

Executable Outlines

Jesus, The Way



Growing In The Knowledge Of Jesus Christ

"GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST"
Developing A Christ-Like Character

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The **Second Epistle of Peter** is certainly a poignant letter ...
 - Written with an awareness that his death was imminent - **2 Pe 1:14**
 - Warning that false teachers would seek to lead them astray - **2 Pe 2:1-2**
 - With a hope that they would be mindful of the commandments given to them by the apostles of Jesus Christ - **2 Pe 3:1-2**

2. The final command this aged apostle leaves his readers is a charge to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" - cf. **2 Pe 3:18**
 - What does it mean to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ?
 - How can we be sure that we are growing in this "knowledge"?

3. With this lesson, we begin a series entitled "**Growing In The Knowledge Of Jesus Christ**" ...
 - To define what Peter had in mind when he gave us his final charge
 - To encourage growth and development in this "knowledge" of Jesus

[We are not left to wonder what Peter had in mind, for in **2 Pe 1:5-8** we learn...]

II. WHAT IT MEANS TO GROW IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF EIGHT GRACES ...

1. These "graces" are listed in **2 Pe 1:5-7**

2. Briefly defined ...

- (1) **Faith** is "conviction, strong assurance"
- (2) **Virtue** is "moral excellence, goodness"
- (3) **Knowledge** is "correct insight"
- (4) **Self-control** is "self-discipline"
- (5) **Perseverance** is "bearing up under trials"
- (6) **Godliness** is "godly character out of devotion to God"
- (7) **Brotherly kindness** is "love toward brethren"
- (8) **Love** is "active goodwill toward others"

3. Now note carefully **2 Pe 1:8**

- We must "abound" in these eight graces
- Only then can it be said that we are "growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ"

4. It is more than simply increasing our "intellectual" knowledge of Jesus!

- Such knowledge has a place, but it is just one of the graces necessary
- Peter is talking about growing in a fuller and personal knowledge of Jesus Christ!
 - Which comes by developing the "Christ-like" attributes listed in this passage
 - The more we grow in these "graces", the more we really "know" Jesus

(for He is the perfect personification of these "graces")

5. That it involves more than intellectual knowledge is also evident from the Greek word used for knowledge in **2 Pe 1:2-3,8**

- The word is **epignosis** {ep-ig'-no-sis}, meaning "to become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly, to know accurately, know well" (Thayer)
- Such knowledge comes only as we demonstrate these "Christ-like graces" in our lives

B. IN CONJUNCTION WITH EACH OTHER ...

1. Notice the word **"add"** (or "supply") in **2 Pe 1:5**

- Before each grace mentioned, the word is implied
- The word in Greek is **epichoregeo** {ep-ee-khor-ayg-eh'-o}
 - "Originally, to found and support a chorus, to lead a choir, to keep in tune"
 - "Then, to supply or provide"
- This word suggests the idea of "each grace working in harmony with the others to produce an overall effect"

2. Notice also the preposition **"to"** (or "in") in **2 Pe 1:5-7**

- This implies "each grace is to temper and make perfect the grace that goes before it"
- To illustrate this point:
 - **"to knowledge (add) self-control"**
- the grace of self-control enables one to apply properly the knowledge one has
 - **"to self-control (add) perseverance"**
- self-control in turn needs the quality of perseverance to be consistent day after day

3. Therefore each grace is necessary!

- They must all be developed in conjunction with each other
- We cannot be selective and just pick the ones we like and leave others behind

C. WITH ALL DILIGENCE ...

1. Notice the repeated use of the word "diligence" - **2 Pe 1:5,10**
2. It means "earnestness, zeal, sometimes with haste"
3. To grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ requires much effort
4. We do not "accidentally" or "naturally" develop these graces!
5. If we are not careful, we may be like the teacher in the following illustration:

In his book *Folk Psalms of Faith*, Ray Stedman tells a story of a woman who had been a school teacher for 25 years. When she heard about a job that would mean a promotion, she applied for the position. However, someone who had been teaching for only one year was hired instead. She went to the principal and asked why. The principal responded, "I'm sorry, but you haven't had 25 years of experience as you claim; you've had only one year's experience 25 times." During that whole time the teacher had not improved.

6. We may have been Christians for a number of years; but unless...

- We "add" to our faith these Christ-like qualities with all "diligence"
- We are simply repeating the first year over and over again!

[Is the effort worth it? In the context of this passage (**2 Pe 1:2-11**), Peter provides **five reasons** why we should "give all diligence" to grow in this knowledge of Jesus Christ ...]

III. REASONS TO GROW IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

A. GRACE AND PEACE ARE MULTIPLIED ...

1. Grace and peace are common forms of greeting in the New Testament

- **Grace** - a greeting which requests God's unmerited favor upon the person addressed
- **Peace** - a greeting requesting the natural result of God's favor

2. Note that these two blessings are "multiplied" in the knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2 Pe 1:2**

- All men experience God's favor and its result to some degree - cf. **Mt 5:45**
- But only in Christ can one enjoy the "fulness" of God's favor and peace - **Ep 1:3; Ph 4:6-7**

-- If you desire God's grace and peace to be "multiplied" in your life, it is through the knowledge (epignosis) of Jesus Christ; i.e., as you become more like Him!

B. ALL THINGS PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS PROVIDED ...

1. We note that God provides all things pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge (epignosis) of Him who called us to glory and virtue - **2 Pe 1:3**

- "Life" in this context refers to our spiritual life and well-being
- "Godliness" refers to the pious conduct which comes out of devotion to God

2. Only as we grow in this knowledge do we enjoy the true, full life available by God's divine power!

- Which includes "exceedingly great and precious promises" - **2 Pe 1:4a**
- Which enables us to be "partakers of the divine nature" - **2 Pe 1:4b**

- Which can free us from the "corruption that is in the world through lust" - **2 Pe 1:4c**
- If we desire to have all that God offers related to life and godliness, it comes as we develop the Christ-like character!

C. SPIRITUAL "MYOPIA" AND "AMNESIA" AVOIDED ...

1. Our religion is "shortsighted" if we are not growing in the knowledge of Jesus! - **2 Pe 1:9a**
 - For what is the ultimate objective of being a Christian?
 - Is it not to become like Christ? - cf. also **Ro 8:29; Co 3:9-11**
 - As we have seen, this is what it really means to grow in the knowledge of Christ
2. Failure to so grow indicates we have forgotten why we were redeemed by the blood of Christ in the first place! - **2 Pe 1:9b**
 - To have our sins forgiven, yes...
 - But also to become what He wants us to be - like His Son!

-- Unless we want to be guilty of forgetfulness and shortsightedness, we need to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ!

D. WE WILL NEVER STUMBLE ...

1. Peter says "if you do these things you will never stumble" - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - a. If you are diligent to make your calling and election sure
 - b. If you add to your faith virtue, etc.
 - c. If you abound in these eight graces

2. This does not mean we will never sin - cf. **1 Jn 1:8,10**

- a. The word "stumble" in Greek means "to fall into misery, become wretched; cf. the loss of salvation" (Thayer)
 - b. We will never stumble so as to fall short of our ultimate salvation!
- But this assurance is true only if we are "giving all diligence" to grow in the knowledge of Christ and thereby "making our calling and election sure"

E. AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM ...

1. This "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" - **2 Pe 1:11**

- Is the "heavenly kingdom" referred to by Paul in **2 Ti 4:18**
- In other words, the ultimate destiny of the redeemed!

2. What is meant by the idea of an "abundant entrance"?

- "You may be able to enter, not as having escaped from a shipwreck, or from fire, but as it were in triumph." (Bengel)
- By possessing the eight graces, we will be able to live victoriously in this life and to joyously anticipate what lies ahead - cf. **2 Ti 4:6-8**

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Are these not sufficient reasons to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ?

2. For through such knowledge...

- Grace and peace are multiplied
- All things pertaining to life and godliness are provided
- Spiritual myopia and amnesia are avoided
- We will never stumble
- An abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom will be ours!

3. Because such knowledge requires...

- The development of eight graces
- In conjunction with each other
- With all diligence

... I trust you will agree that a careful study of these eight "graces" which lead to **"Developing A Christ-Like Character"** is worth the effort!

REMI NDER - 8 GRACES:

- (1) **Faith** is "conviction, strong assurance"
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