



## MAIN SCRIPTURES

- II Peter 1:5-7
- Judges 6-7
- 1 Samuel 4-5

## OBJECT LESSON: KNOWLEDGE

- The Basics
- Incorporating Knowledge
- Discarding Knowledge

## FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“...to those who have obtained the same precious **faith** as we have obtained, and obtained it in the same way, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:” 2 Peter 1:1

“**For this very reason you are required to do your part. Make every effort to add to your faith virtue;** add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control; add to self-control, perseverance; add to perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly affection; and add to brotherly affection, love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

“**If these things are yours** and abound... and...**if you do these things...**” 2 Peter 1:8, 10

“**He who lacks these things** is nearsighted; he is approaching total blindness. It’s as if he has forgotten he’s been completely cleansed from his old sins.” 2 Peter 1:9

“Just as, “**The dog returns to his own vomit,**” and “the pig that has washed returns to wallowing in the mud.”” 2 Peter 2:22

## **INTRODUCTION: Object Lesson: Knowledge**

*Faith is the foundation of the Christian life and it is a gift from God that came to you by way of His grace. And you must practice your faith if you wish to gain continual access to that grace. To do so, add these things to your faith in this precise sequence. First add virtue. That means to seek the Lord's voice for what is right in every matter and don't even attempt to seek new information or take any action before you are confident you're in alignment with God's will.*

*Once you are certain about God's directions, to truly demonstrate wisdom, begin by gathering any missing information before you act. It is only after you have the necessary knowledge to proceed judiciously that you should take any decisive action. It requires excellent self-control to both take wise action and to refrain from acting when God tells you to be still. It is also critical to recognize that challenges and temptations surely await; they will test you, misdirect you, and humble you. Nevertheless, one must stay the course to fulfill God's desires, and that takes perseverance. By the way, unless you humbly come to the conclusion that you made an error that must be corrected before you continue, persist until you succeed; a display of permanent self-control is part of the process. However, if you do discover you've made an error, it is prudent to retrace your steps to find your mistake. Begin by*

*reconsidering if you've misinterpreted God's original instructions and proceed from there.*

*This entire process is meant to be pursued in every area of life. Doing so is the very essence of godliness. No doubt, your imperfections will be exposed as you progress, but godliness is not characterized by perfection. Godliness, instead, is the authentic grace-empowered pursuit of perfection, not the achievement of perfection. It's hallmark is a never-ending desire to pursue God's will in all things, and to make the appropriate corrections along the way.*

*And that is how a disciple of Christ becomes an effective minister of reconciliation—one who readily imparts God's grace. His relentless pursuit of godliness has crafted him into a man whose surrendered life is poured out in sacrifice for the priorities of others. He is a beacon of brotherly affection who exudes kindness, a true disciple of Christ recognized by the love he shares. He imitates the character of Christ, and that is the constant meditation of his heart—to look more and more like Christ by how he loves.*

*God is love; so, to become love is to become like Christ. Thus, to imitate God's love is the only true measure of a perfect man—the full stature of Christ. And that is the goal of discipleship. Therefore, practice diligently if you wish to experience the fullness of God's precious and exceedingly great promises, the greatest of which is the promise to partake in God's Divine Nature.*

## THE BASICS

### 1. Everything Begins with Faith

#### A. Faith Like Mine

(1) Faith: The Foundation of Everything (See: [Faith Like Mine](#))

(a) The righteous shall live by **Two Faiths**: God's righteousness is revealed from Faith to Faith

1. "I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ; it is **the power of God for salvation** for everyone who believes, (Jew first also Greek). **In it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith.** As it is written, "But **the righteous shall live by faith.**" Romans 1:16-17

a) Righteousness: revealed through the gift of faith.

1) "...to those who have obtained the same precious **faith as mine**, in the same way, **by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:**" 2 Peter 1:1

b) Righteousness: revealed by the practice of faith!

1) "For this very reason you are required to do your part. **Make every effort to add to your faith...**" 2 Peter 1:5

(b) The gift of faith must become a practice of faith!

1. "Being therefore **justified by faith, we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ; through

whom **we also have our access by faith into this grace** in which we stand..." Romans 5:1-2

a) **You are justified by faith:**

- 1) The gift of faith came by way of God's grace
- 2) It softened your heart to the Gospel of Salvation
- 3) The cross became real: you believed, repented, and confessed.
- 4) All your sins were instantly forgiven and you came into right standing with God.
- 5) You no longer had any debt to God; instead you came into complete harmony with God.

b) **You have access by faith:**

- 1) The practice of faith: to exercise the free gift.
- 2) The practice of faith gives you continual access to God's grace.
- 3) Grace then empowers you to live as a disciple.
- 4) As a new creation, you leave behind the sin of your old life.
- 5) This distinguishes a disciple from a convert.

B. **Just Add P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E. Persistent Repetition Accelerates Character Transformation Impacting Christian Ethos.**

(1) 7 Steps to the Practice of Faith ([Just Add P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E](#))

- (a) Add to your faith: the order is as important as the steps!

1. **“For this very reason you are required to do your part. Make every effort to add to your faith virtue; add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control; add to self-control, perseverance; add to perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly affection; and add to brotherly affection, love.”** 2 Peter 1:5-7

a) **Faith (Ground 0):**

- 1) The foundation of the Christian life.
- 2) A gift from God that came by His grace.
- 3) You must practice your faith to gain continual access to God’s grace.
- 4) Add these to your faith in this sequence...

b) **Virtue (Step 1):**

- 1) Morality according to the world is ever-changing; virtue for the Christian is what is morally excellent according to God.
- 2) It must be the first step after faith or your coordinates will always be off target.
- 3) To practice your faith consider:
  - a. What is right to God in this situation?
  - b. What does Yahweh think about this?
  - c. What is God’s heart on this matter?

- c) **Knowledge (Step 2):**
  - 1) Additional information needed to act wisely.
  - 2) To do what is right: fill the knowledge gap
    - a. What do I need to know before I act?
    - b. What am I missing?
- d) **Self-control (Step 3):** to act wisely you must not act according to your first impulses and desires.
  - 1) Wisdom: godly application of knowledge, instruction, and understanding.
  - 2) Once you know what God wants you to do and you have filled in the necessary knowledge, you must have the self-control to do it.
  - 3) Two arms of Self-control:
    - a. **One:** take action.
    - b. **Two:** be on constant guard that your actions stay in alignment with virtue and knowledge.
  - 4) Two components of Self-control:
    - a. **Do:** once you know what to do and how to do it, you must do it.
    - b. **Do not do:** you must know what not to do and then don't do those things.
  - 5) A life of self-control:
    - a. Tell yourself no when yes is so tempting.

- b. Tell yourself yes when no is more convenient.
- e) **Perseverance (Step 4):** Doing what is right, no matter how hard it is, how long it takes, or how much it cost!
  - 1) **Suffering:** challenges and difficulties are part of the process. Y'shua suffered, why not you?
  - 2) No matter how long or what the challenges...
    - a. Persist in what God called you to do.
    - b. Abstain from what God called you to abstain.
  - 3) Perseverance is PERMANENT SELF-CONTROL.
    - a. You know what is right according to God!
    - b. You know how to do it and you do it!
    - c. You discipline yourself from straying off course, but it is still not working as planned!
    - d. The fruit is elusive; the breakthrough absent; suffering persists; and hope starts to fade...
    - e. This is a test; don't give up! Perseverance is relentless, never-ending self-control.
    - f. Note: Be humble enough to check your work!
- f) **Godliness (Step 5):** holistic integrity!
  - 1) Characterized by the desire to be in alignment with God's in all areas of your life, and then actively pursue those things...



- a. All components of your spirit, soul, and body are longing to be in complete agreement with what they were designed for by your Creator.
- b. Does not mean you have perfected your quest, but that you perfected your pursuit!
- c. The authentic grace-empowered pursuit of perfection, not the achievement of perfection.

g) **Brotherly Affection (Step 6):**

- 1) Be kind to and prefer others and their needs over yourself and your own needs!
  - a. Christian Alert: it's never been about you!
  - b. Christ did everything for us, not for Himself.
  - c. That is the model of how we should live.
  - d. No greater love is there than to lay down our lives for others.

h) **Love (Step 7):**

- 1) God is love! Love is the Divine Nature. It is the goal of the discipleship model.
- 2) Love is the bond of perfection.
- 3) Love is how we experience God in us!
- 4) There is no fear in love.
- 5) Perfect love casts out fear.
- 6) We have the mind of Christ.

- 7) We can love like God!
- 8) To love like God is to become like Christ!

### C. The 1 Thing

(1) Life-Altering Critical Negligence ([The 1 Thing](#))

(a) One thing can shipwreck everything!

1. **“He who lacks these things** is nearsighted; he is approaching total blindness. It’s as if he’s forgotten he’s been completely cleansed from his old sins.”

2 Peter 1:9

a) Lacks what? *The practice of adding to your faith...*

- 1) 1. virtue 2. knowledge 3. self-control  
4. perseverance 5. godliness 6. brotherly affection 7. love.

b) Cause of Blindness: living *in the past* prevents you from seeing *in the future*!

- 1) Forgetting you’ve ALREADY been cleansed...
  - a. You will not pursue... adding to your faith...
  - b. You will instead pursue your past sins!
  - c. The fullness of God’s promises—elusive!
  - d. Partake in the Divine Nature—impossible!

c) Why is forgetting you’re forgiven so devastating?

- 1) He who holds onto his past is bound to repeat it

- a. *“The dog returns to his own vomit,” and “the pig that has washed returns to wallowing in the mud.”* 2 Peter 2:22
- d) How then should you live instead?
  - 1) *“You’ve spent enough of your past lifetime doing the desire of the Gentiles, and having walked in lewdness, lusts, drunken binges, orgies, carousings, and abominable idolatries.”*  
1 Peter 4:3
  - 2) *“Therefore, since you are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and **sin which clings so closely**, and **run with endurance the race that is set before you**,”*  
Hebrews 12:1
    - a. You’ve invested too much into your former pagan life already.
    - b. Don’t invest one more resource!
    - c. Don’t even go near your past sins!
    - d. Leave the past in the past and pursue becoming more like Christ every day!
- (2) Therefore.... **“If these things are yours** and abound... and...**if you do these things...**” 2 Peter 1:8, 10
  - (a) That is why YOU are being REMINDED!

1. “Therefore **I will not be negligent to remind you of these things**, though **you know them** and are **established in the present truth**. I think it right, as long as I am in this tent, **to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that the putting off of my tent comes swiftly**, even as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. Yes, **I will make every effort that you may always be able to remember these things** even after my departure.” 2 Peter 1:12-15 WEBUS
  - a) What Peter has to say is so important that he uses his last words before his execution to remind his students, and us, of the these truths.
  - b) But, this is not new information; it already fully established in his disciples.
- (b) This is Peter’s second letter written as a reminder...
  1. “This is now, beloved, the second letter that I have written to you; and **in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by reminding you that you should remember the words** which were spoken before **by the holy prophets and the commandment of us**, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,” 2 Peter 3:1-2

- a) This second letter has a greater sense of urgency; it is most critical because he is aware that he is about to be executed
  - 1) *“knowing that the putting off of my tent comes swiftly.”*
- b) His message is consistent with the prophetic Scriptures.
- (c) Peter also reveals that Paul taught similar things in his letters:
  - 1. **“Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; **even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you, as also in all of his letters, speaking in them of these things.** In those, there are some things that are **hard to understand**, which the ignorant and unsettled **twist, as they also do to the other Scriptures**, to their own destruction.”**  
2 Peter 3:15-16 WEBUS
  - a) Unlike Peter who was a simple fisherman, Paul is a scholar who writes in a way that the average man has difficulty understanding his complexities.
    - 1) See the introduction to 2 Peter: [A Last Will & Testament](#), for a comparison between the characters traits of a fisherman and a scholar.

## INCORPORATING KNOWLEDGE

### 2. Adding Knowledge to Virtue

#### A. What does it mean to add knowledge to your virtue?

- (1) It means adding what you need to know to act wisely!
  - (a) Add to your faith: the order is as important as the steps!
    1. “For this very reason you are required to do your part. **Make every effort to** add to your faith virtue; **add to virtue, knowledge;** add to knowledge, self-control; add to self-control, perseverance; add to perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly affection; and add to brotherly affection, love.” 2

Peter 1:5-7

#### a) **Virtue (Step 1):**

- 1) To practice your faith in all circumstances, first consider:
  - a. What is right to God in this situation?
  - b. What does Yahweh think about this?
  - c. What is God’s heart on this matter?

#### b) **Knowledge (Step 2):**

##### 1) **From our Introduction:**

- a. *Once you are certain about God’s directions, demonstrate wisdom by gathering any missing information before you act.*

b. *It is only after you have the necessary knowledge to proceed judiciously that you should take any decisive action.*

2) **Ask...**

a. What do I need to know before I act?

b. What am I missing?

(b) Yahweh lays up sound wisdom for the upright.

1. “For **Yahweh gives wisdom. Out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.** He lays up **sound wisdom for the upright.** He is **a shield** to those who walk in **integrity**, that he may guard the paths of **justice**, and **preserve** the way of his **saints.**” Proverbs 2:6-8 WEBUS

a) Learn what you need to know before you act!

b) God protects those who acquire knowledge and understanding and then who apply it.

c) He assures that those who do so are treated with justice.

**B. Object Lesson: Adding Knowledge to Virtue**

(1) The Rise of Gideon (Judges 6:1-40)

(a) This is what it looks like when a man seeks to acquire knowledge and understanding after he has heard God’s voice.

1. Israel was violating Yahweh's commands, so He delivered them into the hand of Midian for 7 years.
  - a) Israel found themselves living in dens and caves in the mountains.
  - b) Whenever Israel sowed the land, the Midianites and Amalekites would enter in great numbers to destroy it in order to prevent Israel from growing food for their livestock.
  - c) This impoverished Israel, so they cried out to Yahweh.
2. Yahweh sent a prophet who...
  - a) First reminds them that God delivered them from bondage in Egypt and cleared a path in front of them. He even gave them the lands of those who oppressed them along the way .
  - b) He also reminds them that they had no need to fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land they dwelled.
  - c) But then He rebukes them for disobeying Yahweh's voice.
3. Then the Angel of the Lord visits Gideon...
  - a) Gideon is threshing wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.



- b) The Angel tells him, *“Yahweh is with you, you mighty man of valor!”*
  - c) Note: Virtue is hearing what is on God’s heart and obeying! The following interaction between Gideon and Yahweh is a perfect example of a man displaying virtue!
4. Gideon and Yahweh have this conversation, at first through the “Angel.” Gideon says...
- a) If Yahweh is with us, why is all this bad stuff happening?
  - b) Where are all His miracles that our fathers told us about?
  - c) Did not Yahweh bring us up from Egypt?
  - d) It seems that Yahweh has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.
5. Yahweh then seems to interact with him directly!
- a) Gideon, *“Go in this might of yours. You shall save Israel from the Midianites. Realize I’ve sent you!”*
  - b) Gideon reacts, *“O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”*
  - c) Yahweh tells him, *“Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.”*

6. First we see a perfect example in Judges 6:17-18 of a man seeking to confirm he is hearing God's voice.
  - a) Gideon tells Yahweh, *"If now I have found favor in Your sight, **then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.** Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You."*
  - b) Yahweh accepts his offer: *"I will wait until you come back."*
7. Gideon prepares a sacrifice and brings it to the Lord... (Then we see the "Angel" interacting again.)
  - a) *"Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth."*
  - b) The Angel touched the sacrifice with His staff ; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed it and then the Angel disappeared!
  - c) **Gideon perceived this sign to confirm that this was indeed Yahweh at work! *"I have seen the Angel of Yahweh face to face."***
  - d) Then the Lord confirms... *"Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die."*
  - e) Gideon builds an altar and calls it The-Lord-Is-Peace.

8. Gideon is now primed to go, so Yahweh gets right to it that same night and gives Gideon his first assignment as the man who will restore Israel. *“Go in this might of yours. You shall save Israel from the Midianites. Realize I’ve sent you!”*

a) **Acquiring additional knowledge about what to do and how before taking action!** *“Take your father’s young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; and build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down.”*

b) Gideon obeys Yahweh’s instructions [virtue!] and uses ten male servants to assist him.

1) He is certainly afraid to get caught by his father and the men of the city so his “vandalism” takes place at night.

9. The early morning scene...

a) The altar of Baal is torn down!

b) The wooden image was cut down!

c) The bull is burning on the new altar!

- d) The men of the city want to know who is guilty!
- e) They conclude it was Gideon the son of Joash.
- f) They demand Joash deliver his son for execution.

10. Joash refuses and offers this comical alternative...

- a) Which of you men thinks he can defend Baal?
- b) It's pretty insulting to think Baal needs a man to defend him; any man who believes so should be executed himself.
- c) If Baal is a god, he can defend himself. Therefore if Baal is offended, let him execute Gideon. (Of course, nothing happens to Gideon.)
- d) So, the aggravated and embarrassed Midianites and Amalekites gather for war against Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.

11. Gideon's second assignment:.

- a) The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon.
- b) The Abiezrites gather behind him.
- c) He sends messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him.
- d) He also sends messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they come up to join the fight!

12. Gideon **seeks to acquire knowledge** before he takes action! (Gideon's two famous fleeces!)

a) First Fleece before Yahweh:

1) *“If You will save Israel by my hand, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; in the morning, if there is dew on the fleece and the ground is dry around it, then I shall know You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said.”*

2) And it was so!

b) Second Fleece before Yahweh:

1) *“Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let the fleece be dry in the morning, but the ground be wet with dew.”*

2) And it was so!

(2) Knowledge: To add to the instructions of Yahweh the acquisition of **all the necessary information** to successfully fulfill God’s desires before you take action. (Judges 7:1-25)

(a) Gideon’s Battle Plan

1. Gideon and his team rose early and encamped to the south of the Midianites. Yahweh tells Gideon the following...

a) Gideon has got to reduce the number of his soldiers because they will certainly believe that

any success in battle is of their own doing if they have strong numbers.

- b) This is how to thin out the army... “Gideon **acquiring knowledge** before he takes action!”
    - 1) Release anyone with fear to go home! (22,000 leave and 10,000 stay.) Still too many!
    - 2) Bring the remaining men down to the water and do this drink test:
      - a. Those who lap the water like a dog, set them apart for the fight (300 men do this).
      - b. Those who get down on their knees to drink can be released (9700 do this).
2. Then the Lord said to Gideon...
- a) By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. (They gathered their provisions and trumpets.)
  - b) All others can go home
3. The camp of Midian was below him in the valley. That same night that the Lord said to Gideon...
- a) Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.

- b) If you are afraid, first go down to the camp alone with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what is happening (**acquire knowledge**).
  - c) After you **acquire this knowledge**, you will feel emboldened to attack.
4. Gideon goes down with Purah to the outpost of the armed men...
- a) The number of sleeping Midianites and Amalekites is vast (as numerous as locusts; camels were without number, as numerous the sand by the seashore).
  - b) But Gideon hears a man recalling a dream he had to his companion.
  - c) *“A loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and demolished a tent.”*
  - d) His companion interpreted the dream: *“This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.”*
5. Gideon received that as the word of Yahweh and he worshiped!

- a) He returned to his camp spoke boldly to the 300 men, *“Arise, for Yahweh has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.”*
- b) He divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.
- c) He said, *“Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do:”*
  - 1) When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, **‘The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!’**”

6. Gideon takes his 100 men...

- a) He goes to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, blows the trumpets and breaks the pitchers.
- b) All three companies do the same—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, **“The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!”**



- c) The whole Midianite army ran and cried out and fled, but many of them struck down each other **by their own swords!**
  - a) Note: *“The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, to kill those who are upright on the path. **Their sword shall enter into their own heart.** Their bows shall be broken.”* Psalms 37:14-15 WEBUS
  - d) Then the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.
- 7. Gideon releases the rest of Israel to pursue the fleeing army.
  - a) They captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, killed them, and brought their heads to Gideon!

## DISCARDING KNOWLEDGE

### 3. Discarding Knowledge after Virtue

#### A. Object Lesson: Discarding Knowledge

- (1) Foolishness: making decisions or taking action before you have all the facts is foolish behavior! (I Samuel 4:1-22)

- (a) The word of Samuel came to all Israel
1. Israel went out to battle against the Philistines (without proper knowledge).
    - a) The Philistines were in battle array against Israel.
    - b) Israel was soundly defeated.
    - c) Approximately four thousand Israelites died on the field of battle
  2. The elders of Israel questioned, *“Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines?”* (1 Sam 4:3)
    - a) They obviously don’t wait to learn from Yahweh what they should do; they just jump into action!
    - b) They react by making a really foolish decision to take the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh, and to bring it into the camp.
    - c) They believe that they can bring it with them into battle and it will save them from their enemies.
    - d) **If you consider the many rules and commands in the Torah regarding the handling of the ark, can you recognize how this is the complete opposite of acquiring knowledge before taking action?**
  3. No one seems to care about doing what is right according to God!
    - a) They bring the ark of the covenant into the camp.

- b) And who is involved in this debacle?
  - c) None other than the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. (1 Samuel 4:4)
  - d) Remember, these are corrupt priests who were stealing sacrifices (1 Samuel 2:12-15) and having sex with prostitutes at the Tent of Meeting (1 Samuel 2:22). See [Object Lesson: Virtue](#)
  - e) When the ark of the covenant came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook.
  - f) It seems that they were thoroughly excited about this absurd plan!
4. At first, the Philistines were concerned when they heard the shouting...
- a) *“What does the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?”*
  - b) The pagan Philistines somehow understood that the ark had come into the camp and were fearful as they equated it as if, *“God had come into the camp!”* **(Israel should have been so reverent!)**
    - 1) **The Philistines think:** *“Woe to us! Such a thing has never happened before. Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods?”*

- c) They knew the reputation of “the gods” of the Hebrews, and how the Egyptians had been struck with all sorts of plagues.
- d) The Philistines encouraged themselves...
  - 1) Be strong and conduct yourselves like men!
  - 2) Do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you.
  - 3) Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!
- e) The Philistines fought...
  - 1) Israel was defeated and fled.
  - 2) There was a very great slaughter (thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel died).
  - 3) The ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died just as it was prophesied to happen... (1 Samuel 4:11)
    - a. *“Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: **in one day they shall die, both of them.**”* 1 Samuel 2:34 NKJV
    - b. What do you expect when you partner with wicked and corrupt priests in your endeavors? (This is quite the opposite of acquiring knowledge before taking action.)

5. Tragedies ripple through the camp!
- a) A man of Benjamin delivers the dreadful news to Eli about the ark and his sons.
  - b) Eli was sitting in total fear for what may have happened to the ark.
  - c) At first, when the men of the city discover that the ark was captured, the whole city cried out.
  - d) Eli wonders about the meaning of the outcry, *“What does the sound of this tumult mean?”*
  - e) Eli was ninety-eight years old and when he was told the news....
    - 1) Israel has fled before the Philistines.
    - 2) There was a great slaughter among the people.
    - 3) Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead.
    - 4) And the ark of God has been captured!
  - f) When the capture of the ark was mentioned, Eli fell off the seat backward, broke his neck and died.
6. Eli’s daughter-in-law, Phinehas’s wife, was due to deliver a child.
- a) When she heard the news that the ark was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor.
  - b) She died giving birth to a son.

- c) Right before she died, she named the child Ichabod, meaning, *“The glory has departed from Israel!”* (Because the ark had been lost, and her father-in-law and husband were killed.)
- (2) Foolishness: actions without knowledge (I Samuel 5:1-12)
- (a) The Philistines took the ark into custody: that itself was a significant display of a lack of knowledge!
    1. The Philistines took the ark and brought it into the house of Dagon (the pagan fish god) and set it by Dagon.
      - a) The next morning Dagon had fallen on its face before the ark of the Lord.
      - b) They reset Dagon in its place.
      - c) Again, the next morning, Dagon had fallen on its face, but this time the head and both of its hands were broken off; only Dagon’s torso remained.
    2. The hand of Yahweh was heavy on the people!
      - a) He ravaged them and struck them with tumors.
      - b) They reasoned, *“The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god.”*
    3. They assembled the rulers of the Philistines to decide what to do with the ark. (Again, they make a decision

with no acquisition of knowledge or the necessary information).

- a) They brought the ark to Gath.
- b) The hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction.
- c) He struck the men of that city also and tumors broke out on them.
- d) Then they sent the ark of God to Ekron, but there was a deadly destruction throughout the entire city; the hand of God was very heavy there as well.
- e) So they gathered rulers again and decided to send the ark of the God back to Israel. (That was the correct choice!)

(3) **Conclusion:** to Incorporate or Discard Knowledge

- (a) Yahweh lays up sound wisdom for the upright.
  - 1. “For **Yahweh gives wisdom. Out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.** He lays up **sound wisdom for the upright.** He is **a shield** to those who walk in **integrity**, that he may guard the paths of **justice**, and **preserve** the way of his **saints.**” Proverbs 2:6-8 WEBUS
- a) Learn what you need to know before you act!

b) God protects those who acquire knowledge and understanding and then who apply it.

c) Those who do so are treated with justice.

(b) **Gideon incorporated knowledge after hearing God's instructions [Virtue]:** (Judges 6-7)

1. Yahweh will be with him, and he shall defeat the Midianites as one man.
2. Gideon set two fleeces before Yahweh to affirm His instructions before he took action!
3. The whole Midianite army cried out and fled; many of them struck down each other by their own swords!
4. They captured the two princes of the Midianites, killed them, and brought their heads to Gideon!

(c) **Israelites discarded knowledge:** they made decisions and took action before they had all the facts! (I Sam 4-5)

1. Let's bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh into the camp.
2. When it comes, we will use it in battle to save us from the hand of our enemies.
3. They marched the ark into battle and there was a great slaughter among their own people.
4. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.
5. The ark of God was captured!



6. When Eli learned that the ark was captured, he fell off his seat backward, broke his neck and died.
7. The news caused Phinehas's wife to go into labor and she died giving birth.
8. The Philistines kept the ark, but destruction followed it everywhere, until they sent it back to Israel.

## **QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION**

### **1. Read the introduction three times.**

- A. Define knowledge.
- B. Why must it be the immediate step after virtue in the practice of your faith?

### **2. Personal Object Lesson:**

- A. Describe a time in your life when you acquired the necessary information before you took action? What was the outcome?
- B. Describe a time in your life when you neglected to acquire the necessary information before you took action? What was the outcome?

### **3. Transformation:**

- A. What did you or will you do to correct your error in discussion point 2B?
- B. What will you do in the future to ensure you do not repeat the same mistake?