

Christian Awareness Graph

Back in the early sixties a grand experiment occurred in the school systems across America. They began implementing a new math, much like what has happened these past few years with the new common core math, supposedly a better way to solve equations. If you have seen some of the examples that have been bandied about on the internet you will understand that it can be confusing given the way we have always been taught to do equations. Back in the sixties it was the new math that was being taught and it had much the same effect on the given norm of the way to do math as does common core does today. My sixth grade classmates and I were to part of that group that was being taught this new math and it was truly new to all of us. We had not even heard of algebraic formulas, let alone ever tried to learn how to utilize them, including the concept that was introduced to us of graphing. There are many things that we learn in school that seem to be useless in later life because we don't use them, I had thought that graphing might very well be one of those things, I was wrong. When I was with the steel company, I learned to appreciate the information that I began learning in the sixth grade. We used graphs to track sales, tonnage moved, tonnage received, gross profit margins, etc. It seemed that everything was tracked in one manner or another. Every day multiple reports would be generated containing volumes of information that typically has been reduced to what some might consider to be more readable and understandable figures, and or numbers, and then placed on a graph to show how they correspond with one another. It is a graphic way, excuse the pun, to measure growth or loss patterns, among other things. Graphing has become such an important part of daily business in today's world that there are now required courses in college that teach graphing for business and math degrees.

I am sure that everyone knows what a graph is, our kids probably more than the rest, but, please, bear with me and allow me to illustrate.

A graph is a series of intersecting lines which, where they connect, make points that are then marked or defined in some way. Then, like filling in one of those pictures with the dots, the points are connected showing how their corresponding definitions relate to each other. Thus at a glance, anyone can see how they are doing in relationship to the data contained on the graph. Not only is overall data reviewed in this way, but also the specifics that make up the overall data. You might have a number of different sub graphs all relating to the overall graph and each tells a different story relating to the whole. What areas are strong or slow, where sales are up or down, graphs are used in many different ways to give people visual aids of what they are doing or achieving at any given time. Graphic Illustration is used as a means to an end for many who want to measure or quantify how they are doing. **1**

I thought it might be interesting in this lesson to try and make a graph of who or what we are in our lives, to graph ourselves as a Christian, if you will. Since graphs are used to illustrate relationships, let's call this our **2**

Now, what I mean by this is that we are going to try and graph where we are at in our Christianity. Remember, as with all information, whether on a graph or in a report, it is only as valid as is the truthfulness of that information. The point is that it is easy to skew information, to spin it so that I look good in it. That's easy, but the results become a lie, a deception. Until I decide to be truthful about myself, I will never be able to assess me based on the standard of the word.

James 1:23-25 **3**

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does

James says it clearly, if you look into a mirror of the Word of Truth and ignore the reality of what you see, you aren't dealing with truthful information and if your information is false then so will be your assessment of it.

So, now all we need to do is define the parameters we are going to use for our graph. In

Rev 3:14-16

4

14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: **15**

'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. **16**

'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

The Lord obviously has a standard by which He measures us. If we are found to measure up to the standard, we are hot, if we are found lacking or only measure up in the areas we choose to, we are lukewarm, or if we are found to have set aside or ignored the standard, we are found to be cold.

Well, if I am to be measured by a standard that determines my fate, I want to know what that standard is. In...

Rev 22:18-19

5

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; **19** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

Then in...

John 5:23-24

6

24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 12:47-48

7

47 "And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. **48** "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

Christ says that the standard by which we will be found hot or cold is the Word of God. The word is inviolate, it can not be changed. We are to neither add to nor take away from the word that God has sent. If we choose to hear and obey the Word of God we have eternal life, if we choose to reject those same words, that word will judge us in the last day. In

2 Peter 1:1-4

8

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: **2** Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; **3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. **4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Notice the progression of Peter's comments.

9

1) God's power grants to Christians

- 2) Everything that pertains to life and Godliness
- 3) Through the knowledge the Word brings about God and Christ
- 4) The knowledge through which we can partake of His precious promises
- 5) The promises that bring salvation

In summation, God's Divine power has granted Christians everything that pertains to life and Godliness, through the true, read rightly divided, knowledge of His Son, Christ, who called us by His own Glory and Excellence. It is through Christ's Glory and Excellence that Christians are granted His precious and magnificent promises so that we might escape the corruption of this world and partake of the divine nature, IF....

2 Peter 1:5-7 10

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; **6** and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; **7** and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

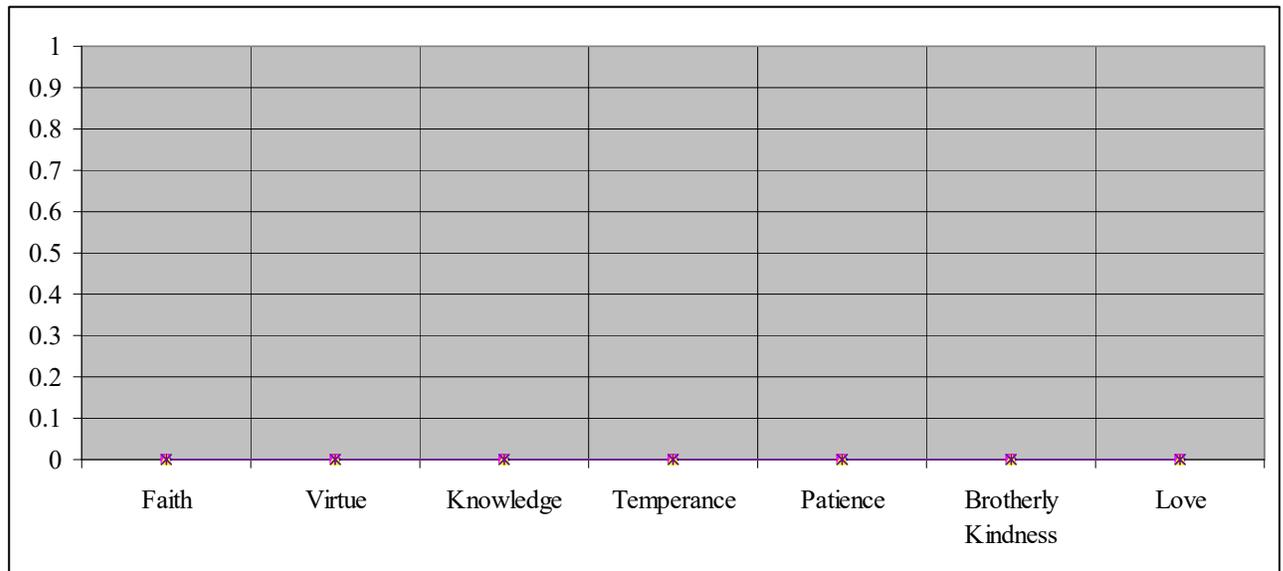
God, through Peter, tells us that since we have become partakers in the divine nature through His son, we need to continue to grow in Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Perseverance, Godliness, Brotherly Kindness, Love.

Now, as we look at our graph we can see that the parameters have been set. On our scale, we are using 1 to 10 with 1 being the worst and 10 being the best... 11

Cold 1-3

Lukewarm 4-6

Hot 7-10



Our reaction to different stimuli, things that happen to us in this life determines how we measure up against the standard. How do react in the face of trial, joy, fear, all the things that Satan places in our paths to draw us away from God.

In...

Luke 18:15-17 12

15 And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He might touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. **16** But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs

to such as these. **17** "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all."

13

Receive the Kingdom of God as a child

What does that mean? How does a child receive things? How does their innocence affect their reception? How about their unquestioning trust? Is this what is meant by receiving the Kingdom as a child? To come to God with trust in His Word, acceptance of the Love shown in the sacrifice of Christ, is that what it means?

But how do we balance that with the idea of being accountable? In **Acts 2:37**, those that had heard Peter's sermon realized their error, felt their guilt and accountability, and demanded to know what they needed to do. Isn't that what Peter was talking about when he told us to...

14

Add to our Faith

We grow to maturity in body, mind, and spirit, and we are held accountable for how we receive the word and respond to it.

In **Acts 7** we read the story of the stoning of Stephen, a man so committed to his faith that in the face of dire persecution he chose to proclaim God and Christ and was put to death for his commitment.

The strength of our commitment is seen in our continued diligence in pursuing God and Christ through the study of the Word sent through the Holy Spirit and our continued obedience to it, We have now come full circle back to...

2 Peter 1:5-7

15

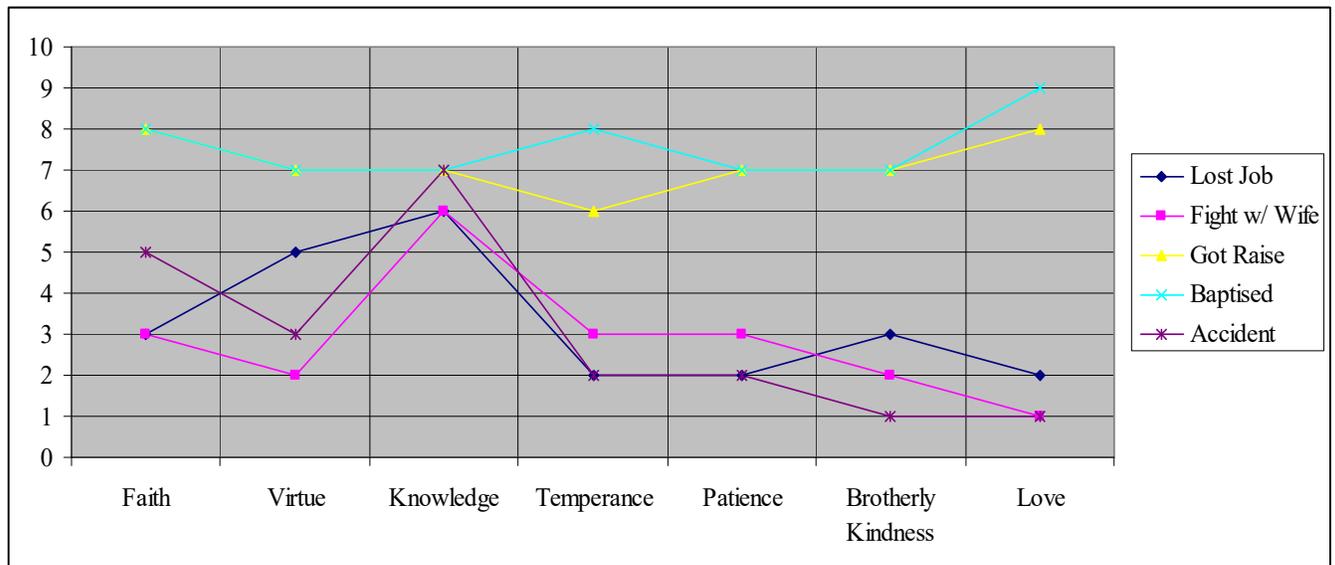
5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; **6** and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; **7** and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

So how does our strength of commitment measure up when faced with Satan's snares? **16**

Cold 1-3

Lukewarm 4-6

Hot 7-10



The point of this lesson isn't to try and get cutesy with these graphs but rather to try and make us aware of fluctuations in how we receive God, Christ, The Word, how that the different stimuli of this world can have a drastic affect on the strength of our commitment. The more we are

aware of what affects us, the better job we can do in trying to maintain an even keel with how we receive the Word that will judge us.

How do you receive the word? Have you received the word? We begin receiving it when we

- 17 HEAR:** The veracity of our reception is defined by whether or not we
- 18 BELIEVE:** The strength of our reception is determined by our readiness to change our will, to
- 19 REPENT:** The manifestation of our reception is seen in the commitment we make to our
- 20 CONFESSION:** The ultimate statement of our reception is the trust we have in the word and our response to it through
- 21 BAPTISM:** The true strength of our reception of God's Word, will be seen in our commitment, our diligence and effort to add to our faith...

This is the process by which God brings us into contact with the Blood of Christ which saves man from his sin. This is the process which calls man out of the world of sin and into the world of eternal life. Then as we see in...

Acts 2:42

22

42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The continuation of the process is described here for us...

23

42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching

God wants all men to be saved, and given everything man needs to accomplish that goal, but man's salvation is dependent upon his faithful obedience to the knowledge of God and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We must grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and especially LOVE. Love for God and love for each other. If our personal Christian awareness graphs don't show growth, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that we either lukewarm or cold.

What does your chart show?