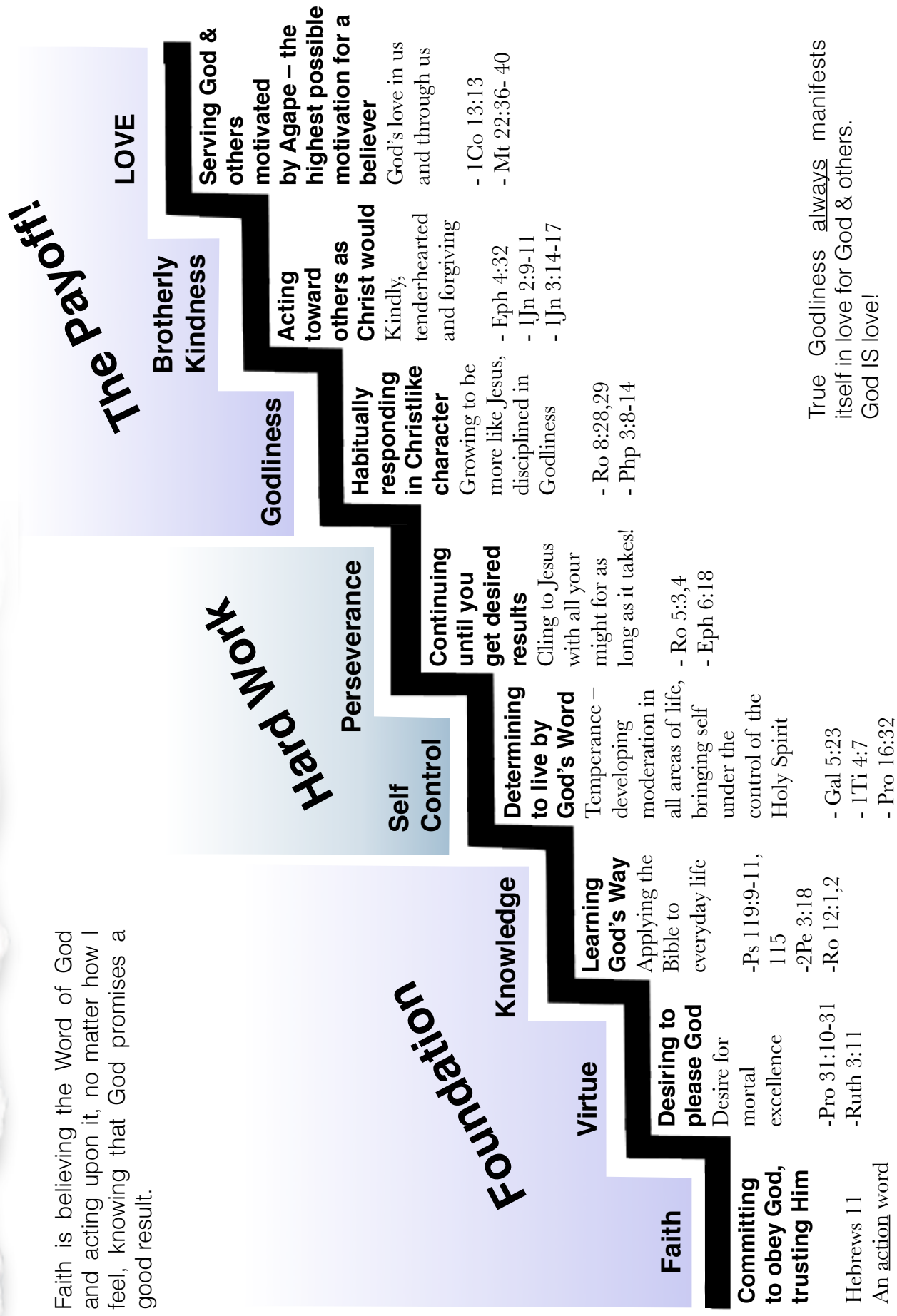


Sanctification Process - 2Pet 1:3-10

Faith is believing the Word of God and acting upon it, no matter how I feel, knowing that God promises a good result.



Progressive Sanctification

2 Peter 1:3-4 proclaims the sufficiency of Scripture; we have everything we need to live a godly life—the Holy Spirit living in us with divine power, and the written Word that teaches us how to be like Christ and to escape sinful lifestyles.

The next three verses give us eight qualities to follow as we pursue maturity. Verse 10 promises that if we practice these eight qualities, we will never fall back into our sinful and painful lifestyles. These qualities are to be blended or chorused together, moving progressively like a stairway toward Christlikeness. If these qualities are ours and are increasing, they keep us from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we lack these qualities, we forget that we have been cleansed from our past.

So, what are these eight qualities?

1) **Faith** is believing the Word of God and acting upon it, no matter how I feel, because God promises a good result. We need faith both for salvation (Ro 1:16,17) and for obedient living (Heb 11). Faith is foundational to a godly life—without faith, it is impossible to please God. Faith is a commitment to obey Christ, no matter what.

2) **Virtue**, that desire for moral excellence that makes us want to be more like Jesus, must be added to our faith for a strong foundation. Virtue is the desire to please Christ, no matter what.

3) **Knowledge** completes the foundation, for without knowing the Word of God, we wouldn't know how to obey Christ even if we had the desire to obey! These first three qualities must work together to provide a strong foundation for our growth and maturity in Christ.

4) **Self-control** is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) that results from obedience to Christ. It requires a lot of hard work to build on the foundation, but the Holy Spirit assists us in developing self-control, which is really submitting ourselves to Him to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We can't do it alone - it requires cooperation!

5) **Perseverance** is a steadfastness that allows us to develop that self-control (1Co 15:58). Often in counseling I define perseverance as clinging to Jesus with all our might and continuing to hang on as long as it takes to be victorious. Self-control and perseverance are the “Hard Work” of the sanctification process. They must work together to produce results.

6) **Godliness** is habitually responding in a Christlike way (1Ti 4:7-16). It is the fruit of laying the strong foundation of faith, virtue, and knowledge and then doing the hard work of self-control and perseverance. As we learn and grow in the Lord, and persist in forming new and godly habits, we respond more consistently in reflecting God's character. Godliness is acting like Jesus as He lives in and through us.

7) **Brotherly affection** is being kind one to another. We taught our children to use their best manners with each other, treating each other with kindness and respect (Lk 6:31). They are still affectionate as adults. Christlike character and godly habits always affect the way we treat each other; we should be characterized by brotherly affection.

8) **Love** is the agape motivation that is our ultimate goal as believers (Jn 15:12-13). We are to love God and one another as God loves us (1Jn 3:14-18). This proves God's love is really in us and that we have truly become like He is, for He is love (1Jn 4:8).

If we lay the right foundation (faith, virtue, and knowledge) and then continue in the hard work required to become godly (self-control and perseverance), the pay off (godliness, brotherly affection, and love) will surely come. We are to not become weary in doing what is right (Gal 6:9). He promises us in 2 Peter 1:10 that if we diligently live out these eight qualities we will never stumble! Let us be diligent to make progress on this stairway for sanctification.