

Epistle of Second Peter II

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As you will notice, I passed out to you the *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry. This is the one that I use and recommend to everyone because it is based on the Stephen's Text of 1550_{A.D.} I think if you have it, read the introductory part, at least about the first five pages; and I think you will see that right in there there's a message as to why we really need this kind of teaching, so we can know. As you know, God preserved the text in Greek. When we have difficulties in the translation, then we should go to the Greek and derive as much as we can from it.

Between the time the *King James* translators made their translation and the turn of the century, 1901, there was a great deal of information discovered about what is called Koine Greek—which is what is called New Testament Greek. Koine Greek was a common language; it is not some sort of holy, secret language, separate from what ordinary people used. So they have been able to discover a great, huge number of just ordinary writings and business transactions and so forth; and so, they have a good background and a lot of knowledge now as to what the Koine Greek really means. Coupled with that, we have the change of the English language from 1611 until now. So, George Ricker Berry, I think, did an outstanding job with his *Interlinear*. And even though you don't know Greek, there are still certain things that you can learn.

Hopefully, I'll be able to point out a couple of things to you as we go along, which will help you. I don't need to be burdensome, or cumber you down with something that's too difficult, although I know that some of the technical things you can get if you stick with it. We just had a new fellowship group back in Ohio—that started three or four weeks ago—and their first project was going through the *Holy Spirit* series that we did with the whole printout on it, and the Greek and everything; and they had a group of eight people and they sat down and they went through it. I sent them each a copy of the study paper with it. When they heard it without the study paper it was really difficult.

So, when they got the study paper and sat down, they all went through it—and they went through it fast. They went through in the three weeks—they took two tapes a week. When they got done they were so happy they could understand everything that I covered in it. It made me feel good that at least I was able to reach them. They had no background in Greek or anything like that. So, I'm not trying to be over your head, or I'm not trying to be super-technical in some of these things. But what I'm trying to do is to make it as understandable as I

can so that we can grow in grace and knowledge and understanding of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as we ought to.

Let's come to the beginning of 2-Peter in the *Interlinear*. I just want to cover just a couple of things here, which will help it. 2-Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, **bondman** and apostle of Jesus Christ..." That's a servant. It's a special kind of a servant. It is a slave. A bondman is someone who is bought and paid for. Now notice the Greek word over it. You can almost make out all the letters because they're very similar to English—δουλος—**dou**—and then the next letter looks like and upside-down **y**—that is an **I** and **os**—and that's pronounced: 'doulos'—and 'doulos' means *slave, servant*.

As we compared last time, when Peter began his first epistle, he said, 1-Peter 1:1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ..." He's learned something in between. Let's also understand that this word 'doulos' is also used in Christ. Let's go to Philippians, the second chapter, and let's understand what it was that Christ did when He came to be the human sacrifice. He didn't come as king. He didn't come grand and glorious. He didn't come as some high, exalted person. Let's notice what it says here, because this is telling us the whole purpose of our conversion is to reach the ultimate of:

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus; Who, although He existed in *the* form of God... [and the Greek means *actually existing as God*—'huparchon'] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God... [and as we covered last week: 'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God.'] (but notice v 7): ...**but emptied Himself...**" (vs 5-7)—'with no reputation' (*KJV*).

Not only that, He came with such a common visage that there was 'no comeliness, there was no beauty, there was no outstanding feature to which, physically, people could be drawn and say: 'Aha! This is the Savior I know because He's the most perfect, beautiful specimen of a human being I've ever seen. No, He didn't do that! 'made Himself of no reputation'! Remember, He created everything that there was; so when it says that *He humbled Himself*, it really means it.

"...and was made in *the* likeness of men, and took the form of a servant... ['doulos'—a slave, the lowest rung of Roman society; a slave, bought and sold. But here He was a total slave of God.] ...And being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (vs 7-8). And I think

therein, brethren, is a lifelong lesson for us to really learn and study on, because that is a profound thing when we understand that our Creator did that for us. I think Peter shows a great deal more of conversion in his second epistle than he does in his first epistle. And this, I think, is a clue: where he says ‘doulos.’

Now let’s come to the *Interlinear* of 2-Peter 1:5 (last part): “...supply ye in your faith...” Let’s not add to in the strictest sense. That *supply* means *to put in to addition*; but notice it is *in your faith*. So, it is *adding within*. It’s a *growing within; character within*.

“...in your faith virtue, and in virtue knowledge, and in knowledge self-control, and in self-control endurance... [it says *patience* in the *King James*; but we’ll see why it’s *endurance* a little later] ...and in endurance piety... [which is *Godliness*] ...and in piety brotherly love, and in brotherly love” (vs 5-7).

Look at the word for *love* in the Greek. You will notice just to left there is another three-letter word—that three-letter word is the definite article meaning *the love*. So what he is doing in writing this, he is building each one of these to the pinnacle of *the love*. So when they didn’t translate that in the English, I think they really missed a tremendous and powerful point.

That’s why in my English translation of it, I translate it THE LOVE! (all caps with an exclamation mark) because he is ending up with *the love*. I think it gives us an incite into how much we can learn, even not knowing Greek. If you would just take the time, get the *Interlinear* and read all of the English that is there, you will find that that translation is superior, and far more accurate than the *King James*—far more accurate. All I do is I improve upon it just a little bit by taking care of the participles and taking care of the verbs and their proper tense, and also some of the passive verbs in the *King James* are translated as *active verbs* when they should not be.

Now let’s come back to 2-Peter 1:4—and I want to cover just a couple of things here to gain a little more incite into what he is writing about. And I think today we’re going to see something very interesting. How many times did the writings of the apostles agree, with variation. How can they agree with variation? *You will see!* All these things listed here are listed a little bit differently in one place by Paul; a little bit differently in another place as he writes to Timothy, and so forth.

2-Peter 1:4: “Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises...” If we keep our mind on that, regardless of what happens; keep our mind on the promises of God, then it doesn’t matter what happens. I’m going to say that

again: *It does not matter what happens in the world around you*. We’re coming to a time when it’s going to get most desperate. What if you were in St. Croix yesterday, or the Virgin Islands, yesterday. Your world is gone, physically. Hurricane came through and ripped it asunder—tore it apart—there’s nothing left. There’s hardly a palm tree that has not been snapped in two. Now, living in circumstances like that, if your whole focus in life was just on the physical things in the world around, your world has ended, especially if you don’t know God, or if you think you know God, now you can be mad at God. But when you focus on these promises, and know that we are going to ‘see Him as He is’ because ‘we’re going to be like Him’—then nothing, nothing, *nothing, nothing, nothing* in this physical world should unsettle you in any way. Now, it may discombobble you for a while; but there is a way around it.

Here’s quite a famous Psalm that God is going to protect you. Let’s look at this in relationship to receiving the spiritual promises—as Peter is talking about here in 2-Pet. 1. Psalm 91:1: “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Whom I will trust.’... [regardless of what there is] ...Surely He will deliver you from the fowler’s trap and from the destroying pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge. His Truth shall be your shield and buckler... [and you can tie in Eph. 6 there concerning how fight against Satan with shield and buckler and helmet and all that.] ...You shall not be afraid of the terror by night... [because those days are going to come.] ...nor for the arrow that flies by day, nor for the plague that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction laying waste at noonday” (vs 1-6). Whether it be a war; whether it be a hurricane; whether it be a tornado; whether it be an earthquake.

Verse 7: “A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand; it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes you shall behold and see the recompense of the wicked” (vs 7-8). God can take care of the wicked—*He will!* But He’s going to do it

- in *His time*
- in *His way*
- with *His devices*
- with *His means*

—and when they go down there’s no recovery.

Verse 9: “Because you have made the LORD, Who is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling, for He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your

ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone” (vs 9-12). This is what Satan quoted to Jesus when he was tempting Him—didn’t he? *Yes!*

Verse 13: “You shall tread upon the lion and asp... [both signs of Satan] ...the young lion and the jackal you shall trample underfoot.... [God is speaking]: ...‘Because he... [you can just put your name there] ...has set his love upon Me... [that’s why all of these things are done, brethren] ...therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation” (vs 13-16).

Whatever these great and precious promises are, focus in on those whenever the going gets tough. That way you’ll never be discouraged, you’ll never be down, you’ll always find a way out of all of the difficulties that come along.

Now, let’s come back to 2-Peter 1:4, and let’s look at a couple of other things here: “...that through these you may become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.” Now let’s look at this thing concerning corruption and so forth that we need to escape.

The world is out there doing everything that which is corruptible. Currently, those of us who like football, we’re out there and we’re rooting for our team—who’s going to be in the Superbowl? And what happens? *Only one team wins!* I feel sorry for teams like the Buffalo Bills who’ve lost four times; and the Denver Broncos, three times. I think they ought to have a silver trophy for them—at least they’re number two; give them something!

1-Corinthians 9:24: “Don’t you know that those who run a race all run...” We’re going to see that as we come to some of these other things that we’re also in a race; we’re all running. In the world, in these races, in their marathons—which calls for endurance.

“...but *only* one receives the prize?... [But with us, we’re all going to receive the prize—the prize of the high-calling of Christ Jesus.] ...That is the way you *are to* **run in order that you may obtain** the prize. For everyone who is striving for **mastery controls himself in all things....**” (vs 24-25). We’ll understand a little bit more about the self-control that we are to have.

“...Of course, they *do this* so that they may receive a corruptible crown...” (v 25). They’re in there pumping iron, working out from day to night, keep their bodies in great shape and trim form so they can run or push or shove or tackle or leap or

catch—whatever it is that they do. ‘to obtain a corruptible crown.’ It’s going to be gone! A hundred years into the Millennium who’s going to remember Jerry Rice? *Nobody!*

“...but **we are striving for an incorruptible crown**.... [We’re going to have a name, which is going to be absolutely fantastic! Personally given to each one of us by Jesus Christ—which will never perish; never fade away.] ...I, therefore, so run, not as one who is uncertain; so *also* I fight, not as beating *the* air. But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, after preaching to others, I myself might be rejected” (vs 25-27).

There’s one other thing we need to understand with that is this: is that if you truly have the Spirit of God and God the Father has called you—which He has, otherwise you wouldn’t have His Spirit—you are not going to be lost if you’re doing what he says here to really strive. But also do what Peter says here, *with all diligence*. To be diligently doing it. They do it after a corruptible one.

Let’s see some things which are important concerning corruptible vs incorruptible. 1-Peter 1:2: “*Who have been chosen* according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father, by sanctification through the Spirit, unto the obedience and *the* sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has **begotten us again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; into an inheritance incorruptible**... [we escaped the corruption that’s in the world. Now ***we are looking for something which is incorruptible***.] ...and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us” (vs 2-4). When Christ comes He will bring it.

In order to be redeemed, we have to be redeemed with something which is not corruptible, v 18: “Knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from your forefathers, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who truly was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for your sake” (vs 18-20).

Verse 23: “*For* you have been begotten again... [not *born again*] ...not from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible *seed*, by the living Word of God, *which* remains forever.” I know, and you know, that with the experience of getting older we know the longer we live, the less time we have to live. There comes a point when this old body just shuts down. Someone was telling me about one of their relatives who had just died yesterday. They got

up at two o'clock last night, person got up, feeling fine and someone there with him said, 'How you feeling?' He said, *fine*. Went back to bed and was dead in the morning. Now, that's the way to go! I mean if there's any way to go, that's the way to go! This person something like 80-something—way up there. Now, ***if they have the Spirit of Christ they are guaranteed an incorruptible inheritance.*** And that's the whole point! Paul talks about this; it has to be, and that's something! I can hardly wait for this time. Boy, I tell you, that is something; if we really keep this in mind and look forward to this, this is going to be awesome!

1-Corinthians 15:51: "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed." Metamorphosed—that's why we can learn something from the insects. They change from one form to another—a caterpillar to a butterfly. If you look at a butterfly over here, not knowing that it came from a caterpillar over here, you would not connect the two together—would you? But there's a process that they go through so that it happens. It's called *metamorphose*. Our change will be instant!

Verse 52: "**In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed** [metamorphosed]. For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality" (vs 52-53). That's what we are to look forward to. These are the 'great and precious promises.' And we can be 'partakers of the Divine nature.'

Let's see something else, 2-Peter 1:4: "...having escaped the corruption... [all of it] ...*that is* in the world through lust"—deceitful lusts.

How can we escape the corruption that is in the world when we are still in it and it's all around us? It's there everywhere. As Jesus said, 'We are ***not of*** the world; we ***live in*** the world.' Here's how we do it:

1-John 2:15: "Do not **love the world**... [We're going to notice—you might want to circle this as we go along—it mentions *the world* six times!—which is profound—isn't it?] ...**nor the things that are in the world**. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him because **everything** that *is* in the world—the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and the pretentious **pride of physical life**... [This *pride of life* is the 'bio'—the physical from which we get the word *biology*. This is the physical life.] ...—*is not* from the Father, but is from the world. And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (vs 15-17). I think it's interesting, we have 'the world' listed six times;

'lust' three times—including the *pride of life*.

As we will see a little later on, Peter is building up to what he's going to bring in the second chapter. Whenever there is bad news the apostles always bring, first, the good news; then the bad news. Inspire us first so we can understand the correction, second; and what's going on.

Let's go to Ephesians 4, and we're going to see that the world is run according to deceitful lusts. What I want you to do, since you will probably be watching some television sometime tonight or tomorrow, what I want you to do is look at every commercial that comes on, look at the shows which are made, and just ask the question: Is this the *lust of the flesh*, the *lust of the eyes*, and the *pride of life*? And you're going to see almost every one of them is. Almost every commercial! Almost every program!

You will notice in each case Peter is telling us in 2-Pet. that we are to *put in*. When we *put in* something, you also have to *remove* something; and Paul is saying the same thing here, expressing it just a little differently:

Ephesians 4:22 "That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 22-24). We're going to talk about Holiness here in just a little bit. And then it shows some things to *put away* and other things to *put on*.

2-Peter 1:5: "And for this very reason... [of these promises] ...also, having applied all *your* diligence besides..." We're to put forth the maximum effort we can. When you put forth the maximum effort, how are you to do this? *With Christ in you!* You ask God to bless you in your efforts—what you are doing—that you can put forth the maximum. Have you ever put forth your maximum effort but to find out that you weren't 'in gear'? Try it some time.

Go in your parking lot and put your car in neutral and step on the gas. You're not going very far. You have to have Christ in you do it; because if we are doing this to show God what we can do, then we're just like sitting in the car, in neutral, and going full blast. But if Christ is in us, we ask God

- to help us
- to motivate us
- to inspire us
- to give us the diligence

then we will be able to be so much more productive. Another thing this will do: You won't be devastated when you don't succeed the first time. You'll be able to pick up and go on.

“...add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control... [we’ll see what kind of self-control that is in just a bit] ...and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, **the love...** [‘tein agape’] ...of God” (vs 5-7).

Now, let’s pick up where we left off last time—we finished with faith and we started just a little bit with:

4) **Virtue**—means moral uprightness.

It’s used only three times or four times in the whole New Testament, and that is if there is any good thing—or you can also say, *good behavior*, *good conduct*, and so forth—so we will look at it from the point of view of *good conduct*. There are virtuous or Godly or good things that we are to do; and this is really a very important Scripture, which probably should be expounded a little bit more, at another time.

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship...” We can see about *overcoming with Christ in you*.

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved...” In the Greek this means *having been saved*—a completed, past fact. As I mentioned before, there are three steps to salvation:

1. *have been saved* now
2. *being saved* currently
3. *shall be saved* at the resurrection

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are **His workmanship**... [let God have that perfect work within you] ...created in Christ Jesus... [What did the Apostle Paul say to the Galatians: ‘Oh, Galatians, I travail until Christ be formed in you.’] ...in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works... [and *good* here can be similar to *virtue*, which then *good works* are those things which you see outside, as well as *good works* can be those which are within.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (vs 8-10).

Now, let’s go to Luke, the sixth chapter, and let’s expand this just a little bit; because if we’re going to have virtue, then we have to be connected in with Christ, Who is good. We have to be minding that which is good, doing that which is good; and here in Luke it’s compared to a tree.

Luke 6:43: “For there is not a good tree that is producing corrupt fruit; nor *is there* a corrupt tree that is producing good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit; for they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather a bunch of grapes from a

bramble. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart... [which then is: **the virtue**] ...brings forth that which *is* good...” (vs 43-45). If you’ve escaped the lust of the world—which we have—and if you ‘love not the world, nor the things that are in the world’; and you’re not given over to the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, then you’re going to what? *You’re going to bring forth good things*; out of your heart—that’s what it’s going to bring.

“...and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure of his heart brings forth that which *is* wicked...” (v 45). Now, you think on that as you watch the *progressive degeneration* of television. How many of you have noticed that over the last ten years? Progressively more degenerate! When you understand and remember that every word spoken is scripted; when you understand and realize that every scene is preplanned; every frame in that videotape has been edited to do exactly what they want to be done; and they are bringing forth ‘evil treasure out of their heart.’

“...**for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks**” (v 45). Very profound! Absolutely true! So those are some of the *virtues* that we need to have.

Now let’s go to Colossians, the first chapter, please; and we’re going to see something else concerning it. Colossians 1:9 falls right along with this, but let’s notice what this is doing: “For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will...”

That’s what we want, brethren. I want to know and understand the knowledge and the will of God, because that’s the greatest thing that we can know in this life. Only God can reveal it and give it. That’s wonderful! There are going to be times when you’re studying, when you’re praying, when you’re thinking, that God is going to give you added understanding. I tell you, there is nothing that encourages you more than something like that—and you know it has to come from God, it’s not from you—it’s from God! We need to increase in that.

“...knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding... [that can come with the mind of Christ; that gives you the spiritual understanding] ...That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work... [again, this is the virtue that is seeing the moral uprightness] ...and growing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with **all power**... [‘*dunamis*’—that is *the energy that comes from the power of God’s Spirit*] ...according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy... [The days around us are going to get real

rough. If we can do it with joyfulness, that's going to be great.] ...giving thanks to the Father, Who has **made us qualified...**" (vs 9-12).

And you know, it's really true; I've heard many sermons: you gotta do this; you gotta do that; and qualify. If you don't do it, you won't qualify, you're going to fall short. Well, if Christ is in you, and God the Father is qualifying you, **you're going to make it!**

"...for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred us unto the kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins" (vs 12-14).

Listen, God is doing everything so that we can make it! That's great, brethren! That's wonderful! We're going to. I know there's going to come a time when we can help and inspire other brethren to do the same.

Now, let's go to 1-Peter 3:8: "Now *this is* the goal: all of you be of one mind, sympathizing... [this is all part of the *virtue* that we're to have. Now notice how these exhortations come along one after the other, just like in 2-Pet. 1.] ...loving the brethren... [that means be sympathetic and understanding of other people's problems.] ...compassionate *and* friendly, not rendering evil for evil, or abuse for abuse; but instead *be* blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you should inherit a blessing. For the one who desires to love life, and to see good days, let him restrain his own tongue from evil, and not allow his lips to speak deceit. Let him avoid evil, and let him *continually* practice good [virtue]. Let him seek peace, and let him *earnestly* pursue it; because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their supplication. But the face of the Lord is against those who are practicing evil" (vs 8-12). So again, let God handle it; let God take care of it. Those are some of the things that we have in the way of *virtue*.

5) Knowledge

There are two kinds of *knowledge* which are listed here; although, they are used interchangeably. There's

1. 'epignosis'—which is *saving knowledge*—which comes from God
2. 'gnosis'—which is *knowledge*

—but they're used interchangeably. I've done a word study on that and they're pretty much used interchangeably. Let's see the ultimate of the *knowledge* that God wants us to have. Let's go to Ephesians, the first chapter, and **only God can give this**. You will find that when I'm preaching, there'll be two or three places in Ephesians that I will go to quite

often—Eph. 1 & 3. The reason that I do is because those contain such powerful and tremendous lessons for us, that we need to go there quite often; because we can learn more and more each time we do. Here's the kind of knowledge that we want to have—knowledge, understanding, wisdom; you can bunch that all together in 'epignosis.'

Ephesians 1:17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.... [That's why we go through and study it the way that we do; so that we can understand as much as we can.] ...*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened..." (vs 17-18)—and I like that phrase—*the eyes of your understanding*. There is one thing to see with the eyes; there's another thing to see with the mind—and that's what he's talking about here.

(go to the next track)

Let's look at this knowledge, this 'epignosis' that we are to add to our faith and put in our faith. Faith is the foundation, then we add everything else into it as Peter was saying, and he ends up with love. Paul starts with *love* is the fruit of the Spirit and adds everything into it and then ends up with *self-control*. Now let's look and see what kind of knowledge that God wants us to have. There are places in chapters 1 & 3 that I will use quite often; and the reason that I will is because they're very, very inspiring sections of the entire Bible.

Ephesians 1:17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.... [the 'epignosis'—God wants us to have that knowledge.] ...*And* may the **eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend...**" (vs 17-18). That's a tremendous experience! God wants us to all have that in relationship to His Word. So there may be times when you're praying; there may be times when you're studying, that all of a sudden, with God's Spirit, BAM! you understand that you never understood before. And it wasn't that it wasn't there, it was there all the time; but God is opening your mind to it.

Just like Job, because Job had the same thing. He was seeing with his eyes; he was seeing partly—or 'hearing with his ears' as he says. But he had to come to understand something very, very profound and that is that God IS God.

Job 42:1: "And Job answered the LORD and said..." God came to Job and He didn't smash him down, knock him all apart because Satan already did a good job with that. I mean, how would you like to be weeks and weeks with boils from the top of your head to the sole of your foot, and sitting there scraping with a potsherd, and the pus running out

and the blood running down, and the flies coming around and landing on you and laying their eggs; now you look down and there are maggots crawling in your flesh. So he pretty well had had it. So if you think you've had a bad week, think on Job!

God came down to Job and said, 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the world. I tell you what, if you can clothe yourself with majesty, as I am clothed; if you can make the water stop at your word; then I'll declare to you that you can save yourself.' So Job got the lesson.

Verse 2: "I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You." God knows! Now that's a powerful thing—isn't it? That doesn't mean that God is going around spying in everyone's mind. Please understand that! But it means this: God can know any thought that He wants to at any time. And besides, whatever you think is stored in your mind, so it's there anyhow—right? *Yes!*

Verse 3: "You *asked*, 'Who is he who hides counsel without knowledge?'.... [Job was talking about himself.] ...Therefore, I have spoken that which I did not understand; *things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know. Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said*, 'I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear... [partial understanding; just that which is outside—not which is inside.] ...**but now my eye sees You**.... [In other words, the understanding of the eyes of his understanding in his mind now understood God.] ...Therefore, I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." (vs 3-6).

Let's go back to Ephesians 1 again; and I'll guarantee you this, the more that the eyes of your understanding are opened, and you see the greatness of God and what God has done and the magnitude of God's promises, and the magnitude of the blessings that God is holding out to us—just like Peter said, 'exceeding great and precious promises'—you don't have to worry about beating the flesh to be humble; you will be overwhelmed in awe!

Ephesians 1:18: "And may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend... [God wants us to *know always*, brethren.] ...what is the hope of His calling, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... [riches and glory. I don't know what it's going to be like to be a spirit being, and clothed with spirit clothes, and to be able to have access to the greatest riches of the universe, brethren—that's what God is going to give us; that's something!] ...And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power" (vs 18-19).

Now let's go to Colossians, the second

chapter, and let's see what he says about the mystery of God—God wants us to know. Isn't that something! When God calls you, He says, 'I'm going to take you into My confidence; I'm going to reveal to you My plan.' That's something!

Colossians 2:2: "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love unto all riches of the **full assurance of understanding**..." I tell you what, when you understand and are confident in that understanding, no one can take it from you—can he? *No! Nobody can!*

I was talking with a person the other day, and this person was telling me about a problem; and I said, over the phone, *breathe for me*. I didn't say a word, and the answer came back, 'Well, I can't.' I said, *You're right. There are certain things that only you can do*. And this was in relationship to other people's problems and people coming and bothering and dumping all their problems on him. They get all worried—just worried! Some people worry when there's nothing to worry about. 'My, there must be something wrong! I have nothing to worry about.' So that's why I asked this person to breathe for me. Couldn't do it. You can't have a church where all the brethren are on artificial respirators; because when those are cut off they can't breathe.

You see, **God wants us to know!** He wants us to have the full assurance, each one of us, in our mind and heart "...unto *the* knowledge... ['epignosis'—that's where this comes from] ...of the mystery of God... [He wants us to know, brethren] ...and of *the* Father, and of Christ; in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (vs 2-3). Only God the Father and Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, can bring that knowledge to you—it cannot come any other way.

Colossians 3:10—here's what this knowledge—this 'epignosis'—is to do for us. "And have put on the new man, who *is* being **renewed in knowledge**... [epignosis—with the Spirit of God] ...according to *the* image of Him Who created him." So this is what the knowledge of God is to do for us.

Let's go to 2-Peter 3:15 and let's see what he ends up saying: "And bear in mind that the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation, exactly as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, also wrote to you; also, as in all his epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand, which the ignorant and unstable are twisting *and distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (vs 15-16).

What he's doing here, if you really understand it, he's equating the writings of the Apostle Paul to Scripture. They were, in fact, at the time of Peter writing this getting together all the

Epistles of Paul and they were producing what we have as the New Testament at that time.

Verse 17: “Now therefore, beloved, *since* you know this in advance, be guarding yourselves against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness; rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge [epignosis] of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” (vs 17-18). So, he starts out with that and he ends up with that. That becomes very important, especially when you sandwich in between it 2-Pet. 2 with all of the heresies that were going on.

Now let’s look at another kind of ‘gnosis’ or *knowledge* this is just ‘gnosis.’ We will see that some of these things are kind of interchangeable, as we go along, with ‘epignosis.’ But ‘epignosis’ has more of the connotation that it comes directly from God—not that ‘gnosis’ cannot also allude to that.

Let’s go to 1-Corinthians 1. This book is some book, and it relates all of the problems that any church would go through. I remember one time a ‘high-ranking’ minister said to me: ‘I don’t know why 1-Corinthians is in the Bible, we don’t have any of these problems.’ And guess what, 15 years later we had all of these problems.

1-Corinthians 1:4: “I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus; and that you have been *spiritually* enriched in Him in everything, in all discourse and knowledge... [‘gnosis’—this is knowledge *about*, not knowledge *from*] ...According as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that you do not lack *even* one *spiritual* gift while you are awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 4-7).

Verse 9: “God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called into *the* fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” So that has to be revealed and given to us.

1-Corinthians 12:8—knowledge is one of the gifts of the Spirit, which God can give. That’s why we have to rightly divide and put together the Word of God. “For to one, a word of wisdom is given by the Spirit; and to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit.” Now he has listing the gifts of the Spirit in a different way. These are ministering gifts to minister to the Church. The fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23 are the individual fruits that each individual will develop. These then are gifts of ministering to the brethren.

Verse 9: “And to a different one, faith by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and to another, *the* working of miracles; and to another, prophecy; and to another, discerning

of spirits; and to a different one, various languages; and to another, *the* interpretation of languages. But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God* Himself desires” (vs 9-11). It is to bring us not only knowledge, but wisdom and all of these other things together. It’s a little bit different than listed by Peter in 2-Peter, the first chapter.

After he said he counted all things a loss that he may win Christ, Philippians 3:9 “And may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness* which *is by the* faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith; that I may **know** [‘gnosis’] Him, and the power of His resurrection...” (vs 9-10).

6) Self-control—right self-direction

Right self-direction can only come with Christ in you. So it’s a little bit different kind of self-control that the control that you would see like in military discipline or the control that you would see that the police are disciplined into. This is *internal self-control*. I like this section here, it’s called *temperance* (KJV)—has nothing to do with the Women’s Temperance Society, which were teetotalers. And there’s a funny movie out, *Hallelujah Trail*—where the Temperance Union gets all drunk. See, no self-control—bad news. Self-control also has to do not only with right self-direction, but *right* self-control in relationship to restraint sexually. This is when Paul was in prison.

Acts 24:24: “Now, after certain days, Felix appeared with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess; *and* he sent for Paul and listened to him *speak* about the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned concerning righteousness... [he’s talking in a language that he would understand] ...and self-control, and the judgment to come... [It must have been a pretty powerful message.] ...Felix became fearful *and* answered, ‘You may go now, and when I find an opportunity, I will call for you’” (vs 24-25).

He couldn’t stand it any longer. I wonder if Felix was lacking in righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come against people who do those things. Makes you wonder. Could be, but I thought it was funny reading through that. He trembled!

Verse 26: “Moreover, he was also hoping that money would be given *to* him by Paul, so that he might release him... [a little bribery; no wonder he was shaking, he was looking for a bribe there] ...for this reason, he sent for him and conversed with him more often.”

So he came in, took two years, and he kept talking to him. And the next guy down—Festus—said, ‘You almost persuade me to be a Christian, Paul.’ So Paul was still really going at it there—he

was talking about that self-control. Let's see that that's one of the first things that anyone who is called to be an overseer or an elder must have—he must have self-control. That is *right self-control, as controlled by Christ in him*.

Titus 1:7: “For it is obligatory that as God's steward an overseer be blameless...” He's going to list off some qualifications for an overseer. And I view an elder as one who is like a coach. I'm going to have to give another sermon on that and finish off the Church structure and function, because there are some people going around, because they've been so hurt by ministers, they say that everyone who's baptized is a minister. There is no difference.

I have to go through and cover that. I view an elder, who is leading and teaching, like a coach. A coach is on the sidelines. He gets them all involved in doing what they need to do, and he is teaching so each one can become competent in what he or she should do in whatever sport it may be. So that's how I view it—he's overseeing from the sidelines. And when it's done, and it's done properly, there's a minimum of trouble; there's a minimum of strife; and you don't have to bring any great sermons, resoundingly, coming down on authority. So that's how I view an elder—on the sideline teaching, training, helping everyone so they can all enter into the Kingdom of God.

“...an overseer [must] be blameless...” (v 7). That's kind of the opposite of *virtuous*. In other words, not having any great faults. You have *virtue* over here which is the goodness; then you have *blameless* over here which is the lack of great, huge faults.

“...not self-willed... [that is so he will yield to the Spirit of God] ...not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not a bully, not greedy for material gain; but hospitable, a lover of [the] good... [not good men—*the* good—which can be men or things or whatever] ...sound-minded, just, Holy, self-controlled... [temporant] ...holding steadfastly to the faithful word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*...” (vs 7-9). This *right self-control* is what we need to have.

I tell you, it's something that needs to be taught our children. The other day I was in *K & S*—our local market—and they have a little place you can go cash a check. So I had to go cash a check, and there are some mothers in the line and here's a kid standing outside waiting (they have one of these separation things that you have to walk through)—and there's a stamp machine. So here's this kid pushing all the buttons on the stamp machine, and he went through it about three times. So finally, I looked at him and said, ‘Please don't do that, this is not a toy, this is a stamp machine. If you want to buy

a stamp then put in some money and buy some, but if not, leave it alone.’ And I guess this mother looked and told him to get his hands off, but *self-control*—my they sure need to teach that in school. What is this program that the kids watch; this thing on the Nickelodeon? They have one where they have the face of Nimrod in the middle of it with his tongue sticking out—it's Baal-worship. They have here on this Nickelodeon program—as I'm channel surfing I've seen this quite a few times—where it's speaking! It's speaking! The image of the beast is speaking! A type of it! But here, all of these kids are just being sucked into all of these, almost uncontrollable things that they go through. It's something! No self-control! No right direction!

7) Endurance

The *King James* has it as *patience*, but *patience* is not a good translation. It's okay—on a scale of one to ten it's about four-and-a-half; because in order to have *endurance*, you must have *patience*. But you can be patient mentally, but have no *endurance*. It means *courageous steadfastness*, or *steadfast endurance in the face of evil or suffering*. Let's look at some Scriptures concerning this. I think we're going to find this real important here.

James 1:2: “[My brethren] Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials... [temptations, or difficulties—I haven't gotten there yet. Hope to.] ...knowing that the testing of your faith produces **endurance**” (vs 2-3).

What does it say in Matt. 24? One of the very famous Scriptures we look to. ‘He who endures to the end, the same shall be saved.’ That's why you have to have *endurance*—for salvation. Says *patience* in the *King James*, but it means *endurance*.

Verse 4: “But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything. However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*” (vs 4-6).

James 5:10—this is the thing which help me understand the difference between *patience* and *enduring*. “My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of *the Lord as an example of endurance*... [not just patience, but endurance. You go back and look what Jeremiah had to endure; look what Ezekiel had to endure. I think of poor Ezekiel, he must have had the toughest assignment of all of them.] ...*in* afflictions and of steadfastness. Remember, we call those blessed who endure. You

have heard of the **endurance of Job**... [it says *patience* in the *King James*, but Job was anything but patient! He was impatient; demanding of God—**but he endured!**] ...and you have seen the end result of *servicing the Lord*: that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercies” (vs 10-11).

We may come back to this again a little later, but let's go to Romans, the fifth chapter, because it talks about **endurance**. And it talks about it in a way that, I think, is very good. And again, notice the steps that it gives. I'm going to compile all of those things—the steps—all of these sections of Scripture which gives these one after another. I think it'll be a good lesson for us.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations...” (vs 1-3).

Boy, I tell you what, God must have given all the apostles a real, special blessing in how to endure tribulations. He must have! Everyone of them says, ‘joy in tribulation.’ And I've talked to a lot of people and they don't *joy* in tribulation. Like I said, I haven't arrived there yet, myself.

“...realizing that **tribulation brings forth endurance**, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope” (vs 3-4). Which shows that character only comes by experience. I can look back in my life now and I can speak from experience where I couldn't before. Some of the things that I have gone through have been tribulations and difficulties.

Verse 5: “And the hope of *God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit... [here he ends up with love, just like Peter did.] ...which has been given to us,”

Now let's see some more concerning enduring and what we need to do. Let's see another charge. This is given to Timothy, so this is a charge to all the elders—and here's what he was to do, and it's just a little bit different; it's similar, but it's a little bit different.

1-Timothy 6:11: “But you, O man of God, flee these things... [that is all of the going after money and covetousness and so forth] ...and pursue righteousness... [It's just a little different—isn't it?] ...Godliness, faith, love, endurance *and* meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith! Take hold of eternal life to which you were also called, and did profess a good profession in the presence of many

witnesses” (vs 11-12).

When you're down and when you are out and when you are filled with difficulties and you think that you can go on **no further!** Have you ever come to that point? or you thought that you were close to that point? Well, when you get down to it, we will call it *the brink of the river end!* or *the brink of the end of the rope!* And sometimes things will happen that you're almost like on a rope and you're trying to hold on, and you are slipping, slipping, slipping, slipping, slipping, slipping! And finally, you turn to Christ. Well, here's what you need to do, and the reason that this is important is because Christ also went through all of these things. Can you imagine what Christ had to think of when He was in the flesh?

- *knowing* that He was the Creator of everything that there was
- *knowing* that He was carrying the ‘law of sin and death’ within Him
- *knowing* that He cannot sin even once

So, you compare that with your own life. And from that then you will gain a great deal of strength, because you know that He's gone through everything.

Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight... [You've got to put it aside! When troubles and difficulties come, you have to work it out the best way you can, with God's help, then when it's over, put it aside! Just like I said earlier, you can't breathe for me. I can't breathe for you. Always try and do this when there are troubles and difficulties that come: **do not pollute today with the problems of yesterday; and do not project the problems of today into tomorrow**—because it hasn't come yet. That's what we need to do.] ...lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entraps *us*; and let us **run the race set before us with endurance.**”

Just like these long-distance runners. They have to have endurance—don't they? *Yes, they do!* What are they called? *They are called marathons.* The worst endurance one is the triathlon, where it's the bicycle, and it's the swimming, and it's the running. You try that. I think almost all of us here would huff and puff one block and we would've had all we could endure.

So, “...run the race set before us with endurance... [looking: you always have to have your eyes and your heart and mind on Christ.] ...having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy... [He must have imparted a special joy of comprehending tribulations and difficulties to the apostles that, so far, any of us have received.] ...that lay ahead of Him **endured**

the cross, although He despised the shame... [didn't make any difference] ...and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds" (vs 1-3). So we have to have the endurance; we have to endure to the end—don't we? Yes!

Let's see how that in our patient or enduring continuance in well-doing, we're striving for eternal life while we are looking to Jesus Christ. Romans 2:6: "Who will render to each one according to his own works... [*deeds and works* in the *King James* are exactly the same because they come from the Greek: 'ergon'] ...on the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality—eternal life" (vs 6-7). Now again, we have a set of things coming one after the other: you're to seek for glory, honor and immortality—you're going to receive eternal life. So that's really tremendous, the things that God gives us if we endure.

Let's go to 1-Corinthians 13:4, and let's see that ***the only way you can endure is to have the love of God***: "Love is patient... [that implies by that, ***endurance***] ...and is kind.... [v 7]: *Love bears all things... [you can't bear all things unless you have endurance] ...believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*" When we look back and see that we haven't *endured unto blood, resisting against sin*, yet, then we can look to Christ and we'll make it through. He'll see us through. We don't have to worry!

Let's go to 2-Timothy 2—here again are some things that are given to Timothy; he's told certain things that he needs to do. Good instruction. A little bit different sequence of things; but it's interesting how many times this follows through.

2-Timothy 2:9: "For which I am suffering hardship, *even* to the point of being imprisoned like a criminal... [Paul had it really rough; he had it very difficult] ...but the Word of God has not been chained. Because of this, I endure all things for the sake of the elect... [whatever it is; whatever the difficulty] ...in order that they may obtain *the* salvation that *is* in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. This is a faithful saying: If we have died together with *Him*, we shall also live together with *Him*; if we endure, we shall also reign together with *Him*; if we deny *Him*, He will also deny us; if we are unfaithful, He remains faithful—He cannot deny Himself" (vs 9-13). So there again, ***the charge to Timothy to be faithful, to endure, to go forward.***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

✓ Exception: 1& 2-Peter, from *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter—author's translation

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Peter 1:1
- 2) Philippians 2:5-8
- 3) 2-Peter 1:5-7
- 4) 2-Peter 1:4
- 5) Psalm 91:1-16
- 6) 2-Peter 1:4
- 7) 1-Corinthians 9:24-27
- 8) 1-Peter 1:2-4, 18-20, 23
- 9) 1-Corinthians 15:51-53
- 10) 2-Peter 1:4
- 11) 1-John 2:15-17
- 12) Ephesians 4:22-24
- 13) 2-Peter 1:5-7
- 14) Ephesians 2:10, 8-10
- 15) Luke 6:43-45
- 16) Colossians 1:9-14
- 17) 1-Peter 3:8-12
- 18) Ephesians 1:17-18
- 19) Job 42:1-6
- 20) Ephesians 1:18-19
- 21) Colossians 2:2-3
- 22) Colossians 3:10
- 23) 2-Peter 3:15-18
- 24) 1-Corinthians 1:4-7, 9
- 25) 1-Corinthians 12:8-11
- 26) Philippians 3:9-10
- 27) Acts 24:24-26
- 28) Titus 1:7-9
- 29) James 1:2-6
- 30) James 5:10-11
- 31) Romans 5:1-5
- 32) 1-Timothy 6:11-12
- 33) Hebrews 12:1-3
- 34) Romans 2:6-7
- 35) 1-Corinthians 13:4, 7
- 36) 2-Timothy 2:9-13

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- Ephesians 6
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- Matthew 24

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Holy Spirit*

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