

“To Virtue Knowledge”

2 Peter 1:5

In Peter’s prescription for building Christian character and preventing apostasy (2 Pet. 1:5-11), *knowledge* is to be added to virtue. In part, to have knowledge is to be aware of something, to apprehend as true, to distinguish between good and bad, to know that which may be known. Jehovah has gone to great lengths to make certain things known to man through angels, prophets, teachers, preachers and most notably his Son (Heb. 1:2), the exclusive Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 12:24; 1 Tim. 2:5). Moses recorded that God has chosen not to make some things known, but “...*those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever (Deut. 29:29).*” God’s revelation has always been directed exclusively toward man, to make His will known. It is up to man at that point to take that which may be known (what has been revealed) and transform it into knowledge through the learning process.

Knowledge, or the lack of it, has played a key role in mankind’s spiritual, psychological and physical condition from the beginning. Sadly though, Adam and Eve did not learn from what God had made known to them and died spiritually and physically as a result. We must be aware, though the first sin brought evil upon Adam's race, that sin is forced upon no one and that there has always been an alternative. Genesis 3:22 states that, “...*the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.*” Just as we can know evil, we can know good and make a rational choice between the two, though it is clear that we cannot do it perfectly (Rom. 3:10, 23; 1 Jn. 1:8-10). It is expected that through attentively listening and learning that we become increasingly better at discerning between good and evil, and that we be able to teach others to do the same (Heb. 5:12-14). Ungodly teachers, would have us to believe that good and evil are relative terms having no concrete definition, but God would have us to know that they are relative only to His will. Since human wisdom alone is bound to the frailties of the flesh, knowledge of good and evil has often become confused (Isaiah 5:20). Man's only hope in clearing the confusion is in the knowledge that is found of God (Prov. 2:5) and certainly not in any attitude that would exclude God from man's knowledge (Rom. 1:28). Ultimately, it is knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:2-4), expressed inerrantly through the scriptures (2 Pet. 1:20-21), that frees man from sin (Jn. 8:31-36), equips him for godly service (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and prepares him for eternity with the Lord (1 Jn. 5:13).

The apostle Paul prayed that love would abound in knowledge (Phil. 1:9) and counted the knowledge of Christ worth the loss of all other things (Phil. 3:8). He also speaks of the putting on of the new man, “...*which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him (Col. 3:10).*” Finally, grace and peace is multiplied through the knowledge of God and Christ (2 Pet. 1:2). Is knowledge not worth the adding to virtue?

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