



Reflections and Revelations Newsletter (October 1, 2010)

THE POWER OF PROGRESSIONⁱ

2 Peter 1:5-9 (NKJV): “⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

I don’t know about anyone else, but I’ve been doing a lot of thinking lately, I’ve been thinking there are a lot of wonderful insights in the Word of God we can miss by reading it in a linear fashion. For instance, 2 Peter 1:5-9 is one of many verses, until recently, I have read in the Bible, but missed the richness of what it is saying! Lately, however, I have been seeing God’s Word through a different filter. One thing that has helped changed how I view God’s Word is what I like to call T-Time.

T-Time is where I take the Word of God and break it down. Sometimes, the result clearly outlines the choices we are presented. Other times, like in this T, we see the progressive nature of God’s Word. The format for breaking down the Word is based on a capital T, hence the name, T-Time. Using T-Time has been very rewarding, because it helps me to more clearly see God’s Word when I am studying Scripture. To illustrate, let’s use a T-Time to show the power progression in our verse above.

FRUITFUL GROWTH IN THE FAITH (2 Peter 1:5-9)

The Seed	The Fruit
Faith	Virtue
Virtue	Knowledge
Knowledge	Self-Control
Self-Control	Perseverance
Perseverance	Godliness
Godliness	Brotherly Kindness
Brotherly Kindness	Love

How – through diligence

Y - “For if these things are [mine] and abound, [I] *will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Life)

Y – “For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed. (Death)

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Now, let me explain what I just did. I took my title from how these passages of Scripture are labeled in the New King James Version (NKJV). This way, when I look at this T, I know I am looking at fruitful growth as it relates to my faith. For quick reference, I also included the passage of Scripture I used, so if I need to go back and look at the verses in the context of which they are written, I can easily find them.

I then decided how I wanted to label each side of my T. I chose “the seed” and “the fruit” for a couple of reasons. One, I am a huge lover of the parable of the sower and the seed (Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-15). Simply put, when we plant the seed of God’s Word into our heart, when it falls on good ground, we produce fruit. Thus, my second reason for my choice of labels is in order to produce fruit, we typically need to plant a seed. In this particular passage of Scripture, Peter is telling us what seed we can plant to produce what fruit. The most beautiful aspect of this passage is the fruit is progressive!

For instance, when we plant faith, we can produce virtue, which is added to our faith! We can then plant our virtue to produce knowledge, which is added to our virtue and our faith, and so on and so on. Do you get the picture? Nothing is taken away from us in this process; however, as we are diligent in our pursuit of growth, we gain additional attributes that will enable us to live in a way that brings glory, honor, and praise to the name of Jesus.

Moreover, the progressive nature of this verse helps me to understand where I am and what I need to do to grow in my walk with Christ. For instance, through my studies, I know if I am struggling in a trial, I lack perseverance. I can then back track in my T to find out what seeds I need to plant and cultivate in order to gain the perseverance I need to withstand during the trials of life. Okay, so let’s take a moment to do that.

When we look at our T, we find perseverance on the right side four lines down. This tells me I need to build upon my faith, my virtue, my knowledge, and my self-control before I can ever hope to persevere. All too often, I have found myself trying to persevere without the necessary ammunition, as it were, to withstand in the evil day. As a result, I would end up worn, weary, and confused! Now, by being able to look at God’s Word and clearly see my choices, or the progressive nature of His Word, it helps me to strengthen myself, as I seek to glorify Him in all that I think, speak, and do!

Something else this T shows me is how I walk out this verse, and why it is important to do so. I walk out this verse by being diligent in planting each seed and cultivating each fruit listed. Or, as we are told in Scripture, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (**2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV**), or as another version says, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (**KJV**).

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If I am diligent, our opening verse says the result is I am not barren in my knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the flip side, if I am not diligent, then I've forgotten I have been cleansed of my sins. So, I now hear the question, "Why is it important to know the two whys listed in the T?" I am a firm believer that if I don't know why I am doing something, I cannot make that same decision when faced with similar circumstances. Knowing why we act the way we do helps us gain wisdom to be able to change the way we act when it does not glorify God!

Moreover, **Deuteronomy 30:19** tells us our two choices are life and death, and we are to choose life so we and our descendants may live. If we want to choose life, then we will be diligent in our studies so we can produce fruit. If we remain shortsighted and blind, we will not be diligent, which can lead to spiritual death. For me, anything that separates me from walking in God's love and extending that love to others is spiritual death, because I am told to love God and to love others!

I pray this T-Time journey through 2 Peter 1:5-9 will bless all who read it. Holy Spirit, I ask that You will be the Teacher to help every soul glean what You have for them as they read. May every eye be opened and every heart made flesh to receive what the Spirit of the Lord seeks to impart that each may be fruitful in Your Kingdom! In Jesus name, I pray. Amen!

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ⁱ Minor edits were made to this document to fix typographical and content errors on January 11, 2015.