

Epignosis

- A. The noun *epignosis* comes from the *ginosko* word group:
1. *Ginosko* (γινωσκω) (verb), “to know personally, intimately and experientially.”
 2. *Gnosis* (γνωσις) (noun), “knowledge that is the intelligent comprehension but is not personal and experiential.”
 3. *Epignosis* (επιγνωσίς) (noun), “intimate, personal, experiential knowledge.”
 4. *Epiginosko* (επιγινωσκω) (verb), “to perceive.”
- B. Liddel and Scott (page 627):
1. Recognition
 2. Determination of a fact
 3. Knowledge
 4. Decision
- C. Richard Chenevix Trench notes, “In comparing *epignosis* with *gnosis*, the *epi* must be regarded as an intensive use of a preposition that gives the compound word a greater strength than the simple word alone possesses” (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, page 300).
- D. Quoting Culverwell, he writes, “*Epignosis* and *gnosis* differ. *Epignosis* is the complete comprehension after the first knowledge (*gnosin*) of a matter. It is bringing me better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off. That little portion of knowledge which we had here shall be much improved, our eye shall be raised to see the things more strongly and clearly” (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, page 300).
- E. He goes on to say on the same page, “All Paul’s uses of *epignosis* justify and bear out this distinction. This same intensive use of *epignosis* is confirmed by similar passages in the New Testament and in the Septuagint. It also was recognized by the Greek fathers. Thus Chrysostom stated: ‘You knew (*egnote*), but it is necessary to know thoroughly (*epignonai*).’”
- F. J.B. Lightfoot commenting on *epignosis*, notes, “The compound *epignosis* is an advance upon *gnosis*, denoting a larger and more thorough knowledge...Hence also *epignosis* is used especially of the knowledge of God and of Christ, as being the perfection of knowledge” (*St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, page 138).
- G. The verb *epiginosko* appears 46 times in the NT and the noun *epignosis* is found 21 times.
- H. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, “*epignosis*, akin to A, No. 3, denotes “exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition,” and is a strengthened form of No. 1, expressing a fuller or a full “knowledge,” a greater participation by the “knower” in the object “known,” thus more powerfully influencing him. It is not found in the Gospels and Acts. Paul uses it 15 times (16 if (Heb. 10:26) is included) out of the 20 occurrences; Peter 4 times, all in his 2nd Epistle. Contrast (Rom. 1:28) (*epignosis*) with the simple verb in (v. 21). “In all the four Epistles of the first Roman captivity it is an element in the Apostle’s opening prayer for his correspondents’ well-being, (Phil. 1:9; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9; Philem. 6)” (Lightfoot). It is used with reference to God in (Rom. 1:28; 10:2; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:10; 2 Pet. 1:3); God and Christ, (2 Pet. 1:2); Christ, (Eph. 4:13; 2 Pet. 1:8; 2:20); the will of the Lord, (Col. 1:9); every good thing, (Philem. 6), RV (KJV, “acknowledging”); the truth, (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25), RV; (3:7; Titus 1:1), RV; the mystery of God. (Col. 2:2), RV, “(that they) may know” (KJV, “to the acknowledgment of”), lit., “into a full knowledge.” It is used without the mention of an object in (Phil. 1:9; Col. 3:10), RV, “(renewed) unto knowledge.”
- I. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, volume 2:
1. To possess more or less definite information about, possibly with a degree of thoroughness or competence – ‘to know about, to know definitely about, knowledge about’ (page 334).
 2. The content of what is known – ‘knowledge, what is known’ (page 336).
- J. The Analytical Greek-Lexicon Revised (page 155):
1. The coming at the knowledge of a thing, ascertainment
 2. A distinct perception or impression, acknowledgement
- K. The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon (page 237):
1. Precise and correct knowledge
 2. Knowledge of things ethical and divine
 3. Of God, especially knowledge of His holy will and of the blessings which He has bestowed and constantly bestows on men through Christ
 4. Of Christ, i.e., the true knowledge of Christ’s nature, dignity, benefits

5. Of God and Christ, i.e., to keep the knowledge of the one true God which has illumined the soul
- L. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, page 291:
 1. Knowledge, recognition
 2. Knowledge of God
 3. Knowledge of God and Christ
 4. Renewed in knowledge
 5. Real knowledge
- M. Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 2, page 25:
 1. Knowledge as recognition of the will of God that is effective in the conduct of the one who knows God
 2. Christian faith
- N. *Epignosis* has 2 basic meaning in the Greek New Testament:
 1. Acknowledge, acknowledgement
 2. Experiential knowledge (of God and Christ).
- O. The following is a list of passages in which the word is used.
 1. **Ro. 1:28, "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge (*epignosis*) God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper."**
 2. **Ro. 3:20, "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the acknowledgement (*epignosis*) of sin."**
 3. **Ro. 10:2, "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*)."**
 4. **Eph. 1:17, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a lifestyle of wisdom and of revelation by means of an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him."**
 5. **Eph. 4:13, "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the Son of God into a mature man into the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ."**
 6. **Philippians 1:9, "Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge (*epignosis*)."**
 7. **Col. 1:9-10, "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God."**
 8. **Col. 2:2, "that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together by means of divine-love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself."**
 9. **Col. 3:10, "and have put on the new self, the one being renewed for an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) according to the image of the One who created him."**
 10. **1 Tim. 2:4, "who desires all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the truth."**
 11. **2 Ti. 2:25, "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them a change of mind leading to an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the truth."**
 12. **2 Ti. 3:7, "always learning and never able to come to an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the truth."**
 13. **Tit. 1:1, "Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the truth which is according to spirituality."**
 14. **Phm. 1:6, "and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake."**
 15. **Heb. 10:26, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins."**
 16. **2 Pe. 1:2-3, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you by means of an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of God even Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and spirituality, through an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the One having called us by His own glory and excellence."**
 17. **2 Pe. 1:8, "For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful with respect to an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

18. **2 Pe. 2:20, “For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by an experiential knowledge (*epignosis*) of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.”**

- P. Therefore, with the exception Romans 1:28 and 3:20, the noun *epignosis* means “experiential knowledge.”
- Q. It is used many different adjuncts such as God, Christ, divine-love, truth, divine assets and provisions and the will of God.
- R. To experience means, “to personally encounter, observe or undergo something through a process, to have knowledge or practical wisdom gained from what one has observed, encountered or undergone,” and implies being affected by what one meets.
- S. Thus, in Ephesians 1:7 and 2 Peter 1:3, *epignosis* means an “experiential knowledge” of the Father in the sense of personally encountering through the process of experiential sanctification the Father as He is revealed in the pages of Scripture and prayer by God the Holy Spirit and being affected by this encounter with the Father resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.
- T. In Colossians 1:9 *epignosis* means an “experiential knowledge” of the Father’s will in the sense of personally encountering through the process of experiential sanctification the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the Father’s will resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.
- U. In 1 Timothy 2:4, 25; 2 Timothy 3:7; Titus 1:1 and Hebrews 10:26, the noun *epignosis* means an “experiential knowledge” of Word of Truth, which is the mind of Christ in the sense of personally encountering through the process of experiential sanctification the mind of Christ as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the mind of Christ resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.
- V. In Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 2:2; 3:10 and 2 Peter 1:2, 8; 2:20 the noun *epignosis* means an “experiential knowledge” of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of personally encountering Him through the process of experiential sanctification as He is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the Lord resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.
- W. In Philemon 1:6, the noun *epignosis* means an “experiential knowledge” of every good thing in the sense of personally encountering through the process of experiential sanctification the divine assets and provisions given to the believer by the Father as they are revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.
- X. In Philippians 1:9, the noun *epignosis* means an “experiential knowledge” of Christ’s love in the sense of personally encountering through the process of experiential sanctification the love of Christ as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the love of Christ resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.