

Intro:

Two weeks ago we began a series that is focused on the positive side of the walk of the Spirit. We were looking at the negative side for several months, focusing on the idea of 'crucifying the flesh'. In those messages we were providing a Biblical rationale and motivation for the concept.

The positive side of walking in the Spirit is also called Christian Growth, or *progressive sanctification*. The New Testament has a good deal to say about this. We are starting this series with a look at four phrases in 2 Peter 3.

The chapter ends with an admonition to Christians to 'Grow in Grace'. That is the goal of progressive sanctification. There are four aspects of it highlighted by what we call the 'beloved be's' of 2 Peter 3.

1. Beloved be mindful (1-2)
2. Beloved be not ignorant (8)
3. Beloved be diligent (14)
4. Beloved be ware (17)

Each of these exhortations has something to do with the mind. And each of them has something to do with Christian growth.

In fact, we might refer to these four things as components of Christian growth.

The first component of Christian growth is this: *Beloved be mindful of the Word.*

- Christian growth starts with the Word of God.
- Christian growth is rooted in the Word of God.
- Christian growth is sustained by the Word of God.
- Christian growth is directed by the Word of God.

Now we come to the second component of Christian growth:

Beloved Be Not Ignorant
... be not ignorant of God ...

Let's read 2 Pt 3.3-9, text mainly focused on v. 8

Proposition: The second foundational component of Christian growth is the knowledge of God found in the Bible.

Our text calls us to 'be not ignorant ...'

I. The problem of ignorance (8)

A. The definition of ignorance

1. Root meaning of the verb: ‘to be hidden’
2. Meaning in 2 Pt 3.8: “to not recall information and thus to lose sight of its significance”¹
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) NAU: “do not let this one *fact* escape your notice”
 - 2) ESV: “do not overlook this one fact”
 - 3) NET: “do not let this one thing escape your notice”
 - b. More from Louw-Nida: “In a number of languages the fact of ‘forgetting’ or ‘not remembering’ is expressed idiomatically, for example:
 - 1) “‘to lose out of one’s heart,’
 - 2) “‘to have one’s thoughts walk away,’
 - 3) “‘or ‘to have words disappear from one’s liver.’”²

The warning for us is against inattention to important information.

We all have experienced momentary forgetfulness of some detail – I do it with your names when I am calling on you to answer a question, for example.

- Hopefully that ignorance and forgetfulness has no *eternal* or *spiritual* consequences!

B. The possibility of ignorance

1. The warning suggests its possibility
2. The warning suggests its prevalence

Jesus told the parable of the seeds: many things can contribute to the seed of the Word (things of true importance) being rejected or ignored. *The cares of this life* are one of them.

¹ Louw-Nida *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd Edition, Edited by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. Copyright © 1988 by the United Bible Societies, New York, NY 10023.

² *Ibid.*

- The believers Peter is writing to are facing persecution – these cares might tempt ignorance.
- We face many demands on our time – the pressure isn't the same as persecution, but the forgetfulness certainly is (and is perhaps more pernicious and prevalent).

C. The deadly spiritual fruit of ignorance

1. Failure of spiritual growth (2 Pt 1.9)
2. Absence of spiritual life (2 Pt 3.5 [read 2 Pt 3.3-7])
 - a. That is not to say that the mockery of unbelief is a possibility for a true believer
 - b. But to note that deliberate and willful ignorance produces bad spiritual fruit

The admonition of our passage, as applied to spiritual growth, implies that if we are ignorant of something, **we will do damage** to our souls. **We may also** do damage to the souls of others.

Brethren, *be not ignorant...*

Our text calls us to 'be not ignorant that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years ...'

II. The object of our understanding (8)

- A. The specific object of understanding: the relation of the Lord to time
 1. Don't be ignorant of this one fact: a day with the Lord is like 1000 years and 1000 years like a day
 2. Note specifically the word "as" [or "like"] – the specific point is not to say "equals" but "as"
 3. The point: God is eternal, timeless; this is an attribute of the nature of God
- B. The general object of our understanding: the Lord himself
 1. God is eternal
 2. God is the creator

3. God is sovereign and supreme
4. God is the last judge
5. God is your personal judge

There are many more attributes to God found in the Bible. We list these because they seem to be implied by the context of our passage.

- C. The person of the Lord, the object of our knowledge and understanding
1. The term used here in vv. 8-9 is 'Lord'
 2. In the NT this is a term generally used of the Lord Jesus Christ
 3. One aspect of the knowledge of God to which we are called (and which is revealed in the NT) is this knowledge of Jesus as the eternal God
 4. We are called as believers, beloved, to be not ignorant of the nature of our Lord

Be mindful ... of the Word

Be not ignorant ... of God

- Spiritual knowledge of our God is life-changing.
- To whom (or to what) do you pay attention?
- What is the object of your knowledge and understanding?
- What do you fill your mind with?

Our text calls us to 'be not ignorant ... the Lord is not slack ... but is longsuffering ...'

III. The product of the knowledge of God (9)

- A. The immediate product: repentance
1. God's delay of judgement is real
 2. God's delay of judgement is for the purpose of bringing men to repentance

- B. The ultimate product: usefulness and fruitfulness in the true knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (1.3-11)
1. God provides everything we need in the word so that we can take part in the divine nature (3-4)
 2. God exhorts us to add spiritual qualities to our faith for this very reason [taking part in the divine nature] (5-7)
 3. God produces in us spiritual goals by these things (8-9)
 - a. Usefulness and fruitfulness (8)
 - b. Spiritual vision and knowledge [opposites of their absence] (9)
 4. God exhorts us to be diligent in this knowledge for a more abundant entrance into God's kingdom (10-11)

At the end of this life, the only thing that will matter is your entrance to the kingdom.

- I met a man in the hospital a few years ago. He was dying. I tried to talk to him about the condition of his soul. He was more worried about "never getting to drive his car again."

What is going to matter to you on that day?

Conclusion:

We are talking about spiritual growth in these messages.

We have been working on these propositions:

- **Proposition 1:** The first foundational component of Christian growth is the Word given by prophets and apostles.
- **Proposition 2:** The second foundational component of Christian growth is the knowledge of God found in the Bible.

First we start with the Word.

Through the Word, we come to know God.

This is how you grow.