Add to knowledge, **self-control**. Restraining emotions is difficult for most of us. We tend to witness an event and immediately react emotionally. A wise person moves slowly, thinking through an emotionally charged issued to make sure that decisions are made wisely, and with no regret later. As I look at the political unrest that has been present in our country for as long as I can remember, there is one consistent feature that I have seen now for 6o years in the news. And that is that the average demonstrator is a young person. It is rare to see 80 or 90 year olds out throwing bottles and pillaging businesses. Reigning in our emotions requires time and effort, but it is worth it in the long run.

Add to self –control, **perseverance.** We live in a world that is full of stress. It is the nature of the beast and will always be there. We are to learn to endure under hardship. We must never give up—never! The writer of Hebrews said we are to have faith, work hard and endure. This trio is to go together always. I recall, many years ago, my grandmother died and I wanted to go to the funeral, which was out of state. The cabinet job I was working on at the time was for a lady who had little or no concern for me, or my family issues. I was told in no uncertain terms that her cabinetry must be in place before I left the state or she would sue me for breach of contract. I knew quite well that she was unsaved and I was determined to display to her an example of how a Christian reacts to difficulty. I had no recourse but to work straight through and complete her job—44 hours worth, non-stop. I have never forgotten that episode in my life. She got her cabinetry, and I got to say goodbye to my grandmother at her funeral.

Add to perseverance, **Godliness**. I can sum this one up very concisely. Godliness is having an appropriate fear of God. God is worthy of respect, our deep respect and honor. The more I learn about God, the more I know I need to learn about God. That is achieved through a lifetime commitment of having a personal devotional time. It cannot be achieved through any shortcuts. This one takes time. A lifetime.

Add to Godliness, **brotherly kindness**. God made us creatures that need relationships. We have in the book of Genesis the account of creation. And as each day ended, God looked at what He had done and said, “It is good.” But when He had finished creating Adam, his words were, “It is not good…” What a striking contrast. It is not good that man should be alone. We are social beings and need each other to fulfill our lives as God desires. We must learn to accept each other, regardless of our warts and all. Kindness to those around us who are Christians, who wear the same title we do—children of God—deserve our respect, our love, and our kindness.

Add to brotherly kindness, **love.** There it is, the “Holy Grail” of life, the greatest thing that we can ever obtain and attain—love. What is love? God is love. When we understand God, we will see love in perfection. It must motivate all that we do, it must come before all that we say. Let me give you an example of how this works. If I tell you I have 1,000,000 dollars, you would be impressed. All those zeros look pretty impressive lined up like that. But the most important numeral in that number is the “1”. Without it the rest is worthless. So it is with life. If love isn’t first, if love isn’t before, if love isn’t motivating everything we do or say, we have gained nothing.

And that, my friends, is how you win the game!

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We are to add to our faith **goodness**. Exceptional moral character, like courage, strength and valor, should mark the Christian life. What is our word worth in the world? In my life I have very few heroes. I have not met many people who I hold up as shining examples of a life well lived. My grandfather is one of the few heroes I cherish to have known. As a man in his prime, he was physically tough and stout. The story is told of some men at the farmer’s supply store who were standing behind a pickup one day, trying to decide how to pick up a huge bag of feed and load it in the bed of the truck. My grandfather, annoyed by the commotion, pushed his way to the middle of the onlookers, bent down and grabbed it up and placed it, by himself, into the bed of the truck. He then turned to the men who were still standing with their mouths agape and said, “That’s how it is done.” And then he simply walked away and went about his business. I knew him later in life, after the ravages of Parkinson’s disease had taken its toll on his physical self. By the end of his life, he could not feed himself because of his shaking hands, he needed help to use the bathroom, and his heart did not allow for any strenuous activity. My grandmother told me later, after he had passed, that not once, NOT ONE TIME, did he ever complain or ask “why me”. That may seem small to many, but to me, it showed tremendous character. Hero type character.

Add to goodness, **knowledge**. Do we read and study the Bible as we should? This is an amazing book. It contains everything that we need to know about life, God, our future—it’s all there. I have met few people in my life who have read through the Bible even one time. And fewer still who have done it more than once. Why? We have the most incredible book, the living Word of God, at our fingertips, but we ignore it and spend our time on other things. God has said of his Word, that it will not go out from Him and return void or empty—it will have an effect. Nothing will change your life as profoundly as simply reading Scripture. Read the Word of God!

