

Growing in the Lord

A night of prayer, fasting & praise

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If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

Background

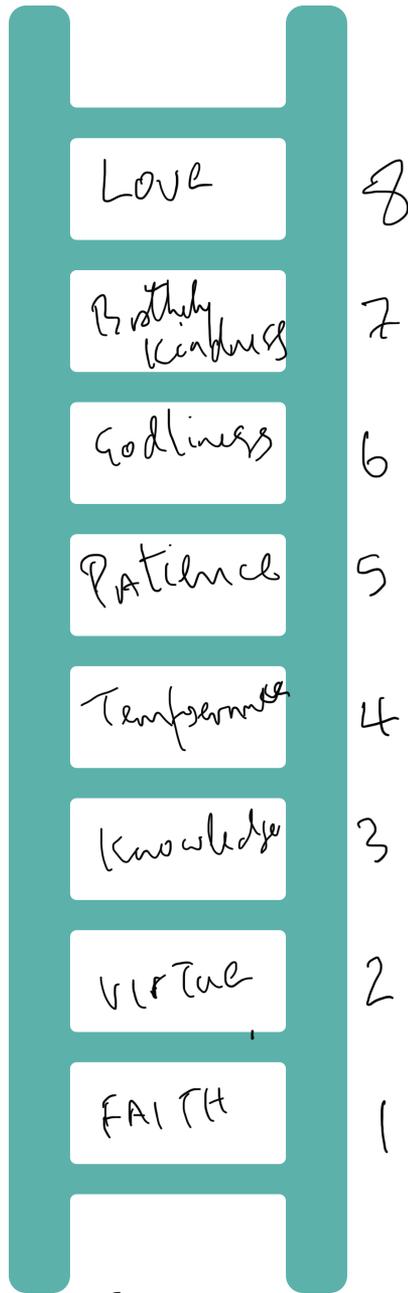
A half night of fasting, prayer and praise has been called at the Brixton SDA church for November 14, 2020. The intention of this special session is three fold:

1. To bring the members of the church into a closer relationship with the Lord as the country enters a challenging and uncertain future;
2. To seek God's guidance and wisdom for our local church family and community as we come to the end of another year and look towards the second coming of the Lord.
3. To praise and thank God for what he had done and is doing in our lives.

The theme for the day is 'Growing in the Lord'. Based on the spiritual advice from Peter the Apostle, in 2 Peter 1:5-11. The church will meditate on Peter's eight (8) characteristics in his ladder of spiritual progress, all the time praying for the Holy Spirit to apply the principles in our lives, within our church and in the SEC session.

Prayer is the vital breath of Christians; not the thing that makes us alive, but the evidence that we are alive. May God grant us fulfilment of the promises given 2 Peter 1.

Peter's
Ladder
of
Spiritual
Progress



Growing in the Lord

Sample Prayer points for each virtue. Group to develop their own ideas.

Spiritual Virtue	Personal Life	Brixton Church	SEC
Faith	Strengthen my relationship with you Lord	Help us to be more faithful in our service	Help your church to become more faithful in stewardship
Virtue	Good character	Leadership with integrity	A church that is a moral lighthouse for the world and selects leaders with integrity
Knowledge	Spend more time in personal Bible study	Local church that teaches its children and young people the Bible	Church that promotes the Bible based ideas to the world
Temperance	Change my diet to a healthy diet	Revival towards the principles of healthy living	Health reform in all churches as goal for next 5 years
Patience	get ride of my temper	Patience with our church and family members	Patience with our leaders in the conference session
Godliness	separate me from the trap that I keep falling into	A higher Christian standard	Godly leaders to be elected to serve

Spiritual Virtue	Personal Life	Brixton Church	SEC
Brotherly Kindness	A gentle teachable spirits at work	A more loving and king church family, helping each other when times get hard	A kind and peaceful conference session, less accusation and a prayerful environment
Love	Acceptance of my brothers and sisters, forgive and forget the hurt	Deeper Community service work	Reach out to the poor and neglected

Template for Groups

Spiritual Virtue	Personal Life	Brixton Church	SEC
Faith			
Virtue			
Knowledge			
Temperance			
Patience			
Godliness			
Brotherly Kindness			
Love			

Key Text:

2 Peter 1:5-11



And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-11).

no vision → ↓ leadership

God's
Promise
#1

no
vision

God's
Promise
#2

Introductory Remarks



“Divine strength Imparted”

The apostle has presented before us the importance of making continual advancement in the Christian life. There is no excuse for our lack of spiritual understanding. The successive steps in the path of progress are stated in the exhortation of the text, and we must take these steps if we fulfill the requirement of God, and become fitted for the heavenly courts. The work of progress is not left wholly dependent on our weak human efforts; but as we endeavor to walk in the footsteps of the Redeemer, divine strength will be imparted, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us. Help has been laid upon One who is mighty to save, and as we strive to add these virtues, He will multiply grace, according to our need, from His own divine sufficiency. PCP 16.1

Session 1



Faith, the first round. Round two: Virtue

Faith is the first round in the ladder of advancement. Without faith it is impossible to please God. But many stop on this round, and never ascend higher. They seem to think that when they have professed Christ, when their names are on the church record, their work is completed. Faith is essential; but the inspired word says, "Add to your faith virtue." Those who are seeking for eternal life, and a home in the kingdom of God, must lay for their character building the foundation of virtue. Jesus must be the chief cornerstone. The things that defile the soul must be banished from the mind and life. When temptations are presented, they must be resisted in the strength of Christ. The virtue of the spotless Lamb of God must be woven into the character till the soul can stand in its integrity. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." PCP 16.2

Example of Joseph

The young Christian will have severe tests and temptations. Satan will not permit you to leave his banner of darkness to march under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel, without making an effort to retain you in his service. He will present every attraction to cause you to leave the

narrow road that leads to eternal life; but you must stand like a faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph is an example of how the youth may stand unspotted, amid the evil of the world, and add to their faith, virtue. Though a captive in a strange land, far from the restraints of home, he kept the fear of God before him, and when he was sorely tempted to indulge in evil, he exclaimed, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The grace of God enabled him to resist the tempter. He was cast into prison, because of his steadfastness of purpose to keep the commandments of God. But prison walls could not shut out the light of Heaven's favor, nor hinder his advancement in the divine life; for "the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy." And the Lord will be with every soul who adds the precious grace of virtue, and who fears to transgress the law of Heaven. PCP 16.3

Belief and patience

Joseph did not complain at his lot, nor question why the Lord permitted him to suffer for righteousness' sake. He did not allow any cloud of despondency to settle upon his heart. He believed in God, and patiently waited for his salvation. He determined that this affliction should serve as an occasion to glorify God and benefit his associates. He did not cease his efforts toward perfection of character. He forgot his sorrow in seeking to lighten the sorrows of others, and the prisoners saw that the Lord was with Joseph. When he had borne the proving of the furnace, the Lord brought him out of the gloomy cell, and exalted him to a position next to the king of Egypt. Those who honor God will be honored by Him. PCP 17.1

Had Joseph wavered and fallen under the first temptation, his strength would have been insufficient for the second test. It is important that we do not take a wrong step in any

direction; for it is very unprofitable to us. Whatever it may cost you, add to your faith, virtue. The greatest earthly loss will prove eternal gain if this is accomplished. If we use our powers unwisely, for the gratification of sinful desires, we cannot attain to the exaltation of character to which God would have us attain. We rob God of the service we should render, and fail to accomplish the good that we owe to our fellow men. If we give ourselves to Christ, He will become our helper. Poor and sinful and dependent, He will wash us in His own blood, put His Spirit within us, and make us to reflect His image. PCP 17.2

Session 2



Round three: Knowledge—Benefits from associating with Christ

Every moment of our lives is intensely real, and charged with solemn responsibilities. Ignorance will be no excuse for lack of spiritual understanding and attainment; for we are exhorted to add to virtue, knowledge. Many are very ignorant of Bible truth, and they do not realize the duty and necessity of becoming intelligent Christians. The disciples learned of Jesus, and men perceived the benefits of His association and service, as they saw the change in these men. The uncultured fishermen became men of refinement and ability; and the lessons that they were privileged to learn are written for our admonition and instruction. We are invited to become learners in the school of Christ. We need to acquire all the knowledge possible. We cannot afford to be ignorant of the things that pertain to our eternal welfare. If all would cease gossip and evil communication, devoting the time to contemplation of Christ and the plan of salvation, they would add the knowledge essential to a growth in grace. We are to add knowledge from “whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.” God wants us to understand why He has placed us in the world, and given us the sacred burden of life to bear. He would have us develop the faculties of mind and body, that we may be a blessing to those around us, and that His glory may be reflected from us to the world. It is not His will that

our powers should be bound up in torpid stupidity and ignorance. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
PCP 17.3

Session 3



Round four: Temperance

And to knowledge temperance.” This is the ... [fourth] step in the path toward perfection of character. On every side there is indulgence and dissipation, and the result is degeneration and corruption. The inhabitants of our earth are depreciating in mental, moral, and physical power, because of the intemperate habits of society. Appetite, passion, and love of display are carrying the multitudes into the greatest excesses and extravagance. Temptations present themselves on every hand, not only in places of vice but also in the homes of our land. Our tables are spread with little regard for health or morality, and the cravings of perverted appetite are indulged, to the detriment of physical and mental strength. The people of God must take an opposite course from the world. They must take up the warfare against these sinful practices, deny appetite, and keep the lower nature in subjection. Said the great apostle, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” PCP 18.1

Importance of healthful diet

God has given us the fruits and grains of the earth for food, that we might have unfevered blood, calm nerves, and clear minds. The stimulating diet and drink of this day are not conducive to the best state of health. Tea, coffee, and tobacco are all stimulating, and contain poisons. They are not only unnecessary, but harmful, and should be discarded if we would add to knowledge, temperance. We should live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It is for us to "search the scriptures," and bring our habits into harmony with the instruction of the Bible. We are admonished, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." PCP 18.2

Session 4



Round five: Patience

And to temperance patience.” The need of becoming temperate is made manifest as we try to take this step. It is next to an impossibility for an intemperate person to be patient. We should make decided efforts to be on the right side in every matter. We are on a battleground, and Satan is striving for our souls. No impatient man or woman will ever enter into the courts of heaven. We must not allow the natural feelings to control our judgment. Many are quickly irritated, and their words are sharp and bitter. They wound the hearts of those about them, and make it apparent that the Spirit of Christ is not abiding in their souls. The grace of Christ will bring the peace of God into your homes; but many who profess the truth do not seem to realize that it is an essential part of religion to become meek and lowly, tenderhearted and forbearing. PCP 19.1

Peace in the home

Is there anything desirable in impatience? The loud, harsh complaint, the fretful, faultfinding spirit, are evidences of a narrow, conceited mind. Impatience brings strife and accusation and sorrow; but patience pours the balm of peace and love into the experiences of the home life. When we exercise the precious grace of patience toward others, they will reflect our spirit, and we shall gather with Christ. Patience will seek for unity in the church, in the family, and

in the community. This grace must be woven into our lives. Everyone should mount this round of progress, and add to faith, virtue, and temperance, the grace of patience. PCP 19.2

Session 5



Round six: Godliness Beauty of religion in the home

“And to patience godliness.” Godliness is the fruit of Christian character. If we abide in the Vine, we shall bear the fruits of the Spirit. The life of the Vine will manifest itself through the branches. We must have a close and intimate connection with heaven, if we bear the grace of godliness. Jesus must be a guest in our homes, a member of our households, if we reflect His image and show that we are sons and daughters of the Most High. Religion is a beautiful thing in the home. If the Lord abides with us, we shall feel that we are members of Christ's family in heaven. We shall realize that angels are watching us, and our manners will be gentle and forbearing. We shall be fitting up for an entrance into the courts of heaven, by cultivating courtesy and godliness. Our conversation will be holy, and our thoughts will be upon heavenly things. PCP 19.3

Session 6



*Round seven: Brotherly kindness—the example of Enoch
Earthly home fits for heaven*

Enoch walked with God. He honored God in every affair of life. In his home and in his business, he inquired, “Will this be acceptable to the Lord?” And by remembering God, and following His counsel, he was transformed in character, and became a godly man, whose ways pleased the Lord. We are exhorted to add to godliness, brotherly kindness. O how much we need to take this step, to add this quality to our characters! In many of our homes there is a hard, combative spirit manifested. Critical words and unkind actions are offensive to God. Dictatorial commands and haughty, overbearing manners are not acceptable to Heaven. The reason there are so many differences existing between brethren is that they have failed to add brotherly kindness. We should have that love for others that Christ has had for us. A man is estimated at his true value by the Lord of heaven. If he is unkind in his earthly home, he is unfit for the heavenly home. If he will have his own way, no matter whom it grieves, he would not be content in heaven, unless he could rule there. PCP 20.1

Session 7



Round eight: Love

The love of Christ must control our hearts, and the peace of God will abide in our homes. Seek God with a broken and contrite spirit, and you will be melted with compassion toward your brethren. You will be prepared to add to brotherly kindness, charity, or love. Without charity we will become “as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” Our highest professions are hollow and insincere; but “love is the fulfilling of the law.” We shall be found wanting, if we do not add charity that suffereth long and is kind, that vaunteth not itself, that seeketh not her own. PCP 20.2

Concluding Thought



Heaven brought nearer

Will it make us miserable to follow this plan of Christian progression?—No. It will bring heaven nearer to us. We may have the sweet peace and consolation of God in doing this work. These steps will take us into the atmosphere of heaven; for as God sees His children seeking to carry out His instruction in their habits and thoughts, He multiplies grace, and gives them that wisdom that cometh down from above, that is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.” PCP 20.3

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10). (The Review and Herald, February 21, 1888. Sermon at Christiana, Norway, October 6, 1886.). PCP 21.1

About the Author

There are portions of scripture that seem to have been tailor-made for the needs of God's last-day people. Second Peter summarizes the message of all sixty-six books of the Bible—that God is worthy of man's admiration and trust—in a way that is particularly helpful to believers living just prior to Christ's second coming. PCP 7.1

Ellen White was fascinated with Peter's second epistle. She loved its optimism and often used it as a touchstone for letters, sermons, and articles. Of special interest to her was the clear help 2 Peter provided in the area of child guidance. PCP 7.2

In her comments on 2 Peter, Ellen White refers to God's offer to restore His image in believers as “an eternal life insurance policy.” God's prophet was surely anticipating world conditions today. Situations, achievements, and material things that have provided security for years are now breaking up, leaving people clamoring for something effective and lasting to cling to. Surely this is an age of opportunity for a church that is optimistic about God's ability to bring order, peace, and personal growth and fulfillment to individuals right here and now. PCP 8.2