

Session Two

SURVEY THE TRAIL

God's divine power gives you what you need for a great life through the knowledge of Him who called us by His glory. In personal terms, this means His power is transmitted into your life by His living promises. But you have a role to play in this process through your actions and choices. With diligence, you must add virtue to your faith. But here's your next great step—now you must add knowledge to your virtue. Always grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

DR. DAVID JEREMIAH

Peter reminds us that in addition to diligence, we must add *virtue* to our faith (see 2 Peter 1:5). Virtuous believers lead lives of integrity, kindness, goodness, generosity, and graciousness based on their knowledge of God's Word.

Jesus is the epitome of true virtue—which often upset the religious elite because they knew His character was superior to their own. Jesus explained to them the secret to leading a virtuous life: relying on God as our source and pleasing God as our motivation (see John 8:28–29).

Just as Jesus desired to please God, we are called to make it our goal to please God. When we know God as a loving Father, the path of virtue we travel becomes a joy and an adventure.

We live virtuous lives not to gain our loving Father's acceptance (which we already have) but simply because we want to please Him by being an excellent steward of the life He has given us.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:1–3, 9–11, the apostle Paul lists three practical ways to lead a virtuous life:

- Live above the fray of our culture (verse 3)
- Love our faith family (verses 9–10)
- Lead a quiet life (verse 11)

In addition to diligence and virtue, Peter instructs us to add *knowledge* to our character qualities. To live as a disciple of Jesus will require us to take three steps:

- Follow Jesus

- Study Jesus

- Obey Jesus

God sent Jesus, the living Word, to serve as our example of moral excellence. He sent the Bible, His written Word, to provide us with the knowledge we need for godliness.

DISCUSS

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture. Use the following questions to help guide your discussion.

1. How would you define *virtue* as it pertains to a person's life or character?
2. Who has served as your personal role model for living a godly life of virtue? How has that person inspired you to live virtuously?
3. Why is living a virtuous life a joyful adventure and not an arduous burden? What makes the difference between the two?

4. How do the three practices that Paul lists in 1 Thessalonians 4:1–3 and 9–11 help us to lead virtuous lives? Which of the practices presents the greatest challenge to you? Why?
5. Keeping Peter's progression in mind, why do you suppose knowledge follows virtue? Shouldn't our knowledge of God and His Word come before virtue? Why or why not?
6. There are three "ingredients"—following Jesus, studying Jesus, obeying Jesus—needed for us to grow in knowledge. How does each one contribute to our knowledge of God and His ways? How does our knowledge become wisdom?