

CHARACTERISTIC THREE: KNOWLEDGE

Lesson 7: The Good & the Bad

In this lesson we are moving onto the next characteristic that Peter tells us to add to our lives, knowledge. For too many years, knowledge has been deemed as a carnal or bad thing within the church. Yes, our knowledge can sometimes get in the way by becoming a roadblock to believing in the supernatural, but that's only when we put natural knowledge above God and His Word. However, God created us with a brain and the ability to gain wisdom and the ability to use it in the right way. Proverbs 18:15 says, "The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge."¹ We need to understand that Satan is not dumb and as believers we need to fill our minds with knowledge so that we can stand against all the schemes that he throws at us. The key is what kind of knowledge, whether good or bad, do we fill our minds with and how do we use it.

Before we go any further, we must differentiate between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is simply knowing the facts about something, but wisdom is adding understanding to that knowledge and applying it correctly to our lives or a particular situation. In Proverbs 4:5-9 Solomon says:

⁵Get wisdom! Get understanding!
Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.
⁶ Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;
Love her, and she will keep you.
⁷ Wisdom *is* the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
And in all your getting, get understanding.
⁸ Exalt her, and she will promote you;
She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.
⁹ She will place on your head an ornament of grace;
A crown of glory she will deliver to you."²

In other words, don't just seek knowledge, but more importantly seek understanding so that you can use it accordingly.

An important thing to note is that there is both good and bad knowledge. In essence, all good knowledge comes from God and is pure and leads us to make righteous decisions, whereas all bad knowledge comes from the enemy and leads us to make unholy choices. As I said the devil is not dumb. Many times, he takes a truth and twists it just enough that it still looks somewhat truthful, however it's clothed in deception. He even uses intelligent people, who have no fear of God to pervert Biblical truths to make things that are explicitly wrong according to God's Word, appear to be both normal and natural. However, good and true knowledge only comes from having a healthy fear of God and his Word. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord *is* the beginning of knowledge,

But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”³ Just because someone can talk intelligently, has a degree or some letters after their last name, it doesn’t mean they have wisdom. As I have often stated, “There are many educated fools.” Psalm 14:1 states, “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”⁴ Again, education and knowledge alone don’t make one wise, it’s having a healthy fear of God.

If we know that good knowledge only comes from God, it makes sense that we learn what God says. Obviously, the only way to do that is by reading and studying His Word. When the Apostle Paul was writing to his protégé, Timothy, he warned him of the coming days by saying in 2 Timothy 3:13-16:

¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.⁵

Several verses later he says that men will not endure sound teaching but instead will turn from the truth and listen to people who will tell them whatever makes them feel good. This has been going on for the past two thousand years and it’s getting worse as time goes on. That’s why it’s imperative that we as men of God study to gain the knowledge and wisdom to stand against false teachers and false teachings. But how can we know something is false, unless we know the truth? It is common practice when training bank tellers how to tell the difference between real money and counterfeit money, that they spend hours training and feeling real money, that way when they feel something different, they automatically can tell something is wrong. In the same way, as we gain more knowledge and wisdom about the truth of God’s Word, we can immediately discern when something is false.

For us to know the truth, we must put the truth in our brain. It doesn’t just magically appear with no effort of our own. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”⁶ The only way to transform our mind is by putting something new into it. New knowledge. New wisdom. New understanding. Paul also says in Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.⁷

What are you putting into your mind? As the old saying goes, “Garbage in, Garbage out.” If we want to be gaining God’s knowledge, then we need to be filling our minds

with God things. I want to encourage you to truly invest in, not only reading, but also studying God's Word, then you will be able to stand firm against all the lies that the enemy has deceived so many people with these days.

Lesson 7 Questions

1. What's the difference between knowledge and wisdom?
2. Where does true knowledge begin and why?
3. How do we learn to tell the difference between true and false doctrine?
4. In what ways can you personally improve your knowledge of God?
5. What is it to think on the right things and why is it important? What are some things that you may need to stop listening to?

¹ [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Pr 18:15.

² Pr 4:5–9.

³ Pr 1:7.

⁴ Ps 14:1.

⁵ 2 Ti 3:13–17.

⁶ Ro 12:2.

⁷ Php 4:8.