

**KEYS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH
ADD KNOWLEDGE TO VIRTUE
2 PETER 1:5-7**

Introduction

We've seen that in order for a person to **GROW SPIRITUALLY** it is **FUNDAMENTALLY IMPORTANT** to begin by having a **GOOD** and **PROPER FOUNDATION** to **BUILD** upon! And there is only **ONE GOOD** and **PROPER FOUNDATION** on which to **GROW SPIRITUALLY!**

1 Corinthians 3:11—"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Matthew 7:24-27—"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

By **REPENTING OF OUR SIN** and **TRUSTING THE GOSPEL** of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, we who are **TRUE BELIEVERS**, have a **GOOD FOUNDATION** on which to **BUILD** our lives. **ALL OTHER GROUND IS SINKING SAND!**

But the FOUNDATION is just the BEGINNING of a **STRUCTURE**, **NOT THE END!** So, **PETER** goes on to challenge **BELIEVERS** to be **DILIGENT** in the matter of **ADDING TO THEIR FAITH!**

We are to **BUILD** upon that **FOUNDATION OF FAITH** that **CHRIST** has **LAI**D IN OUR LIVES WHEN HE SAVED US. **PETER** here is giving us some specific things that need to be **BUILT INTO OUR LIVES** or **ADDED TO OUR FAITH!**

In this letter, **PETER** shares with us the **LORD'S PLAN** for **BUILDING OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES!** I believe these are the **GOLD, SILVER, and PRECIOUS STONES** that **PAUL** refers to in *1 Corinthians 3:10-12*.

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Thus far we have learned that **WE MUST BE SPIRITUALLY DILIGENT ABOUT ADDING THESE THINGS.** (*vs 5*)

That means we are to **GIVE OUR BEST EFFORT** with the **AID OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** to **ADD THESE THINGS TO OUR FAITH** to bring about or **ACCOMPLISH SPIRITUAL GROWTH** in our lives! **It takes WORK! It takes EFFORT! It takes CONTINUING!**

If we are to **GROW SPIRITUALLY** then we must **HABITUALLY PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DILIGENCE!**

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We saw last week that we must **ADD "VIRTUE" TO OUR FAITH!** We should **CULTIVATE A PASSION** for "VIRTUE" in our lives! **VIRTUE refers to the COURAGEOUS PURSUIT OF MORAL EXCELLENCE.**

Remember, we said that "VIRTUE" is an **ATTITUDE** that we must have, as well as an **ACTION** that we must take.

Internally, we are to DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT. Then outwardly, we DEMONSTRATE WHAT IS RIGHT! VIRTUE is PURSUING HOLINESS in our **LIVES** as we live in an **UNHOLY WORLD!**

Notice that **PETER** goes on in *verse 5* to tell us that this "VIRTUE," (*i.e.* **HAVING A DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT**), is essential, but he doesn't stop there! **JUST DESIRING TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT IS NOT ENOUGH!**

Therefore, **PETER** instructs us to "**ADD.... KNOWLEDGE TO VIRTUE**"

By "KNOWLEDGE" **PETER** is referring to both the **INVESTIGATION** and the **COMPREHENSION OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH!**

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Simply speaking, he is saying that **WE NEED TO ADD TO VIRTUE A CONCENTRATED EFFORT OF LEARNING DOCTRINE or SPIRITUAL TRUTH!**

In other words, if we are going to become **MATURE and EFFECTIVE BELIEVERS**, we **MUST INCREASE** in **OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD and HIS WORD!**

Our only TRUE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH is the WORD OF GOD! The WORD OF GOD MUST BE the FINAL AUTHORITY in our lives!

Remember how that **2 Timothy 3:16** states that.... *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (what is right), for reproof (what is wrong), for correction (how to get right), and for instruction in righteousness (how to stay right).*

Some **CHURCHES** try to avoid **DOCTRINE**. Take away **SOUND DOCTRINE** and **CHURCH** becomes nothing more than a social club!

Just how IMPORTANT is DOCTRINE? Well let's consider that... **JESUS TAUGHT DOCTRINE!** *Matthew 7:28*—"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, **the people were astonished at his doctrine**:" (Also *Mark 1:22; 11:22* "**astonished.**" *Mark 1:27* "**amazed**")

Mark 4:2—"And he taught them many things by parables, and **said unto them in his doctrine**,"

Mark 12:38—"And he said unto them **in his doctrine**, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces"

JESUS WARNED ABOUT FALSE DOCTRINE! *Matthew 16:12*—"Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of **the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**"

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JESUS said that HIS DOCTRINE was from GOD THE FATHER! *John 7:16-17*—"Jesus answered them, and said, **My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.** 17 **If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine**, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

John 18:19—"The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of **his doctrine.**"

According to *Acts 2:42*, the early **CHURCH CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE!**

The **APOSTLES** were accused by the **HIGH PRIEST and COUNCIL** in *Acts 5:28* of having filled **JERUSALEM** with their **DOCTRINE!**

A person can't get SAVED without RIGHT DOCTRINE! *Romans 6:17* "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart **that form of doctrine which was delivered you.**"

Paul wrote that we were to avoid those with WRONG DOCTRINE! *Romans 16:17* "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;** and avoid them."

Ephesians 4:14—"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and **carried about with every wind of doctrine**, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

1 Timothy 4:13—"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to **doctrine.**"

1 Timothy 6:3-4—"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, **and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;** 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,"

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2 Timothy 4:2-3—“*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.* 3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;* “

If we want to **GROW SPIRITUALLY**, then we **MUST** become students of the precious **WORD OF GOD** who will **learn it, love it, and live it!**

There are no short cuts to **SPIRITUAL GROWTH!** To **GROW SPIRITUALLY DEMANDS A DILIGENT EFFORT** on our part to **LEARN SPIRITUAL TRUTH** from the **WORD OF GOD!**

That effort should involve several things...

- 1) **Getting to know the BIBLE better involves the HEARING AND HEEDING THE PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD!**

Acts 6:4 points out the **PASTOR’S** two most important functions are to *"give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."*

PETER instructed **PASTORS** in *1 Peter 5:1* to *"Feed the flock of God.."*.
Every **CHILD OF GOD** needs to be **FED SPIRITUALLY** through the **PREACHING** and **TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD!**

- 2) **Getting to know the BIBLE better also involves the SYSTEMATIC STUDY of the BIBLE!**

Our Wednesday Night **BIBLE STUDY** and **PRAYER TIME** aren’t just for folks who have nothing better to do. It is an opportunity to **SYSTEMATICALLY STUDY THE WORD OF GOD!**

- 3) **Getting to know the BIBLE better also involves PERSONALLY READING and STUDYING THE BIBLE FOR YOURSELF!**

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We are not to rely upon others to do all of our studying for us. That is how folks are led astray into error and cults. Search the **SCRIPTURES** for yourself to see if the things which are **PREACHED** and **TAUGHT** are so!

- 4) **Getting to know the BIBLE better involves taking EVERY ADVANTAGE and OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM THE WORD OF GOD!**

So, we are to **ADD "KNOWLEDGE"**, that is, we are to **ADD SPIRITUAL TRUTH** to our lives! How does that help us?

- I. **KNOWING SPIRITUAL TRUTH WILL HELP US TO KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG!**

Some may say, *"Well everybody knows right from wrong."*
Oh how I wish that were true.

We live in a day that is similar to a time in the **OLD TESTAMENT**, where according to *Judges 21:25*, every man was doing what was *"right in his own eyes."*

Isaiah 5:20 tells us that there are those who *"...call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness."* And could I tell you that some of those folks are in **CHURCHES!**

Not everyone has the correct concept of RIGHT and WRONG!
As a matter of fact, our society is seldom **RIGHT** when it comes to what is **RIGHT** and **WRONG!**

We live in a time when the world is increasingly putting their stamp of approval on what the **BIBLE** calls **SIN!**

If we are going to **KNOW WHAT IS RIGHT** and **KNOW WHAT IS WRONG**, we had better be **STUDENTS** of the **WORD OF GOD!** *2 Timothy 2:15*

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The writer of the *Book of Hebrews* tells us that it is through **SKILLFUL USE OF THE WORD OF GOD** that we are equipped... *"to discern both good and evil". (Hebrews 5:14b)*

II. KNOWING SPIRITUAL TRUTH WILL HELP US WIN OUR SPIRITUAL BATTLES!

The **CHRISTIAN LIFE** is a **BATTLE GROUND!** If we are to **GROW** then we **must have VICTORY over TEMPTATION and SIN!**

When our **LORD JESUS** was **TEMPTED** three times by **SATAN** in *Matthew 4*, in each case, **HE OPPOSED SATAN'S TEMPTATION WITH THE WORD OF GOD!** **HE** quoted the **SCRIPTURES**. **HE** repeatedly said, *"it is written !"*

PAUL exhorted **BELIEVERS** in *Ephesians 6* as to how to be **EQUIPPED** for **SPIRITUAL CONFLICT**. He said that we are to **put on THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD**. **A part of that ARMOR is "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."**

The WORD OF GOD is a DEFENSIVE WEAPON to cause SATAN to flee from us.

James 4:7—"Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you."

III. KNOWING SPIRITUAL TRUTH WILL HELP US TO KNOW, TO LOVE, AND TO APPRECIATE OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR MORE!

PETER'S burden was to see his readers **GROW STRONG IN THEIR FAITH!** In fact, in the final verse of this letter, he underscores the message of this book.

2 Peter:3:18—"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

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We ALL need to GROW in our KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS that we might be more like HIM!

Conclusion

The **APOSTLE PAUL'S** ambition was to **KNOW JESUS:** *1 Corinthians 2:2—"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*

Philippians 3:8—"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"

Philippians 3:10—"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto his death."

When I got **SAVED**, I already **KNEW** a lot **ABOUT JESUS** and my **SALVATION** because I grew up in **CHURCH**. **PAUL** told **TIMOTHY**, *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* **2 Timothy 3:15**

Since my **SALVATION** I have a greater understanding of what I **LEARNED** as a child. Also, I've **LEARNED** a lot more of the details about **JESUS** and my **SALVATION**. That **KNOWLEDGE** makes me **APPRECIATE HIM** and **LOVE HIM MORE** than I was able to when I first **RECEIVED HIM** as my **SAVIOUR**.

What is your ATTITUDE toward GAINING KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD?

- 1. Some think they KNOW all they need to KNOW already.** These are those who are satisfied with the **KNOWLEDGE** that they are saved and on their way to heaven. What more could they possibly need or want?

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2. **Some think they have arrived and nobody can TEACH them anything.** These usually deem themselves “*Spiritually mature*” and only show up at **CHURCH** to critique what is going on, not to learn for themselves.
3. **Some think that too much of a good thing is bad for you.** These are usually characterized by hit and miss **CHURCH** attendance.
4. **Some think that repetition is boring.** These are those that when a **TRUTH** is repeated and they think they know it already they either put their mind in neutral or they don’t show up for the **TEACHING**. These same people watch reruns of TV shows and movies with delight!
5. **Then there are those who can’t get enough.**
Matthew 5:6– “*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*”
Determine to be that kind of a **BELIEVER!**

Get into the **WORD OF GOD!** Let it help you **GROW** in your **KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST!**

Colossians 1:9–10 - “*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God*”

Proverbs 2:1ff (Regarding the **DILIGENCE** or **WORK** required!)

Proverbs 24:5– “*A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.*”

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2 Corinthians 10:5– “*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*”

For those of you who **may not have TRUSTED JESUS** as your **SAVIOUR** yet, let me tell you that there is a **KNOWLEDGE GOD** wants you to pursue too!

Proverbs 1:7– “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*”

1 Timothy 2:4 teaches us that it is **GOD’S WILL** for “*all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*”

GOD wants you to **KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION!** The **TRUTH** is that...we all are **SINNERS**...there is a price to pay for **SIN**... we cannot **SAVE** ourselves...**GOD LOVES** us and wants to **SAVE** us...**JESUS CHRIST** has paid the price for our **SIN**...**JESUS** is the **ONLY WAY** of **SALVATION**...if you die without **JESUS** in your life, you will be separated from **GOD** for eternity in the **LAKE OF FIRE**.

Do you have **KNOWLEDGE** of these **TRUTHS**? Do you **KNOW JESUS**? More importantly, does **JESUS KNOW YOU**?