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Moral Excellence

LEVEL UP

_____ _____ _____

UNDISPUTED Faith - Who helps you Level Up

2 Peter 1:1 This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness *[righteousness]* of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior. **2** May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. **3** By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.

UNFINISHED Faith - Why Leveling Up Is Important

2 Peter 1:4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

UNRIVALED Faith - How to Level Up

2 Peter 1:5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, **6** and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, **7** and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

UNPRODUCTIVE Faith - When Leveling Up Doesn't Happen

2 Peter 1:8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

UNWAVERING Faith - What is the Reward for Leveling Up / Where do I start Leveling Up?

2 Peter 1:10 So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. **11** Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **12** Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught. *(NLT)*

2 Peter 1:5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, **6** and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, **7** and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

The _____

What is Moral Excellence?
Why is Moral Excellence needed?
Why is Moral Excellence listed first?
How do I grow Moral Excellence?

Question #1

What is Moral Excellence?

How is it _____?

- Virtue: ἀρετή; (Greek - areté [ar-et'-ay]); moral goodness or excellence, virtue; uprightness; Used of the human mind and in an ethical sense; noble character; a virtuous course of thought, feeling and action; modesty, purity; praise, virtue, manliness (valor)

Isaiah 42:8 "I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else, nor share my praise with carved idols. … **12** Let the whole world glorify the Lord; let it sing his praise. *(NLT)*

Philippians 4:8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. *(NLT)*

What are some _____?

Colossians 3:23 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. *(NLT)*

1 Peter 2:1 So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. … **8** And, "He is the stone that makes people stumble, the rock that makes them fall." *[Isa 8:14.]* They stumble because they do not obey God's word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them. **9** But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. **10** "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." *[Hos 1:6, 9; 2:23]* **11** Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. **12** Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world. *(NLT)*

Ephesians 4:17 With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. **18** Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. **19** They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. **20** But that isn't what you learned about Christ. **21** Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, **22** throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. **23** Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. **24** Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. **25** So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.

26 And "don't sin by letting anger control you." *[Ps 4:4]* Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27** for anger gives a foothold to the devil. **28** If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. **29** Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. **30** And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. **32** Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. *(NLT)*

How do I _____ it in my life?

MORAL EXCELLENCE MEANS THE _____ OF THE _____ WILL OF GOD IN _____ AREA OF LIFE.

Question #2

Why is Moral Excellence needed?

Can you do it on your _____?

Ephesians 2:1 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. **2** You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. **3** All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. **4** But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, **5** that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) **6** For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. **7** So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. **8** God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. **9** Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. **10** For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. *(NLT)*

Romans 12:2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. *(NLT)*

Romans 8:5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. **6** So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. **7** For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. **8** That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. **9** But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) *(NLT)*

What is our _____?

Isaiah 5:20 What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. **21** What sorrow for those who are wise in their own eyes and think themselves so clever. *(NLT)*

1 Corinthians 15:33 Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character." **34** Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don't know God at all. *(NLT)*

How do I _____ natures?

Colossians 3:5 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. **6** Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. **7** You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. **8** But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. **9** Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. **10** Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. *(NLT)*

Galatians 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. **25** Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. *(NLT)*

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. **12** And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, **13** while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. **14** He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds. *(NLT)*

How _____is it?

Proverbs 31:10 Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is more precious than rubies. **11** Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. **12** She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. … **29** "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!" **30** Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised. *(NLT)*

Why is it _____?

2 Timothy 3:1 You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. **2** For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. **3** They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control.

They will be cruel and hate what is good. **4** They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. **5** They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! *(NLT)*

Question #3

Why is Moral Excellence listed first?

Is moral excellence more _____?

Romans 1:21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. **22** Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. **23** And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. **24** So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. **25** They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. **26** That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. **27** And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. **28** Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. **29** Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. **30** They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. **31** They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. **32** They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too. *(NLT)*

John 7:16 So Jesus told them, "My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. **17** Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. **18** Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies. *(NLT)*

What happens if it is _____ in my life?

Galatians 5:19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, **20** idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, **21** envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. **22** But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! *(NLT)*

- Disobedience removes God's blessing.
- Lack of God's blessing brings unfruitfulness.
- Unfruitfulness is linked to immoral behavior.
- This causes one to act selfishly, with impure motives, and with pride.
- This affects one's capacity to serve and lead in the body of Christ.

DOING RIGHT _____.
DOING THINGS _____.

Question #4

How do I grow Moral Excellence?

What do I need to _____?

- Fundamentals: Reading Bible, Praying
- Behaviors: Serving the body of Christ
- Relationship Building: Sharing your story, loving others

Ephesians 4:11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. **12** Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. **13** This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. **14** Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. **15** Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. **16** He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. *(NLT)*

Romans 12:9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. **10** Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. **11** Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. **12** Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. **13** When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. **15** Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! **17** Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. **18** Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. *(NLT)*

Colossians 3:12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. **13** Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. **14** Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. **16** Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. **17** And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. *(NLT)*