

1. **Introduction, Bill Kynes Quote:** *“Union with Christ is that spiritual reality whereby we as believers are joined to our Lord such that what is true of him becomes true of us. This spiritual union is the means by which space and time are transcended, and we share in all the benefits of Jesus’ work in history on our behalf. It is central to our understanding of who we are as Christians” (Union with Christ: The Sum of Our Salvation, C.S. Lewis Institute, Knowing & Doing, Bill Kynes Winter 2007).*
  - A believer’s “Union with Christ” is spiritual not physical. Believers are spiritually joined to Christ by being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are inseparable.
  - Scripture emphasizes that God, the ultimate spiritual Being, created both the physical and spiritual realms. The physical realm is tangible and subject to exploration by humans. The spiritual realm is unseen and not subject to human sensory exploration.
  - Bill Kynes says believer’s spiritual union with Christ transcends time and space. Through their spiritual union with Christ, believers share in every benefit of Jesus’ work in history on their behalf.
  - As seen in Ephesians 1:3-4, election and Union with Christ were decreed in eternity.
2. **Ephesians 1:3-4:** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*
  - “Union with Christ” establishes each elect person’s relationship with Christ. They were purposefully chosen “in Christ” before the foundation of the world. The purpose of their election is to enable them to be holy and blameless before Him.
  - Through Union with Christ, believers receive all the spiritual blessings found in the Lord Jesus Christ, the “Mediator and Redeemer” of the elect. “Union with Christ” permanently establishes each elect person’s relationship with Christ.
  - In the Bible, union with Christ is often expressed by “in Christ” or similar phrases.
  - In Romans 8, Paul recognizes that being in union with Christ is permanent. Believers cannot be separated from Christ and His spiritual blessings.
3. **Romans 8:37-39:** *In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
4. **Activating the Latent Union with Christ:** Though “union” was decreed in eternity, elect individuals do not actively participate in that union until God effectually calls them during their mortal lifetime (1 Cor 1:9).
  - In the intervening interval, Union with Christ latently waits for God’s effectual call.
  - Thus, in every believer’s mortal life, though they are elect, there is a time without Christ, a time “before active union with Christ,” a time before God’s effectual call.

5. **Ephesians 2:1-3**: *You were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
6. **1 Corinthians 1:9**: *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
  - God's decree to incorporate elect individuals "in Christ" is made "manifest" by His effectual call during the elect person's mortal life span. "Latent" signifies something real but presently hidden and inactive.
  - To "make manifest" means to cause something that is latent to become visible and active, to be present as a functioning reality.
  - We are familiar with transitions from latent to manifest. For example, the transition process that transforms the single cell of conception to a mature adult.
7. **Latent to Manifest**: When a baby is conceived, it begins as a single cell. In that one cell, there is a DNA pattern that will determine how the initial cell will develop into a baby and by steps into a full-grown adult with specific attributes.
  - The DNA in the one cell is a "blueprint" with complete detail for making manifest the adult who is latent in the one cell.
  - Making manifest the adult body and mind whose coded plan are latent in the first cell is a step-by-step process requiring time, proper nourishment, training and bodily and mental exercise.
8. **Spiritual DNA of the "Born Again"**: 2 Peter 1:3-11 introduces "spiritual DNA" (latent attributes present in the "born again") to be made manifest as they mature spiritually.
  - Just as a particular adult person is latent in the first cell formed at physical conception, a spiritually adult person is latent in a person "born again."
  - The new spiritual life initiated by being "born again" has in latent form everything needed for the spiritual life and godliness of a spiritual adult.
  - About that latent spiritual life, **2 Peter 1:3a** says, ***"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness."*** Thus, Peter says, spiritual birth into the family of God, brings in latent form everything needed for godliness and life.
  - The latent spiritual capabilities must be developed and made manifest. God graciously enables us to participate in the process of making manifest the latent spiritual qualities that provide everything needed for life and godliness.
  - Because we have been "born again" into the family of God as a new creature and given in latent form everything we need for life and godliness, it is our obligation to make every effort to make manifest that which God has provided.
  - The Holy Spirit will support and enable the making manifest spiritual DNA's latent attributes if we "walk in step" with Him, cooperating, not grieving or quenching Him.

- Peter says, we are to diligently add to God's gift of enabling faith seven attributes of Christian character. God's gift of saving faith forms the base to which spiritual attributes will be added.
  - Faith enables the Christian life to begin and provides the impetus for growth. The faith that saves also sustains believers as they progress in godliness.
9. **Adding the Seven Attributes:** The latent attributes God provides to the "born again" must be made manifest. Making an attribute manifest requires spiritual nourishment and time. Attributes are made manifest one at a time.
- **1. Goodness (Excellence):** Peter says, to faith, add "goodness (excellence)" which means achieving the proper fulfillment of a "thing or person's" nature.
  - The purpose of saving faith is to enable a redeemed sinner to become "like Christ." Christlikeness is the true fulfillment of a believer's new nature. The Holy Spirit supports becoming Christlike by His internal transforming work.
  - Working to become like Christ will convince believers they need more knowledge.
  - **2. Knowledge:** Both intellectual and moral knowledge is needed in the form of practical knowledge that enables living a life conformed to truth as it is in Jesus.
  - When we strive diligently to increase our base of knowledge and practical wisdom, we will find that no one can live a life conformed to truth without "self-control."
  - **3. Self-Control (or Self-Discipline):** Self-control means exercising the ability to choose to do what we know is right. Passions must be controlled by "self" and not allowed to control "self."
  - **4. Perseverance (steadfastness):** Self-discipline works in usual circumstances, but when adversity strikes, perseverance is needed. Perseverance is sustained ability to refrain from sin, not giving-up godliness even in troublesome circumstances.
  - **5. Godliness (Reverence and Piety):** Godliness is reverence toward God and respect toward other people. We must strive to be in right relationships with both God and people. This is a necessary attribute if one is to persevere in tough times.
  - Godliness causes believers to seek to do God's will and seek the welfare of others.
  - **6. Brotherly Kindness:** Brotherly kindness is a specific love for others in God's family no matter how different or difficult they may be. It means guarding our Spirit-given unity from destruction by gossip, prejudice, and narrowness.
  - If such a special love is good for those in the family of God, what about for others?
  - When we have reached this stage in the process of sanctification, having added to faith the attributes of goodness (excellence), knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, and brotherly kindness, a believer is in position to take the final step to which Peter calls us – we are to strive to add agape love.
  - **7. Agape Love:** This "capstone attribute" is the proper fulfillment of the other six qualities. "Agape" is deliberate desire for what is best for the one loved. Agape is made manifest in sacrificial action to achieve good even as God loved us (Jn 3:16).

- No one can or does begin the Christian life possessing the attribute of “agape love.” All begin at the bottom of the ladder which is God’s gift of “saving faith.” We add to that faith step-by-step until we reach the goal of “agape love.”
- And who is to receive “agape love” from us. Jesus answered by citing the greatest commandment and the second, as well as giving the parable of the good Samaritan. “We are to agape everyone.” To strive for what is best for each person.
- The result. What happens when we strive diligently to add these virtues? Peter’s answer covers both adding and neglecting to add the virtues.

**10.2 Peter 1:8-11: *For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, <sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***

- God’s gift of saving faith is an incredible benefit, but it is the beginning, not the end, of God’s blessings to believers. Adding the 7 attributes will keep us from being ineffective and unproductive in our knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Peter says, anyone who has been given faith and adopted into the family of God who does not pursue these attributes, is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten they have been cleansed from their past sins by the blood of Christ.
- God’s gift of faith plus the seven attributes provide necessary conditions for living a life that pleases God.