

The apostle mentions seven such qualities:

- a. moral excellence or virtue
- b. knowledge of truth
- c. self-control
- d. patient endurance
- e. godliness
- f. brotherly love
- g. AGAPE love

A. The first quality Peter says we ought to add is moral excellence or virtue.

Verse 5 says: "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; " (or "virtue," as in the NASB).

What is virtue? What do we mean when we speak of a virtuous person? Proverbs 31:10-31 gives us a helpful insight as to what constitutes a virtuous person, by giving us a list of qualities of a virtuous wife. If we summarize these qualities, we find that the virtuous wife fears the Lord, is morally upright, and fulfills her responsibilities and duties with faithfulness, diligence, and excellence.

Using the virtuous wife of Proverbs 31 as a model of virtue, I believe that we can apply her qualities to any person. And I further believe that as Christians we ought to be virtuous.

I believe that, for a Christian, doing a job well is a moral obligation. I have witnessed many Christians in action who seem to feel that doing a job in a careless, substandard, shoddy way is quite acceptable. They usually carry this attitude into work they do in or for the church.

J. Gresham Machen, a New Testament scholar in the early twentieth century, said, "Many Christians are content to offer shoddy work to the Lord. But holy shoddy is still shoddy!"

Christians need to strive for excellence. The athletes who participate in the Olympic games strive for excellence. They give it their best. They do it to win recognition and acclamation and medals that grow old. As Christians we strive for excellence to please the Lord and bring honor to Him, and to have a sense of accomplishment that has eternal significance. Peter tells us, "Make every effort to add to your faith moral excellence or virtue!"