

The Excellence of God

2 Peter 1:1-15

Good versus Best

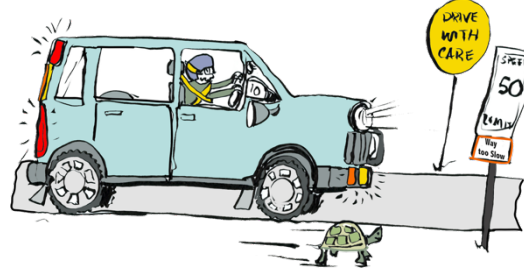
How might the good be the enemy of the best? How might the best be the enemy of the good?
How might this show up in the Christian life?



2 Peter 1

• Verse 5

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness...



“The Faith” = Christianity

“So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7

“your faith” = an individual’s trust in Jesus

“Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Luke 7:50

“your faith” = “our knowledge of him who called us”

The means by which we enter “his very great and precious promises”
The essential foundation for growing in God-likeness



Assurance of Salvation

Conscious trust in Jesus’ death & resurrection

“He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Acts 16:30-31

Inner witness of the Spirit and His work

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” Romans 8:16

“By this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit who he has given us.” 1 John 3:24

“the Gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.” 1 Thes 1:5

Evidence of a life being transformed

“Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.” James 2:18

“goodness”

Not “good...better...best”. Not “

The same Greek word as “him who called us by his own glory and GOODNESS”

NET Bible: “excellence”. Others: “outstanding goodness, moral excellence”

1 Peter 2:9: “...so that you may proclaim the VIRTUES of the one who called you”

The moral excellence of God

The Big Idea

God calls us and empowers us

to grow into the moral excellence of God

Peter calls us to the moral excellence of God!

NOT: neither too good not too bad

To participate in the divine nature

→ Called into the glory and excellence of God

Yet without pride or judgment

Two great dangers

Being “lackadaisical” about growth in goodness = Lacking enthusiasm and determination; lazy

Thinking we’re close to ‘good enough’

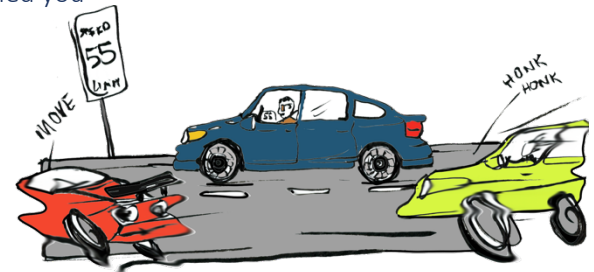
Thinking we can’t make meaningful progress

Adjusting to the standard around us

Pursuing moral excellence in our own strength

“Legalism” or “Moralism”

Judging other people or Judging ourselves



Hold tightly to two things

1. The Spirit's presence and work to bring transformation

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."
Ezekiel 36:26-27

By the Holy Spirit who is given to us freely through Jesus, God will do radical heart surgery to transform us!

2. Determined pursuit of the character of God: Moral excellence

Putting it into practice

➤ Live the new life in Christ

God gives a new heart and gives His Spirit

Always pursue "our knowledge of him who called us" (1:3)

"Grace and peace through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." (1:2)

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!" (Romans 8:1)

➤ Pursue the moral excellence of God

Our Father who deeply loves His children is watching our hearts and our lives

We can and must make genuine, meaningful progress by God's work in us

➤ By the Spirit's power in us

We participate in the divine nature *through the very great and precious promises of God*

Constantly pursue knowing God

Seek the Spirit's work in our hearts

Worship God for His astounding goodness

Challenge

By August 15...

I want to stop...

I want to be doing...

I want to change...

I want to have done...

- Pray daily
- Scripture: memorize, meditate, ...
- Action items for this month
- Find someone to do periodic check-ins

Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. Which error are you more likely to make: being lackadaisical ("lacking enthusiasm and determination; lazy") about pursuing the moral excellence of God, or trying to pursue it in your own strength?
2. What does it look like to hold tightly to the Spirit's presence and powerful work in us?
3. How would you describe the "moral excellence" or "outstanding goodness" of God? What are examples from the life of Jesus? What might it look like in our world today?
4. What is a way that God may be prompting you to grow now and in the coming months? What Scripture may be an important focus for this growth? Who is a "discipling friend" who can encourage you in this growth?

Conversation starters

In terms of people's goodness or morality, how good should we try to be?

What helps us do that?