Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; 91:4).
5. Ruth calls herself “*a foreigner*” in v. 10. There is a gradual elevation of her through the book.

Ruth’s elevation in the book—she goes **from**: “*foreigner*” (*Nochriyah*, an alien in 2:10) **to**

- a. “*maidservant*” (*Shipah*, a lowly servant in 2:13) **to**
 - b. “*maidservant*” (*Amah*, a personal handmaid in 3:9) **to**
 - c. “*wife*” (*Ishah*, the treasure of Boaz in 4:13).
6. Naomi comes to learn of Boaz through Ruth (as does Israel through the Gentiles). She identifies him as a “*close relative*” (*Goel*), a kinsman-redeemer.

Requirements of the kinsman-redeemer related to Jesus:

- a. Must be a near kinsman (Heb. 2:16).
- b. Must be able to redeem (Heb. 7:25).
- c. Must be willing to redeem (Rom. 3:24; Heb. 12:2).
- d. Must assume all accompanying obligations (Phil. 2:5–11).

Ruth Waiting (Ruth 3:6–18)

Waiting on the Lord (Isa. 40:31) is always a matter of faith in His revealed plan and patience as He works out the details. Though Boaz is a willing redeemer, he cannot redeem until two things take place: Ruth must request it, and the unfaithful kinsman must be exposed (see chapter 4).

1. Naomi would have to instruct Ruth in laws and customs that would have been strange to her. Ruth had to be submissive in seeking to carry out Naomi’s instructions (vv. 1–5).
2. The word “*security*” in v. 1 is *Nuach* (Noah = “rest,” Gen. 5:29). Rest is a common theme in Ruth (1:9; 3:18), as it is throughout Scripture (10 times in Heb. 3–4).
3. Boaz blesses Ruth (vv. 10–13), but reveals the existence of a nearer kinsman, who has first right to the redemption.
4. Note that Boaz identifies Ruth as a “*virtuous woman*” (v. 11, *Chayil*; Prov. 31:10; also used of Boaz in 2:1).
5. Naomi instructs Ruth to “wait” (v. 18), because Boaz will not “rest until the matter is concluded” (v. 18). In Isaiah 40:31, God promises to bless those who wait on Him. In Isaiah 30:18 we are told that God waits to bless us, until we learn to wait for Him. The word “*wait*” is the strongest word for faith in Hebrew.

Ruth Rewarded (Ruth 4:9–14)

Boaz becomes the advocate of Ruth (see 1 John 2:1) and exposes and disposes of the unfaithful kinsman. He takes Ruth as his bride, Naomi is restored to joy, and the lineage of the Messiah is secured.

1. The other kinsman, the faithless “*friend*” (*paloni almoni*, v. 1, i.e., “John Doe”) is willing to redeem the land, but not “*Ruth the Moabitess*” (v. 5). So, the right falls to Boaz (vv. 7–10).
2. The blessing of the people (vv. 11–12) goes back to Tamar and Perez (Gen. 38), another story of the grace of God being greater than all our sin.
3. The lineage (vv. 18–22) takes us from Israel’s earliest times down to David the king. It is believed that Samuel was the author of this book, as it was he who anointed David king over Israel (1 Sam. 16:13).
4. Ruth, as a representative of the Church, becomes the “friend” of Boaz, a picture of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Faithless Friend

1. The unnamed kinsman (Ruth 4:1) is a “type” of the faithless friend found many places in Scripture.
2. David spoke of him in Psalm 41:9, “*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*”
3. This faithless friend was most likely Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:30–31), David’s trusted counselor, who was also the grandfather of Bathsheba.
4. In Matthew 26:21, Jesus says to his disciples, “*One of you will betray Me.*”
5. In Matthew 26:50, when Judas approaches Jesus in the garden, Jesus says, “*Friend, why have you come?*” He uses a rare word, *hetaire*, which is used four times in Matthew—always for a friend who is doing wrong (Matt. 11:16; 20:13; 22:12; 26:50).
6. Question: Since Peter denied Jesus three times, what kept him from being the “faithless friend”? We will see later.

Four Faithful Women

The lineages in Ruth chapter 4 link to four women with everything against them who, by faith, ended up in the lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ. Two are named, and two are implied.

1. The first is **Tamar** (v. 12). Her story is recorded in Genesis 38.
2. Next is **Rahab**, who we read of in Joshua 2 and 6. She was the wife of Salmon (vv. 20–21), and mother of Boaz!

3. The connection to David (v. 22) brings us to **Bathsheba** (2 Sam. 11:1–5).
4. And of course, in this book, **Ruth** is the one who connects them all. How amazing that four of the five women listed in the lineage of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:3–6) are all linked together here at the end of the book of Ruth!

Conclusion: What kind of friend am I to the Lord?

1. Ruth is a beautiful example of faith, diligence, and virtue. Her life and story ought to be a challenge to each of us.
2. Boaz is a picture of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, who is worthy of all our faith, devotion, and service.
3. Let us not be like a faithless friend, or a friend in word only. We ought to strive to be included in the company of His true friends.

CLASS THREE

Examples of Knowledge and Self-Control

2 Peter 1:5b–6a

As a couplet, knowledge and self-control go together, just as diligence and virtue in our last study. Learning must convert to doing, which then must become habitual.

Knowledge can either be an amusement (Acts 13:21) or an anchor (Heb. 6:19).

If we sow a thought, we reap an act.
 If we sow an act, we reap a habit.
 If we sow a habit, we reap character.
 If we sow character, we reap destiny.

1. The “*knowledge*” spoken of here, as in v. 3, is *epignosis*, the second phase of learning. It is information turned into experience.
 - a. *Gnosis*—information learned and understood.
 - b. *Epignosis*—knowledge learned and applied in daily life.
 - c. *Oida*—residual understanding from both learning and doing: what we refer to as wisdom, or mature knowledge.
2. The term “*self-control*” comes from the preposition *en*, combined with *kratos*, a word for “rule or authority.” Thus, self-control is the level of growth where the Word heard and believed becomes the authority in one’s soul.

“In every soul there exists two things: a cross and a throne.
 Whichever you take, Jesus Christ takes the other.”
 W. Tozer (paraphrase).

Point: Before our learning can do us any good, it must be given the place of rule in our hearts (Psalm 119:11).

*“Your word I have hidden [tsaphan, “to hoard as a treasure”]
in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”*

Two Examples of Knowledge/Endurance: Abraham and Rahab

In this brief summary of Abraham’s life, James links his initial faith (Gen. 15:6) with his ultimate test (Gen. 22), to show that his faith grew to maturity through testing, which is the theme of James (James 1:2–4).

Abraham Justified by Works

James 2:20–24

The salient points here are four in number:

1. In both verses 22 and 24, the phrase “*you see*” emphasizes the importance of visible evidence of faith in the life.
2. The faith of Abraham at his salvation in v. 23, and at his offering of Isaac in v. 21, were events separated by at least 45–50 years.
3. To be “*justified by works*” (v. 24) is to have a “*faith made perfect*” (v. 22), that is, spiritually mature.
4. The word “*dead*” is a parallel to the idea of “unprofitable” in vv. 14, 16. The word “*save*” refers to temporal deliverance from faith that is unfruitful.

Genesis 22:1–19

1. In vv. 1–6, God commands and Abraham obeys “*early in the morning*” (v. 3). There is no hesitation to God’s seemingly bizarre command.
2. Abraham’s answer to Isaac’s question (v. 8) is personal, regarding his own faith, and prophetic of the coming of Messiah.
3. The “*Angel of the LORD*” (v. 11) is the pre-incarnate Christ; the ram, a picture of substitutionary sacrifice; and Isaac spared is a figure of Jesus’ future resurrection.
4. “*The LORD-Will-Provide ... in the Mount of the LORD*” (v. 14) is literally, “The Lord will see to it,” an intimation of the Doctrine of Divine Providence. Mount Moriah, later, is the site of the Temple (2 Chron. 3:1); and on an extended arm of that Mount was the site of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: Salem, later Jerusalem—the home of Melchizedek—was but a mile or so distance from Mt. Moriah. Could Melchizedek have been watching from the walls?

5. *“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”* (v. 18) is the *Hithpael* perfect of *Barak* (*vav* consecutive)—“shall bless themselves.” [Remember from Ruth that Boaz could not redeem her until she requested it!]

Note: In v. 19, we see only Abraham returning to his men. Isaac is absent from the story until Genesis 24:63–67, when he comes out to meet Rebekah. Could this be a picture of Jesus’ resurrection and return at the Rapture?

Hebrews 11:17–19

1. *“By faith”* is the theme of Hebrews chapter 11. Note that in each case those referred to did something by their faith.

2. *“In Isaac shall your seed be called”* (v. 18) is a reference to the Messianic invitation:

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live.” Isaiah 55:1, 3

“Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” Matthew 11:28

3. Abraham made a spiritual calculation (v. 19), based on the promise of God, and saw *“the end intended by the Lord”* (James 5:11).

Rahab compared/contrasted with Abraham

I am sure we all know the story of Rahab, and of her courageous faith, and the scarlet cord (Joshua 2 and 6). It may be interesting to see the contrasts here as we did with Boaz and Ruth.

Abraham and Rahab compared/contrasted

1. Both were saved by grace through the same faith without works shown in Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; 4:3; Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 10:38.
2. Both were “justified by works.” That is, their works vindicated their claim to genuine faith in the Lord.
3. Abraham is a Jew, Rahab, a Gentile.
4. Abraham was a believer of long standing, Rahab a relatively new believer.
5. He is first of the chosen race, she a member of a doomed nation.
6. Abraham, by faith, offered his own son; Rahab, by her faith, saved her whole family.
7. Both of them are mentioned in Hebrews 11 as heroes of the faith.

Conclusion

Both Abraham and Rahab illustrate the importance of true knowledge of God, and of spiritual self-control in living it out in our lives. We all have this opportunity each and every day. Let's be doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22), that we may one day stand among such as these unashamed (1 John 2:28).

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts ... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another ...” Colossians 3:15–16

CLASS FOUR

An Example of Perseverance and Godliness

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1–2).

2 Peter 1:6

Perseverance is built on self-control, just as self-control is built on experiential knowledge, etc. These qualities are not randomly put together. They have been set in this order by the Spirit of God, to show us in a short passage what the journey of faith, from the Cross to the crown, looks like. This is the *“grace and peace ... multiplied”* of v. 2.

1. The word translated *“perseverance”* in the NKJV is *hupomeno*, the preposition *hupo* means “under,” and the noun *mone* comes from the verb *meno*, which means “to abide, remain, continue, endure.” The idea is to remain, even to be at home, under pressure. Once again, it is impossible to have spiritual endurance until our knowledge of God's Word becomes experiential and is enthroned in our lives.
2. Steady endurance in learning and growing—in both hearing and doing—along with perseverance will ultimately lead us to what we often refer to as spiritual maturity. Peter calls it *“godliness.”* The word here is *eusebeia*, and the best definition of it is found in 1 Timothy 3:16.

*“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on
in the world, Received up in glory.”*

3. By this definition, godliness is nothing less than the life of Christ, manifested in and through the believer. I can think of no better example of endurance and godliness than Moses.

Moses, a Man of Endurance and Godliness

“So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”

Exodus 33:11

“Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.” Numbers 12:3

When Paul wanted to draw a picture of Jesus Christ for us, and of a Christ-like life, he said,

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to cling to [my rendering], but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:5–8

God’s High commendation of Moses (Hebrews 3:1–6)

“Consider ... Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house” (vv. 1–2).

Moses—Seven Decisions that Changed History (Hebrews 11:23–29)

In this brief passage, we see Moses portrayed as a man of great endurance and godliness: Israel’s deliverer and a type of Christ.

1. A family heritage: *“By faith Moses, when he was born ...”* (v. 23).
Moses’ family heritage was one of great faith. His parents, Amram and Jochebed (Exod. 2:1–10; 6:20) had the faith to act in defiance of the death edict of Pharaoh.

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4.

2. A rejection of the world (v. 24).

“But what things were gain to me, I have counted loss for Christ ... That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection ...” Philippians 3:7, 10

3. Identification “with the people of God” (v. 25).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25

4. Establishing spiritual priorities (v. 26).

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:1–2

5. Forsaking all, enduring all by “seeing Him” (v. 27a).

“And let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ...” Hebrews 12:1–2

6. Keeping the Passover—looking to the cross (v. 28).

“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” 1 Corinthians 5:7

7. By faith they passed through the Red Sea (v. 29).

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea.” 1 Corinthians 10:1–2

“Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

Romans 6:3–5

What began with his parents’ faith, he passed on to the next generation. What are we passing on to our children and grandchildren? How can one man’s faith change a nation, and a whole generation of Christians fail to do so?

A Simplified Analogy—the Stair-Steps of Life

	<u>Priorities</u>	<u>Decisions</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Results</u>
<u>Attitude</u>	Spiritual vs.	Wise vs.	Good vs.	Blessing vs.
Humble vs.	Carnal	Foolish	Evil	Cursing.
Arrogant	(1 Cor. 3:1)	(Eph. 5:15)	(Heb. 5:14)	(Heb. 6:7–8)
(1 Pet. 5:5–6)				

Conclusion

In Hebrews 3:1–6, the author reminds us that Moses was a servant in the house of Israel, but the Lord Jesus is the Son over His house—the Church. This places us under even greater responsibility, for

“To whom is given, much will be required.” Luke 12:48

The author then reminds us that all we have is *“Today.”* Hebrews 3:7, 15

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts ...”

Today, we are living in historic, even biblical, times. Let us not fail to grow in grace and truth, and to live out our faith for the sake of those who may yet be won to the Lord in simple childlike faith.

CLASS FIVE

Examples of Brotherly Love and Love (2 Peter 1:7)

It is important to know the difference between these two and to understand why they are placed in this order. In Peter’s example, they are the climax of spiritual growth.

Neither of these are genuinely possible until we have reached a level of spiritual maturity, and *“godliness,”* the nature of Christ, has been formed in us. We all have seen examples of phony *“Christian love;”* it is shallow and often destructive. We do not have, within ourselves, the power to produce such love. Only as we are filled and controlled by the Spirit of God is He able to manifest such love in and through us.

“For the love of Christ compels us ...” 2 Corinthians 5:14

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love” Galatians 5:22

I would argue that the love of Christ flowing through the life of the believer is one of the greatest miracles of the Christian life!

“Love” in the Greek language

The original Koine Greek language distinguished between various kinds of love. The following were the most used:

1. *Agape*— This was the broadest, most all-encompassing kind of love (1 Cor. 13:1). John uses *agape* for the love of God for the whole world (John 3:16).
2. *Philia*— friendship love, based on rapport and like-mindedness (John 21:15–17).
3. *Storge*— this is used for family love (in Rom. 12:10 Paul uses both *philadelphia* and *philostorge*).
4. *Eros*— this is used for sexual, passionate love (not in the New Testament).
5. *Philautia*— self-love, or self-esteem (not used in the New Testament.)
6. *Xenia*— this refers to love of strangers, hospitality. Often combined with *philia*, as in *philoxenia* (Heb. 13:2).

Do You Love Me?
Peter, an Example of Brotherly Love (John 21:15–17)

In this exchange between Jesus and Peter, we see how Peter escaped being the faithless friend, and went on to become a friend of God.

This is one of the most misunderstood passages on love. Here, Jesus is restoring Peter to service after his three denials. Two words for love are used, with significant meaning.

First Exchange (v. 15)

Jesus: “*Do you love Me [agape] more than these?*”

Jesus is referring to the other disciples, probably based on Peter’s boast in Matthew 26:33, “*Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.*”

Peter: “*Yes, Lord; You know that I love [philos] You.*”

Many commentators think that Jesus used *agape* as a higher form of love, but that Peter was too ashamed to rise to that level, so he used *philos*, a lesser form.

The truth is actually the opposite. Jesus asked for *agape*—the broadest, but not the strongest kind of love. *Philos* is stronger, for it is reserved for only the very few. *Philos* could best be illustrated by the most famous friendship in the Old Testament:

“Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” 1 Samuel 18:1

Where *agape* love is to be directed to all men, *philos* can only be directed toward those of like mind.

Point: The reason “brotherly kindness” (*philadelphia*) precedes “love” (*agape*) in 2 Peter 1:7 is because we cannot truly love the lost and unbelieving until we learn to love our fellow believer.

Second and Third Exchange (vv. 16–17)

In the second exchange, Jesus again used *agape*, and Peter stuck to *philos*. I believe that Peter is insisting that his love for the Lord is a deep friendship love—not simply an all-embracing love.

Interestingly, in the last exchange, Jesus switches to *philos*, and Peter affirms that he loves our Lord in this way.

Look at Jesus’ words in John 15:12–14 again, in this light:

“This is My commandment, that you love [agape] one another as I have loved [agape] you. Greater love [agape] has no one than this, to lay down one’s life for his friends [philon]. You are My friends [philoï] if you do whatever I command you.”

John, who was present in the Upper Room, seemed to grasp the distinction Jesus is making here. He seems to use *agape* almost exclusively in 1 John, because it is the most all-embracing and least demanding. In other words, *agape* does not have expectations of the object of the love, but *philos* does. In *agape*, the focus is all on the subject giving unconditionally to the recipient. In *philos* love, there is reciprocation. Consider John 5:20,

“For the Father loves [philos] the Son ...”

This is also the love that Jesus had for Lazarus in John 11:3 and 5,

“Therefore the sisters sent to him, saying, “LORD, behold, he whom You love [philos] is sick ... Now Jesus loved [agape] Martha and Her sister and Lazarus.”

John also distinguishes between faithful and unfaithful believers in the Epistle of 3 John. In this epistle, after he draws a clear distinction between the unfaithful Diotrephes and the faithful Demetrius (vv. 9–12), he concludes the letter with these words,

“Our friends [philos] greet you. Greet the friends [philos] by name.”
3 John 14

The Main Point

I believe, on the Sea of Galilee, the Lord Jesus not only graciously restored Peter to service as a shepherd, but in His final use of *philos*, along with the prophecy of Peter’s death, He was awarding Peter, as it were, the status of “friend of God.”

The Disciple Whom Jesus loved (John 21:20)

Three times John refers to himself as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*” (John 13:23; 19:26; 21:20). The word he uses is *agape*.

This concept, which I think illustrates the final rung in our ladder of spiritual growth in 2 Peter 1:7, is most important for us to understand.

Why did John use this term for himself? I think it is best understood by a contrast. How many times have we heard believers go on and on about how much they love Jesus? I could not count the times!

How many times have you heard a believer go on and on about how amazed they are that the Lord loves them? Probably very few, if any. This is what set John apart. He could never get over the fact that the Lord would stoop so low as to love one such as him. This puts John in a circle by himself.

The Five Circles of Faith

1. The Circle of the 500 (1 Cor. 15:6). I would call this the “circle of witnesses.” Every believer should be in this circle.
2. The Circle of the Seventy (Luke 10:1). This is the “circle of service.” There are probably less who enter into this circle.
3. The Circle of the Twelve (Matt. 10:1–5). These were apostles, but they represent the “circle of leadership.” Only those so called and gifted should seek this circle.
4. The Circle of the Three (Matt. 17:1; 26:37; Luke 8:51). This is the “circle of spiritual intimacy.” How we ought to long to be in this circle!
5. The Circle of the One (John 13:23; 19:26; 21:20). This is the “circle of wonder.” John was amazed every moment that the Lord Jesus so loved him. So, we ought to be.

Blessings in Time and Reward in Eternity (2 Peter 1:8–11)

As was pointed out at the beginning of our study, we have here a roadmap of what God in His grace had done for us in **the past** (vv. 1–4), what He wants us to do in **the present** (vv. 5–7) and what effects this will have in **our future** (vv. 8–11), both in temporal blessings and in eternal rewards.

Blessings in Time (vv. 8–10)

These blessings, and the later rewards, are conditional, “*If these things are yours, and abound.*” The word “*abound*” is *pleonazo*, which means “to increase, to grow, to become more.” This word goes with “*be multiplied*” in v. 2. There he shows us that “*grace and peace*” are “*multiplied*” by the experiential “*knowledge*,” which is outlined in vv. 5–7.

So, what are the temporal benefits and blessings of consistent spiritual growth?

1. Deliverance from a barren and unfruitful life (v. 8).
Again, it is experiential “*knowledge*” (*epignosis*) that brings this deliverance. It is being “*doers of the word, and not hearers only*” (James 1:22). Peter uses two vital words here: “*barren*” is from *argos*, which means “idle or inactive,” the perfect picture of a carnal life. Then “*unfruitful*” is *akarpos*, “not having any fruit.” Remember that he is talking here to genuine believers!
2. Deliverance from slothful forgetfulness (v. 9).
The words “blind” and “*shortsighted*” both lead to forgetfulness regarding our initial cleansing from “old” sins, that is, those we indulged in while in unbelief (1 Cor. 6:9–11). The fundamental problem here is one of ingratitude, which fosters a lax attitude to just how crucial spiritual growth is to our temporal wellbeing. The state of such a believer is well portrayed in Hebrews 5:11–14, called “*dull of hearing.*”

3. Assurance and effectiveness in our calling (v. 10a).

Our “*calling*,” which Peter refers to eight times in his epistles, refers not only to our invitation to enter eternal life, but also to participate in the ongoing plan of God. Jesus includes both of these calls in Matthew 11:28–30. The word “*sure*” is from *bebaios*, the same word translated “*confirmed*” in v. 19. We confirm our calling, in the same sense that James says we are “*justified*” (vindicated) by our works.

4. Deliverance from “falling down” in our calling (v. 10b).

The little word “*do*” is *poieo* (present active indicative). It speaks of habitual, continuous action. This means that while we are consistently practicing these things we cannot stumble in our spiritual life. Paul says the same thing in Galatians 5:16,

“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Note: The “deliverances” mentioned above are precisely how James uses the term “saved” (James 1:21; 2:14; 5:20). He is speaking to believers, in need of temporal deliverance from failure. This is the kind of deliverance of which Jude 24 speaks.

Rewards in Eternity (v. 11)

The little word “*so*” means “in this manner,” and “*entrance*” is *eisodos*—the opposite of *exodus*—it is the way in, not the way out. This will occur either at death or the Rapture of the Church. “*Supplied*” is the same word used in v. 5 and translated “*add.*” It referred to the rich supply of a benefactor for some civic event, such as a play, a chorus, or a symphony. This will be supplied “*abundantly*,” meaning “richly, above and beyond.” We would say, “eternal rewards will blow our minds!”

The phrase “*into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*,” is a reminder both that we serve the King of kings, and that whatever we may merit of “crowns” or eternal rewards will be ours forever!

We should never forget that the grace of God does not incur any debt on our part. But our gratitude for His matchless grace does (Rom. 1:14–15; 8:12)!

The Five Crowns Mentioned in Scripture

1. The Victors Crown (1 Cor. 9:24–27).
Given for consistent spiritual self-discipline.
2. The Crown of Joy (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19–20).
Given for faithful witnessing.
3. The Crown of Life (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
Given for endurance under trials.
4. The Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8).
Given for living in light of Jesus’ return.

5. The Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4).
The shepherd's crown, for faithful ministry.

Some Additional Passages on Rewards

1. Matthew 6:19–21, 33.
Jesus urges us to lay up treasures in Heaven.
2. Matthew 5:7; 7:1–2; Romans 14:10–13; James 2:12–13.
With the measure we judge others we will be judged. To the degree we show mercy, we will receive mercy.
3. 1 Corinthians 3:11–15.
Separation of the works of the flesh vs. Spirit.
4. 2 Corinthians 5:10–11.
We must all give an account of our life.

Conclusion

To be classified as a “friend of God” should be the desire and goal of every believer. None of us, however much we may have failed in the past, are disqualified from attaining it. Neither should any of us assume that we “have it made.” Rather, we should adopt the attitude of the Apostle Paul, the “chief of sinners” and the greatest apostle.

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:12–14