

Series: Additions to Faith

Title: "Knowledge"

Text: 2 Peter 1:1-10

Introduction

Today we will continue our study of 2 Peter Chapter One's seven additions to faith. Last week we studied the first thing we need to add to our faith is virtue.

Virtue comes from the Latin word "virtus," which means manly strength or courage. The biblical definition of virtue is zeal for moral excellence, goodness, and faithfulness. Virtue distinguishes between what is right and what is wrong in your conduct. To add virtue to your life, you have to take a good look at how you're acting and admit when you could have behaved better. The next time you have the chance, you remember and act better.

The second rung on the ladder of spiritual growth is knowledge. Peter says you need to add it to your faith. The word "knowledge" comes from the Greek noun *gnōsis*, which means to seek after a deeper understanding of spiritual truths.

As believers, we learn the ways of Christ by investigating and studying God's Word. In verse 2, Peter talks about "knowing God" in connection with salvation. He says it is part of the basis that comes with faith.

But now, in verse 5, he's talking about knowledge of the scriptures that helps us live the Christian life. At some point, it's time to start learning some spiritual lessons and begin to grow.

One way is to take a few minutes to review the lessons God has already taught you through your personal experiences. What has God taught you? What have you learned? Write it down. Make it part of the spiritual knowledge base on which you can build. It also helps to ask other mature Christians how they handle difficult struggles. Most of them would be happy to share their insights and experiences with you.

No one is immune to the hard lesson of life. A wise person will seek after the knowledge of God's ways and his word. We learned that virtue will cause you to put your faith into action, but without knowledge, virtue can become misdirected zeal or even wild fanaticism. Virtue without knowledge is like a library with no books. Without knowledge, virtue has no way to support its purpose.

Saul of Tarsus zealously persecuted Christians from city to city, convinced he was doing God's work. But when he encounters Christ on the road to Damascus, he learns from his mistake and becomes a devoted follower of Christ.

The Holy Spirit transforms the same intensity that caused him to destroy Christians into apostolic authority that argues on their behalf. Why? Because he now knows the reality of Christ's resurrection and power personally.

The difference is that when Paul persecuted the church, he was definitely zealous but lacked the proper knowledge. Paul later claims that it was in ignorance that he persecuted the church. He didn't have a proper understanding of Christ. Paul was an example of virtue without knowledge and demonstrated it can actually pervert your perception of God.

Virtue without knowledge is belief without proper direction. The knowledge of God is what guides us into light and truth. So Paul says to start with faith. But Peter says to add to your faith virtue, and then add to your virtue what? Knowledge.

I. Spiritual Knowledge

Of course, we're talking about developing spiritual knowledge. But to gain insight to develop spiritual knowledge, we can learn from how we acquire natural knowledge. Natural knowledge is developed based on our experience, environment, background, and training.

There is an abundance of facts and information available to anyone willing to apply themselves to the learning process. Natural knowledge is received through natural means. We use our five natural senses to verify and examine data. Through reason and evaluation, we draw conclusions about our world. And what's true naturally is also true spiritually.

God has designed that our evaluation of the natural world should become a springboard into spiritual knowledge. The problem is, because of sin, a distorted view of natural knowledge causes us to disregard God's perspective in favor of our own humanistic view. Paul writes in Romans Chapter One, "For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," ([Romans 1:20 NKJV](#))

A proper study of the natural world should always lead us to discover the spiritual world. King David wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork." ([Psalms 19:1 NKJV](#))

A proper evaluation of natural knowledge should guide us to spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge transcends natural knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is the knowledge that reveals to us the spirit world. Whenever that knowledge is distorted or perverted, it becomes destructive and dehumanizing.

Proper spiritual knowledge reveals the value that God places upon all of creation and especially all of humanity. The revelation of this truth is why Christ came to earth. And it is why the Holy Spirit continues to reveal and inspire God's word to his followers.

II. Holy Spirit Directed Knowledge

Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you." (John 16:13-14)

Jesus also said, " That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6)

The Apostle Paul writes, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." (1 Corinthians 2:12)

And he says, "Those are the things I am teaching you, not in the same words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches comparing spiritual things with spiritual." He goes on to say, "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one." (1 Corinthians 2:13-15)

The carnal person does not accept the teaching of the Holy Spirit because it seems foolish to them. But when we receive Christ, we receive a new nature and become what we call "born again." God replaces our old sinful, human nature with a new spiritual, Christ-like nature and replaces our old sinful thought life with a new Spirit-controlled thought life so that, as Paul says, "We have the mind of Christ."

So there is natural knowledge, and then there is spiritual knowledge given by Christ and revealed by the Holy Spirit. But there is also supernatural knowledge.

III. A Supernatural Word of Knowledge

1 Corinthians Chapter 12 calls it a supernatural Word of Knowledge. Paul's insight on this revelation of knowledge is very helpful.

God is Omniscient. All-knowing! A supernatural word of knowledge is a small part of God's infinite knowledge, which the Holy Spirit supernaturally reveals to equip a believer for ministry of a specific task or purpose in the will of God.

A Word of Knowledge is not accumulative knowledge. Once its purpose is achieved, it is of no further value. A Word of knowledge is something revealed by the Holy Spirit of specific facts and information that you could not possibly know unless told to you by the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this knowledge is to instruct, edify and cause people to know and do the will of God.

In truth, all of the gifts of the Spirit are given by Christ to build up and encourage people to know and embrace God's salvation and blessings.

There is natural knowledge that is received by natural means through the sense-dominated world we live in. There is spiritual knowledge acquired by studying the Word of God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And there is the supernatural word of knowledge the Holy Spirit reveals to you of specific facts and information to encourage and help someone.

Those are awesome experiences, but we must remember that God is the source of all knowledge. Satan perverts knowledge, but the Holy Spirit reveals true knowledge.

You can't rely upon supernatural gifts of knowledge to live the Christian life! The greatest source of knowledge is the revealed Word of God, the Bible. We need to learn and develop biblical knowledge and add that knowledge to our faith and virtue.

Biblical and spiritual knowledge is learning to think with the mind of Christ. Before Christ, we think with the carnal, sinful mind. But when we become Christians, we study the Bible and begin to think with the mind of Christ, which causes us to know God's purposes and plan.

2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that doesn't need to be ashamed, because you rightly divide the word of truth."

Conclusion

There are no shortcuts to success. If you want to learn, you have to be willing to study. Whether it's natural or spiritual knowledge, you've got to study if you intend to increase your understanding.

Solomon wrote, "Yes, if you cry out for discernment, *And* lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, *And* search for her as *for* hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, *And* find the knowledge of God." ([Proverbs 2:3-5](#))

David prayed, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in thy commandments." We cannot rise above the natural, we cannot rise above our problems and circumstances, and we cannot rise above our limitations until we listen to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to teach us the spiritual knowledge of life in Christ.

The carnal mind cannot discern the things of the Spirit, so Christ gives us a new nature and a renewed mind that can understand the spirit world. But it is still up to us! It is our choice and responsibility to develop and renew our minds through studying and applying the scriptures. And the New Testament truth is God will not

take you any further than you are willing to go. He will not force you to learn His spiritual laws and principles that govern the spiritual realm.

Don't wait until you get to heaven before you start learning spiritual truths. Add the knowledge of God to your virtue today!

We need to develop spiritual knowledge, but we also need to have a desire to be used of God in spiritual ministry. God wants us to experience His supernatural realities and know Him in Spirit and in Truth.

Peter challenges us to learn and know the true source of all wisdom and knowledge and apply ourselves to studying and understanding the scriptures under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit.

He says that through Christ's divine power, glory and virtue, God has given us everything that *pertains* to life and godliness.

It is Christ who imparts this knowledge to us by means of the scriptures and the help of the Holy Spirit. Through God's exceedingly great and precious promises, we partake of the divine nature, and escape the corruption and lust in the world.

And for this very reason, Peter says to give all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue what? Knowledge!