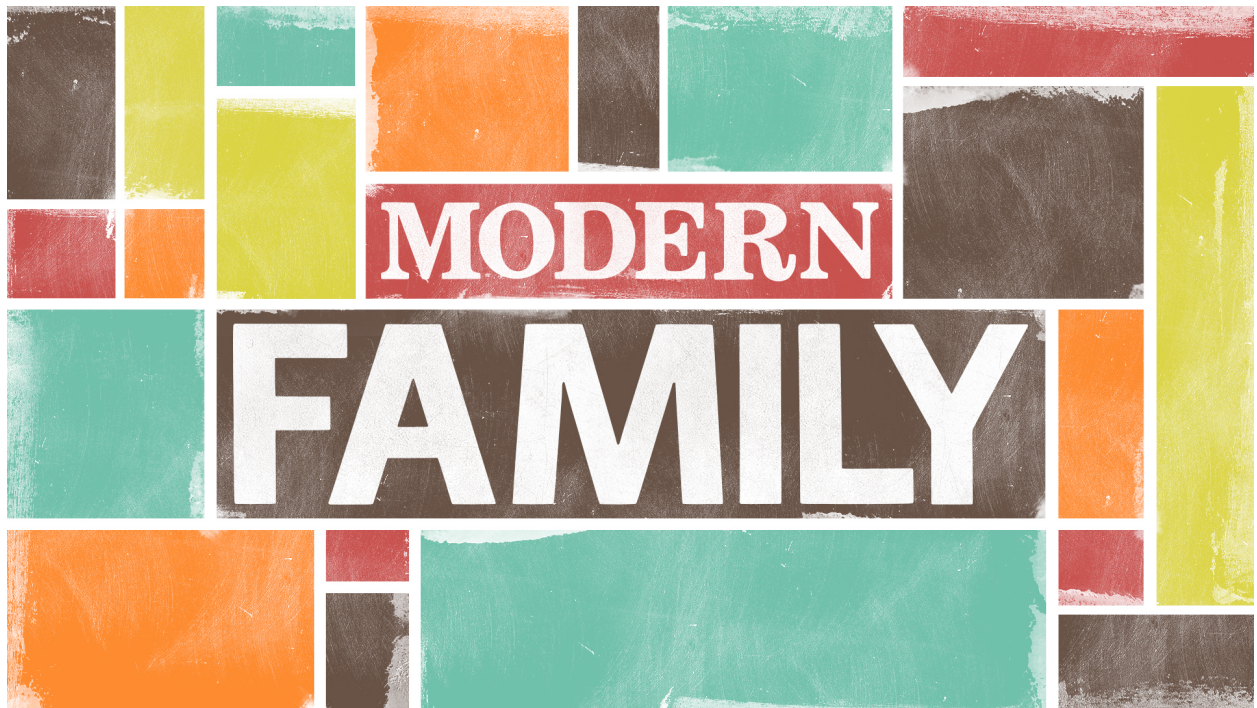




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Becoming the Person on Your “Ideal Mate” List

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Well good morning. It's great to see all of you together and make sure you pick up your Explore God wristband, a great conversation starter. God's doing a lot of things - 330 churches now have signed on to be part of this and it's just amazing what's happening in our city. (congregation claps).

And we are in the middle of the sermon series on Modern Family. So we started talking about what does the Modern Family look like. And in order to understand that we kind of went back and said “Well let’s just look at what God designed when he put the family together,” and we learned that ultimately life is a team sport. We were made to live in relationships and we were made to live for a purpose. When we live in relationships and we live for a purpose not only do our lives become fulfilled, but the world around us gets better. And we looked at God’s original design. The value of maleness and the value of femaleness, united together where both of those properties, those qualities, those characteristics are brought together for the purpose of creating a family. So we looked at all of that and one of the things we’re committed to here as a church is to in very positive, proactive ways help young people as they’re growing up develop a sense of identity that includes their gender. So one of the things we do here is called Journey to Manhood. I really challenge all dads who have sons to take their sons through this process, and you do it with other guys.

And so when I took Ben through Journey to Manhood a number of years ago there were five of us dads and five sons. And when the kids were around 12 and 13 years old we went through this together. You can tell we were all a little bit younger back then. (congregation laughs). So Ben’s in Seattle now, software developer, that’s what he does now, but back then as a kid we had all of these activities and these teaching times and these moments. Well one of the things we did was we sent the five boys off. Now keep in mind that some of these are 12 and some of them are 13. They are going to go off and they’re going to develop a list of what they would be looking for in the ideal mate. And I saved the list. (congregation laughs) Those five boys came up with 43 qualities that they were looking for, and when I say 43 qualities that does not include one of the qualities that one of the boys suggested and got shot down on, and that was she needs to have child-bearing hips. (congregation laughs) The other boys thought that was just a little too inappropriate at this point.

So anyway, I’m reading through this list of 43 things. Let me give you a couple that you might expect to see on the list. Okay, one of them is not ditzy, no vainness, someone who does not nag, and someone who knows how to keep her mouth shut. (congregation laughs) For those of you who are starting to get offended, keep in mind that they are 12 and 13 year old boys. So one of the dads who compiled the list redacted that one and here’s what the dad put, “Speaks wisely, but also knows how to listen.” (congregation laughs) So over time you’ll learn how that’s supposed to be said. Some of the things that went on the list that you might not expect to come from boys this age, and by the way looks were not on the list. And when the dad’s questioned “Is she going to be good looking.” They said “That doesn’t even need to be on the list dad. Like

that’s a given. Who would even think that – you know, you don’t even have to put that down. That’s just on there.”

Here’s some of the ones I thought – I was impressed by this. Not manipulative, someone who can stick with you through hard times, good reputation, not sleeping around. These 12 and 13-year old boys are starting to recognize that that starts for a lot of people at that age. Someone who pushes me spiritually, a humble servant, obedient to parents. Now when I got to that one I thought, “Okay, here we go. So what in the world boys would make you think that the girl that has these qualities would ever be interested in you?” (congregation laughs) And that’s a good question, isn’t it? Because most all of us have made a list at some point in time, right?

How many of you somewhere along the way sat down and either in your head or on paper made a list of what you would be looking for in the mate that you want to marry? Okay, we’re in church here you can be honest. How many of you currently actually have that list? You know, keep it close to your heart or someplace else and you pull it out from time-to-time and read it over. Some people think, “Well you know, I’m married and I don’t really have a list.” And I would question that. Is that true? You mean you don’t have a list of “Well if he would just do this and just do this and be more this way and be more this way. Or if she would just stop doing that and stop doing –“ you know we all tend to have standards or qualifications that we think if the people in our lives, particularly the people that we either want to marry or the people that we’re married to, if they would just be more “fill in the blank,” then my life would be better. The problem with that is that you don’t have the ability to control someone else. And so rather than spending all of your time trying to idealize what somebody else could be to make your life better, maybe the question is, “How do I become the person on my ideal match list? How do I take on those characteristics and become that kind of person?”

We’re challenged in scripture to do just that. To actually take on the characteristics and grow in a way that we become the people that we want to see someone else be. In fact, if you’ll open your Bibles to 2 Peter 1, I want us to walk through a passage of scripture today and just look at what the Word of God has to say about this idea of personal growth and development. So we’re not primarily talking simply about just finding the ideal person, we’re actually talking about becoming the idea person and that happens at every age. Today’s a great day to begin to practice or to work on becoming the person that you feel like God’s called you to be. So, starting in verse 2 of chapter 1 of 2 Peter, and for those of you who have been through our discipleship group, ministry, Discipleship With a Purpose, you memorize these verses. And Peter starts out with:

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

And then he says this:

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness."

God has given us everything we need for life and godliness from his power to us. And he goes on to say:

"through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

By knowing the one who called us, Jesus Christ, by knowing him and understanding his glory and goodness on our behalf, we have got everything we need. And then he says this:

"Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises,"

He's made commitments to us, promises to us.

"so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

So here we have this contrast. We have the promises of God that if we live in those promises, believe those promises, follow those promises we will actually experience within ourselves the divine nature. We'll actually begin to feel the power of God working in us to become something supernatural. God's spirit will work in us and we will be transformed. In contrast to that he says "You're going to escape something." You're going to escape the opposite, the opposite of that is being ruled by evil desires." Things in us like selfishness and pride and anger. Things that come along that we live in like lust and greed. Those are the things that cause corruption. The word corruption there literally means to deteriorate or to pollute or to destroy. There are desires in the world and there are desires in us that damage us. They damage our potential, they damage our character, they damage our relationships, they damage our future. And he says the way you escape being damaged, being corrupted, being ruined is by embracing the promises of God and living in them and experiencing the divine power. Or we can say it this way. For those of you who are following on your outline there in the bulletin, we would say **God has Granted us His Divine Nature to Experience and Express His Life**. To experience his life and to express his life. You say, "Well how would I do that? That sounds great, but

how would I do that?" I'm glad you ask. He tells us in the next verse. In verse 5, he says:

"For this very reason,"

Since God has done this and there's the corruption that could take place if I'm ruled by my desires. Or on the other hand if I walk in the promises there's the divine nature that will give me everything I need to experience, express his godliness. If I do that, what do I do? He says:

"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure -"

Now let me just stop right there. What's he saying? He's saying that **God Calls Us to Grow in the Development of His Nature**. God's calling us to grow in the development of His divine nature. That's what he's calling us to do. Make every effort - now how many efforts is that? That's pretty much all of them, right? Like make every effort. He says make effort to add to. And then in verse 8 he says if you possess these qualities in increasing measure - do you feel the forward progress? Make every effort to "add to", "to increase in." In other words, we've been called to grow in this relationship with God. Now what's interesting in this passage is he doesn't say, "Sit back, read your Bible and then just let it all happen." There's an element here where we're supposed to take responsibility for the time we've been given to live our lives in a way that we move forward. And to not do that is to not do the part that God is calling us to do in the world in which we live and the time in which we have been given in the body and the personality and the gifting that God's provided for us. And so make every effort includes thinking about my growth, making plans to grow, using my resources, spending time and money to help me grow. Breaking out of my comfort zones to put me into places that would challenge me to grow.

I ran into a guy in the gym a while back, a friend of mine I've known for a long time. Our kids grew up together. He said, "Tim I've got to tell you something. My life has changed so much." He said, "Twenty-five years ago I started praying that God would take my alcoholism away from me. I'd get up every morning and I'd just beg God, 'God today, may today be the day that I don't have temptation to drink, that the alcoholism is gone, that I leave it all behind.'" And he said for 25 years God didn't answer my prayers. "And I was so mad at God. You know, I'm praying and why didn't God take this away from me?" And during that time he went through a lot of pain, his family went through a lot of

pain. He said, “About five years ago I decided, well if God’s not going to do something about this then I’m going to do something about it and I joined a group.” (congregation laughs) What’s the problem? “Make every effort”, so he joins a group, he goes to CR (Celebrate Recovery), he gets in there and guess what? He’s been sober for the last five years. And he said “You know what? The first morning when I got up and prayed and I said, ‘God take away my alcoholism,’ God said ‘I’m going to take away your alcoholism when you are willing to go to CR, Celebrate Recovery, or an AA group, when you’re willing to step outside your comfort zone. When you’re willing to invest.’” And he said, “It’s not just what I’ve lost, it’s not just giving up my alcoholism. Over the past five years I’ve found a new lease on life. I’ve made friends that have nurtured me, I live in community today, so much has changed because God had something bigger for me, but I wasn’t listening to Him. I just wanted Him to change my life on my terms.” And how many times have you gotten up and said, “God make my life different today. Take this jerk out of my life, make that easy for me. Give me a job that works for me. Do something to take away this habit or this attitude, or this unforgiveness. God you just do it.” God’s capable of doing that, but God wants you to step in and invest and follow his plan. So make every effort to step out. That’s what you need to do.

Now here’s one of the challenges. We live in a world that doesn’t necessarily support this idea, and I want to challenge those of you who are 20-somethings in the room. In fact, I’m going to show you something that you really need to listen to. Because the culture’s telling you that you’ve got all kinds of time. In fact, it’s actually kind of worked its way down into the teenagers today. So if you’re a young person or you care about a young person, I want you to watch



this. One of the Ted Talks my wife sent to me recently was psychotherapist Meg Jay talking about the 20-something generation. I want you to see part of what she has to say.

(Video Begins)

Meg Jay: When I was in my twenties I saw my very first psychotherapy client. I was a PhD student in clinical psychology at Berkley, she was a 26-year old woman named Alex. Now Alex walked into her first session

wearing jeans and a big slouchy top and she dropped onto the couch in my office and kicked off her flats and told me she was there to talk about “guy problems.” Now when I heard this I was so relieved. My classmate got an arsonist for her first client and I got a twenty-something who wanted to talk about boys. This, I thought I could handle. But I didn’t handle it. With the funny stories that Alex would bring to session it was easy for me to just nod my head while we kicked the can down the road. Thirty is the new 20 Alex would say, and as far as I could tell she was right. Work happened later, marriage happened later, kids happened later, even death happened later. Twenty-somethings like Alex and I had nothing but time. But before long my supervisor pushed me to push Alex about her love life. I pushed back. I said, “Sure she’s dating down. She’s sleeping with a knucklehead, but it’s not like she’s going to marry the guy.” And then my supervisor said, “Not yet. But she might marry the next one. Besides the best time to work on Alex’s marriage is before she has one.” That’s what psychologists call an “ah-hah” moment. That was the moment I realized 30’s not the new 20. Yes people settle down later than they used to, but that didn’t make Alex’s 20’s a developmental downtime. That made Alex’s 20’s a developmental sweet spot and we were sitting there blowing it. That was when I realized that this sort of benign neglect was a real problem and it had real consequences, not just for Alex and her love life, but for the careers and the families and the futures of 20-somethings everywhere.”
(Video Ends)

Interesting. The best time to work on Alex’s marriage is before she has one. And the best time to work on anything is today. Let me just – for you 20-somethings, let me just give you some more context. She goes on to talk about this and you guys need to watch the whole thing at some point in time, but let me just give you some of the facts. Eighty percent of life’s most defining moments take place by age 35. So 8 out of 10 of the things that will shape you will take place before 35, and if you just coast through the decade of your 20’s, things are going to be happening to you that will change the rest of your life. The first 10 years of your career has an exponential impact to the power of, exponential impact on how much you will earn long term. So getting serious about what you’re going to do early on changes the trajectory of the options you have later financially. Most than one-half of Americans are married or dating their future partner by age 30. So half the people are going to end up with the person that they are dating or sleeping with or engaged to by age 30. And so if you look around and say, “Well, you know, I’ve got this guy or I’ve got this girl and they’re not really that good for me, but I’ve got all kinds of time,” challenge that. Here’s one – the brain caps off its second and last growth spurt in our 20’s as it rewrites itself for adulthood. This is interesting. We think of the first five years of a child’s life as significant developmental years, well the 20’s are the same thing for adulthood where the brain is kind of setting its final

fix. In other words if I spend my 20's playing video games I'm hardwiring my brain in a way that probably is going to be difficult to fix later on. This is an important time developmentally. Personality changes more than at any other time of your life during your 20's. What you're deciding to be in your 20's will probably be what you're going to be in your 40's and 50's and 60's. So think about future self and ask yourself the question: Are the things I want to be different or want to change and when's the best time to do that neurologically. Emotionally it's in your 20's. Here's one for the ladies. Female fertility peaks at age 28 and things get tricky after age 35. And so if you wait and decide at 31, 32, 33 it's time now to settle down and I really want the white picket fence with 2.5 children, that just actually might not be an option to you no matter how meaningful and how emotionally you want that. I mean you may be reducing that option. This is not trying to be harsh; this is just reality. And what's weird is our culture today is communicating all along the way, “This is a time for exploration and fun and relaxation and nothing that you do here really matters, so go out and just experiment with everything.” But you're actually experimenting with your life. She says two more things. She says, “We have trivialized what is the defining decade of adulthood.” So it takes me 7 years to get my education. Well that's a big deal. Those are important years. Second, she says, Leonard Bernstein, great quote, he said, “To achieve good things you need a plan and not enough time.” Think about that. If you really want to achieve good things you need a plan and not enough time. So what happens when we tell 20-somethings that really they don't need to be doing anything now. You know what happens? Nothing. If you've got all kinds of time the tendency is to do nothing. The warning here is for everyone of us, do not waste time, but use each day for growth. You say, “Well what do I need to be working on? What are some areas of growth?” Well there are all kinds of ways and places you can grow, but let me just give you some right from this passage – that jump right out of these passages. This is something that throughout history God has been commending these qualities to us. And I'm going to fly through these, so we're going to move really, really fast, and I'm just going to give you a quick overview. He says in verse 5:

“For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.”

So here's a list of traits – now some people may say, “You know, I'm a pretty sequential person so I'm still working on this faith thing. Once I get that down I'll move to the next one.” That's not what he's saying here. These are all things that we can be developing at the same time, working on all of these. You

don't wait for one to start the next. You just grow in these areas. So what does this mean?

The first one he starts off with is faith. He says faith. The word faith here in this context literally could be translated faithfulness, and what we mean by this is relationally loyal verses relationally opportunistic. **Faith (Faithfulness): Loyal vs. Opportunist.** Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. That's faithfulness. Really pointing those two relationships in the right direction. And so the question you have to ask and answer yourself is, do I have loyalty to people? Do I think about them and what's best for them, or do I see people primarily as opportunities for me to advance myself? Are my friends in my life there for fun, and when they're not fun they're not there? Are people in my life a business acquaintance that can help me get to the next level? My spouse, is my spouse there to make me feel good about myself, to affirm my self-esteem. In other words am I opportunistic or am I faithful?

One of the things I tell my kids, when you start dating somebody look at their friends. If they've got long-term, deep relationships with other people that's a good sign of faithfulness, of loyalty. If they - every time they make a move they leave behind everybody and just move on, that's a big question mark as to whether this person can maintain real relationships over the long haul. So ask yourself the question. Do you have a group of friends that you stick with through thick and thin? Has that been a history of your life. If not, this is an area to grow in.

Second quality here is goodness. Goodness is moral excellence. In other words it's valuing good over bad. **Goodness: Valuing Good vs. Bad.** As a culture we're kind of “Breaking Bad” right now, aren't we? We're in music and movies and entertainment, we kind of are starting to glorify those things that really at the end of the day are not for human thriving. They're not healthy for human thriving. Is that you? Do you have a tendency to love the villain? Do you have a tendency to enjoy it when somebody gets evil - or gets even. When someone strikes out. Or do you find yourself admiring good qualities, good character and learning about those. Do you say, “Man, that's just not me.” That's okay. We start where we are - it's time to grow. Add that to the things you're going to begin to work on and develop.

The third one is knowledge. In this context it's knowledge about God. What we're talking is about is spiritual insight versus spiritual apathy. **Knowledge: Spiritual Insight vs. Apathy.** Rather than being apathetic, “Oh you know, I'm - God, spiritual things, like I believe, but I really don't have that much interest. My life is about other things.” That's spiritual apathy. Are you learning, are

you growing? Do you find time studying the Bible and prayer is healthy? Are you engaging in relationships and conversations that spark your spiritual interest and take you deeper in your understanding of who God is and how he wired the world, and your part in it? Do you feel like you're in the process of self-discovering God's will for your life? And you're kind of looking at your destiny in a positive way because you're spiritually engaged and you're moving forward? Oftentimes, when I'm interacting with people that are dating I find that sometimes strong believers don't really want to have spiritual conversations with the people that they're dating because they don't really want to find out that that other person is spiritually apathetic. And that's okay until you get married, and then all of a sudden you want to grow, you want to raise your kids in a spiritual environment, and the person is saying, "Now why did you change the rules? We didn't pray together, we didn't worship together, we weren't growing together spiritually before and now all of a sudden you want this?" I challenge you, if you're dating somebody and you can't talk about your faith and they don't have genuine interest in that that's a big challenge. People who are married, do you pray with your spouse? Are you engaging in spiritual conversations? In other words, spiritually interested versus apathetic.

The next one is self-control. We all have desires. There's no question - we will always have desires and desires can be a very positive force in our life. But the challenge of self-control is does my will govern my behavior or do my desires govern my behavior. In other words, is my will over my desires or is it the other way around? What I want dictates to me what I do. **Self-Control: Will Over Desire vs. Desire Over Will.** I've shared this story in a couple of different settings with some of you, so you may be familiar with it, but I got a call from my oldest daughter a number of years ago. She was very distraught. She had just had a really, really sour experience and she began to relay it to me. She had a friend who was dating a guy and he had a friend, and everybody liked this guy. He was real outgoing, he was doing well in his business and so forth, so they thought this would be a great time for Kate to meet this guy. And so they had a little dinner party, had a bunch of people over. The whole deal was to get Kate and this guy to meet each other. And so they met, and they're talking, and this guy's sharing about himself, and he's talking about how he's working on graduate school, doing internships. He really believes he needs to be a good provider as a man. He's thinking about that. And how he grew up in a really good solid family and he wants to have kids, and he wants to coach little league, and he wants to love his wife and really marry a wholesome girl. And he kind of tells her all of that, and then as they keep talking as the evening rolls on, he leans over and he tries to kiss her. And she went "Whoa, whoa, whoa! We just met." Like what's this about. She said, "Are you trying to date me or something? Is that what's going on here?" And he said, "Oh no, no, no. That's not where I'm at in life. Right now I'm working on my career and I'm

working on my school. You know I would love – I mean you’re really hot. I would love to hook up with you if that’s okay with you, but like don’t ask me to ask you to dinner.” And of course, that was the end of that conversation and that relationship, but she called me and she said, “Dad, this is just crazy. Like this guy’s talking about what he wants and with the way he talks about it he wants to marry a virgin. But he’s not acting like that right now, so this just makes me so angry because I think he’s going to screw around with a lot of people and mess up a lot of people emotionally, and then he’s going to go and he’s going to get the wholesome girl and he’s going to marry her and he’s going to have the wonderful life that he dreamed. And all of the consequences of his behavior will just kind of disappear in the background.” And I said, “Oh Kate, you don’t understand. That’s what he thinks he’s going to do. But that’s not going to happen. He’s the guy that will be in my office 20 years from now whose wife just kicked him out of the house after his third affair, because he can’t control his desires. He thought at some point in time he would just be able to shut it off, but he obviously doesn’t care about people because he’s telling you that he wants a woman like you, but not now so let me ruin you right now so you’re not going to be the one for me in the future.” Somebody doesn’t just recover from that kind of behavior. That becomes a pattern of their lives, and we understand that. We understand how hard it is if today you are choosing self-destructive behavior to all of a sudden tomorrow turn the switch. Every one of you young men who got addicted to dipping snuff at some point in your life and then decided to quit, you know that. Because you’ve been through that pain, right? You know what it’s like. The easiest day for you to have quit dipping snuff was the day before you dipped it the first time. And guess what, tobacco is a minor deal. It’s just going to cut your life short. A major deal is how you treat people and what’s going on inside of you that gives you the freedom to let your desires, “What I want in the moment,” run my life. Self-control is a big one. I’m either working on developing more self-control where my desires are under the control of my will and what’s best, or I’m letting them rule me.

Perseverance is the quality of not quitting. It’s either sticking or bailing out. **Perseverance: Sticking vs. Bailing.** Am I the kind of person who hangs in there with my commitments and works with people? One of the qualities that the scripture talks about that’s a really positive quality is the quality of being a peacemaker. A peacemaker is the one that recognizes that God is present in every situation and he has a solution. And so if I can just keep my head and enter into the conflicts of my life as a peacemaker to try to bring God’s ideas and God’s plan to play in that, then we can make something good out of something hard or harsh. That’s one of the characteristics of someone who perseveres. They learn to be a peacemaker. They learn to bring God’s perspective and God’s ways into every situation.

Which leads us to godliness. Godliness is having a sense of God's presence. So in every situation I'm constantly aware that God is here, that God has a plan, that God is working, and I think about that. That becomes part of who I am. So I'm constantly aware of God. It's not my way in every situation, it's God's way. And I'm growing in the knowledge of him. **Godliness: God's Way vs. My Way.** A lot of us when we went through Soul Revolution and did our 60/60 experiment, where for 60 days every 60 minutes our alarms went off and we stopped and said God what are you doing here. You know what that was for? That was to help us grow in this characteristic of godliness; God's presence in our lives.

The next characteristic Peter gives us is brotherly kindness. That's just liking people. That's just having a general enjoyment and care for people. It's love toward people rather than apathy toward people. **Brotherly Kindness: Love vs. Apathy Toward People.** Are you growing in the quality of appreciating that other people have been created in the image of God and are worthy of a little bit of your time, a little bit of your interest, and a little bit of your listening ear. One of the greatest things that could ever happen to you guys in your 20's is to get out of your urban tribe and build some alliances with people that are outside that little group of friends who kind of do life together. As happy and healthy as that may be, the down side is whenever you're in a system where everybody's had only the same experiences you don't get the benefit of a broader world. That's why at Hill Country Bible Church we'll always be a multi-generational church where we've got old people and young people in the same room. And the reason why that's critical is because we need each other. We grow by getting outside of the bubble and getting the perspective of other people in our lives. And one of the ways you can do that is take the word "awkward" out of your vocabulary. Every time you start to lean into a relationship or an experience and you want to say the words, "I don't think I can do that because that would be 'awkward,'" just get rid of that because of your growth will take place when you cross pollinate with people that make you feel a little uncomfortable at first. But then you listen, you care about them, care about their perspective, and all of a sudden you find out that they've got something to offer you and it's really good. That's why in the church of Jesus Christ we're commanded to love one another, to love each other because when we do that we grow and we learn from each other.

The final one is love. In the Bible the word love, agape, is not just about the emotions. It's actually about the will. It's choosing. When I choose what's best for you over what's convenient for me I'm demonstrating love. **Love: Choosing Them vs. Me.** I've got to tell you folks, that's not my wiring. In fact, none of

these are my wiring. That's why I've got to grow in them, right? That's why we have to grow in them. So what are you doing to grow?

So let me wrap this up. He goes on to say in verse 8, he says:

"For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure,"

So these qualities are beginning to form in you and you're increasing in them. He says:

"They will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Remember that Jesus who gave us these very great and precious promises so that we can participate in the divine nature, if you're not growing you're not going to be participating. In other words, your life is going to be ineffective. It's not going to make much of a difference. Unproductive it's not going to produce much fruit. And then he goes on with an even stronger warning in verse 9. He says:

"But if anyone does not have them he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins."

I love the colorful language that he uses here. Nearsighted. It means when you're looking at your life you can only see the immediate. You don't realize the long-term ramifications of the decisions you're making today. You're only looking at the immediate, and when you only look at the immediate, he says you're blind. You're missing the big picture and you've forgotten that Jesus Christ thinks you are valuable. He loved you enough to come to earth to give his life to save you from your past sin so that you could live a present experience that's awesome. That's filled with his Spirit and his love that makes a good, positive difference in the world, and people that aren't growing and have chosen not to grow, like they're nearsighted.

And so like here's the warning, and it's a big warning for us to take into consideration. **Warning: A Decision to Coast is a Decision to Crash.** A decision to coast is a decision to crash. Now I think we think sometimes that coasting is actually living. It's kind of like the country song, you know falling feels like flying for a little while . . . for a little while. Every jet pilot knows that when you turn the engines off on that big 737 that it begins to descend and it's going to crash. Now the crashing could come in two ways. It may be a bumpy landing in a cornfield, miles from the destination, or it may be a total disaster and loss of life. Total disaster. The problem is you don't know. We don't know.

When you decide in your teens, in your 20's, in your 30's and your 40's and your 50's that like, “You know I'm just going to let things happen and I'm not going to personally engage. I'm not going to grow.” You're on the way down. Now you may land in a way that doesn't look so bad. I mean, it's bumpy, but it's a long way away from where you could have been. What God had for you. Or you may completely destroy your life, and the scary part to me is like just you just don't know. When you start to coast you just don't know.

So the challenge for us today is to ask and answer the question: Am I taking responsibility for now? Am I becoming the person that God created and saved me to be? Not so much worried about what everybody else in the world is doing. If I start working on me, everything changes. How do I become the ideal mate, the person that I want to be with? If I start changing, you'll be amazed at how your life will start changing.

Now Peter ends this passage by reminding us that at the end of the day all of this is made possible because God loved us in Jesus Christ, and sent Jesus into the world to die to pay for our sins to actually give us this new life, and so it's appropriate that as we finish the service that we pause and remember Jesus. And there's no greater way to remember Jesus than by the very meal that he instituted to remind us of himself.

In just a moment we're going to take communion, so I'm going to dismiss the servers to go ahead and go prepare the communion. And while they're going to prepare the communion I just want to remind you that when you hold that piece of bread in your hand, that bread reflects or represents the body of Jesus that was given on our behalf. When you hold that cup, that cup reflects the blood of Jesus. The blood of a new covenant that was spilled for us so that we could have life. Now frequently at Hill Country Bible Church we hold the communion after it's served and we take it all together at the end, but we're not going to do this today. Today this is a very personal moment, so we're going to pass out the communion and we're going to let you take the communion yourself as you feel lead. You may have a loved one beside you or friend, spouse that you just want to spend some time praying together, really committing yourself that based on what Jesus has done for you that you're going to make every effort to begin to live out that life and to grow. And so we're going to have a special time for you guys to do that while we're singing some worship.

And so I'm going to ask the ushers to make their way to the front and they're going to begin to serve you. Let me pray for our communion. Father in heaven, just remind us again of what Jesus has done on our behalf so that we might be people that understand that we are precious in your sight, but this time is

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Tim Hawks, HCBC Lead Pastor
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valuable. That today, supernatural things can happen in us, and as we remember Jesus may we be overwhelmed with gratitude that motivates us to love and live in his presence. We pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

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