

Increasing Growth Through Knowledge

Marshall Reid

As Christians, it is imperative that we are constantly growing. If we're not, something's wrong, and we won't be fully pleasing to God. There are some specific questions that each of us need to ask ourselves that serve as a gauge of how well we're growing. All spiritual growth starts with knowledge, so the first question to ask is, "Do I need to increase my knowledge of the word of God?" I think anybody that is honest would answer in the affirmative. There is never a time that we can say we've learned all there is about God's revealed will for us. Every book of the Bible, every chapter, every verse, every word, was chosen by the Holy Spirit for a purpose. He preserved it to be used by peoples of all ages, including us in 2016.

Do you find yourself very familiar with the New Testament but not the Old Testament? Are there some verses that you know quite well but don't know the context or the chapter or the book? Are there some books that you don't really know what it's all about? While it's not a prerequisite for salvation to have a thorough knowledge of the entire Bible, we should certainly not remain in a state of ignorance.

Some have the mistaken notion that the Old Testament isn't as important to study as the New since we're not bound by the laws of the Old. They feel it's obsolete and irrelevant to us today. While we are under the law of Christ, Christ is the fulfillment of the Law, and becoming more knowledgeable of the Old Testament is crucial to having a proper understanding of the New. Consider the preaching of the apostles in the 1st century. What scriptures did they preach from? What passages were they quoting? It was what we call the Old Testament, of course! The New Testament didn't exist yet. Considering that verses from the Old Testament are quoted in the New approximately 700 times and that there are over 2000 allusions to or paraphrases of Old Testament verses, we best be familiar with the text from which the New Testament authors were quoting or referencing! The apostles and other writers certainly didn't feel the Jewish scriptures were irrelevant, and neither should we.

So what's the point? Are we simply after knowledge? No, but rather what the knowledge will do for us. Paul wrote, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There is an inherent need for application of the knowledge that we have gained in order to grow as a child of God.

All scripture is profitable for teaching, and that includes even what we may consider to be the most boring parts of the Bible. We can learn something about God, the way he works, what he expects from us, and what we are to be doing from every book and passage of the Bible.

All scripture is profitable for reproof and correction. While the Bible contains historical information, it's not preserved for us just so we'll be more familiar with history. We are meant to compare ourselves and our life to the dealings of God with his people in the past and learn from it. We all need reproof of our sinful actions and to be shown the correct way to live.

All scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness. This naturally follows teaching, reproof, and correction. Not only are the errors of our ways shown through scripture, but we are instructed on how to be righteous and conform ourselves to God's righteousness. We are to aspire to be like the God in whose image we were created. And we learn this from all scripture, not just parts of it.

If you want to be a complete man of God equipped for every good work of the Lord, then you need to become more knowledgeable in all scripture. Knowledge is the first step to growing as a Christian.

"How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:103-104).