

God's 2 Peter 1 Process to Renew Your Soul

You should see the house my son-in-law and daughter bought last year. It's quaint and is located in an old neighborhood, with huge trees that overhang the street and drop a carpet of gold leaves on the ground about this time every year. The plan is to renovate and flip the house, and they've done a great job so far, with refinished hardwood floors, new tile and lots of makeover in the kitchen, the instillation of egress windows in the basement, building a deck for the backyard, and now they're working on painting the house.

Except it's Montana, and when the calendar says "first day of fall," the temperature starts to drop quickly and the forecast says snow on the mountaintops come Sunday. Not ideal paint conditions.

This old house has tired, fragile cedar siding that needs to have the old paint scraped off by hand. The kids are racing the clock, so I put on work clothes, grabbed my own scraper, and went over to help.

The cedar has vertical grooves in it, and the wood is soft. The paint has to be carefully scraped out of each little groove. As soon as I started, I wondered if I would be spending one hour just on this one square foot of siding.

My next thought was, "Oh wow, this is my soul."

"Jayme," I said, "This is just like my soul!" She totally gets me and shook her head with an understanding yes.

Following Jesus means a wonderful restoration back to the person I was always meant to be, but He comes with a scraper. Slowly, slowly he chisels off the old me with all of its sinfulness and faults, until he has a clean surface on which

to apply the new.

Peter writes to the followers of Christ and talks about the power God has given us to live godly lives. In light of this power available to us, he gives this command:

For this reason make every effort to add virtue to your faith; and to your virtue, knowledge; and to your knowledge, self-control; and to your self-control, patient endurance; and to your patient endurance, godliness; and to your godliness, brotherly kindness; and to your brotherly kindness, love (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

You know what I see in these verses? The soft, fragile wooden ridges of my mind and heart—ridges that are covered with old, peeling layers of selfishness, ignorance, desire to quit hard things, worldliness, impatience and pettiness toward others. Old paint that has to be slowly chiseled, chiseled, chiseled.

God's divine power scrapes away the old, and I am required to make every effort to prime the raw wood with layers of godliness.

When I left the kids' house yesterday after working for a few hours, I was missing a layer of skin on my knuckles and could barely move my fingers. Making an effort to renovate something is nothing but hard work and sweat equity, but I can use my imagination and picture that cute little house with a fresh coat of paint by the end of the week. It's going to look so good.

When we know Jesus, He promises He is likewise making us into new and beautiful creations. We all get tired of the process, but we can't give up. The effort we make to add good qualities to our souls will make our lives incredibly effective and productive. (See 2 Peter 1:8 if you don't believe me!) And we have God's divine power fueling us every step of the way.

It's worth the painstaking scraping, don't you think? Being made new? {eo}

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