

SHARING GOD'S DIVINE CHARACTER

By Bill Subritzky

Do you realise that if you are a born again Christian you share the nature of God?

2 Peter 1:3-4 says, "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

These verses clearly tell us that by God's divine power He has given us everything that relates to life and godliness because we now know Him through the Holy Spirit.

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What does this mean?

As we share in the nature of God we should be aware that he has given us His faith. As Jesus said in Mark 11:22, "Have the faith of God."

This means that God is offering us the gift of His divine faith. What a wonderful gift. We have to become as a little child in order to believe that we receive this gift because our natural carnal mind cannot receive the things of God. (Romans 8:7.) That is what the born-again experience is all about i.e. receiving the mind of Christ so that we can understand the eternal things of God.

We are told to add to this faith, virtue which means excellence. (2 Peter 1:5.) In other words our walk with God must be a holy walk avoiding deliberate sin and walking in the fear of God. As we walk in this excellence we can hear the voice of God.

Knowledge comes next. This is divine knowledge which can only come through the Holy Spirit as we read the Word of God. Diligent reading of the Word of God is an essential element in the feeding of our spirit and mind spiritually. Through this we learn the mind of God.

Following this is **self-control**. In our flesh it is difficult for many of us to retain self-control in all circumstances. We react to situations and often later regret our reaction. Often hidden anger from unresolved situations of the past can cause us to react badly. The only way the situation can be resolved is by forgiving those who have hurt or damaged us and praying a blessing on them. (Matthew 5:44.) In this way any curse which has come upon us will be defeated.

We are then told to **persevere**. Scripture tells us that tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance produces character and character produces hope. Furthermore that hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5.)

Godliness comes next. How do we achieve godliness? Quite simply by total obedience to God and His Word. We should read the Word of God on a daily basis using a plan that takes us through the Bible, at least once a year. Then we will soon learn the need to practice godliness, through obedience to God.

"The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12.) It will pierce into our very innermost being and guide us into holiness in our walk with God.

Then comes brotherly **kindness**. Jesus gave us a new commandment to love one another as He loved us. (John 13:34.) He said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." (John 13:35.)

Jesus was referring those who are following Him. If the whole Body of Christ followed this commandment what a different world it would be! Where there is unity in the Body of Christ, God pours out His blessing. (Psalm 133:1, 3.) It is awe-inspiring to think of the extent of the blessing God would pour out if only we would believe and obey Him.

And finally there is **love**. As the apostle Paul said, we can have the gifts of prophecy, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, have all faith so we can remove mountains, but if we do not have love, we have nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:2.)

Love is an integral part of the nature of God. "[He] so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

All of the above qualities are part of the nature of God. As the Bible says, if we do these things, we "will not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8) and an entrance will be supplied abundantly to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Compiled by Bill Subritzky and produced by Dove Ministries

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