

## Adding More in 2024

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We serve a God of abundant grace. He wants us to fully experience His blessings. This requires our active participation in receiving His gifts: faith. God wants us to use His graces to change our lives. To encourage this, today, we are introducing our theme for the year: Adding More in 2024.

There are passages in the Bible that urge us to add, increase, and grow. Paul told the Colossians to “bear fruit in every good work and increase in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10). He told the Thessalonians to “increase and abound in love” (1 Thess. 3:12). Adding more is how we actively participate in our spiritual development and encourage traits which will positively bless our lives.

Perhaps the best-known passage in the New Testament related to adding more was written by the apostle Peter. In his second letter, he affirmed the greatness of God’s gifts. Grace and peace can be multiplied in our lives through the gift of His Son. Everything we need for life and godliness can be enjoyed through the knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 1:1-3).

After identifying this blessing, Peter writes about how we must add to our faith. He wanted these saints to become stronger in their commitment to serve Christ. He did not want the pressures of persecution to crush their faith. If they were diligent in this work, they would be welcomed into the kingdom of God. We, too, must follow the teaching of this dedicated apostle.

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

### Keys for Adding More

**1). The need for diligence.** Adding More in 2024 is urgent. Developing ourselves spiritually is the great work of our lives. There is danger in the world. There are threats to our faith. Materialism. Pride. Power. Lust. Anxiety. Indifference. False teaching. As Peter wrote, we must make every effort to supplement our faith.

What kind of effort are we making to add to our faith? Are we regularly reading the Bible? Are we teaching our children the Scriptures? Are we attending worship and Bible study with the church at every opportunity? Are we searching our hearts and evaluating our character? Answering these types of questions will help us measure our diligence.

**2). Adding the right traits.** We are adding something to our lives. We are growing something in our families. Some reputation is increasing in our congregation. Are we adding the right things? By the knowledge of Christ, we can make proper discernments in our lives. Peter makes a brief list of qualities we are to add to our faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love.

These are a positive list of traits that are best exemplified in Christ. We are to learn from Him and follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). These characteristics are different from the evils of worldliness. With the knowledge of Christ, we learn a new way of thinking that produces a new way of living.

**3). The danger of neglect.** Supplementing faith is the life-long responsibility of Christians. Yet, there are times in life when we neglect our responsibilities. We prioritize the wrong goals. We mindlessly drift through life. We become distracted by sin. Bad habits take root.

Peter says that such neglect happens when we forget that we were purged from our old sins. What does this mean? Spiritual neglect occurs when we forget the cross of Jesus. This is the place where our old sins were purged. We need to be reminded daily of the cross of Jesus. We need to think about the sacrifice that was required to pay for our sins.

Remembering the cross is a humbling exercise. The cross of Jesus is to orient our lives. The self-giving love of Jesus has the power to change our hearts. The cross is what enables us to subtract sin and add righteousness.

**4. The results of adding.** The work of adding to our faith is long and difficult. Sacrifice is never easy. Learning new patterns of behavior is challenging. Yet, there is much to be gained. Peter identifies a short-term and long-term blessing for supplementing our faith.

First, Peter says we will never fall or stumble. This does not mean we will never have temptations or obstacles in our lives. This means that challenges to our faith will not defeat us. When we strengthen our faith with the character of Christ, nothing can defeat us. We can meet every challenge and thrive.

Second, Peter promises that we will be welcomed into the kingdom of God. This long-term promise can strengthen us in the short term. The hope of eternal salvation will energize our efforts to add more to our faith.

## **Conclusion**

What are we lacking? What improvements do we want to make? What could be done to strengthen our faith, stabilize our families, and grow our congregation? We will address these important topics each month. In the meantime, let us be resolved to work together to Add More in 2024.