

Add to Your Virtue Knowledge

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Courage without knowledge is of little benefit.
- B. The knowledge that Peter is referring to here is the knowledge of God and of the way of salvation through the Redeemer.
 - 1. It is the duty of every Christian to make the highest possible attainments in knowledge.
 - 2. Without knowledge our zeal for God will be in vain. Consider what Paul said to the church in Corinth regarding those of the nation of Israel. (Romans 10:1-3)
- C. We must pursue knowledge from childhood to old age. “We are never too old to learn.”
- D. It is not surprising that knowledge is given as a Christian characteristic.
 - 1. God desires all men to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)
 - 2. Paul warned Timothy to guard against false knowledge. (1 Timothy 6:20)

I. KNOWLEDGE IS COMMANDED BY GOD.

- A. The apostle Peter wrote, “*but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . .*” (2 Peter 3:18)
 - 1. Peter is pointing out that as Christians we are to increase in the image and favor of God. The life of a Christian is a growth; he is at first born of God, and is a little child; becomes a young man, and a father in Christ. Every father was once an infant; and had he not grown, he would have never been a man.
 - 2. Those who content themselves with the grace they received when converted to God, are, at best, in a continual state of infancy: but we find, in the order of nature, that the infant that does not grow daily is sickly and soon dies; so, in the order of grace, those who do not grow up into Jesus Christ are sickly, and will soon die, die to all sense and influence of heavenly things.
- B. The apostle Paul had these words of encouragement: “. . . *I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.*” (Romans 16:19) The point that Paul was making is that you cannot know evil if you do not have knowledge. Paul went on to tell the

Corinthian brethren: *“Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.”* (1 Corinthians 14:20) In other words, act like those whose understandings are mature and ripe.

II. WHAT IS THE KNOWLEDGE WE ARE TO ADD?

A. If we are to add to our faith courage and to courage knowledge, then what is the knowledge that Peter is telling us to add?

1. We must know the will of God. *“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”* (Ephesians 5:17)
 - a. If we do not understand what the will of the Lord is, it is impossible to even become a Christian. The apostle Paul told Timothy that God “. . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4; cf. Hebrews 8:10, 11)
 - b. The disciples came to Jesus and asked him why he spoke in parables. (Matthew 13:10) Jesus responded with the parable of the sower when he said: *“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, . . .”* (Matthew 13:23)
 - c. When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, he pointed out that they were slaves to sin until they gained knowledge, and then, and only then, were they made free from sin. (Romans 6:17-18)
 - d. We must also realize that we cannot live as a Christian without the will of God. (Colossians 1: 9-10)
2. We must also know the love of Christ.
 - a. Paul desired for the church at Ephesus to be *“able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”* (Ephesians 3:14, 17-19)
 - b. How can we explain **the breadth (width) of Jesus’ love**? God sent his only begotten Son to save the world. (John 3:16-17) Jesus demonstrated this desire that all men might be saved when he directed his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)

- c. When we talk about **the length of Jesus' love**, we can find no better explanation than the apostle Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 13:8 when he says: *"Love never fails . . ."*
 - d. **The depth of Jesus love** can only be explained by Paul when he told Timothy: *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."* (1 Timothy 1:15)
 - e. When we think of **the height of Jesus' love**, we must realize that there is no limit to this love. Love cannot be measured by width, length, depth, or height because God is love. Because His love has no limit, Jesus has prepared for us the way to eternity in heaven. (John 14:1-3)
3. We must also know the hope of God's calling. (Ephesians 1:18)
 - a. **It is a blessed hope.** (Titus 2:13; 1:1-2)
 - b. **The hope of God's calling is an anchor of the soul.** (Hebrews 6:19)
 - c. **There is one hope of our calling.** (Ephesians 4:4)
 4. We should have knowledge of the riches of his glory. (Ephesians 1:18)
 - a. **God purposed to make known these riches.** (Romans 9:23)
 - b. **These riches shall supply our every need.** (Philippians 4:19)
 - c. **Christ became poor that we might be rich.** (2 Corinthians 8:9)
 - 1) He was the Creator of all. (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16))
 - 2) As Creator Jesus had a right to all things, and the disposal of all things.
 5. Our knowledge should also know the greatness of His power. (Ephesians 1:19)
 - a. This greatness of God's power raised up and exalted Christ. (Ephesians 1:20-22)
 - b. God's greatness of power will likewise raise us. (1 Corinthians 6:14)
- B. Why do we need to know these things?
1. Because ignorance of God's will does not excuse us.
 - a. **Ignorance alienates us from God.** (Ephesians 4:17-18)
 - b. **We are all commanded to repent of our sins.** (Acts 17:30)

- c. **Paul prayed that ignorant folks might be saved.** (Romans 10:1-3)
 - 2. We need to know these things because the love of Christ begets love. (1 John 4:19)
 - 3. We need to know these things because Hope influences us to understand that there is a resurrection and eternal life.
 - a. Paul points out that if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. (1 Corinthians 15:19) Paul goes on to tell the brethren at Thesslonica, *“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.”* (1 Thessalonians 4:13)
 - b. We have hope if we are saved. (Romans 8:24)
 - 4. We should know these things because riches create desire.
 - a. Jesus said: *“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”* (Luke 16:10-11)
 - b. Jesus went on to say in Matthew: *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* (Matthew 6:19-20)
 - c. The apostle Paul directed Timothy to: *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”* (1 Timothy 6:17)
 - 5. We need to know these things because His Power keeps us. (1 Peter 1:3-5)
 - a. Let us remember, *“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,”* (2 Peter 1:3)
 - b. Knowledge of God’s power increases our faith.
- C. So what is the source of this knowledge?

1. This knowledge can only be found in the Father, in Christ Jesus, and in the Holy Spirit. (Colossians 2:1-3)
 2. We can only obtain this knowledge of this scheme of Christianity if we study God's word. (Psalms 119:103-104; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-15; Ephesians 3:4)
- D. What are the results of this knowledge?
1. It could have a negative impact and puff us up. (1 Corinthians 8:1-2)
 2. Godly knowledge should cause us to grow. (2 Peter 3:18)
 3. As we gain knowledge, we will also increase our responsibility. (Luke 12:47) He that knows what God commands and requires. *"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."* (James 4:17)

CONCLUSION.

- A. We are often responsible for our ignorance. (Romans 1:28; Matthew 13:15)
- B. We must understand that eternal measures rest there with us.
- C. We should realize how little we know – we must strive to know more.
- D. I am reminded of the story of the boy that walked into his Grandmother's bedroom while she was reading the Bible. The boy asked "Grandmother, what are you doing? She said; "I am studying for my final exam".
- E. We need to study diligently in our learning.
- F. Often our priorities in gaining knowledge on this earth are backwards. We spend hundreds even thousands of hours studying for an earthly career on earth lasting about 40 years. We spend only a few hours studying for an eternity in heaven. Let us not be guilty of misplacing our priorities.