

2 Peter 1:2-11: Epignosis and Spiritual Growth

1. **2 Peter 1:2** – grace and peace come by means of epignosis.
 - a. Grace: Common grace and Logistical grace are always being supplied to you whether you realize it or not. Grace to live the spiritual life is always available but not always accessed. Grace increases as epignosis of God increases.
 - b. Peace: Peace comes from understanding reality. Knowing God in epignosis removes any reason for fear or worry in life.
2. **1:3** – everything needed for life and godliness comes by means of epignosis of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Life: This provides wisdom and power for all areas of life.
 - b. Godliness: This is provision to live the spiritual life.
3. **1:4** – God has motivated us with promises that we **might** share in the divine nature, **after** escaping the corruption in the world by lust.
 - a. Epignosis is the means of escaping the corruption of the world. **2 Peter 2:20**
 - b. The promises given by God are made real by knowing God. Knowing the promise is made sure by knowing the Promisor.
4. Epignosis transforms the life, not because it gets you more temporal stuff, but it enriches everything about life through knowing God. It produces inner joy and motivates one to live the spiritual life.
5. **1:5** – Because the potential to escape the corruption of the world and live in the new nature remains, every believer ought to grow spiritually in the following 7 virtues.
 - a. Every believer ought to be diligent about spiritual growth. Earnestly and hastily seeking to supply the following 7 qualities/virtues:
 - b. These are to be supplied to your faith. Your faith is basis for these virtues.
 - c. Arete: This is an excellence of character.
 - i. Arete is related to the perfection of character in Jesus. **2 Peter 1:3**
 - ii. Arete before knowledge is an attitude that seeks to do what is right in all areas of life. It an attitude of honesty and integrity.
 - iii. Arete goes beyond simply doing the right thing, but rather it is seeking to do the right thing in the most excellent manner.
 - iv. A person seeking to develop arete will desire to learn because it will be seen as a necessity to become more excellent.
 - d. Knowledge: This is gnosis which is always the prerequisite to epignosis. **2 Peter 3:18**
 - i. Knowledge added to arete should be geared toward understanding God.
 1. Special Revelation: **1 Peter 1:25, Heb. 4:25**
 - a. This should also motivate a pursuit of knowledge in all areas of life. **1 Cor. 9:22, 1 Tim. 2:4**(Outreach), **2 Cor. 10:5, 1 Pet. 3:15** **Jude 1:3**(defending the faith)

2. Natural Revelation: **Psalm 19:1-2**(The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ² Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals **knowledge**.)
 - ii. **Proverbs 2:1-6** My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, ² Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; ³ For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; ⁴ If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵ Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. ⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.
- e. Self-control:
- i. With knowledge comes the greater understanding of right and wrong. Often knowing what to do and not do is what heightens the inner battle. **Heb. 4:12**
 - ii. **1 Cor. 8** – knowledge without self-control can be destructive.
 - iii. Self-control is developed through self-discipline. **1 Corinthians 9:25**
 1. Self-control is becoming master over self rather than being enslaved by the sin nature. **1 Cor. 9:27, 2 Peter 2:19.**
 2. Israel serves as a warning. **1 Cor. 10:6**
 - iv. Self-control is ultimately achieved by the power of the Holy Spirit and not human gimmicks. **Romans 7:15-8:4, Galatians 5:23**
 1. Victory over the sin nature is requires a change of thinking. **Rom.8:4-6.**
- f. Perseverance :
- i. Self-control for a day is usually attainable but for an extending period of time perseverance is required.
 - ii. Perseverance requires maintaining faith and application of doctrine. **Hebrews 10:36**
 - iii. The one persevering must focus on the reward rather than the present difficulty. **Romans 5:3-5**
 - iv. Perseverance develops character. **James 1:4, Romans 5:3-5**
 - v. After a time of perseverance, self-control becomes a little easier as your character starts to become molded through your actions.
 - vi. Over time what you once struggled to not do, you now find more difficult to do because of virtue developed in your soul. At this point you have escaped the corruption in the world.
- g. Godliness:
- i. Self-control and perseverance discipline the believer for godliness. **1 Tim. 4:6-8**
 - ii. Godliness requires epignosis and the Holy Spirit. **Titus 1:1, 2 Peter 1:3, 2 Tim. 3:5**
 - iii. While the previous virtues are geared toward inner preparation and outward refrain from that which one should not do, godliness begins the execution of that which one should do. This is a life that applies doctrine for the purpose of living a God honoring and glorifying life.

- iv. **2 Tim. 3:12** – “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. “ Godliness is more than proper conduct toward outsiders.
 - h. Brotherly Love: Philadelphia
 - i. Once godliness or execution of the spiritual life begins, the mind and actions should be geared to toward care for other believers.
 - ii. This should be in consideration of all believers and not just your local church.
 - iii. As a character or virtue you possess, it is not outward action but an inward genuine care for others, similar to the care you would have for a sibling.
 - iv. **Romans 12:10** – honor and show preference
 - v. **1 Peter 1:22, 4:8** – fervently
 - vi. **Hebrew 10:24, 25** – encourage, stimulate to good deeds
 - vii. This does NOT mean to be a busy body. Grace should be in operation.
 - viii. **φίλημα - 1Pet. 5:14, 1 Thess. 5:26, Luke 22:47**
 - ix. Developing the quality of brotherly love will also be useful in reaching out to unbelievers.
 - x. Consider how important this is to the local church and fellow believers.
 - i. Love(Christian Spiritual Love)
 - i. Brotherly love turns the mind toward interest and care for others and love/agape can be added in order to perfect one’s thought and care for others.
 - ii. Agape as a quality is manner of thinking that affects all actions and decisions toward others.
 - iii. Agape as a quality is best defined in **1 Cor. 13**.
 - iv. Love takes joy in the spiritual growth and success of another believer rather than envy.
- 6. 1 Peter 1:8:**
- a. If they are existing **in** you and increasing. Both are present active participles, showing continuous action.
 - b. You will not be idle in your spiritual life.
 - c. You will be fruitful.
 - d. They must be combined with epignosis of Jesus Christ.
- 7. 1:9** – The alternative to spiritual growth: **2 Peter 2:20**
- a. Spiritual blindness: Laodicea – blind to your own condition. Blind to the things of God. **1 John 2:11**
 - b. Short sighted: Cannot see beyond the temporal.
 - i. Love for the world. **1 John 2:15-16, Mark 4:19**
 - ii. Distraction. **Heb. 12:1-2**
 - c. Forgetting your salvation and cleansing from sin.
- 8. 1:10** – A reminder of the diligence you should have and a reassuring promise.
- a. If you are in the act of practicing these internal qualities you will not stumble.
- 9. 1:11** – This focuses the believer on the reward which can only be realized when operating in epignosis.