

**GROW IN KNOWLEDGE !**

The apostle Peter closes his second letter with a call to spiritual growth. 2Peter 3:14-18 ends with "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*" We looked at growing in grace, so let's consider growing in knowledge.

**1- Don't be carried away by error.** Peter has warned how false teachers and cults emphasize their own "false truth" rather than what Scripture teaches. Their version of "gnosis" or knowledge comes from their own ideas, rather than what God has revealed and written in Scripture, which involves Christian doctrine. Their gnostic pursuits come from esoteric or special knowledge they claim to have received, which in reality are doctrines of false spirits. These false teachers and their converts focus on legalism, their own specific rules to follow. Or they focus on license, the absence of rules for life, because in their false liberalism they disregard the material world, wrongly preferring to think that only the spiritual is in view, which allows them to pervert the physical. These are aberrations of the true liberty believers have in Christ, who has freed us from the penalty and power of sin, by the grace of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**2- Make use of the means of grace,** not as esoteric experiences, but as derived from Scripture. Many theologians list prayer, Scripture, baptism and communion in their understanding of the means of grace. But they're not suggesting any merit from merely going through the motions. DM Lloyd-Jones recognizes the means of grace as food for the soul, yet is careful to distinguish ritual activity from real growth in grace. Believers grow in grace and knowledge when they walk in the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, attend to the Bible, and worship and participate in the koinonia gathering of the congregation of the saints, which is an expression of union with Christ which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. But these things are not an end in themselves, and growing is not an end in itself. "Growth in Christ is the essential result of living in Christ," he says, so the means of grace is not a matter of rote attendance, but of Spirit-filled participation.

**3- Overcome error with God's truth.** As believers live out a life of obedience to God's Word, they will grow in grace which will be expressed in their experience of truth, even as they grow in knowledge, which is expressed as they live out their understanding of God's written Word, the Bible. To grow in God's grace happens by God's power, as you trust and obey Him, but the means is through His truth. That's why Peter speaks so adamantly against false prophets and false teachers. It's said you are what you think. Your beliefs drive your behaviors. Putting God's truth in your mind overcomes errors, lies, all that is counterfeit. You can't grow in grace without growing in knowledge, in knowing who and what you believe. You can see this in your own life, through countless examples of daily decisions. The more you know the better you can do, if you do what you know. For Christians, this is done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**4- Trust and obey God's truth in the Bible.** When Peter talks about growing in knowledge, he speaks about knowing God's truth as revealed in the Bible, showing us who God is and why He wants His people to become like Him. When in Romans 8 the apostle Paul says, "*for I am sure*" about God's everlasting love for His people in Christ, this is because he has been persuaded and convinced by the Word of God. It is the truth of God that overcomes error and evil in your life. When you pray "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" and "*deliver us from evil*" you are acknowledging that God's grace-provision is His truth, written down in Scripture, to overcome evil and error. Put God's truth in your heart and mind instead of the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Trust what God says, and obey Him. Choose to obey His truth with your will, by the power of the Holy Spirit within you, as a believer in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Not some gnostic spiritual experience kind of knowledge, but God's written-down truth of the Bible, which is God's provision for His purpose of transforming His people, as in Romans 8:29.

**5- Be filled with the knowledge of God's will.** Peter acknowledges that Scripture has much to say about growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:9, "*be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, and bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*" Colossians 2:6,18, "*just as you were taught, let no one disqualify you with visions, not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body grows with a growth from God.*" Colossians 3:16, "*let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another.*" Ephesians 4:13-15, "*attain to the knowledge of the Son of God, to be no longer children tossed about by every wind of doctrine and crafty deceitful schemes, but growing up in every way into Christ who is the Head of the body.*"

You know God's will by what He has written in the Bible. How can you do these things? Believers trust and obey the Lord - what God has written down, as they live in the power of the Holy Spirit. 2Peter 1:5-8 says, growing, increasing in this way "*keeps you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ,*" to bring glory to Him on your entrance into His eternal kingdom. So it's not just how much you know, it's how much you grow, to glorify Him! ☐