

WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX?

SCRIPTURE:

"Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love" (2 Peter. 1:5-7)

MATERIALS LIST:

(1) Toolbox full of tools

SONG: "I Want to be a Worker for the Lord"

LESSON:

I remember it like it was yesterday. I was 12 years old, but it wasn't even my birthday or Christmas when my dad gave me one of the most special gifts I have ever received. When I opened the lid, there they were: TOOLS!!! That's right; my dad had given me my first toolbox with my very own tools. I had used a lot of hammers, screwdrivers, tape measures and wrenches before, but none of them were as cool as the ones that were in MY toolbox. I'm not sure if my dad knew that I had achieved a great level of maturity, or if he was just tired of me using (and probably losing) all of his tools, but it didn't matter to me.

One of the great things about the Bible is that it gives several different lists of the tools that we will need to be faithful followers of Christ. These lists of tools are called things like the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11), "The Fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23), and my favorite, the Christian Graces (2 Peter 1:5-7). Each of these lists helps us to evaluate what spiritual tools we still need to develop in our lives to be of more service to God. The more of these tools we have in our spiritual toolbox, the more effective "instruments of righteousness" (Rom. 6:13) we will be.

The reason the Christian Graces, from our Scripture reading today, are my favorite is because they all build on one another. In other words, you have to have developed the previous tools listed before you are able to effectively add the ones to follow. This is like learning to use a handsaw, and when you get pretty good at that, you can move on and learn to use a power saw. For example, in 2 Peter 1:5-6, it tells us to add self-control to our knowledge. You know those people who think they know everything, and they are always bragging about the things that they have done or learned that you haven't? Well, they may know a lot, but they are not going to make very many friends because they haven't learned self-control. They are not controlling their tongues or their attitudes. Once we gain knowledge, especially knowledge of God's Word, we must learn to control ourselves so that we don't come across as "know-it-alls," because no one will listen to us. Then Peter tells us that to our self-control, we need to add perseverance. You see, it is easier to control yourself once, but will you be able to do it again tomorrow and the next day. Perseverance is learning to improve the way we control ourselves.

The more tools you have in your spiritual toolbox, the more like God you will become, and the more useful workman you will be for Him (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

PRAYER: That we will focus on adding the spiritual tools to our lives that God gives us in His Word.

MAIN MESSAGE:

As a Christian we must always keep striving to better ourselves in our service to Jesus Christ. There will always be something that can be added to our lives to make us more useful to God.