

# A Well Rounded Character

by John Hames

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*The sermon teaches that a well-rounded character is built upon divine virtues that reflect God's nature and prepare believers for eternal life.*

**Scripture:** 2 Peter 1:11

**Topics:** "Christian Character", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

John Hames delivers a powerful sermon based on 2 Peter 1:3, 11, urging believers to not be content with their current spiritual state but to enrich their sanctified lives with heavenly graces. He emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation of righteousness, affections, law of God, conscience, and will, leading to a character that withstands trials. Hames encourages the congregation to add courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and divine love to their faith, creating a harmonious and virtuous life that reflects Christ. He concludes by painting a beautiful picture of believers being welcomed into the everlasting kingdom by the very graces they cultivated on earth, chorusing them home to their coronation.

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## Transcript

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 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 1:3, 11.

This fiery message was addressed to a class of believers who had been made partakers of the Divine nature, and because of this very fact the Apostle exhorts them not to rest contented with present attainments, but to enrich their sanctified personality with these heavenly graces.

The word "add," we are told by an able scholar, is the same Greek term "Epichoregos," and it refers to a chorus leader or a leader of an orchestra. "It means chorus into your faith and life these beautiful graces. Bring them all in tune, work them out in harmony and praise, so that your life shall be a doxology of joy and thanksgiving."

But, before we add and start this heavenly structure, let us go to the Divine quarry and lift up four foundation stones and upon these we will build. Before the sky-scraper goes up with its towering wall among the clouds, the workmen first go down until they "strike solid rock. We will call this rock righteousness. and upon this we will build a character against which the storms of earth and hell shall not move. Now, upon this foundation we shall build according to the Divine pattern. First of all, we will place the affections. Where goes the affections goes the whole man. What a man loves determines his character and destiny.

After placing purified affections as the basis in this heavenly structure, we will now build upon this wise. High over all we will put the law of God within the heart. (Heb. 8 :10). Right under law let us put conscience. (A religion without an enlightened conscience is a sham). Under conscience we will place the will -- the power to choose, and under the will the affection. Now, with the light of the Holy Spirit shining and radiating its heavenly rays from the law of God, falling upon an enlightened conscience and conscience gripping the will and affections, we will have a saint after the New Testament order.

Now, with the foundation well laid, we will build according to the Apostle's order. "And to your faith, courage." We must have courage or we will fail in every other grace. We must have courage to believe what God says; courage to carry out our God-given convictions. Dare to do, dare to stand alone! This does not mean a blind, brutal force; but it means a divinely imparted courage given unto us through the power of the Holy Ghost This is an age when the Church needs heroes -- men and women with a burning message, who have the blood of martyrs in their veins. God has no place for cowards in His kingdom.

Look at Luther, when brought before the Emperor of Germany. There as he stood all alone, he never looked more like his Master. When asked if he would renounce the books he had written and recant from the stand which he had taken against the Church of Rome, he answered "Until God, the Holy Spirit, my conscience shows me I am wrong. Here I stand, what more can I do, so help me God." He started something that day which will live forever. Stand by your God-given convictions and when the smoke of the battle is blown away you will find God and angels on your side.

"Add to your courage, knowledge." Knowledge is the sweet handmaid of the soul which means to rightly direct our lives. Without knowledge our courage might be ill-directed. But with knowledge on the throne, we push ahead since we have the assurance that we are not fighting losing battles. "This is the spirit that holds our powers in equilibrium, keeps us in perfect balance, and enables us to turn all forces, all resources, and all opportunities to the best account."

"Add to your knowledge, temperance." Without temperance there is a danger of rashness, harshness, running off into extremes, stressing non-essentials, and leaving the weighty matters undone. Mr. Wesley says concerning Christian Perfection: "Some are lacking in tenderness, gentleness, sweetness, meekness, longsuffering, and goodness. Some, he said, may say that you are sanctified, but I do not. Hold fast to what you have and seek more." Temperance (self-control) which means the higher spiritual nature has ascended the throne and reigns over the lower nature, bringing every imagination, every appetite, and bodily desire under subjection. It is the balance wheel which keeps the soul regulated and

well-rounded.

To your temperance, "add patience." Patience has to do with the temper. How is your temper? Good or bad? A good temper is the touch-stone of the Holy Ghost religion. Nothing will give a lie to your profession any quicker than a hot flashy temper. Patience means to hold steady under pressure and answer with a meek mild voice. "Were the Christian life chiefly a thing of forms, rites, observance -- as a mechanical thing -- it would not take much of the Holy Spirit to run a thing like that. But our religion is of a different kind from that; it is a thing of virtue, graces, tempers and experiences.

"Add to your patience godliness." Godliness means Godlikeness. We become like the things we admire. The Holy Ghost enthrones Christ within the human heart until in our manners and dispositions we become like God. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"Add to your godliness, brotherly-kindness." Kindness comes from the root word "kin." We are to feel toward all of God's children and the household of faith as we do toward our nearest blood kin. Without brotherly kindness our godliness would be like the image of God without His glory. Brotherly kindness softens, sweetens our attitude toward all of our brethren -- even those who hold different views. It pays to be kind. Kindness will unlock more old rusty heart doors than a wagon-load of cold orthodox sermons. Do not wait until your loved ones die to be kind. Show it to them now. Manifest it in your daily life, in the home, Church, on the street, at your work. Let it radiate from your face, voice, eyes, and walks. A heart filled with the blessed comforter will be characterized by tenderness, and kindness.

And to brotherly kindness add Divine love. Now, the building is finished except the keystone. Love is the keystone. It is the crowning virtue of the arch. Like a heavenly queen it reigns over all the other graces in the soul. The Holy Ghost longs to flood our hearts with Divine love until our affections will be softened, sweetened, melted into a liquid fiery stream.

Now, we come to a most remarkable thing found in the eleventh verse of this same chapter. "For so shall an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Literally it might be translated: "So an entrance shall be chorused unto you." You see at the close of that paragraph the word "Epichoregos" reappears. "It refers to a chorus leader in Bible times. That means the very graces that were wrought into your earthly life and attended you as a heavenly choir shall wait for you at the gates of heaven and sing you home to your coronation. The love and gentleness, the faith and patience that exercised pilgrimage shall be waiting as a train of musicians and celebrate your victory and your recompense throughout all eternity."

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