

I. Know the Plan - 2 Peter 3:16-18: Beyond Gnosis

Consequently, Peter's use of gnosis plus the command to grow in the sphere of grace is a challenge to the believer to respond positively to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 3:18 is a mandate for the believer's free will to search for truth and once identified to metabolize it into his heart resulting in epistemological habilitation.

2 Peter 3:18 - But keep on growing [an imperative mood thus a challenge to the volition] in the sphere of grace [Grace Apparatus for Perception] and in the sphere of knowledge [gnosis: volitional response to revealed truth]...

Conclusions:

Peter by stopping at gnosis emphasizes the interaction between the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit and the volition of the believer.

Under God's grace system, the Holy Spirit is able to take divine truth all the way to the point of academic understanding before volition becomes an issue.

The only way the believer can advance beyond gnosis is for him to believe what the Holy Spirit has made clear.

This is why Peter uses gnosis; he seeks to emphasize the importance of human volition within the system.

To say yes to revealed truth is to obey the command to grow ... the imperative mood of *auxano*.

It is only when this occurs that spiritual growth may occur.

Thus, spiritual growth is dependent upon several factors:

1. The Grace Apparatus for Perception
2. The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to the level of academic understanding, or *gnosis*.
3. The believer's positive volition to *gnosis* in response to the imperative mood of *auxano*.

It is only at this point that doctrine, academically understood as gnosis, can be transferred by the Holy Spirit to the stream of consciousness as *epignosis*.

This growth however is accomplished in the sphere of grace--GAP--and in the sphere of *gnosis*--academic understanding.

It is here that the imperative mood of *auxano* becomes important for it is at this point that the ministry of the Holy Spirit must take a hiatus awaiting the volitional response of the believer.

The Holy Spirit can enable you to understand truth but He cannot make you believe it.

Gnosis plus positive volition takes truth beyond academic understanding and makes it a part of your spiritual life.

This is life beyond gnosis and is mentioned by Paul in:

Ephesians 3:19 - And to come to know the love of Christ which goes beyond knowledge ...

The phrase "goes beyond knowledge" is made up of the present active participle of: *huperballō* – "to go beyond"

The word is a combination of *huper* “beyond” and *hallo* “to throw.” Hence, to cast above or beyond, thus to excel, exceed, transcend, surpass.

That which it goes beyond is gnosis, the academic understanding acquired by means of the Holy Spirit.

Positive volition takes the believer beyond gnosis to a clear understanding of divine thought: *epignosis* in the heart’s stream of consciousness.

Do not assume that Peter did not understand this portion of the grace system of didactics. That he did so is obvious by his statement in the first chapter of this epistle.

2 Peter 1:2 - Grace to you and may prosperity be multiplied in the sphere of the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

The word which is translated “knowledge” is *epignosis*

The word for “prosperity” is *ε’πι11α11* and refers to tranquility of soul.

The message is that through grace, tranquility may be multiplied within your stream of consciousness when it functions in the sphere of *epignosis*.

This is important. What is being said is that tranquility of soul is possible for the believer but only when it functions within the boundaries and under the influence of *epignosis* knowledge.

Peter starts his epistle by reminding his audience that grace has been appropriated to them. He then asserts that because of this grace they have a potential: tranquility may be multiplied.

But that multiplication is only possible if it functions within the boundaries and influence of *epignosis* doctrine.

And as we have established, *epignosis* doctrine can only exist in the stream of consciousness of the believer's heart.

This means that the individual must grow in the sphere of the influence of grace and in the sphere of the influence of gnosis by means of his own positive volition.

Thus, Peter begins the book with a challenge to acquire prosperity and tranquility within the sphere of influence of metabolized truth. He then goes on to amplify this concept.

2 Peter 1:3 - His divine power has granted to us [imputation of divine operating assets at salvation] everything pertaining to life [logistics for physical sustenance] and godliness [logistics for spiritual growth] by means of the *epignosis* knowledge of Him [faith alone in Christ alone] who called us [common grace] to His own glory and virtue.

Peter then goes on to amplify the benefits which accrue to the believer who continues to metabolize gnosis into his stream of consciousness as *epignosis*.

Peter concluded his epistle with a final challenge to the believer's volition to grow in the sphere of influence which is found first in GAP and then in resultant gnosis.