

The Quest for Knowledge

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Paul warned that there would be those people who were “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim. 3:7) How is this possible? Is it just that we listen to the wrong teachers or read the wrong books? These may be a factor but they are not the root cause of our being unable to come to the real knowledge of the truth.

Paul also wrote, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) As we cease from the activities of the sinful flesh that makes us exactly like this world and as we interact more deeply with the Spirit of God, we will be changed. Our mind will not be as influenced by the sinful nature and we will draw more clearly and deeply from the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16)

The “hidden secret” to the gaining of real knowledge of the truth is not *what* we know, but *who* we know. It is not just a matter of arriving at the “right” belief and then we’ll be right with God or that once we have that “right” knowledge (at least to our own satisfaction), then we can rest and cruise the rest of our “spiritual journey.” Though this is what the whole deceptive “quest for knowledge” that never arrives at the truth is really about, it is vastly different from simply allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, being content (but neither lazy nor negligent) with as much or as little understanding as He gives while we remain diligent to remain in His rest.

“It’s not what we know, but who we know” is simply another way of saying that knowledge is not the end of the matter. And this is all the more true for those who already know this! Those who know this fact could easily begin to rest in this fact and cease to rest in the Spirit of God! This is the intricate labyrinth of the unrenewed human mind and it is very easy to get lost in the coils of introspective paralysis and this is the subtle snare laid for those who begin to trust in their intellectual knowledge of Biblical or even spiritual concepts. A subtle switch from relying on God to relying on our own carnal intellect has been made and God is no longer God over our life – our own intellect is.

God’s plan is that the life and nature of Christ is implanted within and then lived forth from the very depths of our being. (Jas. 1:21, Jn. 7:38) Anything other than this is merely deception. We must remain in Christ and routinely draw closer to this state of resting in Christ now, closer than where we were at months or years before. If we are still spiritually where we were at some long time ago, we can know that we have fallen victim to some deception. We must come to a stage where we at least begin to rest in Him and not in our knowledge of Him.

The “church” has all along thought themselves to be in possession of all the answers. Certainly, when confronted in such blatant terms they will be quick to deny it – but their arrogant and haughty display of their knowledge makes it evident that, without a doubt in their mind, there is no possibility that they have any gaps in their knowledge base nor could they possibly be mistaken in any way in their beliefs.

The “church,” beginning way back in the 3rd century, has even made such extravagant assertions as “No one can have God for his Father, who has not the church for his mother.” (Cyprian, 251 A.D.) Or they even go so far as to say, “everybody needs this or that program or this facet of the ‘church.’” Still others insist that you need a “spiritual father” in order to progress on to spiritual maturity. But what is lost in all this deception is that *everyone simply needs Jesus!* The fallacy of the “mother church” deception is most readily uncovered by

realizing that “church” is not the original word used to describe the people of God. That word is ekklesia [1577] and it does not have all the meanings that “church” has – there is such a discrepancy between “church” and ekklesia that one is appalled to find out the history of King James’ arbitrary authoritarian mandate to retain the word “church” in his English “Authorized Version of 1611”!

What is the ekklesia? It is the people who have heard Christ’s spiritual call to come out of this world’s darkness, who have been translated into being members of His family and of His kingdom of light and who are now responsible to attend to the affairs of Christ in their own circle of influence. When does a person become a member of this ekklesia? At the new birth from above. (Jn. 3:3, 5, 1 Pet. 1:23) John wrote that “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (Jn. 1:12-13) The idea that any other member of the ekklesia has any part in bringing about this new birth is simply ludicrous and completely contradictory to what John has said here. The new birth from above is most likely preceded by someone from Christ’s ekklesia preaching and presenting various facts (that are then brought to spiritual life in the listener by the Spirit of God) and the new life is indeed commenced with the first step of faith each convert must make. (see Rom. 10:17, etc.) But it is God alone who brings the new convert into new spiritual life and makes him or her into a new creation in Christ Jesus. To suppose anything else is to misread and misunderstand the Bible in some very fundamental ways!

Those that participate in some program or practice that actually produces spiritual life, maturity or godliness are likely to be miles ahead of where the pew-sitters and “church”-ites are, but even these usually don’t really see what it is that they have or why it works. Those who have overcome issues that had them trapped for years simply don’t see that they’ve overcome their sin and addiction or whatever issue by surrendering to Christ and not because they’ve “worked the steps” or followed some prescribed list of behaviors. It is because their program or practice incorporates obedience to some principle or command of Christ or God that their program or practice produces good fruit in their lives. But obedience to any and all of God’s commands produces good fruit in our lives! We don’t need to repackage them in some special program or practice manual. What we need to do is find where we started practicing obedience to God and use that as our starting base to continue on in ever increasing obedience to God! It will always bring spiritual death into the equation to cram this wonderful new life and freedom we’ve found back into the “church” paradigm or to give the credit to our specialized program or practice.

The question that usually troubles most believers and followers of Christ is how to overcome some specific sin. And this is indeed legitimate and necessary. But it is only the beginning. It is not enough to be free of that certain sin - we are called to conform to “the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ.” (Eph. 4:13-15) We need to allow the Spirit of truth to open our hearts and imaginations to see that He has called – and equipped us – for a life that is much larger than our current battle with some particular sin, addiction or issue.

While there is certainly place for even the smallest of questions about whom we should interact with, where we should go, what we should do, etc., to become locked in introspective paralysis trying to find the answers to those questions is to look in the wrong place. *All*

questions must be submitted to God and we must trust that, if we are not immediately given an answer, it has not slipped past His attention. “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” (1 Jn. 5:14) If our will is submitted to His will, He hears and He will act according to His plan and purpose for our life in His time and way. We can confidently rest in this. Our difficulty begins when we cease resting in this but begin to anxiously fret over the various aspects of the problem at hand.

Perhaps the deepest question we should be pondering and presenting to God is not so much about how much to be involved with various aspects of our current dilemma but rather “What, Lord, needs to come next in order to bring Your life and nature out from within the depths of me?” If we would but truly submit our all to Him, we would see a much larger picture and we would experience more of the peace, joy, life and love of Christ and God in our life. But if we are not waiting for Him to do His work, we labor in vain (Psa. 127:1) as we press on with our program or practice apart from His work in our lives.

If we are content to pursue any *it* – our program or practice, even spiritual things like grace or love – it will replace our first love for *Him*. If we prefer an “it,” God may simply give us over to “it” because we want it more than we want *Him*. The way of following Christ and God is very simple – any thing, no matter how right, good or necessary it may seem, if it keeps us away from *Him*, it is only a diversion away from the truth and life that *is* God. Salvation and abundant, eternal life is simply not available to those who cling to their favorite formulas, doctrines and “theologies” while they reject the simple, obedient one-on-one interaction with the only living and Most High God revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The quest for knowledge apart from the quest for Him is to take fruit from the wrong tree – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:17, etc.) Truth is an integral aspect of the other tree, the tree of life, the Person and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Truth that brings both eternal and abundant life can only be gained from *Him* – it will never be found amid the ruins of our fallen, carnal (fleshly), unrenewed intellect or in the shambles of man-made traditions and religion. Look there all you care to – it simply is not there.

Let he who has ears hear.

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