

KNOWLEDGE – IT’S A HEART THING!

Introduction

There are **2 things** that God says we should have in our hearts – **Love** and **Knowledge**

⇒ **Proverbs 3:3** tells us: *Let not mercy [i.e. Agape love] and truth [i.e. knowledge] forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart*

We need both agape **love** and God’s **knowledge** in our hearts in order to live the **full Christian life**

Two Kinds of Knowledge

“Knowledge in the **heart**,” you ask? “Isn’t knowledge stored in the **mind**?”

⇒ Well, just as there are **3 kinds of love** in the Koine Greek of the New Testament, so too are there **2 kinds of knowledge** – **head** knowledge, and **heart** knowledge

1. **Gnosis** is the Greek word for the kind of knowledge we store in our minds

2. **Epignosis** is the Greek word for the kind of knowledge that is stored in our hearts

Both of these kinds of knowledge are addressed in **2 Peter 1:2-8**:

⇒ *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the **knowledge** of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. ⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue **knowledge**, ⁶to **knowledge** self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the **knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The English word “**knowledge**” appears **5 times** in these 7 verses – obviously it’s **important**!

⇒ However, in the **Greek**, both forms of the words for knowledge appear in the text, so it is important to **differentiate** them and see what this text is really saying to us

In verses 2-4, the Greek word **epignosis** is used in conjunction with the phrase “of God”

1. **v2**: *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the (**epignosis**) **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

2. **v3**: *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the (**epignosis**) **knowledge** of Him who called us by glory and virtue*

⇒ this is a **different** form of knowledge than we usually mean when we talk of the things of this **world**

⇒ in Greek it means “**full discernment**” – this is **supernatural knowledge** that comes only from God; **unbelievers cannot receive** nor comprehend this knowledge:

⇒ **1 Cor 2:14** *But the **natural man** does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are **foolishness** to him; nor can he **know** them, because they are **spiritually discerned**.*

Now, in the **next 3 verses**, the Greek word **gnosis** is used to designate the kind of knowledge that we **acquire** and **store** in our **minds**:

⇒ **vv. 5-7**: *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue **knowledge** (**gnosis**), to **knowledge** (**gnosis**) self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*

⇒ Peter is saying that we need to be **diligent** to acquire information – specifically of **God’s Word** – to add to these other **fruits of the Spirit** so that we are not just acting out of **emotion** but also out of **wisdom**

⇒ For **wisdom is the Fruit of studying God’s Word** with the **aid of the Holy Spirit** for interpretation

Then, when it's fully **discerned**, fully **digested**, it becomes what one teacher calls "**metabolized doctrine**"

⇒ When something is **metabolized**, it is broken down into its sub-components and distributed throughout the entire body

This is what **Proverbs 3:3** means when it says God's Word is **written** on the **tablets of our heart**

⇒ It's now **ingrained** in our very **being**, not just stored in some **neurons** of our brains

That's why **Jesus** called God's Word the "**bread of life**"

⇒ *"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matt. 4:4)*

⇒ Jesus also proclaimed Himself to be "**the bread of life**" because when we allow Him to take up **residence** within us, it makes **God's Word** also **come alive** within us

God's Word is alive!

⇒ *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* (John 1:1)

⇒ We need **God's Word** alive within us as **metabolized doctrine**, as **epignosis knowledge**, as **full discernment** of the Truth & the Life – then it becomes "**spiritual understanding**)

It's a Heart Thing

Just like **agape** love, **metabolized doctrine** is a **heart thing**

⇒ **Solomon**, the wisest man in the world, explained in Eccl 1:16,

⇒ *"My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge."*

⇒ And, in Ecclesiastes, Solomon further advises:

⇒ *"Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your heart to my knowledge; (Prov 22:17)*

David also proclaimed such **epignosis** knowledge, such **metabolized doctrine**, to be a **heart thing** as well:

⇒ Psa 40:8 *I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.*

⇒ Psa 90:12 *So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

⇒ Psa 119:11 *Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You [Lord]!*

Metabolized Doctrine – Not Emotion

But when we call **epignosis knowledge** or **metabolized doctrine** a "**heart thing**" we also have to be **careful** to recognize that we are not talking about **just emotion**.

⇒ The Apostle Paul wrote of his concern about the **Jews** who were **pious zealots** but who had rejected Christ:

⇒ *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (again, epignosis, not just gnosis). (Rom 10:2)*

For when **Scripture** refers to the **heart** in this kind of context, what it **really means**, according to Strong's Dictionary, is:

⇒ it is used figuratively for the **feelings**, the **will** and even the **intellect**; likewise for the **center** of anything with the heart representing the **innermost organ**:

⇒ i.e. our **spiritual center**, the essence of our **being**

Thus, we need to **ingest God's Word** and the **teachings of the Holy Spirit** into the **spiritual center of our being**, not just as factual information in our minds.

Consequences of Not Metabolizing Doctrine

What happens if you **don't** metabolize doctrine?

1. Many (most) do not take in **any form** of knowledge – and are, therefore, **without hope** – the **lost**
⇒ *My people are destroyed for **lack of knowledge**.* (Hosea 4:6 NKJV)
2. Many **believers** read God's Word and **store up information** – but they remain **unchanged** and **unmoved** by the mere **intellectual exercise**
⇒ *For men will be..... led away by various **lusts, always learning** and never able to come to the **knowledge of the truth**.* (2 Tim 3:7 NKJV)
⇒ There are many who **sit in church** every Sunday and even **read the Word** during the week, but have a **closed, stony heart** or one that remains **asleep to the Truth**
⇒ They appear to be **always learning information** about the truth, but never coming to an **epignosis knowledge** of the Truth – i.e. it is **not metabolized** and does not become an **ingrained part of their being**
⇒ They are not able, therefore, to **apply** these truths in their **everyday lives**
⇒ You can tell the condition of someone's heart by **how they react to adversity**
⇒ For our reactions come from the **center of our being, instantaneously**, without prior thought
⇒ Therefore, these reactions are **based on what's in there!**
3. You can **still be** saved, but you will not experience all the **promises** and all the blessings God has for you **right here and now**.
4. You will also not be storing up **treasure in** heaven for yourself – you'll still get there, but your storehouse of treasures will be **relatively empty**

The Apostle Paul **exhorted** believers **to**:

⇒ ***Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the **knowledge of God**. I speak this to your **shame**.*** (1 Cor 15:34 NKJV)

Benefits of Metabolizing Doctrine

Just as God does not wish that **anyone should perish**, so too he wants **believers** to experience the **full benefits** of the **spiritual life** we can lead here on earth:

⇒ *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who **desires all men to be saved and to come to the **knowledge of the truth****.* (1 Tim 2:3-4 NKJV)

⇒ That is, **epignosis knowledge of the truth**, or **metabolized doctrine**,

The **Apostle Paul** wrote to the Colossians:

⇒ *For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge [i.e. **epignosis or metabolized doctrine**]**of His will in all **wisdom and spiritual understanding**; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being **fruitful** in every good work and increasing in the **knowledge of God**; (Col 1:9-10)*

⇒ We become **fruitful** and **pleasing** to God through **metabolized doctrine**

We also become true **Warriors of the Word** when we have **metabolized doctrine** written on the **tablets of our hearts**:

⇒ *For the **weapons of our warfare** are not **carnal** [i.e. mere information about this world] but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the **knowledge** of God... (2 Cor 10:4)*

Conclusion

So make acquiring **epignosis knowledge** of **God's Word** your **highest priority** – **read** – **study** -- **meditate**

⇒ But, don't just **read** the Word, **ingest it** into the center of your being, **metabolize the Truth**, write in on the **tablets of your heart**

⇒ And then experience the **full benefits** God has for you **here and now**, and store up your **treasures in heaven**