

1. **Introduction:** Spiritual Union with Christ (Ephesians 1:1-3), was decreed in eternity, but 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 is latent, waiting for God's effectual call.
 - Thus, in every believer's mortal life, there is a time without Christ, a time "before active union with Christ," a time before God's effectual call. Paul says:
2. **Ephesians 2:1-3:** *You were dead in the trespasses and sins ² 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 - ³ 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.*
 - God's decree to incorporate individuals "in Christ" is made "manifest" by His effectual call (Holy Spirit's specific, internal call to salvation) during the 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.
 - One familiar transition from latent to manifest is the process that transforms the single cell of human conception to a mature adult.
3. **Latent and 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 then by many 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 single cell of conception.
 - Making manifest the adult body and mind coded in the first cell is a step-by-step process requiring time, nourishment, bodily exercise and training, plus information and mental training for developing the mind.
 - In a similar way, there is a spiritual development pattern established in every person "born again" in Union with Christ. A spiritual adult is coded in "spiritual DNA."
4. **Spiritual DNA of the "Born Again":** 2 Peter 1:3-11 introduces attributes that are latent in those "born again. These latent attributes are the blueprint or spiritual DNA that will be made manifest as a "born again" person matures spiritually into a spiritual adult.
 - Just as a particular adult person is latent in the first cell formed at physical conception, a specific spiritually adult person is latent in a person "born again."
 - The new spiritual life initiated by being "born again" includes in latent form, as Peter says, everything needed for the spiritual life and godliness of a spiritual adult.
 - About latent spiritual attributes, **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.

- Notice the past tense – “**has given.**” Think about it. When you were “born again,” did you feel as if you had all things pertaining to life and godliness and could live a life of perfection? I didn’t! After growing spiritually through the ups and downs of many years, I still say and do inappropriate things, don’t fully understand the Bible as I should, etc.
 - But Peter says, Everything needed has been given. As given, they are latent and require effort to make them manifest. God graciously enables us to participate in the process of “making manifest” spiritual attributes He has provided.
 - “Making manifest” is not automatic. Work is required to develop each latent quality.
 - Peter days diligently add to God’s initial gift of enabling faith seven latent attributes of Christian character. Saving faith is the base to which spiritual attributes are added.
 - Saving faith enables Christian life to begin and provides the impetus for growth. The faith that saves also enables and sustains believers as they progress in godliness.
 - 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 enables and supports becoming Christlike by His internal transforming work.
 - The Holy Spirit will enable us to make manifest our spiritual DNA’s latent attributes if we “walk in step” with Him, cooperating, not grieving or quenching Him.
 - Peter lists the 7 attributes to be one-by-one added to faith: They are: Goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape love.
5. **Adding the Seven Attributes:** The latent attributes God provides to the “born again” through spiritual DNA must be made manifest. Making an attribute manifest requires effort, spiritual nourishment and time. Attributes are made manifest one-by-one in the sequence Peter gives..
- **1. Goodness (Excellence):** Peter says, to our base of faith, begin by adding “goodness (excellence)” which means achieving the proper fulfillment of a “thing or person’s” nature. The goal toward which we work is “to become Christ-like.”
 - 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. Godliness means striving to be right in 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 the will of God and seek the welfare of others.
 - Increasing godliness will lead to realization that members of the family of God are to be special in our sight. That requires adding “brotherly kindness.”
 - **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. Love God and love people. “We are to agape everyone.” To strive for what is best for each person we encounter.
6. **The Result of Adding or Failing to Add the 7 Attributes:** What are the consequences of adding or failing to add these attributes? Peter’s answer covers both situations.
- **Adding (2 Peter 1:8):** *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.*
 - **Failing to Add (2 Peter 1:9):** *But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.*
7. **Advice (2 Peter 1:10-11):** *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble,¹¹ 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 and 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 latent attributes provide necessities for living a life that pleases God.