



CALLIT

Q U I T S

Quit Pursuing the World

DAY 1- Knowledge??

At college graduations something that always catches my attention, and curiosity, are those members of the faculty that have earned high degrees in multiple disciplines. One of my professors had 5 doctorates. That's a lot of schooling. It reminds me that some people enjoy learning so much they can become "professional students". They never stop learning, but go on from one subject to another.

In the time of the early church, the Greeks had a love of learning and knowledge. Because of this, they developed various schools of learning with Hippocrates, a Greek doctor who made many contributions to medicine, founding the first school of medicine, and was the first place where medicine was separated from philosophy and religion.

In his second Epistle, Peter refers to "knowledge" 5 times in his opening statements (vv 2, 3, 5, 6 & 8). Because of the Greek influence and understanding of knowledge, and our thinking today, it is important for us to understand what the "knowledge" that Peter is describing is, and what it is not?

Peter uses two different words to describe knowledge. The first is epignōsis. This type of knowledge is used to describe the state of knowing another person. This knowledge is not just being aware of another's existence, but the knowledge that comes from being in a relationship with the other person.

This was the type of knowledge Peter was referring to when he said;

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (v 2)

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (v 3)

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (v 8)

As believers, we need to have a growing knowledge of Jesus. This can only be achieved as we stay in

relationship with him through the Holy Spirit.

The other word for knowledge is gnōsis and is used to describe the understanding one gets from learning and experience. You can see this in verses 5-6 as Peter describes a progression of one growing in goodness and knowledge and finally self-control.

Peter was not describing this "knowledge" in regards to obtaining salvation. As James declared "Even the demons believe that (in God)—and shudder." (Ja 2:19). Sadly, this is the case for many today. They believe that Jesus existed and was a great moral teacher, but their knowledge of Jesus ends there. We'll explore knowledge deeper in our remaining lessons.

Things To Ponder

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DAY 2- *Everything You Need*

Earlier I described how we need to “Cast all your anxiety on him” (2 Pe 5:7). Most would agree that this is easier said than done. We all have a tendency to hold on to worry. But why?

The need to control one’s environment is a foundational part of what we would call “original sin”. That desire to be in control so that we can determine our own outcomes. Adam and Eve wanted to be like God. They wanted to control their lives without God. We can hold on to worry thinking we can control things and make everything right.

This want to control also points to a fundamental problem of trust. We may hold on to worry because we simply don’t trust God. We may not trust that God can or will resolve the problem the way we want it resolved. We may find ourselves thinking, subconsciously of course, “If only God would do what we think is best”. That’s how Adam and Eve acted out their lack of trust in God.

We also hold on to worry because we know what must be done and choose not to. Why? Usually because what must be done requires a change on our part, and we don’t like to change, we prefer others’ change for us. Again, control over others.

Eventually worry begins to wear us down. We hold onto the false idea, the lie that we can control things, people, situations. But we can’t. So we worry more as anxiety starts to set and the walls of worry seem to press in harder and harder.

Once again God’s solution is simple yet hard to do. We must humble ourselves before God. Peter told his readers, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time” (2 Pe 5:6). The idea of being humble before God goes against our sinful nature. We want to be in control. We want to be the master of our life.

But when we finally humble ourselves and acknowledge God’s authority we find relief. God wants to take the burdens of life off of our shoulders so that under his mighty hand we can find joy and peace. King David said, “He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.” (Ps 25:9).

If you’re experiencing a time of worry and anxiety, know that God loves and cares for you. He wants you to take your anxiety to him and trade it for joy and peace as he lifts you up. Know that “the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory” (Ps 149:4). You can experience victory over worry.

Things To Ponder

What steps would you take to make sure you had everything you needed if you were taking a long trip? What would be the spiritual implications of this for life?

What are your favorite promises from God in the Bible? How do you find strength in remembering God’s promises?

Do you find yourself being drawn back to the corruption of this world? How can you find strength in God to not fall back into sin?

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DAY 3- *Essential Christian Values*

Although the exact list can vary, health professionals tell us that in order to be healthy we need to eat a well balanced variety of foods from the various food groups. The idea is that each food group helps provide various nutrients our body needs, but that no one group has everything. Therefore, as we eat a balanced diet we'll get the nutrients we need to be healthy.

(FYI, there have been some great studies done on the health benefits of dark chocolate)

In his letter, Peter has just talked about believers growing in grace and peace in God, participating in the divine nature through Jesus. But to this point, it has only been "theoretical" in discussion. Peter now turns his attention to the practicality of how one can actively live one's life so they will not be ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge (epignōsis) of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pe 1:8). Peter then goes on to list a progression of virtues or qualities. Please take a moment to read 2 Peter 1:5-8.

Peter begins with a clarification statement "for this very reason" (v 5) which forces the reader to look back at what was just discussed. Because of the new birth and the promises associated with it, Christians participate in the divine nature.

But this new birth does not rule human activity but shows the need to be growing in our relationship with God and Jesus as Peter tells the believers to "make every effort to add to your faith" (v 5). The Christian life is not to be sedentary or stagnant, but alive and flourishing, always building, always growing.

A quick glance at Peter's list of virtues (vv 5-7) is similar to Paul's list of the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Both list goodness, self-control and love, while the remaining items all share similar themes. And while they are not the requirement for salvation, these attributes should be found in every believer's life as evidence of their salvation in Jesus.

Let's look at the virtues that believers should be adding to their faith: goodness, knowledge (gnōsis), self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, love (vv 5-7). We'll not go into each, but rather will talk about some general principles. First, and maybe most important, the list should NOT be interpreted as

a progression from one to the next. This interpretation can result in a mindset that one can never move on to the next, until one masters the first.

Second, all the qualities listed should be evident in the believers life, although their degrees of maturity may vary. Maybe you are doing good on goodness, but you see areas where self-control may be lacking. Or maybe mutual affection for other believers is good, but you need to work on loving your enemy.

Third, the attributes are to be possessed in "increasing measure" (v 8). The Holy Spirit is never done shaping us into the image of Jesus on this side of eternity. Last, know that possessing these qualities in increasing measure will "keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge (epignōsis) of the Lord Jesus Christ" (v 8). Let me close with this thought. Although we tend to think of the great commission (Mt 28:19-20) first, in the early church the goal of every believer was simply to know (epignōsis) and become like Jesus (2 Pe 3:18, Eph 1:17, Phil 3:10, 1 Cor 2:2). Everything else was secondary.

Things To Ponder

How would you compare the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) with Peter's list (2 Pe 1:5-7)? Similarities and differences.

How does thinking about the qualities Peter lists as not being progressive help you in your spiritual growth?

How can understanding that a believer's first goal is to be like Jesus help you grow? What can it free you from?

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DAY 4- A Warning & A Change

The Greek language does not contain punctuation, leaving the translators to determine punctuation and placing of paragraphs. In the NIV verses 3-9 and 10-11 are separate paragraphs, while in the NET verses 3-11 are one large paragraph. Most times this is not a cause for concern when interpreting a passage from the Bible, but it is something that the reader should know and understand. Thus my recommendation to always compare multiple translations.

A great Bible study method is to first identify some specific types of keywords in the passage. In this example we'll focus on how Peter uses words to either contrast, compare, or summarize his thoughts.

(I've highlighted them in bold)

But whoever does not have them is nearsighted **and** blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. **For if** you do these things, **you will** never stumble, and **you will** receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pe 1:9-11)

Earlier Peter listed qualities that every believer should have in increasing measure (vv 5-7). Now he contrasts this with those who do not have these qualities as being "nearsighted and blind" (v 9). Interesting - can you be both nearsighted and blind at the same time? No, not literally. Peter uses the two hyperboles in combination as a metaphor depicting the fact that they have lost sight of the most important reality: God's forgiveness of their sin.

Peter's use of "therefore" (v 10) forces the reader to a decision point or self evaluation to confirm, or make sure of their "calling and election" (v 10). While there are differing viewpoints on the use of "election" here, there is universal agreement that all believers have been called by God to repentance.

Peter then lists two things his readers can rely on "if you do these things", referring back to verses 5-7. First you will never stumble (v 10), or as the NET lists "stumble into sin". Some have argued that "the loss of salvation" is in view here, but the meaning of "suffer

a reverse or misfortune" for stumble better fits the context. If a believer is adding to their faith: goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, love, then they should not easily stumble in their faith and walk with Jesus.

Second, "you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v 11). When believers pass from this life to eternity Jesus is waiting to welcome them into God's eternal kingdom. Christians long to hear the words from Jesus, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Mt 25:21, 23).

Things To Ponder

How can reading multiple Bible versions help you better understand God's word?

How does the use of hyperboles "nearsighted and blind" help you understand the importance of having the qualities he lists in verses 5-7?

How easily have you "stumbled" in your relationship with Jesus? How can having the qualities Peter lists in verses 5-7 help you not to?

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DAY 5-Life Application

In this devotional and series of lessons, we have explored **2 Peter 1:2-11**. This final lesson is unique in that it is time for me to stop talking (writing) and for you to do some Bible study and journaling. .

This is totally optional, but here is what I would like you to do.

1. Get maybe 2 or 3 of your favorite versions of the Bible.
2. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you something new, something you never really noticed before.
3. Read **2 Peter 2** at least twice - slowly.
4. Now read the questions below and write down some thoughts and observations. This is just for you, I'll not ask you to share any of it.

Digging Deeper

Main Point - What do you see as the main point or idea the writer wanted to convey?

Learning - What was one new thing you learned or was reminded of from this scripture passage?

Life Application - How can applying what you have learned help you grow?

Next Step - What is the next step you can do to apply what you have learned?

References

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