

June 2008—The Greatness of Jesus Christ for Men

(Part 2 of 3)

Last month I was reveling in the greatness of Jesus Christ and how it relates to us from 2 Peter 1:1-10. In this precious **BIBLICAL PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SAVIOR**, we saw that He is the Christ of power (v. 3), generosity (v. 3), and exceedingly great and precious promises (v. 4); and the One who enables us to escape the world's corruption (v. 4), making us partakers of His divine nature (v. 4).

Verses 5-10 exhibit **A PORTRAIT OF MANKIND EQUIPPED**: it all begins with *faith* (v. 5). That's no surprise is it? I still glory in simply believing that what Jesus Christ said is true; knowing that happiness and peace and strength come from accepting Him at His word!

Building on our faith, our resources are sevenfold—

1. **VIRTUE** (v. 5) is a life effective in the service of the Lord.
2. **KNOWLEDGE** (v. 5) is practical ability to apply wisdom to everyday situations.
3. **TEMPERANCE** (v. 6) is the middle ground or balance between two extremes: not the control of self that is purely subjugated to reason (no feeling—just facts). And equally important, this is not the state in which reason is conquered by passion (no reason—all passion). This is the control in which our passion remains, but is under complete control as we yield ourselves to Christ. Our passions become our servants—not our tormenters. Some would think that we need *less* passion. I believe we need *more* passion—under the biblical control of Christ!
4. **PATIENCE** (v. 6) is that conquering endurance. I love this one! It is a cheerful (or hopeful) endurance: constancy, regardless of circumstances.
5. **GODLINESS** (v. 6) is a two directional word. Certainly it is piety. Yet more than that, it refers to having a right relationship to God *and man*. We fervently love God, but at the same time we recognize our duty to mankind.
6. **BROTHERLY KINDNESS** (v. 7) is Philadelphia; literally it is “love for the brethren, brotherly affection.” There is a religious devotion that separates a man from others—in which the needs of his fellow-man become an imposition on his study of God's word, his meditation, and his prayers. There is something wrong with our faith if we view the claims of interpersonal relationships as a nuisance.
7. **CHARITY** (v. 7) is the self-sacrificing love Christ displays to us. These Christian virtues peak with an authentic giving love. This is “I will give 100% to you, no matter what you give back” kind of love.

Fellow missionaries—these precious truths remind us that we are indeed “thoroughly furnished” (2 Tim 3:17) as we minister for His Glory.

Bill