**Add To Your Faith...Knowledge (SR: 2Pet. 1:1-11)**

No man should strive to grow in just one of the characteristics Peter lists without trying to grow just as strong in the others.

**I. Christians Are To Grow In Knowledge.**

A. Nothing is more plainly taught in the NT (2Pet. 1:5; 3:18).

1. This can be done by prayerfully, diligently, and regularly studying the Scriptures (2Tim. 2:15).

2. Knowledge is to be prized. Peter stresses it (2Pet. 1:2f, 5). “Knowledge” in these verses means “full knowledge, discernment, recognition...”

3. *“gnw:siV here is the wisdom and discernment which the Christian needs for a virtuous life and which is progressively acquired. It is practical rather than purely speculative wisdom (cf. Phil. 1:9).”* (Bauckham, *WBC*, 186)

B. The word of God instructs us to seek spiritual knowledge (1Tim. 2:4).

1. All men pursue knowledge from birth. Our life is a continual learning process. Many possess worldly knowledge but are destitute of spiritual knowledge.

2. We may attain specific knowledge of God only through the Scriptures.

C. Jesus stressed that one can know the truth (Jn. 8:32; cf. Eph. 3:3-5).

1. The source of that truth is God’s Word (Jn. 17:17). Obedience to the truth is what purifies the soul (1Pet. 1:22).

2. Peter stresses how necessary knowledge is to a productive life (2Pet. 1:3). It is through knowledge we escape defilements (2Pet. 2:20). The way to escape error is to know beforehand the dangers and to counteract them by growth (2Pet. 3:17f).

D. There is no need to fear true knowledge in any field.

1. Knowledge is the apprehension of reality. All truth is God’s truth and there is no need for the Christian to fear truth.

2. There is no need to fear knowledge that is genuine knowledge. There is, of course, knowledge falsely so called (1Tim. 6:20). And this is where statements such as *“Knowledge puffs up...”* (1Cor. 8:1f), *“Foolish speculations*” (2Tim. 2:23), *“philosophies of men”* (Col. 2) and “God has made foolish the wisdom/knowledge of this world” (1Cor. 1) legitimately speak toward. We need to be careful that misapplication of these passages doesn’t leave us dim-witted and ignorant. Intellectual sloth and lack of desire in developing our cerebral potential for God is condemnable and gives occasion for blasphemy amongst the worldly.

3. False teachers call their speculations knowledge, but it is not derived from revelation and its appeal demands over-estimation of human minds. As one commentator has said, *“The cure for false knowledge is not less knowledge, but more.”* (Green, 68)

E. There is no reason for any faithful Christian to fear any truth any intellectual discipline may discover whether biology, philosophy, or whatever.

1. Truth in physical sciences cannot contradict the clear teaching of Scripture. Some have advanced in worldly knowledge and abandoned the faith, but it wasn’t b/c they learned some truth that invalidated God’s Word.

2. The gospel is a system of faith, but it rests on real knowledge. However, it is interesting to note that, *“in the non-Christian [virtue] lists it was usually first or last in the list. In most Christian lists it has been displaced from these positions by ‘faith’ and ‘love.’”* (Bauckham, 186)

**II. The Influence Of Knowledge.**

A. Peter’s solution to serious threats to the faith is more knowledge (3:18).

1. Knowledge by itself is practically useless. It is to be accompanied by the other qualities in our text.

2. Knowledge in conjunction with the other qualities is to result in changed behavior (2Pet. 1:8). Without them, knowledge can do nothing.

B. The NT describes the knowledge we are to add (Col. 1:9). Paul mentions three specific characteristics of life that should follow the addition of knowledge.

1. We are to live a life of *service* (Col. 1:10; Eph. 4:1). Christians have been created in Christ unto good works (Eph. 2:10). This is why it is important for babes in Christ to seek knowledge. How can they know how to live without instruction? (1Pet. 2:2).

2. Knowledge gives us a life of *strength and courage*. As our knowledge grows, our strength grows because of dependence on God Who will perfect us unto every good work (Col. 1:11; Phil. 4:13; Heb. 13:21). Some are able to survive as Christians because they have spent much time at the Word being strengthened. They have been diligent.

3. The third characteristic of adding knowledge is a life of *praise* (Col. 1:12). Our life will be one of praise to God through our knowledge that He has translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. We will offer praise to God. Our spiritual battles may be harsh, but they will not leave us bitter for there is much for which to be thankful. We live a thankful life because of our knowledge in Christ. Christ is the winner.

There are no “spiritual plateaus” which we may reach and say, “I have now arrived; I need grow no more.” To stop is to stagnate. *“’Knowledge’ comes with effort in the application of one’s self to the examination of, and reflection on, the word of God. It does not come by accident or happenstance.”* (Hamilton, *Truth*,38)