

MAY 18, 2026

VERSE OF THE WEEK 2

Proverbs 22:17-18

ABOUT CAPITOL MINISTRIES 4



POWERED BY LOGOS BIBLE SOFTWARE



FOCUSED ON THE WORD

The Essentiality of Knowledge



The Scriptures are replete with verses that emphasize how the believer must be characterized first and foremost by *love*. *Love* is essential and preeminent! A close second to *love*, though, is the believer's lifetime pursuit of *knowledge*. In fact, Proverbs calls those who are lacking in *knowledge simpletons*, whereas those who have *knowledge* are called *wise*.

A public servant can be neither unloving nor a *simpleton* if he or she wants to be a good witness for Christ, as well as be effective in office. This study seeks to encourage and strengthen the pursuit of *knowledge* in the life of the believer.

Read on, friends.

I. INTRODUCTION

The primacy of *love* over *knowledge* is underscored in 1 Corinthians 13:1, wherein the great apostle states, *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal*. Elsewhere, in

- WHITE HOUSE CABINET
AMBASSADORS
AND GOVERNORS
- Alex Acosta DC
 - Mike Braun IN
 - Phil Bryant MS
 - Dr. Ben Carson DC
 - Mike Dunleavy AK
 - Greg Gianforte MT
 - Mark Gordon WY
 - Pete Hegseth DC
 - Mike Huckabee NC
 - Sarah Huckabee Sanders AR
 - Mike Keboe MO
 - David Perdue DC
 - Sonny Perdue GA
 - Rick Perry TX
 - Jim Pillen NE
 - Tate Reeves MS
 - Kim Reynolds IA
 - Brooke Rollins DC
 - Kevin Stitt OK
 - Scott Turner DC
 - Russell Vought DC
 - Scott Walker WI
 - Glenn Youngkin VA

- SENATORS
- John Thune
 - Senate Majority Leader
 - Marsha Blackburn TN
 - Katie Britt AL
 - Ted Budd NC
 - Bill Cassidy LA
 - Kevin Cramer ND
 - Steven Daines MT
 - Joni Ernst IA
 - William Hagerty TN
 - Cindy Hyde-Smith MS
 - James Lankford OK
 - Markwayne Mullin OK
 - Mike Rounds SD
 - Tim Scott SC

- REPRESENTATIVES
- Mike Johnson
 - Speaker of the House
 - Mark Alford MO
 - Robert Aderholt AL
 - Rick Allen GA
 - Brian Babin TX
 - Don Bacon NE
 - Nick Begich AK
 - Michael Bost IL
 - Josh Brecheen OK
 - Tim Burchett TN
 - John Carter TX
 - Juan Ciscomani AZ
 - Rick Crawford AR
 - Jake Ellzey TX
 - Ron Estes KS
 - Glenn Grothman WI
 - Pat Harrigan NC
 - Kevin Hern OK
 - Richard Hudson NC
 - Bill Huizenga MI
 - Dusty Johnson SD
 - Jim Jordan OH
 - Nathaniel Moran TX
 - Gary Palmer AL
 - August Pfluger TX
 - David Rouzer NC
 - John Rutherford FL
 - Marlin Stutzman IN
 - Glenn Thompson PA
 - Tim Walberg MI
 - Randy Weber TX
 - Daniel Webster FL
 - Bruce Westerman AR
 - Roger Williams TX
 - Rob Wittman VA
 - Steve Womack AR
 - Rudy Yakym IN

The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

White House Cabinet and Governors: Wednesdays 8am (EST), light breakfast served

Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served

House Members: Thursdays 8am, Natural Resources, Longworth 1334, hot breakfast served



VERSE OF THE WEEK

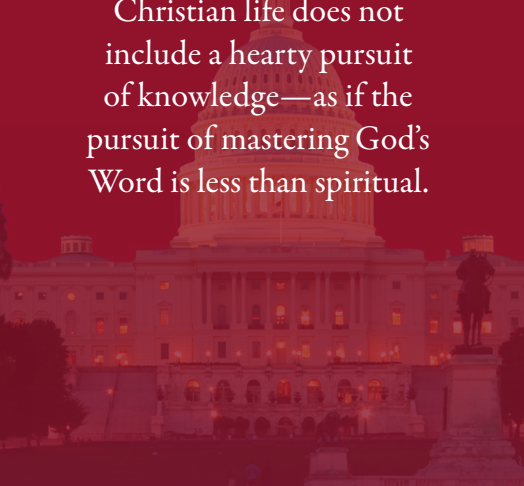


Proverbs 22:17–18

Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge; for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, that they may be ready on your lips.



Don't let anyone lead you into thinking that the Christian life does not include a hearty pursuit of knowledge—as if the pursuit of mastering God's Word is less than spiritual.



The Essentiality of Knowledge

1 Corinthians 8:1 (NKJV), Paul concludes similarly. In comparing *knowledge* to *love*, he states *knowledge puffs up, but love edifies*. For sure, *knowledge* as a personal pursuit should take a back seat to the priority of *love*. *Loving* our Savior and *loving* others must be the primary pursuits of the believer's life. But having stated that rationale, we cannot conclude that to be in constant pursuit of *knowledge* proves a person to be *unloving*.

II. THE FALSE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

An important clarification is in order relative to the tension between *love* and *knowledge*: in stating the preeminence of *love* over *knowledge*, to assert that someone who is *knowledgeable* and in the pursuit of *knowledge* is therefore somehow less than *loving* is improper. To diminish the importance of *knowledge* relative to spiritual maturity in favor of only being *loving* is to do a public servant a great disservice.

You might at some time hear the cliché “Going to seminary is like going to a cemetery.” Such thinking serves to make the point that this tragic mindset is ever-increasing in American Christianity today. To illustrate this point metaphorically:

Can you say that someone who eats an enormous breakfast each morning is an overeater when he is preparing to compete in the Tour de France?

In a spiritual sense, the mental preparedness, the gaining of *knowledge*, is quite essential for any important kingdom assignment, such as serving Christ in city, county, state, or national government. In fact, nutrition is a prerequisite for performing with excellence. So don't be misled by

those who would have you diminish your pursuit of *knowledge*, especially *knowledge* of God's ways per His Word! The believer in office, or any citizen for that matter, can be both *knowledgeable* and *loving* at the same time. Those who pursue *knowledge* are not necessarily *unloving*; to say otherwise is to propagate a false dichotomy.

III. THE UNDERLYING MOTIVES OF GAINING KNOWLEDGE

The appropriateness or otherwise sinfulness of the pursuit of *knowledge* depends largely on motives. As previously stated from 1 Corinthians 8:1, *knowledge* can *puff up*, meaning it can be the pursuit of a proud heart in order to appear superior. However, as stated in the previous point, *knowledge* can be equivalent to preparedness.

In the book of Proverbs, the word *knowledge* appears 40 times and is always related to and descriptive of a wise person.

Proverbs 1:22 states in this regard:

“How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?”

In Proverbs 1:28-29, *knowledge* is directly related to finding God:

“Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but they will not find me, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.”

These passages are but two of the many that characterize the pursuit of *knowledge* in a positive light. Accordingly, the underlying motive for gaining *knowledge* is often a determinative factor as to whether or not it is a holy pursuit. If we possess the right purpose of glorifying God, building His kingdom, winning the lost to Christ, and being a preserver and illuminator in culture, then our quest for *knowledge* is



undoubtedly a wonderful pursuit that is both God-honoring and God-blessed!

IV. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS DEPENDENT ON KNOWLEDGE

Perhaps the most powerful way to illustrate the point being made here—that the Bible teaches that our faith in Christ must be cognitive as well as *loving*—is to examine the three biblically identified stages of the believer’s spiritual growth as listed in 1 John 2:12-14. What is contained in this passage illustrates the proposition that *knowledge* is extremely important to the Christian’s life and growth in Christ! In fact, without the pursuit of biblical *knowledge*, there will be no maturation in Christ. Carefully observe how each of the following stages of spiritual growth is dependent on *knowledge*:

A. SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF 1 JOHN 2:12-14

12I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake. 13I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. 14I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

The following chart is an attempt to sort out the twice repeated, three distinct stages of spiritual maturity as delineated by the Apostle John in this passage. Observe what titles John places on each: *little children, fathers, and young men*. Think of John’s communication style here to be similar to someone’s painting a wall with two separate coats in order to obtain the desired outcome:

GROWTH STAGE	CHARACTERIZED BY	VERSE(S)
Child	Sins forgiven You know the Father	v. 12 v. 13
Young Man	Overcome the Evil One You are strong The Word of God abides in you	vv. 13–14 v. 14 v. 14
Father	You know Him who has been from the beginning You know Him who has been from the beginning	v. 13 v. 14

In John’s biblical analogy of physical maturation to spiritual maturation, the Greek words used to describe the believers’ stages of growth are not intended to relate to their physical age, but rather to their spiritual maturity. Again, keep in mind the overall point for delving into this exercise: each of these stages of spiritual growth relates to and are dependent on *knowledge*! With this foundation in mind, look more closely at each of the three stages:

B. LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE FAITH

Little children are saved, but they only possess a rudimentary understanding of God: “Jesus *loves* me! This I *know*, for the Bible tells me so!” accurately depicts their very minimalistic level of understanding of salvation. Children possess limited biblical *knowledge*. Nonetheless, they possess enough biblical *knowledge* to be genuinely saved as compared to an unsaved person who does not possess this saving *knowledge*.

Satan can and often does wreak havoc on little children because they have little knowledge of his wiles.

Cults often target *little children* in the faith because they are tenderhearted to-

ward spiritual matters but very naive. Ephesians 4:14 is descriptive and admonishing to infant believers:

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.

Spiritual babes, this passage states, should not remain in such a state of infancy. They should not remain naive or unknowledgeable of the *winds, trickery, and craftiness* that have the potential to make them highly unstable as newborn babes in Christ. In opposition to those who say that *knowledge* in the life of the believer is unimportant or of lesser importance, this passage points to the opposite: Scripture says *knowledge* is absolutely critical to spiritual maturity!

C. YOUNG MEN OF THE FAITH

Young men are those who, while not yet having walked with God over a longer period of time and gotten to *know Him* (as is the case with a *father* who has experienced the truths of His Word firsthand), do *know* sound doctrine (in contrast to the *child* of the faith). *Young men* are strong against sin and error because *the word of God abides in* them, which is synonymous with having *knowledge* of His Word. Per the descriptors given of a *young man* in this passage, this believer, via his *knowledge*, has *overcome* the deceitfulness of the *evil one*.

D. FATHER OF THE FAITH

The *father* of the faith is the one John depicts as the most spiritually mature; he has a deep, abiding *knowledge* of the eternal



God. John twice states that he *knows Him*. This descriptor is commensurate with Philippians 3:10, wherein the Apostle Paul states regarding himself (as a *father* of the faith), *that I may know Him*. Accordingly, the following is true:

become a *young man* by being *strong in the Word*, which implies obtaining *knowledge*. From this vantage point he becomes a *father in the faith*. Proverbs 22:17 is a fitting summation: *apply your mind to my knowledge*.

The height of spiritual maturity is to *know* God in His fullness via His Word, as well as the firsthand *knowledge* of having personally experienced the truths of His Word in our lives.

VI. CONCLUSION

Herein lies the biblical case for the noble pursuit of *knowledge*: in a nutshell, *knowledge* is tantamount to spiritual maturation and God's glorification! Biblical and vocational *knowledge* is extremely important, foundational, and critical in the life of every believer and especially those who serve in leadership. Proverbs 3:3 states very fittingly that both *knowledge* and *love* are essential to the life of the believer:

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Importantly, relative to spiritual growth, don't let anyone lead you into thinking that the Christian life does not include a hearty pursuit of *knowledge*—as if the pursuit of mastering God's Word is less than spiritual. No!

V. SUMMARY OF THE THREE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

All three of the aforementioned stages of spiritual growth are related to commensurate *knowledge*. The point again, that which makes this passage worth mentioning at length, is that one can only become a *father* in the faith and have profound intimacy with God by first becoming a believer, who herein is termed a *little child* in the faith. The *little child* then grows to



Making Disciples of Jesus Christ in the Political Arena Throughout the World



Capitol Ministries provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, Capitol Ministries has started ongoing ministries in more than forty U.S. state capitols and dozens of foreign federal capitols.

Capitol Ministries
Mail Processing Center
Post Office 30994
Phoenix, AZ 85046
661.288.2622
capmin.org

© 2026 Capitol Ministries®
All rights reserved.



/capitolministries

ESTABLISHED MINISTRIES: UNITED STATES

Albany NEW YORK • Annapolis MARYLAND • Atlanta GEORGIA • Augusta MAINE • Austin TEXAS • Bismarck NORTH DAKOTA • Boise IDAHO
Boston MASSACHUSETTS • Denver COLORADO • Dover DELAWARE • Carson City NEVADA • Charleston WEST VIRGINIA • Cheyenne WYOMING
Columbia SOUTH CAROLINA • Columbus OHIO • Concord NEW HAMPSHIRE • Des Moines IOWA • Hartford CONNECTICUT
Harrisburg PENNSYLVANIA • Helena MONTANA • Honolulu HAWAII • Jefferson City MISSOURI • Juneau ALASKA • Lansing MICHIGAN
Lincoln NEBRASKA • Little Rock ARKANSAS • Madison WISCONSIN • Montgomery ALABAMA • Montpelier VERMONT
Nashville TENNESSEE • Oklahoma City OKLAHOMA • Olympia WASHINGTON • Phoenix ARIZONA • Providence RHODE ISLAND
Raleigh NORTH CAROLINA • Richmond VIRGINIA • Sacramento CALIFORNIA • Saint Paul MINNESOTA • Salem OREGON
Santa Fe NEW MEXICO • Springfield ILLINOIS • Topeka KANSAS • Trenton NEW JERSEY

ESTABLISHED MINISTRIES: INTERNATIONAL

Brussels BELGIUM • Porto Novo BENIN • Brasilia BRAZIL • Ouagadougou BURKINA FASO • Gitega BURUNDI • Yaounde CAMEROON • Manitoba CANADA
Bangui CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC • San Jose COSTA RICA • Yamoussoukro COTE D'IVOIRE • Kinshasa DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
Quito ECUADOR • Malabo EQUATORIAL GUINEA • Mbabane ESWATINI • Addis Ababa ETHIOPIA • Brussels EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
Helsinki FINLAND • Suva FIJI • Libreville GABON • Strasbourg GERMANY • Accra GHANA • Conakry GUINEA • Port-au-Prince HAITI
Tegucigalpa HONDURAS • New Delhi INDIA • Rome ITALY • Nairobi KENYA • Riga LATVIA • Monrovia LIBERIA • Vilnius LITHUANIA
Antananarivo MADAGASCAR • Lilongwe MALAWI • Mexico City MEXICO • Chisinau MOLDOVA • Maputo MOZAMBIQUE • Nauru • Kathmandu NEPAL
Wellington NEW ZEALAND • Abuja NIGERIA • Skopje NORTH MACEDONIA • Oslo NORWAY • Ngerulmud PALAU • Port Moresby PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Warsaw POLAND • Brazzaville REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO • Bucharest ROMANIA • Apia SAMOA • Edinburgh SCOTLAND • Belgrade SERBIA
Freetown SIERRA LEONE • Bratislava SLOVAKIA • Honiara SOLOMON ISLANDS • Pretoria SOUTH AFRICA • Seoul SOUTH KOREA
Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte SRI LANKA • Bern SWITZERLAND • Papeete TAHITI • Dodoma TANZANIA • Nuku'alofa TONGA • Kyiv UKRAINE
London UNITED KINGDOM • Washington, D.C. USA • Montevideo URUGUAY • Port Vila VANUATU • Cardiff WALES • Lusaka ZAMBIA • Harare ZIMBABWE

For past Bible studies or additional copies of this week's study please go to capmin.org/bible-studies