

Dynamic or Dull Spiritual Development

by Alan Martin

This sermon emphasizes the potential for believers to grow in Christ and the consequences of failing to do so. It highlights the need to progress in faith, warning against becoming dull, unproductive, and unfruitful. The message stresses the availability of God's grace and the importance of diligently adding virtues like knowledge, self-control, godliness, kindness, and love to avoid ineffectiveness.

Scripture: Hebrews 6:1, 2 Peter 1:3, Matthew 25:14, James 1:6, Romans 15:13

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Diligence in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

For some time now we've been talking about how much potential there is for the believer to grow in Christ. Tremendous potential to develop your spiritual life. But to be fair to the Bible, not only is there tremendous potential for growth and glory and praise and honor to God in your Christian life, there's also potential consequences for failure to grow.

And the biblical writers were honest about this. And it's in fact the fact that God has made so much of his grace available, it's constantly available, that to fail to develop and grow in the Lord is actually worse than to not even know about it. If it weren't available it wouldn't nearly be as severe.

But when his sons and daughters fail to develop and they're not fruitful, this dishonors the Heavenly Father. And it's a bad reflection upon him. And all the biblical writers knew this and yet men kind of get their grubby hands in it because of their theologies and they try to explain how it all works together and I'm not going there.

I agree with Solomon, the more the words the less the meaning. It was obviously a serious concern on all the apostles and all the biblical writers that there were dangers for being unfruitful and unproductive in your spiritual life. We should just take it for face value for what we find in the scriptures.

Let's look with me in Hebrews chapter 6. I'm not going to dwell on the negative side of this entirely this morning, but we need to know that it's there in the scriptures. He's warning for us. So from verse 1 chapter 6, therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and let us press on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and the faith toward God of teaching about washings and laying on of hands and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

And this we will do if God permits. For in the case of those once having been enlightened and having tasted of the heavenly gift and having become partakers of the Holy Spirit and having tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they have fallen away, it's impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify the Son of God to themselves all over again and put him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled receives a blessing of God.

But take heed of this. But if it yields thorns and thistles after having received the rain that falls on it, it's unfit and it's close to being cursed, and in the end it'll be burned. And then he goes on, the writer of Hebrews goes on in verse 9, but we are convinced about you, beloved, of things that are better, that belong to salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

So see, he has a concern. He's not saying that the believers he's writing to are in this state, but he's concerned that none of them ever come to be in that state. And that's why, that's how we need to look at these things.

He goes on saying, verse 10, God is not unrighteous, so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward his name, in having ministered and continuing to minister to the saints. And then here's his point. God knows what you've done.

He remembers your work and so far how you've served it. And he says, and we desire that each of you show this same diligence so as to realize the full assurance all the way to the end. There's something that is in my heart that I feel as a pastor, as someone who desires to be faithful to the word of God, that you and I are not there, we're in the safest ground until we have come to this place of full assurance, a full assurance of hope.

And that full assurance of hope looks like an abounding spiritual life, fullness of joy, a deep and abiding sense of peace that guards our heart and mind, a life where things go well with us. The joy of the Lord is our strength. The peace of Christ is guarding our heart and mind.

We're being led by the spirit and we're not living according to the flesh. We're not filling those desires, but Christ in us is producing much fruit, the fruit of the spirit, the fruit of a good testimony in the lives of those that are in our lives, whether we're in our home, on the job, in our church family. There is an abounding of grace that is very evident and visible to those who are watching our lives.

Because the danger here of not having this full assurance is the next verse. I want to read the two together now again. We desire that each of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not become dull.

That's the danger. It's possible to become dull in your spiritual life. Dull, unproductive, and unproofful.

And if you'll understand the New Testament, and it says it in various ways, but dullness is not blessed by God. Fruitlessness is not blessed by God. It is the responsibility of the believer to grow up in our salvation,

to become strong in the Lord.

It is not full honesty to simply say, well, I fail because I'm weak. We're not supposed to live in our weakness. We are supposed to become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, so that the testimony we have is, though we are just a common earthen vessel, the excellency of the power that sustains us is of God.

And they see the power of God manifested in very wholesome, gracious speech, very spirit-guided, meek, and controlled responses to difficulty. We don't act out. We don't fall apart.

We don't freak out. We don't lose our cool. We don't become depressed because Christ Jesus in us, in every situation, His power is made perfect in our weakness.

That's the life that the Lord wants, and that's the testimony He deserves because He has made that much grace available to us. And if we become dull, then like the writer of Hebrews says, we may not inherit all the promises that are there for us. All of us should remember that just because God has promised something to someone, that does not guarantee they will inherit what He promised.

He promised the promised land to the nation He saved from Egypt, to the people of Egypt. And shortly after they were led forth out of Egypt, Moses took a census, and there were 603,550 men that were at least 20 years of age or more. And so, if you count one lady and one child to that, you're having a million and a half people easily, a large group that were saved out of the land of Egypt.

But out of those 603,550 men, only two entered the promised land that God had promised them all. Because they didn't become dull. They mixed what they heard with faith.

And God was pleased with them because they were of a different spirit than the other people who didn't believe. And the writer of Hebrews simply uses that analogy. He uses that generation.

He uses the bad example of the unbelieving and disobedient generation as contrast to the two men who did inherit the promise because Joshua and Caleb, that they mixed with what they heard with faith. And he just simply gives the believers he's writing to the warning, don't become dull. It's possible.

The difficulties of this life can take their toll on us. And we can stop pressing into the Lord and being filled with joy and being filled with peace and radiate the life of Christ to those around us. Instead, we can become cynical, pessimistic, doubtful, and thinking we're being honest.

We're just going to be real. Life is hard. The way of the Lord is not easy.

We struggle and we fail constantly. And we confuse that poor testimony with humility. That's not humility.

That's disobedience. To fail despite the fact that the Holy Spirit lives in us and can guide us every step of the way is not humility. It's unbelief and inconsistency.

In a double-minded man, the Scripture says, he who doubts like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind, that kind of lifestyle, back and forth, unstable, the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. And James says this, that kind of man should not think he's going to receive anything from the Lord. So let me just say, if we're unstable and we're double-minded and we do bad when times are hard and we do good when times are easy, should we think we're going to receive heaven from the Lord? You're unstable in this life, but you're still going to receive heaven from the Lord? No.

Heaven is the reward for those who overcome the world by faith. All of this, all the promises in Revelation, all the description of the celestial city, the new Jerusalem, access to the tree of life, the temple in the midst of the city where there's no night, no sorrow, no pain, no mourning. The old order of things has passed away.

All things become new. It says, he who overcomes will inherit all this. Let me suggest to us one of the first things we need to overcome as a believer is dullness, unfruitfulness, double-mindedness, because the scripture does not guarantee the promises of God to people who are double-minded, dull in spirit, do not develop, and who are unfruitful.

That's just an honest look at the letters of the New Testament. Paul said this, and I love this, his heart was to present every believer that he ministered to complete and perfect in Christ. That was his heart.

That's why we read last week, the message last week was about the Lord gave apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastor teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all reach the unity of the faith into the full stature of the Son of God, becoming mature, no longer like infants blown to and fro by every wind of doctrine, instead growing up into all things into Christ. Stable, mature, fruitful believers abounding in grace. And this was so much his heart, if you want to turn with me, it was his prayer for the Ephesians.

I love the book of Ephesians or the letter to the church of Ephesus for this reason. Here in chapter 1, I'm going to start with verse 15, Ephesians 1. For this reason, I too, having heard of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the full knowledge of Him, so that you will have these things, there's three things he's going to mention, and these three things that will take place when the eyes of your heart are enlightened. If God is going to open the eyes of your heart to see the possibility that He has for you, this is what Paul was wanting them to see.

He wanted them to see these three things, to see what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power towards us who believe, and that power is actually like the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. So, three things that Paul wanted us to see. He wanted the eyes of our heart enlightened, so we would, first of all, we'd know the hope to which we, He had called us.

And I want to talk about that hope, because Paul said in his letter to Rome, now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. And I tell you what, I don't want a single member of this church to be a down-on-the-mouth, pessimistic, cynical believer. And I don't want you to lack hope for yourself or for other people, because it's one thing, you cannot have hope in God without having hope for others.

And if you just write other people off because they have problems in their life, you need to be filled with hope. You need to be filled with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that you can look at someone who you think is the worst case scenario, and realize God could grant that person repentance and bring them to life. You can abound in that kind of hope.

Like Abraham, in hope against hope, Abraham believed and so became the father of many nations, just as the scripture said, so shall your offspring be. Without weakening in faith, he faced the fact that his own

body was as good as dead, being about 100 years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb, yet he did not waver through unbelief in regards to the promise of God, but was strengthened by faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded God had power to do what he has promised. And let me tell you something, none of us here who write other people off are trusting in God's power.

I was talking to one of the brothers here, he knows who I'm talking to, I'm not trying to pick on him, but he was talking about praying for someone and saying at the same time, I don't want to come within 100 miles of them. I said, well, your prayers must not be very powerful. You must not really be expecting God's going to change them.

And listen, he's not alone in that. Do you believe in God's power, ability to change people? Then where are you not to hope for them, to be filled with hope for them? Because you know what, when we're put out with those people who irritate us, or we think they should be further along, you know what we give off? We give off a hopelessness. We give off this air that we're not hoping for them.

But when we are filled with the hope of God and hoping in the power of God for other people, we are looking for the opportunities to share with them the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because we realize it could be this day, it could be this time that God will grant them repentance and they will come to their senses and escape the trap of the devil who's taken them captive to do his will. And we're looking forward to rejoice with the angels.

And our hope, our hope of God is steadfast because we know God is long suffering. He doesn't want anyone to perish. He's left room for everyone to come to repentance.

And even if we're already serving the Lord now, and that person we're trying to have hope for, or seeking hope for, is stubborn, stubborn, stubborn. We remember the parable of the vineyard worker, don't we? Not everyone went to work at first, did they? Remember the owner of the vineyard? He went up to hire workers for the vineyard, and he hired some right at the beginning of the day. I'll pay you a denarius.

Went back mid-morning, hired some more. Worked for me, I'll pay you what's fair. Went back at noon, worked for me, I'll pay you what's fair.

Middle afternoon, worked for me, I'll pay you what's fair. Late in the day, one hour left, some guys work for me, I'll pay you what's fair. End of the day, has his manager line everybody up, the guys who work hired last first.

He gives them the same thing he promised the guys who worked all day long, a denarius. Well, the guys at the end of the line, you know, the guys that worked all day long, they're getting their pay last. They're expecting more because they're thinking, man, this guy's good, he's giving those guys that.

What are we going to get? When they got engaged, they got a denarius. They got the same pay that the guys who only worked an hour, and they grumbled in their hearts. And they said to the owner, hey bud, you've made those guys equal with us who had to work all day long to eat.

And he said to them, men, friends, didn't I promise that I'd pay you denarius for a day's work? Yeah. Then are you going to be mad at me or call me evil for being generous? Isn't it my money to do with what I want? If I choose to be kind to these, here's the point of the parable for me, and it's been, it's burned this in my heart. I better not be one to complain if God saves that stubborn guy who has lived that way for years at the very last minute and makes him equal with me, takes him to heaven with me, forgives all of his sins

with me.

Because that's all I've received from the Lord is mercy. The Lord doesn't give me what I deserve. He's given me mercy.

And I want to rejoice that he gives anyone mercy. That's what he's looking for. And this is the kind of hope we need to have.

And it's not just a hope for the life to come. This verse came to me when I was thinking about hope. Paul said, if only for this life we have hope, we are of all men, most miserable.

So he was saying that we have a hope beyond this life, but we do have a hope for this life. Because he said, if only for this life we have hope. There is hope for this life.

You know what that hope for this life is? Fullness of joy. A beautiful depth of peace that we can live in peaceful dwelling places and in places where our life is abundant. Jesus said, I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.

These things I have spoken unto you that my joy may be in you and your joy will be full. That's hope for this life and the life to come. In my mind, I am in a win-win situation.

My father filters everything that I encounter. Whatever difficulty he allows, he filters it so that no temptation takes me. But such is common to man, he doesn't even allow me to be tempted above what I'm able.

He filters and he provides a way of escape. So he filters how difficult it is. He works everything together for good, whether it's hard or easy.

And he has said that whatever difficulty we face in this life is only down here and it's only temporary and it's not even worth comparing to the future glory that's going to be revealed. So I'm in a win-win situation. How can I ever be down? How can I ever complain? Whatever difficulty it is, my father is going to work together for good.

Hope should abound in me. I should never murmur or complain. In everything, I can give thanks because God is filling me with hope.

And I approach, I wake up in the day and hope for the good. What's going to happen today? What are we going to see together today, Lord? I live with that hope. That is what the New Testament says the believer should live.

That you would know the hope you've been called, not just for this life. Even if this life is a little bit more difficult for you, it's only temporary. And God will work in the difficulty for your good and maybe even good for others through your perseverance and compared to what glory there is for all of us.

Because by the way, some of us are facing some medical difficulties. Some of us have cancer. Some of us have blood issues.

Some of us have diabetes. All of these things. All of us live in these bodies and all of us have this in common.

I know some of you don't feel it as much as the rest of us, but we are wasting away outwardly. That's what's happening. But that's all right.

Who wants to live in this tent forever? We're just camping out. That's all we're doing. No tent was ever... I mean, it's a pretty good tent.

How many car engines never shut off for 96 years? You think a car engine could run 70 years and never turned off? We are fearfully and wonderfully made. But these bodies wear out. Why should that disturb any of us? You know what? This is honestly... I've said this.

This is not the first time I'm saying it. I want to be careful. I want to be sensitive.

It's difficult. The wearing out process is not necessarily easy. One of our dear church members, she's homebound.

She told me the golden years have not been too golden for her. I knew what she meant. She was in the hospital when I was talking to her.

But listen, this is... You know, men and women used to die of old age. They don't do that anymore. They die of cancer.

They die of a heart attack. They die of a stroke. They die of this or that.

Now they're just told why you did it. In the past, they couldn't be that specific. And it just seems like it has freaked the world out to know why these bodies wear out.

Why? Why have we let that happen to us? All of us as believers should abound in hope. We have a hope beyond the wearing out of this body, don't we? We know that if the body we live in is destroyed, we have a body made in heaven eternal. That's how you abounded hope in this life and live like it's a win-win situation.

And that's what Paul's saying for Ephesians, that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened. We would know this. We would know the hope to which we've been called.

There's hope for broken marriages. There's hope for people dealing with addictions. There are hope for those who have relational issues.

There's hope you can become stable. Your speech can be purified. Your thoughts can be purified.

There is hope for fullness of joy. You can experience a greater quality of life in Christ in this life. And just keep growing.

Don't become dull. Keep growing. Don't become dull.

Continuing to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Grow in the grace of God. Hope is the first thing.

Second thing was the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. You know, the scripture says that God has chosen the poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in, come on, you quote that, rich in what? Faith. God has chosen the poor of the eyes of the world to be rich in faith.

But you know, a lot of us would like to be rich in mammon, Jesus said. Mammon, worldly goods. Isn't it the rich? Isn't it hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven? So why do we want to make it hard? God, make it hard for us to go to heaven.

Bless us with worldly riches. Let us have bank accounts. We never have to worry about where, you know, the check is going to clear.

Why do we need the eyes of our heart enlightened to see the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints? You know why? Because these are spiritual. Riches. God has blessed us in the heavenly realm with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Fullness of joy. Dynamic peace. Inner tranquility.

And quietness of spirit. So that you can abound in hope. So that every day life is good because spiritually you so enjoy the Lord being with you.

You so enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit. But you don't need money. But you don't need things.

Man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possession. And when you see with the eyes of your heart that God has made every spiritual blessing available to you and I in Christ, you live like the king's son you are. You are rich.

You are rich. You are rich. But not all of us live that way.

You just don't fully understand. Paul knew even these believers needed help seeing how rich they are. Remember, they're spiritual.

And the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit. They are foolishness to him. But we've not received the Spirit of the world.

But we've received the Spirit from God so that we might understand all the things that God has already given us. He's given us every spiritual blessing in Christ. In other words, whenever you need wisdom, God's wisdom is there for you.

Whenever you need encouragement, God's encouragement is there for you. Wherever you need help and support, God's help and support is there for you. Wherever you need comfort, God's comfort is there for you.

Your bank account in Christ is full. God called all of His fullness to dwell in Christ. And when your eyes see that, when you see that you have all the spiritual riches that are already available to you and here in this life to sustain your journey and in the life that is promised us where there'll be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more misery, no more medication, no more doctor's appointments, no more dentists, no more wheelchairs, no more walkers, no more dialysis, no more chemo, no more surgeries.

That's just this life stuck. That's all it is. That's this life stuck.

We are rich already in Christ Jesus. Already. We don't need life handed to us on a silver platter down here to enjoy life of Jesus Christ every single day.

But we need the eyes of our hearts enlightened to know that. And then the third thing. Okay, the third thing.

The last thing. What is the surpassing greatness of His power towards us? See, I'm convinced of this from my experience that all of us here already fully know how weak we are. Got that? You amen that? You've already proven that.

I don't need to know it. I'm tired of you knowing that. When are we going to wake up to how much power is available for us? That's where we're lacking right there.

That's where we need the eyes of our heart enlightened. I don't need to tell you how depraved you are. You got that.

You know that if it depended upon you, no good thing would happen. You know that you don't have strength and enough in yourself to walk in the way that God wants. You know that.

You've got that. But when are we going to learn that wherever sin abounded, grace super abounded. And wherever there is weakness, God's power, His grace is made perfect in weakness.

What kind of power are we talking about? Power to control your tongue so that you never even allow an unwholesome word come out of your mouth. Everything you say is carefully weighed so that it builds up others according to their needs and administers grace to those who hear. You do power to be able to do everything without murmuring and complaining so that you can be a blameless and pure child of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation in whom you shine as stars in the midst of the universe holding forth the word of life.

Power to be able to have a sound mind. Power sufficient to take every thought captive. No, we can't stop Satan and our own humanity from having thoughts that are troubling us.

But there is power available to arrest the thoughts that should be taken captive and follow the thoughts that are from God. Being led by the Spirit into all truth. And some of us have not understood that you can be murmuring and complaining while you're speaking the truth.

You're telling someone how bad your day was. You're being truthful. You're just sinning while you're doing it.

Do you understand? Sometimes you look quiet and you look at me like, but that's natural. See, that's the problem. If that's the way you think, that everybody does it and this is just natural, you need the eyes of your heart.

You need to know what is the surpassing greatness of the power that's available. Because you and your little natural self is not what God sees. God has seen the wealth of power he's made available to every single one of us.

And it's tailor-made and it's specific so that every one of us has exactly what we need. As a matter of fact, we have more than we need. Listen to this Paul's statement to the church of Corinth, and God is able to make all grace abound to you so that all times having all sufficiency, you may abound unto every good work.

All grace, all the time, all sufficient for every good work. That's how much grace he's made of it. But we need revelation and understanding to see that.

So we will stop living our lives in the excuse, the reason I'm doing poorly is because I'm so weak and thinking that that is being honest. That's not genuine honesty. It might come close to it, but it falls short of real honesty.

This would be real honesty. Despite the fact that my heavenly father is a filter and he never lets me be tempted above what I'm able. And despite the fact that he's given me every single spiritual blessing in Christ.

Despite the fact that he's provided every single thing I need for life and godliness to the knowledge of heaven. Despite that wherever sin abounded, he's made grace to super abound. Despite that he, that Jesus Christ himself lives right inside of me and the Holy Spirit to guide me and everything.

Despite that, I'm just not doing very well. That might be honest, but that's how God sees it. God already knows our weaknesses and he has abundantly provided everything we need to live a godly life.

And you know what? He deserves someone actually walking in that. He does not deserve a people whose life contradict that. You understand what I'm saying by that? You think you're being honest and he sees it as you're robbing him of the opportunity to show himself powerful to the world out there.

By so transforming your life that people just wonder how in the world can you live the way you live? How can you always be so full of hope? How come you never, never, I've never heard you murmur or complain. Now some of us, they could say that of us because they know us. But it could be, they could say this, I don't understand it.

You never complain. Wouldn't that be sweet? Man, ever since whatever, I don't know what happened to you, but something has happened to you because you never, you never complain. That's called if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things pass away and all things become, that's what that's called. Where people look at us and they say, something has happened to you. How do you live this way? That's what Paul is praying for these Ephesians.

And that's what's potential for us. The flip side of that potential is how does God feel if despite the fact that he's pouring, pouring out spiritual blessings upon us, that we still in spite of that become dull and unproductive and unfruitful. Remember the passage we read in Hebrews chapter six, land that drinks in the rain, often falling upon it receives the blessing of God for those, it's till land, but land that receives the same amount of rain, but produces only thorns and thistles.

What's that land in danger of? Being cursed. Remember the servant who only was given one talent and he buried his talent and did nothing else with it. What did the master call him in the end? Wicked, lazy servant.

So there's, we need to, we need to come to grips with that God's glory, his goodness and the riches that are available to us also make us accountable. It's not going to be his fault if we become dull and unproductive. Do you remember this passage in first Peter? If you want to read it with me, not first Peter, second Peter chapter one, it's the first chapter of second Peter actually.

I'll read it for us because it just, it just sums up and we'll close the message today with this. I'm just going to read right from the first of the chapter, second Peter chapter one, verse one, Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ to those who receive the same kind of faith as ours by the righteousness of our God and savior, Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the full knowledge of God.

That's what I designed. I believe in multiplication. I believe that grace can be multiplied to us.

You can have way more grace and peace than you have now. God can multiply it to you. That it, that it becomes so sweet, that so evident in you and through you and to you to the lives of those around you.

Seeing that his divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to it has granted it already through the full knowledge of him and called us by his own glory and excellence. For by these, he has granted to us his precious and magnificent promises so that by them he may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And now for this reason, because he's made every grace available to us, we can participate in the divine nature, not just live by our own corrupt nature.

We get to participate in his divine nature. Knowing that, that allows us to escape the corruption that's in the world. So I don't have to be dragged down by the corruption of the world.

You know why? I'm partaking of the divine nature. Christ lives in me. The Holy Spirit is in me and he makes all grace to avail to be at all times.

And that's how I want to live. So for this very reason, it says applying diligence. See that diligence is the opposite of dullness, isn't it? So God has promised all these.

He's made us partakers of the divine nature. And the true response, when the eyes of our heart has seen it, is to give all diligence to add to our faith virtue, virtue knowledge, knowledge, self-control, self-control, godliness, godliness, brotherly kindness, brotherly kindness, love. And he says, if these qualities are in you in increasing amounts, you're prospering in them.

You're prospering in virtue, knowledge, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. You're just prospering in them. They will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive.

There it is again. It's possible. It would not be in the scriptures if it were not possible.

A believer can become ineffective and unproductive. This is why we need to give all diligence to add virtue, knowledge, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. They need to be abounding in us.

They'll keep us from being ineffective and unproductive in our knowledge of God. And then he says, but whoever does not have these things abounding. In other words, to the dull person, to the person who's not advancing and abounding.

It says that if any man has not these things, he is nearsighted and blind. He's not seeing. That doesn't mean there's not life.

He has a problem with his vision. He's not seeing despite the fact that it's there. And I can honestly, I'll tell you, I'm looking out of my congregation and I love you.

And some of you, some of you may be right here. We're looking me with your natural eyes and you don't see it. You don't see the availability of this life.

You don't see the abundance. You want to look at the natural. You don't want to believe it's possible because that puts you on, that puts you on notice that if you're not experiencing that, something's wrong with you.

You can comfort yourself by saying, it's just common. I don't know anybody who lives this way. I wouldn't suggest doing that.

That's just lack of vision. And you know what, you know what nearsighted and blind looks like to me? You want to sound like me, brother Rudy? It sounds like a person, like the people that Isaiah was sent to. Remember the people that Isaiah was sent to preach to? Go and tell this people.

Be ever seeing and never perceiving, ever hearing and never understanding. A dull person who, despite the fact that all that God has done is not progressing and he's become listless and ineffective, living in his weakness, inconsistent, unstable, unproductive, unfruitful. It's like a man with eyes that he can't see and ears that he can't hear.

It reminds me of what Jesus said. Be very careful how you hear. Whoever has will be given more and he will have an abundance.

But whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has, shall be taken from him. And I don't want that to happen to a single person here. But the reality of it is, it is your decision and my decision that determines that.

God has made every grace available to you. The God of hope will fill you with all joy and peace and believing so that you can abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. The eyes of your heart can be enlightened and you can know the riches of the glorious inheritance in the saints.

And you can realize that every spiritual blessing in Christ is already yours. Every spiritual blessing in Christ is already yours. And then you can see how incredibly great his power is.

Power more than necessary to perfect every area of weakness in your own life. And enable you to live exactly the way the scripture says to live. Strong, stable, fruitful, productive, dynamic, not dull.

Dynamic, not dull. Okay.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ojShVQ7yQ5c.mp4>

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