

Lesson 5: Knowledge (2 Peter 1:5, 10)**What is Knowledge?**

According to 2 Peter 1:5-6, knowledge is to be arranged with faith and virtue in the Christian's life. As we shall see in this class, a virtuous learning of knowledge leads to the wisdom of Christ, distinguishing it from the flawed and false knowledge described repeatedly in the New Testament (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 3:7; Matt 11:25; Lk 11:52; 1 Cor 1:26; 2:1; 2 Cor 1:12; Col 2:23; James 3:15).

The term for knowledge in 2 Peter 1:5 is the most general Greek term for "knowledge" -- *gnosis*. This term can indicate either a true or false knowledge, a general or specific knowledge. There are more specific and intensive forms of knowledge described in the New Testament – e.g., "recognition" (*epignosis*), "wisdom" (*sophia*), and "insight" (*aisthēsis*). Each of these other types of knowledge are often paired together synonymously with general *gnosis* knowledge (Prov 2:6; Col 2:3; Rom 11:33; Eph 1:17; Col 1:9; Isa 63:16 Hosea 4:6), but these are types of knowledge that are complete, truthful, insightfully applied, and/or supportive of good judgment. We will look at all of this more closely in class, and will find it important that knowledge is supplied in faith and virtue (2 Peter 1:5-6), because that is the knowledge that grows up into true knowledge, wisdom, and prudence.

Exercise #1:

According to the following verses, what should Christians know? In each of these cases, how would it be possible to corrupt your learning, so that your knowledge is not virtuous?

- God (Romans 11:33; Titus 1:16)
- Christ (2 Cor 2:14; Eph 3:19; Rom 11:33-34; 1 Cor 13:12)
- Truth (1 Timothy 2:4; Mark 12:24; Romans 1:32)
- Morality (1 Thess 4:4; Rom 5:3; Rom 6:16; 1 Cor 8:1ff)
- Providence (Romans 8:28; Philippians 1:19)

Why Knowledge?

Learning is not an end in itself in the New Testament (e.g., 2 Tim 3:7 – "always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth"), but is to be directed toward the purpose that God has given us. In class we will study how to discipline our learning so that it is purpose-driven. Complete the following exercise to help you develop knowledge that has God as its goal.

Exercise #2

What are the purposes of knowledge according to the following passages?

1. How should it affect our speech and behavior? Luke 21:15; Acts 6:10; Rom 15:14; Col 1:2; 2 Cor 5:11
2. How should it affect our life together in the church? 1 Corinthians 3:10; 1 Corinthians 6:5
3. How should it affect our attitude? 2 Peter 1:2

How Knowledge?

According to the New Testament, knowledge comes through prayer (Col 1:9; James 1:5), study of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15), and mutual instruction, e.g., in singing (2 Tim 3:15). We have evidence in the Gospels that Jesus was a model of all of these behaviors. In addition, Jesus exhibited a *mindset* that is specifically and repeatedly identified as important to learning and obtaining the knowledge and wisdom of Christ.

Exercise #3:

What do the following verses identify as an attitude of Jesus and Christians that leads to virtuous knowledge? What are actions in which this attitude is expressed?

Matthew 11:29;

James 1:21; 3:13

2 Corinthians 10:1

2 Timothy 2:2