

Audio Transcript of Sermon  
January 25, 2020  
Knowledge

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. With the start of 2020, we have been diving into a passage from second Peter. That's where we'll start today, we'll look this time at second Peter one beginning with verse five.

### **2 Peter 1:5-8**

**5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;**

**6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;**

**7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.**

**8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Today, we are looking at knowledge. Last week we considered virtue, before that diligence, and before that faith. We're looking at these building blocks of our spiritual life that are so very important for us because without these, we will not grow spiritually, and at the end of our life, whenever that comes, we run the risk of not measuring up to the spiritual maturity we need for eternal salvation.

Since the beginning of time when God was interacting with man, knowledge of God has been an integral part of our relationship with God. Let's go back and take a look at one of those early interactions between God and man going all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Let's take a look at Genesis two, beginning with verse eight, Genesis two verse eight.

### **Genesis 2:8-17**

**8. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.**

**9. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food;**

Imagine a garden that has a huge variety of trees. That's what the Garden of Eden was. It wasn't a garden that was dominated by a solitary variety of trees, there were dozens and dozens if not hundreds of different kinds of trees that were in the middle of the Garden of Eden, trees that were pleasant to the sight that we can enjoy during the different seasons of the year, where maybe there are flowers to smell, where the leaves have different shapes and textures and sizes. But there were also trees that were good for food. We think of trees like the apple tree, the orange tree, trees that bare nuts, the pecan is very hugely grown around the El Paso area. But also with all of these trees, there was,

**the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.**

Knowledge has always been a part of our relationship with God and if you were to stop right there at verse nine and didn't read any other part about the Garden of Eden, or the differences between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you might not clearly understand what the difference is. We'll understand that Satan the devil clearly understood what the difference was and used that difference to his advantage to deceive Eve. Verse ten.

**10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.**

**11. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;**

**12. And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.**

**13. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.**

**14. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.**

**15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.**

There are those who would look at this passage and these rivers and say, "*See, the Bible is a made-up book, because there is no way these four rivers could ever possibly come from a single solitary point and flow outward.*" What we don't know from history is how the flood from Noah changed the topography of the earth. Whenever you run water over the surface of the earth, it changes the

features of the terrain. So, for those who would look at this passage as a way to discount the accuracy and veracity of the Bible, that's not something we can do in good faith when we look at the entire passage and history of the Bible. Verse sixteen.

**16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:**

So, imagine in this case Adam going around the Garden of Eden knowing that he could eat of every tree with one exception. Verse seventeen.

**17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

Here's Adam in the Garden of Eden with very little background understanding and awareness of God and this huge struggle that God endured when Satan rebelled against him. Adam and his wife were totally dependent and reliant on God and what they saw around them. They had no prior knowledge or experience to go on. Moving slightly forward in the story, let's take a look at Genesis three verse one.

### **Genesis 3:1**

**1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?**

So, here is Satan posing a question to Eve, and he poses it in a way that intellectually empowers Eve. He asked Eve the question, "*...hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" And here is what Eve responded in verse two.

**2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:**

**3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.**

So, looking at this passage, there might be this question, “Why would God not want people to have knowledge of good and evil?” Wouldn’t God want people to be aware of both what is good and what is bad? That’s the angle Satan came from when he talked with Eve. He told her a half-truth in verse four. Many politicians are very good at giving half-truths, the reality is many people are very good at giving half-truths as well.

#### **4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:**

Now the reality is, when Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she didn’t die right then and there, so that gave the serpent, Satan the devil, the ammunition he needed to basically say, “*See, I told you, you wouldn’t die.*” That wasn’t the full story because what Eve couldn’t know and what Satan wasn’t sharing with her was that by choosing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Eve was setting into motion a set of events that would lead to this modern world that we know today. Had Eve chosen instead to only eat of the tree of life, the path forward would have looked much different, but because Eve chose of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that changed how God worked with people. Verse five.

#### **5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.**

That was the catch. He was sharing and telling Eve that God was withholding secret knowledge from her and from Adam. And so, with all of that deception from the serpent, and with the instruction from God, Eve carefully took a look at what she had available to her. In verse six,

#### **6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.**

We do not know what fruit was on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The common assumption is Eve gave Adam the apple because there is this part of the human anatomy called the Adam’s apple. We don’t know what fruit it was that Eve gave to Adam. There is no way to know exactly what fruit that was, or if

that tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a tree that exists in nature to this day and we simply do not know what it is. The result of all of this in verse seven,

**7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.**

Imagine how differently things would be today if Eve and Adam had chosen to eat of the tree of life. We understand good and evil today because of the choice that Even and Adam made back at this time back at the very beginning of time. Had Adam and Eve chosen the tree of life, the world we live in today would look pretty much like this Kingdom of God that we set our heart to. The dynamics would be totally different. The only reason we understand evil today, is because of this act back then, and if there is no understanding of evil, then there can be no evil. When Even and Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they voluntarily upon themselves introduced evil into the mindset of mankind. Before this time, there was no knowledge of evil, and if there is no knowledge of evil, there is no evil that can be done. Only good would have been possible because God was teaching them based on His laws and His teachings. There would be no way where Adam and Eve could have gone off on their own into this realm of evil, but because the voluntarily chose to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, what we take for granted today as an evil world, would not exist. The world would be much different. So, this was a huge significant time in the history of mankind.

Knowledge is important, but the knowledge of good and evil is not important, not compared to the knowledge of God's way of life and how God would have us live our life. What God doesn't want us to have and to focus on is this knowledge of good and evil. Rather, God wants us to focus on the knowledge that will lead us to salvation and the Kingdom of God.

Let's take a look at the prophetic Book of Hosea, Hosea four beginning with verse four, Hosea four verse four.

**Hosea 4:4-10**

**4. Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.**

Back in the time, people would disagree with what was being taught by the priesthood. We live in a political world where people disagree all of the time, but the idea of disagreeing with the teaching of God, that's what's being discussed in verse four. It becomes very dangerous when we come to a point where we look at something in the Bible and we say, I disagree with that. That puts us in a very dangerous place in our footing with God because all that that action acknowledges is that we are very much into the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and we're making our value system judgments based on that knowledge of both good and evil, and not on the teachings of God. Verse five.

**5. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.**

Because people voluntarily choose to disagree with what God teaches, bad things will happen, and let's look at verse six.

**6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:**

Knowledge is very powerful. I worked in education for twenty-seven years, we're all about helping people acquire knowledge, and in verse six, God says, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...*," and here is how they were destroyed for lack of knowledge,

**because thou hast rejected knowledge,**

When we look at the Bible and we take a look at any passage from the Bible, and we say, I disagree with this passage from the Bible, we are rejecting God, we are rejecting the knowledge that is in the Bible, and it makes no difference why we come to that conclusion. People come to that conclusion for a variety of reasons. People will take a look at a passage from the Bible and say, "*Well, I disagree with that passage because it was written by a man.*" We need to remember that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. There should be no passage of the Bible that we reject. That's what Hosea four is talking about, and what happens if we reject knowledge, we know we're going to be destroyed for lack of knowledge because we reject knowledge, but here is what God says continuing in verse six.

**I will also reject thee,**

And here primarily, God is talking to the priests; these are the people who have the responsibility to teach people, but these verses could apply to anybody who voluntarily chooses to reject God. *"I will also reject thee,"*

**that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.**

We live in a time when because of politics and social initiatives that fall outside of the realm of faith and religion, drives what happens within faith and within churches. That's wrong. The reality is, we cannot forget the law of God, because if we do, God will reject us, He will reject our children. Verse seven.

**7. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.**

Think about what happens in the world around us. People who are priests are given a high moral standard. They are viewed very favorably by the people around them. They are the pillars of the community, until one of them goes out and molests a child, or one of them takes advantage of a person in their congregation. That glory very quickly gets turned into shame, and in the modern era we are living that day in and day out because the priests who speak to so many people have rejected the knowledge that is in the Bible, and have replaced it with a mixture of politics and modern social initiatives. There is nothing wrong with having a political viewpoint. There is nothing wrong with taking certain social initiatives. Neither of those take the place of what is in the Bible. Neither of those is more important than what is in the Bible. That's what we're looking at here in Hosea four. Verse eight.

**8. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.**

When this passage says the priests eat up the sins of my people, it doesn't mean they destroy the sins of the people, it means they devour the sins of the people. They enjoy the sins of the people. They are fed and nourished by the sins of the people. That is perverse. People who are spiritually minded, who are here to teach the Bible, should not be fed by sin, they should be fed by the word of God. But, because they have rejected the word of God, because they have rejected God, they have to get their food somewhere, and they're going to the extreme

opposite. If you have ever wondered why this world is so evil and corrupt, it's because those who supposedly are in a position to protect us have totally abandoned their responsibility by rejecting God and the words within the Bible. Verse nine.

**9. And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.**

Each and every day we have a choice in what we do as people, and if we make a horrible decision within our life, we will be punished, and if we make the right kinds of decisions, God will reward us for those.

**10. For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.**

When Jesus Christ came, he came to undo those evils. He was persecuted by the priests of his time who were evil as being described in the Book of Hosea. Let's take a look at a prophecy about Jesus Christ in Isaiah eleven verse one, Isaiah eleven verse one.

#### **Isaiah 11:1-9**

**1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:**

**2. And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;**

Knowledge without the fear of the LORD is worthless knowledge to have because it will not lead to your salvation. Verse three.

**3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:**

We are not as people and Jesus was not as a person limited in our understanding to our five senses. As spiritual people and spiritually led individuals, we must be led by the Holy Spirit. Verse four.



**4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.**

**5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.**

And, what will all of these actions lead to? This future time of happiness which is summarized very succinctly and beautifully in the following few verses.

**6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.**

**7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.**

**8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.**

**9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**

This future time of happiness will come as direct impact of Jesus Christ on this earth because unlike Adam and Eve, who rejected the tree of life and instead chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Jesus Christ embraced the tree of life from the very beginning.

Through life we have all these different kinds of choices we can make, and on a very frequent basis, a daily basis, multiple times per day, we should find ourselves in conversations with God through prayer, and we have a very beautiful example of what we can talk about with God. And, in the Book of Second Chronicles, God appeared to Solomon, and imagine God appearing to you and giving you one wish. Let's take a look at second Chronicles one, because if I had one wish or you had one wish of God, what would you ask God for? Let's take a look at what Solomon asked God for. Second Chronicles one verse seven.

### **2 Chronicles 1:7-12**

**7. In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.**

Imagine that. Imagine if God gave you a blank check and said, “Hey, what do you want?” If you’re a little child you might give a certain response. If you’re a teenager, another response, a young adult throughout the entire realm of your lifetime, you might get different kinds of responses. Here was Solomon, his father David had just died, He was taking over the Kingdom of Israel, and so, Solomon responded in verse eight,

**8. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.**

**9. Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.**

**10. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?**

**11. And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:**

**12. Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.**

Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is basically this filter of information we keep in our brain. Wisdom is the best application of that knowledge in a given circumstance. Solomon correctly asked for wisdom and knowledge. If you have no knowledge, you can have no wisdom in certain situations. The more knowledge you have, the more capacity you have to act with wisdom, but it’s not a guarantee. Wisdom is the best application of the knowledge you have in a given set of circumstances.

We look at books that were written in the Bible and the Book of Proverbs was a book that was written to help people to better understand how to be people. Understanding is a kind of knowledge. Let’s take a look at the very beginning of the Book of Proverbs in chapter one verse one, Proverbs one verse one.

### **Proverbs 1:1-7**

#### **1. The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;**

And here in verse two he gives what today we would call a mission statement.

- 2. To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;**
- 3. To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;**
- 4. To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.**
- 5. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:**
- 6. To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.**
- 7. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

If we want to have knowledge, especially about God, the Bible, God's plan of salvation for mankind, we can only have that knowledge if we have the proper kind of respect for God, understanding that God is the Creator of the tree of life, and that we must hunger and thirst for that kind of righteousness. If knowledge is all of this type of information we have in our brain, and wisdom is the best application of that knowledge in a given circumstance, there is this beautiful passage in Ecclesiastes that talks to this. Let's look at Ecclesiastes chapter seven verse one, Ecclesiastes seven verse one.

#### **Ecclesiastes 7:1-12**

- 1. A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.**
- 2. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.**
- 3. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.**
- 4. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.**

The older I have gotten, the more I understand how precarious life is, how a very good situation can turn to a very bad situation quicker than I can even think. Younger people, including me when I was younger, tend to look at what is happy and exciting. That's why when new technology comes out, it's normally the younger generation that is more quick to adopt the new technology. They see all the positive and happy, they don't consider necessarily the possibility of bad.

Getting a young person to buy a big life insurance policy, that's a big hard thing to do when instead they could go out and instead buy a wonderful new smartphone. When people are younger, they tend to avoid thinking about those legitimate, negative parts of life, that all people will face. It's just where they are in their stage of life. Verse five.

**5. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.**

**6. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.**

**7. Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.**

**8. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.**

**9. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.**

**10. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.**

**11. Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.**

And in verse twelve we come to a very beautiful comparison of wisdom and knowledge. Verse twelve.

**12. For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence:**

Wisdom and money are wonderful tools for us to use in our lives. Wisdom can get us out of tricky situations. Money, we can buy our way out of tricky situations.

**but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.**

If we have knowledge, we have this information that we can pull from, and when we have more knowledge that we can pull from, we can better correctly and use the best application of that knowledge in a variety of different circumstances. That's the power of knowledge. Of and by itself, knowledge has no power. Knowledge becomes powerful when we can correctly apply it in our life and in the case of wisdom, the best application of that knowledge in a given circumstance.

In the New Testament, James wrote about knowledge. James one of the latter books as ordered in the New Testament was one of the first New Testament books that was written after the death of Jesus Christ. Let's take a look at James three verse thirteen.

### **James 3:13-18**

**13. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.**

**14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.**

**15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.**

**16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.**

**17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**

**18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.**

Wisdom is the best application of the knowledge we have, and the only way we can get knowledge of the Bible and God is through prayerful study of the Bible, meditation on what we have read and never giving up on that practice.

Foolishness on the other hand is the worst application of the knowledge we have. If we are foolish it is not that we don't have knowledge, it's we are not applying the knowledge that we have to our advantage.

The Book of Matthew talks about ten virgins, some of whom were wise, some of them were foolish. Let's consider Matthew twenty-five beginning in verse one, Matthew twenty-five verse one.

### **Matthew 25:1-13**

**1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.**

**2. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.**

**3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:**

**4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.**

**5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.**

**6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.**

- 7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.**
- 8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.**
- 9. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.**
- 10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.**
- 11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.**
- 12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.**
- 13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.**

Wisdom is the best application of the knowledge we have, and if we want to be wise virgins, not locked out of the Kingdom of God, as is given to us in this parable, then we have to begin with an understanding of what's written in the Bible. We'll conclude today with a short passage from Romans eleven verse thirty-three, Romans eleven verse thirty-three.

#### **Romans 11:33-36**

- 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!**
- 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?**
- 35. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?**
- 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.**

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.