

The Power of the Knowledge of God

By Frank Catanzaro

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Study the comments relating to 2 Peter 1:2-3 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share a clear explanation of the gift of knowledge and its importance concerning our identity in Christ.

Assignment Two

Study the comments relating to 2 Peter 1:5-11 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to lead a discussion regarding the necessity of growth in knowledge.

Assignment Three

Scan all the discussions in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: Is it possible for someone not to know about Christ's death and resurrection and still experience the power of the knowledge of God? How are they linked together?

Scripture to Memorize

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence." 2 Peter 1:3

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will have a clear understanding of the power of the knowledge of God most clearly revealed through Christ.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

While helping people understand and overcome their difficulties in life, counselors often hear people say, "I'm only human." This is a common expression among people who struggle. While this statement contains truth, it fails to tell the entire story. It can sometimes take the burden of responsibility off of them and defer their taking action.

For believers (children of God), this statement is not true. While it is true that we are human, we also possess the Spirit of God, Who has promised that we can do all things through Him. We discount His power by deferring to our frailty. In this lesson we will see what God has accomplished in spite of our humanity.

Finding True Knowledge through His Divine Power

Previous lessons in this unit have covered important points:

- Knowing who we are in Christ is valuable.
- Knowing that what we do is not nearly as important as who we are also is valuable.
- When we understand our position in Christ, then all we do is for His glory.
- Our view of identity or self is determined by Him and His will for our lives (Galatians 2:20).
- When we understand our true purpose, then we are less focused on our performance or the way others measure our "success."
- All our focus should shift to Christ because He is the one who has made it all happen. He is the power.

Read 2 Peter 1:1-11 out loud.

Studying the Passage

The first chapter of 2 Peter builds on ideas from the previous lessons. Peter emphasized that life is not about us, but about who Jesus is and what He has accomplished. Our world and culture are consumed with the idea of accomplishment. The question is always, "What have you done for me lately?" Another common question today is, "What have I done for myself to better my position in the world?" The idea of trusting Christ for our future is totally absent from this worldly point of view.

Verses 2–3. knowledge of God . . . knowledge of Him. The word "knowledge" appears twice in these two verses. The Greek word translated as "knowledge" carries a strong meaning. It expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. In other words, there is active participation in the knowledge that is received. Knowledge is revealed in such a way that we live our lives differently.

It's not just "I know that" or "I see that." Instead, it is "Because I know that, my life is different." We say we believe and know so much about Who God is, but we sometimes live in a way that denies Him.

In 2 Timothy 3:7, Paul refers to people who were “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” They had a great deal of information, but it really didn’t make any difference.

Believers can fall into that same pattern today. Believers who want to be true disciples of Jesus should consider questions such as these:

- Our churches give us plenty of opportunities to learn, but does all that learning really lead us to be any different?
- Are we growing? Are we becoming more like the person God wants us to be? We are the children of God. Are we living in a fashion that is consistent with that identity? Are we consistently becoming more like Him because we are coming to the knowledge of truth?

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now give the group a clear explanation of the gift of knowledge and its implications relative to our identity in Christ.

Discussion Question

If someone is not growing in the knowledge of God and yet tries to be a Christian leader, what are some of the likely results?

Studying the Passage

Now we deal with the results of coming to that knowledge. Peter called believers to embrace the truth and to allow the Lord to use that knowledge to grow and change them for His glory. In verse 4, Peter began to lay out the results.

Verse 4. precious and very great promises. Christ has granted precious and magnificent promises. **escaped.** Because of His divine nature and our participation in it, we have escaped the corruption that is in the world. “Escaped” is an interesting word. We don’t cope, we don’t struggle and we don’t fret or fear. We escape. Do we do this because we are so competent in ourselves? No! His power, His life and His working in us give us victory.

Paul said that “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). Here you find that we overwhelmingly conquer in Christ. It’s not us; it’s Him. There is no indication in Scripture that *just coping* is a part of the believers’ lives. He gives us victory! Hallelujah!

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now lead a discussion revealing the necessity of growth in knowledge.

Discussion Question

Every believer needs to grow in knowledge, but why is that doubly true for a Christian leader?

Studying the Passage

Now we come to the specifics of the growth that results from the knowledge of truth. This is exciting to see.

Verse 5. make every effort. Seven qualities described in these verses will be ours if we apply diligence.

Verses 5–7. Virtue . . . knowledge . . . self-control . . . steadfastness . . . godliness . . . brotherly affection . . . love. This is an ascending list of qualities with love (*agape*) being the highest of the qualities. Why? When we love as Christ loves, we demonstrate Him. We cannot do this apart from Him. Love provides a demonstration of the power of God to overcome our inborn selfishness and demonstrate His love in spite of any circumstance. Amazing!

On Your Own

According to 2 Peter 1:8-11, growing in the knowledge of Christ will make you useful and fruitful. In the space below, write your answers:

- How can such knowledge impact your becoming a new creature?

- How can it impact your serving as an ambassador of Christ in our broken culture?

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now lead a discussion related to this question: Is it possible for someone not to know about Christ's death and resurrection and still be transformed by the power of the knowledge of God?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of

Christ.

3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ. Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share that with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue, I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Ultimately, God has created us for His glory. By His grace and the sacrifice of Christ, we have a relationship with Him. However, He has not simply invited us into a relationship for our own pleasure and fulfillment. He has a purpose for our lives, and understanding our identity in Him can help us find that purpose.

In 2 Peter 1:1-11, we begin to understand the significance of knowing who God has made us to be and the ministry to which He has called us.

You are studying dozens of lessons as part of this discipleship process. In addition, you hear many sermons and many Bible studies in other places. The practical question is this: Are you actively participating in the knowledge of Christ you are receiving? Are you cooperating with the Holy Spirit so that knowledge is changing your spiritual DNA?

Can you tell you are moving from:

- “I know that” to “Because I know that, my life is different”?
- “Here is what God taught me this week” to “Here’s how I’ve been changed through what God taught me this week”?

If you can tell who you are and what you do are changing, then you are experiencing the power of the knowledge of Christ. Few things are more important to a servant leader.

Follow-Up Question

How have the Scriptures revealed to you a clear understanding of the power of the knowledge of God, most clearly revealed through Christ?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.