

Introduction:

“What must I do to be saved?” Hear, believe, confess, repent and be baptized (**Romans 10:17; 10:9-10; Acts 2:38**). When someone obeys this, he is saved. End of story! Right? Wrong! This is only the beginning of salvation. We now ask, “Now that I am a Christian, what must I do to be saved?” Peter answers this question in **II Peter 1:5-11**. As you look forward to the new year, let this passage be a plan for growth.

Discussion:

- I. Strengthen your foundation: Faith.
 - A. We already have faith. It was part of what made us Christian to begin with (**Romans 10:9-10**).
 - B. **II Peter 1:8** says these qualities must be increasing. Thus, we may not say, “I have faith so I am saved.” We must have a growing faith. This also applies to all the characteristics we will examine in this lesson.
 - C. **II Peter 1:10** says we must be diligent about these characteristics. The term translated “diligence” is elsewhere translated eager (**Ephesians 4:3**) and strive (**Hebrews 4:11**). We must exert will and action in these characteristics to be saved. Growth is not accidental. We must purpose and plan to grow.
 - D. **II Peter 1:10** says these attributes are practices, not just states of mind. We must not just have faith, we must practice faith. That is, we must do those things which increase faith (**Romans 10:17**) and those things which demonstrate faith (**Romans 1:5**). So are all the attributes diligent practices.
- II. Build onto your foundation: Virtue.
 - A. Virtue is simply the idea of doing what is right because it is right, no matter the consequences. It is described by Paul in **Ephesians 4:17-32**, laying aside of the old man and putting on the new man. Your path of virtue has already begun. In baptism, you built on to and made perfect your faith through obedience to God’s command (**James 2:22-24; Colossians 2:12**). Now you must add to that virtue.
 - B. Remember God’s word is the standard for what is right (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). If God’s word does not authorize the work, that course of action is not virtuous, no matter what anyone else says or what you may think. As a Christian, if you would be saved, you must follow God’s pattern of virtue.
- III. Don’t be destroyed: Knowledge.
 - A. Under the old covenant, God declared, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (**Hosea 4:6**, ESV). Jesus told the Sadducees, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures...” (**Matthew 22:29**, ESV). Jesus also said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (**John 8:32**, ESV).
 - B. We are seeing an upward cycle. Our faith comes by hearing (**Romans 10:17**). That is, we began with some knowledge, which led to faith. Our faith produced virtue. To know what was virtuous, we had to study our Bibles (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). This study increased our knowledge. This increased knowledge, produced greater faith, etc. Upward we go on the cycle.
 - C. More than just reading the Bible, you must learn it. Hide it in your heart, that you might not sin against God (**Psalms 119:11**). Additionally, more than knowing it, you must use it. Jesus’ stands as a shining example of using knowledge in **Matthew 4:1-11**. Jesus responded to each temptation from His knowledge of the scripture, three times saying, “It is written.” Now that you are a Christian, if you would be saved you must increase your knowledge. Remember, this, like faith, is to be done with diligence. Don’t wait for Sundays and Wednesdays to gain knowledge. Knowledge is a daily endeavor.
- IV. Standing on your own two feet: Self-control.
 - A. Self-control is an issue of responsibility and accountability. Self-control is realizing that you are where you are today because of choices you made yesterday. And you will be where you will be

tomorrow because of the choices you make today. Self-control means not blaming anyone else for your choices. Self-control means taking the growth you have in faith, virtue and knowledge and living it because you have decided to live it. Not because someone is forcing you to live it. Self-control means you control yourself.

- B. This is a growth process. New Christians may seek others' help, having them keep a direct watch over their personal goals of faith, virtue and knowledge. Perhaps for a while, they will meet with a brother to study and pray on a regular basis. As the new Christian grows in self-control the reliance on older Christians for accountability shrinks.
- C. Self-control does not mean we do not lean on God. Rather, our self-control is based on surrendering to God, not leaning on our own understanding but trusting God's way as the right way and choosing that way always (**Proverbs 3:5; Matthew 7:13-14**). Now that you are a Christian, if you would be saved, you will realize you do what you want to do. You will make your choices. You will take responsibility for your choices. You will learn from your mistakes, confessing your sins to God, accepting His grace.

V. Keep on keepin' on: Steadfastness.

- A. Steadfastness is endurance even in the face of the greatest suffering. It is determining to continue to serve God until the end (**James 5:7-8**). But steadfastness is much more than serving God throughout the day to day humdrum activities. It means serving God even through hardship.
- B. Steadfastness means serving God even though we must sacrifice some of the pleasures of this life (**Hebrews 11:24-26**). It means not being distracted by the things of the world (**Colossians 3:1-2**). It means facing hatred and persecution but continuing anyway without soft-peddling the gospel (**II Timothy 3:12**). To see an example of true perseverance read **Hebrews 11:35-38**.
- C. If you would be saved, persevere in the face of the hardships and trials that await you (**I Timothy 6:12**).

VI. Growing in your relationship with God: Godliness

- A. You became a Christian because you feared God. You became a Christian because of your attitude towards who He is and what He does. Growing in godliness, means growing in that relationship.
- B. The term translated "godliness" (eusebeia) is a contraction of two terms, one meaning "good" (eu) and the other meaning "reverence" (sebomai). It is reverence for and piety towards God. However, as learned earlier, this, like faith, is not just an attitude. Godliness is to be our diligent practice.
- C. What would be the ultimate way of practicing piety towards God? Imitation! Paul commanded us to imitate Christ (**I Corinthians 11:1**). Peter said we are to be holy, because God is holy (**I Peter 1:16**).
- D. Now that you are a Christian, if you would be saved you must be godly. That is, have a devotion and piety toward God that is demonstrated by living as God would. While I do not want to promote fads, the question that was so popular a few years ago, "What would Jesus do?" is a great guide for this aspect.

VII. Growing in your relationship with other Christians: Brotherly affection

- A. When we enter a relationship with God, we are placed in a relationship with others (**I John 1:7**). If you would be saved, you must grow in your relationship with those others.
- B. The term translated "brotherly affection" (philadelphia) is also a contraction of two words. One meaning "friend" (philos), the other meaning "brother" (adelphos). Thus, we are to be friends with our brothers. As in our physical families, in Christ, we do not choose who are brothers are. But, in all relationships, we choose who our friends are. Peter says we must choose to be friends with our brethren (**Romans 12:10**).
- C. We typically make friends with those who have the same interests, same desires and same goals as we do. What greater similarity could we have than going to heaven and taking others with us?

- D. How do you treat a friend? With kindness and patience. You help them overcome their problems. You accept help from them with your problems. You work through relational difficulties. You speak well of them. You spend time with them. Look at all your brethren. How do you treat them? Be a friend to them.
- E. Now that you are a Christian, if you would be saved, you must be a friend to your brethren. By the way, notice this is not waiting around for your brethren to be friends with you. You be a friend.

VIII. Growing in your relationship with all mankind: Love.

- A. Now that you are a Christian, your outlook and action toward everyone changes. This love encompasses the previous two points (**Matthew 22:36-39; Luke 10:25-28**) and adds everybody else in your changing relationships. In fact, Jesus' parable in **Luke 10:30-37** about the good Samaritan is an illustration of this love. The love was demonstrated between enemies: a Samaritan and a Jew.
- B. This love is an unconditional love. We are to love all no matter what they have done. They do not have to be pretty, rich or even friendly. They just have to be there. God is our model for love (**Matthew 5:43-48**).
- C. This love is described in **I Corinthians 13:4-7**. An enlightening exercise is to take each of the attributes of love and see if you can honestly apply them to yourself. Instead of saying "Love is patient", can you insert your name? "(Insert name) is patient." Take the exercise a step further. Instead of thinking nebulously about your overall character. Ask yourself these questions about particular relationships. "(Insert name) is patient with (insert the name of someone with whom you have a relationship)."
- D. Now that you are a Christian, if you would be saved, you must love, just as God loved you.

Conclusion:

Grow in these qualities, then "there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (**II Peter 1:11**, ESV).

If you are not a Christian yet, we go back to the original question of, "What must I do to be saved?" Do you remember what we learned in the introduction of this lesson? Hear the gospel, believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and He was raised from the dead, confess this faith, repent of your sins and be baptized for the remission of those sins (**Romans 10:17; 10:9-10; Acts 2:38**). Why not begin salvation's road now?