

# The Secret to Spiritual Success Pt.3

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## John 17:3 ESV

**3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.**

- *Everything about being a Christian works by a personal, living and growing relationship with God; and nothing, about being a Christian, works without that relationship.*
  - eternal (aiōnios) without beginning and end, that which always has been and always will be
  - life (zōē) the absolute fullness of life that only God possesses
  - know (ginōskō) Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse, relational and experiential intimacy, to learn to know, to become known
- *The secret to spiritual success is a communion with God which is spiritual, alive, interactive, intimate and continual.*
  - *Not knowledge about God, but a relationship of knowing the Person of God.*
  - *Success, not by working harder, achieving more or performing better, but by knowing God in a personal relationship.*

## John 4:14 ESV

**14 [Jesus] "but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**

- welling (hallomai) to leap, spring, gush

## John 4:23-24 ESV

**23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.**

**24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."**

- *Worshipping in spirit means that knowing God:*
  - *does not originate in the mind or intellect*
  - *does not originate in emotion*
- *Worshipping in Truth means we come to Father:*
  - *by the Truth of His Word, not our personal perception of truth*
  - *on His terms, not ours*
  - *seeking His will and His pleasure, not our own*

## 2 Peter 1:1-4 ESV

**1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:**

**2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge [epignōsis] of God and of Jesus our Lord.**

knowledge

- epignōsis (noun) precise and correct knowledge, full discernment

- from epiginosko (verb) to know thoroughly and accurately, to perceive who a person is, to find out, to become fully acquainted with, to understand

## 2 Peter 1:1-4 ESV

3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge [epignōsis] of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

- This communion with God is a holy intercourse where He gives:
  - His holiness for our worldliness
  - His purity for our sinfulness
  - His strength for our weakness
  - His joy for our sorrow
  - His hope for our depression
  - His healing for our infirmities

## Character Birthed and Matured by Knowing God

### 2 Peter 1:5-7 ESV

5 For this very reason, make every effort [NASB - applying all diligence] to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

- These character traits cannot be humanly manufactured.
- “Make every effort” is speaking of priority, not methodology.
- “Make every effort” is not trying harder to manufacture within ourselves some pretence of religiosity.
- “Make every effort” is presenting ourselves to Him, as living sacrifices, so He can do the work in us that only He can do.
- These character traits are birthed and matured by:
  - Abiding in relationship
  - God’s Word
  - God’s chastening

### John 15:5 ESV

5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

### Isaiah 55:11 ESV

11 So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Hebrews 12:11 ESV

11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

## Why This Character is so Important

- Giving up and turning back is never an option for the Christian.
- These very character traits are required for the Christian to endure to the end. Without them, the Christian will fail.

2 Peter 1:8-11 ESV

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love

9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- If we lack these qualities, does that mean that an entrance will NOT be provided for us?

2 Peter 2:20-22 ESV

20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

Hebrews 6:4-8 ESV

4 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

7 For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.

8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

## Why Christians Fail and Fall Away

*Mark 4:14-20 ESV*

*14 The sower sows the word.*

*15 And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.*

*16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.*

*17 And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.*

*18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word,*

*19 but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.*

*20 But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."*

*Hebrews 2:1-3 ESV*

*1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*

*2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,*

*3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?*

## "...Make Every Effort to Supplement Your Faith With Virtue..."

**2 Peter 1:5 ESV**

**5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue [aretē - moral goodness, virtue, excellence]...**

- Growing in the character of virtue does not, unfortunately, mean sinless perfection.
- Growing in the character of virtue means a supernatural change in one's life trajectory:
  - Change in relation to God, from hating and being afraid of, to longing for and seeking.
  - Change in purpose, from pleasing self, to denying self, to pleasing God.
  - Change in desires and affections, from loving sin, to loving righteousness.
  - Change in response to sin, from finding pleasure in, to loathsome remorse.
  - Change in citizenship, from earth-dweller, to heaven as our eternal hope and home.
  - A Christian, who wants to be called a Christian, but still indulges carnal desires and pursuits deliberately and habitually, is no Christian at all.
  - Until there is such a rudimentary change in our nature and character, there has been no genuine repentance nor regeneration. This is what discriminates the true from the false converts, the wheat from the tares (Matthew 13:24-30).
  - Without this fundamental change of heart, there is no hope for such a professing Christian in a world of deception, distractions and temptations. There will be no resistance to being swept along by the god of this world (Ephesians 2:1-3).

*"A whole new generation of Christians has come up believing that it is possible to 'accept Christ' without forsaking the world."*  
—A.W. Tozer

*"The grace that does not make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves His people, not IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."*  
—Charles Spurgeon

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

- *The Christian is not changed in forced, outward behavior only, but in the very substance, nature, and character of his or her person.*
- *Many Christians (much like the world) focus on behavior and performance rather than the inward character and condition of a person's spirit and soul.*

Ezekiel 11:19-21 ESV

*19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,*

*20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

*21 But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord GOD."*

Ezekiel 36:25-27 ESV

*25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.*

*26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

*27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

Hebrews 8:10-11 ESV [from Jeremiah 31:33-34]

*10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*11 And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.*

- *God's laws put into our minds is thinking as God thinks.*
- *God's laws written on our hearts is feeling what God feels.*

*James 2:17-20 ESV*

*17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

*19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder!*

*20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?*

*James 1:22-25 ESV*

*22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

*23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.*

*24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.*

*25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

*Matthew 13:24-30 ESV*

*24 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,*

*25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.*

*26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.*

*27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?'*

*28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'*

*29 But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.*

*30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'""*

*"Another proof of the conquest of a soul for Christ will be found in a real change of life. If the man does not live differently from what he did before, both at home and abroad, his repentance needs repented of, and his conversion is a fiction."* —Charles Spurgeon