

Peter said, "For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8). Knowledge has no intrinsic worth, but rather must be used in pursuit of truth. Knowledge may be part of truth, but is worthless apart from truth. If not careful, the quest for knowledge can be a guise of idolatry, producing arrogance rather than humility. When you make knowledge an end in itself, it is destructive of truth. Truth always has as its goal application.

The word for "idle" means "free from labour, at leisure, lazy, shunning the labour which one ought to perform." You can know when you are lazy, and whether you pursue the graces listed in the preceding verses 5-6 (virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love), but you cannot know if you are "fruitful." Nor can you know the degree that these listed graces are present in your life. For this reason Jesus taught in John 15 that the committed believer majors on abiding and obedience, not on being fruitful. Peter ends this epistle with the words, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." (2 Peter 3:18), indicating that you should "grow in knowledge." The believer is never static in his relationship with Christ; he must major on "growing." A lack of spiritual growth is a sign of spiritual death.