

B. The second quality we ought to add to our faith is knowledge of God's truth.

Verse 5 says, "and to goodness, knowledge."

In verses 2 and 3 Peter uses knowledge in the sense of "knowledge of fellowship, personal knowledge."

Here in verse 5 he uses a word which in most cases refers to objective knowledge; i.e., knowledge of God's truth. This refers to the truth God has revealed about Himself and His relationship to the created world, including human beings.

God has revealed so much about His character; about His works of creation, providence, redemption, and judgment; and about His purpose and will for created beings, that we could spend an entire lifetime studying these revealed truths and still only be beginners in God's school!

But what is the purpose of gaining this knowledge? Is it learning with a purpose?

It seems that when some believers read their Bibles, they do it not to learn God's truth. Rather, they read the Bible to get a momentary lift, a shot in the arm, a quick blessing, a thrill, a charge, a rush! Instead of placing themselves under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit as He speaks in the Bible, and allowing the truth of the Word to form their character, they use the Bible as a means of inspiration, comfort, and guidance for themselves, and of correction (usually of others!).

This shift from standing under the teaching of the whole of Scripture (which involves study, investigation, and thought), to standing over Scripture and using it to meet our immediate needs or desires, is a very subtle shift, and very dangerous. As such, we must strongly resist it!

On the other hand, exposition of revealed truth is never an end in itself; it always has godliness as its goal. In this connection, John Wesley's words ring true. Wesley wrote:

Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is, at best, a very slender part of religion. Though right tempers [or attitudes] cannot subsist without right opinions, yet right opinions may subsist without right tempers [or attitudes]. There may be a right opinion of God without either love or one right temper [or attitude] toward Him. Satan is a proof of