

Grace and Peace Multiplied

By Ginny Larsen

“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”
(2 Peter 1:2)

The word “in” means “in which alone” (Jamieson, Faucett, and Brown Commentary on 2 Peter 1:2). The knowledge of the Father and the Son is that alone in which we have grace and peace multiplied to us. Are you growing in your *knowledge of Him*? We can grow in knowledge. We can grow in learning from teachers and from head knowledge about Him, but the times I have really had grace and peace multiplied to me was when I grew in my *knowing* Him. He taught me the knowledge I had of Him, and I applied it by faith in my life so that it became a knowledge that was truly *of Him*. It became rooted and grounded in me through the Spirit, making His Word life to me in my actual experience as I received it by faith. Through its confirmation again and again in His Word, He gradually opened up my understanding to it. It is by believing and by humility that we learn to know Him.

True knowledge of God cannot happen without humility. Without true humility in our inner being, we are not even teachable. We may think we are, because we can discipline our minds to learn something and to study it, but “*knowledge puffeth up*” (1 Corinthians 8:1). True learning only comes as God teaches us when we submit to Him and His Word in humility. By humility I mean truly seeing ourselves for what we are, in God's Light, and not deluding ourselves to think we are something when we are nothing, “*for if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself*” (Galatians 6:3).

We deceive ourselves and cannot learn of God if we think we can't be taught by others, if we think we are somehow superior in ourselves to others, or if we refuse to consider our own flesh and see it for what it is. We are keeping ourselves from His knowledge if we lock ourselves into our own comfortable way of thinking and refuse to be taught by God or to listen to others whom He brings into our lives because we think they are spiritually beneath us. When someone confronts you, do you automatically react or instead take it to the Lord and say, “Is there truth I need in this, Lord? Examine my heart and reveal anything in my flesh I need to see and lead me to Your Light.” Maybe we simply “know we're right” and won't even consider what others may teach us. This is especially hard for someone who is in a teacher's position or who considers him or herself to have a gift of teaching. Yet if you are not teachable, you should not be teaching others. The greatest teacher is one who is not defensive but teachable and who understands his place before the Body of Christ and before God. I've seen pastors who are not approachable, but I've also been blessed to be under one who is very approachable, humble, and who even asks others to examine all he says in God's Word and to come to him if we have questions. What a difference that makes! I learn much more from the latter, even if I don't always agree with someone's way of looking at the Word! I see Jesus in them, and I see God's heart coming through. I can trust they will give me room to grow, and I can give them room to grow as the Lord continues to teach both of us.

In this true light of humility and true knowledge of ourselves and of God, “*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).

This verse has so much meaning to me in my daily life. What peace it gives! First of all, I count on Him to reveal true knowledge to me as His child, bought with His own blood and given

His Spirit. Then I count on that divine power, His power, with nothing of myself, to grant all things – say it again – all things pertaining to life and Godliness. Wow! I've had some pretty rough trials lately that have ripped at my heart. There is no way I can get through them by my own power. I do not have in myself any peace or grace or strength to face these trials in life that rip my heart out or to do the right thing! I want to lie down and die when these things hit me. I want immediate escape! But as I look to the Lord, for His knowledge, and for His power, I find He brings me to just the right knowledge I need to apply to the situation in His Word. I find I have just what I need through His power and presence in me to endure the pain, to endure the temptation to give up, and to overcome. I have all I need in His correct counsel to walk in His Godliness and according to the new life He has given me.

I find that if I go to the counsel of men, I find confusion if their words do not direct me to trust in the Word of God and to seek His face to know Him for myself. It is fleshly "help" that turns out too often to draw me more inward than God-ward and I discover in the long run that I have not learned to know Him through it. But Godly counsel comes from His knowledge, taught by God through His breaking the flesh and proving it in our lives. Then we know God's Word experientially and practically. I've learned in my life to steer clear of those that counsel through a head knowledge of "counseling principles" but have not the true knowledge of God for the situation.

Knowledge of God comes through a humble walk with God in faith, taking Him at His Word each time we are tested in it. That Word is then proven to us and in us. Grace and peace are more and more multiplied in our lives the more we grow in that knowledge. One definition of knowledge is "learning; illumination of the mind" (Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language). True illumination only comes by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:17-18).

"Ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven" (Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language). The Greek word for knowledge is correctly translated "full knowledge."

Thayer Greek-English Lexicon: knowledge

1) precise and correct knowledge

1a) used in the NT of the knowledge of things ethical and divine

If we put the Greek and the Thayer definitions together, we have "full, divine knowledge." Through that full divine knowledge, we can have everything we need and know just what to do in any given circumstance, having the counsel of the Holy Spirit as needed for our life and our Godliness. We don't need to seek it anywhere else but through Him.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:5-6). This is said in regard to our trials. We are to ask God's wisdom for our trials. God alone knows the personal things in our hearts, our minds, and our will that we struggle with (He is working in us). He alone knows what effect He wants to have in and through us by each trial and circumstance. He alone can give you the true wisdom that is from above. This is the only wisdom I want.

When I've come to Him for that wisdom during those times, I've felt hopeless to see a way through it. Yet, as I bring it to Him, He begins to work. He brings to me the right Word, He brings things to light, and He shows me His way by taking my hand, enabling me, and leading me through it. He does what only He could have done. When we are given teaching or counsel

from others, we need always to take it before God and not just take it blindly. I've learned to bring all counsel and teaching to God's Word and examine it there. I've learned to never, ever trust anything BUT His counsel and His wisdom. I must run to Him! I've learned to trust no other way but His. I've learned that I want His will above my own in any matter. I've learned there is no security, safety, peace, or grace outside of His will. I've seen His grace and peace multiplied in my life over and over when I've trusted Him, and it has reinforced my trust in Him, my knowledge of Him, and my rooting in the knowledge He gives. I continue to learn.

There's no debate left when someone challenges God's knowledge, because it is a deep Holy Spirit-taught knowledge of His living Word that is now living and abiding in you. You know it in your whole being. It's not just a doctrine in your head you've come to through study. Precept upon precept, He teaches you, and it can't be argued anymore, and it can't be taken from you. Are we willing to have our own knowledge of things examined and tested and put through the fire by God? Are we willing to be humbled enough to see and admit our misunderstanding it? When our faith goes through the fire, what is not of God will be burned up. Sometimes it feels like the rug being pulled out from under our feet. Sometimes it feels almost as though we have no faith left and are abandoned by God.

But then we find something pure growing in us in its place – something that is of God, something that is solid and pure as gold. Even though it is as small as a mustard seed, it is solid and real, and it enables us to truly walk in the knowledge of God personally. We see God and know God a little more than we did. Only God can do this. No friend, counselor, or spiritual leader can do this in us but only God. When that faith of pure gold is brought forth, grace and peace are multiplied over and over in our lives, enabling us to grow in our love for Him more and more and toward others.

What has He called us to but *to His own glory and excellence*? Praise to His name! Just stop and think on those words for a minute. Don't lightly brush over them as though they had no significance. We are not called to a glory that we see in this earth. We are not called to the glory of honorable position among men or women in the world. No glory of this earth can compare to the Glory God has in store for us. It is His own glory and His own excellence that we are being called to. And that's what He's provided for. He's provided for it all through Himself. The more we know Him, the more of that glory and excellence fills us and guides us through this life and the more of it we enjoy. Do you want to settle for anything less as His child? If you do, please examine your heart in His Light and ask where you are truly at in your relationship with Him! How can any other pursuit be greater or more rewarding?

May the grace and peace of our Lord now truly be multiplied to you as you submit yourself wholly to the knowledge of Him. May that knowledge fill you fully, and may others see it and partake as well. Feed us, Lord Jesus, from Your Heavenly stores above, that You may be glorified through us to this world around us. Amen.