

Be Sure • 2 Peter 1:5-11

INTRODUCTION • Read vs.

Agape Elixir

1. After several yrs of Research & Testing, we are now ready to share with you, the people of CCO, **Agape Elixir**.
2. This amazing formulation is a distillation of 27 secret ingredients that will make you more like Jesus.
3. Taken each night at bedtime, *Agape Elixir* works while you sleep to produce the Fruit of the Spirit & the Virtues of Christ.
4. You awake each morning with the **renewed mind of Christ**.
5. **Faith, Hope, & Love** will overflow you throughout the day.
  - a. A few did report their love **weakened** a bit in late afternoon traffic.
  - b. But not to worry, we've also got **mini-shots** you can keep with you for a quick boost.
6. The patented technology that makes *Agape Elixir* means an **end** to the *painful & long* process of spiritual growth Christians have had to endure since the days of the Apostles.
7. Now spiritual maturity can be achieved effortlessly, in just 4 weeks with *Agape Elixir*.
8. Pick up a bottle at the Bookstore.

The Instant & Easy

1. The innovations of modern technology have produced dozens of products that make what **used** to be difficult & time-consuming chores, a breeze.
  - a. Washing machines & driers.
  - b. Microwave ovens & dishwashers
  - c. Vacuum cleaners
  - d. Computers & printers
2. These appliances have **sped up & eased** what used to be lengthy & hard tasks.
3. A wide range of medicines speed recovery from diseases that usually meant death.
4. The result of all this is that **many** people have come to expect **whatever** they desire could & **should** arrive quickly & without effort on their part.
5. That mentality can infect us as followers of Jesus.
6. We must be on guard against the idea that spiritual maturity can be **microwaved**
  - a. **Whipped up** in a flash,
  - b. **Distilled** to some elixir or **popped** in a pill we take orally & wake up the next day just like Jesus.
7. There is no, "7 Easy Steps to Godliness."
  - a. No book you can read, seminar to attend, DVD to watch
  - b. That will render you a saint.
8. You & I grow in Christ the same way Peter & Paul did.
  - a. The same way Ambrose & Patrick did.
  - b. By following Jesus, walking in the Spirit DAILY.
9. What Peter says in these vs. is that if we're **really** following Jesus, there **WILL BE PROGRESS**.
10. We **will** become more like Him.

Vs. 5-7

1. As we pick it up at v. 5, we need to connect to what we saw 2 weeks ago where we ended with v. 4.
2. God's given us exceedingly great & precious promises, that by them we may be partakers of the divine nature.
3. Next, Peter describes some of what that nature looks like . . .
- <sup>5</sup> But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,
- <sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, <sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.
4. Being born again isn't the **end** of the Spirit's work in us; it's the beginning.
5. He leads us **TO** faith in Christ so He can then lead us **IN** faith in Him.
6. Built into the code of your *physical* DNA is an amazing design for growth.
  - a. When you were a child, all that was needed to **maximize** that growth was good food,

exercise & rest.

b. If a child ***fails to get*** healthy food & exercise, his/her growth is stunted.

7. It's the same in our ***spiritual*** lives.

a. God's designed our ***spiritual*** DNA the same was as our cellular DNA – for growth.

b. That growth happens as we apply ourselves to a healthy spiritual diet & exercise.

8. That's why Peter says we're to give all diligence, make every effort toward, adding the marks of spiritual maturity.

9. He lists 7 of them.

a. The NT has several passages listing the virtues & traits that ought to reside in a believer.

b. These things ***aren't a legalistic code*** we're to walk lock-step into.

c. They're a ***catalog of characteristics*** we see in Jesus; ***Desires*** of a ***transformed life***.

10. Peter links each trait by the word "add."

a. But we're not to understand these things as ***sequential***.

b. Virtue isn't a prerequisite for knowledge; not does self-control have to come before perseverance.

c. The word "add" means to ***lavishly include something***.

d. Like at a buffet line you might pile up on you plate a huge mound of mashed potatoes.

11. While each of these characteristics could be their own sermon, we'll just skim them today.

add to your faith virtue,

12. Virtue means ***moral excellence***.

a. This was one of the favorite words of the Greek philosophers.

b. Something was excellent when it ***perfectly fulfilled its purpose***.

13. We were created to glorify God.

a. But God's ***intent*** in that is not that we'd be some mindless chorus droning an endless chant of praise. "Glory to God in the highest. All laud His holy name. Blah. blah, blah . . ."

b. The glory we're created to bring Him comes from a profoundly deep & intimate connection to Him.

c. He wants us to ***KNOW*** Him

1) Like the aged sailor knows the sea.

2) Like the artist knows his paint, pallet & brush > notch in finger & thumb.

3) Like the musician knows her violin & bow > Cheek & violin perfect match; muscles of arm.

4) Like 2 friends of many yrs who know each other so well, can complete each other's sentences.

d. That's how God wants us to know Him. And that knowledge has filled is with such peace & purpose, not only our words glorify God, our living does as well.

14. The Westminster Catechism captures it well when it says the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

15. When Peter says we're to lavishly pile on virtue, he means we're to set ourselves to go ***ALL OUT*** in our pursuit of God.

a. There's to be no ***desire*** or ***affection*** we don't invite Him into.

b. No ***dream*** or ***plan*** He doesn't become master of.

to virtue knowledge,

16. This is the ***practical application*** of what we learn about God ***to daily life***.

17. The person who's Christianity is limited to Sunday mornings is no real follower of Jesus.

18. The Book of Proverbs is the ***blueprint for a successful life***.

a. At the core of Proverbs is the oft-repeated starting point that the ***beginning of wisdom*** is the knowledge of God.

b. That's why our world today is rapidly spinning out of control; it's rejected God.

c. When you remove the center, the rest caves in.

d. The post-modern age in which we live is ***hollow***.

1) We live in a world of ***hollow*** men & hollow women.

2) Politics are hollow; Govt is hollow. So their policies & practices are **empty**.

19. The **world** forever looks for **better programs** **God's** program is all & only about **better people**.

20. The world wants a plan > God sends a man.

<sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance,

21. **Self-control** is **restraint** in handling **pleasure** while **Perseverance** is **patience** in dealing w/trials.

22. These 2 words go far to highlight the **BALANCE** that's to mark the Christian life.

a. God wants us to **enjoy** the pleasures He built into Creation.

1) But that enjoyment must never become an end in itself.

2) Success in life isn't determined by coming to the end with more pleasure than pain.

3) We don't define ourselves by how we "FEEL."

4) We are IN Christ; sons & daughters of the Living God; free to enjoy what He's created w/o regret or guilt.

b. And when pleasure's replace by the pain of a trial, we aren't going to freak out & doubt the goodness of God because we know He's still on His throne & works all things together for good.

to perseverance godliness,

23. This is a rich word that conveys the idea of a devotion to God so strong it results in blessing to others.

a. When I read this word I think of St. Francis of Assisi who was walking along one day, just worshipping God, caught up in praise for His goodness.

b. He saw a leper and was surprised by his own lack of revulsion at the man's hideous visage.

c. For what Francis saw was a human being made in God's glorious image with amazing potential because of the Gospel.

d. So he went over to the man who'd not been touched by another human being for many years.

e. And he knelt down, took the man's foot, lifted it to his lips and kissed it.

24. An inconsequential act to the eyes of the world; but a soul-transforming kindness to that leper.

25. Friends, let's be done with the idea that it's only within these walls we show our devotion to God by worshipping & talking of spiritual things.

a. This is but the **team room** where we gather to go over plays,

b. Then hit the field out there where we run those plays & live it!

<sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

26. Peter lists 2 flavors of love;

a. The first is the **affection** we have for one another as believers.

b. The second is **agape**; the love that comes from God alone.

27. There's a special affection we ought to have for one another both here at Calvary, & toward the wider Body of Christ; wherever it is and whatever flag it flies.

a. When the unsaved visit a local church, or happen to see Christians gathered in some public place

b. What they ought to behold is genuine warmth & affinity for one another.

c. They ought not be subjected to our debates over how many angels it takes to screw in a lightbulb.

28. But the **highest** love of all is agape; God's love.

a. In Christ, we're not only to receive that love,

b. We're to be channels of it to others; even those who don't deserve it.

Vs. 8-9

<sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound,

1. If these 7 traits are lavishly piling up in us . . .

*you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. Peter's point again is that spiritual growth is the norm for us.

3. It is possible for someone who's been born again to be barren & unfruitful.

a. Barren means **useless**.

b. In John 15, Jesus said it was God's will we bear **abundant fruit**.

4. One of the great challenges we face today in the Modern American church is the danger of **consumerism**.

a. Where people think being a Christian means believing the Gospel story,

1) Going to church once a week, singing a half dozen songs, & listening to a vaguely interesting sermon.

2) & if you're **really** into it—maybe putting a bumper sticker on your car.

b. But that's the extent of their involvement & experience of the Christian life.

5. It's the very thing Peter's saying we're NOT to do; just religious consumers who take but never give.

<sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

6. Peter minces no words. The person who isn't growing in Christ & the virtues of vs. 5-7 is short-sighted to the point of spiritual blindness.

a. He/she has lost sight of the fact that being born again ushers us into a **new life**

b. And that life **grows** to become more & more like Jesus.

7. But the person who DOES know that and is growing in Christ sees clearly; their vision is sharp.

a. Rather than being short-sighted, pre-occupied just with their life & the world,

b. They see the future God has for them in His amazing plans.

8. In John 4:35 Jesus told His disciples to **lift up their eyes** & to see the fields ready for harvest.

a. He didn't mean literal crops of grain;

b. He meant **people** ripe for the Gospel.

9. What Jesus told them, the Holy Spirit repeats to us today.

10. Last week we shared the vision God's given for the future of CCO.

a. The response was wonderful as so many shared their support.

b. A few others shared their concern that we not get ahead of the Spirit of God as we move forward.

c. We appreciate that caution & need people who'll ever remind us of the need to keep this entire undertaking bathed in prayer.

d. But there were a few others whose caution I'm concerned is the lack of vision Peter refers to here in v. 9.

1) They don't like change.

2) They're content where we are right now & don't want to be bothered with all the work a new home requires.

3) What they don't realize is—there'd be no "Here" & where they are right now if we'd listened to their spiritual ancestors back in El Rio.

4) Back then there were people who said what they're saying now.

5) They didn't have the vision for this & missed out.

e. Now it's the turn for everyone here to SEE the future & move with purpose toward it.

11. As we look to a new campus, SEE a city that NEEDS Jesus!

12. Lift up your eyes, because God has given us Oxnard!

Vs. 10-11

<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

1. Peter's use of the words "call & election" are an enticing invitation to dive into a highly controversial issue.

2. But wouldn't you just know it – we're out of time!

3. So let's stay on track & be sure to see what he says . . .

4. Peter uses the same word in vs. 5 & 10 when he says we're to be **diligent**.

a. We **make** our calling & election sure by growing in the graces he describes in vs. 5-7,

b. & not being barren, unfruitful, or spiritually short-sighted.

5. Whatever your understanding of God's call & our election, Peter's clear that we must never adopt a passive attitude toward growing in grace.

6. The doctrine of grace must never lull us into spiritual apathy & laziness.

7. On the contrary, it ought to spark us to ever-increasing faithfulness; knowing we are loved by a mighty God.

8. The stumble Peter refers to at the end of v. 10 means a fatal fall; one that takes you out of the race. It's an athletic image.

9. That image carries on in v. 11

<sup>11</sup> for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

10. The picture here is the welcome extended an Olympic champion when he returned to his city.

- a. Everyone turned out to welcome him home & exult in his victory!
- 11. Peter's point is that by purposing to grow in Christ, by setting ourselves to put what we believe into action,
  - 1) We ***prove*** we really do belong to God,
  - 2) We ***don't have to worry*** about falling away
  - 3) And we can be ***confident*** of our arrival in glory.