

2 Peter 1:5-7

KNOWLEDGE IS IMPORTANT, BUT...

study #2

Knowledge is in our key passage.

(2 Pet. 1:5-7)

1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue **knowledge**; **1:6** And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; **1:7** And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

Knowing the Lord Jesus enables fruitfulness.

(2 Pet. 1:8-11)

1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **1:9** But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. **1:10** Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: **1:11** For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

So knowledge is necessary, but it can not stand alone.

The Bible is not opposed to true knowledge, science, or reason, but knowledge requires a solid foundation. Faith which comes first saves and humbles the believer. Virtue comes second and involves the desire to please God based on faith, as seen in Hebrews chapter 11, the great 'by faith' chapter.

Knowledge comes third and is aimed at helping the believer know what to do and how to do it. For instance, God told Noah how to build the ark, but his faith and desire to please God were foundational prerequisites. Without the faith foundation and God-given purpose (virtue), knowledge is corrupt and leads to pride (1 Cor. 8:1) rather than loving service.

Knowledge is stressed everywhere today. Yet, how knowledge fits in God's design is little understood, even by God's people. One reason is because **2 Pet. 1:1-11** is rarely studied and secular views of education have a powerful impact. Peter shows that knowledge is important but is not number one.

KNOWLEDGE is important but not number one.

Mark the lines (as completed) below as either correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).

A	() The most important knowledge is knowing God.
A-1	() Knowing the Lord Jesus is knowing God (1:2,8, 3:18).
A-2	() Having faith in 1:5 is the same as knowing God in 1:1-2.
A-3	() God's power is available to those who know the Lord (1:3).
A-4	() Knowing God is discovering who Jesus really is (1:16-18).
A-5	() Peter did not care much about knowledge in general (1:1-8).
B	() Many who claim to know the Lord do not.
B-1	() The false teachers described in Second Peter chapter two did not know the Lord.
B-2	() Like crazy Balaam, the false teachers knew how to make money (2:3, 14-16).
B-3	() Those who know God are not forgetful (1:9, 12-19, 2:15, 20-22, 3:1-9).
B-4	() The false teachers in 2 Pet. 2:18 and Jude 16 seemed to be scholarly.
B-5	() Those who lack self-control do not really know the Lord (2:12, 20).
B-6	() Much of what is called knowledge is error (3:16-18, 1 Tim. 6:20).
C	() Growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus is important for all believers.
C-1	() Peter stressed the importance of growing in biblical knowledge (1:5-6, 19, 3:18).
C-2	() Peter stressed the importance of rightly understanding the Day of the Lord (3:8-15).
C-3	() The knowledge Peter wrote of in 1:5-6 and 3:18 goes beyond the knowledge in 1:2-3.
C-4	() Paul encouraged Timothy to get as much education as possible (1 Tim. 4:12-16).
C-5	() Those who want to serve the Lord (i.e. have virtue) will want to learn about Him.
C-6	() Those who grow in the knowledge of the Lord will not go astray (3:17-18).
C-7	() Growing in knowledge helps with self-control and endurance (1:5-6).
C-8	() knowledge without a faith foundation leads to pride (1 Cor. 8:1).
C-9	() Growing in Bible knowledge makes fruitfulness possible (1:4, 8).
C-10	() Bible colleges are not just to train preachers.

The lines above cover three aspects of knowledge: A.) in evangelism, B.) in false teaching, and C.) in edification and growth. For comments on these lines, see the discussion on the following pages.

The following discussion was overheard in a Christian Education class at fictional Quest Bible College. Those present were discussing the points on the worksheet for this study on the previous page.

Dr. Ed (on knowledge being overly stressed by many)

Today, we are focusing on our philosophy of education and the role of knowledge in the Christian life. This desperately needs to be studied, because one of the most wide-spread errors in the world today is the view that knowledge and education are more important than anything else. Knowing God really is the most important thing in life (A), but that is not the knowledge that most people have in mind. There is much disagreement about knowledge. So we need to talk about the several controversial lines on our worksheet.

Theo (on knowing the Lord and experiencing his power)

I believe that having faith in 1:5 is the same as knowing the Lord in 1:1-2 (A-2), but 'God's power' in line A-3 needs to be defined. Those that know the Lord have access to God's divine power for sanctification (1:3-4) not in order to try to act like God is selfish or showy ways. Moreover, knowledge in Peter's virtue set (1:5-7) seems to be for a holy purpose, since it is followed by self-control (C-7). If we are truly born again, knowing more about the Lord should help us to be more like him. The false teachers knew a lot (2:21) and sounded scholarly (B-4), but they were unsaved. So their knowledge led to pride (C-8) rather than to holiness (B-5)!

Dr. Ed (on knowledge and being a moral example)

Great points, Theo. Peter's futuristic emphasis in chapter three (C-2) also seemed to be aimed at sanctification and service. How different this is from the false teachers who covet knowledge in order to be better speakers (2:18, B-4) rather than in order to be better examples. By the way, Paul did not tell Timothy to get as much education as possible (C-4). Rather he told him to spend time in the Word and be a good example (1 Tim. 4:12-16).

Red (on sanctification and service)

I read in the class notes that knowledge, self-control, and endurance in Peter's set of virtues are primarily about sanctification, and the final three virtues – godliness, brotherly-love, and *agape* – are aspects of service. This is the same order, sanctification followed by service, that I read about back in First Peter 4:1-11.

Ichiro (on Peter's virtue set being for every believer)

We are all supposed to serve the Lord, right? That's why I love the point about all believers needing to grow in biblical knowledge (C). I may or may not become a preacher someday, but I am here to learn the Bible and serve the Lord better no matter what. Sadly most pastors back in Japan disagree with line C-10. There, you usually have to say that you are called to full-time ministry in order to be accepted at a Bible College. That is one reason why we do not have many laymen who know the Bible well in Japanese churches like there are here in North America.

Dr. Ed (on professionalism and nuclear physics)

That's sad, Ichiro, but we are glad that you are here at Quest Bible College. From what I have heard, professionalism is emphasized more in Japan than here. That's probably why formal Bible education is viewed almost exclusively as pastoral training. Sadly, many think that way here too. Finally, as for what kind of knowledge Peter was interested in, he mostly wrote about biblical knowledge rather than knowledge in general. Yet, in his final chapter God enabled him to write about topics related to geology, physics, and astronomy (3:10-13). Line A-5 is mostly incorrect.

The following discussion was overheard in a Theology class at fictional Quest Bible College. Those present were discussing the points on the worksheet for this study on an earlier page.

Dr. Theoris (on seeing theology in today's worksheet)

The lines on today's worksheet involve various theological topics. So I'd like each of you to choose a line or two and talk about the theology involved. I'm looking for clear thinking, rather than fancy terminology, and I'll give you ten minutes to work on it. You can help each other if you like.

[ten minutes later] — Probably Theo would like to go first, but I'm afraid he might say so much that it would spoil it for others. So how about you getting us started, Frank?

Frank (on how seeking knowledge can become sinful)

Ok, but Theo helped me a lot and suggested that I say that line C-8 is about the doctrine of sin and connect it to what happened in Genesis chapter three. According to Theo, Adam and Eve lusted for God-like knowledge instead of obediently submitting to the Lord. His main point was that the pride problem raised in 1 Cor. 8:1 is the same as the problem in the garden. People seek knowledge in selfish, independent ways, rather than starting with God and faith.

I appreciate Theo's help, but, frankly, the simple point I got out of line C-8, Peter's virtue order, and various passages is that Bible teachers who do not put God first are dangerous and satanic even if they sound scholarly (B-4). Once again, simple is better!

Dr. Theoris (a question about Second Peter chapter three)

Thanks for putting it simply in your own words at the end, Frank. That's what I'm looking for. By the way, did anyone notice that line C-2 is about the doctrine of future things. The technical term for this is eschatology, but let's keep the terminology simple.

Tim (on the practical nature of eschatology)

Second Peter chapter three is about time, past time, the flood, as well as the future. I marked line C-2 correct, but there is more to Peter's emphasis than just the Day of the Lord. Past judgments point to the certainty of future ones. Knowing this helps us endure persecution and live holy lives (C-7). So the doctrine of future things is practical theology for us now.

Jack (on the relationship between faith and knowledge)

Knowing the Lord Jesus and who HE really is connects us to God the Father (A-1, A-4). Peter stressed this up front in Second Peter chapter one and there is a lot about it in John's Gospel as well. To me, one of the most important lines on today's worksheet is line A-2, because it shows that the foundational faith in Peter's set of virtues is knowing God in Christ. So saving faith is not a leap in the dark; it is a kind of knowledge. It is Christ-centered discovery. So faith and knowledge are not polar opposites. They are more like brothers or first cousins.

Dr. Theoris (on the two words for knowledge that Peter used)

When you look at the terms for knowledge that Peter used, the closeness become even more clear. The term used in 1:2, 1:3, and 1:8, which basically means discovery, is much like but still different from the more general term for knowledge used in 1:5, 1:6, and 3:18. The general term used in Peter's set of virtues is a call to go beyond initial discovery and saving faith (C-3). Thus, Peter's theology is a theology of growth. Growing in our knowledge of Christ through the Scriptures (1:19) helps keep us from going astray (3:17-18). Line C-6 is correct, but I would like to change the wording a little, to make it more clear that daily growth is what matters most.

The following discussion was overheard in [a Christian Ministry class](#) at Quest Bible College. Those present were discussing the points on the worksheet for this study on an earlier page.

Mr. Carey (on three areas of struggle in ministry)

Christian ministry is difficult, but it is the only thing in the world that is worth all the trouble. Today's worksheet covers three areas of struggle: evangelism in the A section, false teaching in the B section, and edification in the longer C section. Instead of discussing the various worksheet points as we usually do, today, I have three short presentations from Quest faculty members.

Dr. Evans (from a short clip on evangelism)

Why is evangelism such a struggle? One problem is that many reject the Lord Jesus and his miracles. They disagree with lines A-1 and A-4. To deal with this, I focus on the Gospels and stress the fact that many miracles were public. (Notice in 2 Pet. 1:16-18 that Peter referred to witnessing the transfiguration.) We have not followed cunningly devised fable. Many today also believe that Christians reject science. So they agree with line A-5, which is actually false. There is a lot about science in Second Peter chapter three.

Dr. Theoris (from a short clip on dealing with false Christianity)

Regarding false teachers, a great variety of people and problems come to mind. So specific doctrinal subjects such as inspiration (1:19-21, 2:18), the centrality of Christ (1:1-2, 17, B-6), the love of money (2:3, 14-16, B-2), and godly speech (2:12,18, B-4) could be taught, but it is difficult to cover everything. Peter knew this. So before he wrote a word about the false teachers in chapter two, he gave us God's pattern for life in chapter one. His eight virtues summarize everything! Growing in Christ according to this pattern protects us from all false teaching (3:17-18, C-6).

Dr. Quest (from a short clip on growing in Christ)

Growing in Christ was Peter's main positive focus (1:1-11, 3:18). Why? Well, it is because Christian workers as well as laypeople mostly fail because they do not grow in Christ according to God's plan (1:5-7) rather than because they have not studied enough psychology or sociology (C-1, C-9). Did you notice the warnings about failure in 1:8-10?

Moreover, growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ (3:18) means increasing in line with all that is set forth in 2 Pet. 1:5-7. (See 1:8.) It is not just about storing facts in our heads. The bottom-line is not how much we know. It is how much of it we are putting into practice in ministry toward God (godliness) and others (brotherly-love, and *agape*).

Mr. Carey (concluding remarks on how to have a fulfilled life)

Our purpose as a Bible college is to help fulfill the great commission. This, of course, includes imparting knowledge, but what about the other virtues in 2 Pet. 1:5-7? For instance, did you spend quality time with the Lord in personal devotions this morning or did you neglect to do so because you have a test? It is easy and natural for us as students and teachers to stress knowledge and neglect godliness. Doing so will surely lead to needless (1:3-4), eternal loss (1:8-11).

my application
